

REGALIANVS AND DRYANTILLA RELOADED. THE NEW EVIDENCE FROM CARNUNTUM¹

Cristian Găzdac

Institute of Archaeology and Art History
Cluj-Napoca
cgazdac2000@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract: The present work deals with the new numismatic evidence coming from two excavations at the archaeological site of Carnuntum (nowadays, Petronell-Carnuntum, Austria). Three more coins of the usurper couple of Regalianus and Dryantilla can throw a new light on the location of the mint that issued these coins.

Keywords: Regalianus, Dryantilla, Carnuntum, amphitheatre

DOI: 10.14795/j.v2i2.109
ISSN 2360 – 266X
ISSN-L 2360 – 266X

When a local individual reaches the highest position of a social-political hierarchy – even as a usurper – he is becoming an icon for the area where he came from.

This is the case of Regalianus and his wife, Dryantilla, who rebelled against the new legitimate emperor, Gallienus, somewhere around AD 259/260.² He ruled for a short period of time, probably couple of months, and never seized authority over the whole empire.

The literary evidence is very lacunar on this figure and is wrapped in the midst of a legend. According to *Historia Augusta* he was a capable military and a descendant from the Dacian king Decebalus: '*Fuit, quod negari non potest, vir in re militari semper probatus et Gallieno iam ante suspectus, quod dignus videretur imperio, gentis Daciae, Decebali ipsius, ut fertur, ad finis.*'³ (It cannot, indeed, be denied that he had always won approbation in warfare and had long been suspected by Gallienus because he seemed worthy to rule; he was, moreover, a Dacian by birth and a kinsman, so it was said, of Decebalus himself).⁴

The same *Historia Augusta* stated that Regalianus was appointed the governor of Illyricum under Valerianus I and was victorious against the Sarmatians raids.⁵ It was his troops who proclaimed him as emperor, the same killed him fearing the punishment from Gallienus.⁶

Despite the short period of reign, Regalianus made his way into history. There are works dedicated to him and his wife analysing their life, coins, and the impact of their 'rule' in the centuries to come up to nowadays.⁷

1 This work was made available owing to the financial support offered by research projects UEFISCDI PN-II-ID-PCE-2012-4-0210 and PN-II-RU-TE 20123-0216.

2 KIENAST 1990, 220-221.

3 *SHA, Tyr.trig.*, 10.8.

4 Translation: http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Historia_Augusta/Tyranni_XXX*.html

5 *SHA, Tyr.trig.*, 10.2.

6 *SHA, Tyr.trig.*, 10.3-7.

7 SARIA 1937, 352-354; FITZ 1966; GÖBL 1970; BARNES 1972, 140-182. For the

The only portraits of this couple of usurpers are known owing to the coins they minted. In fact, the name and the historical existence of Regalianus' wife, Dryantilla, it is known only because of her coins.

On the other hand, as one expects, the number of coins of Regalianus and Dryantilla is not too high. Until the coins presented on this study, only 129 pieces were known: 60 of Regalianus, 69 of Dryantilla⁸. At the same time all the known coins in the best situation have a piece of information such as a findspot (locality) and a sort of 'context' (e.g. '500 m SE of the legionary fort') or they have unknown source of provenance.

Therefore, the presentation of three more coins coming from the metropolis of Carnuntum (map 1) with a precise findspot and archaeological context it is worth publishing.

During the campaigns of 2008 and 2009 at the amphitheater I (the 'military' one) in Carnuntum (map 3) two coins were found: Regalianus (fig. 1) and Dryantilla (fig. 2).⁹

REGALIANVS

Denomination: antoninianus, fragmentary, spoilt coin

Axis: 6; D: 20.6 mm; W: 2.4 gr.

Mint: Carnuntum

Dating: 259-260

Obv: C REGALIA(nus)

...(max)IMINVS...

Head radiate, right.

Rv: PRO[vi]DE(ntia augusti)

Providentia standing left, holding ears of corn and cornucopiae; at foot, modius.

Reference: RIC V.2, p. 587, no. 8

MIR 43, no. 1714

Find-spot: Amphitheatre I 2008, Inv. 315/2008 to the FN 206/2008; context: quadrant Q19; SE 405; from N-edge: 2.14m; from W-edge: 1.30m; h: 168.719 m.



