

Loosely translated as, 'I too am present in Arcadia', the Roman poet Virgil wrote this in his Eclogues. There are various interpretations of his meaning, 'I' being death and our use of identity tags is one used by both Roman and today's military to identify people.

Our identity tags were embossed on metal and completed by hundreds of visitors to the museum over half term, summer 2022 working with artist Karen MacDougall, assisted by Clare Forsythe, members of GNM staff and museum volunteers. The installation remains at the museum until the end of January.

These identity tags, made by today's Frontier Voices, are sharing the gallery with artefacts from the Romans who inhabited the area around Hadrian's Wall 1900 years ago. This creates a tangible link between past and present visitors to the Roman Frontier through sharing the same physical space and eventual death.

The concept for the artwork is a drawing of columns. One of the really exciting things about this museum is the number of real artefacts from the length of Hadrian's Wall. To create the column capital some of the Roman altars on display were explored and motifs used to create the design which was then printed onto board. Using the trees already present in the gallery, this gave a perfect framework for the roman red lines and column heads with the identity tags adding shiny metal scales to the space not unlike the lorica segmentata of the armour.

Frontier Voices: Et in Arcadia Ego 2 @ The Sill

The Sill is the National Landscape Discovery Centre and our installation has been adapted. Hundreds of participants in workshops along the Wall have been invited to make an identity leaf. The column concept has remained, but the capitals are now based on one of the altars from the Mithraeum at Carrawburgh, not far from the Sill.

