

The Medals Of Admiral Vernon

By John Adams

The medals of Admiral Vernon, of which there are over 250 varieties known, represent a strange paradox. On the one hand, most pieces in the series are poorly executed, featuring crude engraving and frequent mis-spellings. On the other hand, the Vernon's have attracted more serious studies (we will cite 14) than any other segment of modern numismatics.

To begin at the beginning, following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Europe had enjoyed 25 years of peace. However, in the New World the Spanish harassed British shipping, retreating to fortified harbors when the need arose. British hawks believed that those safe harbors needed to be attacked, but the pacifist government of Sir Robert Walpole opposed any rash and costly action.

Enter Edward Vernon, a Tory back-bencher, who rose in the Commons and boasted that he could take Porto Bello, the key to the Spanish defences in the Western Hemisphere, "with six ships only." In early 1739, he got his six ships and proceeded to make good his boast. When news of his success reached England, there was an immense outpouring of patriotic fervor – sermons, bonfires and general jubilation. In short order came the Vernon mementoes, with his face appearing on crockery, silverware, buttons, corkscrews as well as all manner of household decorations. And with it all came a profusion of medals, a few of high quality but most made by "medalists scarcely deserving of the title of artists."¹

So many and varied are the Vernon medals that it would make sense to arrange them by one of perhaps a dozen major types. However, like moths to the flames, authors have chosen to be drawn into the hundreds of minor-but-distinct varieties. Making sense of this complexity is a non-trivial undertaking but, at the same time, it is fun. Vernon medals are readily obtainable at relatively low prices; they do not require great care in handling; and, depicting the battle scenes as they do, they stimulate one's contemplation of the chain of events that led from Porto Bello to Montreal to Yorktown.

Whatever the attraction, Admiral Vernon medals have drawn the attention of many of the best numismatists of the past 150 years. Copper enthusiasts will point to the wonderful corpus of

¹ Grueber, foreword to plate CLV.

writing devoted to large cents. How can one hope to best the progression from Maris to Frossard to Gilbert to Newcomb to Clapp to Sheldon? With a Comte, a Marquess, an Earl and 11 other worthies, that's how. Read on and share in this remarkable tradition.

Chronological Listing of Vernon Studies

- 1) de Renesse-Breidbach, M. le Comte C.W. Mes Loisirs, Amusemens Numismatiques, vol. III, Antwerp, 1835

We are indebted to the redoubtable W.S. Appleton for uncovering this obscure source.² Per Appleton, the author “gives a short, much abbreviated, and often misspelt description of thirty pieces.”³ Whatever the merit of its content, this work can claim credit for being the first on the subject.

Of the 37,506 pieces catalogued in Mes Loisirs, the Vernon medals occupy only a tiny part, namely items 29,516 through 29,545. The author gives partial legends and only terse descriptions of the devices. All 30 pieces are in bronze, with no sizes given.

- 2) Appleton, W.S. The “Admiral Vernon Medals,” American Journal of Numismatics, Vol II, No 5, September 1867, pp. 46ff.

William Sumner Appleton deserves credit for the first listing of Vernon varieties published on this side of the Atlantic. In Vol. II, No. 5 September, 1867 of the AJN, he describes 31 varieties. In Vol. II, No. 9, January 1868, he describes another 17 and, finally in Vol. V, No. 3, January 1871, he describes a further 27, making 75 varieties in all.

The Appleton architecture is somewhat random and the individual descriptions are not always defining. Later, in his 1894 opus, C.W. Betts references Appleton numbers but he is the only subsequent author to do so.

² AJN, vol. 11, No. 5, p. 46. WSA's copy of Mes Loisirs resides in the Library of the ANS.

³ Ibid.

- 3) Carranza, D. Angel Justiniano. El Almirante Vernon en las Aguas de Nueva Granada, Buenos Aires, 1874

We are deeply indebted to the Argentine numismatist, Dr. Fernando Chao, for the following description.

