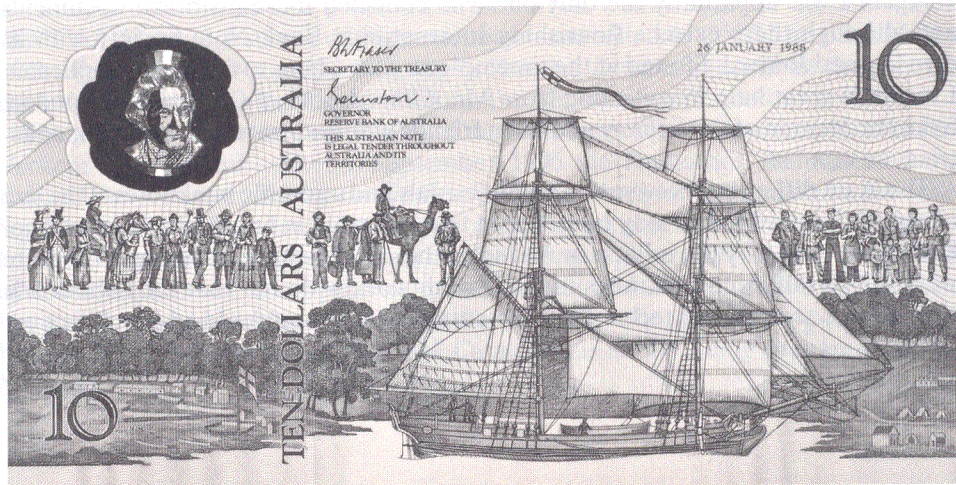


Title 76

India's 2 rupee banknote has so far remained the only one to show a spacecraft, manned or unmanned, on a national currency issue. The astronomical satellite was launched by a Russian rocket in 1975 and is named **Aryabhata** after a Hindu astronomer of the 5th century. The banknote measures 65 x 105 mm.

Author's collection.



Title 76

The first plastic **Polymer Banknote** with an OVD design was the Australian \$ 10 note, issued on 26 January 1988 to celebrate the country's bicentennial. The OVD, the Optically Variable Design, is based on a Moiré pattern and makes it impossible to reproduce the banknote on a colour photo copying machine. In this banknote the OVD is the picture of Captain Cook surrounded by a transparent background, here appearing as deep black. *Author's collection.*

The Art and Science of Numismatics has three disciplines: Coins, collected since antiquity; Medals, gathered since the Renaissance, and Banknotes, which, with their strange history, have been collected only during the last 100 years. Few will realise that the Chinese invented the first banknotes, printed from a carved wood block with elaborate designs onto paper made from the bark of the mulberry tree. Although there is evidence that the first were printed in 1023 AD, none have survived. The oldest surviving printed banknotes date from the beginning of the Ming dynasty, and are generally dated 1375 AD. I was fortunate to find a genuine specimen to add to my historical collection. [See Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* Vol. 5, Part 1, p. 96]

No paper money existed for the next 300 years, and the first printed banknotes re-appeared in Sweden in 1661, in America 1690, France 1720, Russia 1768, England 1797 and Germany 1806. These early examples had only graphic designs and the first black-and-white pictorial banknotes were printed by the multitude of private banks in North America from the middle of the 19th century onwards. These small banks, here today and gone tomorrow, wanted to advertise to their clients their monetary strength, their security and their modernity by having pictures on their banknotes of the latest technological achievements, like railways, steamships and electric telegraphs. These I collected if I could find and afford them.

Colour security printing advanced slowly. Only since the end of World War II have I found banknotes with portraits of scientists and engineers, or their achievements, which I could include in my collection following the same definition which I used for scientific medals [see Title 74]. I began collecting at the beginning of the 1980s and by 1997, when my collection was acquired by the Deutsches Technikmuseum in Berlin, the total was 1300 scientific banknotes from all over the world.

Again I was apparently the only one who collected these historical documents and although there exists a flourishing International Bank Note Society with its own learned Journal, I found at the time no-one with whom to exchange duplicates. I received great help in collecting from Mrs Claire Lobel of Coincraft in London, from the Journal of the Society and from friends who had travelled to distant countries.

The main difference between scientific medals and scientific banknotes is the size of their editions. Medals may be struck in tens or rarely in hundreds, whereas banknotes are issued by the million or multiples thereof. I estimated that by 1997 there were 20000 different banknotes in circulation worldwide but that only about 5 % showed any scientific or technological pictures which I could add to my collection.

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