One of our obligations as professional archaeologists is the dissemination of our research results. This responsibility includes publication in books, academic journals, and popular magazines, and participation in scholarly meetings, media appearances, and public outreach events. By hosting open days at archaeological sites, visiting classrooms and community centers, and generally engaging with the public we can and do illustrate the relevance of archaeology to a wider global community. Public outreach is one of the most undervalued aspects of our work and yet it is one of the most important things we do. Nathan Ellans' article about the Ancient Coins for Education (ACE) program illustrates the importance of such efforts.

Ellans reveals the seediness of the trade in illegally excavated coins from Bulgaria. Looting in Bulgaria is not a new phenomenon, as Petkova (2004) outlines in her article "How to Get a 2000% Profit from Selling an Object." According to Petkova, the history of looting and archaeological site destruction in Bulgaria can be traced back to the pillaging of Thracian tombs in antiquity. The first recorded instances of looting were in 1852, when authorities apprehended treasure hunters searching for gold and coins. Bulgaria, under Ottoman rule, enacted formal heritage legislation in 1869 prohibiting illegal excavation without special permission of the Ottoman Empire; and the sale and export of archaeological material outside the borders of Bulgaria was banned (Petkova 2004: 362). In 1969, a comprehensive law ensured that permits for archaeological excavations were to be issued by the Archaeological Institute and its professional members (Velkov 1993), theoretically eliminating the illegal and unregulated excavation of archaeological sites. Nevertheless, the complex chain of supply and demand that allows for the movement of illegal goods is clearly demonstrated by both Elkins and Petkova, who show that laws continue to be circumvented with the assistance of organized crime.

In 2006, after much negotiation, Bulgaria enacted the Cultural Heritage Act, replacing the 1969 law. The collecting and dealing communities viewed the new Act as too restrictive. Archaeologists called for more concrete definitions, proscriptions, and clear penalties. Recently, the Bulgarian Constitutional Court ruled that a number of provisions in the law are unconstitutional and should be amended. In September of 2009, the new ruling party, the Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria, proposed a series of amendments. The changes to the law would ease the documentation of proof requirements, with a simple sales receipt sufficing as confirmation of purchase (Bivol 2009). The impetus for the amendments came from the collecting lobby, which includes elements of organized crime, as illustrated by Elkins and Petkova in their analyses.

The proposed shifts in policy threaten national ownership legislation in Bulgaria. A recent report states, "The new law disposes the National Institute for Preservation of the Cultural Heritage from its powers and transfers them to the Culture Ministry" (Sofia News Agency 2009), which takes decision making about the protection of archaeological sites and artifacts out of the hands of experts and transfers it to the government. At the center of the debate is what constitutes "official documentation" for claiming legal right to heritage. One of the bill's more contentious provisions is that owners of artwork or antiquities should be able to prove their ownership, and that proof should be in the form of official State-sanctioned documents. Originally intended to balance the interests of private collectors against the protection of the state's cultural heritage, the provision states that if ownership cannot be proven then the artifact/collection would revert to the State and the collector would become the "caretaker" of the item (Bivol 2009).

The ongoing debates surrounding the current legislative efforts in Bulgaria and the educational efforts of the ACE program remind us that we should always be aware of the power of lobbying. The underlying agendas of powerful lobby groups can impact the protection of archaeological
Treasure Hunting 101 in America's Classrooms

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Introducing primary and secondary students to archaeology can build critical thinking skills and provide entertaining activities at the same time. In doing so, however, teachers should take care that they expose their students to archaeology in a manner that accurately represents the methodological and ethical concerns of the discipline. Educators should be vigilant when selecting educational activities, since there are groups of antiquities dealers who sponsor programs to promote political agendas and insensitive attitudes in collecting, which drive looting and the illicit trade in antiquities. One such program is Ancient Coins for Education (ACE), which purports to teach ancient history and archaeology to children by bringing coin dealers and collectors into classrooms to speak about collecting and show children coins. ACE is especially fond of presenting bulk lots of uncleaned coins to their students. Much of the material that ACE purchases or solicits in donations originates in Balkan countries where unlicensed excavation and export is illegal. The Ancient Coin Collectors Guild (ACCG), a lobby of ancient coin dealers, sponsors the ACE program, with clear aims to recruit future collectors, dealers, and sympathizers. It is up to the archaeological community to bolster partnerships with grade-level educators and increase awareness about looting and the subversive tactics that profiteers are now employing.

