

# COINAGE OF BIAFRA



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## **STANDARD CATALOG OF BANKNOTES, COINS AND EXONUMIA 1967-2025**

**Anton Andreev**

**Moscow  
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**Coinage of Biafra.**

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The Catalog contains a detailed description and illustrations of 7 banknotes and 22 coins of Biafra by 1967-1969, some silver and copper trial strikes to be described for the first time. It also includes sections on postage stamps of Biafra, and exonumia items. Among them there are 22 unusual coins that were issued unofficially under the name of Biafra during 2012-2025.

The Catalog addresses to professional numismatists and exonumia collectors, coins and banknotes collectors, researchers on the economy and culture of Nigeria and Central Africa.

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Cover photos:

Civilians fleeing Aba to go to Umuahia (Francois Mazure / AFP, 1968).  
Igbo fighters (Gilles Caron, 1968).

## FOREWORD

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## INTRODUCTION

The Catalog consists of 4 main sections. We present coins, banknotes, postage and cinderella stamps<sup>10</sup>, exnumia items and unusual coins<sup>11</sup> in each section in chronological order.

We use original A-BFR# numbers for coins, banknotes, and exnumia items. Additionally Krause World Coins Catalog (WCC), or Numista online catalog number is given<sup>12</sup>.

We give a price guide for each coin, banknote, or unusual coin in excellent condition (Uncirculated, UNC), according to market prices of the largest Russian and international auctions, and estimates of numismatic platforms [www.numista.com](http://www.numista.com) and [www.ucoin.net](http://www.ucoin.net).

| <b>Rarity</b>        | <b>Estimate (USD)</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| C (Common)           | 1 - 10                |
| S (Scarce)           | 11 - 100              |
| R (Rare)             | 101 - 1 000           |
| RR (Very rare)       | 1001 - 10 000         |
| RRR (Extremely rare) | 10 001 - 100 000      |

Size and color of each image in the Catalog can differ from original size and color of coin, banknote, or exnumia item.

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<sup>10</sup> Cinderellas or non-postage stamps, small-format pieces made by graphic methods on paper with no relation to postal circulation.

<sup>11</sup> Unusual or fantasy coin means a non-legal tender souvenir item which has the main visual features of a coin (i.e. face value, symbolism of the issuing state), but never used in a monetary circulation. The issuing state designated on unusual coin either does not exist, or does not officially recognize it as a legal tender on its territory. As a rule, producers of unusual coins remain unknown.

<sup>12</sup> We use KM# for the coin, P# for the banknote, X# for unusual coin according to Krause WCC (46th edition for XX century, 13th edition for XXI century) and Numismaster.com, or N# according to Numista online catalog. For certain stamps mentioned below, we use Mi# according to Michel Stamps catalog.

Biafra proclaimed independence on the territory of Eastern Nigeria (West Africa) about 60 years ago in May 1967. Short 30 months of sovereignty of new state were associated with trials of war and a severe famine.

In June 1967, the Bank of Biafra was established as one of the first state institutions. In January 1968, under economic blockade by the Federal Government of Nigeria, authorities of independent Biafra introduced their own banknotes (5 shillings and 1 pound) into monetary circulation within its territory. British monetary system was inherited, familiar from colonial times: 1 pound equal to 20 shillings or 240 pence.

In February 1969, banknotes of the second series (5 and 10 shillings, 1, 5 and 10 pounds), and 3 types of aluminum coins (3 pence, 1 and 2 ½ shillings) were put into circulation as well.

In December 1969, a series of low-mintage commemorative gold coins of 1, 2, 5, 10, 25 Biafran pounds was issued in honor of the 2nd Anniversary of the Independence of Biafra.

After the end of civil war in January 1970, Nigerian government canceled Biafran monetary unit, to confiscate and to destroy most of Biafran cash soon after.

In recent decades, there has been evidence of attempts of limited reuse of preserved Biafran banknotes of 1967-69 issues, in monetary circulation in Eastern Nigeria and in some border settlements of Togo, Benin and Ivory Coast. On its territory, Nigerian authorities have been harshly suppressing such attempts (Owen 2009).

During 2012-2025 they minted over 20 unusual coins under the name of Biafra, a half dedicated to the anniversary of the Bank of Biafra<sup>13</sup>.

Quality of design of most unusual coins is low, both from a technical and artistic point of view. Its design normally bears elements of several original circulating and commemorative coins of Biafra. There is no information about producer and mintage of most of these items.

Unusual coins under the name of Biafra have been never used into monetary circulation. These items are not legal tender within territory of Nigeria, including territory of ex-independent Biafra, therefore they cannot be considered coins.

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<sup>13</sup> For comparison: independent Nigeria after 1960 issued 2 commemorative coins only (in 1994 in silver and gold), both dedicated to the 100th anniversary of banking in Nigeria.

## OFFICIAL COINS. 1967-1969

1968

In February 1968, Nigerian «Sunday Post» newspaper reported the introduction of Biafran first coins, turned to be tokens of light plastic (Okigbo 1989):

«The coins were light plastics cut out in shillings and pennies bearing the inscription «TOKEN TWO SHILLINGS», «TOKEN ONE SHILLING», and «TOKEN THREE PENCE».... the samples bounced like a ping pong ball when dropped on the hard floor. The plastic has obviously been introduced by Ojukwu as a face saving device and to deceive his collaborators that he could still do something about the chaotic condition of the monetary situation in the rebel held areas».

Dr. Pius Nwabufo Charles Okigbo (\*1924-†2000) helped to establish the Bank of Biafra, and convinced Biafran government to produce national currency.

During 1967 it turned to be too expensive to mint coins abroad, and to deliver coins from abroad as well. Thus they decided to mint coins locally (Uche 2002). However, there is still lack of evidence that these patterns were ever minted.

At least during 1967-68 Nigerian coins remained to be legal tender within Biafra.

|                                                                                                             |             |                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
|  <p>No image available</p> | Face value  | 3 pence                |
|                                                                                                             | Year        | 1968                   |
|                                                                                                             | Composition | light plastic          |
|                                                                                                             | Weight      | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Diameter    | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Mintage     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Mint        | reported not confirmed |
|                                                                                                             | Number      | A-BFR#1                |
|                                                                                                             | Obverse     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Reverse     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Edge        | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Estimate    | RR                     |

Fig. 1. 3 pence token 1968

|                                                                                                             |             |                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
|  <p>No image available</p> | Face value  | 1 shilling             |
|                                                                                                             | Year        | 1968                   |
|                                                                                                             | Composition | light plastic          |
|                                                                                                             | Weight      | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Diameter    | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Mintage     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Mint        | reported not confirmed |
|                                                                                                             | Number      | A-BFR#2                |
|                                                                                                             | Obverse     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Reverse     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Edge        | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                             | Estimate    | RR                     |

Fig. 2. 1 shilling token 1968

|                                                                                                               |             |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
|  <p>No image available</p> | Face value  | 2 shilling             |
|                                                                                                               | Year        | 1968                   |
|                                                                                                               | Composition | light plastic          |
|                                                                                                               | Weight      | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                               | Diameter    | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                               | Mintage     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                               | Mint        | reported not confirmed |
|                                                                                                               | Number      | A-BFR#3                |
|                                                                                                               | Obverse     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                               | Reverse     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                               | Edge        | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                                               | Estimate    | RR                     |

Fig. 3. 2 shilling token 1968

1969

It is known about a contract in November 1968 with a delivery period of 100 days between the Bank of Biafra and a manufacturer in Portugal for production of 60 million coins in 1 shilling (diameter – 23.2 mm, weight – 1.9 g, thickness – 1.6 mm) and 10 million coins in 2 shillings (diameter – 27.0 mm, weight – 3.1 g, thickness – 2.0 mm), both made of aluminum-magnesium alloy. It was supposed to pack 1 000 coins of 2 shillings per bag, and 2 000 coins of 1 shilling per bag (Angelo 2019). There is no confirmation of this contract to be fulfilled.