Fig. 1. Coin of Regalianus from the Amphitheatre I, Carnuntum

Remark: The coin was overstruck on a denarius of Maximinus I Thrax. Based on the state of preservation and its shape the coin could be a spoilt one.

REGALIANVS: Dryantilla

most recent approach of Regalianus and Dryantilla see DEMBSKI/WINTER/WOYTEK 2007, 523-596.

⁸ WINTER 2007, 570-596.

⁹ GÄZDAC 2013, 25-26.

Denomination: antoninianus

Axis: 11; D: 20.2 mm; W: 2.8 gr.

Mint: Carnuntum

Dating: 259-260

Obv: [sul]P(icia) [dr]YANTILLA AVG(usta)

Bust draped, on crescent, right.

Rv: [iunoni] REGINE

S

Juno standing left, holding patera and scepter.

Reference: MIR 43, no. 1722a



Fig. 2. Coin of Dryantilla from the Amphitheatre I, Carnuntum

Find-spot: Amphitheatre I 2009, FN 1576/2009; context: quadrant: Q21; layer SE 1403, from N-edge: 4.30 m, from W-edge: 3.10 m; h: 168.243 m.

Remark: The coin was minted reusing an earlier coin. A letter S, from the previous coin, is still visible on the reverse.

Another coin of Dryantilla (fig. 3) was provided by a testing excavation from 2013 in the resident quarter of the 'Civilian' town of Carnuntum. The findspot was the corridor between the baths and the villa urbana (map 2).

REGALIANVS: Dryantilla

Denomination: antoninianus, fragmentary

Axis: 2; D: 19.6 mm; W: 1.5 gr.

Mint: Carnuntum

Dating: 259-260

Obv: [d]RYAN[tilla avg]

Bust draped, on crescent, right.

Rv: [aequi]IT[tas aug]

Aequitas standing left, holding scales and cornucopia

Reference: MIR 43, no. 1720a



Fig. 3. Coin of Dryantilla from the 'Civilian' city, Carnuntum

Find-spot: KG05109 Petronell-Carnuntum Gst. 141/2, R 23, 05109.13.04, SE 956, Section: 08

Remark: overstruck a denarius of Septimius Severus. SE[verus] and part of his neck an beard are still visible on the

obverse. On the reverse can be seen IMP COS III.

The over-striking of the new coin types upon old ones is a regular aspect for the coins issued by Regalianus and Dryantilla¹⁰.

The finding of such rare coins have other benefits as well.

As these coins had a very short period of minting, AD 259/260 and circulation, they can provide a very narrow *terminus post quem* for that phase of existence in the area of the amphitheater, the *villa urbana* and the baths.

On the other hand, the frequency of finding of these coins at Carnuntum and the fact that one of the coin can be considered a spoilage with very small chances that has ever been put in circulation (the coin of Regalianus, fig. 1) clearly indicate the location of the mint in this Roman town.¹¹

REFERENCES

BARNES 1972

Barnes, T.D. „Some Persons in the Historia Augusta”, *Phoenix* 26/2, 140-182.

DEMBSKI/WINTER/WOYTEK 2007

Dembski, G./Winter, H./Woytek, D., Regalianus und Dryantilla. Historischer Hintergrund, numismatische Evidenz, Forschungsgeschichte. In: Alram, M./Schmidt-Dick, F. (eds.), *Numismata Carnuntina. Forschungen und Material* [Moneta Imperii Romani 43 – Neubearbeitung] (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), 523-596.

FITZ 1966

Fitz, J., Ingenuus and Régalien [Latomus 81] (Bruxelles: Berchem).

GÄZDAC 2013

Gäzdac, C., Coins revealing history: Case studies from Carnuntum, *Carnuntum Jahrbuch*, 25-29.

GÖBL 1970

Göbl, R., *Regalianus und Dryantilla. Dokumentation. Münzen, Texte, Epigraphisches* (Wien).

KIENAST 1996

Kienast, D., *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft).

