The Cincinnati Numismatist

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August 2018



The next meeting of the Cincinnati Numismatic Association will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, August 10th, at Coins +, located at 225 East 6th Street in downtown Cincinnati. The building is closed in the evenings so members need to arrive between 7:00 and 7:30. If you arrive later than 7:30, a phone number that you can call will be listed on the door. There will also be a Monday night meeting on the 20th at the Groesbeck branch of the library. Doors open at 6:30.

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The Mystery of Maine's Viking Penny The coin is the real deal, but how did it get all the way from Norway?

By Sarah Laskow This article originally appeared at AtlasObscura.com. © Atlas Obscura Inc., reprinted by special permission.

The story that Guy Mellgren told about the curious silver coin began on the shores of Maine, where he met a stranger named Goddard. In the fall of 1956, Mellgren and Ed Runge, a pair of ama-

teur archaeologists, had come in search of the most

basic of coastal dig sites—a shell middenwhen they happened onto a more unusual discovery. Goddard had invited them to explore his

shoreline property, and there, on a natural terrace



with little help from professional archaeologists. In the second summer, they produced the coin.

For two decades, based on an analysis by a friend in a numismatics club, Mellgren described it as a coin mint-



ed in 12thcentury England, and no one questioned that identification. The discoverv should have been noteworthythere's no good explanation for how a medieval

The Norse coin found at the Goddard site. Courtesy of The Maine State Museum, MSM 72.73.1

English coin could have crossed the Atlantic-but Mellgren never sought wider attention for the find. It was a curiosity to show off to friends and his son's classmates, until, in 1978, a scrappy regional bulletin published a picture of the coin

2018 Meetings

about eight feet above the high tide line,

they found stone chips, knives, and fire

pits, along with an abundance of other

unexpected artifacts. Each summer for

turned to excavate the "Goddard Site,"

many years, Mellgren and Runge re-

<u>Date</u>			Presenter	Ī
June	29th	Friday	John Roberts	٢
July	13th	Friday	Ext. Show & Tell	٢
August	l Oth	Friday	Jeff Starck	Ľ
August	20th	Monday!	Ext. Show & Tell	
Septembe	er 14th	Friday	Open	J
October	l 2th	Friday	Open	F

<u>Date</u>			Presenter
November	9th	Friday	Michael Sullivan
November	26th	Monday!	Ext. Show & Tell
December	l 4th		Annual Charity Christmas Dinner
January	l I th	Friday	Open
February	8th	Friday	Open

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and an article titled, "Were the English the First to Discover America?"

That picture found its way to a well-known London dealer, who recognized at once that the coin could not have come from England. Two weeks after Mellgren died, the coin's reidentification swept into the news. It was a Norse penny, made between 1065 and 1093—evidence for Viking contact with North America centuries before Columbus.

All of a sudden, experts from around the world began taking a careful look at the details of Mellgren's story. Of many objects purported to prove a Viking presence in North America, only the artifacts painstakingly excavated at L'Anse aux Meadows, in Newfoundland, have stood up to investigation. The rest—the Beardmore relics, the Vinland Map, the notorious Kensington Rune Stone—are all considered hoaxes.

Since 1978, no one has questioned that the Mellgren coin is an authentic Norse penny, made in medieval Scandinavia. But 60 years after Mellgren's find, archaeologists and numismatic experts are still asking how in the world this small, worn coin got to Maine.



The coast of Mount Desert Island, not far from the Goddard Site. LEE COURSEY/CC BY 2.0

On February 6, 1979, Kolbjørn Skaare, a Norwegian numismatist with a tall, wide forehead, walked into the Maine State Museum to see the coin. Just a few years earlier, he had published Coins and Coinage in Viking-Age Norway, a doctoral thesis that grew from the decade-plus he had spent as a keeper at the University of Oslo's Coin Cabinet. The first specialist to examine the coin in person, he had just a day with it before Bruce J. Bourque, the museum's lead archaeologist, had to address the national press.

