

The Albert Einstein vignette bank note collection.

Albert Einstein was born in Ulm Germany in 1879 to a family of into a family of secular Ashkenazi Jews. His family moved to Italy in 1894. In 1896 at the age of 16, Einstein moved to Switzerland to complete his secondary education and relinquish his German citizenship the following year. While visiting the United States, Adolph Hitler came into power In Germany. Einstein was to stay permanently in the United States and became an American citizen in 1940.

One could reasonably hope Germany, Italy, Switzerland, or the United States would honor him with bank notes showing his effigy. Einstein was asked to become the president of the newly emerging state of Israel in 1952 by Israel's first leader, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. Einstein, a supporter of Zionism, turned down the offer, explaining he lacked "both the natural aptitude and the experience to deal properly with people and to exercise official functions." Israel still honored him with a classic image of Einstein on the front of the 1968 5 Lirot (P-34a & P-34b¹, B411a & B411b²). By no coincidence, the front features an atomic symbol while the reverse shows the atomic reactor at Nahal Sorek. The artwork was designed by Masino Besi of Italy and Sam Hertz of the Netherlands. The watermark also depicts Einstein. The Dutch printer Joh. Enschedé en Zonen produced the note. The "a" version of the note with a black serial number was introduced in 1972 while the "b" red serial number was introduced in 1974. The currency was withdrawn as legal tender in 1984.



Figure 1 SCWPM P-34b¹ front



Figure 2 WCWPM P-34b¹ reverse

Since Einstein is not a dead President, it is no surprise he is not honored on a United States banknote. What would one look like if one was produced? Possibly like this Robert Dowd ink drawing on paper produced in 1968. The work has generous 9 ½" x 14 ¼" dimensions. If something looks awry, it should be mentioned this is part of his folded money series.



Figure 3 "E=MC 50" drawing by Dowd

None of the other countries Einstein lived in so honored him, BUT there are 15 notes from 11 firms with 32 varieties who do depict Einstein on their notes! Who are these firms and what notes do they have that a world currency collector doesn't

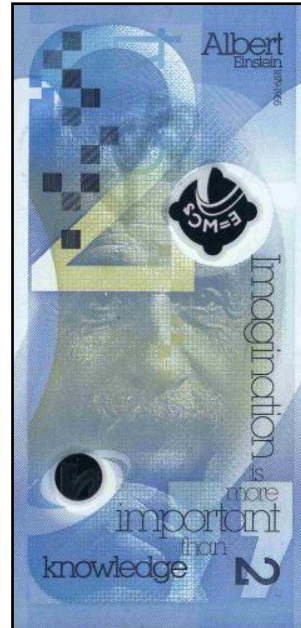
recognize? They are test notes. Modern test notes are produced to tout the banknote printers, substrate manufacturers, and security device makers' latest achievements. Often more than one firm will contribute their newest trade mark or patented features to a test note. The most firms to blend their designs, substrates, devices, or inks on a single test note is attributed in The Printers Promotional Sheets and Test Notes, 16th Edition is five.

By far, the largest group of Einstein test notes was produced by Thomas De La Rue of England, printer of bank notes for about 150 countries worldwide. Denominations of 2, 5, and 50 were produced over several years starting in 2010.

The 2 denomination has Guardian polymer substrate with two types attributed, one with AZ000000 serial number while the other has unique serial numbers with several prefixes starting with AA. Both catalog at \$75.



Figure 4 TDLR-572b³ front



TDLR-572³ reverse

There are six 5 Denomination types attributed, also all with polymer substrate. One has a different polymer called FlexicoinsTM. Other differences are colors, with and without serial numbers, with and without signatures, and objects on the two clear windows. One of the more scarce types follows with a catalog value of \$130.