Introduction

Ancient Coins for Education (ACE) was founded in 2001 as an educational program for secondary school students that teaches archaeology and ancient history. The program is run by volunteers and collectors who serve on its board of directors. These representatives and others lecture about coin collecting using looted, uncleaned coins as instructional materials. ACE's slogan is, "Put history in the hands of your students." In addition to inviting dealers and collectors to speak with students, ACE offers different archaeological simulations and creative ancient world activities. Many of the teachers involved in the program are now collectors themselves and they encourage their students to become collectors. The ACE program is widespread throughout the United States and works mostly with high school teachers, but also some elementary and middle school teachers.

Since 2004, ACE has had a close partnership with the Ancient Coin Collectors Guild (ACCG), a lobby representing dealer interests that opposes import restrictions on undocumented ancient coins and artifacts and fights for a "free market for all collector coins" (ACCG 2007). The ACCG actively lobbies lawmakers locally and in Washington, awarding them "Friends of Numismatics Awards" for their efforts (Sayles 2005d, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). In Wisconsin, one dealer and ACCG member convinced the Republican Party to add "collectors' rights" to the party's state platform (Sayles 2005d, 2006a).

While teachers who use the ACE programs most likely focus on education, not the political agenda behind ACCG, ACE's programs do not teach archaeology in a responsible or ethical manner and instead encourage the destruction of archaeological sites and historical information through the use of ancient materials, purchased from an indiscriminate market, as teaching aids. This article surveys the role that ACE plays in the destruction of the archaeological record, the interests ACE serves, and the agenda behind the ACCG's staunch support of ACE. ACE's operations are chronicled on the internet and the ACCG fights many of its public relations battles online as well. It is necessary, therefore, to examine internet resources and correspondence in order to gain a full understanding of how ACE and ACCG operate and the relationship between the ACE program and the ACCG lobby group.

The Sourcing of Material for ACE

It is ironic that one of the subjects that ACE purports to teach is archaeology because the ACE program uses re-
ently surfaced and decontextualized material, which con- 
ducts ethical standards in archaeology. One way ACE in-
trduces students to “archaeology” is by placing uncleaned 
ancient coins and other objects in sandboxes and setting up 
a grid for the students to “excavate” them and then record 
and inventory finds, although one can be quite sure the 
metal detectorists who first removed them from the 
ground used no such grid or recording process (see ACE 
2008a for a description of its archaeological simulations 
and ACE 2008b for an image of a sandbox simulation).

While ancient coins can be an important teaching tool, 
the methods used by ACE and its directors to acquire coins 
are suspect. Scott Uhrick, a collector and ACE director 
who solicits donations and makes bulk purchases of un-
cleaned ancient coins from dealers, wholesalers, or 
importers on behalf of ACE, frequently uses online ancient 
coin discussion lists to locate sources (e.g., Uhrick 2007a). 
Bulk lots of uncleaned ancient coins are often affectionate-
ly referred to as “crusties” by dealers and collectors.