“From the Conference convened by D. Angel Justiniano Carranza in the principal hall of the Buenos Aires University on June 15, 1873. It was the third session of the Instituto Bonaerense de Numismática y Antigüedades. It was published:

a) Revista del Rio de la Plata. T. VI, pags. 192 and ss, Buenos Aires, 1873.

b) Draw apart of 50 numbers, hand corrected. XLVIII pages (numbered, but in fact 49) Buenos Aires 1874. Incorrectly named “third edition” as it should have been a print apart from the N° 1 bulletin of the Instituto Bonaerense de Numismática y Antigüedades.

Known books. One with pink first page, owned by José Marcó del Pont (member of the Institute), then to his son D. José Antonino Marcó del Pont, then to D. Jorge N. Ferrari and now to Dr. Osvaldo Mitchell.

Another in pink presentation page, owned by Casa Pardo, donated to the Instituto Bonaerense in 1936.

The third book with light blue front page was presented by Carranza to D. Clemente Fregeiro (member of the Institute), then to Casa Pardo, then to Arnaldo Cunietti Ferrando, then to Osvaldo Mitchell and later to D. Fernando Chao (h).”

To this list must be added a fourth copy in the Numismatic Library of the British Museum. Even so, whoever possesses a Carranza owns a rare avis indeed.

Most of the 49 pages of this work are devoted to history, with a general survey of the English, Spanish and French naval activity in the area. The main focus is, of course, Admiral Vernon and Carranza’s extensive bibliography reflects this focus, with most of the contemporary sources being written in English. The author also reveals his admiration for the courageous defense of don Blas de Lezo, whose diary records that Cartagena was shelled with 6068 English bombs and over 10,000 cannon balls.⁴

The numismatic aspect of El Almirante Vernon is less robust than the historical. Carranza lists only fifteen varieties but he describes them in enough detailed that, for example,

⁴ Carranza, p. 36.

his number six can be identified as MG 108. All of the Porto Bello medals he condemns with “Cuyo trabajo de arte es mediocre”⁵ (the craftsmanship is mediocre).

Just as Carranza provided a historical bibliography, he also notes early mention of the Vernon medals in numismatic circles. In this category are auction sales of doctor don Jose Garcia de la Torre (Madrid, 1852) and the Swedish diplomat Gustavo Daniel de Lorichs (Madrid, 1859). Carranza became immersed in his subject along multiple dimensions, bringing a dignity to the subject through his intensity, that is quite contagious.

⁵ Carranza, p. 17.

4) Hawkins, Edward. Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland. London, 1885 Vol. II.

Medallic Illustrations is a chronological listing of all British historical medals from William I through George II. In the case of the Vernon medals, the strict chronology is broken in order to keep the group together. The group comprises 96 citations referencing a total of 121 different varieties.

Augustus Franks and Herbert Grueber, the editors of Medallic Illustrations, had little love for the Vernon series. They described the medals in these terms: “The popular joy over success of the expedition of Admiral Vernon to South America, and the capture of Porte Bello, Fort Chagre, and Carthagena, is expressed in the hundred and more medallic pieces commemorating those events. These pieces, miserable in design, and still more wretched in execution, are degrading to an art which in by-gone days had produced so many fine objects. It need only be said that they were issued by a manufacturer of toys, and their only place is amongst such articles.”⁶

Fortunately, the disdain of the editors was not shared by the compiler of Medallic Illustrations, Edward Hawkins. He catalogues 96 varieties of Vernon medals, all in the collections of the British Museum, and references another twenty six for which the details vary only slightly. Hawkins work is rigorous: for each piece he supplies the entire motto (with translations where required), the diameter and the metal. He also supplies the basic historical framework and, for the more serious student, he adds color: e.g. Don Blas de Leso was not humbled because, in fact he had already escaped.

Despite the disdain of his colleagues, Hawkins had succeeded in launching the Vernon series In England. Worthy successors on both sides of the Atlantic were to enrich the platform he had begun to build.

