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VINISIUS TO NIGRA: EVIDENCE FROM OXFORD OF CHRISTIANITY IN
ROMAN BRITAIN

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Vinisius to Nigra: Evidence from Oxford of Christianity in Roman Britain*

Oscar Wilde, in almost the last year of his life, wrote to a friend: "My once Greek and gracious handwriting has been so wrecked by long disuse and troubled nerves that I always feel my letters to you are hieroglyphs that Paton should *not* discover, and that Sayce would be unable to translate."¹ W.R. Paton, Wilde's contemporary at Magdalen College, Oxford, married the beautiful daughter of the mayor of Calymnos while collecting the inscriptions of Cos.² A.H. Sayce, a lifelong bachelor, was the Professor of Assyriology at Oxford, and his fame rested on the decipherment of cuneiform tablets.³ At this time, however, he was puzzled by another inscribed tablet [see plates IV and V; figures 1 (a) and 1 (b), p. 105], a rectangular piece of sheet lead measuring 3 by 1³/₄ inches (76 by 44 mm), which had been found in 1880 in the hot spring under the King's Bath at Bath. Both sides bore mysterious scratches, which seemed to be handwriting. The Professor of Zoology at Oxford, J.O. Westwood, a palaeographer who had published the early inscriptions of Wales in *Lapidarium Walliae* (1876-9), could not read it. Photographs were sent to Hübner, who had published the Roman inscriptions of Britain in *CIL VII* (1873), and to Zangemeister, who had quickly deciphered the other leaden tablet found at Bath in 1880 (now *RIB* 154), but without success.⁴ The leading British epigraphist, F.J. Haverfield, noted the tablet in his first supplement to *CIL VII: literas nullas efficere potui* (*EE VII* 827).

* I have read this paper to seminars at Oxford and Harvard, to whose members I am grateful for their helpful comments. I am particularly grateful to Professor Richard Sorabji and Dr Danuta Shanzer, for helping me to publish it, and to the editors of *ZPE* for accepting it in its present form, where I hope its value as an object-lesson will outweigh the Oxonicentricity. I am also indebted to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for access to the letters and other documents relating to E.W.B. Nicholson's *Vinisius to Nigra* (see n. 4) which have been bound together as *MS Eng. misc. d. 71*, and for permission to publish the two photographs of the tablet. They were all carefully preserved by Nicholson himself, who in 1895 was already marking volumes of his private papers "for the Bodleian at my death". Falconer Madan, his deputy and eventual successor (in 1912), when he noticed this, is said to have hoped that Nicholson was contemplating suicide. Nicholson's life and work have been well studied by K.A. Manley (see n. 6). The form of this paper and much of the detail belong to before I read his excellent thesis, but I nonetheless owe it a special debt.

¹ *Letters*, ed. R. Hart-Davis (London, 1962), 721 [? 22 March 1898].

² J.N.L. Myres, "Commander J.L. Myres, R.N.V.R. The Blackbeard of the Aegean", *The Tenth J.L. Myres Memorial Lecture* (1980), 10. According to J.L. Myres (quoted *ibid.*), Paton "spoke Greek and French to his wife, German to the children's governess, English to me, Turkish to the servants, Latin and Gaelic to his children."

³ *Dictionary of National Biography, 1931-1940* (1949), 786-8. Sayce was said to be able to write good prose in twenty ancient and modern languages. His biographer also notes that "Sayce's many publications showed forth an original mind, and a very active imagination." Sayce gave a partial account of his life and interests in his anecdotal *Reminiscences* (1923).

⁴ E.W.B. Nicholson, *'Vinisius to Nigra': a 4th cent. Christian letter written in south Britain and discovered at Bath* (1904), 3. Cited below as *Vinisius to Nigra*.

Haverfield, who later became Camden Professor of Ancient History at Oxford, could not make out any letters. This was probably in 1889, by coincidence the year of Sayce's own visit to Bath, where the hot waters "almost miraculously" cured his sciatica after Oxford medicine had failed (*Reminiscences* [see n. 3], 264). In 1900, suspecting that the tablet was inscribed in a Celtic script, Sayce referred it to an Oxford philologist, Edward Williams Byron Nicholson (1849-1912), who had been Librarian of the Bodleian Library since 1882. He provided Nicholson with photographs, which he took with him on holiday to Scotland, where he "deciphered much the greater part of the text."⁵ Sayce wrote to congratulate him: "You have been so successful with what the wise men of Germany pronounced to be indecipherable that I shall come to you more than ever with 'hopeless' inscriptions" (Letter, 25 September 1900).

Bodley's Librarian was indeed a remarkable man.⁶ The notebook survives in which, at the age of 12, he catalogued his own library. At Oxford, where he read Classics, he was elected Librarian of its famous debating society, the Oxford Union. At the age of 24 he gained a post first held by Porson, that of Librarian of the London Institution, an ancient lending library which he revitalised. In 1877 he helped to organise an international conference of librarians, and was a founder and joint-secretary of the Library Association which resulted from it. This has become the British librarians' professional body, even though Nicholson himself, one of the first modern librarian-administrators, soon lost interest in it. He aspired all his life to recognition as a scholar and man of letters, a writer of books as well as their keeper.

Before his election to the Bodleian, Nicholson's published works included *The Gospel according to the Hebrews* (1879) and, in the same year, *The Rights of an Animal*. In the year of his election (1882), he published *New Homeric Researches* and *Jim Lord, a Poem*, which moralises upon the rescue of a cat from drowning. He was then only 33, "full of the feverish energy that was to consume him" (Craster [see n. 6], 153). Mark Pattison, biographer of Casaubon and himself the original of George Eliot's Casaubon, thought Nicholson was "vain, egotistical, and vulgar"; but other Oxford reformers like the great Benjamin Jowett saw him as the new broom the Bodleian needed.⁷ In the last 69 years there had been only two Librarians, Bulkeley Bandinel who had returned to Oxford from a previous appointment as chaplain of the flagship H.M.S. *Victory* during the Napoleonic Wars, and (in 1860) the saintly Henry Coxe who prayed in his diary for patience when Bandinel, at the age of 77, still clung to office. Once, when he was congratulated on the eloquence of a sermon he had just preached, Coxe replied: "The Devil told me so before I left the pulpit." He did not greatly change Bodley, the Library's historian comments, but when he died, a light seemed to have gone out of it (Craster [see n. 6], 151).

⁵ *Vinisius to Nigra* (see n. 4), 4; letter from Sayce to Nicholson, 2 September 1900.

⁶ E. Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library, 1845-1945* (1981), Part III, especially 152-7. There are short memoirs by two colleagues who knew him well: H.R. Tedder, "E.W.B. Nicholson (Bodley's Librarian, 1882-1912): In Memoriam", *Library Association Record* 16 (1914), 95-108; and S. Gibson, "E.W.B. Nicholson (1849-1912): Some Impressions", *ibid.*, 51 (1949), 137-43. Above all there is K.A. Manley, *E.W.B. Nicholson (1849-1912) and his importance to librarianship* (unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1977), which is scholarly, well-documented, and a delight to read.

⁷ Manley (see n. 6), 54, quoting Pattison's diary for 18 February 1882.

