



Group of gardeners with the Stresa coat of arms made of flowers.

## A Flag, a Coat of Arms, a Gonfalon

*Vivat, crescat, floreat* is the motto adorning the banner affectionately gifted to “Pro Stresa” in 1909 by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Genoa, born of the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and married into the House of Savoy. These royal houses are represented by the crests embroidered on the velvet banner.

The occasion marked the tenth anniversary of the society’s founding, and Stresa hosted the “Pro Verbanesi Congress,” attended by all the Pro societies of the region, aimed at proposing beneficial initiatives for the entire territory. By this date, “Pro Stresa” had already contributed to public greenery, enhancing the flowerbeds by the lake square and the mountain paths named after the distinguished vacationer Georg von Siemens. Progress and “flourish,” therefore, perfecting the splendid nature that has always made Stresa a privileged place. This nature is modestly referenced in the laurel branches that adorn the banner and the coat of arms of Stresa, approved in 1914, just as the prosperous Art Nouveau period was coming to an end. The coat of arms features a red cross on a white background in the left field, paying homage to the arms of Novara. Stresa not only belonged to the province of Novara at that time, but it had also flourished under its rule in the 13th century.

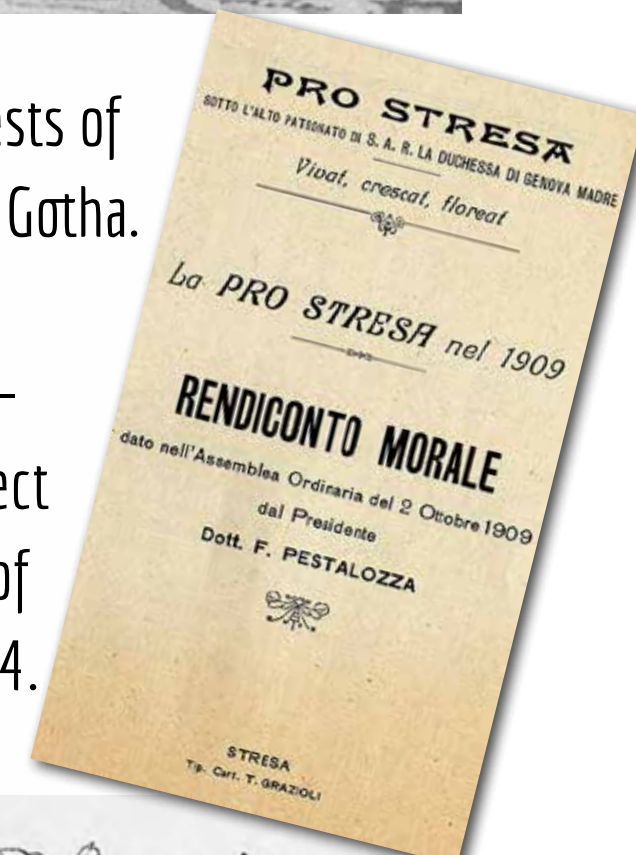
In the right field, three wavy blue bands represent the three main streams of the town: the Roddo to the north, the Crée in the center, and the Vignolo to the south. At the top is a mural crown symbolizing “city and fortified place,” at the bottom are two sickles—symbols of agricultural work and pruning—and surrounding it are two laurel branches. The coat of arms is also featured, in a sumptuous volute frame and amid lush branches of oak and laurel, at the center of the grand silk gonfalon offered by over 180 women of Stresa to the Municipality in 1924, to commemorate the sixth anniversary of Italy’s victory in the First World War (November 4, 1918).

The extraordinarily crafted and carefully restored embroidery elegantly combines a rich array of volutes, spirals, flowers, and fruits with heraldic (crests of the Visconti; of Milan, in homage to the Borromeo; of the Savoy or Novara) and religious (Saint Ambrose, patron of the city) images representing the history of Stresa. The style is not strictly Art Nouveau, but its attention to the flourishing of nature echoes that movement...



Above, left: Banner from 1909 with the crests of the Houses of Savoy and Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Above, right: The Duchess of Genoa.

Right: Activities of “Pro Stresa,” 1909. Bottom of the page, from the right: The project and the Royal Decree for the Stresa coat of arms, 1914-1915, and the gonfalon, 1924.



The “Pro Verbanio” mentioned in the magazine “Verbania” in 1909.

