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VIOLENCE, COLONIZATION AND HENRY VIII'S CONQUEST OF FRANCE, 1544–1546*

In 1579 the English writer Thomas Churchyard explained to his readers the military strategy that Sir Humphrey Gilbert had used in Ireland during the suppression of the First Desmond Rebellion ten years earlier. He wrote that 'when soeuer he [Gilbert] made any ostyng, or inrode, into the enemies Countrey, he killed manne, woman, and child, and spoiled, wasted, and burned, by the grounde all that he might: leauyng nothyng of the enemies in saffetie, whiche he could possiblie waste, or consume'.¹ Gilbert's actions have been seen as emblematic of the apparently special character of English warfare in sixteenth-century Ireland. The editors of an influential collection of essays examining conflict in early modern Ireland have written of 'a level of violence in Ireland that was more intense and vicious than elsewhere in the Tudor and Stuart kingdoms'.² Other historians of early modern Ireland have made even bolder claims. For Vincent Carey, the English 'campaigns of indiscriminate killing and systematic starvation in Munster and Ulster constituted an early modern European version of total war, which in its impact on the civilian population was probably unprecedented and unmatched until the events of the

* I wish to thank Steven Gunn and Tom Lawson for their valuable comments on this article. I am also grateful to the participants in the History Research Seminar at Northumbria University for the stimulating discussion that followed the paper I gave on this subject.

¹ Thomas Churchyard, *A Generall Rehearsall of Warres Wherein Is Five Hundred Seuerall Seruices of Land and Sea: As Sieges, Battailles, Skirmiches, and Encounters. A Thousande Gentle Memmes Names, of the Best Sort of Warriours. A Praise and True Honour of Soldiours: A Proefe of Perfite Nobilitie. A Triall and First Erection of Heraldes: a Discourse of Calamitie. And Ioyned to the Same some Tragedies and Epitaphes, as Many as Was Necessarye for this Firste Booke. All Whiche Woorkes Are Dedicated to the Right Honourable Sir Christopher Hatton Knight, Vize Chamberlain, Capitain of the Gard: [et] One of the Quéenes Maiesties Priuie Consail* (London, 1579, STC 5235).

² Clodagh Tait, David Edwards and Pádraig Lenihan, 'Early Modern Ireland: A History of Violence', in David Edwards, Pádraig Lenihan and Clodagh Tait (eds.), *Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2007), 23.

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Thirty Years' War some decades later'.³ Recently, David Edwards has reasserted the unique and brutal character of English violence in Ireland. Rather than being a product of the Elizabethan conquest, 'this type of violence', Edwards finds, was first used in Ireland during the repression of the Geraldine Rebellion in the 1530s and became especially pronounced in the 'colonial wars' that accompanied the establishment of English plantations in Laois and Offaly from the late 1540s.⁴

Edwards's explanation of the nature of the violence used in Ireland draws on the traditional narrative of the emergence of the early modern British Empire, which is widely believed to have started with the establishment of colonies in Ireland in the second half of the sixteenth century.⁵ To take a recent example, the editors of *Age of Atrocity* state that Ireland was 'the first colony of the fledgling British Empire', with the Laois–Offaly plantation forming the 'very first state colony'.⁶ Historians have deemed

³ Vincent Carey, "'What Pen Can Paint or Tears Atone?': Mountjoy's Scorched Earth Campaign', in Hiram Morgan (ed.), *The Battle of Kinsale* (Bray, 2004), 206. Nicholas Canny also describes the war in Munster as being 'total war': Nicholas P. Canny, 'The Ideology of English Colonization: from Ireland to America', *William and Mary Quarterly*, xxx (1973), 583, 593.

⁴ David Edwards, 'The Escalation of Violence in Sixteenth-Century Ireland', in Tait, Edwards and Lenihan (eds.), *Age of Atrocity*.

⁵ Karl S. Bottingheimer, 'Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Westward Enterprise, 1536–1660', in Kenneth R. Andrews et al. (eds.), *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic and America, 1480–1650* (Liverpool, 1978), 45; Nicholas Canny, 'The Origins of Empire: An Introduction', in Nicholas Canny and Elaine Low (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, i, *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 15; Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, 5th edn (Harlow, 2004), 120; Raymond Gillespie, 'Explorers, Exploiters and Entrepreneurs: Early Modern Ireland and its Context, 1500–1700', in B. J. Graham and L. J. Proudfoot (eds.), *An Historical Geography of Ireland* (London, 1993); Howard Mumford Jones, 'Origins of the Colonial Idea in England', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, lxxxv (1942), 451–3; Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2012), ch. 7; Hiram Morgan, 'The Colonial Venture of Sir Thomas Smith in Ulster, 1571–1575', *Historical Journal*, xxviii (1987); Jane H. Ohlmeyer, 'A Laboratory for Empire?: Early Modern Ireland and English Imperialism', in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2004); D. B. Quinn, 'Ireland and Sixteenth-Century European Expansion', in T. Desmond Williams (ed.), *Historical Studies I: Papers Read to the Irish Conference of Historians* (1958); D. B. Quinn, 'Renaissance Influences in English Colonization', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxvi (1976).

⁶ Tait, Edwards and Lenihan, 'Early Modern Ireland', 9. See also John Patrick Montano, *The Roots of English Colonialism in Ireland* (Cambridge, 2011), 19. For the development of the English colonies in Laois and Offaly, see R. Dunlop, 'The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', *English Historical Review*, vi (1891); Dean Gunter

these early colonies in Ireland to be significant because they are believed to have provided the bedrock 'for the long-term development of English colonization'.⁷ According to this view, English experiences in Ireland provided the foundation for the expansion of the British Empire in the seventeenth century.⁸ For Shankar Raman, Ireland was the 'testing ground for English colonial policy in the New World', while Patrick Griffin has written that 'the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland served as a laboratory for the first settlement of America. So axiomatic has this last point become . . . that it lies beyond debate'.⁹

Historians have found that the English developed savage methods of warfare during their conflicts in Ireland, which they also used against the native populations of the Americas, because the English held ethnic views of the Irish that were akin to those they had of the population of the New World.¹⁰ For them, the Irish, like native Americans, were savages, and thus the restraints on violence typically used when fighting other Europeans did not

(n. 6 cont.)

White, 'Tudor Plantations in Ireland before 1571' (Trinity College Dublin Ph.D. thesis, 1968).

⁷ Vincent Carey, 'Icons of Atrocity: John Derricke's *Image of Irelande* (1581)', in Allison B. Kavey (ed.), *World-Building and the Early Modern Imagination* (New York, 2010), 308.

⁸ Nicholas Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest: A Pattern Established* (Hassocks, 1976), 65, 76, 86, 162–3; Canny, 'Ideology of English Colonization'; Alison Games, 'Beyond the Atlantic: English Globetrotters and Transoceanic Connections', *William and Mary Quarterly*, lxiii (2006); Andrew Hadfield, 'Irish Colonies and the Americas', in Robert Appelbaum and John Wood Sweet (eds.), *Envisioning an English Empire: Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2005), 174; G. A. Hayes-McCoy, 'The Tudor Conquest (1534–1603)', in T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin (eds.), *The Course of Irish History* (Cork, 1967), 175; Richard McCabe, *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference* (Oxford, 2002), 61–2; Annaleigh Margey, 'Representing Colonial Landscapes: Early English Maps of Ulster and Virginia, 1580–1612', in Brian Mac Cuarta (ed.), *Reshaping Ireland, 1550–1700: Colonization and its Consequences* (Dublin, 2011), 61–4; Peter J. Piveronus, 'Sir Warham St Leger and the First Munster Plantation, 1568–69', *Eire-Ireland*, xiv (1979); David Beers Quinn, 'Sir Thomas Smith (1513–1577) and the Beginnings of English Colonial Theory', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, lxxxix (1945); William J. Smyth, *Map-Making, Landscapes and Memory: A Geography of Colonial and Early Modern Ireland, c. 1530–1750* (Cork, 2006), 427–8.

⁹ Shankar Raman, *Renaissance Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh, 2011), 24; Patrick Griffin, 'Reckoning with the English', review of S. J. Connolly, *Contested Island* and Smyth, *Mapmaking, Landscapes and Memory*, in *Field Day Review*, iv (2008), 248.

¹⁰ Carey, 'Icons of Atrocity', 234, 237.

apply when campaigning in Ireland.¹¹ Harold E. Selesky finds that the English conduct of war in sixteenth-century France was markedly different from that in Ireland and the Americas.¹² Historians have asserted that a Protestant English hatred of the Catholic Irish explains the supposedly unique character of violence in Ireland. Nicholas Canny (the leading proponent of this view) has stated that ethnic hatred was the 'pretext for extermination' because it 'absolved [the English] of all normal ethical constraints'.¹³

The interplay between violence and colonialism in sixteenth-century Ireland has led some historians to view the English conquest as genocide. From the nineteenth century, historians emphasized the annihilationist nature of English violence in Ireland, which is portrayed as genocide *avant la lettre*.¹⁴ Furthermore, Raphael Lemkin (who devised the concept of genocide in response to Turkey's massacre of its Armenian population) considered English actions in sixteenth-century Ireland to constitute genocide.¹⁵ From Lemkin to Jean-Paul Sartre to Hannah Arendt, colonialism has been closely tied to genocide.¹⁶ Indeed, the combination of colonization and

¹¹ Nicholas Canny, 'The Marginal Kingdom: Ireland as a Problem in the First British Empire', in Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (eds.), *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill and London, 1991), 35–6; Ronald Takaki, 'The Tempest in the Wilderness: The Racialization of Savagery', *Journal of American History*, lxxix (1992).