It is likely that the vast majority of coins the program re-
ceives through donations or purchases were recently loot-
ed and illegally exported from the source country, since 
much of the material it procures comes from Balkan 
sources, where unlicensed excavation and export are illegal 
but common. It is widely known (Center for the Study of 
Democracy 2007: 177–197) that much of the material 
presently supplying the antiquities and ancient coin market 
comes from Balkan countries. When browsing bulk lots of 
ancient coins on eBay and the stock of many dealers in 
“crusties,” it is apparent from the contents that most of this 
material originates from the Balkans and especially Bulgar-
ia. ACE does not hide the fact that the coins used in its pro-
gram come from the Balkans. In a guide on “Talking Up 
Ace,” one ACE director replied to a question about the ori-
gins of the coins with the answer “the Balkans, mostly…” 
(Uhrick 2008). The bulk suppliers of ancient coins and an-
tiquities are often Bulgarian nationals living and managing 
their businesses in the United States and Western Europe. 
A recent report by the Center for the Study of Democracy, 
which treats ancient coin and antiquities smuggling along-
side other illicit activities such as drug trafficking and in-
ternational auto theft, estimates that between 30 and 50 
such individuals are active, as of 2007, staging the export 
of material to market nations (Center for the Study of 

The report also analyzes the ways in which Bulgarian na-
tionals smuggle ancient coins and antiquities en masse out 
of the country, the structure of their trade networks, and 
the gangs of metal detectorists and looters that procure the 
objects (Center for the Study of Democracy 2007: 
177–197). In the United States, dealers in bulk quantities 
of ancient coins and antiquities are often referred to as 
“wholesalers.” These individuals deal in astonishing quan-
tities of “crusties” and appear to supply much of the main-
stream market as well as the self-proclaimed “bottom feed-
ers” who enjoy purchasing cheap, uncleaned coins. In oth-
er words, the wholesalers import the material and sell more 
valuable coins at wholesale prices to mid- and upper-range 
ancient coin dealers and then dispose of mass quantities of 
4th-century bronzes and other common, damaged, or 
worn coins to individuals on eBay or through other chan-
nels (Elkins in press, on the relationships between dealers 
and suppliers; on problems with the illicit trade in antiqui-
ties and internet auctions see Chippindale and Gill 2001). 
Figure 1 provides a model of this relationship between 
wholesalers, other dealers, auction houses, and collectors.

The Operations of Wholesalers and Suppliers

In assessing the ethical problems associated with ACE’s 
methods of supplying schools with uncleaned ancient 
coins, it is useful to examine how wholesalers and bulk sup-
pliers operate. An example of how damaging the indis-
criminate trade in ancient coins can be, especially as fresh 
supplies are constantly in demand, is provided by a case in 
which customs officials at Frankfurt airport seized a 60 kg 
parcel of ancient coins that had been falsely declared on 
March 23, 1999. The parcel was destined for a New York 
airport and had a New Jersey address on it (Dietrich 2002; 
analysis by academic numismatists at Frankfurt University 
showed that the coins came from the Balkan region. The 
estimated market value of only part of the parcel exceeded 
€100,000. The whole parcel contained 19,680 coins. 
Within the parcel were smaller packages of Bulgarian ori-
gin, which contained some already cleaned coins that were 
sorted according to size, date, and market value. Other 
coins in the parcel were uncleaned. The dealer and ship-
ner—named in the report on organized crime in Bulgar-
ia—had been arrested multiple times for antiquities crimes 
and was also the brother of the Bulgarian prosecutor gen-
eral at the time, who himself faced allegations of corrup-
tion. For inexplicable reasons, the prosecutor’s office in 
Bavaria, to whose jurisdiction the case was transferred, re-
leased the parcel to its destination. High-level corruption 
in Bulgaria and abroad makes it easier for international ant-
tiquities smugglers and other international criminals to op-
erate (Dietrich 2002: 295–303; Center for the Study of 
Democracy 2007; Martens 2008). Further investigations 
by German customs officials revealed that before the ran-
dom inspection of this parcel, the dealer had smuggled ap-
proximately one metric ton of material through the airport 
to the United States. According to my estimates, this
would be around 350,000 ancient coins with a market value in the millions of dollars. This number of coins is similar to the number recorded in the 41 volumes of Fund- münzen der römischen Zeit in Deutschland (FMRD) published since 1960, which have cataloged approximately 300,000 coins from hundreds of excavations, hoards, surveys, and local collections throughout Germany.