Skaare saw "a dark-grey, fragmentary piece," he later wrote. It had not been found whole, and the coin had continued to shed tiny bits since it was first weighed. A little less than two-thirds of an inch in diameter, it had a cross on one side, with two horizontal lines, and on the other side "an animal-like figure in a rather barbarous design," with a curved throat and hair like a horse's mane. In his opinion, it was an authentic Norwegian penny from someone playing a trick on them must have been able to obtain a medieval Norse coin.

Medieval Norse coins aren't an unheard-of rarity. In 1879, farmers in a potato field in Gressli, Norway, had discovered a hoard containing 2,301 coins from the reign of Olaf the Peaceful, the period Mellgren's penny dated to. Many of those coins were exact duplicates of each other, and the University of Oslo had sold off the extras between the 1880s and the 1920s.

But the Mellgren coin isn't quite like the ones from the Gressli hoard, which have been described as looking like they're newly minted. The Maine penny was much more worn, and not an exact duplicate of any coin in the university's collection. In the 1970s, many experts were inclined to believe the coin was a genuine discovery.



Coins from the Gressli hoard. ÅGE HOJEM/NTNU VITENSKAPSMUSEET/CC BY 2.0

the second half of the 11th century.

The mystery centered on its journey from Norway to Maine. It was possible to imagine, for example, that it had traveled through the hands of traders, from farther up the Atlantic coast, where Norse explorer Leif Eriksson was known to have built a winter camp. If the coin had come to America in the more recent decades, the hoaxer presumably Mellgren, Runge, or Edmund Carpenter disagreed. Carpenter was an anthropologist and archaeologist known for his films of remote tribal life from the Arctic Circle to Papua New Guinea, and his work at the University of Toronto with the media thinker Marshall McLuhan. From the 1970s on, Carpenter lived as a sort of gentleman intellectual, teaching intermittently and supporting other filmmakers through the Rock Foundation, a charity set up by his wife. He couldn't believe the credulousness of his colleagues about the Norse penny. The year Mellgren had found the coin, 1957, was "a bumper year for Viking fakes," Carpenter wrote in a 2003 article about the coin, published by the Rock Foundation. The year before, Hjalmar Holand, one of the most insistent defenders of the widely debunked Kensington Rune Stone, had published Explorations of Ameried showing around the Vinland map, said to be a 15th-century document of the Vikings' full knowledge of the globe, but quickly suspected to be a fake. In Holand's book, he described the Viking Thorwald Eriksson catching sight of Maine's Mount Desert Island—just across the bay from the Goddard Site.

"Am I alone in finding such a coincidence remarkable?" Carpenter wrote.



The Kensington Rune Stone. LOUISE LUND LARSEN/PUBLIC DOMAIN

ca Before Columbus. The same year of Mellgren's find, writer Frederick J. Pohl* published Vikings on Cape Cod, and a London book dealer start-

Mellgren, he noted, in addition to his archaeological hobby, collected coins and worked parttime at an auction house, which might have given him access to a Norse coin, or at least connections to people who could procure one. Plus Mellgren had an interest in pre-Columbian contact and, like so many of the known Viking hoaxers, Scandinavian roots. He fit the profile.

The idea that Vikings reached the Americas before Columbus goes back to Icelandic sagas that describe journeys west from Greenland to a lush land of grass and grapes. For centuries these were considered only stories to all but a handful of enthusiasts, among them 19thcentury Scandinavians who settled in America. Fiercely proud, they relied on these stories to defend their claim to their new country, often in the face of discrimination and scorn from earlier, Anglo-Saxon migrants. They believed the old sagas to be true and wanted evidence to prove it. In 1960, Helge Instad and Anne Stine discovered the archaeological site at L'Anse aux Meadows, and over years of excavations produced small artifacts—a pin, a whorl, a whetstone-that tied the site to Vikings. By the time experts identified Mellgren's penny as Norse, archaeological evidence had already given those tales of ocean-crossing Vikings a toehold in North America.

In hoaxes and other overinterpreted archaeological finds, usually "the hopes outrun the evidence from the very start," writes archaeologist Stephen Williams in Fantastic Archaeology. But in this case, Mellgren didn't try to attract attention to the penny. Whatever hopes he had about the significance of his find, he kept them quiet.

