

Research on Western Silver Coins Unearthed in Southern Taiwan

Tai-kang Lu

ABSTRACT

Known also as *yangying* (foreign silver coin) or *fangying* (barbarian silver coin), western silver coins circulating in Taiwan from the 17th to 19th century were of many different types and distributed in large quantity. However, little research had been done on silver coins from archaeological remains. This study on western silver coins unearthed in Southern Taiwan covered recent excavations, field studies as well as the collection of Tainan government. The artifacts examined included Dutch silver stuivers, Spanish silver reals; Mexican silver 8 reals (eagle silver) and Japanese silver yen. This paper presents the details as well as the comparative analytical studies of the silver coins listed above in terms of their specific decoration, motif, inscription, date of production and value. The compositions of these silver coins were determined using scientific approaches. Cross-examination among technical findings, archaeological evidences and historical records was conducted to shed light on the cultural and historic context of western silver coins circulating in Taiwan during Ming and Qing dynasties.

Keywords: Western Silver Coin, *Yangying* (Foreign Silver Coin), *Fangying* (Barbarian Silver Coin), Archaeology of Historical Period, Antiquarian Study