This dealer still works in the United States and actively supplies both dealers and collectors, selling cheaper coins in bulk through venues like eBay. Shortly after his multiple shipments from Bulgaria to the United States arrived, ancient coin collectors and dealers were excited about a “new source” for ancient coins. In June 1999, one dealer drew attention to this new source on the Moneta-L ancient coin collecting discussion list.

There is a new source of uncleaned ancient coins and nice quality antiquities on eBay, to which I invite your attention...The dealer is an old friend of mine, and has been wholesaling to leading dealers in America and Europe for years, and has decided to enter the retail market on selected items. I personally vouch for the honesty and fairness of this individual (Burbules 1999a).

In a follow-up message, another dealer asks if it would be a certain named individual, which was confirmed by Pete Burbules.

Yes, but PLEASE don’t advertise it. He wants to keep a low profile in dealing with the public. He is uncomfortable in doing so and has hired a young lady to be the ‘face to the public’ on sales (Burbules 1999b).

On the same day, a collector remarked:

[The dealer] had a booth at CICF [The Chicago International Coin Fair] this year for the first time, and I had a chance to meet him. He wasn’t retailing at his booth, he was strictly selling wholesale. I found myself drawn to his bags of late Roman bronze and bought them the only way I could—a handful at a time. Very pretty stuff. By mid afternoon of the second day of the show all his LRB [Late Roman Bronze coins] were gone (Knapp 1999).

Later that year, he had so much inventory that he had to hire additional help, as announced by a dealer friend who described him as “a major wholesale supplier to the nation’s largest and smallest ancient coin and antiquities businesses from coast to coast” (Burbules 1999c).

One of the most visible dealers and wholesalers in bulk ancient coins in the United States who also sells on eBay.
and has two storefronts on the VCoin\s.com website is also a licensed U. S. Customs Broker and has cleared dealers at JFK International Airport in New York. On internet discussion lists, he has advised dealers on how to expedite import of ancient coins and antiquities. In at least one instance, it is certain that the company at which he works has assisted another ancient coin importer. The dealer testifies:

I import ancient coins and artifacts. My old broker had many problems, uninformed about regulations pertaining to antiquities and my items were detained for weeks. Since using Action [Customs, Ltd.], I have never had one detained shipment, and any questions or problems customs had were satisfied immediately. My first service with them was fixing a mistake another broker made. That shipment was destined for confiscation, due to an error by my old broker made. Action [Customs, Ltd.] had my items in my hands two days later (Ancientcoinimports 2007).

In response to a query about supplies of ancient coins from ACE director Scott Uhrick, the customs broker provided some insight into the size of his own wholesaling business.

I have a steady supply, with at least 50-60 thousand of coins on hand, selling an average of 10-15K per week (Chavarria 2006).

In another message he claimed:

We have about 20 thousand uncleaned [H]oly [L]and coins. These are sold in lots of 100-1000. Since we wholesale these lots to dealers we cannot lower the amount of lot quantities...We have roughly 15 bags of 1000 uncleaned [R]omans from our last shipment, and another 50 thousand [en route] (Chavarria 2004).

It is clear from browsing the inventory that most of the material comes from the Balkan and Middle Eastern regions.

The customs broker\'s business partner in the dealership has donated to ACE (Lehman 2004). Some lists of ACE\'s donors can be viewed on its website and include a number of ancient coin dealers and wholesalers (ACE 2008c).

The ACCG-ACE Partnership as a Cause for Concern

In addition to the material, intellectual, and possible legal consequences of trading in ancient coins without histories, particularly in mass quantities of uncleaned coins from the Balkans, ACE\'s activities ought to be of concern for another reason: the program is clearly being used by individuals wishing to manipulate school children in order to promote their own private and commercial interests, especially since it became an affiliate member and ally of the ACCG in 2004.