SARIA 1937

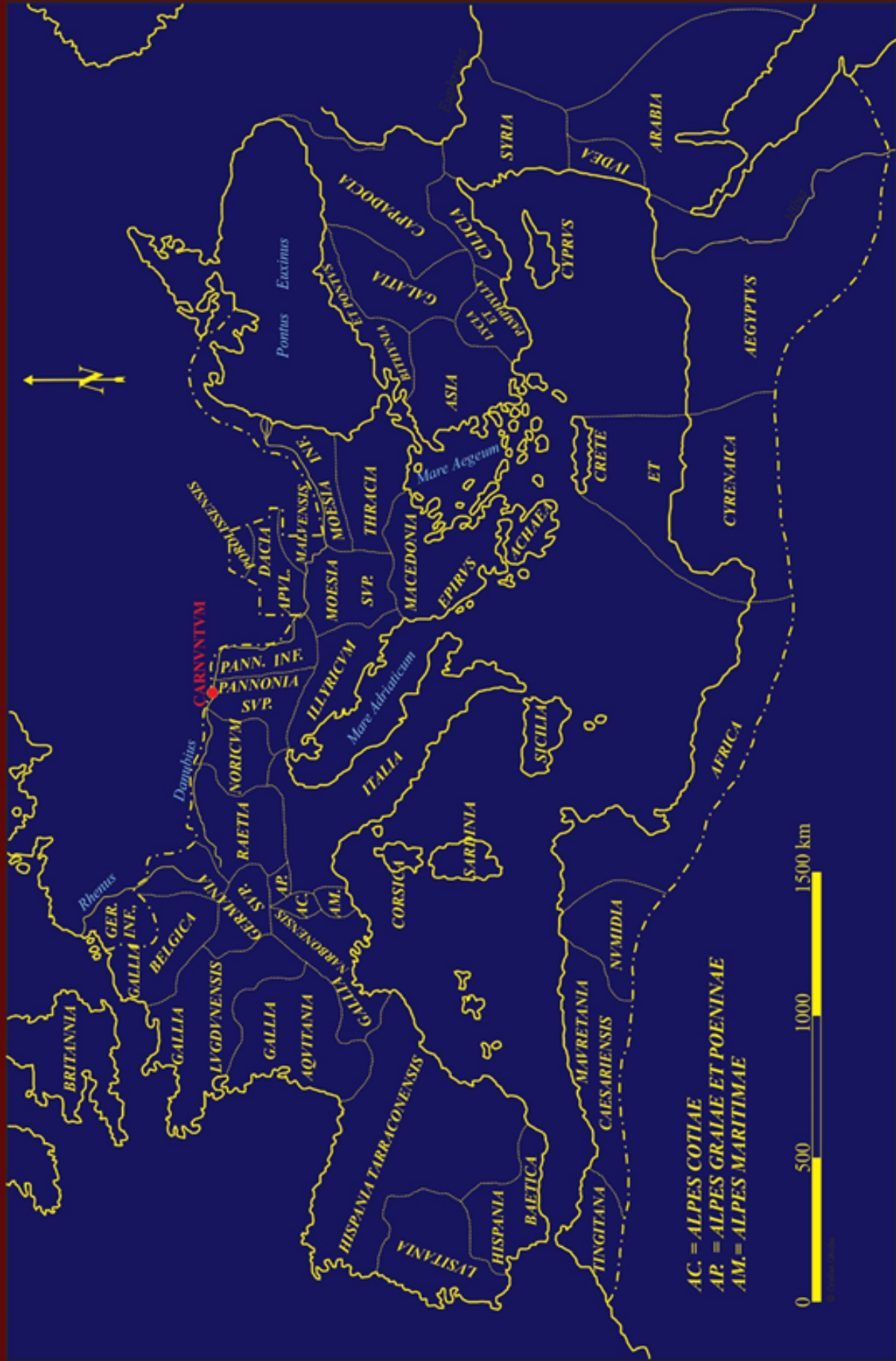
Saria, B., Zur Geschichte des Kaisers Regalianus, *Klio* 30, 352-354.

WINTER 2007

Winter, H., Stückkatalog. In: Alram, M./Schmidt-Dick, F. (eds.), *Numismata Carnuntina. Forschungen und Material* [Moneta Imperii Romani 43 – Neubearbeitung] (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), 570-596.

¹⁰ WINTER 2007, 547-549.

