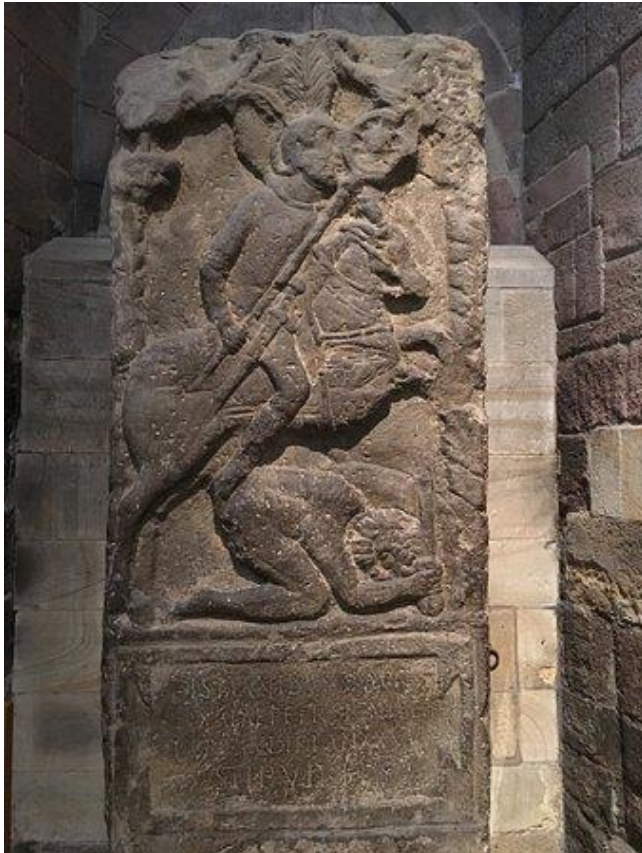


# Poem as Inscription: Ezra Pound to Ian Hamilton Finlay



Rowena Fowler

University of Warwick

9 March 2019

# Roman Epitaph in Hexham Abbey

Dis Manibus Flavinus  
eq(ues) alae Petr(ianae) signifer  
tur(ma) Candidi an(norum) XXV  
stip(endiorum) VII h(ic) s(itus) (est)

To the Gods and the Shades.  
Flavinus.  
Standard-bearer. Petriana Horse.  
White Troop. Age Twenty-Five.  
Service Seven.  
Lies Here.

# 'Loving the rituals'

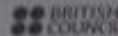
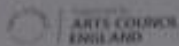
Loving the rituals that keep men close,  
Nature created means for friends apart:

pen, paper, ink, the alphabet,  
signs for the distant and disconsolate heart.

Poems on the Underground *celebrating 25 years*

*Palladas (4th century AD)  
translated by Tony Harrison  
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MAYOR OF LONDON



[tfl.gov.uk/poems](http://tfl.gov.uk/poems) Transport for London



Biccadilly line

# Hrothgar's inscribed sword

Hroðgar maðelode,        hylt sceawode,  
ealde lafe,        on ðæm wæs or written  
fyrngewinnes,        syðþan flod ofsloh,  
gifen geotende,        giganta cyn

. . .

Swa wæs on ðæm scennum        sciran goldes  
þurh runstafas        rihte gemearcod,  
geseted ond gesæd        hwam þæt sweord geworht,  
irena cyst,        ærest wære,  
wreopenhilt ond wyrmfah.        ða se wisa spræc  
sunu Healfdenes        (swigedon ealle):

*Beowulf*, 1687–90; 1694–99

# John Donne

## 'A Valediction: of my name, in the window'

I

My name engrav'd herein,  
Doth contribute my firmnesse to this glasse,  
Which, ever since that charme, hath beene  
As hard, as that which grav'd it, was;  
Thine eye will give it price enough, to mock  
The diamonds of either rock.