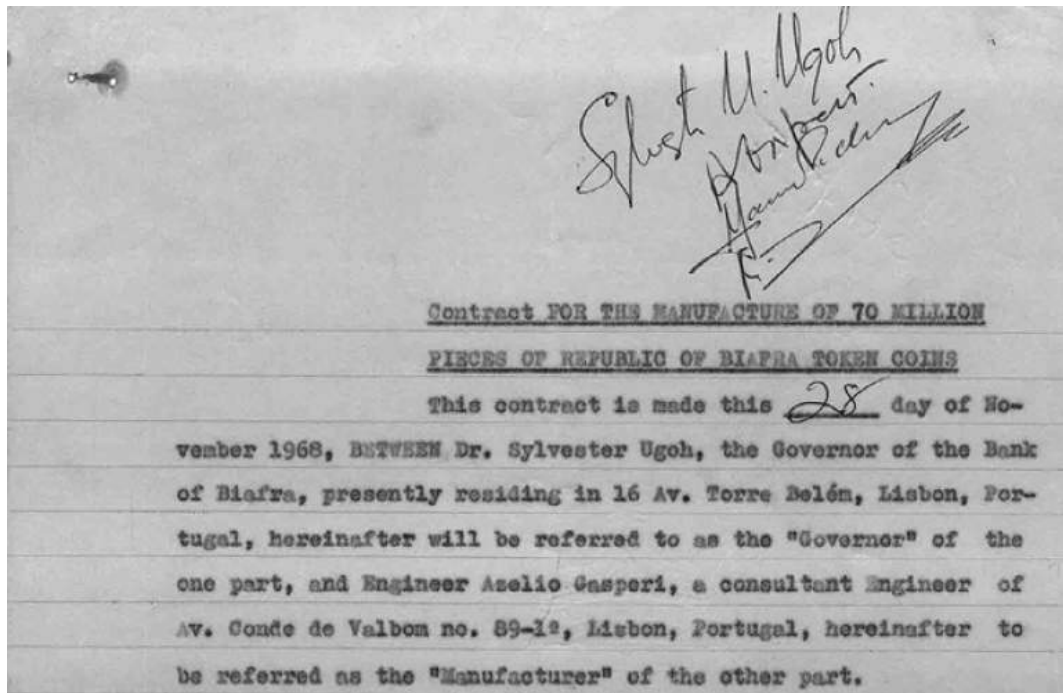


Fig. 4.1. Excerpt from the contract for Biafran coins manufacture, 1968 (Angelo 2019)

This contract was signed by Dr. Sylvester Ezewiro Uzor Ugoh (\*1931) as governor of the Bank of Biafra, the only one in its history, by Eng. Azelio Gasperi as manufacturer, and by Dr. Manuel Augusto Pechirra (\*1941-†2020) as guarantor.

Manuel Pechirra worked for Biafran Government and was responsible for information and PR. He was mandated by Gen. Odumegwu Ojukwu<sup>14</sup> (\*1933-†2011) to coordinate some activities in Portugal and other European countries, including printing of coins and banknotes in Lisbon (Angelo 2019).

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<sup>14</sup> Nigerian military officer, nationalist, political figure, the son of one of Nigeria's richest Igbo businessmen, who made a fortune in transportation and trade. He received a higher humanitarian and military education in the United Kingdom, and served as President of Biafra from 1967 to 1970.

However, since February 1969, there were 3 types of coins in circulation, namely 3 pence, 1 and 2 ½ shillings. That could be confirmed at least in The Report of the Biafra Study Commission<sup>15</sup> by U.S. senator Charles E. Goodell at the Senate meeting on 25th of February, 1969.

There is no reliable information about its producer and mintage. Coins were minted in Portugal (Malcolm 1971), presumably at the Portuguese Mint (Casa da Moeda). They were delivered to Biafra from Portugal by sea and by flights in 1969-1970 (Seibert 2018). Lightweight aluminum as material for coins had been chosen highly likely due to difficulties with future delivery.

We have a document for delivery of 762 boxes of coins weighing 23.6 tons, and 1 917 boxes of banknotes weighing 26.4 tons to the island of Sao Tome from Portugal by the vessel «Alenquer» in July 1969 (Freire 2017). Thus number of delivered coins can be estimated at 7-30 million pieces, while banknotes – at 23-25 million pieces.

In October 1972 H. William (Bill) Bernhardt stated that he had arranged for the printing of Biafran money (Davis 1977), and apparently its delivery. Mr. Bernhardt was American advertising and PR manager, having had worked for BBDO agency. He opened the news service of Markpress (Biafran Overseas Press Service) (Geneva, Switzerland), where from January 1968 to January 1970 he was engaged in propaganda for the independence of Biafra, having had settled a special contract with Government of Biafra.

First coins were presumably designed by Nigerian artist Simon Obiekezie Okeke (\*1937-†1969) and other local artists (Wolff 2024). Design of the coins features official signs and symbols of Biafra: «Peace, Unity, Freedom» motto, the rising sun, a manilla<sup>16</sup>, a coconut palm tree<sup>17</sup>, a leopard, an eagle holding an elephant tusk in its paws.

Both types of coins of 6 pence and 1 shilling with word «ONE» instead of the number «1» on reverse, apparently were not released into circulation.

They said it could be possible to obtain 6 pence coins in 1970 directly from Markpress in Geneva<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1969/02/25/115/senate-section/article/4290-4468>, accessed – 15.01.2025.

<sup>16</sup> Manilla was a mean of payment of pre-coinage period (Opitz 2011; Denk 2020).

<sup>17</sup> Palm oil and kernels were among major export in Biafra. Palm tree was one of basic elements of official coat of arms of the British West Africa. This colony included territories of modern Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Ghana (former the British Gold Coast). Palm tree was depicted on colony's coins by 1 and 2 shillings.

<sup>18</sup> See Coins (vol. 7, № 5, May 1970, p. 60).

|                                                                                   |             |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
|  | Face value  | 3 pence            |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969               |
|                                                                                   | Composition | aluminum           |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 0.7 g              |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 16.5-17.0 mm       |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.               |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a. (Portugal)    |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#4, KM#1      |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Face value         |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth             |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | S                  |

Fig. 4. 3 pence 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 6 pence              |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | aluminum             |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 1.2 g                |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 20.5 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | ca. 20 <sup>19</sup> |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a. (Portugal)      |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#5, KM#12       |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree   |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Face value           |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | RR                   |

Fig. 5. 6 pence 1969

<sup>19</sup> This coin was expected to be released into circulation in September 1969, and was first mentioned in February 1970 (see *The Numismatist*, vol. 83, №2, February 1970, p. 167). Its specimen seemed to be discovered in 1996 only (see *Coin World*, August 1996, p. 66).

|                                                                                   |             |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 shilling         |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969               |
|                                                                                   | Composition | aluminum           |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 1.7-1.8 g          |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 23.5 mm            |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.               |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a. (Portugal)    |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#6, KM#2      |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Coat of arms       |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth             |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | S                  |

Fig. 6. 1 shilling 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 shilling         |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969               |
|                                                                                   | Composition | aluminum           |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 1.6-1.9 g          |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 23.5 mm            |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | ca. 20             |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a. (Portugal)    |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#7, KM#3      |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Coat of arms       |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth             |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | R                  |

Fig. 7. 1 «ONE» shilling 1969

|                                                                                     |             |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
|  | Face value  | 2 ½ shilling       |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 1969               |
|                                                                                     | Composition | aluminum           |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 2.9-3.0 g          |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 27.0 mm            |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | n.a.               |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | n.a. (Portugal)    |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#8, KM#4      |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Leopard            |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | smooth             |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | S                  |

Fig. 8. 2 ½ shilling 1969

Two types of silver coins generally are treated as doubtful. Both had been never circulated, and occasionally appeared in numismatic market later than 1969.

|                                                                                   |             |                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 pound                   |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                      |
|                                                                                   | Composition | silver (.750)             |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 24.5-27.0 g <sup>20</sup> |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 37.0-38.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                      |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                      |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#9, KM#6             |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms              |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, declaration        |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded                    |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | R                         |

Fig. 9. 1 pound 1969

This coin could have been found on the international numismatic market at least since September 1971<sup>21</sup> and has been cataloged since 1972 (Yeoman 1972). We assume that the same forms were used to produce the dies for this coin and for the set of gold coins of 1969, but production itself began after the end of civil war in Nigeria.

Design of this coin matches design of 10 pound 1969 gold coin, down to smallest details of the coat of arms, but with different font on obverse and reverse (Fig. 9.1). Both coins have rather similar diameter of 38 and 40 mm.



Fig. 9.1. Non-stamped diagonal on shield of coat of arms: 1 pound, 10 pound, 10 pound die 1969

This coin's alignment could be medal or coin, while coin alignment type is 2-3 times more common than medal one.

<sup>20</sup> Until 2014, Krause WCC indicated its weight as 19.8 g, which differs much from weight of genuine coins.

<sup>21</sup> See Numismatic News, vol. 19, №39, September 1971, p. 11.