Wayne Sayles is an ancient coin dealer who has authored books and articles on collecting ancient coins. He founded the ACCG in 2004 and is its executive director. Most of the ACCG\'s officers, benefactors (donors of $5000 or more), and the majority of patrons (donors of $250 or more) are dealers in ancient coins. The ACCG is a 501(c)(4) organization, which means donations to it are not normally tax deductible, since up to 100% of its funds can be used for the purposes of political lobbying, unlike 501(c)(3) organizations, to which donations are tax deductible and the use of funds for political lobbying is very limited. Peter Tompa, a former president of the ACCG, lobbies Washington politicians on the ACCG\'s behalf and has also received funds from two ancient coin trade groups, the Professional Numismatists Guild (PNG) and the International Association of Professional Numismatists (IAPN), to do likewise (Gill 2008). The ACCG has denied that market demand for ancient coins directly contributes to looting, but it nonetheless opposes any legislation designed to curb looting when the indiscriminate import of ancient coins may be affected, since it might hinder a "free market for all collector coins" (ACCG 2007). ACCG is also currently fighting the U. S. State Department\'s import restrictions on certain coins produced in ancient Cyprus, which affects only those coins with no record before the Memorandum of Understanding, as requested by the Cyproian government through a pending lawsuit filed under the Freedom of Information Act. The PNG and IAPN are co-plaintiffs in the lawsuit. The ACCG is now openly challenging import restrictions with the intent of overturning them after staging the import or detention of restricted Cyproian and Chinese coins (ACCG 2009). Mr. Tompa is also lobbying Washington politicians to oppose emergency import restrictions on material from Iraq as they affect the import of ancient coins (Bogardus 2008).

The ACCG and certain vociferous leaders of the group who attempt to portray themselves and their commercial activities as scholarly are generally resentful of professional archaeology and routinely attack the ethical standpoints of many archaeologists and archaeological societies as "radical" (see for example Sayles 2004a; 2004b; 2005a; 2005b), even though they have been universally adopted amongst the archaeological community.

The ACCG regularly supports ACE\'s educational activities and donates coins for its programs while representatives from ACE have supported the ACCG\'s aims of promoting indiscriminate attitudes in the collecting of ancient coins as a hobby. Representatives from ACE testified with the ACCG on behalf of coin collectors and dealers at the hearing in 2005 about import restrictions on undocumented ancient materials from Italy, referencing the educational value of the classroom sandbox activity. The ACCG\'s press releases about ACE\'s affiliate membership highlight the importance ACE plays in its commercial agenda (Sayles 2004c, 2005c). The announcement that
ACE became an affiliate of the ACCG did not begin with an explanation of how educationally beneficial the program may be to school children, but rather on the future of collecting, as constructed by the lobby's founder:

The future of our hobby is in the hands of today's youth. The attitudes and interests that are developed now will be critical when these youngsters become the world's decision makers. If the hobby, as we know it, is to survive it will be because the general public is aware of what we do and understands why it is useful to society (Sayles 2004c).

Another article on the ACCG website, regarding support of ACE “coin museums” in schools, states: “It's hard to imagine a better way of building goodwill toward the hobby, or of recruiting well-informed and enthusiastic supporters” (Sayles 2005c). Even statements made by one of ACE's directors, a collector himself, seem to indicate that there are fringe benefits of the program that serve private interests:

[We] have not only helped our hobby educate kids, we have helped the hobby since many kids and teachers have gone on to become collectors in their own right (Uhrick 2007a).

I know that some of the teachers and students we have introduced to our hobby have purchased from your store [that of a donor], and hopefully these coins [which were donated] will create more new collectors and further ‘prime the pump’ (Uhrick 2007b).

The remarks made by Wayne Sayles and Scott Uhrick indicate an awareness that the ACE program is an excellent way to recruit future hobbyists and collectors and to indoctrinate them to the dealer lobby's points of view regarding the hobby, or of recruiting well-informed and enthusiastic supporters” (Sayles 2005c). Even statements made by one of ACE's directors, a collector himself, seem to indicate that there are fringe benefits of the program that serve private interests:

...so I came to study numismatics. But very soon I saw that what I wanted was not to be found in a literature which, after Eckhel [1737–1798], has been left mostly to dilettanti and shopmen; and, as a young man and a rash one, I tried to write, myself, what I wanted to get written. I am fully aware that my numismatic works are far from satisfactory; nevertheless, they have contributed to bridge over the chasm between numismatics and history (Mommsen 1895).

