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A Silver Legend: The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler

Clara Semple

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Clara Semple : A Silver Legend: The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Silver Legend: The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A worthy tribute to one of the most famous and fascinating coins of the world By DavyJones A beautiful and fascinating book about one of the most famous coins of the world and the most famous trade dollar. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Book Review of "A Silver Legend: The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler" By Landon Lasseter A Silver Legend: The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler. Clara Semple. Barzan Publishing. £19.95. xii + 165 pp. ISBN 0-9549701-0-1. Maria Theresa Thalers can still be found in the souqs around the Middle East, and are often stumbled upon in the far corners of the world. How did a coin from an Austrian Empress spread so far and become so well known? This is what Clara Semple attempts to show the readers of her book A Silver Legend: The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler. Clara has transcribed a legend upon pages. She first discovered her interest in the Thaler while researching traditional silver jewelry of Egypt and the Sudan. An

archaeological artist, Semple has lived and traveled in the Middle East for most of the last half century, and in the process has become a reputable source for information on the Maria Theresa Thaler. The book starts off with a brief forward on the history between the author and the Maria Theresa Thaler. This is followed by a concise but informative introduction, which demonstrates the geographical distribution of the coin, along with key points as to why the coin became an important commodity. The next three chapters of the book give attention to the European origins of the coin. These chapters cover silver mining and coin production, an overview of the life of Empress Maria Theresa, and the Imperial use of the Thaler. The next section of Semple's book covers the ascent and use of the coin as an internationally traded commodity. The coin that Johann von Fries launched on the world would have a reign of more than 200 years. The last chapter in this section gives numerous first hand accounts relating to the coin. These accounts give vivid details of travel in the region from European explorers and travelers. Legends and tales of hidden hoards of coins are given, along with accounts of how rulers in the region made use of them. The names by which the coin has been known, and the attempts to forge the coin are covered. The book is wrapped up with two final topics, the use of the Thaler as jewelry and in jewelry making, and the use of the Thaler as currency for the cause of rescue, ransom, and war. Strong points in the book include extensive photographs and illustrations to aid the text and a thorough history of the coin from inception to modern day. The author's knowledge of the subject is apparent in her writing, which provides for excellent reading value. A possible weakness of the book could stem from her love of the subject. Overall, the book serves to romanticize the history of the coin, providing as the title states "A Silver Legend." The author supports her book extensively with photographs, historical documents, first hand accounts, and personal experience. A bibliography is provided, which is adequate, but could be more extensive. Footnotes are missing, which could have been used to support historical points in the text, making further research into the subject easier. This book would be of interest to anyone who is researching the commerce, economy, trade, jewelry production, or currency of the Middle Eastern region during the 18th to 20th Century. A book where so many levels of culture, society, and history are combined under one title is a rare find. Overall, the book deserves an "A", because Semple provides both an excellent read for "popular" history, and an excellent resource for research.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Maria Theresa Thaler - a great coin history! By V. Emery This book was well worth the time and money. I have had a Maria Theresa Thaler (MTT) for years, but didn't know much about it. I did a Google search and found an interesting article in a Saudi magazine that referenced Ms. Semple's book. I went ahead and ordered the book, and I was pleasantly surprised.

1. The pictures are fantastic...the MTT as tribal jewelry, old paintings and drawings, and coin details.
2. The history of Empress Maria Theresa, thalers, and the MTT in the Levant. There are very interesting facts about the MTT's use in military campaigns and in travel expeditions.
3. The art cultural angle...she covers the MTT's use in jewelry, bride wealth, and magical charms.

This is probably the most interesting book about coins that I have ever read. Visitors in my home have been caught flipping through the book, devouring the beautiful pictures. If you have any interest in Maria Theresa Thalers, this is the book for you. If you read this book, you will probably find yourself buying a few MTTs, as well!

This first comprehensive account of the Maria Theresa Thaler in English covers every aspect of the thaler's use, and explains how this coin came to be accepted as the universal currency for trade in the Middle East and beyond. The role of the coin in financing military expeditions and colonial wars is thoroughly examined.