Coxe's successor, although he published religious verse and even a short story entitled *The man with two Souls*, and for a time frequented spiritualist séances in North Oxford, was "in religion an agnostic, who throughout life believed in the efficacy of prayer" (Gibson [see n. 6], 143). He became known to his deputy, Falconer Madan, as 'D.B.', *diabolus bibliothecae*, and to others as 'Old Nick'. "He had all the virtues except tact and the knowledge of where he was; the Bodleian rocked with his tumultuous energy".⁸ The catalogue was reorganised, new reading rooms were opened, an underground bookstore was begun, the Library's holdings and its staff multiplied; it grew faster than its resources, with Nicholson forever complaining of overwork and inadequate funds, and for a quarter of a century not even on speaking terms with his deputy. The energy which he lavished on modernising the Library and fighting his board of Curators, two of whom committed suicide under the strain, spilled over into controversies and eccentric scholarship. He was ahead of his time in employing boys and women in the Library despite opposition; he found time for anti-vivisectionist controversy, and books and pamphlets on such subjects as the etymology of the name 'Jack', Scottish folklore, the Pictish language, 'Keltic' philology, and *Can we not save architecture in Oxford?* (1910). He jealously resisted a bid by (Sir) Arthur Evans, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, to take over the Library's huge collection of ancient coins: "Why is that coin among the Roman Emperors?" he was overheard asking the boy who was arranging them; "Haven't I told you that every Roman Emperor has a stiff neck?"⁹

Unlike Coxe, who was painted by G.F. Watts, Nicholson never received "that sure index of declining years, a presentation portrait"; the Library has only an enlarged photograph of him in the Curators' Room, tall, awkward and melancholy, with a bulging forehead balanced by a walrus moustache. "To those of us who can remember him as he appeared in his later years, he was a somewhat grotesque but still a formidable figure. His magenta tie, his straw hat with Trinity ribbon worn summer and winter; his oblique vision and rather staring and protuberant eyes, in one of them a constantly tumbling monocle, made him a familiar sight in the streets of Oxford. In Bodley he was a tornado, the billowing sleeves of his M.A. gown scattering the papers of library readers as he dashed down Duke Humphrey."¹⁰ But Craster adds: "He was brusque and lacked the social graces, yet he had a fund of unexpected kindness for the young. He was unsparing of himself. His sole aim and the passion of his life was to extend the usefulness of the great library over which he now came to preside." Manley, whose thesis is the only full-scale study of Nicholson, and a very good one, concludes that others did not share Nicholson's confidence in his own abilities, a source of friction that marred his career. "Even so, few would deny that Nicholson's achievements rank him as one of the major figures in librarianship at the beginning of this century" (Manley [see n. 6], 205).

Such was the man who returned from his summer holiday in 1900, confident that he had solved the mystery. His ally Sayce reminded him of another joint success: "I was look-

⁸ L.R. Farnell, *An Oxonian Looks Back* (1934), 272-3.

⁹ *Ibid.* In 1884 there were 50,417 coins: see Manley (see n. 6), 171-3.

¹⁰ Craster [see n. 6], 153. 'Duke Humphrey' was then the Library's main reading room, dominated from Arts End by the 'Gothic' chair (still there) at which Nicholson worked. Manley (see n. 6), Plate 6, reproduces a drawing from *Cassell's Family Magazine*, May 1886, shewing the scene.

ing up the correspondence about the Brough stone two days ago, and was amused to see how you and I triumphed over the dogmatism and sneers of the Cambridge scholars who nevertheless had not the decency to confess in public that our readings were right."¹¹ This was a Romano-British tombstone inscribed in Greek, now published as *RIB 758*, which Sayce had taken to be evidence of a "Celtic-Greek" dialect persisting in northern Britain after the Roman period; it was correctly interpreted by Arthur Evans. Sayce wrote again in October 1900, to urge Nicholson to check his decipherment of the Bath tablet against the original: the characters, he said, were clearer than in the photograph. Zangemeister, one of Sayce's "wise men of Germany", had also asked to see the original. This was understandable: a good photograph of an inscribed lead tablet is almost impossible, since the letters, originally bright scratches, oxidise to the same grey as their background. They are easily confused with casual damage, and a further difficulty, to quote a modern Oxford papyrologist, is that "in any constant angle of light only some of the strokes are visible, so that the plaque has to be held in the hand and tilted or rotated to take advantage of various angles of light, if the patterns of the letters are to be recognized."¹²

Nicholson now obtained better photographs from the Bath city architect, and sent them to Haverfield, who replied by asking for the transcript as well; he said he had given up all hope of deciphering the thing himself (Letter, 21 December 1900). But the transcript was not sent. Nicholson plunged once more into the breathless routine of the Library, which is echoed in a pencilled note of 1890: "No fresh work can be undertaken without involving time of the Librarian. Deeper and deeper in slough of arrears. Work never so little as seven hours. Worry as well. Appeal to Curators" (Craster [see n. 6], 155). Nicholson could not delegate, a weakness parodied by a malicious story of Geoffrey Madan's, which he got from his father: Nicholson spent "three days at the London docks, watching outgoing ships, after losing a book from Bodley, which was afterwards discovered slightly out of place in the shelf".¹³ The truth was no less bizarre. In 1891, the year in which Sherlock Holmes first appeared in the *Strand Magazine*, one of Nicholson's boys stole 37 books and pamphlets, which were recovered, but the thief himself was thought to be emigrating to Australia; Nicholson, "playing the part of the Satanic Detective" (the malapropism is Falconer Madan's), tried to intercept him at the Docks (Manley [see n. 6], 103-4). The previous year, after suffering palpitations, Nicholson was told he had a diseased heart. In November 1901 his health failed; according to Nicholson himself, he suffered "a great heart-breakdown". In 1902 and 1903 he went, not to Bath, but to Bad Nauheim, a spa in Germany, where he was treated for heart disease. His convalescence was accompanied by an epic struggle with the University authorities, who in November 1902 decided to 'stable' readers' bicycles in the Proscholium, the lofty Jacobean gallery by which one now enters the Bodleian. It took three years of protests, and a war of pamphlets, before the bicycle stands were finally re-

¹¹ Letter, 25 September 1900. Sayce ignored Nicholson when he came to write his *Reminiscences* (see n. 3), recording only the indignation of a notoriously noisy reader that his desk was cleared after two weeks by order of "that hideous Leviathan at the Bodleian". "Nicholson squinted badly", Sayce comments (*ibid.*, 227-8).

¹² Dr John Rea in *Britannia* 3 (1972), 365.

¹³ G. Madan, *Notebooks*, ed. J.A. Gere and J. Sparrow (1981), 66.

moved (Tedder [see n. 6], 10). Nevertheless, when Nicholson took his summer holiday in 1904, photographs of the Bath tablet went with him. They were new ones, taken by Walter G. Lewis, Art Photographer at Bath, who charged Nicholson 22/6 and 10/6 copyright fee, but it was money well spent. Much of the text can still be read from them, fortunately, since no one has seen the tablet itself these fifty years and more. The photographs are reproduced here as plates IV and V.