¹² Harold E. Selesky, 'Colonial America', in Michael Howard, George J. Andreopoulos and Mark R. Shulman (eds.), *The Laws of War: Constraints on Warfare in the Western World* (New Haven and London, 1994), 61.

¹³ Canny, 'Ideology of English Colonization', 581; Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest*, 122. See also Carey, 'Icons of Atrocity', 233–54.

¹⁴ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, 7 vols. (London, 1878–90), ii, 95.

¹⁵ John Docker, 'Are Settler-Colonies Inherently Genocidal? Re-reading Lemkin', in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York, 2010), 85–6.

¹⁶ Ann Curthoys and John Docker, 'Defining Genocide', in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of Genocide* (New York, 2008), 10–13; Pascal Grosse, 'From Colonialism to National Socialism to Postcolonialism: Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*', *Postcolonial Studies*, ix (2006); Tom Lawson, *Debates on the Holocaust* (Manchester, 2010), 222–5; Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (New York, 1944), 79–80; Nicolas A. Robins, 'Colonial Latin America', in Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford, 2010), 305; Alison Palmer, *Colonial Genocide* (Adelaide, 2000), ch. 2; J.-P. Sartre, *On Genocide: And a Summary of the Evidence and the Judgments of the International War Crimes Tribunal*, ed. Arlette El Kaïm-Sartre (Boston, 1968).

extreme violence has given sixteenth-century Ireland a prominent place in the emerging field of genocide studies, which has reinforced the apparently unique character of the violence there.¹⁷ In his highly influential examination of genocide in human history, Ben Kiernan writes that English policy in sixteenth-century Ireland was based on ‘ethnic and annihilationist thinking’.¹⁸ Postcolonial scholars such as Edward Said and Shankar Raman have also emphasized the exceptional character of the violence used during the sixteenth-century conquest of Ireland, portraying English ideas of Irish racial inferiority as the pretext for extermination.¹⁹

In comparison to the sheer volume of work on the impact of violence on civilian populations in sixteenth-century Ireland, work on other theatres of Tudor conflict, particularly France, lags far behind. In his book on England’s colonial wars, Bruce Lenman focuses on Ireland without mentioning France at all.²⁰ There are no detailed discussions of the nature of the violence used against civilians in the principal studies of English armies in the sixteenth century.²¹ Recently, Brendan Kane has questioned the extent to which the character of violence in Tudor Ireland was unique, though he focuses on comparisons with violence in England rather than on the interplay between violence and colonialism.²²

¹⁷ David Edwards, ‘Tudor Ireland: Anglicisation, Mass Killing, and Security’, in Cathie Carmichael and Richard C. Maguire (eds.), *The Routledge History of Genocide* (Abingdon, 2015); Raymond Evans, ‘“Crime Without a Name”: Colonialism and the Case for “Indigenocide”’, in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 136, 143; Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State*, ii, *The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London, 2013), 51; Robbie McVeigh, ‘“The Balance of Cruelty”: Ireland, Britain and the Logic of Genocide’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, x (2008), 547.

¹⁸ Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven, 2007), 183, 213. See also Fletcher and MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, 118. On Kiernan and Ireland, see Brendan Kane, ‘Introduction: Human Rights and the History of Violence in the Early British Empire’, *History*, xcix (2014), 384–5.

¹⁹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993), 5, 266, 268, 284.

²⁰ Bruce Lenman, *England’s Colonial Wars, 1550–1688: Conflicts, Empire and National Identity* (Harlow, 2001).

²¹ Charles Cruickshank, *Henry VIII and the Invasion of France* (Stroud, 1990); C. G. Cruickshank, *The English Occupation of Tournai, 1513–1519* (Oxford, 1971); David Grummitt, *The Calais Garrison: War and Military Service in England, 1436–1558* (Woodbridge, 2008); Paul E. J. Hammer, *Elizabeth’s Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544–1604* (Basingstoke, 2003); Mark Charles Fissel, *English Warfare, 1511–1642* (London, 2001); James Raymond, *Henry VIII’s Military Revolution: The Armies of Sixteenth-Century Britain and Europe* (London, 2007).

²² Brendan Kane, ‘Ordinary Violence? Ireland as Emergency in the Tudor State’, *History*, xcix (2014).

Cliff Davies, Steven Gunn and David Potter have discussed important aspects of the attacks on civilians in their studies of Henry VIII's wars in France, though none of these works specifically focuses on this topic.²³ The result of the disproportionate coverage of the impact of English warfare on civilians has encouraged the view that the Irish were the victims par excellence of the expansionist Tudor state. Likewise, broader studies of early modern European warfare have tended to confirm the impression that scorched-earth tactics were particular to conflicts in Ireland. For example, in his influential *War and Society in Renaissance Europe*, J. R. Hale writes that there are 'few early modern examples' of a 'deliberate scorched-earth policy'.²⁴ Yet Hale is far off the mark, as English, French and Habsburg armies, among others, used scorched-earth tactics widely during the sixteenth century.²⁵ Certainly, when we examine Henry VIII's wars in France and Scotland, we find the extensive use of scorched-earth tactics and a high level of violence against civilians. Whereas the implementation of scorched earth in Scotland was modified by a concern to take plunder and prisoners, it was at its most severe in France when conflict was coupled with colonial development in the Boulonnais in the 1540s.²⁶

It has gone entirely unnoticed by historians of the early modern British Empire that the principal hallmarks of imperial rule (which are customarily seen to have developed in Ireland in the second half of the sixteenth century) had already appeared in northern France during the 1540s. Indeed, France rarely features in the historiography of the early British Empire.

²³ Clifford S. L. Davies, 'Henry VIII and Henry V: The Wars in France', in John L. Watts (ed.), *The End of the Middle Ages? England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Stroud, 1998), 261; S. J. Gunn, 'The Duke of Suffolk's March on Paris in 1523', *English Historical Review*, ci (1986); David Potter (ed.), *Henry VIII and Francis I: The Final Conflict, 1540–47* (Leiden, 2011), 269–71. I also wish to thank Steven Gunn for sending me the transcripts of his 2015 Ford Lectures ('The English People at War in the Age of Henry VIII', at <<https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/james-ford-lectures-british-history>>), which contain a wealth of information on the wider impact of warfare during the reign of Henry VIII.

²⁴ J. R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450–1620* (London, 1985), 184–6.

²⁵ Steven Gunn, David Grummitt and Hans Cools, *War, State and Society in England and the Netherlands, 1477–1559* (Oxford, 2007), 273–81; David Potter, *War and Government in the French Provinces: Picardy 1470–1560* (Cambridge, 1993), 200–32.

²⁶ For Scotland, see Steven Gunn, 'Ford Lecture, Number 4: Trade and Tillage'.

English lands in France receive no treatment in the *Oxford History of the British Empire* beyond cursory remarks from David Armitage that Calais was the ‘last toehold of the Angevin empire’ (in fact, Calais was never part of the Angevin Empire) and from Nicholas Canny that the loss of Calais spelt the end of ‘England’s medieval empire’ on the continent.²⁷ This dismissive view of England’s policy towards France fails to account for the significant developments in colonial rule that were made on the continent. In particular, an English colony was founded in the Boulonnais in 1546 on the back of the region’s depopulation through the use of scorched-earth tactics. As in Ireland, the English crown employed this highly destructive type of warfare against people it deemed to be its own subjects. This article will begin by investigating the use of military codes of conduct to restrain the behaviour of the English soldiers fighting in the Boulonnais, before moving on to examine direct attacks on the civilian population, particularly traditional non-combatants such as women, children and clergy. It will then examine the effects of the implementation of a scorched-earth policy to depopulate the Boulonnais of its native inhabitants, which was followed by an attempt to create an ethnically English colony.