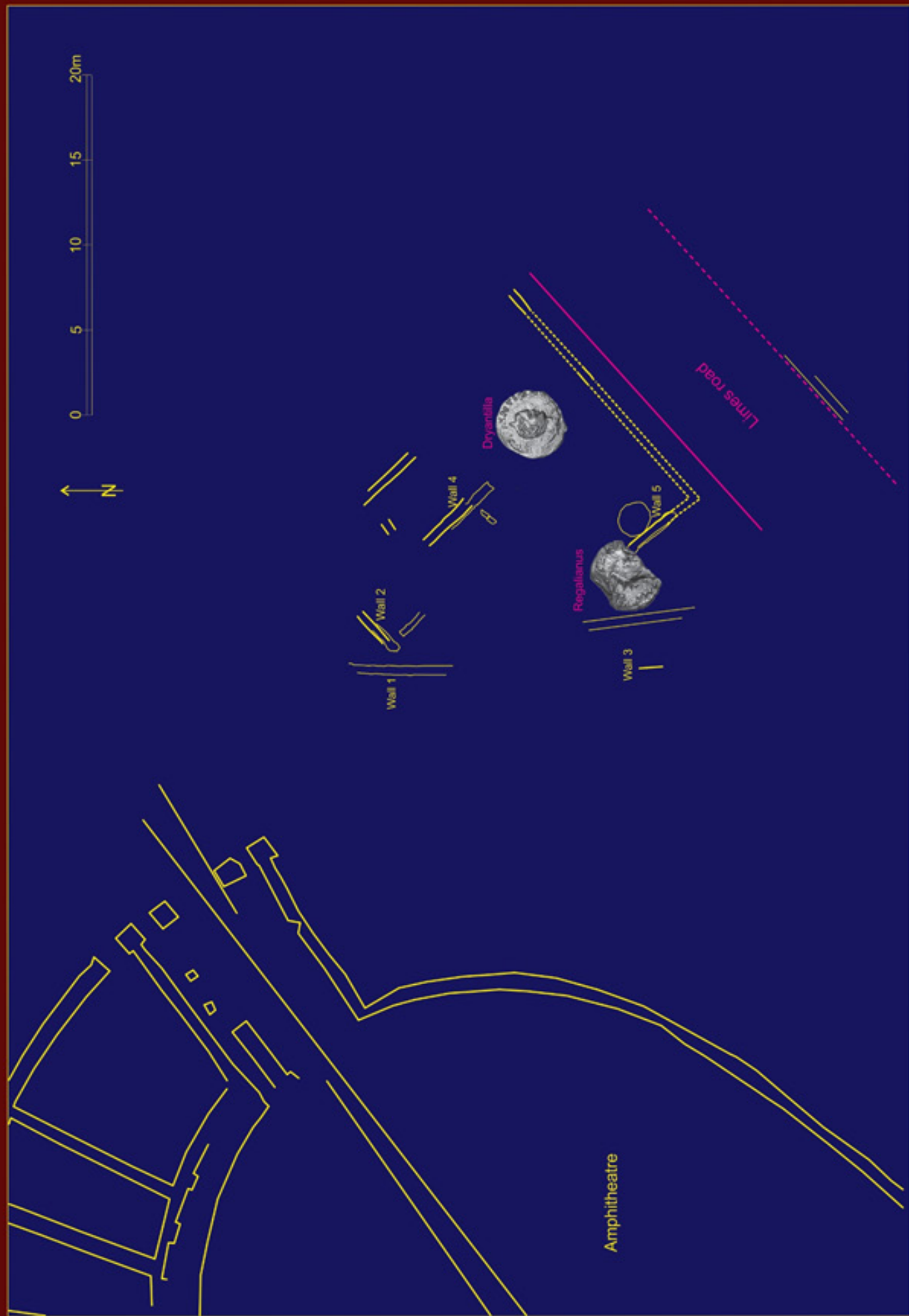
¹¹ J. Fitz has argued for a location of the mint at *Sirmium*, in *Pannonia Inferior* (nowadays, Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia) as in his opinion Regalianus was stationed in this city, FITZ 1966.



Map 1. The Roman Empire pointing out the location of Carnuntum, mid-2nd century AD



Map 2. The plan of the quarter of the 'civilian' town Carnuntum (also known as the 'Spaziergarten', and the 'Open Air Museum')



Map 3. The Amphitheater I with the findspots of Regalianus and Dryanitilla coins