⁶ MI Vol. I, XXI.

5) Rosa, Alejandro. Medallas del Almirante Vernon. Buenos Aires, 1893.

Printed in an edition of only 50 copies, Rosa's 37 page essay on the Vernon series is today a rare work. Not listed in Clain-Stefanelli (although five other titles by Rosa are so listed) nor to be found in the library of the ANS, this contribution to the subject is not widely acknowledged.

Rosa describes 96 numbers but actually lists 121 varieties, the additional twenty five being those that exhibit only minor differences. All but two of the 96 are listed as being in the British Museum, with Medalllic Illustrations clearly being his primary source. Also cited are Carranza, Mitre and Adolph Weyl's 1878 catalogue of the Fonrobert Collection.

The author gives only one page of historical background, his primary focus being the medals. For these, his descriptions are fully adequate to determine type but, often, not in enough detail to attribute varieties. Overall, the effort falls well short of that by C. Wyllys Betts which was written in the same year.

We are indebted to Dr. Fernando Chao who graciously supplied us with this rare essay. He estimates that only five or six copies are now extant.

6) Betts, C. Wyllys. American Colonial History Illustrated by Contemporary Medals. New York, 1894.

C. Wyllys Betts loved the Admiral Vernon medals as none before him and few after. With a total of 167 varieties described, he added literally dozens to the Vernon corpus. His descriptions of individual pieces are fresh and insightful.

The architecture of his attributions is user friendly: first location (Porto Bello, etc.), next obverse legend, next bust (half length/full length) and finally reverse legend. After a period of familiarization, one can make relatively quick work of individual pieces.

There are, however, some formidable obstacles. Often, the author tires of fine distinctions e.g. #183: “Nearly identical with the preceding reverse” or #184: “Similar to preceding number. There are at least four dies of this obverse, differing so minutely that descriptions that would distinguish them cannot be given except at great length, although perceptible on comparison.” On at least a dozen occasions, the Betts number combines the obverse of one known variety with the reverse of another. Perhaps all these mules exist but it seems more likely that Betts or his editors made errors in compiling the manuscript.

The Holy Grail of Vernon medals would be the discovery of keys that would permit an ordering of the series by emission sequence or maker or artist. To this end, Betts made an intense study both of mottoes and of reverse groupings. He did not pursue either key to a conclusion because, in our opinion, the medals were made in virtually random fashion. Haste was the order of the day, so pieces were made from the first die that came to hand but then subsequent strikings depended on demand and/or the condition of the dies which, in turn, were often re-worked. There may be a logic to it all and, if there is, Betts came as close to discovering it as anybody. His analysis of reverse designs remains definitive more than a century later.

For all its shortcomings, Betts has been used more often than any other system of attribution. Had his work been published in a larger format with multiple columns for easy access it might have remained the standard, with new varieties being inserted into the columnar tables as discovered. Had there been photographs to buttress the author’s less eloquent descriptions, there would not be so many Betts numbers that remain in an uncharted limbo. The Vernon series may require a better reference but be it said that Betts is a good one.

7) Mitre, Bartolomé. Medallas de Vernon Buenos Aires, 1904. 100 copies printed.

Mitre lists 70 varieties. He arranges them into six sections, the first four being the campaigns in chronological order. As a lieutenant general in the army of Argentina, Mitre's relatively brief comments have a professional basis, delivered with a certain piquancy. He observes that Vernon's reputation lasted barely as long as the smoke from his cannons⁷-- hyperbole, perhaps, but not entirely wide of the mark,

The images in Mitre's work are low resolution reproductions, typically of worn specimens. Between low quality images and a small corpus (only 70 varieties), this reference has little to recommend it to the variety specialist.

⁷ See Ferrari, Numisma, 1966, p. 117.

8) Grueber, H.A., editor. Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland. 1904-1911, London, 2 vols.