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 crown              |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | silver               |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 28.0-28.6 g          |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 38.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | ca. 10 <sup>22</sup> |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#10, KM#5       |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Odumegwu Ojukwu      |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Palm tree            |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | RRR <sup>23</sup>    |

Fig. 10. 1 crown 1969 (image by NGC Photo Vision)

This coin seems to appear on the international numismatic market in late 1980ties. Presumably Istituto Numismatico Europeo (I.N.E.) (Milan, Italy) was distributor of this coin. We assume that letters «IC» (but not just «C») depicted at the base of palm tree on reverse (Fig. 10.1), could refer to ItalCambio. Thus this coin was apparently struck at Gori and Zucchi (1AR) (Arezzo, Italy).

On reverse under palm tree, letters «N.L.K.», or «J.I.L.h» are depicted, which can denote initials of coin's designer or engraver (Fig. 10.1).



Fig. 10.1. Element of reverse of 1 crown 1969



Fig. 10.2. Connecticut copper cent 1787

We suppose this coin to be designed in US, or by American numismatist with no authorization by Biafran authorities of 1967-70.

In comparison to Biafran original motto «Peace, Unity, Freedom», «Independence and Liberty» motto seems to be typical American.

<sup>22</sup> 6 pieces were known to 2018 (see Heritage Auction Galleries Catalog №3066, August 2018, p. 93).

<sup>23</sup> This coin is considered to be one of the most expensive 1 crown coins. Auction price during 2014-2024 varied USD 7 000 – 15 000.

We can see «INDE ET. LIB» abbreviation in Latin on Connecticut copper cents, minted from 1785 to 1788. Each coin depicted Britannia as the personification of American Liberty (Fig. 10.2). Tiny flowers look rather similar to those depicted on obverse of crown coin as well.

There is no image of Biafran leader, Gen. Odumegwu Ojukwu met in Biafran currency and stamps' design. While his portrait on obverse of crown coin was made in a special manner of caricature, with no military cap and jacket.

For comparison we show an original artwork by a cartoonist Richard Willson (\*1939-†2011) (Fig. 10.3). This image was used for the front cover of The Spectator magazine, published on 20th December, 1969.



Fig. 10.3. Gen. Odumegwu Ojukwu (Richard Willson, December 1969)

A set of gold commemorative coins in honor of the 2nd Anniversary of the Independence of Biafra, occurred in May 1969, was issued on December 6, 1969. There was still a month left before an act of surrender of self-proclaimed state would be signed.

This set contained 5 coins with denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 25 pounds. Its mintage was limited to 3 000 pieces. Each one had a numbered certificate of authenticity (CoA) signed by Sylvester Ugoh, governor of the Bank of Biafra (Fig. 11.01). Coins were never declared legal tender, nor released into circulation. Some researchers considered this issue speculative and «controversial» (Yeoman 1972).



Fig. 11.01. CoA for set of gold coins 1969

We assume that William Bernhardt was a key runner of this issue, from idea and design to production and distribution.

Profit from gold coins distribution was a way for Biafran authorities to pay Markpress agency for its PR services (Davis 1977)<sup>24</sup>. A set was on sale at a price of CHF 2 000 (equivalent to USD 464 in 1970, or USD 990 in December 1977). That price included packaging and delivery.

We note a serious influence of American tradition on these coins design. An eagle on reverse with its plumage looks rather similar to an eagle from American Numismatic Association (ANA) Convention Medal of 1969. An image with its earlier design by famous American engraver Frank Gasparro (\*1909-†2001), was published in *The Numismatist* on May 1969 (Fig. 11.02).

<sup>24</sup> Revenue would be at least USD 1.4 mln, while costs would be ca. USD 0.6 mln. Total weight of pure gold in each set was 135.5 grams, while price was USD 1.2 per 1 gram of pure gold in 1968-70, and a premium estimate was 20%. Thus ca. USD 0.8 mln of net profit could be expected. For comparison: total charity amount provided Biafra from relief organizations during 1967-69 was estimated at USD 3.5-20.0 mln.



Fig. 11.02. ANA 1969 Convention Medal early design (Frank Gasparro, May 1969)

«Fight for Survival» motto refers to report submitted to Biafran officials by Markpress agency in early 1968 (Davis 1977). Later we could meet this motto in the article by The Guardian journalist John Fairhall (\*1928-†2015) (Fig. 11.03).

**NIGERIA**

## Biafrans need peace to win fight for survival

By JOHN FAIRHALL

An attempt to draw up a balance sheet of the prospect of a reasonably civilised peace at the conclusion of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war has to start with the military situation.

Here, the Federal Government holds most of the assets. They have already captured two-thirds of the secessionists' territory, they surround the Biafrans, they have a flow of men, arms, and money (and if Britain did not supply arms, other countries would make good the loss). They have some aircraft, some artillery, light and heavy armoured cars, and the momentum of victory.

The Biafrans have no source of outside supply except occasional flights into hurriedly extended landing strips. These flights can continue while the landing strips can be kept repaired and charter pilots found. The federation's only night flying aircraft are the UAR Illyushin bombers.

Biafra is without artillery, without aircraft. Its ingenuity has produced home-made rockets which are powerful but inaccurate, and a weird assortment of home-made armoured vehicles—all too slow to be effective. They are short of explosives. Basically their defence relies on small arms and the cover for ambush and guerrilla warfare provided by the thick vegetation. A village 20 yards from the road is often invisible behind the screen of banana trees, maize, palms, mangoes, and the rest.

Militarily then, the Biafrans cannot hope to stop the Federal Army. The best they can do is to slow the advance, and once their towns have fallen harass the Federal troops along roads ideal for ambushers. Operating against the mostly raw Federal troops they could claim heavy casualties and severely hamper Federal movement outside the towns and away from the main roads.

To fight through the Biafran Ibo tribal land would be to invite a hideous slaughter, to turn the Ibo heartland into a killing ground. For troops to withstand guerrilla warfare without turning on the civil populace with the familiar pattern of reprisals and deterrents requires first-class discipline and cool and controlled leaders. The Nigerian forces in the field have neither. Among them are varying amounts of arrogance, excitability (sometimes hump-induced hysteria), lack of training and anti-Ibo hatred. So far as the Ibos are concerned it is a lethal mixture.

cially they have been supported by some foreign commercial interests—the Federal Government indicts French firms although not the French Government. From the Portuguese they get facilities for air supply of arms and journalists.

This outside pressure must have some influence on the Nigerians but well before the Ivory Coast and Zambian recognition of Biafra there were many indications that they were ready to be flexible. The Federal team went off to Kampala last week for the peace talks ready to make concessions, short of the rigid insistence that Biafra must renounce secession and accept the 12-State Nigeria.

Without any outside pressure, however, Nigeria's head of State, General Gowon, and a probably dominant section of the military and civilian leaders round him are searching for a solution that avoids fighting through Ibo land and leads to the reintegration of the Ibo. The alternatives are a bloody slaughter and a running sore of civil disturbance along with economic disruption and hostile external political pressure, or a federation in which the Ibos are contained in their own predominantly rural State while the Ibo talent that once gave them their commanding rôle in trade and administration is eventually available for the benefit of all Nigeria.

### Ibos' future

To get peace General Gowon has to convince the Biafran Ibos that they have a future. To do this without tighter control of the Federal troops is going to be very difficult. In the northern part of Biafra—the territory now in Federal hands—civilian life generally went back almost to subsistence farming level. Only a trickle of trade goes through the few markets that have been restarted. The sight of Federal troops is usually enough to keep the Ibo villagers hidden in the villages and the bush. Malnutrition is rampant. In the as yet uncaptured areas of Biafra, in which the leaders of the secession are to be found, even this stagnation would almost certainly be impossible.

The most sensible policy appears to be an increasing of troops and the way in the future this is done. The fact of the Ibo's return to some most encouraging sign is the civil war situation. The picture given is no sign of Federal strategic gains as a number of insurance, but instead to state the Central Bank would be Federal policy. Federal policy is to be disciplined than the way) and this without tighter control of the Federal troops is going to be very difficult. In the northern part of Biafra—the territory now in Federal hands—civilian life generally went back almost to subsistence farming level. Only a trickle of trade goes through the few markets that have been restarted. The sight of Federal troops is usually enough to keep the Ibo villagers hidden in the villages and the bush. Malnutrition is rampant. In the as yet uncaptured areas of Biafra, in which the leaders of the secession are to be found, even this stagnation would almost certainly be impossible.

It would be surprising if the Federal negotiators are not pointing forward the use at the Kampala talks. Yet to Biafrans it would seem to be the only effective manner of their lives. Much as they would like to see of their former removal dominance, staying alive is what matters.