Sir John Evans, the president of the Numismatic Society of London at the time, seems to have also understood Mommsen’s sentiments in his response.

No one numismatist is able to boast of a thorough knowledge of all the multifarious branches of this wide study nor
do we all seek from coins the same sort of information. Some of us consult them as grammar of art and archaeology, others admire them as galleries of portraits, others have recourse to them as a storehouse of mythological lore, while others, again, are interested in them chiefly as illustrating the history of currency in past ages, and some others, simply as an article of commerce to be turned into the currency of the present day, at a profit (Evans 1895).

Since that time, many numismatists have commented on the negative consequences of clandestine looting for ancient coins (Butcher and Gill 1990; Göbl 1987: 74–75; von Kaenel 1994, 1995; Beckmann 1998; Elkins 2008; Witschonke 2009). Even as early as the 1970s, numismatists and historians referenced the problems associated with the growing antiquities trade (Kraay 1976: xxiv; Finley 1975: 96; Walker 1977).

**Conclusion**

ACE’s current practices of obtaining material for its educational activities play an antagonistic role in the preservation of scientific information and archaeological context. While purporting to teach archaeology, the program’s practices directly sponsor criminal activities in source countries, such as Bulgaria, and the destruction of archaeological and cultural heritage. The ACCG’s partnership with ACE and the statements it has made regarding the program highlight the ideological and practical role that ACE plays in its anti-archaeology and commercial agenda. It is up to us, the community of numismatists and professional archaeologists, to increase our dialog with primary and secondary educators and to make our abundant resources and services known and available to them. Commercial interests have already taken their case to the public via aggressive weblogs, self-solicited media attention, and by touting programs such as ACE. This underscores the urgent need for archaeologists to play a more active role in the public arena.

American archaeological societies, such as the AIA, ASOR, and the SAA, have extensive outreach and educational resource programs and we must be more proactive in our partnerships with primary and secondary educators in order to counter the disingenuous strategies deployed by private interests to indoctrinate and recruit future unconcerned collectors and sympathizers. A coordinated plan of action by the educational and outreach departments of these organizations, with perhaps the addition of resources from numismatic societies, such as the American Numismatic Society (ANS), or university museums with numismatic study collections, would provide an alternative to scientifically and archaeologically erosive programs, as currently embodied by ACE and its existing practices and relationship with the dealer lobby.

Archaeology can be taught responsibly without encouraging the destruction of archaeological sites and a number of resources for teachers are publicly and freely available to aid them in developing a curriculum that incorporates archaeology. Commercial interests are increasingly fighting for public-recognized legitimacy and they frequently attempt to veil their activities in the guise of archaeology and scholarship, but one should not be deceived (cf. Hall 2007). The teacher who wishes to introduce archaeology or ancient numismatics to students in a classroom setting should be on guard when searching for resource information. Teachers should be aware that some groups are attempting to undermine real archaeology in order to assert their individual and commercial interests in programs that are deliberately targeting the malleable minds of school children.

Replicas of ancient coins and other objects are readily available, affordable, and could be incorporated into classroom education. Extensive online catalogs of various coin cabinets, such as the those of the ANS, the Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen in Berlin, and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge are accessible online and could be used in classroom discussions and activities on ancient coins. It may also be worthwhile for professional archaeological and numismatic organizations, such as the AIA and the ANS, to develop and coordinate programs whereby numismatic material from the ANS collection or local university collections could be lent out to schools or to educators traveling to schools, so that students might experience the thrill of physically handling ancient objects without being deliberately encouraged to contribute to the problems wrought by buying bulk lots of earth-encrusted coins. In the past, ancient coins have been offered on loan by the ANS for traveling educational programs

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