The article is based on a range of primary sources (English, French and imperial), including the records produced by the English crown that detail the military strategy used in the Boulonnais (among them the blueprints for the establishment of the English colony) and the highly detailed reports that English commanders in France sent to Henry VIII and his leading ministers, giving blow-by-blow accounts of their attacks on the native population. We are fortunate to possess a number of diaries and journals kept by ordinary English soldiers who participated in the campaign, which provide us with graphic accounts of the brutal nature of the conflict in the Boulonnais. As these English sources were generally not intended for public consumption, the authors made no effort to minimize death rates or disguise their slaughter of civilians through the use of innuendo. In addition to the numerous English records, we also possess an abundant range of contemporary sources (diaries, letters, legal inquests, registers of municipal deliberations,

²⁷ David Armitage, ‘Literature and Empire’, in Canny and Low (eds.), *Origins of Empire*, 112.

financial accounts) left by the victims of the English campaign, as well as by those who witnessed at first hand the effects of the war on the local population. Overwhelmingly, these documents corroborate the information provided in the English sources and highlight the wider impact of the violence of 1544–6 on the native population of the Boulonnais. In sum, the range and volume of the surviving contemporary materials detailing Henry VIII's war in the Boulonnais make this campaign one of the best-documented European conflicts of the age.

I

Historians of early modern Europe have overstated the degree to which military codes of conduct were a development of the later sixteenth century.²⁸ Indeed, there is a wide literature on military ordinances and restraints in war in the later Middle Ages which early modernists have largely ignored.²⁹ Certainly, English armies used codes of conduct from the fourteenth century onwards to regulate soldiers' behaviour on campaign, including the treatment of non-combatants.³⁰ Restraints were read out to Henry VIII's armies in France, such as the 'lawes and ordinances' prohibiting English soldiers from attacking women, children, merchants and the clergy during the Tournai campaign of 1513.³¹ While military ordinances only show how the army

²⁸ John Childs, 'The Laws of War in Seventeenth-Century Europe and their Application during the Jacobite War in Ireland, 1688–91', in *Age of Atrocity*, 283–4; Micheál Ó Siochrú, 'Atrocity, Codes of Conduct, and the Irish in the British Civil Wars, 1641–1653', *Past and Present*, no. 195 (May 2007), 55–6; Geoffrey Parker, 'The Etiquette of Atrocity: The Laws of War in Early Modern Europe', in his *Empire, War and Faith in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2003), 160–5.

²⁹ For England, see Anne Curry, 'Disciplinary Ordinances for English and Franco-Scottish Armies in 1385: An International Code?', *Journal of Medieval History*, xxxvii (2011); Anne Curry, 'The Military Ordinances of Henry V: Texts and Contexts', in Chris Given-Wilson, Ann Kettle and Len Scales (eds.), *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c.1150–1500: Essays in Honour of Michael Prestwich* (Woodbridge, 2008); Maurice Keen, 'Richard II's Ordinances of War of 1385', in Rowena E. Archer and Simon Walker (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays Presented to Gerald Harriss* (London, 1995).

³⁰ *The Black Book of the Admiralty*, ed. Travers Twiss, 4 vols. (Rolls ser., iv, London, 1871), iv, 453–8, 459–72; J. Moisant, *Le Prince Noir en Aquitaine, 1355–1356–1362–1370* (Paris, 1894), 157–74.

³¹ *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols. (New Haven and London, 1964–69), i, 106–20; *Hereafter Ensue Certayne Statutes and Ordenaunces of Warre Made Ordeyned Enacted and Establyshed by the Most Noble*

(cont. on p. 21)

commanders expected their troops to act — rather than the reality of the situation in the field — we know from other types of records (including chronicles and reports from the conflict zone) that these regulations were strictly enforced in 1513 and that soldiers who pillaged the local population were hanged.³² Likewise, a code of conduct was issued to English soldiers in 1544 which aimed to protect the local population from unlicensed pillaging (and the diaries of English soldiers serving in the campaign show that these ordinances were rigorously enforced).³³ When the duke of Norfolk's soldiers marched out of Calais to campaign in the Boulonnais in June 1544, they were told that 'no one should dare to leave the host to ravage or loot within the French land on pain of death'.³⁴ The verbal communication of law codes was a cornerstone of English military practice during the sixteenth century. In his *Treatise of the Art of War*, Thomas Audley (who was appointed lieutenant of the lower town of Boulogne following the establishment of the colony in 1546) stated that military laws should be read out to soldiers before they set off on campaign, 'And if thei thynke them reasonable they will consent to them and hold up their hands which signifieth agreement. And afterwards if they breake any of thos Lawes of constitucions, then shall thei suffer without any resistance those punishments to be appointed therefor'.³⁵ Accordingly, soldiers could not claim ignorance of the punishments for unlicensed pillaging. Indeed, the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk hanged soldiers by the roadside in 1544 as a warning of the consequences of looting from the population of the Boulonnais.³⁶

Yet the regulations that restrained soldiers from attacking civilians could be suspended in the wake of a siege, with

(n. 31 cont.)

Victorious, and Moste Cristen Prynce Our Moste Drade Soueraygne Lorde Kynge Henry the viiii (London, 1513, STC 9333).

³² *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, Preserved in the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and Elsewhere in England* (hereafter LP), i, ed. J. S. Brewer (London, 1862), pt 2, no. 2391.

³³ *Statutes and Ordynances for the Warre* (London, 1544, STC 9334).

³⁴ *Elis Gruffydd and the 1544 'Enterprises' of Paris and Boulogne*, ed. Jonathan Davies (Farnham, 2003), 13.

³⁵ Thomas Audley, 'A Treatise on the Art of War', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vi (1927), 67.

³⁶ *Elis Gruffydd*, 15; J. H. Leslie (ed.), 'The Siege and Capture of Boulogne — 1544', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, i (1922), 193–4.

victorious commanders giving their soldiers licence to attack conquered populations. While sieges were the most codified aspect of warfare in sixteenth-century Europe, the rules governing them offered little protection to civilians, largely because they were derived from biblical precedents which were typically harsh towards conquered populations. The Book of Joshua records how the Israelites slaughtered Jericho's men, women and children, took their livestock and then burned the city to the ground. Likewise, the Book of Deuteronomy (which provided the blueprint for the laws governing sieges in the sixteenth century) ruled that all the men in a conquered city could be killed and the women, children and goods distributed among the victorious soldiers.³⁷

English commanders threatened to enforce the full rigour of the laws of war. During his French campaign of September 1522, Thomas Howard (then earl of Surrey) promised to kill all the men, women and children of Hesdin if they did not surrender.³⁸ While threats of violence were designed to intimidate urban populations and thus encourage them to capitulate, the full severity of the laws of war could be applied against defiant populations. When Thomas Howard took the Breton town of Morlaix by force in July 1522, he gave his soldiers permission to spend two days sacking it — an action that was endorsed by both Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell.³⁹ Similarly, during the Scottish war of 1544, the earl of Hertford told Edinburgh's rulers that 'vnless they would yelde vp the towne frankley without condition, and cause man, woman and childe, to issue into the fieldes, submitting them to his will and pleasure, he woulde put them to the sworde, and their towne to the fire'.⁴⁰ When Edinburgh refused to surrender and was

³⁷ Davies, 'Henry VIII and Henry V', 255; M. H. Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1965), 123; Theodor Meron, *Henry's Wars and Shakespeare's Laws: Perspectives on the Law of War in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1993), 22–3.

³⁸ *Grafton's Chronicle: To which Is Added His Table of the Bailiffs, Sheriffs, and Mayors, of the City of London. From the Year 1189, to 1558 Inclusive*, 2 vols. (London, 1809), ii, 330–1.

³⁹ *LP*, iii, pt 2, no. 2958; *Grafton's Chronicle*, ii, 325.

⁴⁰ *Grafton's Chronicle*, ii, 490–1; *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 6 vols. (London, 1807–08), iii, 835.

taken by force, Hertford ordered his soldiers to 'put the inhabitants to the sword' and then burn the town.⁴¹

The threat of a general slaughter could motivate the besieged to reach an accommodation with their attackers in the hope of avoiding a sack. In early September 1544, it became clear to the captain of Boulogne, Jacques de Coucy, lord of Vervins, that the town (which had been under siege since mid July) could not hold out against a further English assault. Vervins opened negotiations with the duke of Suffolk on 13 September 1544, obtaining his guarantee that the townspeople could leave Boulogne unharmed and with their possessions intact.⁴² It is significant that Henry VIII was personally commanding the siege of Boulogne, as it permitted Vervins to play on expectations of royal clemency. The ability to grant mercy was a cornerstone of royal power and it could be used for propaganda purposes, especially in chronicles that sought to promote English royal power.⁴³ Raphael Holinshed remarks that Henry approved Vervins' request for mercy 'like a noble and mercifull prince', while Ulpian Fulwell, in his sixteenth-century biography of the king, stated that Henry VIII was a greater ruler than both Agamemnon and Alexander (both of whom had ordered the sack of cities) because he had spared the population of Boulogne.⁴⁴ Henry granted the two thousand civilians who chose to leave Boulogne safe passage to Abbeville, instructing his soldiers not to molest them. In order to

⁴¹ Francis Godwin, *Annales of England Containing the Reignes of Henry the Eighth, Edward the Sixth, Queene Mary: Written in Latin by the Right Honorable and Right Reverend Father in God, Francis Lord Bishop of Hereford* (London, 1630, STC 11947), 190; *Holinshed's Chronicles*, iii, 835.