### Civilian clothes

The Federal officer in charge of the Port Harcourt sector, Lieutenant-Colonel Ayo Ariyo, while preparing for the final attack told me that all Biafran troops in the city were wearing civilian clothes: all civilians would have fled, and anyone who was not a Federal soldier was an enemy and a target. With this considered approach from a senior officer it is easy to see why the corpses the vultures were ripping open on the road to Port Harcourt were all in civilian clothes. In Ibo land the distinction between soldier and civilian would obviously be fatally blurred. The killing of Ibos by Federal troops have already been admitted by the Federal leaders, although excused and the numbers disputed.

From the outside world the Biafrans have the political support that stems from their recognition by Tanzania, Gabon, Ivory Coast, and Zambia. Finances

Jubilant Federal troops in Port Harcourt

THE GUARDIAN — MONDAY 27. 1968 (page 13)

Fig. 11.03. «Biafrans need peace to win fight for survival» (The Guardian, May 1968)

The word «SPES» means «hope» in Latin, while 2 stars obviously mean 2 years of Biafra's independence.

Set was packed in a special original gift box with red inner cardboard (Fig. 11.04).



Fig. 11.04. Original gift box for gold coins 1969

According to Remick, a set was produced by «Istituto Numismatico Europeo» (I.N.E.) (Milan, Italy), distributor of gold coins and medals (Remick 1971). Another version says that Geneva Gold Refining Factory (Geneva, Switzerland)<sup>25</sup>, or Huguenin Médailleurs S.A. (Le Locle, Switzerland)<sup>26</sup> produced these coins.

We assume that 2 000 sets of gold coins were minted by Gori and Zucchi (1AR or UnoAerre) (Arezzo, Italy)<sup>27</sup>. For comparison, we show original boxes for several silver and gold coins, issued for Haiti and Jordan by 1AR in 1967-69 (Fig. 11.05).



Fig. 11.05. Examples of original gift boxes for silver and gold coins, issued by 1AR (1967-69)

<sup>25</sup> Usine Genevoise de Dégrossissage d'Or (in French) had been producing jewelry, semi-finished products for watches, medals, gold and silver ingots since 1875. In 1986 UGDO was acquired by Metalor Technologies SA (Switzerland). Representatives of Metalor do not confirm, but do not refute this assumption, referring to the lack of archival data (November 2022).

<sup>26</sup> HF was founded in 1868 as a manufacture of watch cases. During 1960ties HF was active minting gold and silver coins and medals for Switzerland, Nicaragua, Paraguay. HF closed in 2022 after bankruptcy. According to Swiss sources (March 2025), archival documentation was destroyed.

<sup>27</sup> 1AR private factory was active during 1960-80 to produce gold and silver commemorative coins and medals for Albania, Dahomey (Benin), Central African Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Japan, Jordan, Haiti, Somalia, South Korea, Tunisia, UAE, etc.

There are 2 types of gift boxes that are known to exist for Biafran gold coins. They differ in terms of design of the lock, the color of velvet cloth and the cardboard (red and green), the coat of arms, and the font used for inscription of the state on the box (Fig. 11.06). Each CoA of the second type, though being the same, bears a number imprinted in black, not in red.



Fig. 11.06. Second type of gift box for gold coins 1969

We assume that 1 000 sets of gold coins, apparently with numbers from 1 000 to 1 999 (Fig. 11.014), were minted by Valcambi SA (Balerna, Switzerland)<sup>28</sup>.

We note a visible difference between 25 pounds gold coins with numbers from 1 000 to 1 999, and those which bear other numbers (Fig. 11.07).



Fig. 11.07. Varieties of 25 pounds gold coin obverse (#832, #1015, #2513)

<sup>28</sup> Valcambi SA (Valori&Cambi) private mint was found in 1961 and during 1960-80 was active to produce gold and silver commemorative coins and medals for different world countries.

Unique trial strikes or patterns of all 5 coins exist, minted in copper and silver. We describe them in this Catalog for the first time.

There is no information whether copper set was ever packed in original box, or had a CoA. Copper coins bear no countermarks.

While silver set was packed in original box and had a CoA, which differed from that of gold set (Fig. 11.08). It bears different text and was made of thicker paper.

We note that the same font and mode of speech, i.e. «This is to certify that...was minted (was struck)...by authority...», were used for CoA of coins, minted much later by Valcambi SA (Fig. 11.09).

Silver coins bear «NTA» countermark (Fig. 11.012).



Fig. 11.08. Original box and certificate for set of silver coins 1969

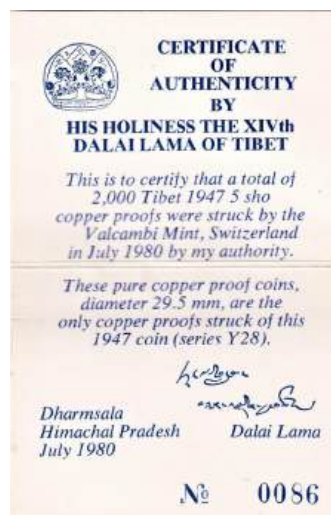


Fig. 11.09. COA of copper coin of Tibet 1980

According to CoA, silver set was approved by the Cabinet of the Republic of Biafra, while gold set was just minted for The Bank of Biafra on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Biafra.

Numismatic Trading Associates (NTA) (Geneva, Switzerland) and H. William Bernhardt Inc. (Geneva, Switzerland), both associated with William Bernhardt, but not with Government of Biafra, were official distributors of gold coins during 1970-77<sup>29</sup>. The Guardian Trust Co. (Montreal, Canada) distributed these gold coins as well (Remick 1971).

We could meet appropriate advertisements published in the French newspaper The International Herald Tribune (January 23-24, 1971), and in The Numismatist (vol. 88, № 9, September 1975) (Fig. 11.010). In September 1975, William Bernhardt became a member of ANA, with application R-86263<sup>30</sup>.

# BIAFRAN GOLD COINS



The only commemorative coins authorized by the Republic of Biafra as legal tender (for their 2nd anniversary in 1969). Available in sets of five coins in fitted cases with a certificate of authenticity. A strictly limited issue of 3,000 numbered sets. On sale through banks, Numismatic agents or from Numismatic Trading Associates, 136 Route de Chêne, Tel 35 81 50 Telex 22362, 1224 Geneva, Switzerland.

**NEW OPTIONS RELEASE**

Options held by former Biafrans have just expired releasing more sets for public sale.

## BIAFRAN GOLD COINS

**WHY THESE COINS ARE UNIQUE  
FROM A NUMISMATIC, HISTORICAL,  
ARTISTIC AND INVESTMENT POINT OF VIEW**

THERE IS A RIGID LIMIT. Only 3000 sets were ever authorized. THEY ARE THE LAST AND ONLY BIAFRAN GOLD COINS. In the Republic of Biafra's nearly three years of existence, only these Second Anniversary coins were issued. Since Biafra no longer exists the possibility of further commemorative sets is entirely excluded. THEY ARE RIGIDLY CONTROLLED. Every set itself bears a registry number. This registry number is supported by an official "Certificate of Authenticity" that accompanies each set and which shows the relative number. The certificate also confirms that the coins have been declared legal tender by the cabinet of the Republic of Biafra with an endorsement by the Governor of the Bank of Biafra. The official "Registry of Sets" is controlled by a Swiss auditor. HIGHEST PROOF QUALITY. These coins are acknowledged to be an outstanding example of perfection in the metal arts. No effort or expense was spared to achieve highest degree of artistic perfection. They are minted with a flawless gleaming mirror finish, made more dramatic by the high relief of the sculpture. Each set contains 4 3/4 ounces of 22 karat gold. HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE. The pride and courage of the 14,000,000 people who fought for their country for nearly three years is embodied in the nobility of these five coins. During the struggle for independence several countries gave full recognition to the Republic of Biafra, many others lent sympathetic support.




**NUMISMATIC TRADING ASSOCIATES**  
6 RUE PEDRO MEYLAN, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND  
Cable : NUMTRAD

2082 THE NUMISMATIST

Fig. 11.010. Examples of advertisements for sale of a set of gold coins during 1971-75

<sup>29</sup> Due to legal restrictions, US collectors could own gold coins since January 1975 only.

<sup>30</sup> The address indicated in application (6 Rue Pedro Meylan, 1208 Geneva, Switzerland) was the same as later address of NTA (see The Numismatist, volume 88, number 8, August 1975). While NTA earlier address (136 Route de Chêne, 1224 Geneva, Switzerland) matched an address of above mentioned Markpress agency.

Set of 10 genuine dies for gold coins of 1969 (Fig. 11.011) first appeared on the market in 2013, when it was sold at the International Zurich Coin Fair. In May, 2022 this set was sold at the auction №77, held by Sincona AG (Switzerland)<sup>31</sup>.