II

'Tis much that Glasse should bee  
As all-confessing, and through-shine as I,  
'Tis more, that it showes thee to thee,  
And cleare reflects thee to thine eye.  
But all such rules, loves magique can undo,  
Here you see mee, and I am you.

# Graffito on window at Jesus College, Cambridge, c. 1600



# William Wordsworth

‘Written with a slate Pencil upon a Stone, the largest of a Heap lying near a deserted Quarry, upon one of the Islands at Rydal’

Stranger! this hillock of mis-shapen stones  
Is not a Ruin spared or made by time,  
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st, the Cairn  
Of some old British Chief: 'tis nothing more  
Than the rude embryo of a little Dome  
Or Pleasure-house, once destined to be built  
Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.

. . . .

—if, disturbed  
By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn  
Out of the quiet rock the elements  
Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to blaze  
In snow-white splendour,—think again; and, taught  
By old Sir William and his quarry, leave  
Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose;  
There let the vernal slow-worm sun himself,  
And let the redbreast hop from stone to stone.

# Keats's grave in Rome



*Here lies One  
Whose Name was writ in Water*



# Ezra Pound, 'Stele' (Moeurs contemporaines, VI)

After years of continence  
he hurled himself into a sea of six women.  
Now, quenched as the brand of Meleager,  
he lies by the poluphloisboious sea-coast.

παρὰ θῆνα πολυφλοίσβοιο Θαλάσσης

SISTE VIATOR

# Ezra Pound's inscribed oars

'But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied  
'Heap up mine arms, be tomb by sea-bord, and inscribed:  
'*A man of no fortune, and with a name to come.*  
And set my oar up, that I swung mid fellows.'  
(*Canto I* / 3–4; cf *Odyssey* 11. 21–78)

Then on an oar  
Read this:

'I was  
And I no more exist;  
Here drifted  
An hedonist.'  
(*'Mauberley'*, IV)

# Cavafy

## ΕΝ Τῶ ΜΗΝΙ ΑΘΥΡ

Μὲ δυσκολία διαβάζω      στήν πέτρα τὴν ἀρχαία.  
«Κύ[ρι]ε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ».      Ἐνα «Ψυ[χ]ήν» διακρίνω.  
«Ἐν τῷ μηνί Ἀθύρ»      «Ὁ Λεύκιος ἐ[κοιμ]ήθη».  
Στὴ μνεία τῆς ἡλικίας      «Ἐβί[ωσ]εν ἑτῶν»,  
τὸ Κάππα Ζῆτα δείχνει      πὸν νέος ἐκοιμήθη.  
Μὲς στὰ φθαρμένα βλέπω      «Αὐτὸ[ν] . . . Ἀλεξανδρέα».  
Μετὰ ἔχει τρεῖς γραμμὲς      πολὺ ἀκρωτηριασμένες·  
μὰ κάτι λέξεις βγάζω —      σὰν «δ[ά]κρυα ἡμῶν», «ὀδύνην»,  
κατόπιν πάλι «δάκρυα»,      καὶ «[ἡμ]ῖν τοῖς [φ]ίλοις πένθος».  
Μὲ φαίνεται πὸν ὁ Λεύκιος      μέγਾਲος θ' ἀγαπήθη.  
Ἐν τῷ μηνί Ἀθύρ      ὁ Λεύκιος ἐκοιμήθη.

PATRICK  
LEIGH FERMOR

ΥΠΗΡΞΕΝ ΕΤΙ ΤΟ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΝ ΕΚΕΙΝΟ,  
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ.