"It's reasonable to suspect that the Norse penny was a plant," says Bourque, who only recently stepped down as the Maine State Museum's chief archaeologist. "The balance of the evidence argues it's an honest find."

Just this past November, in the Journal of the North Atlantic, Svein H. Gullbekk, a renowned numismatist at the University of Oslo and a former student of the coin expert Skaare, took a closer look at the possibility that the coin had come from the Gressli hoard or another notable assemblage of Viking coins. "The pennies of this type, class N. are rare by any standard," he says. In the paper, he notes that of the hundreds of Gressli coins sold, only 41 were class N pennies, characterized by the orientation of the head design, and all were known from the university's collection, unlike Mellgren's. Other major finds contained no pennies of this type, and the class N pennies from smaller finds can all be accounted for.

"In hoaxes and other overinterpreted archaeological finds, usually "the hopes outrun the evidence from the very start." Based on this process of elimination, "the Norse penny cannot have originated from any recorded Norwegian hoard or single find," Gullbekk writes. In his view, the circumstantial evidence points to it being a genuine find (even if it does not establish how the coin got there to be found).

There's unpublished evidence, too, that helps shore up the case. More than a decade ago, Bourque sent the coin for Raman spectroscopy, which, he says, "demonstrated fairly strongly that the coin lay in a horizontal position in the site for a very long time indeed." The test showed that the corrosion on the coin was consistent with water trickling down around the metal over time, and with other signs of its having been buried for centuries. The wear and tear on the penny, this shows, had not been faked.

After Mellgren's coin was identified as Norse, the Maine State Museum sent a team of professional archaeologists to the Goddard Site to better understand the context the coin had come from. While no other Norse artifact has ever been found there, the site did hold surprisesartifacts attesting to an explosion of trade contact between Native American groups, stretching from the eastern Great Lakes up to Labrador. At the same time the coin shows up, for instance, archery first appears in the region.

"The site has an unspeakably dense concentration of archers," says Bourque. Excavations have turned up thousands of arrowheads, along with mounds of pottery sherds and stones that come from hundreds of miles away. "It's off the charts," he says. "The real mystery is—what the hell is going on at the site at the time?"

To Bourque, the coin is a clue in this other mystery. All sorts of objects that seem out of place in 12th-century Maine show up in this one spot, as if it were the site of a pre-Columbian World's Fair for northeastern coastal America, from Lake Erie to Newfoundland. Unlike the sagas—all story, little evidence this site is full of interesting evidence in search of a story.

* This story was updated to clarify that Frederick J. Pohl, the writer of Vikings on Cape Cod is not sci-fi writer Frederik Pohl.

Numenclature: Antoninianus

Numismatic definitions

Antoninianus an to nin i a nus / antə ninē ānəs

plural an to nin i a ni (an-tuh-ninee-ey-nahy) / œn tə nın i eı naı/.

Noun

An ancient Roman coin originally worth two denarii.

A roman coin first from silver, later a mix of silver and other materials issued by the roman emperor Marinus Aurelius Antonius, also known as Caracalla in 214 AD it was a double dinarius between 4.7 and 5.3 grams. The coin is easy to recognize by the radiate crown around the head of the emperor.

Speculatively named after an Antoninus mentioned in the Augustan History, after whom some silver coins were said to be named. However, it





is not known what the antoninianus was called in antiquity.

ANA Staff Profile Barbara Gregory

By Phil Vitale

Barbara Gregory developed a passion for writing, editing and publishing while growing up in Upstate New York. She expanded her skills and horizons with each successive step in her educational ladder. In her first real job at the University of Rochester, she edited and designed brochures, created charts, and developed graphs for medical journals.



Barbara came to Colorado Springs in 1980 armed with a newly minted English degree from Alfred University and her publishing skills (and I think a fair amount of courage). She found work right away and made the job decision that would set the course of her life when she accepted a position as a part-time edi-



torial assistant for The Numismatist, the ANA's official publication. In 1988 she became the editor. I asked Barbara how her young self was able to climb the position ladder so quickly. In addition to being at the right place at the right time, she cites her ability to envision all aspects of the publication, working hard, and taking pride in everything she does. The result is evident in every issue that comes out.