Staying once more at the Sutherland Arms, Golspie, in Scotland, Nicholson wrestled with his holiday task. Queries were sent to Strickland Gibson, who had been recruited to the Bodleian as a boy, when Nicholson used to examine him in Greek and Latin literature.¹⁴ He now looked up awkward words in recent works of reference, the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1900-), Gradenwitz's *Laterculi Vocum Latinarum* (1904), and Holder's *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* (1896-1913), all of them still used by the present editors of *RIB*. He also sent a note of the heresiarch Arius, and his dates, on a postcard. Nicholson incorporated this all into his commentary on the new text. From Golspie he wrote to Haverfield, who replied by postcard: "Very many thanks for your letter and photographs. I confess the thing beats me, and I do not know anyone else in England who knows the Roman inscriptional cursive, except only Maunde Thompson" (Card dated 9 Sept(ember) [1904]). Thompson of course wrote the standard *Handbook of Greek and Latin Palaeography* (first edition, 1893), and was then Librarian of the British Museum; in October 1902, at the disastrous dinner which celebrated the Bodleian tercentenary, he confessed that in 1882 he had wanted to succeed Coxe as Bodley's Librarian (Manley [see n. 6], 89).

Nicholson returned to Oxford, spent a day in Bath studying the original, and felt it was "time to communicate the result". The Oxford University Press agreed to publish 250 copies for £8.13.6, and provided four sets of proofs of the photographs; but it regretted that the collotype was not a little more like the leaden original.¹⁵ Others thought the same. The Celtic scholar (Sir) John Rhys, writing to thank Nicholson for a copy, said with some ambiguity: "The reading is too hard for my eyes, but you seem to be on the right track and to have made out a story quite in context with the time to which you think it belongs". Rhys did not explicitly mention his own attempt on the tablet, and may not have known that Nicholson was aware of it.¹⁶ The anonymous reviewer in the *Manchester Guardian* (Nicholson suspected it was Haverfield) was not convinced: "The photographic facsimile clearly shows how difficult is the task of decipherment."¹⁷ And an American newspaper, *The*

¹⁴ For Gibson see above, n. 6. He ultimately became Sub-Librarian.

¹⁵ Horace Hart (Printer to the University) to Nicholson, 12 December 1904. The plates in *Vinisius to Nigra* are indeed poor, but enough was visible on them to start me on the course of reading which led to this paper. If they had been any better, Traube (see below, n. 20) would have anticipated me.

¹⁶ Rhys to Nicholson, 15 December 1904. When Nicholson approached Major Davis, the Bath city architect, in 1900, Davis said he must mean the tablet "which Professor Rhys spent a day in attempting to decipher (*sic*) and which he copied and said he had no doubt he would be able to manage later on, but I have never heard from him since" (Davis to Nicholson, 21 September 1900).

¹⁷ The reviewer cites Haverfield, but this may be disingenuous. Like Traube (see n. 20) this reviewer suspected that the object was really a *defixio*.

Nation, commented: "The little which can be deciphered from his collotype facsimile of the tablet suggests that no two scholars are likely to agree in transcribing the original."¹⁸

In spite of this difficulty, Nicholson's pamphlet entitled '*Vinisius to Nigra*': a 4th cent. Christian letter written in south Britain and discovered at Bath duly appeared on 20 December 1904. The publisher warned Nicholson that the title of the work would stand in its way with the unlearned, but copies were sent on sale or return to booksellers in Bath, Cheltenham and Bristol; 88 copies were sent out for review, and others were presented to friends and fellow-scholars. Haverfield told him he would return to the tablet with renewed curiosity, but was not yet convinced. But J.B. Bury, who was about to publish his *Life of St Patrick* (1905), replied that it seemed to be a wonderful piece of deciphering. The Librarian of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Henri Omont, wrote to congratulate him on a triumph of palaeography. Sir John Stainer, who collaborated with Nicholson in the publication of early music, exclaimed: "How you manage to make head or tail of such things passes my comprehension!" Sayce, who was wintering in Egypt as usual, sent his congratulations (it was a discovery to be proud of); a copy was left on the library table of the Athenaeum Club in London; and the editors of the *Expository Times* and the *Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Transactions* asked Nicholson for papers based on his decipherment.¹⁹

Nicholson found the script to be what he called a 'cursive' of mixed 'majuscules' and 'minuscules' with ligatures and contractions, for example *Xpm* for *Christum*. He added 'palaeographic notes' to his transcript, and pencilled notes also survive of letter-forms, but unfortunately he did not relate the script to anything in Maunde Thompson or other published examples of Roman cursive, and it is difficult to check his readings in detail. He allowed himself some latitude: "The same letter of the alphabet often has various shapes." He was also ready to conjecture, inevitably perhaps, given the state of the tablet: "It sometimes shows marks to be accidental which in a photograph might be mistaken for intentional cuts; and, on the other hand, lines doubtful in a photograph sometimes come out more clearly in the original" (*Vinisius to Nigra* [see n. 4], 4-5). Sayce had suspected a Celtic script, but what emerged was Latin, nothing less than "a complete 4th cent. Latin letter written by a Christian man in Britain to a Christian woman in Britain" (*ibid.*, 3). Here is Nicholson's transcript, in a form "intelligible to the ordinary reader":

[Obverse]

- [1] Nigrae Uini(s)iu(s)
- [2] (?Gratia) dni Ihev Xti & tvis. Mariti
- [3] uitia Uinisia (memo)ravit
- [4] Simili Vili. (?Tu uale in IHcu &) ðni ui

¹⁸ These reviews, and others used below, were collected by Nicholson and are now in Bodleian *MS Eng. misc. d. 71*.

¹⁹ These letters were all preserved by Nicholson and are now in Bodleian *MS Eng. misc. d. 71*. He acceded to the request from Shropshire: see W.G.D. Fletcher, "A fourth century Christian letter from (?) Uriconium", *Trans. Shropshire Arch. Soc.*, 3rd ser. v (1905), Miscellanea, 1-2. But nothing seems to have come of a Shropshire clergyman's idea of writing a short story based upon the decipherment, with the familiar academic proviso: "I may do so, if I can find the time" (the Rector of Neen Sollars to Nicholson, 5 January 1905).

- [5] (?tva i *contra*). Ni iustis arenis
 [6] (?vita abundius invidias).

[*Reverse*]

- [1] Inimicus Xti
 [2] Biliconum Viriconio misit ut
 [3] sumatis ovili & si canem
 [4] Arii. Tu lucem ora Xpm.
 [5] xps
 [6] Gerit A(p)ulicus has lānas.

And here is his translation:

[*Obverse*]

- [1] Vinisius to Nigra
 [2] (? The grace) of the Lord Jesus Christ to thine also. (Thy) husband's
 [3] faults Vinisia has related
 [4] to Vilius's Similis. (? Do thou be strong in Jesus and) with all thy strength
 [5] (? in thee go counter). Unless in just conflicts (*lit.* arenas)
 [6] (? avoid jealousies more abundantly).

[*Reverse*]

- [1] Christ's enemy
 [2] has sent Biliconus from Viriconium that
 [3] ye may take (him) in the sheepfold, although a dog
 [4] of Arius. Do thou pray Christ for light.
 [5] xps
 [6] A(p)ulicus carries these sheets.

Ten pages of commentary resolve any obscurities. Vinisius, a Christian of Wroxeter, is reassuring a woman at Bath called Nigra; he also warns her against a "dog of Arius" (a pun on Biliconus' Celtic name, which means 'good dog'), a heretic who is visiting Bath. This and other letters written on sheet lead, a material easily available in Bath and Wroxeter, are carried by Apulicus. And how did it enter the hot spring? It may have fallen out of Nigra's dress, but more likely it was an offering to the sacred spring, like the pins and coins of more recent times.