HE WAS BORN IN LONDON  
11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1915  
& DIED AT DUMBLETON  
10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011

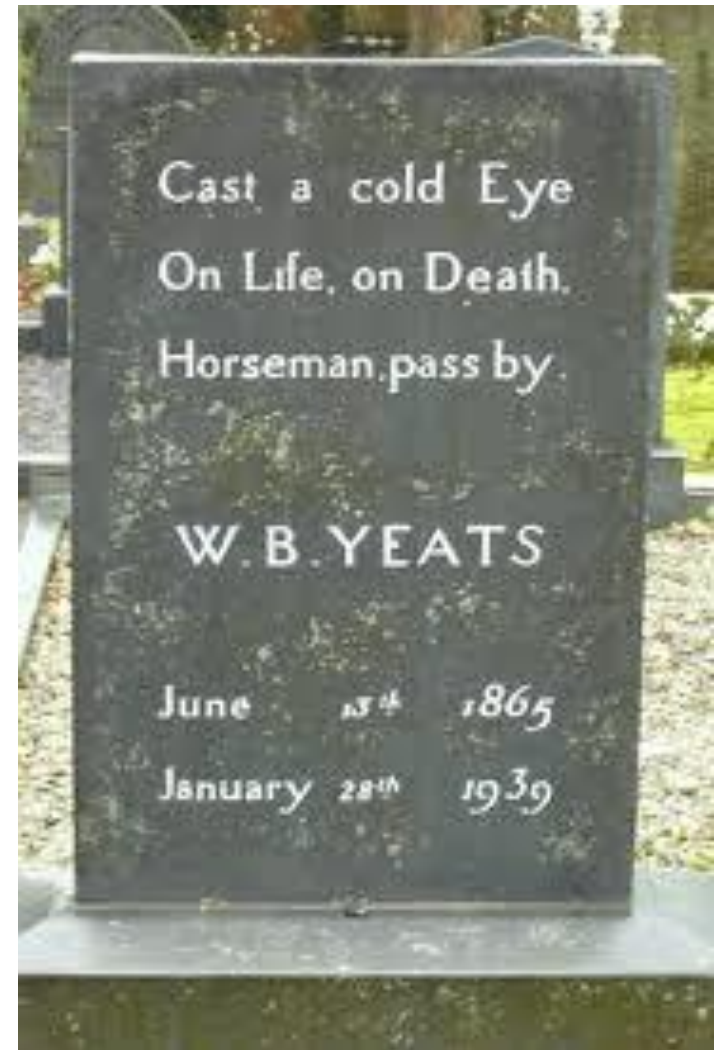


Under bare Ben Bulben's head  
In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid.  
An ancestor was rector there  
Long years ago; a church stands near,  
By the road an ancient Cross.  
No marble, no conventional phrase;  
On limestone quarried near the spot  
By his command these words are cut:

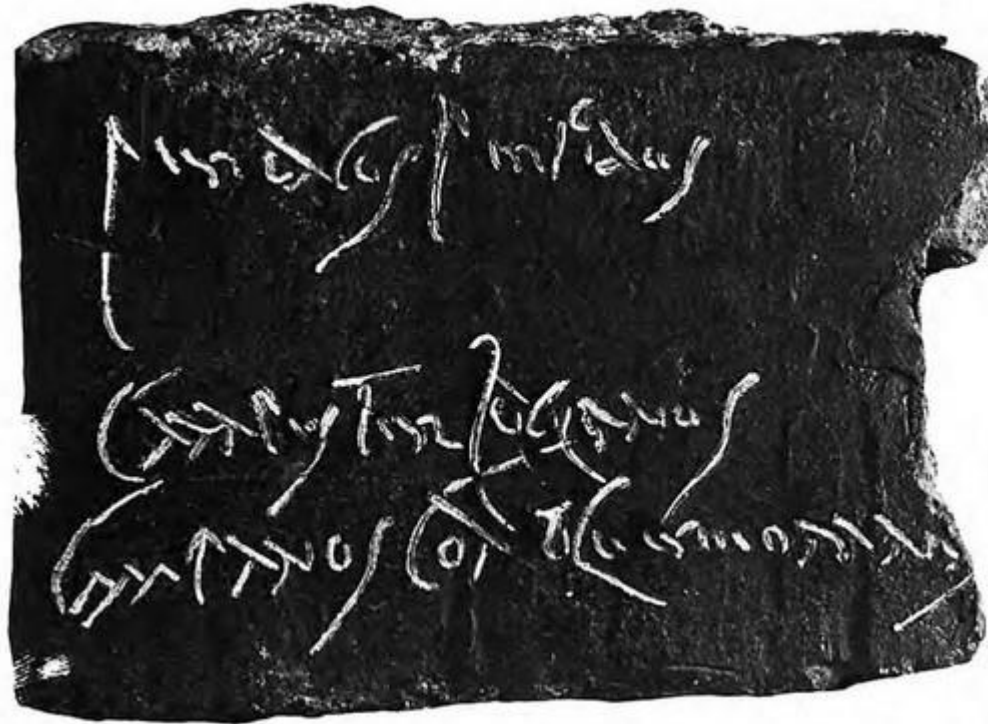
*Cast a cold eye  
On life, on death,  
Horseman, pass by!*

