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**A Roman Pig of Lead found at Syde, Glos**

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*Note*

The axe was given to Mrs M.U. Jones by Mr A.J. Baxter during the course of her excavations in the Lechlade area, and has remained with the finds from that work until recently when post-excavation work began under the auspices of the Oxford Archaeological Unit. Since the axe was not recovered from an excavated area it was decided to publish it separately. The author is grateful to Mrs M.U. Jones and Mr A.J. Baxter for information regarding the finding of the axe, and for the opportunity to prepare this report. The axe will be deposited in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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## A ROMAN PIG OF LEAD FOUND AT SYDE, GLOS

This note serves to draw together the references for the discovery of a Roman lead pig at Syde in 1962 (*J Roman Stud* 53, 1963, 162 and pl. 17) and to comment upon its significance. The pig (FIG. 2) is preserved in the collections of the Corinium Museum at Cirencester and is available for study by appointment (accn. no. A327).

The history of the Mendip lead industry has been fully discussed elsewhere (Elkington 1970, 24–30 and 1976), with a further recent discussion and reappraisal as to dating evidence (Whittick 1982). The Syde pig is the only example of an ingot known to have been found in Gloucestershire and is one of ten such products of the Mendip mines known to date from the reign of Vespasian (AD 69–79). Its specifications are: weight: 174lb (78.9 kg); height: 102 mm; base: 584 × 168 mm; face: 520 × 76 mm. An analysis by spectroscopy in 1962–3 (courtesy of G. Clement Whittick and Dr F.R. Tylecote) revealed a silver content of 0.00324 per cent to the ton avoirdupois of lead, copper 0.005 per cent, and antimony not detected.

The inscription (FIG. 2) reads (courtesy of R.P. Wright, formerly Reader in Epigraphy, University of Durham):

face: (moulded)	Imp(eratore) Vesp(asiano) Aug(usto) VIII (plumbum) Brit(annicum) ex ar(gentariis)
left end: (impressed five times)	C(aius) P(ublius) C(. . .)