⁴² P.-J.-B. Bertrand, *Précis de l'histoire physique, civile et politique, de la ville de Boulogne-sur-Mer et des ses environs depuis les morins jusqu'en 1814: suivi de la topographie médicale, de considérations sur l'hygiène publique, d'une analyse de l'histoire naturelle du Boulonnais, d'un traité sur les bains de mer, et d'une biographie des hommes distingués nés dans ce pays. Orné de gravures et de cartes* (Boulogne, 1828), 109; A. Morin, 'Chroniques du siège de Boulogne, en 1544: ou, Journal de ce siège, en vers', *Revue des Sociétés Savantes de la France et de l'Étranger*, 4th ser., ii (1868), 255.

⁴³ K. J. Kesselring, *Mercy and Authority in the Tudor State* (Cambridge, 2003), 3; Fritz Redlich, *De praeda militari: Looting and Booty, 1500–1815* (Wiesbaden, 1956), 23; Peter H. Wilson, 'Atrocities in the Thirty Years War', in Micheál Ó Siochru and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds.), *Ireland: 1641. Contexts and Reactions* (Manchester, 2013), 159.

⁴⁴ *Holinshed's Chronicles*, iii, 840; Ulpian Fulwell, *The Flower of Fame: Containing the Bright Renowne, and Moste Fortunate Raigne of King Henry the VIII. Wherein Is Mentioned of Matters, by the Rest of Our Cronographers Ouerpassed* (London, 1575, STC 11475), 42.

prevent attacks on the townspeople, Henry stopped his troops from entering Boulogne until its population had departed; indeed, he even provided the refugees with a guard to protect them on the road.⁴⁵ By granting the townspeople clemency, Henry could also demonstrate that he was acting in accordance with contemporary views regarding the implementation of the laws of war. While the sack of cities was never the norm in the Middle Ages, military theorists (such as Alberico Gentili) placed an increased emphasis on the granting of mercy to conquered populations during the sixteenth century, though there could be a substantial difference between the often idealized forms of conflict set down in military manuals and the reality of war.⁴⁶

In 1544, the granting of mercy to the population of Boulogne (and the restraining of English soldiers) depended on the king's presence. As soon as the Boulogne refugees had walked several miles along the road — and thus beyond Henry's gaze — they were attacked by soldiers, who stole their goods and left them exposed to harsh weather in a region that had been entirely destroyed and depopulated.⁴⁷ It is probable that their attackers were the very soldiers that Henry VIII had sent to protect them, or else mercenaries or English adventurers operating beyond the control of army authorities. While Henry granted the townspeople permission to leave Boulogne with their possessions intact as an act of mercy, this gesture also made

⁴⁵ Louis Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre et d'Artois: Analyse et extraits pour servir à l'histoire de ces provinces de 1482 à 1560*, ed. E. Mannier (Paris, 1880), 184–5; *Chronicle of King Henry VIII of England: Being a Contemporary Record of Some of the Principal Events of the Reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. Written in Spanish by an Unknown Hand*, ed. Martin A. Sharp Hume (London, 1889), 116; *Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London*, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Society, 1st ser., liii, London, 1852), 47; *Elis Gruffydd*, 30–1; Leslie, 'Siege and Capture of Boulogne', 192; Charles Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors, from AD 1485 to 1559*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton, 2 vols. (London, 1838), i, 149; *Grafton's Chronicle*, ii, 491–2; *Holinshed's Chronicles*, iii, 840; Godwin, *Annales of England*, 192.

⁴⁶ Meron, *Henry's Wars*, 103–4.

⁴⁷ M. le Baron d'Ordre, *Le siège de Boulogne en 1544*, ed. Alexandre Marmin (Boulogne, 1825), 87; Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre et d'Artois*, 185; Ernest Deseille, 'Introduction à l'histoire du pays Boulonnais', *Mémoires de la Société Académique de l'Arrondissement de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, ix (1879), 46–7; 'Récit du siège et de la prise de Boulogne par les anglais en 1544, et de la reprise de cette ville par le roi Henri II, en 1550, par Guillaume Paradin', ed. D. Haigneré, *Mémoires de la Société Académique de l'Arrondissement de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, xv (1889–90), 290; Morin, 'Chroniques du siège de Boulogne', 259.

them prime targets for pillage — particularly as the group included the wealthiest urban families.⁴⁸

Furthermore, one contemporary French account of the attack states that some of the townswomen were raped.⁴⁹ Certainly, there is good reason to treat this account as more than an effort to demonize the English, particularly because rape was (and continues to be) a common threat for women during periods of warfare, and there are numerous reports of soldiers (English, French and imperial) raping women in this region during the mid sixteenth century.⁵⁰ It is significant that the rapes took place in the immediate aftermath of a siege, when the customary restraints on soldiers' violence were often lifted. Under normal circumstances, rape was a capital crime; indeed, the codes of conduct issued to the English army in 1544 made the rape of women punishable by death.⁵¹ Nonetheless, soldiers believed that the laws of war gave them the right to rape women after a victorious siege.⁵² As Thomas Meron has observed, 'licence to rape was considered a major incentive for the soldier involved in siege warfare'.⁵³ What we find here is perhaps the darker aspect to E. P. Thompson's moral economy.⁵⁴ As the English soldiers saw it, Henry VIII had infringed their customary rights by preventing them from pillaging Boulogne in the aftermath of the siege. Soldiers considered the right to rape to be enshrined in the laws regulating warfare, which made it difficult to restrain their

⁴⁸ Baron d'Ordre, *Siège de Boulogne*, 25; Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 185. Morin, 'Chroniques du siège de Boulogne', 63, 143, 245, 248, 252, 256.

⁴⁹ Bertrand, *Précis de l'histoire*, 101–2; 'Récit du siège', ed. Haigneré, 290.

⁵⁰ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 279; Gunn, *War, State and Society*, 273; Potter, *War and Government in the French Provinces*, 217; Jean Thieulaine, 'Un livre de raison en Artois (XVI^e siècle): extraits historiques', ed. X. de Gorguette d'Argœuvres, *Mémoires de la société des antiquaires de La Morinie*, xxi (1888–9), 160–1. For soldiers and rape, see Elizabeth D. Heineman (ed.), *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones: From the Ancient World to the Era of Human Rights* (Philadelphia, 2011).

⁵¹ Garthine Walker, 'Rereading Rape and Sexual Violence in Early Modern England', *Gender and History*, x (1998), 1; *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, i, 112; *Statutes and Ordinances for the Warre*, 15; J. H. Leslie (ed.), 'The Printed Articles of War of 1544', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vii (1928), 231.

⁵² Jim Bradbury, *The Medieval Siege* (Woodbridge, 1992), 317, 319, 322; Keen, *Laws of War*, 65, 121; Meron, *Henry's Wars*, 40–1; Robert C. Stacey, 'The Age of Chivalry', in Howard, Andreopoulos and Shulman (eds.), *Laws of War*, 38; Roland Littlewood, 'Military Rape', *Anthropology Today*, xiii (1997), 8.

⁵³ Meron, *Henry's Wars*, 111–12.

⁵⁴ E. P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, no. 50 (Feb. 1971).

actions.⁵⁵ As Michel de Montaigne observed, it was difficult to stop victorious troops from attacking the populations of conquered towns, even when mercy had been granted.⁵⁶ Efforts to prevent soldiers from molesting civilian populations often provoked discontent among armies. Certainly, English soldiers complained about the restraints placed on them during the 1544 campaign in France.⁵⁷ Soldiers sought to profit from their labour by sacking a town; indeed, army commanders encouraged their soldiers to fight with promises of pay through plunder. Moreover, in his 1539 work *On the Law of War*, the influential Spanish writer Francisco de Vitoria stated that the sack of a town was beneficial to soldiers' morale.⁵⁸

Military theorists of the sixteenth century such as Vitoria reluctantly recognized that the rape of women was part of the sack of a city (as had Saint Augustine).⁵⁹ Indeed, the rape of women and the looting of enemy goods were two sides of the same coin for soldiers.⁶⁰ As Otto Ulbricht has observed in his study of the Thirty Years' War, 'Rape by soldiers . . . meant the experience of violence in its most radical form, namely, reducing a human being to a mere object, a part of the booty'.⁶¹ As the attack on Boulogne's refugees took place on the road, the rapes would undoubtedly have been carried out in front of the women's husbands or fathers. By having acts of sexual violence take place concurrently with the looting of goods, English soldiers reinforced the men's powerlessness to protect their property. Because the rape of women was seen as an attack on male

⁵⁵ Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 318.

⁵⁶ Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech (London, 1991), 25.

⁵⁷ Elis Gruffydd, 26–7.

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Parker, 'Early Modern Europe', in Howard, Andreopoulos and Shulman (eds.), *Laws of War*, 49. Francisco de Vitoria, *Political Writings*, ed. Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrance (Cambridge, 1991), 293–327.

⁵⁹ Vitoria, *Political Writings*, 323; Saint Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London, 2003), 66.