The *Spectator*, although it praised the world of pains Nicholson had taken, could not accept this last point: "Let us hope she had learnt better things". The *Church Times* too was worried at how the letter got into the spring, but concluded its favourable review with an unconscious prophecy: "Though Bath cannot give us papyri, yet perhaps it may some day produce other illuminating treasures from its fountains. It will be well if they find as competent an editor as Mr. Nicholson." Most reviews, which ranged from the *Cheltenham Examiner*, the *Antiquary*, the *Periodical* ("a little masterpiece of conjecture"), to the *Theologische Revue* and *Revue d' Histoire Ecclesiastique*, were content to summarise what Nicholson had written. *La Quinzaine* enthused (in French): "The climax of this scholar's holiday

was a satisfying transcription, which in its brevity gives us a glimpse of a delicious little intimate drama". But *The Scotsman* was mildly sceptical: "In deciphering such ancient writings there is not a little danger of error. Possibly the next interpreter may tell us that Vinisius and Vinisia, Nigra and her husband, Biliconus and Similis and Vilius, and Apulicus, the unfortunate postman who carried letters of lead from Viriconium to Aquae Sulis, are but shadows in the imagination of Bodley's Librarian. In the meantime we may accept his tale."

The American *Nation* was amused to find a male Christian writing to another man's wife about her husband's faults, and offering nothing warmer than ghostly consolation; Nicholson's decipherment would have to be checked against the original, since his reputation as a palaeographer did not make such verification unnecessary. The *Revue Archéologique* curtly rejected the decipherment as absurd, but the best review appeared in a German journal of shorthand. The reviewer was the brilliant Professor of Medieval Literature at the University of Munich, Ludwig Traube, who was uniquely qualified to judge Nicholson's palaeography and the contractions revealed by the new text. He wrote Nicholson a charming letter (in English), thanking him for *Vinisius to Nigra* "which I have read with great interest, without, however, being able to follow your lofty flights". In his published review he found Nicholson's contractions impossible, and exposed the implausibilities of his text with devastating good humour. This new evidence, wrote Traube, published with such wit and acumen, concerning the religious life of Roman Britain, its postal system, its baths, the language of the Celts and Romans, was like stumbling on a volume of the *Transactions of the Pickwick Club*.²⁰

The immediate reaction on the whole, however, was favourable. The Baths Committee at Bath, after discussing the problem raised by Alderman Moore of their old attendants ("After they had spent all their lives with them, they did not know what to do with them"), received Nicholson's pamphlet and passed a vote of thanks to him and Haverfield. Nicholson carefully kept all these newspaper cuttings and letters, even the correspondence from the Press which documented the fortunes of *Vinisius to Nigra*. By March 1905, 159 copies had been sold; but in the next six months, only 14 more. By the end of 1906, with the return of copies which had been sent out on sale or return, the only hope was to remainder what was left. In 1907 and 1908, Nicholson received formal statements that at the beginning of the year there were 125 copies left; and at the end of the year, 125 copies left. His only consolation was a letter from Clacton College, Clacton-on-Sea, enclosing the proofs of a recent lecture, with the writer's thanks: "I do this because in that lecture I made use of your remarkable account of the letter from Vinisius to Nigra. I think that learned workers are sometimes glad to see that humbler students are carrying torches, lit at the larger flames, into the darker parts of the groves of ignorance" (Harold Picton to Nicholson, 4 March 1909).

In fact the darkness descended. Nicholson's last years were spent on fantastic projects like Picture Biscuits (biscuits impressed with silhouettes of beauty-spots like Snowdon) and a revolutionary free newspaper. The *Daily News* told him that no one would bother to read

²⁰ Traube to Nicholson, 6 January 1905. *Archiv für Stenographie* 56 (1905), 201ff. Traube, like Haverfield (?) (see n. 17), thought it must be a *defixio*. Nicholson knew it had been found with a *defixio*, and resembled one physically; but he argued in *Vinisius to Nigra* (see n. 4), 12-14, that a lead tablet, whatever its text, was an acceptable offering to the goddess of a spring.

it. The British Admiralty did not even acknowledge his advice on how to protect battle-ships from aerial attack.²¹ After being a keen cyclist who used to insist that the Bodleian's boys should learn to swim (two of them died by drowning), Nicholson was now crippled by a failing heart. Under extreme pressure from his Curators, he accepted a year's leave of absence on 13 February 1912, a Tuesday; on the Sunday he was dead. The *Oxford Chronicle*, like many other newspapers, but with the benefit of personal knowledge, carried an obituary: "His tall bent figure, with shambling gait; his lined face, his eyes with lids often three-parts shut and pupils that never seemed to look at you; his straw hat, worn all the year round, his collar, always made of flannel long before it became the popular fashion, his old jacket, the curiously prominent cord of his eye-glasses—all made up the quaint figure which could be seen regularly, when he was in Oxford and in health, sitting at mid-day over a bun and a glass of milk in a certain shop in the High."²² Nicholson's last words were "Don't let them break up the Bodleian", and he must be remembered as a librarian, not as a man of letters, a scholar, or even an epigraphist. Haverfield, accompanied by the Tacitean scholar J.G.C. Anderson, had immediately checked *Vinisius to Nigra* against the original in Bath; they concluded that it was not necessarily inscribed at all, and that in any case Nicholson's decipherment was unacceptable.²³ R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright, the editors of *RIB*, have followed them in relegating Nicholson's tablet to the *falsa*, "having scribbles on it made in antiquity (probably by someone who could not write) and intended to pass for an inscription. The scribbles are not Roman writing, but persons unaccustomed to Roman inscriptions have taken the opposite view and have read and interpreted the supposed graffito in many mutually contradictory senses."²⁴ In spite of this, *Vinisius to Nigra* has retained a toehold in the literature. "The letter from Vinisius to Nigra is of interest chiefly because it represents, aside from Gildas, the only considerable relic of pre-Augustinian Christianity in Britain."²⁵ It has been offered, with reservations, as possible evidence "very much on its own" of Christianity at Wroxeter.²⁶ *Vinisius* even precedes St Patrick in the standard bibliography of Celtic Insular Latin.²⁷

²¹ Picture biscuits had been tried already, the manufacturers told him patiently. The other ideas were before their time, but it must be added that Nicholson was then on holiday (April 1909) without access to any description of the Dreadnought class. "I am even unaware whether it employs sail-power," he informed the Admiralty.

²² The shop was called Boffins: Nicholson was a prescient collector of printed ephemera, the Scrap Collection noted by Gibson (see n. 6), and the Bodleian still cherishes one of his lunchtime paper bags, deposited by him in 1889. This obituary, like others of Nicholson, was collected for Falconer Madan by a press-cuttings agency. It prompted a letter to the rival *Oxford Times* which described Nicholson as a knight-errant with the poet's impatience of qualification and compromise. "Anybody became his friend who really loved the Bodleian". (In the margin Madan has written "Stuff!")

²³ *Victoria County History: Somerset*, I, 283. *EE* IX, p. 515.

²⁴ *RIB* 2349*, citing *Vinisius to Nigra* as an example of this treatment.

²⁵ W.F. Bolton, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature* (1967), 12.

²⁶ Charles Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500* (1981), 126-7. "Celticists will raise their eyebrows at the mention of the author of *Keltic Researches*, etc. (1904) as an epigrapher."

²⁷ M. Lapidge and R. Sharpe, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature 400-1200* (1985), No. 1. Patrick is No. 2.

