

*The Tudor Occupation of Boulogne: Conquest, Colonisation, and Imperial Monarchy, 1544–1550.* Neil Murphy.

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In the summer of 1544, English King Henry VIII made one last foray into military adventurism on the Continent, besieging and capturing the French port of Boulogne and its surrounding territory. While the Boulogne campaign was the largest of his entire reign, it is also one of the least known. Historians have commonly dismissed it as the last effort of an aging monarch to prove his virility, and as an expensive disaster that sapped resources badly needed elsewhere until the English sold the port back to France, six years after the conquest. Neil Murphy's new study demonstrates that the English efforts to seize and control this territory are worthy of study both for what they tell about the English military system and administration at the time and for colonial policy more broadly. The occupation of Boulogne provides valuable context for efforts in Scotland, Ireland, and the Americas.

The sheer size and cost of the expedition and of the efforts to colonize and defend the conquered areas in themselves make the topic worthy of study. The 36,000-strong force that Henry took across the channel was larger than any previous English invasion anywhere and would not be exceeded for 150 years. The costs of funding the invasion and efforts to garrison, fortify, and populate the area consumed an unprecedented amount of resources. While the records that the English kept at Boulogne were lost when they left, the Crown kept enough records at home to make it possible for Murphy to reconstruct much of what happened in the colony, and the author supplements these records with material from the correspondence and diaries of some of the principal actors, pamphlet literature, French records, and even the series of maps of the conquered areas that Henry commissioned.

While the book opens with a chapter on the campaign and siege, the rest of the work focuses on the occupation and English efforts to create a self-sustaining colony in the Boulonnais. The first issue that Murphy examines in depth is the fate of the French population of the town and surrounding countryside. Here he makes effective use of a wide range of sources to demonstrate that the invaders treated the locals brutally—killing, robbing, and otherwise abusing the peasant population, and eventually driving any who survived into French territory. He also notes that while Henry spared the lives of the town's inhabitants, there were no protections provided for them once they left it. Moreover, undisciplined soldiers, possibly on both sides, robbed the inhabitants not only of the possessions that they were allowed to carry with them but even of their clothing, likely causing many of them to become ill or die from exposure. From there, Murphy traces English efforts to garrison the new colony to protect it against the French, to build new fortifications to defend the Boulonnais, and to recruit English farmers and artisans to populate the colony and make it self-sustaining, efforts that were ultimately doomed by French moves to reclaim their territory and frustrate

English plans. In the end, Edward VI's handlers, who initially had attempted to continue Henry's efforts to secure the colony, simply sold it back to the French in 1550.

Beyond chronicling the colonial venture itself, Murphy advances several arguments regarding its significance. He uses evidence from his research, as well as scholarship on the Hundred Years' War and border conflicts with Scotland, to demonstrate that English soldiers had always treated foreigners brutally and had often engaged in what would now be termed ethnic cleansing. Here he challenges those who present Tudor colonial policy in Ireland, which was equally brutal, as something new, and something that would later be transferred to the Americas. Murphy notes that many of the soldiers and noblemen who led the Irish expeditions had previously served at Boulogne, and simply repeated in Ireland what they had done elsewhere. He also presents the Boulogne expedition and the Irish ventures as being the last English efforts to use Crown resources to build colonies, which would give way to chartering private groups to establish colonies in the Americas. Murphy develops and supports his arguments thoroughly and carefully, and presents them in an accessible fashion that will make his work valuable to researchers and accessible to undergraduates.

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*American Baroque: Pearls and the Nature of Empire, 1492–1700.*

Molly A. Warsh.

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In 1550 there was a mountain as big and as rich as Potosi in the Caribbean. It was a mountain made of pearls and empty oyster shells. In a beautifully crafted book, Molly Warsh describes the spectacular production of pearls in three tiny sixteenth-century areas of Venezuela: Cubagua, Margarita, and the Pearl Coast. Every year throughout the century, the Spanish Crown received an average of 1,000 pounds of pearls as tax, corresponding to the monarch's *quinto*, a fifth of all production (90). Yet Crown accountants never registered 80 percent of the pearls actually produced (53). Smugglers transported them in the seams of sleeves and coats or swallowed them. The tiny islands off the coast of Venezuela could just as well have been silver mountains, like Potosi. Drawing heavily on the monumental scholarship of Enrique Otte (who reconstructed every detail of this pearl economy) and using pearls as both case study and metaphor, Warsh explores the very nature of the early modern imperial state. Her argument: the monarchy helplessly sought to regulate production, value, and circulation of pearls, but was outmaneuvered at every turn by slaves, towns, merchants, pirates, and its own bureaucracies.