Chinese Numismatic References: an Annotated Bibliography

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Naturally, most research in Chinese numismatics has been performed in China and published in Chinese, and unfortunately, not much of it has been translated into English. However, enough material has either been translated or written in English to meet the needs of everyone except the most serious specialists.

China changed radically in 1912 with the fall of the Empire. Since then, Chinese coins and paper money have been typically modern in style, with the issues reflecting the country’s chaotic recent history. The following references, and the Seminar lecture, are largely devoted to pre-1912 numismatics. Most information about modern Chinese numismatics can be obtained from commonly used general catalogs.


**-- 1976. Ch'ing cash until 1735. Taipei, Taiwan: Mei Ya Publ. The definitive study of these multitudinous issues.**


**-- 1967. A bibliography on Far Eastern numismatology and a coin index. Encyclopedia of Chinese coins, v. 1. Denver, Colo.: The Author, 1967.** This at the time rather comprehensive list included all references (especially useful for its annotations on original Far Eastern language works). It was the first of a projected multi-volume series intended to cover all of Chinese Numismatics. Other volumes are listed below. A failing to be noted in Coole’s work is his lack of differentiation of forgeries found among the holdings in his extensive personal collection, which formed the basis of his researches and publication; a valuable feature is the extensive number of rubbings included.


(DaXi) *Zhongguo lidai huobi daxi*. 1988-. [Shanghai : Shanghai People's Publishing House] 12 vols. (projected). In Chinese; this is “The Shanghai encyclopedia of the great series of Chinese dynastic currency.” vol.1 covers Pre-Qin dynasty coinage (to 221 BC); vol.3. the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the five Kingdoms and ten States period; vol. 11 is the *Currency of the Chinese Democratic Revolution*; vol. 7 covers paper money of Qing Dynasty. The most important use of this work is as the single largest source of examples of the earliest types of coins, the spade money, knife money, etc.

Fisher, George Albert. [1990]. *Fisher's ding, or, Ding Fubao's catalog of old Chinese cast coinage, selectively translated and annotated*. Littleton, Colo.: G.A. Fisher, [1990]. A thoroughly numerated, paginated and Anglicized revised version of Ding Fubao's earlier work (Ting Fu-Pao, : 《Gu Qian Da Chi Dian, “An encyclopaedia of Ancient coins,” Shanghai, 1936). Fisher’s work became the foremost reference in English for the Traditional coinages due to the high quality of Ding’s rubbings and the care with which Fisher annotated the plates. Fisher has also conveniently appended a table of Pinyin Chinese transliteration conversion from the earlier Wade-Giles system, typically used in most prior English-language references.

Hartill, David. 2005. *Cast Chinese coins: a historical catalogue*. Victoria, B.C., Canada: Trafford Publ. This is a comprehensive guide to the identification and context of Chinese cast coins from antiquity through 1912. Recently published, it benefits from current scholarship and is presently the most thorough general compendium.


Schjöth, Fredrik. 1929. The currency of the Far East, the Schjöth collections at the Numismatic cabinet of the University of Oslo, Norway: “What the Chinese say about their coins.” Reprint edition (1965), Chinese Currency, Iola, Wis.: Krause Publications. A catalog of an extensive private—now public—collection, this book has been rendered obsolete by Hartill’s. However, as formerly the most comprehensive work available in English, it has been used for many years as a primary reference, so a student might well need to refer to it to identify a citation. The extensive illustrations are drawings of the coins made by the author’s daughter.

Terrien de Lacouperie, Albert. 1892. Catalogue of Chinese coins from the VIIth cent. B.C., to A.D. 621, including the series in the British museum. Reginald Stuart Poole, ed. London: The Trustees. This now antique catalog of the extensive (even at the time) British Museum collection is still a useful compendium of information on the earliest coins.