Vinisius has retained his precarious hold because the tablet itself has not been seen since 1939, when it was apparently deposited somewhere for safekeeping at the outbreak of war. In 1979, however, the original find-spot, the King's Bath, was investigated once more.²⁸ More than a hundred inscribed leaden tablets were found.²⁹ After reading these, it is possible to accept Nicholson's own invitation: "If, therefore, someone should come after me and, concentrating his attention with an unfagged brain and a mind free from prepossessions, on the less certain readings, should better the transcript here given, I trust the very great difficulty of my task will be sufficient excuse for me" (*Vinisius to Nigra* [see n. 4], 3-4).

It was unfortunate for Nicholson that the papyrologists Grenfell and Hunt, to whom he wanted to send copies of *Vinisius to Nigra*, were in Egypt.³⁰ Perhaps also he was too proud to consult his former rival, Maunde Thompson. It is easy, with hindsight, to criticise Nicholson, since we now have a much better idea of the New Roman Cursive (NRC) which replaced Old Roman Cursive (ORC) towards the end of the third century.³¹ Thompson's *Handbook*, however, contains no example of Roman handwriting from the third and fourth centuries; on the other hand, the Ravenna deed of 572 which he illustrates contains most of the letter-forms found in the Bath tablet. For it is clear from Nicholson's photographs, even if they do not preserve all the text, that he was right, and Haverfield was wrong: the tablet *was* inscribed. Nicholson made one mistake, palaeographically speaking, but a serious one. He tried to read the text upside down.³²

It can be seen from Nicholson's photographs (plates IV and V) that the tablet, like others from Bath inscribed in NRC, was cut from a thick sheet of lead or, more likely, tin/lead alloy (*Tab. Sulis* [see n. 29], 81-4). The knife-marks are visible on three edges; the fourth edge is uncut, and has the undulating outline and rounded profile which belonged to the edge of the original cast sheet. The tablet was therefore complete when found.³³ The parallel striations visible upon both surfaces are probably due to the use of an edged metal tool to smooth the writing-surface.³⁴ The surface is rough in places, as a result of being cast, and

²⁸ B. Cunliffe and P. Davenport, *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, I The Site* (1985), 21-3, 37-45.

²⁹ Published with commentary in B. Cunliffe (ed.), *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, II: The Finds from the Sacred Spring* (1988), 59 - 277; and separately as R.S.O. Tomlin, *Tabellae Sulis. Roman inscribed tablets of tin and lead from the Sacred Spring at Bath* (1988). This is cited below as *Tab. Sulis*.

³⁰ The Press offered to post copies to Cairo. Nicholson had been less successful with papyri: in 1894 he moistened a fragment of Ezekiel donated to the Bodleian by Grenfell, and part of the text was lost. Grenfell complained, and the Curators ordered that work on papyri be suspended. See Manley (n. 6), 188-9.

³¹ See, for example, A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *Vindolanda: the Latin Writing-Tablets* (1983), 51-71.

³² See figures 1 and 2 when inverted. Nicholson correctly assumed the text was written from left to right, but he failed to notice that his 'letters' were consistently cutting 'letters' to the right of them.

³³ The fragmentary letters of a 6 seem to overlap the cut edge, implying it was already there, but the photograph is not decisive on this point. Something has possibly been lost to the left, but on the other side b 5 is clearly the last line, which implies that the cut edge is original. The splits visible in the tablet, above *non* (b 1) and to the left of b 5, are probably due to flaws in the casting exacerbated by hammering out the cast sheet.

³⁴ These are mostly horizontal (long-axis), but there are vertical striations along the bottom of side (b). Two other NRC tablets from Bath (*Tab. Sulis* Nos. 98 and 104) were prepared in this way. The tool used for *Tab. Sulis* No. 104 was only 6 mm wide, and was probably the fishtail end of a stilus.

perhaps also from corrosion after the tablet was inscribed, but on the whole the tablet was in better condition than most of the tablets found in the Sacred Spring: this was in part because of its thickness (probably *c.* 2 mm) and because like other NRC tablets it was not rolled up.³⁵ However, there has been some loss of photographic definition in places, both because the tablet was not perfectly flat and so the necessary focus would have varied, and because the aperture of the camera lens was not stopped down enough to give sufficient depth of field. There was also the usual problem of lighting the tablet so as to contrast the lettering with its background; inevitably some deliberate strokes have been lost. Horizontal strokes, for instance, are liable to disappear in the striations. On the other hand, some strokes must be casual.³⁶ The original, were it ever rediscovered, would probably be entirely legible, but even from the photographs alone it is possible to recover much of the text.³⁷

The Script³⁸

The scribe wrote a bold but careless NRC. *a* is easy to confuse with *u*, the distinction being that *u* is made with a second vertical stroke (the *ductus* is seen most clearly in *fumi*) which in *n* is prolonged into a second loop. This can be well seen in *femina*, whereas in *puella* the distinction is almost non-existent. It is also interesting to compare the *u* of *puella* with the *u* of *vir*; the latter is of conventional form (as elsewhere in the text), whereas the *u* of *puella* is indistinguishable from *n*. The *u* of *puer* is intermediate between *u* and *n*. Fortunately these readings are certain because the words are formulaic, but such inconsistencies of letter-form cause problems elsewhere. *u* is also twice written above the line with a single stroke in the usual ORC way (see *qui* and *somnum*). *n* is made in the usual NRC way, but in *femina* it is made with three strokes like *iu*. *s* is usually of NRC form, but it is twice (in *si puella* (a 1) and *nis(i)* (a 4)) reduced to something much more like the ORC form. After *fumi* (b 5) there is no sign of any text and the surface seems to be uninscribed; this suggests that the text ended here, an impression reinforced by the elaborate *i* of *fumi*. This either means that side (a) and side (b) were written independently of each other, or that if the text is continuous (and unfortunately this point cannot be decided), it began on side (a) and finished on side (b).

³⁵ Some NRC tablets were not folded at all, others only once: *Tab. Sulis*, 84, and Nos. 94ff. Some of the Bath ORC tablets were written on thin alloy sheet (less than 1 mm thick) probably cast under pressure, which was easily rolled up or folded. But other ORC texts were inscribed on crude sheet (sometimes hammered flat), like those found at other sites in Britain, and were nonetheless folded. Nicholson's photographs indicate two folds, but it is not clear how complete these were; whether the tablet was folded twice upon itself, or simply bent by accident after being inscribed.

³⁶ For examples see the *u* of *involavit* (a 3), the second *n* of *innocent-* (a 4) and the *c* of *nec* (b 2). The latter (in b 2) seems to be an extension of the split in the edge above it. These apparent strokes are clearly unrelated to the letters underneath, but elsewhere (for example in (a) 5-6, in *dimittat[u]r* (b 1) and in the first half of (b) 3), it is not so easy to eliminate them.

³⁷ The text published here differs in detail from *Tab. Sulis* No. 100, where it first appeared. *Tab. Sulis* No. 98, which is cited several times, first appeared as *Britannia* 13 (1982), 404-5, No. 7.

³⁸ Tabulated in *Tab. Sulis*, 94.

The Text

TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
side (a)		side (a)
sipuersipuella	1	si puer si puella
siuirsi femina qui h . c		si vir si femina qui hoc
inuol[]uitnon eiremit		invol[a]vit non ei remit-
taur̄nisinn . csen	4	taur̄nis(i) innoc{s}en
tiamale		tiam ALE
(traces)		(traces)
side (b)		side (b)
nonillidimitta[]u .	1	non illi dimitta[t]ur
necsomnumnisiut		nec somnum nisi ut
eutiçiamodiumne		Eutiçia modium ne-
bulaemodiumveni	4	bulae modium veni-
at̄fumi vacat		at̄ fumi.