The original Medallic Illustrations, written by Edward Hawkins in 1885, was an epic work, but it lacked images for most of the medals cited. This defect was magnified in the case of Admiral Vernon medals where, typically, the differences between varieties are quite slight. As a result, “MI” numbers for the Vernon’s are virtually useless.

In an equally epic project begun in 1904 and completed in 1911, Herbert Grueber both broadened the corpus covered by Medallic Illustrations and added 183 folio-sized plates of plaster casts taken from the medals themselves. The Admiral Vernon medals are depicted on plates CLIV through CLX, for a total of 89 images in all. These illustrate “the main types and the more important variations.”⁸ Grueber reckons that if one were to search the 188 specimens in the National Collection as well as several private collections of considerable extent, “it would be possible to form a collection of not less than 300 different types and varieties of these medals.”⁹

From a careful reading of all of Grueber’s comments, we sense that the conclusion of “not less than 300” is more of a general impression than an accurate scientific count. Indeed, it is difficult to affix Grueber plate numbers to MI numbers in many cases, much less achieve a concordance with the attributions of C.W. Betts, one of the private collections referenced. Grueber shared the disdain of his colleague, A.W. Franks (see comment quoted above), and was not about to get bogged down in the details of medals of inferior design and executions.

Although he was not interested in the painstaking task of attribution, Grueber does a competent job of describing the historicity of the medals and of commenting on the aesthetics of individual pieces. In his comment preceding on plates CLV, he ascribes most of the Vernon’s to toy maker Edward Pinchbeck, who was thought to have either made the medals in his own shop or supervised their making by designers such as T. Tibs, J. Giles and a half dozen others. Per Grueber, the formula for Pinchbeck was three parts zinc to four of copper.

Taken as a whole, the comments that precede plates CLIV through CLX provide a solid account of events surrounding the events as seen for the English perspective. Drawing heavily on Vernon’s own reports as published in the London Gazette and The Gentleman’s Magazine,

⁸ MI. See comments to Plate CLV.

⁹ Ibid.

Grueber provides for each of the battles the names of the commander(s), the manpower, and the ships with their armament as well as a running account. One learns, for example, that there was not one engagement at Cartagena but two and Don Blas de Leso, the Spanish Governor at Cartagena, escaped capture despite the many medals that depict him kneeling before Vernon or before both Vernon and Chaloner Ogle, the commander of the land forces. Indeed, there is one medal, CLVIII, 17 (MG-177), that shows Don Blas capitulating to Commodore Brown who, as Grueber neatly points out, was posted to Chatham, England, when the deciding battle at Cartagena was fought. Grueber stops short of admitting the obvious: Vernon lost the battle of Cartagena and Lezo won it.

Despite his general distaste for the genre, the author makes incisive comments on a number of pieces. He praises the execution of his CLVI, 20 (MG-19), a Vernon that does truly stand out. He notes that the Fort Chagre and Cartagena medals are generally superior to those of Porto Bello, a truism that is worth pondering. Among many other helpful comments, Grueber notes that the uniface CLIX, 7 (MG-10) dated 1741 is probably a proof from a die by Dassier that remained unfinished when it was learned that the attack on Havana, proposed for 1741, never took place. This is clearly a guess but it is as good as any.

9) Storer, Malcolm. Admiral Vernon Medals 1739-1742. Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Series 3, V. 52 (1918-1919), Boston.

Readers of this work will know that they are in the presence of a first rate mind. Storer's accounts of Admiral Vernon's campaigns are well-researched and eloquent. No other numismatic writer has presented this material nearly as well.

Given the erudition supporting the historical dimension of this paper, one would hold high expectations for the numismatic analysis. Storer's architecture calls for six main divisions¹⁰ "(Porto Bello, Carthagen, etc), subdivided into "forty main types"¹¹ arranged by the first letter of the inscription on the reverse."¹² What the author calls "a simple plan" is actually quite complicated and, had it proved true "that by using this list a given medal can be located with ease,"¹³ the use of Storer numbers would have become widespread. Actually, save for medals at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the U.S. Naval Academy, collections with which Storer was closely associated, the system died a-borning. A system crafted with immense effort has lain fallow for almost 100 years.