Fig. 11.011. Genuine set of 10 dies for gold coins 1969

Four types of countermarks could be met on original gold coins.

On reverse countermark «NTA» (Numismatic Trading Associates) could be stamped in different fonts (Fig. 11.012).

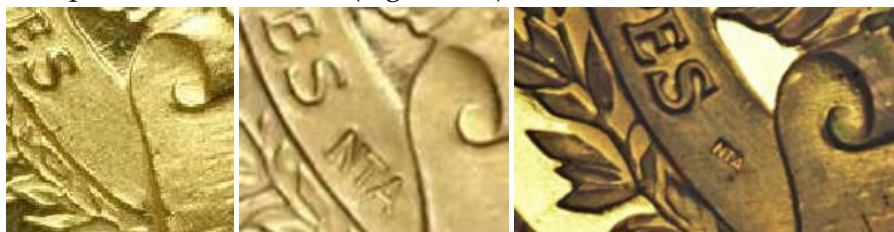


Fig. 11.012. Varieties of «NTA» countermark on reverse

On reverse to the right of scroll with declaration, countermark «916» or «0916» could be stamped, denoting a 22-carat gold sample (Fig. 11.013).



Fig. 11.013. Varieties of «916» countermark on reverse

<sup>31</sup> Lot 2032 with result price of CHF 3 200, while starting price was CHF 2 500.

On reverse of 25 pounds gold coin only, above word «FIVE» a hexagon with an inscribed five-pointed star, or certain letters could be stamped (Fig. 11.014).



Fig. 11.014. Variety of «star» countermark on 25 pounds 1969 gold coin

On reverse of 25 pounds coin only, to the right of inscription «POUNDS», a number from 0001 to 3000 is placed in rectangle, denoting the mintage.

At least 3 different fonts for this inscription are known to be chosen (Fig. 11.015).

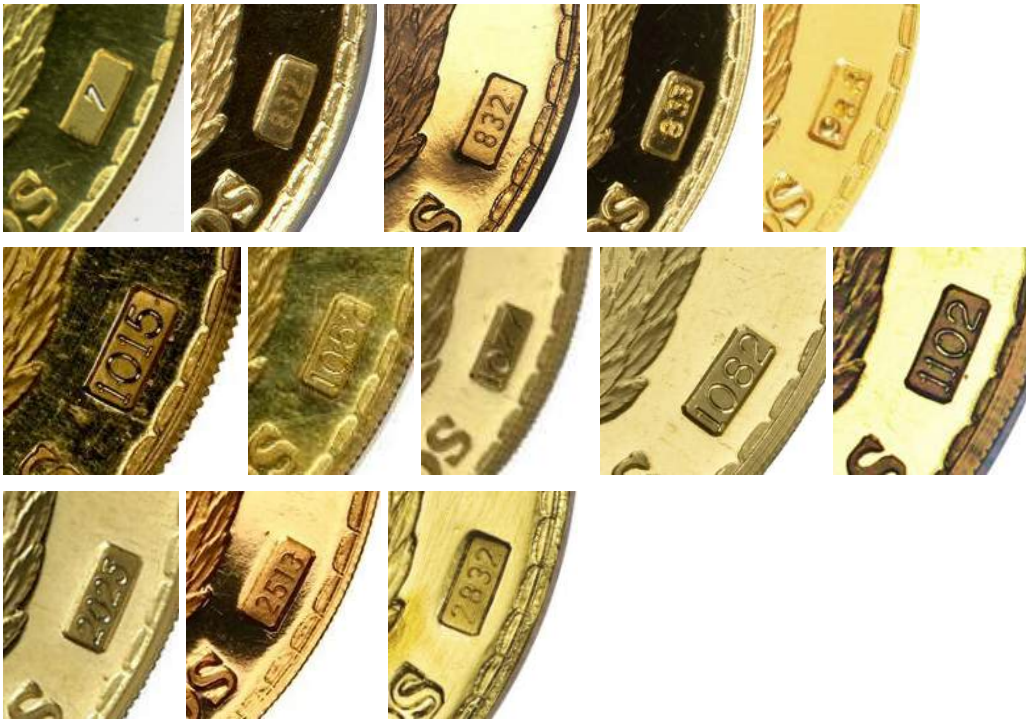


Fig. 11.015. Different fonts for countermark with number on 25 pounds 1969 gold coin

We know that a die for 1 pound gold coin became worn pretty soon, thus latest pieces of this type could have poor details (Fig. 11.016).



Fig. 11.016. Weak coinage of latest 1 pound gold coins 1969

An absence of «NTA» and «916» countermarks, different fonts for countermark with a number of set, an absence of original certificate, as we conclude, may indicate additional later restrike of gold coins of 1969 series.

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 pound             |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | copper              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 2.1 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 19.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#11a           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 11.1. 1 pound «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 pound             |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | silver              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 2.6 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 19.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#11b           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 11.2. 1 pound «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                     |             |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 pound             |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                     | Composition | gold (.916)         |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 3.99 g              |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 19.0 mm             |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | 3 000               |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#11c, KM#7     |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 11.3. 1 pound «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 2 pounds            |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | copper              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 4.1 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 22.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#12a           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 12.1. 2 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 2 pounds            |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | silver              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 4.7 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 22.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#12b           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 12.2. 2 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                     |             |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 2 pounds            |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                     | Composition | gold (.916)         |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 8.00 g              |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 22.0 mm             |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | 3 000               |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#12c, KM#8     |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 12.3. 2 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 5 pounds            |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | copper              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 8.0 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 28.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#13a           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 13.1. 5 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 5 pounds            |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | silver              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 9.3 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 28.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#13b           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 13.2. 5 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                     |             |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 5 pounds            |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                     | Composition | gold (.916)         |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 16.0 g              |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 28.0 mm             |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | 3 000               |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#13c, KM#9     |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | R                   |

Fig. 13.3. 5 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 pounds           |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | copper              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 19.7 g              |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 40.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#14a           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | RR                  |

Fig. 14.1. 10 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 pounds           |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | silver              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 22.8 g              |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 40.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#14b           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | RR                  |

Fig. 14.2. 10 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                     |             |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 pounds           |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                     | Composition | gold (.916)         |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 39.9 g              |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 40.0 mm             |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | 3 000               |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#14c, KM#10    |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | RR                  |

Fig. 14.3. 10 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 25 pounds           |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | copper              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 40.0 g              |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 50.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#15a           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | RR                  |

Fig. 15.1. 25 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 25 pounds           |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | silver              |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 44.6 g              |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 50.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#15b           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | RR                  |

Fig. 15.2. 25 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

|                                                                                     |             |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 25 pounds           |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 1969                |
|                                                                                     | Composition | gold (.916)         |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 79.9 g              |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 50.0 mm             |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | 3 000               |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | Gori & Zucchi (1AR) |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#15c, KM#11    |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Eagle, Declaration  |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | reeded              |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | RR                  |

Fig. 15.3. 25 pounds «2 years of Independence» 1969

## OFFICIAL BANKNOTES. 1967-1969

1968

Biafran banknotes of the first and, in fact, extraordinary series included only two denominations, 5 shillings and 1 pound.

Both were made urgently, that's why protection of banknotes was weak, as a paper without fluorescence and any watermarks was used. First series was introduced into monetary circulation in January 1968 (Fig. 16.1).



Fig. 16.1. Gen. Ojukwu introducing and signing first banknotes of Biafra (Enugu, January 1968)

This issue was printed presumably at the Portuguese Mint (Casa da Moeda) (Symes 1997).

Banknotes were designed by Simon Okeke and other local artists (Okereke 1979; Achebe 2012). Four young women on reverse represent four main ethnic groups of Biafra: Igbo, Efik, Ijaw and the Annang, while semicircular nature motif depicts growth. Two groups of busy ants on the right on obverse suggest hard working people of Biafra (Okereke 1979; Wolff 2024).