⁶⁰ John A. Lynn II, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2008), 153–4; Corinne Saunders, 'Sexual Violence in Wars — The Middle Ages', in Hans-Henning Kortüm (ed.), *Transcultural Wars: From the Middle Ages to the 21st Century* (Berlin, 2006), 151; Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The 'Heroic' Tradition and its Alternatives* (Cambridge, 1999), 63.

⁶¹ Otto Ulbricht, 'The Experience of Violence during the Thirty Years War: A Look at the Civilian Victims', in Joseph Canning, Hartmut Lehmann and Jay Winter (eds.), *Power, Violence and Mass Death in Pre-Modern and Modern Times* (Farnham, 2004), 114.

honour, soldiers could further assert their domination over the conquered population. As the refugees included Boulogne's elite, there may have been an element of class humiliation to this act because, in contemporary thought, the loss of honour through rape was greater for higher-class women.⁶²

Contemporary descriptions of the Boulogne refugees provided by people who saw them strongly suggest that the English soldiers stripped the townspeople of their clothing during this attack.⁶³ The theft of clothes from conquered populations was a common aspect of warfare in early modern Europe. On the one hand, there was a basic financial incentive because clothes were valuable and could be sold on. But stripping was also intended to humiliate the victims, especially when they were from social elites (for whom clothing was an important marker of their elevated status). As William Smyth has shown, the humiliation was intensified when those stripped of their clothing were refugees on their way to seek shelter.⁶⁴ There were also strong associations between the stripping of women and the opportunity to commit sexual violence, particularly in the wake of a siege.⁶⁵

Moreover, the stripping of conquered populations during periods of adverse weather was an effective way to kill them without resorting to direct slaughter.⁶⁶ While the deliberate

⁶² Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 322; Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm, "The Rebels Turkish Tyranny": Understanding Sexual Violence in Ireland during the 1640s', *Gender and History*, xxii (2010), 63; Wolfthal, *Images of Rape*, 64.

⁶³ *Elis Gruffydd*, 30–1; Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 185.

⁶⁴ Willie Smyth, 'Towards a Cultural Geography of the 1641 Rising/Rebellion', in *Ireland: 1641*, 78.

⁶⁵ Ronald G. Asch, "Wo der soldat hinkoemt, da ist alles sein": Military Violence and Atrocities in the Thirty Years War Re-Examined', *German History*, xviii (2000), 296–7; Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British: 1580–1650* (Oxford, 2001), 542–4; Hall and Malcolm, "Rebels Turkish Tyranny", 66; Littlewood, 'Military Rape', 10; Mary O'Dowd, 'Women and War in Ireland in the 1640s', in Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O'Dowd (eds.), *Women in Early Modern Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1991), 98–9, 101; Ulbricht, 'Experience of Violence', 118–19; Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003), 54; John Walter, 'Performative Violence? The Politics of Violence in the 1641 Depositions', in *Ireland: 1641*, 137; Wilson, 'Atrocities in the Thirty Years War', 166; Wolfthal, *Images of Rape*, 61.

⁶⁶ Patrick J. Corish, 'The Rising of 1641 and the Catholic Confederacy, 1641–5', in T. F. X. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland*, iii, *Early Modern Ireland, 1534–1691* (Oxford, 1991); Robin Clifton, "An Indiscriminate Blackness"? Massacre, Counter-Massacre, and Ethnic Cleansing in Ireland, 1640–1660", in Mark Levene and Penny Roberts (eds.), *The Massacre in History* (New York, 1999), 109.

killing of civilians through stripping and exposure is taken to be a distinctive feature of English warfare in Ireland, both English and French forces used this tactic during the wars in the Boulonnais in the 1540s.⁶⁷ When the English garrison at New Haven surrendered to the French in 1549, one soldier observed that ‘if any man or woman came out wearing any good clothes the French stripped them cruelly, and so many left with very little on them at all to protect them from the hoar frost on their way to Calais’.⁶⁸ By adopting such tactics, commanders could claim that they were being merciful to civilians by sparing their lives, though the denial of adequate shelter and clothing in periods of harsh weather often had the same result as direct slaughter. There are numerous contemporary accounts attesting to the severe weather in the Boulonnais at the time of the townspeople’s expulsion — and the fatal effect it had on them. One English soldier who witnessed the refugees leaving Boulogne commented on the ‘Winde and Raine wt suche Storme as has not been seen . . . and foule wether’ that continued to afflict the region while the townspeople were on the road.⁶⁹ The Welsh soldier Elis Gruffydd, who was participating in the siege of Montreuil in September 1544, saw the Boulogne refugees pass him on the road to Abbeville. He states that the men, women and children ‘fainted while walking because it was so wet that there had not been one dry hour for ten days’, noting how the refugees sought refuge in ‘the ruins of a church and village which we had burnt a short time before. Many both old and young died there of cold’.⁷⁰ Antoine Morin, one of the Boulogne refugees, records how they were unable to find any shelter from the incessant rainfall because of the total destruction of the buildings in the region.⁷¹ The Saint-Omer monk Louis Brésin confirms the observations of Gruffydd and Morin, stating that the refugees passed through a land that had been entirely burnt and depopulated, while many refugees drowned in rivers swollen by the heavy rains.⁷²

⁶⁷ Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest*, 121; Smyth, ‘Towards a Cultural Geography’, 76.

⁶⁸ ‘Boulogne and Calais from 1545 to 1550’, ed. M. Bryn Davies, *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Fouad I University*, xii (1950), 67.

⁶⁹ Leslie, ‘Siege and Capture of Boulogne’, 192–3. For the adverse weather, see also: Morin, ‘Chroniques du siège de Boulogne’, 245, 251; Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 189, 193.

⁷⁰ *Elis Gruffydd*, 67.

⁷¹ Morin, ‘Chroniques du siège de Boulogne’, 260.

⁷² Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 185.

While the attacks on the Boulogne refugees took place in contravention of Henry VIII's instructions, there are numerous accounts of English commanders ordering the deliberate killing of civilians during the conquest of the Boulonnais. These killings were partly a consequence of the strategies the local population developed in response to Henry VIII's invasion. As Julius Ruff has observed, peasants had three principal choices when faced with a military invasion. First, they could attempt to flee the violence by seeking shelter in a castle or fortified town. Failing that, they could escape into woods, caves or other remote areas in the hope of remaining hidden until the soldiers had passed through the region. Second, villagers could stay in their homes and try to protect their families and their possessions.⁷³ Third, peasants could offer resistance to the invading army. The native population of the Boulonnais used all three strategies in response to the English invasion of 1544.

Peasants who were able to seek refuge in a walled town or castle often had the best chance of survival. At the beginning of the English campaign in 1544, the inhabitants of the villages surrounding Boulogne sought refuge in the town and its surrounding forts, while others fled to neighbouring towns such as Amiens, Abbeville, Beauvais and Senlis.⁷⁴ Yet this option was not available to many rural dwellers for two principal reasons. First, peasants had to live in close proximity to a fortified town if they hoped to reach it before the invading army did. Second, it was typically only the wealthier peasants (who had enough food and money to support themselves during their period of exile) who were permitted entry into towns. Because the burden of feeding poor rural refugees often fell on urban populations, displaced people were often forcibly prevented from entering towns. Furthermore, when food supplies ran low even those people fortunate enough to be admitted behind the security of urban walls could find that they had to re-enter the conflict zone in order to find sustenance. For example, peasants who had fled into Boulogne in advance of the siege were

⁷³ Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 2001), 57–8; Ulbricht, 'Experience of Violence', 110.

⁷⁴ *Journal du siège de Boulogne par les anglais prédédé d'une lettre de Henry VIII à la reine sur les operations du siège*, ed. Camille Le Roy (Boulogne, 1863), 22.

slaughtered by English troops when they tried to forage for food in the surrounding area.⁷⁵

Villagers who were unable or unwilling to stray far from their homes had to seek an alternative place of refuge. Peasants often sought shelter in churches, as these were normally the strongest places in their villages. Religious buildings were regularly destroyed during periods of conflict because they could be fortified, and the English burned numerous churches and abbeys in 1544.⁷⁶ Indeed, the situation in the Boulonnais was so dire that some villagers sought refuge in burned churches.⁷⁷ While religious buildings offered a place of refuge, the people who sought shelter within their walls were subject to the same laws of war that governed the conduct of sieges.⁷⁸ The men of the Boulonnais village of Audinghen fortified their church against an English force and managed to hold out for six hours despite the use of artillery against them, during which time they killed several soldiers and one officer. While the English commander persuaded the villagers to surrender by offering them mercy, as soon as the peasants opened the church doors the soldiers started to slaughter them. When the village women tried to stop the massacre of their menfolk, they too were killed.⁷⁹ Likewise, after soldiers under the command of Adrien de Croÿ, count of Roelx (who fought with the English army in 1544), used cannon against the church of Petinghem, the villagers sheltering inside attempted to surrender. Yet the count refused to accept their capitulation (as the artillery had been fired, he was not obliged

⁷⁵ W. A. J. Archbold (ed.), 'A Diary of the Expedition of 1544', *English Historical Review*, xvi (1901), 504; *Elis Gruffydd*, 55. Peasants also died while guarding the walls of Boulogne, along with women, children and members of the clergy: Morin, 'Chroniques du siège de Boulogne', 142.