"Whether (they be) boy or girl, whether man or woman, forgiveness is not to be given to the person who has stolen this unless [...] innocence. Forgiveness is not to be given to him/her, nor shall he/she sleep, except on condition that Euticia (?) sell a bushel of cloud, a bushel of smoke."

Commentary³⁹

(a) 1-2. These and other pairs of mutually exclusive alternatives, usually introduced by *si ... si*, are common in 'curse tablet' texts from Britain and can be paralleled elsewhere; they are also a formula found in prayers and legal texts: see *Tab. Sulis*, 67-8. Their effect is quasi-legal, to ensure that the document applies to the thief, whoever he or she may be. The pronouns *ei* (a 3) and *illi* (b 1) may be masculine or feminine, and this ambiguity has been retained in the translation.

It is most unusual for a 'curse tablet' to begin so abruptly, without an address to the deity, for example, but *Tab. Sulis* No. 98 also begins with pairs of mutually exclusive alternatives.

2-3. *qui hoc invol[a]vit*: the 'vulgar' *involavit* is the verb regularly used in 'curse tablets' from Britain: see *Tab. Sulis*, 64. The object stolen is unfortunately not specified. This vagueness occurs elsewhere, for example in a text from Uley (*Britannia* 19 (1988), 485-7, No. 2), *quidquid pe(r)d(id)it*, and may be due to a literal-minded copying of a formulary.

3-4. *non ei remittatur*: the photograph does not allow certainty here. Another of Nicholson's photographs, in which the scratches were heightened by french chalk, suggests that *ei* was formed by two angular hooked strokes, the second ligatured to a long downward stroke (read as an incomplete *p* in *Tab. Sulis*). This looks probable, but the horizontal striations confuse the issue. After *ei* the surface is out of focus, but the visible traces suit the reading. In 4 there are fresh problems due to a cracked and damaged surface, and local over-illumination. Initial *t* is certain, followed by *a* or *u*, and then *c*, *e* or *t* ligatured to *u*. *s* cannot be read for *remittas* (compare *permittas*: see below); *t* however is possible if the cross-bar began further to the left than is

³⁹ This commentary is developed from *Tab. Sulis*, 236-7, but has been much improved by Danuta Shanzer. Two of her points have been made independently by Dr. J.N. Adams in *Britannia* 23 (1992) 18.

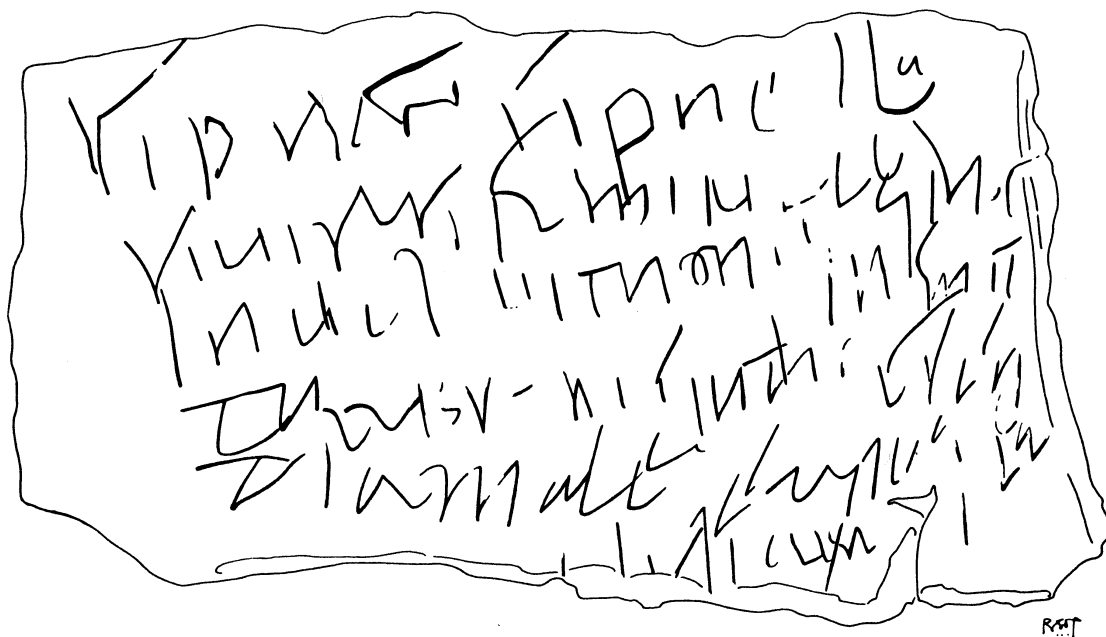


fig. 1, side (a), scale: ~ 2:1

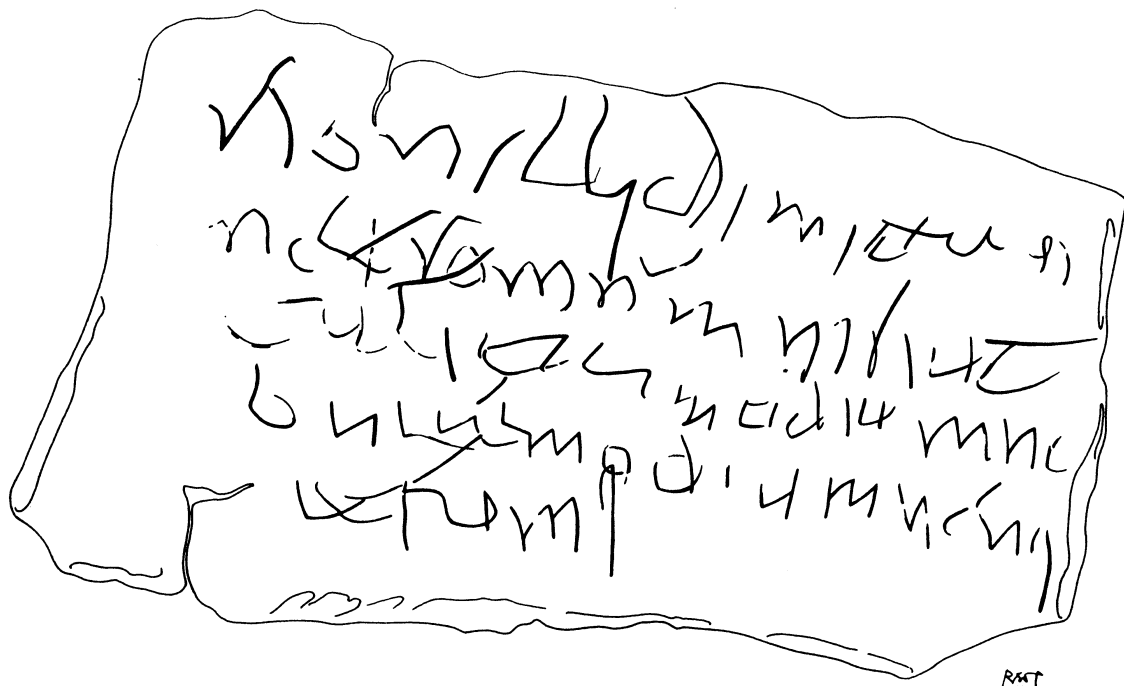


fig. 1, side (b), scale: ~ 2:1

clear from the photograph. The damage visible after *u*, which happened when the sheet was cast, may have forced the scribe to space out his letters; if so, it is possible to read an incomplete *r* here by itself.

non eī remittatur at first sight is a variant of the common formula *non* (not *ne*, but with the jussive subjunctive) *ei* or *illi permittas*: the god is not to allow the thief well-being unless (*nisi*) the stolen property is returned; see *Tab. Sulis*, 65-6. However, this is probably not so: see next note; and for the meaning of *remittere*, the note on *non illi dimittat[ur]* (b 1).