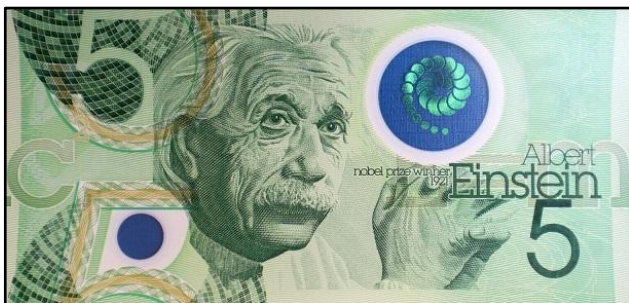
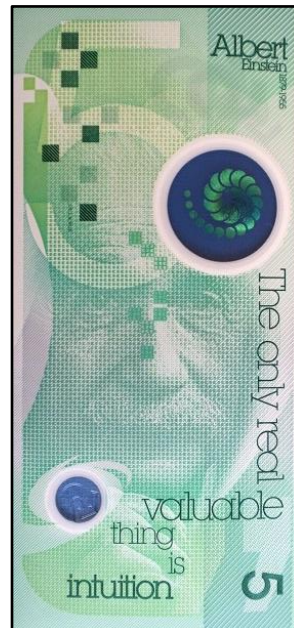


Figure 5 TDLR-574e³ front



TDLR-574e³ reverse

The 50 denomination has more plentiful varieties with nine attributed. All are cotton substrate. Most tout different types of security strips including MagForm[®], Achromatic Depth Thread[®], StarBright[®], and Starchrome[®]. As well as solid silver and red threads, color shifting colors available include Magenta to Green, Green to Purple, Blue to Red, and Violet to bronze. This one has two security strips and is valued at about \$90. Like many modern test notes, it is available in an advertising brochure, given away at currency conferences and in person to potential and existing customers – many central banks and monetary authorities.



Figure 6 TDLR-571a1c³ front



TDLR-571a1c³ reverse

Two other Thomas De La Rue test notes tout holographic Depth™ without the background of the others. They are also uniface.



Figure 7 TDLR-682³

After TDLR, the firm Landis + Gyr AG from Switzerland produced three test notes of 10, 20, and 50 Francs depicting Einstein. All were designed by the famous banknote designer Atelier Roger Pfund. All these uniface notes have the same vignette of Einstein with different colors and security features. All have sales of \$25 each, but not recent. I suspect a new sale would run about twice that amount.

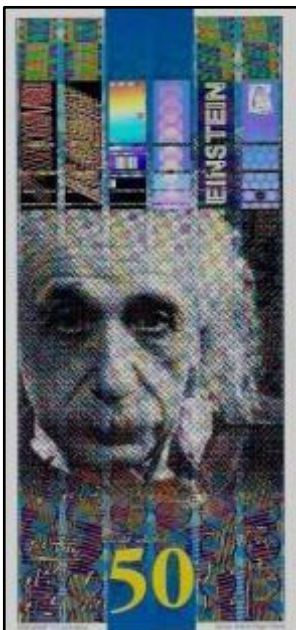


Figure 8 LGYR-103D³

Probably the oldest test note made in the 1940s was co-produced by Societe Technique d'Impressions Fiduciaire and E. Desfosses, both of France. There are two versions, one with the company name at bottom right, the other exhibiting a serial number. Both uniface notes are valued at \$200.



Figure 9 STIL-121aD³

Portals paper mill was established in 1712. Its first order was the Bank of England in 1724. Thomas De La Rue owned the firm from 1995 to 2018. They produced a promotional sheet with Sir Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein watermarks, available for about \$25 each.



Figure 10 PORT-201³

Organization Giori produced one Einstein test note in the 1970-1980s with a blank reverse valued at \$300. By 1952, KBA acquired 50% stake in Organization Giori of Lausanne, Switzerland. In 1965, De La Rue acquired a 50% ownership. KBA (Koenig und Bauer) bought out De La Rue's remaining 50% in 2001. The note was designed by the Austrian firm OeBS. The former bank note printing works of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank (OeNB) became a limited company in 1998, named OeBS, and today is a specialist in the production of bank notes for the international market, mostly to eastern European countries.

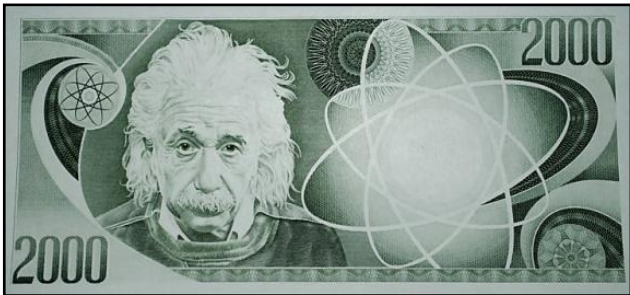


Figure 11 GIOR-291³

Another test note was produced by Silba, valued at \$45. Silba was formed as a joint venture in 1984 between Mobil Oil and AgraVadeko, thus the Pegasus logo of Mobil on this test note. Trial notes with Duranote (an early polymer substrate) were printed for 21 countries, but trials were not successful and the program was discontinued. The partnership was dissolved in 1996. After the 1998 merger of Exxon Corp. and Mobil, the patents for the DuraNote substrate were abandoned. Since July 2013 the patents are owned by Canadian Bank Note Company.