Barbara is responsible for transforming The Numismatist into the great publication it is today. She brought in-house typesetting to the operation. In the 1990s she was responsible for introducing scanners to capture text electronically and Apple MacIntosh with desktop publishing technology. Most notable today is the 2002 decision to enlarge the magazine's format and use four-color throughout. Perhaps the most notable accomplishment is a publication that provides the members of our hobby, both experts and newcomers, a wide array of excellent articles

that educate and entertain. Barbara was the recipient of the Numismatic Literary Guild's Clemy award in 2006 recognizing outstanding accomplishment in numismatic writing.

The young Miss Gregory collected coins, butterflies and sea shells. While she no longer pursues cents and nickels, she does fill those extra minutes away from the job with various endeavors. Barbara and Steve, her husband of 16 years, have a continuing project in the restoration and renovation of a 113-year-old American four-square house in downtown Colorado Springs. She also collects movie tokens and Jacques Wiener's 19th-century "Great Cathedrals of Europe" medal series.

Barbara is going strong to extend her 37-year career at the ANA. She continues to enrich us every month by her uncompromising efforts at The Numismatist. Someday she will retire, but when that happens you can put money on her keeping her hand in the publication business.



Nerdy Notes Slovenia 1997 50 Tolarjev

By Kirsten Lynch

Baron Jurij Bartolomej Vega (March 23, 1754 - September 26, 1802) was a Slovene mathematician, physicist and artillery officer and is shown on the front of this Nerdy Note. His major work was Thesaurus Logarithmorum Completus (Treasury of all Logarithms) that was first published 1794 in Leipzig. The 90th edition of the Thesaurus Logarithmorum Completus was published in 1924. Vega's logarithmic tables, with logarithms to 10 decimal places, was found in the Museum of Carl Friedrich Gauss in Göttingen. Gauss used Vega's work frequently and found some of Vega's errors in the calculations of the range of numbers, of which there are more than a million.

On August 20, 1789 Vega achieved a world record when he calculated pi to 140 places. Vega retained his record for 52 years until 1841 and his method is mentioned still today.

Also shown on the front of the note are mathematical designs that represent the logarithms that Vega calculated.

The back of the note shows a representation of the solar system as Vega was also known to do work in astronomy.

The hand engraved portrait of the mathematician Jurij Vega is the main motif on the front of the banknote. The profile silhouette filled up with microwriting completes the image. In the left hand area of the banknote the motif of the drawing from Vega's Treatise on the Sphere is printed by the intaglio method. The watermark bears the face of Jurij Vega.



Club News

The July meeting had no speaker and instead featured an extended show and tell and a world coin identification session. Here's how it works. Interested club members select a foreign coin of their choosing from a container. They must enclose it in a 2 x 2, identify the coin by country, date, denomination and KM number, label it and then it is theirs to keep and they can repeat the process as many times as they like. Krause catalogs are available as are various sizes of 2 x 2s and flat cinch staplers. This is the second time we have had the activity at a meeting and based on it's popularity we will have it again. The August meeting of the Cincinnati Numismatic Association will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Friday the 10th. This month our speaker will be Jeff Starck. Jeff's topic was not available at the time this newsletter was printed but it is sure to be interesting.

Here is Jeff's biography from Coin World. "Jeff is a senior editor and was Coin World's 2003 Margo Russell intern and joined the staff in 2004. Jeff has been a collector since childhood and fondly remembers the challenges of completing Whitman folders by pulling coins from circulation and searching rolls from the bank. His current collecting interest focuses on Missouri-related numismatics and exonumia. He is the primary writer for the World Coins section in the monthly Special Edition and is responsible for Coin World's coverage of world coins and weekly International page. He graduated with a bachelor of arts degree from Webster University in St. Louis where he was editor-in-chief of its weekly student newspaper."