September 4, 1938

(W. B. Yeats, 'Under Ben Bulben', VI)



# Roman tile from Silchester



Pertacus Perfidus

*Pertacus, Perfidus,*

Campester Lucilianus  
Campanus conticuere omnes

*Campester, Lucilianus,  
Campanus: they all fell silent.*

# from U.A. Fanthorpe, 'The Silence'

They came too near the dark, for all their know-how.  
Those curses they scratched widdershins on lead —  
Asking for trouble.

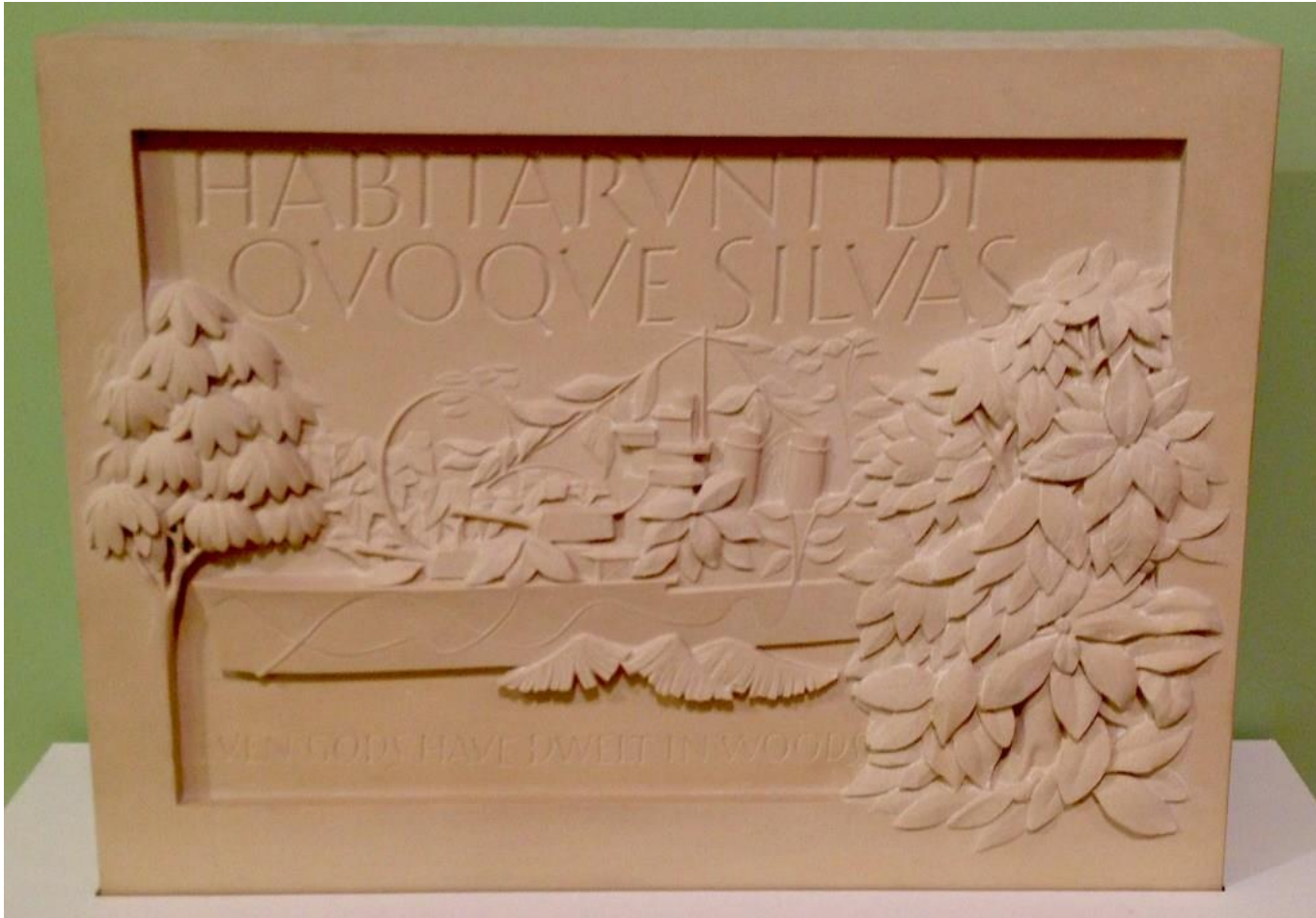
We withdrew into the old places, that are easier  
To believe in. Once we waited  
For someone to come back,

