

Die silwer Maria Theresia taler

Artikel #1 - Inleiding tot versameling



The silver Maria Theresa taler

Paper #1 - Introduction to Collecting

Luthando Prinsloo

Vishoek, Oktober 19, 2026

English text advice John Womble

Inhoud

Voorwoord	3
Agtergrond	4
Agtergrond vervolg – anatomie van die ‘gewone, moderne’ 1780 MTt	5
Die LP Maria Theresia taler indeks	6
Gunsteling aardigheid – MTt monument, Trieste	8
Inligting bronne	9

Contents

Foreword	3
Background	4
Background continued – anatomy of the ‘ordinary, modern’ 1780 MTt	5
The LP Maria Theresia taler index	7
Favourite oddity – MTt monument, Trieste	8
Information sources	9

Elke Suid Afrikaanse Maria Theresia taler (MTt) versamelaar, wat ek al gevra het, kan onthou hoe dit gevoel het om 'n MTt vir die eerste keer vas te hou. Die groote en gewig word gereeld eerste genoem, intrige met die klassieke ontwerp, die sonderlinge randskrif ... en dan natuurlik die 1780 datum.

Dit is merkwaardig dat ons MTts in SA kry, seinde ons vêr vanaf Oostenryk is en die munt was in 1854/57 alreeds gedemonetiseer. Soos ek verstaan, was hulle nooit as geld in Suid Afrika gebruik, maar daar was wel talers teengestempel oor 1888/9 - 1895 vir Mosambiekse gebruik (Hafner & Stadlober 2022:136). Op 'n tegniese punt; party mense en organisasies verwys steeds na *thalers*, moontlik in herinnering aan die oorspronklike 1520 *Joachimsthaler*. Daar was egter tydens die Duitse ortografiese kongres van 1901 besluit om die sagte 'h' vanuit baie Duitse woorde weg te laat. Ek gebruik dus taler.

Ek het MTts oorspronklik 'organies' versamel – geneem wat ek kon kry, sonder enige of met min, navorsing. Eers nadat ek die omvang van hierdie opwindende veld kon waardeur, het ek spesifiek moes fokus. My reeks artikels beoog dus om MTt verslaafdes, algemene versamelaars en nuwe belangstellendes te dien. Ek skryf in Afrikaans en Engels om die artikels meer toeganklik te maak, omdat die wisselwerking tussen die twee tale my help formuleer en as 'n bydrae aan die hiper-skaarse Afrikaanse munt versamel literatuur.

Voorblad foto

1970s Vienne Maria Theresia taler, met die 1976 Natal Numismatic Society se teenstempel (Hafner & Stadlober 2022:143).

Fotos

Tensy anders vermeld is alle fotos die skrywer se eie van munte in eie versameling.

Every South African Maria Theresia taler (MTt) collector, whom I've asked, can remember what it felt like when they first held an MTt. Size and weight is often mentioned, along with intrigue of the classical design, the unique edge writing ... and then of course the 1780 date.

It is remarkable that we encounter MTts in SA as we're far from Austria and the coin was already demonetized in 1854/57. As I have it, MTts were never in circulation in SA, although talers were counter stamped over 1888/9 - 1895 for Mozambican use (Hafner & Stadlober 2022:136). On a technical point; some people and organisations still refer to *thaler*, possibly in memory of the original 1520 *Joachimsthaler*. Yet, during the German orthographic conference of 1901, it was decided to drop the soft 'h' from many German words. I therefore use taler.

I originally collected MTts organically – taking what I could find, without, or with little, research. It is only after I got to appreciate the scope of this exciting field that I had to focus specifically. My series of articles therefore intend supporting MTt addicts, general coin collectors and newly interested people alike. I'm writing in Afrikaans and English to have the articles more accessible, as the interaction between the two languages support my formulation and in contribution to hyper-scarce Afrikaans coin collecting literature.

Cover photo

1970s Vienna Maria Theresia taler, with the 1976 Natal Numismatic Society's counter stamp (Hafner & Stadlober 2022:143).

Photos

Unless otherwise indicated, all photos are the author's from coins in the author's collection.

Agtergrond

Ek beplan om in elke artikel 'n paar agtergrond notas te verskaf, want ek ervaar die MTt konteks as betekenisvol en dat interessanthede waardeer mag word. Dit is ook my manier om geskiedenis en (droë) feite in klein hapies aan te bied.