There will also be a Monday night meeting on the 20th at the Groesbeck branch of the library. Doors open at 6:30.

We will be continuing the attendance award at both meetings! Remember, at every meeting everyone who attends will receive a numbered ticket. At the end of the night one ticket will be drawn at random and the member with that number will be able to choose from a variety of prizes.



We are looking for presenters for meetings for 2018 and 2019. Share your passion with the club! Every numismatic subject can make a good presentation.

A Blast From The Past, 1994

BIG COIN SHOW! 11th Annual Greater Cincinnati Numismatic Exposition DRAWBRIDGE (Exit #186 No. KY)

September 16-18th 10-6 Fri-Sat; 10-4 Sunday * 100 Tables & 200 Dealers * Collector & Certified

Coins for All Interests

Unreserved AUCTION Saturday 7 p.m.

Large consignment of Early Gold & Type; complete sets from Cents to Dollars. Pre-registration required to bid in the auction!

PAUL PADGET, Chairman 821-2143

McDonald's Issues MacCoin to celebrate Big Mac's 50th anniversary

Beginning at the lunch rush on August 2nd, Big Mac fans received a "MacCoin" when they ordered a Big Mac at 14,000 participating restaurants across the United States. McDonald's made the announcement on July 29th.

The coin can be redeemed



for another Big Mac throughout the rest of 2018.

McDonald's sold 1.3 billion Big Macs last year, according to the chain.

MacCoins will feature five

unique designs, each representing a decade of the Big Mac. The highlights:

• The '70s: Showcasing the decade's flower power



•The '80s: Alluding to pop art

•The '90s: Defined by bold, abstract shapes

•The early '00s: Specifically focusing

on the technology that was at the forefront of the turn of the century

• The '10s: MacCoin calling attention to the evolution of communication

Redbook Fundraiser Order Form Your Order Will be Available at Club Meetings or Can be shipped to you

Purchase the new 2019 Redbook (and or Bluebook) through the Cincinnati Numismatic Association with a personalized bookplate and help support the club's educational programs. The cost is the same as last year, only \$15 and you can pick up your copy at a club meeting or have it delivered for just \$3 more.

If you would like to pick up your copy at a club meeting, send an email to dheinrich@fuse.net and give us the exact spelling of your name, as you want it to appear on the bookplate and bring your \$15 payment to the meeting. Or you can use the form below and mail it in.

For delivery by U.S. Postal Service send a check for \$18 to:

Cincinnati Numismatic Association P.O. Box 446 Miamitown, OH 45041

You can also order copies as gifts for friends or relatives!

PERSONALIZED REDBOOK ORDER FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name as you want it to appear on the bookplate:

Shipping Address if applicable:

Name: ____

Mailing Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

E-mail: ___

_____ Picked up at meeting: \$15.00 per book

_____ Delivery by U.S. Mail: \$18.00 per book

Checks should be made payable to:

Cincinnati Numismatic Association

Mail your order to:

Cincinnati Numismatic Association P.O. Box 446 Miamitown, OH 45041



Membership Application

Pass this Membership Application on to a friend!

Since 1930, the Cincinnati Numismatic Association has been the gathering organization for coin collectors and other numismatic related specialists in the Cincinnati area. Its purpose has remained the same to foster knowledge of numismatics and a fraternal spirit among those who pursue the study of coins, currency, tokens, medals, and exonumia.

The organization meets once a month, on the second Friday at 7:30 pm and some additional Mondays at 7:00 pm. The Friday meeting location is at Coins +, 225 East 6th Street in downtown Cincinnati on an upper floor of the building. Monday meetings are held at the Groesbeck branch library located at 2994 West Galbraith Road. Cincinnati, Ohio 45239. The Groesbeck Branch is on Galbraith Road, approximately a quarter of a mile east of the intersection of Colerain Avenue and Galbraith Road.

Our meetings consist of numismatic talks or discussions, grading seminars, digital presentations, exhibits, and a dinner held every April. Club dues for adults are \$10 annually. Dues for Juniors are just \$3 a year. This is certainly one of the best values in numismatics.

