

# STRESA: A BOURGEOIS RESORT.

## HYPOTHESIS OF RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF HERITAGE.

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The aim of our research is to analyze the evolution of tourism in Stresa, a small town on the western side of Lake Maggiore, from the end of the 18th century up the 1930s. The location and the historical period gave us the opportunity to construct a historical analysis, following both the urban evolution of the place and the concept of "tourism".

First we wanted to underline how its strategic position, a natural link between central Europe and Italy, made this Piedmontese shore so important, from an infrastructural point of view. Its position was so important to make it a regular and compulsory stopping place for the Grand Tour of the 1700s.

From the ashes of this Grand Tour, from the end of 1700s, all through the 1800s and in the early 1900s, a new kind of modern tourism, supported by the raising of shipping and railways, developed. In the 19th century, some Swiss, German, Lombard and Piedmontese citizens, aristocrats as well as the emerging new middle class, showed a renewed interest in the lake, its landscape and its small villages; they made a difference because it was in this period that new residences, palaces and hotels were built on a large scale.

So as to have a deeper understanding of the historical phases, we used cartography and G.I.S., a computer system which allows people to obtain, use and return informations from geographic data.

We started to revise the data from the traditional cartography, kept in the State Archives in Piedmont. First, we digitized the cartographic support, then we added metric and geographic data, to create different superimposable levels so as to get a chronological history of the evolution of the properties and of the expansion of the buildings.

In summary, we managed to visualize historical properties which were either partially damaged or did not exist any longer.

For an old buiding of the 1800s, Villa Marina, we tried to find out more about its typological and material features.

Our research allowed us to become aware of the potential that the place has to improve its current tourist offer. And yet, little is done to spread this historical legacy, linked to its different points of interest, and to enhance the value of the architectural property and landscape on the mainland, while other places on the lake have already started a process to restore the historical properties.

Some plans have been recently suggested about the renewal of the abandoned residential areas, but nothing has been done so far.

The current economic situation just suggested another way to enhance the property value; within the tourist field, this method is based on the diffusion of historical information through the G.I.S. support.

We chose the city of Stresa as our “case study” because this is a location which stands out both for the beauty of its landscape and for the lack of awareness of how much of value could be restored to its former glory.

The process of historical research, data processing and translation of the result into G.I.S. maps can be done for any historical built-up area which wishes to carry out a new policy to protect its own property and to spread its historical legacy.