Storer was proud that, in terms of numbers of varieties, he had gone well beyond previous authors. His 339 Vernon medals was more than double the 167 varieties listed by Betts in 1894. Herein lies the problem. Based on sparse descriptions in periodicals and in auction catalogs like Fonrobert, Ulex and Salbach, Storer is quick to declare a new variety where the data are simply insufficient. Even in his own collection, where the author cites 31 new varieties out of a total of 119 pieces owned, it seems clear that Storer's imagination outruns his powers of observation.

One of the challenges faced by all early authors was the lack of photographs to compare with pieces actually in hand. Storer might have over come this obstacle with a highly disciplined concordance, such as that used by Milford Haven, but he did not. He improvised and his system suffers accordingly. Be it said that Storer wins high praise from Leander McCormick-Goodhart in the preface to his monograph published in 1945. Be it also said that McCormick-Goodhart does not even attempt to incorporate Storer into his concordance. The unspoken conclusion is that Storer's history is excellent but his attributions are unworkable.

¹⁰ MHS Proceedings, 1918-1919, p. 207.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

10) Milford Haven, Admiral The Marquess of. British Naval Medals, London, 1919, Volume III.

Published in folio size on high quality paper, “Milford Haven” is a work of both beauty and merit. The period covered begins with Elizabeth I and continues into World War I, with the Vernon series occupying sixty six of the third volume’s 499 pages. Unlike those of his countrymen who disdained the Vernon’s for lack of artistic beauty, Milford Haven cherished them as an integral part of the nation’s proud naval history.

Prior to 1919, the Admiral Vernon medals had been described by Carranza, Hawkins, Grueber, Betts, Medina and Storer. Thus, Milford Haven was exploring where many had trod before. Unlike his predecessors, he succeeded in creating a user-friendly approach to the series. His two page schematic¹⁴ that precedes his listings of the medals is organized 1) by site (e.g. Porto Bello), 2) by Vernon’s figure (e.g. half length, full length), 3) by legend and 4) by reverse legend. With this key, a numismatist can quickly place a Vernon medal into a small grouping and then proceed to an exact attribution.

Clearly, Milford Haven studied his subject matter with painstaking care. His descriptions are complete; he distinguishes metallic composition (i.e. copper, brass or pinchbeck), his concordances with Betts and MI numbers are accurate, and, with a total of 184 varieties listed, he pushes beyond the 167 listings in Betts. As if all these features were not sufficient, he adds high grade images that, unlike the Grueber plates, are placed next to the descriptions of each individual variety. British Naval Medals is not the work of a titled dilettante. Rather, it is a thorough study executed with care by an accomplished numismatist.

¹⁴ Milford Haven, pp. 102-103.

11) Medina, J.T. Las Medallas del Almirante Vernon, Santiago de Chile, 1919.

José Toribio Medina was the author of numerous books on Latin American numismatics. Medina not only wrote these works, he printed them on his own press, typically in runs of 250 or less. Unfortunately, Almirante Vernon is “less,” with only 100 copies printed. Finding any copy, much less a decent copy, is a challenge.

Though much admired by Spanish-speaking successors, Medina’s work is only a partial success. A mere 143 varieties of Vernon medals are presented. Metrological data, such as weight, diameter and metal employed are generally lacking. The accompanying images are often low resolution line screen, which makes attribution difficult. But then there is little reason to attribute to an attenuated list.

Where Medina succeeds is in gathering a cornucopia of primary source material. He includes in their entirety seven first hand reports on the battles of Porto Bello and Cartagena reports that he unearthed in the Archivo de Indias in Spain. In similar fashion, he presents contemporary reports as seen from the English side, thus providing an unusually complete perspective on the underlying events. For those whose curiosity is not sated, the author appends a seven page bibliography listing other relevant material. More than any other author on the Vernon series up to this point, Medina immersed himself in relevant primary sources.