4-5. nis(i) innoc{s}entiam ALE: *i* was omitted by haplography, but why *s* was inserted is unclear; perhaps the scribe confused *innocens* and *innoxius*. Compare the word-play in Ammianus Marcellinus 29.3.9, *Innocentiam* (sc. the name of one of the emperor Valentinian's bears) ... *dimisit innoxiam*. Sense and the letter-sequence in 5 suggest that *innocentiam* should be read rather than *innocenti* (how can a thief can be 'innocent?') or *innocentia* (which introduces a new subject and an abstract one). The next three letters are legible, though *alle* could also be read; then there is apparently an unscripted space, followed by the rest of the text (5-6) out of focus and illegible. This is evidently a conditional clause, but it does not refer explicitly to the return of stolen property (compare *Tab. Sulis*, 65, s.v. *nisi*); the mention of 'innocence' may mean that the curse will be lifted if the thief can establish his innocence. This seems a contradiction in terms, but perhaps it was phrased as an impossibility (compare b 2-5) or perhaps he was thought to do so by returning what he had stolen. *Innocentiam?*] occurs in *Tab. Sulis* No. 66, but the context is equally obscure.

(b) 1. non illi dimittat[ur]: the initial *n* looks like *si*, but since the reading *illi* is certain, *si* followed by a word of two letters (the second almost certainly *n*) is impossible. After *a* there seems to be an indistinct *u* made like that in *fumi* (b 5) and a downstroke appropriate to *r*. *t* is rather cramped but possible, and the restoration is compelling given the parallelism with *non ei remittatur* (a 3-4).

Both phrases may have been suggested by the *non ei* (or *illi permittas*) formula already mentioned, which is not however found in the Bath NRC texts. It is probably more significant that *dimittere* and *remittere* are used in Christian texts in the non-Classical sense of 'forgive', notably in the Old Latin (pre-Vulgate) version of the Lord's Prayer: *et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*. This is the 'Itala' text of *Matthew* 6.12; the 'Afra' reads *remitte* and *remittimus*. (See A. Jülicher, *Itala. Das neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung*, 1 (1938), *Matthäus-Evangelium*). The translation adopts this sense of *remittere* / *dimittere*. It need not follow that the tablet was drafted by a Christian, only that this sense was current at the time. Compare *Tab. Sulis* No. 98, another NRC text, which refers explicitly to Christianity in its opening words *seu gens* or *gen(tili)s seu Ch(r)istianus* and may also contain a reminiscence of *Galatians* 3.28.

2. nec somnum: something has been omitted here, e.g. *permittas* or, since the deity of the spring seems not to be directly addressed in this text, *videat* (sc. the thief). The interdiction of 'sleep' contrasted with 'wakefulness' or 'well-being' (etc.) is a common formula: see for example *Tab. Sulis* No. 32, *nec permittas somnum nec sanitatem*, and in general *Tab. Sulis*, 65-6.

nisi ut: a post-Classical combination introducing a second conditional clause (compare a 4-6); not the return of stolen property (see *Tab. Sulis*, 65-6), but an impossible condition (see below) to reinforce the prohibition.

3. Eutiçia: the surface of the tablet was particularly rough here, and the photograph is out of focus; nor is it clear which strokes if any are casual. The first letter looks more like *t*, but *e* is possible. *c* seems to have been made with two attempts at the initial downstroke, which then continues in a long rightward curve. Below it is a bold diagonal stroke (read as *g* in *Tab. Sulis*), but it does not continue the downstroke and is therefore taken to be casual.

The feminine personal name *Euticia* is properly spelled *Eutychia*, but it is not attested in Britain in this form. Instead *Euticius* is found, in *Tab. Sulis* No. 98, as it happens, and *Euticianus* nearby at Cirencester (*Britannia* 3 (1972), 352, No. 2). So *Euticia* is a plausible name to find in fourth-century Bath, but it is not clear who *Euticia* was. She may have figured in a mythological or contemporary allusion lost on us, but more likely she was the suspected thief, condemned here to an impossible task. It does seem illogical to name her

after using the formulas above (a 1-2), but the author may have thought they were necessary if she were to be cursed in proper form.

3-5. *modium nebulae modium veniat fumi*: dotted letters apart, this reading seems unavoidable, and *fumi* the last word of the text. *at* is peculiar (Nicholson read it inverted as 'Xpm'): the scribe seems to have written *a* with his usual double loop, the loops however overlapping rather than being continuous; the cross-bar of *t* is clearly visible, but not the down-stroke, perhaps because it has been lost in the striations and surface roughness here.

The phrase is obscure. Syntactically *Euticia* must be the subject and *modium* (etc.) the object of *veniat*. The asyndeton of *modium nebulae* and *modium fumi* is difficult, but the second *modium* apparently defines or emphasises the first ("a bushel of cloud or smoke"). The author may have had a proverbial phrase in mind. Rufinus couples 'smoke' and 'cloud' in *Apol.* 2. 7 (Jerome throws dust in his readers' eyes): *tamquam fumos et nebulas lectoribus spargit*. Augustine dismisses an early achievement as 'smoke and wind': *Conf.* 1.17 (27), *nonne ecce illa omnia fumus et ventus?* This may be a reminiscence of *Wisdom of Solomon* 5.15 (14): the hope of the wicked is scattered like smoke in the wind, *tamquam fumus qui a vento diffusus est*. When Patrick adapted *Wisdom* 5.15 (14), he introduced the notion of 'cloud' as well: *Epist. ad Coroticum* 19 (101), *sicut nubes vel fumus qui utique vento dispergitur, ita peccatores fraudulentum a facie Domini peribunt*. There seems to be no significant difference here between the Vulgate text and that of the *Vetus Latina*: see W. Thiele (ed.), *Vetus Latina: Sapientia Salomonis* (1977-85), ad loc. So 'cloud' was contributed by Patrick himself, perhaps because it was coupled with 'smoke' in a proverbial phrase.

In view of the frequency of *fumum vendere* ("to sell something which does not materialise", *OCD* s.v. *fumus* 3; and see A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (1890), 149, No. 730), *veniat* in this context ought to come from *veneo* ('be for sale'), not *venio* ('come'). Neither verb of course governs a direct object, but *veneo* may be confused here with *vendo* (*veniat* < *vendat*). The grammarian Diomedes notes (ed. Keil, p. 368) that although *veneo* served as the passive of *vendo*, it was itself sometimes used in the passive, as if it were a synonym of *vendo*. (For this and what follows see Forcellini, *Lexicon* s.v. *veneo*; more fully K. Lachmann, "Venditur und perditur", *Rhein. Mus.* 3 (1845), 613-5.) *Veneo* in the active is even used as if it were *vendo* by Hilary of Poitiers, *In Matthaeum*, 10.18. The image of the two sparrows sold for a farthing (*nonne duo passeris asse veneunt?*) draws his attention to the vendors, sinful men who sell themselves: *qui igitur duos passeris asse veneunt, se ipsos peccato minimo veneunt* (etc.); compare *ibid.*, 21. 4, where *vendere* and *venire* are used interchangeably; and 27. 4, *vendentes* and *veneunt*.)