⁷⁶ *Dictionnaire historique et archéologique du département du Pas-de-Calais publié par la Commission départementale des Monuments historiques: Arrondissement de Boulogne*, ed. Daniel Haighneré, 3 vols. (Arras, 1880–2), iii, 139; Davies, 'Boulogne and Calais', 12; *Grafton's Chronicle*, ii, 492; *Holinshed's Chronicles*, iii, 841; Bertrand, *Précis de l'histoire*, 101; 'Documents inédits ou rarissimes, concernant les sièges de Boulogne 1544–1549', ed. Arthur de Rosny, *Mémoires de la Société Académique de l'Arrondissement de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, xxvii (1912).

⁷⁷ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 180, 295.

⁷⁸ Davies, 'Boulogne and Calais', 11.

⁷⁹ Contemporary reports of the numbers of villagers killed at Audinghen are largely consistent. One source states that eighty-eight men were killed in addition to an unknown number of women, while another puts the total number of men, women and children killed at 110: 'Documents inédits ou rarissimes', ed. Rosny, 404–5; Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 179.

to do so by the laws of war)⁸⁰ and he massacred eighty men in the church, as well as an unknown number of women and children.⁸¹ By seeking refuge inside churches and defending them against the English soldiers, these peasants had relinquished the protection given to them in military codes of conduct. While the direct slaughter of women and children has typically been portrayed as a distinctive feature of English warfare in Ireland, these examples demonstrate that it was already happening in Henry VIII's wars in France.⁸²

In addition to women and children, members of the clergy (also traditionally protected by the law of war) were killed during attacks on churches. Historians of early modern Europe have traditionally treated attacks on the clergy as examples of religiously motivated violence.⁸³ Yet there is little to suggest that religion was a motivating factor in the violence of 1544, despite the attempts of some nineteenth-century French historians to portray the population of the Boulonnais as 'good French and good Catholics' who were defending their land against a tyrannical Henry VIII, who had invaded France intent on destroying Catholicism.⁸⁴ Rather, members of the clergy were attacked when they encouraged or facilitated resistance to the English — actions that removed their customary protection from violence. English commanders warned the French clergy to isolate themselves from any resistance to Henry VIII's wars in France. During the 1523 invasion of France, Sir William Sandes spared the lives of the clergy he found in fortified churches, though he reminded them that they were not men of war and threatened to hang them from the steeples of their churches in future.⁸⁵ This was more than an empty threat: in 1522 Sandes burned the priests and villagers of Whitsandbay in the bell-tower of the church they defended against the English.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 308; David Potter, *Renaissance France at War: Armies, Culture and Society, c. 1480–1560* (Woodbridge, 2008), 205.

⁸¹ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 180.

⁸² Carey, '“What Pen Can Paint or Tears Atone?”', 210–11; Edwards, 'Escalation of Violence in Sixteenth-Century Ireland', 71.

⁸³ See, for example, Walter, 'Performative Violence?', 139.

⁸⁴ Auguste d'Hauttefeuille and Louis Bénard, *Histoire de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, 2 vols. (Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1860), i, 226 (also 220, 225, 238). See also Bertrand, *Précis de l'histoire*, 101–2; Deseille, 'Introduction à l'histoire du pays Boulonnais', 47–8.

⁸⁵ *Grafton's Chronicle*, ii, 326.

⁸⁶ *Grafton's Chronicle*, ii, 326.

In 1544, a monk from the abbey of Cysoing (close to Saint-Omer) recorded how 'in many places the poor people were burned in their bell-towers'.⁸⁷ While killing of civilians in bell-towers is a common feature of atrocity stories, there are good reasons to read this as more than a literary trope. First, it is entirely logical for civilians to be killed in their churches because these buildings were places of refuge during times of conflict. Second, bell-towers had a judicial and symbolic importance. As highly visible structures, they provided the location where justice was done. During the suppression of the 1549 revolt in England, priests who led the rebels were hanged from church towers.⁸⁸ Similarly, clergy (like other non-combatants) were killed in 1544 because the English crown characterized them as rebels who had resisted their legitimate ruler — Henry VIII.

The majority of the instances of peasant resistance occurred in the early days of the English occupation, which probably reflected a belief that the English were only there to pillage rather than to occupy the land.⁸⁹ As well as defending churches, French peasants also made some direct attacks on English soldiers. Although a genuine feeling of loyalty towards the Valois monarchy may have motivated some of the attacks, the viciousness of these actions may also point to a wider hatred of the soldiers who repeatedly devastated the region in the mid sixteenth century, particularly as these attacks were designed to humiliate the soldiers. For example, soon after English soldiers had entered the region, French peasants killed a scout and mutilated his corpse.⁹⁰ Similarly, English soldiers caught pillaging an orchard in 1544 were killed and hanged from trees with their mouths stuffed full of cherries.⁹¹ These actions were intended both to humiliate the soldiers and to warn others of the consequences of pillaging. Yet retributive attacks on English soldiers were rare. Peasant violence tended to be defensive and it largely resulted from French villagers trying to protect their communities from attack. Peasant leaders emerged, such as Pierre du Roy, who moved the population of the village of

⁸⁷ 'Documents inédits ou rarissimes', ed. Rosny, 405.

⁸⁸ Andy Woods, 'The Deep Roots of Albion's Fatal Tree: The Tudor State and the Monopoly of Violence', *History*, xcix (2014), 411.

⁸⁹ *Elis Gruffydd*, 18.

⁹⁰ 'Documents inédits ou rarissimes', ed. Rosny, 405.

⁹¹ *Elis Gruffydd*, 20–21.

Alquines to a well-hidden cave system, which the community used as a place of refuge during times of conflict.⁹²

Flight to remote locations such as woods was the most common civilian response to the English invasion of 1544.⁹³ After Sir Ralph Ellerker and Sir Hugh Paulet had raided Desvres in 1545, they reported that the population had 'fled into the pyle and woods, and so saved themselves'.⁹⁴ It was not in the interests of soldiers to slaughter fleeing villagers when pillaging was the motivation behind their attacks. Indeed, it was easier to loot goods from deserted villages because there was no resistance to deal with.⁹⁵ However, as the 1544 war was aimed at depopulating the region, English commanders had their soldiers hunt down French peasants who had fled into the woods.⁹⁶ This was a tactic the English had used in Scotland. During his scorched-earth campaign in the Scottish Borders in 1523 Thomas Howard (who also commanded an English army in France in 1544) enlisted men from Northumberland (who knew the terrain) to hunt down Scottish villagers who had fled into the hills in advance of the English raid.⁹⁷ Similarly, during the 1544 campaign in the Boulonnais one English soldier recorded how he had 'censed the Woode' of 'pyllers and robbers'.⁹⁸ From Henry V's invasion of Normandy to Robespierre's campaign against the Vendée rebels in 1793, governments labelled people they wanted to take punitive action against as brigands or criminals because it justified the use of violence against them.⁹⁹ As the sixteenth-century military theorist Alberico Gentili made clear in his *De*

⁹² *Elis Gruffydd*, 13–15; Potter, *Henry VIII and Francis I*, 269–70.

⁹³ Nicholas Wright, *Knights and Peasants: The Hundred Years War in the French Countryside* (Woodbridge, 1998), 66.

⁹⁴ The National Archives, London (hereafter TNA), SP 1/202, fo. 84^r (*LP*, xx, pt 1, no. 962).

⁹⁵ Wilson, 'Atrocities in the Thirty Years War', 166; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 67; Myron P. Gutmann, *War and Rural Life in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Assen, 1980), 163; Ulbricht, 'Experience of Violence', 103, 104–6.

⁹⁶ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 293.

⁹⁷ British Library, London (hereafter BL), Cotton MS Caligula B/VI, fo. 372^v (*LP*, iii, no. 3321).

⁹⁸ Leslie, 'Siege and Capture of Boulogne', 189 (see also 197). During the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland, the English also hunted down civilians who had fled to the woods: Carey, "'What Pen Can Paint or Tears Atone?'"', 208; John McGurk, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: The 1590s Crisis* (Manchester, 1997), 226.

⁹⁹ C. T. Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy, 1415–50: The History of a Medieval Occupation* (Oxford, 1983), 229–40; Wright, *Knight and Peasants*, 87.

iure belli libri tres, brigands ‘do not enjoy the privileges of a law [of war] to which they are foes’.¹⁰⁰ In 1544, the English employed a legal vocabulary that legitimized their violence against the population of the Boulonnais. The Welsh soldier Elis Gruffydd writes of the ‘people of Picardy living like thieves and bandits in the woods and caves and valleys of the country round Boulogne’.¹⁰¹ Likewise, during the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland, the English called those people who had fled to the woods ‘rebells and theeves’.¹⁰² As we saw with the slaughter of women, children and the clergy, the English could justify their killing of civilians in 1544 by claiming that the laws of war did not protect these people because of their actions.