Excepting numbers 3 and 79, Almirante Vernon offers little new data to the student of die varieties. The author does point out that his #76 (MG) was the first Vernon medal to be illustrated, having appeared in Clave Historical, published by P. Henrique Florez in 1749. If the numismatic content is limited, the historical content is truly invigorating. Medina’s effort deserves much more attention in the English-speaking world than it has received.

12) Sandwich, Earl of. British and Foreign Medals Relating to Naval and Maritime Affairs. Greenwich, England, 1937. Second Edition, 1950.

The Vernon Section of the 1936 edition of Sandwich lists 126 varieties, all in the collection of the National Maritime Museum and most of them donated by the author. These 126 varieties are divided into four unimaginative categories: Porto Bello, Fort Chagre, Carthage and Havana. The descriptions are equally unimaginative with, typically, partial legends and incomplete descriptions of the reverses. This book cannot be used for attributions because, other than the four geographic categories, there is no structure to sequencing the numbers. To the Earl's credit, his numbers are cross-referenced to Milford Haven; five varieties not in Milford Haven are cross-referenced to Storer and/or Betts. The 1936 edition of Sandwich is an adequate catalogue of a decent collection but, otherwise, it adds nothing to our knowledge of the series.

In 1950, the Earl of Sandwich came up with a much improved effort. The collection had grown to 205 varieties with no less than 17 of these being in silver. The categories have been given a great deal more thought and are now organized both by location and legend. Equally important, the key details on the reverses of the medal are now given so that the modern numismatist could attribute most varieties to Sandwich numbers. However, this is not necessary because the author lists the collection by McCormick-Goodhart as well as by Milford Haven.

The most original feature of the 1950 edition of Sandwich is the format: the pages are eight inches on the vertical axis and 12 and one half inches on the horizontal. This format does not fit well on the typical library shelf but it does permit no less than nine columns of entries.

Sadly, the author gives only passing mention to Leander McCormick-Goodhart who made major additions to the Museum's collection, including the 17 silver medals, and who in his opus on the Vernon medals published in 1945, pioneered many of the keys to attribution that Sandwich took as his own with no credit given. "Plagiarize" is a harsh word but, in the present case, it is earned.

13) McCormick-Goodhart, Leander. Admiral Vernon Medals, published by Numismatic Review, New York, 1945.

A United State resident with a British passport, Leander McCormick-Goodhart was well-positioned. He was able to acquire Admiral Vernon medals on both sides of the Atlantic at a time—the 1940's—when competition for this material was non-existent. His claim to have owned literally thousands of these pieces is a credible one. His magnum opus published in 1945 adds dozens of new varieties to the published domain and does so with accuracy that comes only with experience.

The author starts his listings with short sections on 1) medals with no place named and no portraits and 2) medals with no place named but including one or more portraits. There follows the standard divisions for Porto Bello, Fort Chagre, Cartagena and Havana. Within these divisions, the listings begin with half busts, proceeding to medium and full length, proceeding to multiple portraits arranged in similar fashion. Within the section of single portraits for Porto Bello, by far the most numerous sub-division, it is most useful to have the listing by the placement of Vernon's finger proceeding clockwise.

A total of 241 varieties are described, a few of which appear to be redundant. Most authors provided full legends, whereas McCormick-Goodhart only gives us the first word. Indeed his descriptions are, in general, too brief which, in turn, makes it very difficult to winnow the redundancies. Another serious criticism is the lack of high quality images. This lack and the aforementioned brevity may well have been caused by wartime shortages in suitable printing paper. In any event, the unprepossessing aesthetics of the work should not detract from the high quality of the content.

McCormick-Goodhart claims to have owned all 241 varieties, save for the handful specifically excepted. Given that he donated large numbers of medals to the British Museum, the National Maritime Museum, the American Numismatic Society, the United States Naval Foundation and perhaps others, one can readily appreciate the extent of his collecting effort.