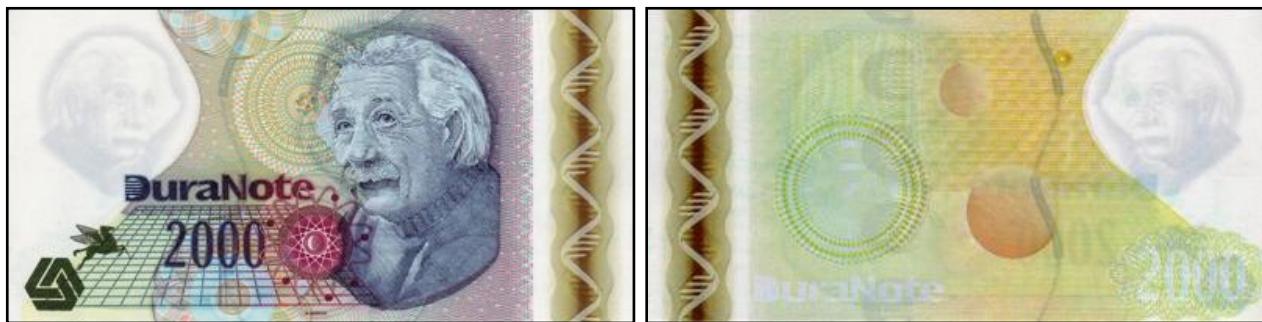


Figure 12 SIL-111³ front

SIL-111³ reverse

Another Einstein test note was produced by KOMSEP. The abbreviation the firm was changed to KOMSCO. Formed in 1951, Korea Minting and Security Printing Corporation (KOMSCO) is a government-owned corporation which is responsible to print and mint the banknotes and coins and other government documents. The uniface note valued at \$200 has a Beethoven watermark.

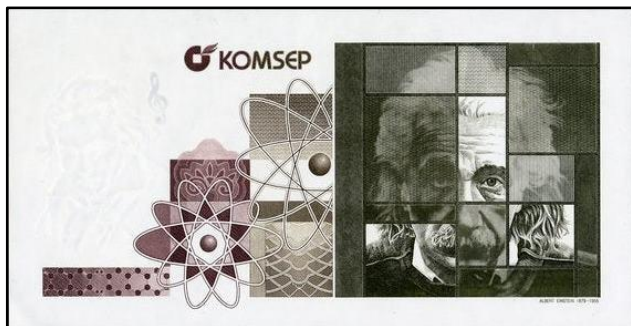


Figure 13 KOMSC-001³

The newest known Einstein test note valued at \$90 was produced by Surys. Surys was established in 1984 as Hologram Industries. Surys produces DOVID patches, stripes and thread for banknotes for Brazil, Philippines, Lebanon, Thailand, and European Union. Alphagram® 50 DIVOD protects 50, 100, 200, and 500 Euro banknotes. Hologram Industries changed its name to Surys in 2015.



Figure 14 SURY-111³ front

SURY-111³ reverse

ADDENDUM

Cataloging a topical collection like Albert Einstein on bank notes and test or house notes is a moving target. I had finished this article in late September only to be alerted to a new polymer house note from Kryten released on October 1, 2021. It features both Albert Einstein and Dennis Gabor. Both are winners of the Nobel Prize for physics in 1921 and 1971 respectively. Kryten is a world class holographic device manufacturer whose products are utilized on all Russian bank notes and some newer notes of Libya and Angola. It is no surprise Gabor is featured with Einstein. Born Dénes Günszberg, Gabor invented holography in 1947. The house note is named "100/50 Nobelists House Note". There is no catalog value set yet because there is no market test for this note yet.



Figure 15 KRY-121³ front



KRY-121³ reverse

SOURCES

- ¹ - "Standard Catalog of World Paper Money". Vol. 3: Modern Issues, 24th Edition
- ² - "The Banknote Book"
- ³ - "Catalog of Printers Promotional Sheets & Test Notes", 16th Edition