Peasants who fled to woods during times of conflict were frequently called ‘wild’. For Nicholas Canny, the English characterization of the Irish as ‘wild’ was essential for the use of extra-legal methods to slaughter them.¹⁰³ Yet, there was nothing specifically Irish about this term. The English used the same vocabulary to describe the population of the Boulonnais. When English officials surveyed the Boulonnais in the summer of 1546 to prepare its resettlement with English colonists, they wrote that the remaining population ‘doe live wildly, nether observyng holyday nor fastyng daye. In our opynyon, no civell nor polytyc order can take ther due effects where god is nether remembered ne honoured’, which is strikingly similar to English accounts of the Gaelic Irish in the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the term ‘wild’ was used widely across Europe; indeed, the French

¹⁰⁰ Alberico Gentili, *De jure belli libri tres*, trans. John C. Rolfe, 2 vols (Oxford, 1933), ii, 22.

¹⁰¹ *Elis Gruffydd*, 29.

¹⁰² “‘A Discourse of Ireland’ (circa 1599): A Sidelight on English Colonial Policy”, ed. David B. Quinn, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, section C, xlvii (1942), 160.

¹⁰³ Canny, ‘Ideology of English Colonization’, 581, 585, 588–9; Canny, *Elizabethan Conquest*, 124–5. See also Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser’s Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl* (Oxford, 1997), 136–8; Christopher Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1997), 3–4; Carey, ‘Icons of Atrocity’, 237; John Gillingham, ‘The English Invasion of Ireland’, in Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (eds.), *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534–1660* (Cambridge, 1993), 26–7.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, SP 1/223, fo. 89^f (LP, xxi, pt. 1, no. 1444). Furthermore, it was not just the Irish that the Tudor crown deemed to be ‘wild’ or ‘barbarous’. It used similar language to describe the population of northern England: Steven G. Ellis, ‘Civilizing the Natives: State Formation and the Tudor Monarchy, c.1400–1603’, in Steven G. Ellis and Lud’a Klusáková (eds.), *Imagining Frontiers, Contesting Identities* (Pisa, 2007), 86–7.

considered the English to be ‘wild’ (‘Anglois sauvaiges’), while Oudart du Biez, admiral of France, wrote that the combined effects of French, English and Irish soldiers in 1544 had forced the population of Groffliers to live in the woods ‘like wild beasts’.¹⁰⁵ As his remarks show, there was a recognition that such people were not naturally ‘wild’ and that war had reduced them to this state.

Historians of early modern Ireland overemphasize the role that ethnic hatred played in outbreaks of mass violence. For Brendan Bradshaw, the savagery of the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland was the product of a Protestant English sense of cultural superiority over the Catholic Irish.¹⁰⁶ Yet it is clear that English soldiers fighting in France in the 1540s had neither a predisposition to extreme violence nor a visceral hatred of the native population. While the English soldiers who served in Ireland had little, if any, connection to the place, many of those who fought in the Boulonnais were drawn from the Calais garrison and had links with the local French population. For example, English soldiers searching the woods outside Samer found a group of refugees, including a woman who had nursed one of the soldiers’ children before she had been expelled from Calais with all the other French residents in 1543.¹⁰⁷ It is also clear that the pitiful state of the French population in the Boulonnais elicited feelings of great sympathy and compassion from many English soldiers. One soldier was so affected by the scenes of starvation he witnessed in the Boulonnais that he tried to hand over his money to French peasants to buy food (though there was no food to buy).¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Elis Gruffydd writes that the terrible state

¹⁰⁵ Potter, *War and Government in the French Provinces*, 213; Archives Municipales (hereafter AM), Amiens, BB 25, fo. 250^r. Similarly, French peasants forced to live in the woods and fields during the Hundred Years War were also described as ‘wild’: Clifford J. Rogers, ‘By Fire and Sword: *Bellum Hostile* and “Civilians” in the Hundred Years’ War’, in Mark Grimsley and Clifford J. Rogers (eds.), *Civilians in the Path of War* (London, 2002), 60; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 66.

¹⁰⁶ Brendan Bradshaw, ‘The English Reformation and Identity Formation in Wales and Ireland’, in Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts (eds.), *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533–1707* (Cambridge, 1998), 62–70; Brendan Bradshaw, *The Irish Constitutional Revolution of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), ch. 9; Brendan Bradshaw, ‘Sword, Word and Strategy in the Reformation in Ireland’, *Historical Journal*, xxi (1978).

¹⁰⁷ Elis Gruffydd, 30.

¹⁰⁸ Elis Gruffydd, 28.

to which the starving population had been reduced 'would have made the hardest heart melt into tears from pity'.¹⁰⁹

Despite such expression of empathy, attacks on the population of the Boulonnais continued unabated. The character of the warfare in 1544 produced a fear among the French that the English were indiscriminately killing civilians. A monk from Saint-Omer wrote that numerous refugees had fled to the town in 1544 because of a rumour that the English had ordered the killing of all men, women and children in the Boulonnais.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the monk stated that when the English Crown recruited soldiers in the Low Countries they had these men take an oath to kill women and children.¹¹¹ While it is easy to dismiss such reports as exaggerated rumours, the nature of the warfare prosecuted in the Boulonnais meant that soldiers were indeed ordered to kill traditional non-combatants (including women and children). From the perspective of the English commanders in France there were compelling reasons to do this, particularly when the women and children had supported the enemy's war effort. For example, in 1544 the English ruled that anyone caught bringing victuals into the French-held town of Ardres (which Henry's army was blockading) would be killed. When English soldiers caught a group of women trying to supply Ardres, they warned them 'not to come there again under threat of having their hair and ears cut off and being sewn in sacks and thrown into the lakes near Guisnes'.¹¹² Soon after the English issued this warning, five men and twelve women caught trying to supply Ardres were executed and their corpses displayed at Guisnes castle.¹¹³ The high number of women executed in 1544 probably reflects a belief that they were less likely to be killed than men (likewise, when Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Cheney burned Saint-Riquier in 1544, the men had fled the town, leaving only the women behind).¹¹⁴ Yet English soldiers patrolled the region around Ardres specifically looking for women and children. In these cases,

¹⁰⁹ *Elis Gruffydd*, 28.

¹¹⁰ 'Documents inédits ou rarissimes', ed. Rosny, 404.

¹¹¹ 'Documents inédits ou rarissimes', ed. Rosny, 405.

¹¹² Davies, 'Boulogne and Calais', 2.

¹¹³ 'Documents inédits ou rarissimes', ed. Rosny, 404.

¹¹⁴ *Holinshed's Chronicles*, iii, 843.

women's and children's customary immunity from violence was removed because they had supported the enemy's war effort.

Overall, reports detailing the killing of traditional non-combatants in 1544 are highly credible for a number of reasons. First, the killings are corroborated by a range of English, French and imperial sources, most of which were not intended for public consumption. Second, these accounts avoid many of the clichés of atrocity stories in early modern Europe, such as the impaling of babies on pikes and the slicing open of pregnant women's wombs. In fact, when English soldiers caught a group of women supplying Ardres, they executed all of them except for the one woman who was pregnant.¹¹⁵ Third, English commanders ordered the killing of civilians when they deemed that their actions — whether supplying the enemy with food, fortifying churches or encouraging peasant resistance — had put them beyond the protection they could expect from the laws of war.¹¹⁶

II

Although widespread, the direct killing of civilians only affected a minority of the Boulonnais' population. In contrast, the implementation of a scorched-earth strategy caused extensive death and deprivation across the region. The English began to destroy the Boulonnais soon after Henry VIII declared war on France in 1543. Within days of the outbreak of hostilities, Sir John Wallop entered the Boulonnais and began to destroy all the villages in his path as he made his way to support Charles V's siege of Landrecies.¹¹⁷ The main onslaught against the Boulonnais began when an English army of approximately 35,000 soldiers poured into the region in the summer of 1544. The real threat to the native population was not from unlicensed pillaging by these soldiers; rather, the English commanders' orders to destroy the region caused the greatest hardship. While Thomas Howard, duke of Norfolk, hanged soldiers for unlicensed pillaging, he began systematically to burn crops and destroy villages from the moment he crossed out of the Calais Pale

¹¹⁵ 'Documents inédits ou rarissimes', ed. Rosny, 404.

¹¹⁶ C. T. Allmand, 'The War and Non-Combatant', in Kenneth Fowler (ed.), *The Hundred Years War* (London, 1971).

¹¹⁷ R. J. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I* (Cambridge, 1994), 486; Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 180.

into the Boulonnais.¹¹⁸ For Howard, there was no tension between these two policies. As pillaging was against military law codes, soldiers who looted from the population of the Boulonnais had challenged his authority and should be punished accordingly. In contrast, the destruction of the land was legitimate because it was carried out on his instructions. Some historians have downplayed the effects of scorched-earth tactics. Commenting on the English use of scorched earth in the sixteenth century, Wayne Lee states that it ‘was not intended to kill the local population. In essence, the tactic of devastation in most sixteenth-century contexts was logistical and emotional, not demographic’.¹¹⁹ In fact, this type of warfare was highly destructive and it created a demographic catastrophe in the Boulonnais during the mid 1540s.