All Biafran banknotes bear the facsimiles of signatures of employees of the Bank of Biafra, i.e. Dr. Sylvester Uzor Ugoh as the governor, and economist Dr. William Okefie Uzoaga as the director.

|                                                                                   |            |                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
|  | Face value | 5 shillings             |
|                                                                                   | Year       | no date (1968)          |
|                                                                                   | Size       | 110 * 55 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage    | 20 000 000              |
|                                                                                   | Printer    | Portuguese Mint         |
|                                                                                   | Number     | A-BFR#B1, P#1           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse    | Pink.<br>Palm tree, Sun |
|                                                                                   | Reverse    | Pink.<br>4 Native girls |
|                                                                                   | Estimate   | C                       |

Fig. 16. 5 shillings 1968

|                                                                                    |            |                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 1 pound                       |
|                                                                                    | Year       | no date (1968)                |
|                                                                                    | Size       | 140 * 70 mm                   |
|                                                                                    | Mintage    | 40 000 000                    |
|                                                                                    | Printer    | Portuguese Mint               |
|                                                                                    | Number     | A-BFR#B2, P#2                 |
|                                                                                    | Obverse    | Dark-green.<br>Palm tree, Sun |
|                                                                                    | Reverse    | Pink.<br>Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                    | Estimate   | S                             |

Fig. 17. 1 pound 1968

1969

Biafran banknotes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> series included five denominations (5 and 10 shillings, 1, 5 and 10 pounds), and were much better protected<sup>32</sup>. Series was put into circulation in February 1969.

Banknotes were printed in Portugal, presumably by the Portuguese Mint.

According to Freire, Lisgráfica (Braz Monteiro printing house) (Portugal) was its printer (Freire 2017), although at the time of its foundation in December 1973 (!) this printing house had the only printing press. There has been no confirmation that this series was produced in Switzerland (Symes 1997), or by Orell Füssli Security Printing (Switzerland).

Second series was designed and supervised by Simon Okeke as well, as he became the only security designer in Biafra during 1967-69 (Okereke 1979). Entire background of reverse bears a motif of cowrie shells, traditional money of Nigeria (Opitz 2011).

Banknotes of the second series were little used in monetary circulation, as a significant amount remained undelivered or was lost upon delivery from Europe.

Back in September 1968, representatives of Biafra in Geneva began selling printed and undelivered banknotes, including blanks without serial numbers, to everyone (Symes 1997).

Banknotes were packed by 500 pieces in each package (Fig. 18.01).



Fig. 18.01. Biafran 1 pound 1969 banknote's original package

<sup>32</sup> Non-fluorescent paper with red and blue fibers was used, as well as «micro-printing» on front side of the banknote, with words «Bank of Biafra» and face value.

|                                                                                   |            |                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 5 shillings                    |
|                                                                                   | Year       | no date (1969)                 |
|                                                                                   | Size       | 110 * 55 mm                    |
|                                                                                   | Mintage    | 40 000 000                     |
|                                                                                   | Printer    | Portuguese Mint                |
|                                                                                   | Number     | A-BFR#B3a, P#3a                |
|                                                                                   | Obverse    | Blue, green.<br>Palm tree      |
|                                                                                   | Reverse    | Blue, green.<br>4 Native girls |
|                                                                                   | Estimate   | C                              |

Fig. 18.1. 5 shillings 1969

|                                                                                    |            |                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 5 shillings                    |
|                                                                                    | Year       | no date (1969)                 |
|                                                                                    | Size       | 110 * 55 mm                    |
|                                                                                    | Mintage    | inc. above                     |
|                                                                                    | Printer    | Portuguese Mint                |
|                                                                                    | Number     | A-BFR#B3b, P#3b                |
|                                                                                    | Obverse    | Blue, green.<br>Palm tree.     |
|                                                                                    | Reverse    | Blue, green.<br>4 Native girls |
|                                                                                    | Estimate   | S                              |

Fig. 18.2. 5 shillings 1969 (without serial number)

|                                                                                   |            |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 10 shillings                        |
|                                                                                   | Year       | no date (1969)                      |
|                                                                                   | Size       | 125 * 60 mm                         |
|                                                                                   | Mintage    | 19 000 000                          |
|                                                                                   | Printer    | Portuguese Mint                     |
|                                                                                   | Number     | A-BFR#B4a, P#4                      |
|                                                                                   | Obverse    | Blue.<br>Palm tree, the Sun         |
|                                                                                   | Reverse    | Blue.<br>Oil refinery <sup>33</sup> |
|                                                                                   | Estimate   | C                                   |

Fig. 19.1. 10 shillings 1969

|                                                                                    |            |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 10 shillings                 |
|                                                                                    | Year       | no date (1969)               |
|                                                                                    | Size       | 125 * 60 mm                  |
|                                                                                    | Mintage    | inc. above                   |
|                                                                                    | Printer    | Portuguese Mint              |
|                                                                                    | Number     | A-BFR#B4b                    |
|                                                                                    | Obverse    | Blue.<br>Palm tree, the Sun. |
|                                                                                    | Reverse    | Blue.<br>Oil refinery        |
|                                                                                    | Estimate   | S                            |

Fig. 19.2. 10 shillings 1969 (without serial number)

<sup>33</sup> Oil refinery presumably of Port Harcourt or Uzoakoli in Nigeria (Symes 1997).

|                                                                                   |            |                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 1 pound                      |
|                                                                                   | Year       | no date (1969)               |
|                                                                                   | Size       | 140 * 70 mm                  |
|                                                                                   | Mintage    | 70 000 000                   |
|                                                                                   | Printer    | Portuguese Mint              |
|                                                                                   | Number     | A-BFR#B5a, P#5a              |
|                                                                                   | Obverse    | Green.<br>Palm tree, the Sun |
|                                                                                   | Reverse    | Green.<br>Coat of arms       |
|                                                                                   | Estimate   | C                            |

Fig. 20.1. 1 pound 1969

|                                                                                    |            |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 1 pound                      |
|                                                                                    | Year       | no date (1969)               |
|                                                                                    | Size       | 140 * 70 mm                  |
|                                                                                    | Mintage    | inc. above                   |
|                                                                                    | Printer    | Portuguese Mint              |
|                                                                                    | Number     | A-BFR#B5b, P#5b              |
|                                                                                    | Obverse    | Green.<br>Palm tree, the Sun |
|                                                                                    | Reverse    | Green.<br>Coat of arms       |
|                                                                                    | Estimate   | S                            |

Fig. 20.2. 1 pound 1969 (without serial number)

|                                                                                   |            |                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 5 pounds                     |
|                                                                                   | Year       | no date (1969)               |
|                                                                                   | Size       | 145 * 75 mm                  |
|                                                                                   | Mintage    | 6 000 000                    |
|                                                                                   | Printer    | Portuguese Mint              |
|                                                                                   | Number     | A-BFR#B6a, P#6               |
|                                                                                   | Obverse    | Green.<br>Palm tree, the Sun |
|                                                                                   | Reverse    | Green, violet.<br>Weaving    |
|                                                                                   | Estimate   | S                            |

Fig. 21.1. 5 pounds 1969

|                                                                                    |            |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
|  | Face value | 5 pounds                     |
|                                                                                    | Year       | no date (1969)               |
|                                                                                    | Size       | 145 * 75 mm                  |
|                                                                                    | Mintage    | inc. above                   |
|                                                                                    | Printer    | Portuguese Mint              |
|                                                                                    | Number     | A-BFR#B6b                    |
|                                                                                    | Obverse    | Green.<br>Palm tree, the Sun |
|                                                                                    | Reverse    | Green, violet.<br>Weaving    |
|                                                                                    | Estimate   | S                            |

Fig. 21.2. 5 pounds 1969 (without serial number)

|                                                                                   |            |                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Face value | 10 pounds                   |
|                                                                                   | Year       | no date (1969)              |
|                                                                                   | Size       | 155 * 80 mm                 |
|                                                                                   | Mintage    | 3 000 000                   |
|                                                                                   | Printer    | Portuguese Mint             |
|                                                                                   | Number     | A-BFR#B7a, P#7a             |
|                                                                                   | Obverse    | Blue.<br>Palm tree, the Sun |
|                                                                                   | Reverse    | Blue.<br>Carver             |
|                                                                                   | Estimate   | S                           |

Fig. 22.1. 10 pounds 1969

|                                                                                    |            |                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Face value | 10 pounds                   |
|                                                                                    | Year       | no date (1969)              |
|                                                                                    | Size       | 155 * 80 mm                 |
|                                                                                    | Mintage    | inc. above                  |
|                                                                                    | Printer    | Portuguese Mint             |
|                                                                                    | Number     | A-BFR#B7b, P#7b             |
|                                                                                    | Obverse    | Blue.<br>Palm tree, the Sun |
|                                                                                    | Reverse    | Blue.<br>Carver             |
|                                                                                    | Estimate   | S                           |

Fig. 22.2. 10 pounds 1969 (without serial number)

## POSTAGE STAMPS AND CINDERELLAS. 1967-2025

The first series of 3 Biafran postage stamps was dedicated to independence. It was printed presumably at the Portuguese Mint in 1967 (Fig. 23.1), and put into circulation in February 1968, along with a First Day Cover (FDC) (Fig. 23.2). Stamps were printed lithographically on relatively low-quality paper with 12 ½ perforation<sup>34</sup> (Blood-Smyth 2021).