Euticia therefore has to sell 'cloud' and 'smoke' in measured quantities. The conceit of 'cloud' in measured quantities, in other words as worthless, is found in Plautus, *Poen.* 274 (the woman whose nightly services for a week are not worth a spoonful of cloud): *quous ego nebulae cyatho septem noctes non emam*. *Euticia* is not making false promises (although this would be a possible interpretation); she is being required to perform the impossible. The whole clause is an impossibility (an *adynaton*), a roundabout way of repeating a negative under the guise of making a concession. This bogus concession merely reinforces the curse; compare *Tab. Sulis* No. 45, where the victim is cursed with loss of eyesight or 'lifelong blindness' instead: *non illi permittas nec oculos nec sanitatem nisi caecitatem orbitatemque quoad vixerit*.

"The obscurity of the question demands boldness, fancy and sagacity", as Traube wrote (in English) to Nicholson (see above, n. 20). There is a disconcerting touch of Nicholson about the new text with its bushels of cloud and smoke, but it makes sense of a sort, and Traube's suspicion that the object was a *defixio* is amply vindicated. It contains formulas found in other Bath 'curse tablets' and can safely be classed with them. By coincidence it is also a fourth-century text, as Nicholson supposed, and it may even bear upon Christianity in Roman Britain: the author seems to have used 'Christian' terminology, as did the author of another Bath NRC text, *Tab. Sulis* No. 98. Both tablets are undoubtedly negative evidence

of Christianity, in that they prove that a pagan cult persisted in the fourth century at the spring of Sulis.

Like other protracted decipherments—Linear B, for example—this one leaves a certain sense of anticlimax. Nicholson's decipherment after all met a need which has not yet been satisfied: Christianity in Roman Britain is still short of written texts. Nicholson's dreamlike world is seductive too: consider this devout agnostic's closing words about the destiny of Biliconus the dog of Arius. "I find it hard to think of 'Good dog' as a bad Christian: his name alone should have been a perpetual monitor to him.⁴⁰ If anywhere beyond our ken there is a 'sheepfold' in which Nigra and her friends are gathered, I for one do not believe that the Shepherd has shut out Biliconus." This may well be so. The place for Biliconus and his enemies is not Heaven, nor Hell, but the limbo they share with other agreeable fictions of Roman Britain. Let it be said of *Vinisius to Nigra*, as the inventor of Richard of Cirencester's *Description of Britain* wrote of his own creation: "It contains many fragments of a better time, which would now in vain be sought for elsewhere."⁴¹

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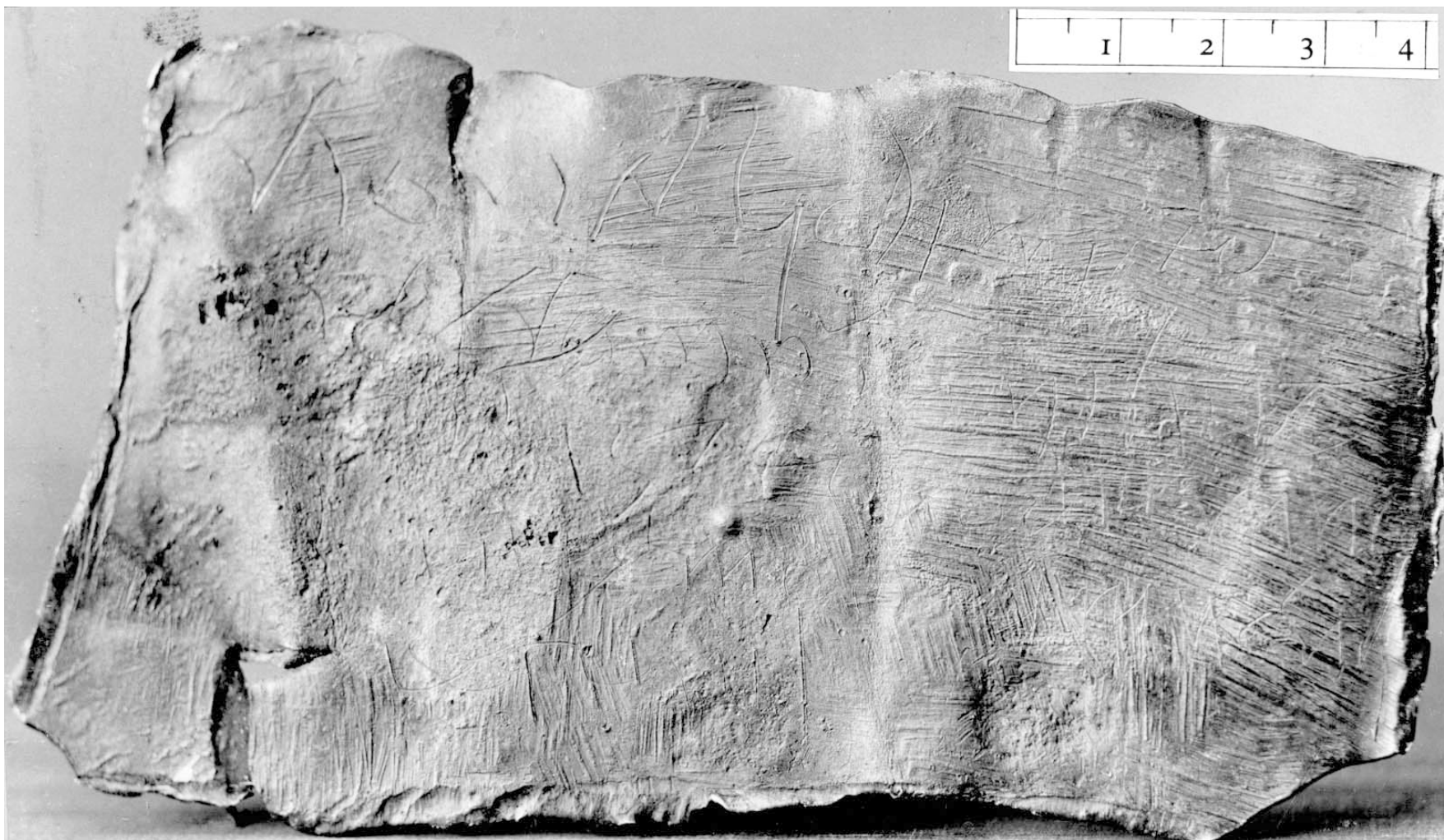
R.S.O. Tomlin

⁴⁰ In 1889 a reader used to leave his big black dog lying on the mat outside the library, but Nicholson was not worried by the thought of other readers getting bitten, "the Librarian naturally sympathising with the intelligent dog", as Gibson (see n. 6), 140, remarks.

⁴¹ Charles Bertram, quoted in the 1809 (London) edition of *The Description of Britain translated from Richard of Cirencester*, p. xxiii.



Bodleian Library, Ms.Eng.Misc. d.71 fol.193: Magische Bleitafel, Seite (a), aus Nachlaß E.W.B. Nicholson



Bodleian Library, Ms.Eng.Misc. d.71 fol.194: Magische Bleitafel, Seite (b), aus Nachlaß E.W.B.Nicholson