But now it's clear they won't. Here we stand,  
Between *Caes. Div. Aug.* and the next lot, expert only  
At unspeakable things,

Stranded between history and history, vague in-between people.  
What we know will not be handed on.  
*Conticuere omnes.*



Ian Hamilton Finlay, wood carving  
'Even gods have dwelt in woods'



Habitarunt di quoque silvas (Virgil, *Eclogues* 2. 60)

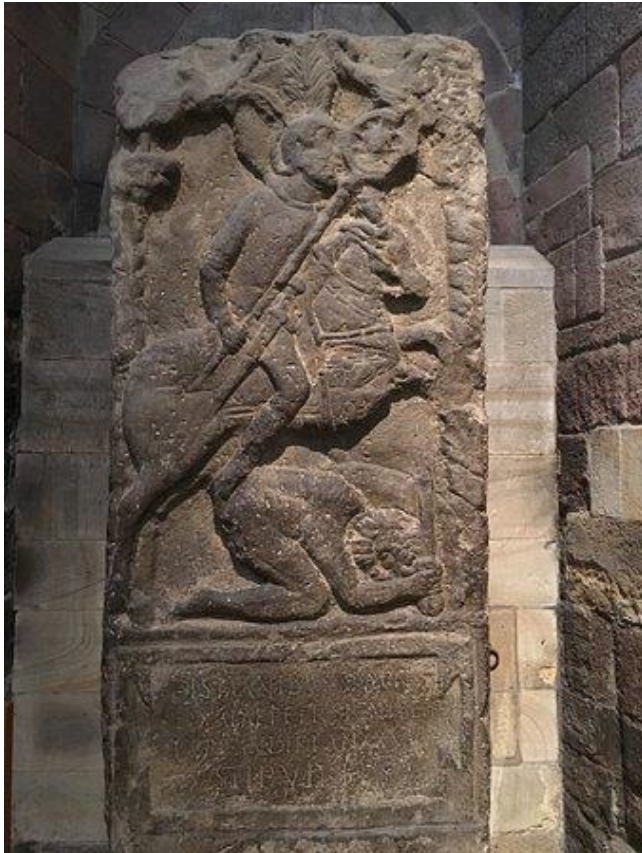


Ian Hamilton Finlay, stone and steel  
'The world has been empty since the Romans'





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