

**HABILITATION THESIS**  
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***ABSTRACT***

**SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS BY MAIN THEME**

**I. Researches on Roman town-planning**

The researches we led on Roman town-planning started with our PhD work, and continued after. They are mainly focused on the problematic concerning the Augustan Region "*XI Transpadana*", which includes the actual Italian regions of Lombardy, Valle d'Aosta and, partially, Piedmont, for its Transpadanian part.

The first goal of our research was to fulfill a real need, as, in comparison to the neighboring regions of Roman Italy, such as Venetia, Aemilia or Liguria, very few studies had been dedicated to this specific area. Moreover, hundreds of old and new excavation reports, ancient and medieval sources, archives and other key indicators for studying the problematic, often hard to access, laid almost unstudied.

After gathering all the important information of more than a thousand published and unpublished documents, we were able to build a corpus of reliable data to confirm or to infirm the precedent theories regarding the urban birth, organization, development, evolution and involution of all this centers in a much broader timeframe than the one adopted by most authors, i.e. from their foundation to the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

The core concept of this method is to gather and systemize all the data available town by town, building a complete chapter dedicated to each center and subdivided into monographic sections: Urban schemes, town walls, forum, theatre, amphitheater, baths, other public monuments, main construction techniques, residential areas and characteristics intra muros, suburbia. Then, we added a section dedicated to worship places intra and extra muros, pagan as well as Christian and a section devoted to necropolis. Finally, we chose to integrate each town into its land cadaster system(s), municipal and regional road network and to examine, when known, which were the small towns, which depended administratively to the city.

This method allowed building a very clear scheme for each city, where each section was then easy to be compared with the similar one of the other cities.

We have been able, for the first time, to propose a narrower classification of the cities of Transpadana into three very different groups, namely the plain cities (or settlements) with pre-Roman organization, which were then "Romanized" (i.e. native centers where the Romanization comes along with an attempt of town-planning aimed to create an orthonormal modular weft while adapting to an already present urban reality), the plain urban areas created ex novo, and finally the piedmontan centers, established on difficultly manageable sites where the topography prevented the realization of a classic orthonormal plan.

## II. Lychnological researches

The study of ancient and pre-modern means of artificial lighting, as well as their economic, politic, religious and social significations can be considered as the core research area we are dedicating our efforts since 1996, i.e. much before the PhD.

We structured our habilitation thesis into specific categories in order to underline the logic of our researches as well as the main scientific directions we followed.

We first underlined the constant work we achieved - and we perfection on a daily base - for gathering the necessary information. In a few words, we founded and continue to manage the International Lychnological Association which gathers in 2014 more than 150 members form 25 countries. This huge network, with its triennial congresses, regular round-tables and publications allows us to be constantly up-to-date in what's going on in this specific field.

Its major achievement is the building and publishing on-line the most extensive bibliographical database on the subject : *www.lychnology.org*, gathers in this very moment 2543 references (from 1756 to january 2014) and is nowadays referenced as the best resource on its domain by more than 50 prestigious universities around the world.

Then, we indicate our continuous researches and publications on three very complementary major corpuses, namely the State Historical Museum (Moscow, Russia), the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire (Geneva, Switzerland) and the Bouvier Collection (Neuchâtel, Switzerland). Altogether, these corpuses we are in charge gather ca. 3300 lamps, covering the whole Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Early Islamic territories and periods.

Next to that, we also explained the variety of areas wher we led or are leading in-depth lychnological researches : the study and publication of all the lamps from the Nyon (Switzerland), Faverges (France); Leptis Magna (Libya); Novae (Bulgaria); Akrai (Sicily, Italy).

As a consequence of the long-haul previously cited researches, we have been able to analyze and publish several macroeconomic studies, but also niche-specialized researches about epigraphy, typology, chronology, iconography, social behaviors a.s.o.

We went also beyond the antiquity period, by constituting and publishing the highlights of a national corpus of medieval lighting devices and issuing international comparisons and even by editing the first archive-based publication on a specific topic belonging to Industrial Archaeology, namely our research on the Railway lighting systems before electricity.

Our most recent research directions, besides to the ongoing "classical" archaeological ones led us to adopt a broader view on the lychnological phaenomenon through the ages, using a fully interdisciplinary approach, mainly based on ethno-archaeology but integrating elements of anthropology, sociology, history of religions, art history and much more.