Admiral Vernon Medals contains terse remarks on the historical events, a cursory bibliography, and a decent start on a concordance. The author's focus is on attributions, where he is clearly superior to all his predecessors, a fact which many have seen fit to ignore for over 60 years.

14) Ferrari, Jorge N. Medallas del Almirante Vernon, Numisma, Madrid, 1966.

Jorge Ferrari was an accomplished collector. In a 20 page document circulated privately in the 1960's he describes his collection of 273 Admiral Vernon medals, comprised of 148 different varieties of which ten were then unpublished. He lists a total of 232 varieties, cross-referencing these to McCormick-Goodhart, Milford Haven, Medallic Illustrations, Medina and Mitre. Thus, the man was eminently qualified to write on the subject of Vernon medals but, unfortunately Medallas del Almirante Vernon, a 17 page article in a Spanish periodical, comprises the totality of his published work.

In Medallas, Ferrari begins by paying the standard homage to Edward Vernon but then shifts to provide the perspective of the Spanish commandant general, don Blas de Lezo y Olabarrieto. Other works on the series suggest that the British attack on Carthagenia fails because of disagreements within the command structure. Ferrari points out that Lezo led a heroic defense of the city, causing the attackers to withdraw. The irony of the situation is that Admiral Vernon, because he dispatched a ship with premature news of a victory, is survived by a plethora of Carthagenia medals whereas Lezo, the victor, is memorialized by none.

In addition to presenting a balanced picture of the events, Ferrari pioneers in sequencing the varieties. Not only does he correct the obvious anachronisms which would place Don Blas on a medal celebrating the action at Porto Bello or Commodore Brown on one that references Carthagenia, he makes a studied attempt to align the medals with the actual history. The result is quite elegant from an intellectual standpoint but, be it said, at some sacrifice to ease-of-use in making attributions.

Ferrari went on to write a 900 page manuscript on the Vernon medals. Whereas, for sufficient reason, the author did not want this work to be published, it is devoutly to be hoped that some elements of his mature thinking will yet see the light of day. Based on his article in Numisina, Ferrari achieves a secure, if not leading, place in the field by taking a close examination of the history and then applying this historical perspective to the medals, as opposed to placing the history and the medals in separate compartments.

Summary Table

	Date	Author	Number of Varieties
1)	1836	de Renesse-Briedbach	30
2)	1867-1871	Appleton	75
3)	1874	Carranza	15
4)	1885	Hawkins	121
5)	1893	Rosa	120
6)	1893	Betts	167
7)	1904	Mitre	70
8)	1904-1911	Grueber	89
9)	1918-1919	Storer	339
10)	1919	Milford Haven	184
11)	1919	Medina	143
12)	1937, 1950	Sandwich	205
13)	1945	McCormick-Goodhart	241
14)	1966	Ferraro	232

Epilogue

In the period 1873 to 1966, thirteen authors published studies of the Admiral Vernon medals—one every seven years. Remarkably, there has been nothing published in the 42 years since Ferrari's 1966 article in *Numisma*. This long period of silence would suggest that there is nothing more to be said on the subject, that the collectors of these medals have been fully served.

It may well be true that historians have devoted as much attention to Admiral Vernon as he deserves. However, a review of the Vernon literature demonstrates that the Spanish writers applaud the heroism of don Blas de Lezo in his successful defense of Cartagena, whereas English commentators leave him either on his knees or fleeing in a small boat, as the medals depict. This dichotomy could be ended with a translation of Ferrari and/or Carranza.

For the numismatic side, there is no quick fix. McCormick-Goodhart may be the best source extant for attributions. However, in Stacks 2008 Americana sale, a senior cataloguer misattributed four out of seven Vernon lots. Indeed in Coin Galleries sale of 3/31/08 featuring pieces formerly owned and catalogued by McCormick-Goodhart himself, there was at least one mistake. Clearly, a reference that is more user-friendly is required, one that takes advantage of modern imaging techniques. We trust that such a reference—the fifteenth in a proud tradition will not be long in coming.