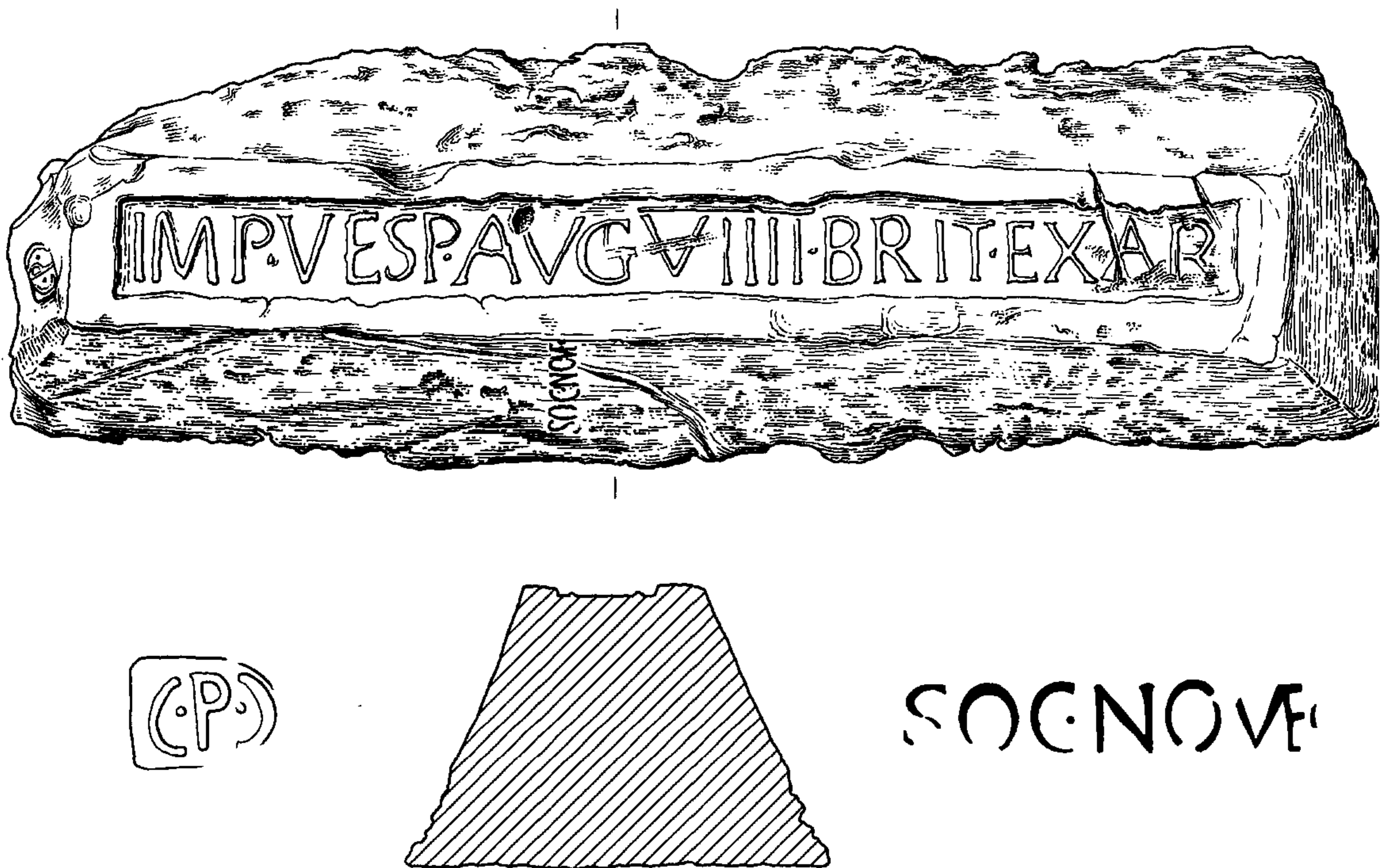


FIG. 2 Roman lead pig from Syde. Scale 1:4 (stamp enlargements at 1:2). Drawn by N. Griffiths.

front:  
(incuse)

Soc(ietatis) Nov(a)ec

which may be translated as:

'(Cast) while the Emperor Vespasian Augustus was consul for the ninth time; British lead from the lead-silver works'

'Gaius Publius C(. . .) (produced this)'

'(product of) the Novaec Company'

The mines were an Imperial monopoly and it was usual on the Mendips for the Emperor's name to be inscribed on the face of the pig. The recorded examples number as follows: Claudius (AD 49): 2; Nero (54–68): 2; Vespasian (69–79): 10; Hadrian (117–138): 2; Antoninus Pius (139–161): 3; Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (164–9): 4; Septimius Severus (195–211): 1; and of unknown date: 3 (total of 27). The Imperial title (consul for the ninth time) dates this pig to AD 79, the last year of Vespasian's reign. By this time the Mendip products were being exported via Gaul to places as far away as Pompeii where a lead cistern, most probably from the Mendips, was buried in the eruption of Vesuvius in that year (Elkington 1976, 188). The find spot of two of the ten Vespasianic pigs supports this point; these were found in the harbour at Clausentum (Bitterne, Southampton) whence they were presumably being shipped to Gaul for onward transport (Elkington 1976, 231–2, nos. 9 and 10). The other examples all come from the Mendip area, three

at Charterhouse – the centre of mining activity – and four from Green Ore nearby (Elkington 1976, 232–3, nos. 11–13 and 14–17; see also Palmer and Ashworth 1957).

The name Gaius Publius C. . . has been impressed no less than five times into the end of the pig; he was probably the official on the Mendips acting on behalf of the Procurator in charge of the mines, to whose supervision fell the checking and controlling of all lead and silver products from the area. He is not otherwise recorded and may not have aspired to the status of a lessee in his own right, as may have been the case with officials elsewhere (Cockerton 1959; Elkington 1976, 186–7). Further, the Syde example is particularly interesting in that it also contains the reference to the Novaec company, an example of the apparently fairly common practice of granting a mining lease to *socii*, companies of two or more partners. Interestingly enough, this same company is also found on the two Clausentum pigs already noted to be of similar date. In Britain, one other company is known, the *Societas Lutudarensis* in Derbyshire, and only the discovery of further products can add to our knowledge of these working arrangements.

As to the weight of the Syde pig, it should be noted that the weight range of examples from Britain varies from 127–223 lbs (58 – 90 kg) with no significant number of pigs at any one weight. Of the dated parallels already noted from Vespasian's reign, the weights of two are not recorded and the remaining seven vary between 171 lbs and 189 lbs.

The pig was found on 5 October 1962 during ploughing operations on Manor Farm, Syde, the property of Major S.P.H. Simonds, and was not only promptly reported to the Corinium Museum at Cirencester but subsequently donated for preservation. Its findspot was recorded as close to the circular copse known as The Clump, in the field ('Pit Piece') immediately to the south-west (unfortunately an unspecified distance from the edge of the copse and therefore at approx. SO 955117). The RCHM survey (1976, 116) records a Romano-British settlement in this area at the western edge of a plateau and immediately below the 900 ft contour. Other than the pig, only a scatter of pottery from 1st to 4th centuries in date has been found and little can be added without further site investigation.

It remains to wonder how the county's only recorded example to date of a lead pig from the Mendip mines came to be deposited high on the Cotswold hills. It must be assumed that the proximity of the findspot (?settlement) some 600 yards to the west of Ermin Street provides the strongest clue and that the pig was in transit elsewhere along the Roman road network when it came to a rest – presumably intended to be temporary – at Syde.

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