Fig. 23.1. Biafran stamps of the 1st series 1968



Fig. 23.2. FDC with Biafran stamps of the 1st series 1968

<sup>34</sup> Size of perforation is determined by the number of teeth that fit 2 cm of the edge of stamp.

During 1968, stamps of Nigeria with the overprint «Sovereign BIAFRA» and the name «Nigeria» crossed out with two lines, were widely used in Biafra (Fig. 23.3).

In May 1968, a series of Biafran stamps was issued in honor of the 1st Anniversary of Independence. One of these types<sup>35</sup> depicts a 1 pound banknote (Fig. 23.4) (Wayne Loew 2020).



Fig. 23.3. Overprinted stamp of Nigeria, 1965



Fig. 23.4. Stamps of Biafra, 1968

The images amplified the campaign for self-determination and nationalism for Biafran nation (Inyang 2021).

They printed 3 types of original stamps in 1967, 9 types of stamps in 1968, 9 types of stamps and 2 types of blocks in 1969. Just all of these items had overprinted varieties with motto like «Mexico Olympics 1968», «Help Biafran Children», «Christmas 1969. Peace on Earth and Goodwill to all men», «Save Biafra. 9th Jan. 1970», «Human Rights». Most items were issued for financial reasons (Fig. 23.5).



Fig. 23.5. Envelope with CTO (cancel to order) from Umuahia, 1968

<sup>35</sup> On the stamp on the right you can see «HELP BIAFRAN CHILDREN» overprints, and denomination of «2/6», which means 2 shillings and 6 pence (i.e. half a crown or 30 pence), namely half of initial denomination of the stamp of 5 shillings (i.e. 1 crown or 60 pence).

Properly used examples of Biafran stamps are rather rare. Biafra did not become a member of Universal Postal Union (UPU), thus overall postal service was weak and original stamps were used mainly for domestic transactions (Fig. 23.6).

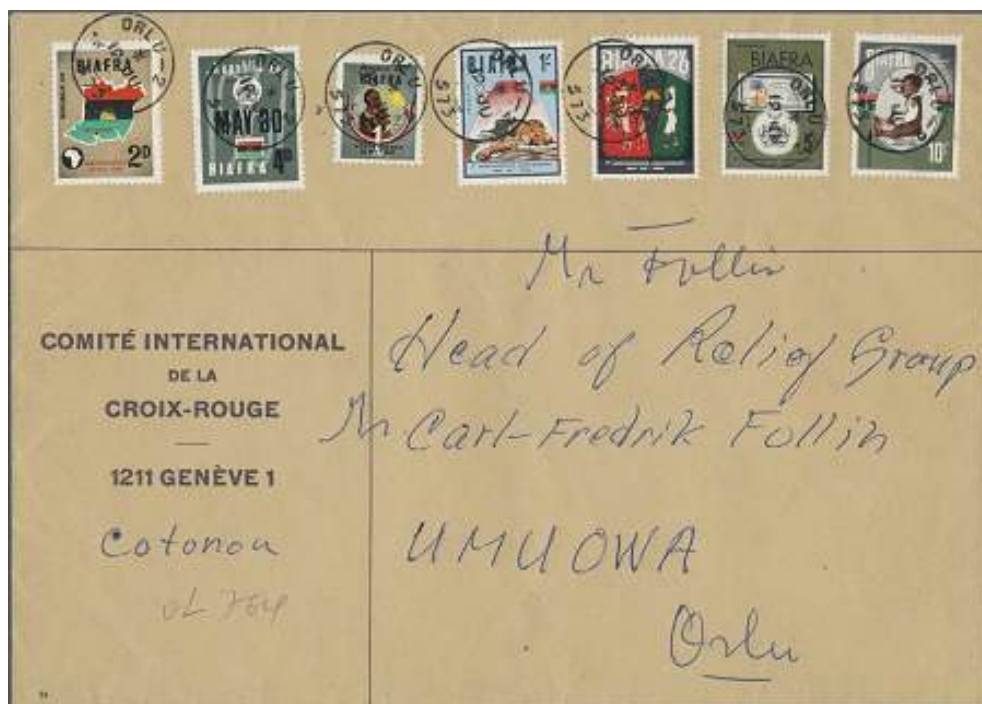


Fig. 23.6. Envelope from Orlu, 1968-69

Presumably in 1968, blue perforated cinderellas with «Help Biafra» motto were printed in The Netherlands, in order to raise funds for charity (Fig. 23.7).



Fig. 23.7. «Help Biafra» cinderella varieties 1968

2010-2013

Cinderellas under the name of «Biafra Free State» was a project by a merchant venturer Rui Alexandre Pires Costa Galvao Gabirro. He founded so called Federation of Free States of Africa, and during 2010-13 produced unusual coins and Cinderellas under the name of different pseudostates from this Federation<sup>36</sup>. However, having participated in various Masonic lodges since 1995, Mr. Gabirro payed much attention to idea and design of items produced.

We show several examples out of 30 types issued (Fig. 23.8-23.9).



Fig. 23.8. «Coat of arms of Biafra Free State» cinderella 2010



Fig. 23.9. «Biafra Free State - Land of rising sun» cinderella 2011

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<sup>36</sup> One could buy these items at [www.AfricaStamps.org](http://www.AfricaStamps.org), a site led by Mr. Gabirro, with delivery from United Kingdom.

1968

|                                                                                   |             |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
|  | Face value  | -                  |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1968               |
|                                                                                   | Composition | bronze or brass    |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 10.4 g             |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 30.0 mm            |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.               |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a. (Portugal)    |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX1          |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms       |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Native girl's head |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth             |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | S                  |

Fig. 24. «Help Biafra to survive» token 1968

Presumably in 1968, in honor of the 1st Anniversary of Independence of Biafra, commemorative token «HELP BIAFRA TO SURVIVE» appeared. Coat of arms on this token differs from coat of arms on gold coins of 1969 series (Fig. 24.1).



Fig. 24.1. No left diagonal on shield of coat of arms: 10 pounds 1969, token 1968

Original die of the reverse of this token could be found at Portuguese collectors forum in February, 2022 (Fig. 24.2). Thus token itself highly likely was minted in Portugal.



Fig. 24.2. Original die of reverse of «Help Biafra to survive» token 1968

1970

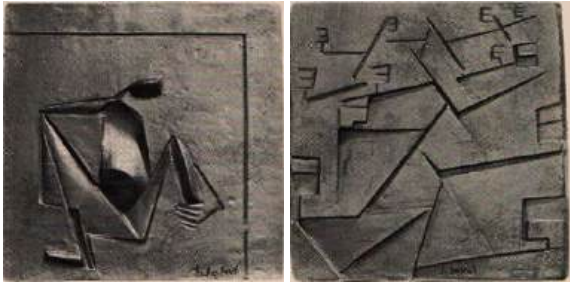
|                                                                                   |             |                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
|  | Face value  | -                      |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1970                   |
|                                                                                   | Composition | bronze                 |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 81.0 * 81.0 mm         |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                   |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | Paris Mint             |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX2              |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Dejected child         |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Symbols of Biafran war |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth                 |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | S                      |

Fig. 25. «Biafra» medal 1970

Designed by Hungarian artist and sculpturer Juliette de Jekel (\*1936-†2003), this bronze medal was dedicated to the end of civil war in Nigeria.

This item was on sale for USD 8.6 directly from the Paris Mint (France)<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> See The Numismatist, No.6, Vol. 83, June 1970, p. 802.

|                                                                                   |             |                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
|  | Face value  | 25 pounds <sup>38</sup> |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2012                    |
|                                                                                   | Composition | copper-nickel, bronze   |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 9.5 g                   |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 28.5 mm                 |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | 1 050                   |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                    |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX3 , N#91991     |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms            |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Leopard                 |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth with notches     |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                       |

Fig. 26. 25 pounds «45th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2012 unusual coin

First unusual coin under the name of Biafra was a project by a merchant venturer Rui Alexandre Pires Costa Galvao Gabirro. He founded so called Federation of Free States of Africa, and during 2010-13 produced unusual coins and Cinderellas under the name of different pseudostates from this Federation<sup>39</sup>. However, having participated in various Masonic lodges since 1995, Mr. Gabirro payed much attention to idea and design of items produced.

On obverse, name of the state is designated as «BIAFRA FREE STATE» in contrast to «REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA» on official coins of 1969, or «SOVEREIGN BIAFRA» on official stamps of Biafra of 1968 (Fig. 26.1). Ground below the shield of stylized coat of arms has no *Costus spectabilis* flowers or any other elements.