Membership in the Cincinnati Numismatic Association includes a subscription to its monthly publication, *The Cincinnati Numismatist*. In 2006, 2007, 2016 and 2017 the publication received first place in the ANA's competition for Outstanding Local Numismatic Publication.

The Cincinnati Numismatic Association has its roots in its long history, but strives to serve the needs of the collectors of the future.

I hereby make application for membership in the CNA and agree to abide	by the constitu-
tion and bylaws of the said association.	

\Box 1 year membership (\$10)	1 year Junior me	mber (\$3)	
Print Name:			
Address:			
City/State/Zip:			
Phone:		(home)	
		(work/cell)	
Email:			
Signature:			
Sponsor (optional):			
Signature:			
(DO NOT FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING	LINES)		
Member Number:	Date I	Paid:	
BOG Approval:	BOG	Approval:	

CINCINNATI NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

President: David G. Heinrich Vice President: Bill Bennett Recording Secretary: Kirsten Lynch Treasurer: David G. Heinrich Webmaster: Colin Feitl



Dues and Membership Contact:

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The Cincinnati Numismatist

is an ANA award-winning publication

The Cincinnati Numismatic Association was founded in August of 1930 and consisted of thirty-five members including numismatic notables such as B. Max Mehl and Farran Zerbe. The first CNA President was Herbert A. Brand. The CNA was founded for the purpose of hosting the 1931 American Numismatic Association convention. Since then the CNA has hosted the ANA convention three more times, in 1942, 1980, and 1988. The CNA also hosted the 1998 ANA Spring show.

Numystery

By: Colonel Green

This month's Numystery:

Where was the Greater Cincinnati Numismatic Exposition held before moving to the Sharonville Convention Center?

Numystery answer: *kzonzusy ussystery up un september out zy*

Coin Show Schedule

Monthly

Cincinnati Greenhills Show American Legion Hall Winton Rd, Cinti, OH Last Sunday 10:00 am - 3:30 pm

Monthly

Columbus Coin, Stamp & Card Show, Makoy Center, 5462 Center St., Hilliard, OH 10 am - 4 pm Third Sunday, over 18 \$2 admission drich@columbus.rr.com

August 14th-18th

World's Fair of Money, Philadelphia, PA, Pennsylvania Convention Center at 1101 Arch St, 19107, Halls D and E; (Main Entrance in Hall D) Come see more than \$1 billion of historic rare coins and colorful currency including \$100,000 bills and a nickel worth \$3 million. Build your collection from the best numismatic inventory anywhere, participate in a live auction, attend lectures and seminars, and view rare historical treasures from the ANA Money Museum and private collections. SHOW HOURS: Tuesday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Wednesday-Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (FREE admission on Saturday!) Admission is \$8 for the public; free for ANA members and children under 12. Admission is free on Saturday, August 18.

August 30th-September 2nd

Central Ohio Numismatic Association's (CONA) Ohio State Coin Show Crowne Plaza Hotel, 600 Metro Place North, Dublin, Ohio 43017, Early Bird Entry: Thursday August 30th, 4:00 pm, Badge \$35.00 Admission Fee: \$4.00, Hours: Friday August 30th, 10am – 6pm-Coin Auction at 6:30pm, Saturday September 1st, 10am – 6pm, Sunday September 2nd, 10am – 4pm Dealer Setup: Thursday August 30th, 3:00 pm – 8:00 pm

October 11th-13th

Louisville & Kentucky State Numismatic Association Inc. Coin Show Hilton Garden Inn, 2735 Crittenden Dr., Louisville, Kentucky 40209 812-945-3622, 70 tables, Admission free.

October 12th-13th

IKOTAMS (Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio Token and Medal Society) Annual Show

American Legion #707 Banquet Hall, 200 West National Road (US 40), Engelwood, Ohio, 45322. The show hours are 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM on Friday, and 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Want To Be Published?

If you have an article that you would like to have published in the newsletter, **PLEASE** mail it to; C.N.A., PO Box 446, Miamitown OH, 45041 or email to cincycoins@gmail.com