

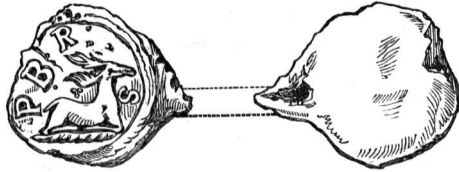
## ON ROMAN LEADEN SEALS.

(*A Letter addressed to Mr. Price.*)

Temple Place, Strood,  
August 7, 1875.

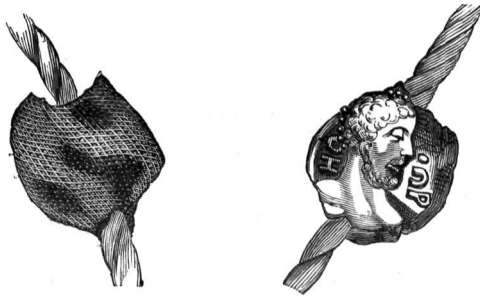
MY DEAR PRICE,

Mr. J. T. Irvine having very kindly made me a drawing of a Roman leaden seal of a new type, found in Somersetshire, I place it at the disposal of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society for comparison with those from Brough, examples of which have appeared in its Transactions.\* It was discovered among the ruins of Roman buildings below the south side of Combe Down, near Bath; and is now in Mr. Irvine's possession. The buildings and the objects found among them are described by the Rev. Prebendary Scarth, in his "Aquæ Solis," or "Notices of Ancient Bath," p. 115 to p. 118.



I also send you sketches I have made of the seals referred to when I first gave a plate of those found at Brough-upon-Stanmore, in the third volume of my "Collectanea Antiqua." Of these there are nine, from the same mould, with the strings yet attached. Although they were discovered when the Greek mummy was unrolled, it is not to be supposed they were applied for sealing the coverings; but they seem to have been previously used for some kind of merchandise; and were taken, for the sake of the cords, to help fasten the bandages of the mummy. It will be at once apparent that they are used precisely in

\* See Proceedings Evening Meetings London and Middlesex Archæological Society, vol. i., paper by Henry C. Coote, F.S.A. on "Roman Military Signacula found in Britain," page 120.



the same manner as those from Brough and other places, as I have described the process. From the character of the head these seals may be referred to the time of the Antonines, and so probably may be that which is detached. The lettering KOIIPHC, *Copres*, may probably indicate the merchant; and so may the letters on the single specimen. I have seen no reason whatever to doubt



the correctness of my opinion as regards the whole of these very interesting seals. I believe they were all used for merchandise or goods of various kinds as a mark or stamp of authentication, precisely as the *bullæ* were affixed to the ordinances of the Popes; the marks to cloth in the Middle Ages; and

indeed the leaden seals in Italy and France at the present day. It is interesting to trace the custom from such remote times in principle unchanged.

I must refer our colleagues to the three plates I have engraved in the "Collectanea Antiqua," (one of which has appeared in the Transactions), and to the two very beautiful examples from Richborough with the head and name of Constantine as upon the coins,\* in order to form a full notion of the variety and classes of these seals; for classified I think they may be. That from Combe Down may be compared with fig. 2, pl. xxxii. vol. iii. "Col. Ant." from Felixstowe, bearing the figure of an ox or bull with the letters P B. The former is inscribed P B R S. It may possibly mean *Plumbum BRitannicum Signatum*; and we may suppose it to have been affixed to native lead.

Some of the Brough seals have the marks of legions and cohorts;

\* Collectanea Antiqua, vol. vi. p. 120.

and these I suggest are indicative of property belonging to those bodies, to which they were appended. But, as I have before remarked, it is not so easy to assign a reason for the accumulation of so many, and of types so various, at one place. The most feasible that occurs to me is that they had all been collected by some *plu barius* to be melted. The station *Verteræ*, represented by Brough-under-Stanmore, has been unfortunate in having no explorer; no one, so far as I can learn, having ever felt much interest in it; and it is said that large quantities of these interesting seals have been consigned to the melting-pot. It stands almost alone among the stations in the North in not contributing a single inscription to Dr. Bruce's "Lapidarium Septentrionale," just published.

Believe me, my dear Price,

Yours very truly,

C. ROACH SMITH.

To JOHN EDWARD PRICE, Esq., F.S.A., &c.  
Hon. Sec. Lond. and Midd. Arch. Soc.

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