My skatting is dat 99,9% MTts wat in Suid Afrika gevind word, die 1780 datum bevat. Met verwysing na hoe die eerste MTt my gevang het en hoe mense oor die MTt taler praat (in SA en in baie ander lande), glo ek dat meeste mense nie besef waarmee hulle te doen het. MTts was oorspronklik tussen 1741 en 1780, tydens die Oostenrykse en Habsburgse Aartshertogin Maria Theresia se heerskappy, aangemunt. Na Maria Theresia se afsterwe in 1780, was daar nog sowat 400 miljoen MTts her-aangemunt (Hafner & Stadlober 2022:11, Semple 2005:5). Almal met dieselfde 1780 datum. Na Maria Theresia se afsterwe was daar besluit om die 1780 datum vir ewig te behou ter nagedagtenis en in 'n vernuftige internasionale sake-strategie om die MTt se reputasie van ontwerp en kwaliteit bestendig te hou. Verwys aasseblief na my poging tot 'n Indeks, verder aan vir 'n aanmuntings oorsig.

Daar is al baie geskryf oor die aantrekking en jare-lange sukses van die MTt. Met waardering beveel ek graag Clara Semple (2005) se pragtige boek aan – vir breë en passievolle navorsing, kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe perspektiewe. In opsomming oor die MTt se langslwendigheid verstaan ek die munt se randskrif, die interessante voor- en agterkant ontwerp, Latynse inskripsies en 'n bestendige (betroubare) silwer inhoud en aanmunt kwaliteit oor meer as drie honderd jaar.

Tensypte van die miljoene MTts, lang bestaan en gebruik in baie lande, weet meeste mense steeds nie van die munt. Ek was verbaas om selfs in Oostenryk te ervaar, dat meeste mense wat ek oor 'n paar jaar teëgekom het, nog nooit 'n MTt gesien het, en baie male nog nie daarvan gehoor het. Daardie ervaring is in teenstelling met baie mense in Addis Ababa, Ethiopië, wat presies geweet het waarvan ek gepraat het. Daar was gereeld verwys na die 'Vet Dame' munt – dit is 'n verhaal vir vorentoe, tesame met besprekings oor die taler se internasionale gebruik.

Background

I'm planning to provide background notes in every article, as I meaningfully experience MTt context and so that curiosities might be appreciated. It's also my way of serving history and (dry) facts in small bites.

My estimate is that 99,9% MTts found in South Africa, have the 1780 date. With reference to how the first MTt caught me and how people talk about the MTt taler (in SA and many other countries), I believe that most people don't know what they're dealing with. MTts were originally struck over the years 1741 - 1780, during the time of the Austrian and Habsburg Archduchess Maria Theresia's reign. After Maria Theresia's death in 1780 another 400 million MTts were re-struck (Hafner & Stadlober 2022:11, Semple 2005:5). All with the same 1780 date. In memory and within a clever international business strategy to maintain reputation of design and quality, it was decided after Maria Theresia's death, to for ever retain the MTt's 1780 date. Please refer to my attempt to a strike overview Index, further on.

Much has been written about the MTt's attraction and long success. I appreciatively recommend Clara Semple's (2005) beautiful book – for its wide and passionate research, quantitative and qualitative perspectives. With respect to the MTt's longevity; I understand the coin's edge writing, interesting obverse and reverse design, Latin inscriptions and consistent (trusted) silver content and strike quality, over more than three hundred years.

Despite millions of MTts, long existence and use in many countries, most people don't know about the coin. I was surprised to realise that even in Austria, most people that I encountered over a few years, had never seen an MTt, and many had never heard of it. That experience is in contrast to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where many people knew exactly what I was talking about. There the taler is often referred to as the 'Fat Lady' coin – left for a future story, and with discussions on various countries where the coins were used.

Agtergrond vervolg – anatomie van die ‘gewone, moderne’ 1780 MTt

Met ‘gewone, moderne’ MTt bedoel ek ‘n taler wat vanaf 1946 slegs deur die Weense Munt her-aangemunt was. ‘n Splinternuwe 1780 MTt, wat presies soos die een hier onder lyk, kan vandag nog by die Weense Munt aangekoop word. Die taler se fisiese eienskappe:

Deursnit: 39,5mm - 41mm

Dikte: ~ 2,5mm

Gewig: 28,0668g

Metaal: 83,33% fyn silwer, 16,67% koper

Oriëntering: Medalje

Geen verhewe rand, ge-embosseerde randskrif

Hier onder is ‘n voorbeeld van ‘n gewone, moderne MTt, met opmerkings oor areas wat met munte vanuit ander jare en deur ander Munte kan verskil:



Edge writing: ‘*Iustitia et Clementia*’. Maria Theresia’s core values of justice and mercy

Obverse:

Mintmark S·F· for mint masters Tobias Schöbl en Joseph Faby

Oval brooch with 9 pearls (some consider them diamonds)

The tiara with 8 pearls (some consider them diamonds)

Reverse:

The ‘X’ saltire (St Andrew’s cross). Denoting the debased silver standard of 1750/53

Double crowns under the two-headed eagle

Background continued – anatomy of the ‘ordinary, modern’ 1780 MTt

By ‘ordinary, modern’ MTt I mean a restruck taler from the Vienna Mint, after 1946. A brand new 1780 MTt, looking exactly like the one below, can be purchased today from the Vienna Mint. The taler’s physical properties are:

Diameter: 39,5mm - 41mm

Thickness: ~ 2,5mm

Weight: 28,0668g

Metal: 83,33% fine silver, 16,67% copper

Orientation: Medal

No raised edge, embossed edge writing

Above is an example of an ordinary, modern MTt, with comments to areas that may differ with coins from other years and Mints.

Die LP Maria Theresia taler indeks

Ek kon tot dusvêr nie 'n gepaste klassifikasie stelsel kry om die groot MTt veld deeglik 1) oorhoofs op te som en 2) om 'n maklike, oog-opslag, indeks te verskaf. Ek span dus my eie ontwikkeling in, hier in opsommende weergawe:

Jaartal	Tipes	Opmerkings
1741 tot 1780	Originaltaler Madonnentaler Konvensionstaler Kronentaler Minentaler Teengestempeld	➤ Die eerste MTt was in 1741 aangemunt, nadat Maria Theresia die Oostenrykse troon ge-erf het, met die afsterwe van haar pa, Carolus (Karl) VI in 1740. ➤ Daar was baie MTts en tipes tydens die Aartshertogin se heerskappy deur verskeie Munte aangemunt. Die munte was herken aan hulle tipes/datums en bv. lettertjies, soos IC en FA onder die arend se kloue op die agterkant, vir die Weense Munt. ➤ Met Maria Theresia se afsterwe in 1780, was daar besluit om met die MTt voort te gaan deur verskeie Munte (agv. oortuigende ekonomiese redes), tenspyte daarvan dat daar wel 'n taler in haar opvolger seun, Josef II, se naam bestaan het.
1780 tot hede	Gewone, klassiek Gewone, modern Teengestempeld Juweliersware Aardighede	➤ Tesame met die MTt se voortgang, was daar ook besluit om die 1780 datum en formaat onveranderd te behou, ter herdenking aan Maria Theresia. ➤ Daar was ongeveer 400 miljoen MTts in hierdie tydperk aangemunt, deur tot 18 Munte. Variasies in die randskrif en voor- en agterkant aspekte kan Munte en datum-reekse identifiseer. ➤ Daar is 'n interessante en groot groep teengestempelde MTts – wat bedoel was vir geld-eenhede in baie ander lande, en gemik vir versamelaars. In die Suider Afrikaanse konteks, bestaan daar bv. teengestempelde Mosambiekse MTts (1888-1895), asook 'n Suid Afrikaanse teengestempelde MTt (1976).

Die indeks word in latere artikels verder ontwikkel en MTts word dan in detail in hulle verskillende tipes bespreek.

The LP Maria Theresa taler index

Up to now, I've been unable to find a fitting classification system as a 1) good overall summary of the vast MTt field and 2) to provide an easy at-a-glance index. I'm therefore employing my own development, here in summary format:

Year	Types	Comments
1741 to 1780	Originaltaler Madonnentaler Konversionstaler Kronentaler Minentaler Counter stamped	➤ The first MTt was struck in 1741, after Maria Theresa inherited the Austrian throne after the passing of her father, Carolus (Charles) VI in 1740. ➤ Many MTts and types were struck during the Archduchess' reign by various mints. These coins are identified by types/dates and markings, for example the small IC en FA legends beneath the reverse side eagle's claws, for the Vienna mint. ➤ With Maria Theresa's passing in 1780, the decision was taken to continue with the MTt (due to compelling economic considerations), despite that a taler already existed in the name of her successor son, Josef II.
1780 to present	Ordinary, classic Ordinary, modern Counter stamped Jewellery Oddities	➤ Within the MTt's continuation, it was also resolved to retain the 1780 date and format in commemoration of Maria Theresa. ➤ In this period about 400 million MTts were struck by up to 18 Mints. Many coins can be identified by variations in edge writing and changes in obverse and reverse aspects. ➤ There is a large and most interesting group of counter stamped MTts – for monetary use in many different countries and to cater for collectors. In the Southern African context, MTts were for example counter struck for Mozambique (1888-1895), and in South Africa (1976).