On reverse, elements from official Biafran coins of 1969 are depicted, i.e. leopard, manilla, palm and the rising sun.



Fig. 26.1. Digital prototype for 25 pounds 2012 unusual coin

<sup>38</sup> Initial sale price of unusual coin was GBP 12.

<sup>39</sup> One could buy these items at [www.AfricaStamps.org](http://www.AfricaStamps.org), a site led by Mr. Gabirro, with delivery from United Kingdom.

2017

Series of 10 unusual coins was issued in 2017 in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra. Denominations remind on original coins of 1969.

Its design bears elements of official coins of 1969, i.e. original motto «Peace, Unity, Freedom», coat of arms, leopard, manilla, palm tree and the rising sun. However, there was no name of the state depicted.

Both producer and beneficiary of this issue remain unknown. We assume this series to be minted in China.

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | ½ penny             |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2017                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | copper, steel       |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 4.8 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 22.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX4, N#112120 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree  |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Cocoa beans         |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                   |

Fig. 27. ½ penny «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                     |             |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 penny             |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 2017                |
|                                                                                     | Composition | copper, steel       |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 6.4 g               |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 25.0 mm             |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | n.a.                |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#EX5, N#112122 |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree  |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Peanuts             |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | smooth              |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | C                   |

Fig. 28. 1 penny «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 3 pence             |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2017                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | aluminum            |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 1.0 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 18.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX6, N#112125 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree  |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Face value          |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                   |

Fig. 29. 3 pence «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 6 pence             |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2017                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | aluminum            |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 1.2 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 22.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX7, N#112126 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree  |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Face palm           |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                   |

Fig. 30. 6 pence «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                     |             |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 shilling          |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 2017                |
|                                                                                     | Composition | aluminum            |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 1.6 g               |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 25.0 mm             |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | n.a.                |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#EX8, N#112127 |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree  |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | smooth              |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | C                   |

Fig. 31. 1 shilling «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 2 ½ shilling        |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2017                |
|                                                                                   | Composition | aluminum            |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 2.3 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 30.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX9, N#112131 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree  |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Leopard             |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                   |

Fig. 32. 2 ½ shilling «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 crown              |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2017                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | aluminum             |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 3.7 g                |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 35.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX10, N#112133 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree   |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Lion                 |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 33. 1 crown «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                     |             |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | ½ pound              |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 2017                 |
|                                                                                     | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 4.3 g                |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 18.0 mm              |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#EX11, N#112135 |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree   |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Map of Biafra        |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 34. ½ pound «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 pound              |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2017                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 5.1 g                |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 22.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX12, N#112136 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree   |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Crocodile's head     |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 35. 1 pound «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 5 pounds             |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2017                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 35.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX13, N#112137 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Manilla, palm tree   |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 36. 5 pounds «50th Anniversary of the Bank of Biafra» 2017 unusual coin

During 2017-2021 a series of 9 unusual coins dedicated to 9 animals of Africa and Asia was issued.

We note that within modern Nigeria you can meet just 4 of those 9 animals: African forest elephant, gorilla, West African lion and dromedary.

|                                                                                   |             |                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings                         |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2017                                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | brass                                |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 12.7 g                               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 31.0 mm                              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX14, N#134552                 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms                         |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Asian elephant,<br>Taj Mahal (India) |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth                               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                                    |

Fig. 37. 10 shillings «Elephants» 2017 unusual coin

|                                                                                    |             |                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings         |
|                                                                                    | Year        | 2017                 |
|                                                                                    | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                    | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                    | Diameter    | 31.0 mm              |
|                                                                                    | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                    | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                    | Number      | A-BFR#EX15, N#106727 |
|                                                                                    | Obverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                    | Reverse     | African elephant     |
|                                                                                    | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                    | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 38. 10 shillings «Elephants» 2017 unusual coin

2018

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings         |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2018                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 31.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX16, N#159095 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Leopard turtle       |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 39. 10 shillings «Animals. Turtle» 2018 unusual coin

2020

|                                                                                    |             |                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings         |
|                                                                                    | Year        | 2020                 |
|                                                                                    | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                    | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                    | Diameter    | 31.0 mm              |
|                                                                                    | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                    | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                    | Number      | A-BFR#EX17, N#239506 |
|                                                                                    | Obverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                    | Reverse     | Lion                 |
|                                                                                    | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                    | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 40. 10 shillings «Animals. Lion» 2020 unusual coin

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings         |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2020                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 31.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX18, N#134552 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | White rhino          |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 41. 10 shillings «Animals. Rhino» 2020 unusual coin

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings         |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2020                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 31.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX19, N#270787 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Zebra                |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 42. 10 shillings «Animals. Zebra» 2020 unusual coin

|                                                                                     |             |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings         |
|                                                                                     | Year        | 2020                 |
|                                                                                     | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                     | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                     | Diameter    | 31.0 mm              |
|                                                                                     | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                     | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                     | Number      | A-BFR#EX20, N#270785 |
|                                                                                     | Obverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                     | Reverse     | Ostrich              |
|                                                                                     | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                     | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 43. 10 shillings «Animals. Ostrich» 2020 unusual coin

2021

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings         |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 2021                 |
|                                                                                   | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 31.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX21, N#299362 |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Gorilla              |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 44. 10 shillings «Animals. Gorilla» 2021 unusual coin

|                                                                                    |             |                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 10 shillings         |
|                                                                                    | Year        | 2021                 |
|                                                                                    | Composition | brass                |
|                                                                                    | Weight      | 12.7 g               |
|                                                                                    | Diameter    | 31.0 mm              |
|                                                                                    | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                    | Mint        | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                    | Number      | A-BFR#EX22, N#278682 |
|                                                                                    | Obverse     | Coat of arms         |
|                                                                                    | Reverse     | Dromedary            |
|                                                                                    | Edge        | smooth               |
|                                                                                    | Estimate    | C                    |

Fig. 45. 10 shillings «Animals. Dromedary» 2021 unusual coin

2023

Presumably ordered by Coincraft coin shop (UK)<sup>40</sup>, this pseudo restrrike of original Biafran 1 pound silver coin of 1969 bears simplified design.

This item was on sale for GBP 12.5, though an alloy used for its minting was much cheaper than silver.

|                                                                                   |             |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 pound             |
|                                                                                   | Year        | 1969 (2023)         |
|                                                                                   | Composition | steel plated nickel |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | 16.0 g              |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 38.0 mm             |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a.                |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX23          |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Coat of arms        |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | Eagle, declaration  |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | smooth              |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | C                   |

Fig. 46. 1 pound 2023 unusual coin (image by Wioletta Madaj, September 2023)

<sup>40</sup> See <https://coincraft.com> (date of access - 10.03.2025).

2024

In February 2024, Biafra Republic Government in Exile (BRGIE)<sup>41</sup> representatives announced Biafra digital currency, known as Biafracoin, equal to USD 1.

During 2024 commemorative unusual coin was issued.

|                                                                                   |             |                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  | Face value  | 1 biafracoin         |
|                                                                                   | Year        | no date (2024)       |
|                                                                                   | Composition | bronze or brass      |
|                                                                                   | Weight      | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Diameter    | 40.0 mm              |
|                                                                                   | Mintage     | n.a.                 |
|                                                                                   | Mint        | n.a. (USA)           |
|                                                                                   | Number      | A-BFR#EX24           |
|                                                                                   | Obverse     | Renewed coat of arms |
|                                                                                   | Reverse     | USBT symbol          |
|                                                                                   | Edge        | reeded               |
|                                                                                   | Estimate    | S                    |

Fig. 47. 1 biafracoin 2024 unusual coin



Fig. 47.1. Digital prototype for 1 biafracoin 2024 unusual coin

In December 2024, Dr. Ngozi Orabueze (\*1978), known as the Deputy Prime Minister and Chief of Staff of BRGIE, introduced new currency of «modern» Biafra, namely ejemma<sup>42</sup>.

There is no confirmation whether announced banknotes were already printed, and whether coins were minted.

<sup>41</sup> Biafra Republic Government in Exile was established to reignite the agitation for sovereign Biafra state. We note that Nigerian government suspects BRGIE leaders to be sponsors of terrorism.

<sup>42</sup> Ejemma (or ejema) was a name for British type manilla, circulated in Southeastern Nigeria (Denk 2020).

## AFTERWORD

Biafra had been independent over 55 years ago, while the idea of independent monetary circulation for Igbo people has been still alive.



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