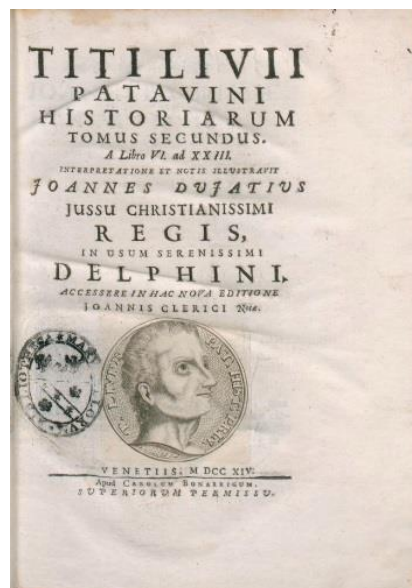


## Ethel Beatrice Abrahams Award 2017/2018

### Livio, *Ad Urbem Condendam*: riletture del passato in età Augustea – University of Bologna, February 2018

The Ethel Beatrice Abrahams Award is granted to students who wish to further their study of Ancient Greek or Classics. This year I was awarded the prize in order to attend a conference and present a paper at the University of Bologna: **Livio, *Ad Urbem Condendam*: riletture del passato in età Augustea**. This conference aimed to examine the work of the Roman historian Titus Livius – usually anglicised as Livy – and in particular the effect that his contemporary experiences and the changing context of his lifetime had on his reconstruction of the past.

Livy was a wealthy provincial Italian born at the end of the Roman Republic – roughly 60 BC – and lived and wrote during the reign of Augustus. Augustus presided over Rome’s transformation from a chaotic republic to a relatively stable autocracy ruled by a single man. Besides the thorough political changes, Augustus also pursued a series of military reforms and a program of legislation that attempted to address a perceived decline in Roman morality. This was the context in which Livy wrote his monumental history. The work as written consisted of 142 books covering the period between 753 BC and 9 BC. Unfortunately, only 25% of the work survives, and all the surviving books cover a period centuries earlier than Livy’s own lifetime. As a result, much study of Livy’s work concerns his approach to reconstructing a previous era of Roman history.



An 18<sup>th</sup> century title page of Livy’s work

Such was the focus of the conference, and it contained papers on Livy’s understanding of the politics, military, social and cultural mores, architecture, and ethnic makeup of a period of Roman history that was already to him the distant past. As my own work concerns how three Roman historians – Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus – reconstruct earlier periods in their narratives, with a specific focus on common soldiers – the relevance of the conference was self-evident. My own paper argued that Livy understood centurions – officers within the Roman army – to

have had a purpose in the Early and Middle Republic (roughly 500-160 BC) that was fundamentally different from both that of his own time and that portrayed in earlier historians. He had, in essence, reconstructed a different role that matched his understanding of the social and political dynamic of the Republic that existed centuries before his time.



The conference was held at the University of Bologna – one of the oldest universities in Europe. It was a decidedly international affair, with papers presented both in English and in Italian. I was one of only two UK based attendees, and while many of the other presenters were based in Italy, there were also papers presented by scholars at universities in Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States, and Chile. The conference was spread over two days, including one day in a beautiful 16<sup>th</sup> century palazzo – alas, my paper was on the first day, in a far more prosaic setting. Besides the conference itself, there was also a conference dinner and a tour of the city offered to attendees. The accommodation was at a Dominican monastery in the centre of the city.

The Ethel Beatrice Abrahams Award allowed all of this to happen. The award covered the cost of my travel and two days of the accommodation – one day having been paid by the University of Bologna. Attending the conference allowed me to share my work with scholars from across the world as well as engage with their work in an environment of academic discourse. I received interesting feedback that has contributed to the improvement of my work, and I was able to develop professional connexions with fellow scholars from Europe and beyond. I would very much recommend any Classical scholars who wish to engage fruitfully with the international academic community to apply for the EBA Award in the future.

*Timothy Brady*