The index is further developed in later articles, where MTts are discussed in detail with their various types.

Gunsteling aardigheid – die MTt monument in Trieste, Italië

Die 'Aardighede' tipe in my voorgenoemde Indeks is 'n versamel-kategorie vir MTts wat nie genoeg voorbeelde bevat, en teveel is, vir aparte tipes. Hierin klassifiseer ek bv. fout-, kleur-, horlosie- en vervalsde-MTts, en eienaardige MTt afbeeldings, bv. 'n 85mm deursnit edeltin (piouter, pewter) voorkant MTt, in my versameling.

Die hawestad Trieste was 'n belangrike deel van Maria Theresia se Hapsburg domein, en het tot die vierde grootste stad van die Austro-Hongaarse ryk, naas Vienne, Budapest and Praag, gegroei. Daardie geskiedenis is so belangrik vir die Tristini dat hulle 'n 16 ton vleklose staal MTt monument in Trieste se Piazza Ponterosso, op Feb 7th, 2023 ingehuldig het. Hierde monument is aanvegbaar steeds die grootste munt standbeeld ter wereld.



Photo: Internet, CitySmart; publication use pending

Favourite oddity – the MTt monument in Trieste, Italy

The 'Oddities' type in my aforementioned Index is a collection category for MTts which do not contain enough examples, and are too many to warrant separate types. Herein I classify, for example: error-, colour-, watch- and counterfeit-MTts, and quirky MTt depictions; for example, a 85mm diameter pewter obverse MTt, in my collection.

The port city of Trieste was an important part of Maria Theresia's Hapsburg domain, growing to become the fourth largest city in the Austro-Hungarian empire, after Vienna, Budapest and Prague. So important is that history to the Tristini that they inaugurated a 16 tonne stainless steel MTt monument in the city of Trieste's Piazza Ponterosso, on Feb 7th, 2023. This is arguably still the largest coin statue in the world.

Inligting bronne, information sources

Wanneer mens ernstig raak met MTt versameling, veral met 'n spesifieke fokus, raak dit relatief duur en moeilik (soveel opsies, skaarstes, vervalsings en foutiewe identifisering). Ek beveel dus deeglike navorsing aan, of om tenminste goed op te lees.

Ek verkies gepubliseerde bronne, vir verskeie redes, veral vir tasbaarheid, soos munte. Die boeke hier onder is gewaardeerde metgeselle vir hoeveel inligting hulle bevat en hoe hard hulle skrywers moes gewerk het. En natuurlik omdat ek hulle in die hande kon kry, gereeld teen waarskynlikheid in. Moderne navorsing sluit natuurlik ook internet verkenning in, wat ek verskaf soos ek bronne waardeer.

Alhoewel my artikels nie akademiese werke is, waardeer ek noukeurigheid en staaf ek minder bekende feite met akademies-belynde verwysings.

When one becomes serious about MTt collecting, especially with specific focus, it becomes relatively expensive and difficult (so many options, scarcity, counterfeits, and incorrect identification). I therefore advise thorough research, or at least to properly read.

I prefer published sources for various reasons, especially tactility, like coins. The books below are valued companions for their information content and how hard their authors must have laboured. And of course that I've managed to get hold of the books, often against probability. Modern research obviously includes internet reconnaissance, which I provide as I come to appreciate sources.

Although my articles are not academic works, I value accuracy and I support lesser known facts with academically-aligned references.

Davenport, J S 1964. *European Crowns 1700 – 1800*. London: Spink & Son Limited.

Frühwald, W Mag. Dr. 2020. *Die Münzen der Regentin Maria Theresia 1740 – 1780. 1st ed.* Salzburg: Verlag Frühwald.

Hafner, W Dr. h. c. & Stadlober, E Dr. 2022. *Lexikon Maria Theresien-Taler 1780, 3rd ed.* Salzburg: Verlag Frühwald.

Hoberman, G 1981. *The Art of Coins and their Photography*. London: Spink & Son Limited.

Semple, C 2005. *A Silver Legend. The story of the Maria Theresia Thaler*. Manchester: Barzan Publishing Limited.

www.numista.com By respective search criteria.

www.theresia.name. *The Maria Theresa Thaler 1780*.