There are a number of reasons why scorched earth caused greater mortality and misery than direct killing. First, these raids aimed to achieve the total destruction of a region. For example, Ralph Robson estimates that Thomas Dacre destroyed 75,000 acres of land in the Scottish Borders in 1523.¹²⁰ Cardinal Wolsey had instructed Dacre to destroy this region entirely, so ‘that ther is left neither house, forterress, village, tree, catail, corn, or other s[ucc]or for man’, with the result that the population would die from starvation.¹²¹ While the destruction of crops is normally portrayed as a unique feature of the Tudor crown’s ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Ireland, Henry VIII’s commanders repeatedly used these methods against his subjects in France.¹²² Midway through Thomas Howard’s 1522 campaign in France, Sir William Sandes wrote to Henry VIII to inform him that they were burning everything in their path and that they had swept the Boulonnais clean of corn, cattle and houses.¹²³ The devastation the English caused in 1522 was so extensive that the French were unable to

¹¹⁸ *Chronicle of King Henry VIII*, 108–9.

¹¹⁹ Wayne E. Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500–1865* (Oxford, 2011), 34.

¹²⁰ Ralph Robson, *The Rise and Fall of the English Highland Clans: Tudor Responses to a Mediaeval Problem* (Edinburgh, 1989), 180, 186. For these burnings, see TNA, SP 49/2, fo. 30^r (LP, iii, no. 3344).

¹²¹ TNA SP1/28, fo. 184^v (LP, iii, no. 3281).

¹²² Carey, ‘“What Pen Can Paint or Tears Atone?”’, 209. See also John McCavitt, *Sir Arthur Chichester: Lord Deputy of Ireland, 1605–1616* (Belfast, 1998), 12–13; Peter Beresford Ellis, *Hell or Connaught!: The Cromwellian Colonisation of Ireland, 1652–1660* (London, 1975), 25–9; Cyril Falls, *Elizabeth’s Irish Wars* (London, 1950), 277.

¹²³ BL, Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fos. 269^v–270^r (LP, iii, pt 2 no. 2530).

send a relief army to the region because it could not have survived.¹²⁴ In 1544, Antoine Morin, one of the Boulogne refugees, wrote that the English had so completely destroyed the Boulonnais they were unable to find any sustenance in the land, so that many died.¹²⁵ In short, the use of scorched earth was not indiscriminate; rather, it was highly organized and designed to destroy as much land as possible.

The English used scorched-earth tactics for the specific purpose of depopulating areas by creating starvation conditions. In 1521, Thomas Howard stated that his burnings in Ireland ensured that the people of the targeted areas 'shalbe enforced eyther to forsake the cuntrey, or dye for honger this wynter comyng'.¹²⁶ Henry VIII's commanders timed their scorched-earth tactics to take place at harvest time, so that they could achieve the maximum amount of damage.¹²⁷ In 1523, Howard delayed his raid in Scotland from June until September 'when their corn will be wonne, and they can be utterly ruined'.¹²⁸ Likewise, the 1544 campaign was deliberately timed to cause as much damage to the harvest as possible.¹²⁹ Indeed, Elis Gruffydd writes that as a consequence of these actions the Boulonnais was made 'barren'.¹³⁰

Corn was the principal target of scorched-earth raids.¹³¹ As this crop underpinned European diets in the sixteenth century, its destruction caused the most damage to the civilian population. Steven Kaplan has written of the 'tyranny of cereal-dependence',

¹²⁴ BL, Cotton MS Caligula D/VI, fos. 353^v–354^r (LP, iii, pt 2no. 2707); BL, Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fo. 266^r (LP, iii, pt 2 no. 2517).

¹²⁵ Morin, 'Chroniques du siège de Boulogne', 260.

¹²⁶ *State Papers Published under the Authority of His Majesty's Commission: Henry VIII*, 11 vols. (London, 1830–52), iii, 75–6.

¹²⁷ BL, Additional MS 24965, fos. 19b, 27–28^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 3110, 3134); BL, Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fo. 266^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 2517); Elis Gruffydd, 37.

¹²⁸ BL, Additional MS 24965, fo. 19b (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 3110). Howard employed similar tactics when he campaigned in France the year before: BL, Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fos. 269^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 2530), 271^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 2541), 273^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 2540); TNA, SP 1/26, fo. 96^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 2592).

¹²⁹ Elis Gruffydd, 12. In early July 1544, Francis I ordered the crops in the regions around the Boulonnais to be harvested early in an effort to save them from destruction: *Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790 publiée sous la direction du ministre de instruction publique: Oise. Ville de Beauvais*, ed. Renaud Rose (Beauvais, 1887), 16; AM Amiens, BB 25, fos. 56^v–57^r.

¹³⁰ Elis Gruffydd, 35.

¹³¹ BL, Additional MS 24965, fo. 55^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 3222); BL, Cotton MS Caligula B/II, fo. 43 (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 3273), 207 (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 3336).

especially for the poorer classes, for whom grain provided the bulk of their calories.¹³² Indeed, the disproportionate effect that the destruction of corn had on the poor was paramount in the minds of English commanders when ordering scorched-earth attacks.¹³³ As well as burning crops in the fields, English soldiers created an immediate inflation in the price of bread by destroying stores of grain.¹³⁴ A 30 per cent reduction in crop yields doubled the price of bread; a 50 per cent reduction increased it fourfold.¹³⁵ Yet surveys from northeastern France in the mid sixteenth century show that the type of warfare used by the English in the Boulonnais typically led to the destruction of 80 per cent of crops.¹³⁶ The destruction of vineyards during the 1544 war also meant that there was no wine that year — with the loss of another essential source of calories.¹³⁷ In addition, the price of beer rose considerably, which was bad for the poor as they obtained a significant amount of their daily calorie intake this way.¹³⁸ If the principal purpose of scorched-earth attacks was to create an immediate food shortage, Henry VIII's commanders in France achieved a resounding success in the Boulonnais.¹³⁹

Numerous contemporary reports attest to the starvation conditions the English created over the winter of 1544–5. One soldier writes of how he saw ‘young and old people, who cried piteously in God’s name for the help of a piece of bread to keep alive some of [the] little ones who were dying for want of food’,

¹³² Steven L. Kaplan, ‘The Famine Plot Persuasion in Eighteenth-Century France’, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, lxxii (1982), 62–3; Steven L. Kaplan, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy in the Reign of Louis XV*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1976), i, xvi–xvii. See also Andrew B. Appleby, ‘Grain Prices and Subsistence Crises in England and France, 1590–1740’, *Journal of Economic History*, xxxix (1979), 868–9; Hugues Neveux, ‘L’alimentation du XIV^e au XVIII^e siècle: essai de mise au point’, *Revue d’Histoire Économique et Sociale*, li (1973).

¹³³ *State Papers . . . Henry VIII*, iv, 26–7; BL, Cotton MS Caligula B/VI, fos. 293^r, 341^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 3341); TNA, SP 49/2, fo. 30^r (LP, iii, pt 2, no. 3344).

¹³⁴ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 190.

¹³⁵ Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven and London, 2013), 20.

¹³⁶ Gunn, *War, State and Society*, 280.

¹³⁷ Parker, *Global Crisis*, 21.

¹³⁸ AM Amiens BB 25, fos 139^v–141^v; Yves Junot, *Les bourgeois de Valenciennes: anatomie d’une élite dans la ville (1500–1630)* (Villeneuve d’Ascq, 2009), 124; Neveux, ‘L’Alimentation du XIV^e au XVIII^e siècle’, 351–54.

¹³⁹ Elis Gruffydd, 37.

before going on describe how numerous bodies lay unburied across the countryside and were eaten by dogs.¹⁴⁰ The effects of the food shortages were compounded by other factors. First, the surplus grain produced in the areas surrounding the immediate conflict zone went to supplying the French army rather than feeding starving civilians.¹⁴¹ Second, the displacement of refugees into neighbouring towns extended the effects of the burnings beyond the Boulonnais. For example, the pressure placed on Amiens by overwhelming numbers of refugees led to the collapse of the city's poor relief system.¹⁴² In addition to causing an immediate food shortage, scorched-earth tactics were designed to produce long-lasting misery. The destruction of seed corn ensured that the region could not support any significant population. Overall, according to David Potter, by 1545 large parts of this region were 'uninhabitable or impossible for normal life'.¹⁴³

As well as burning crops, English commanders sought to destroy the population's sources of food production. For example, the fishing industry, upon which the coastal villages relied, was decimated in 1544 because the English deliberately destroyed fishing boats.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, Henry VIII's armies targeted buildings that were essential to the production of food (mills, breweries and farms), as well as the resources necessary to work the land (horses, cattle and ploughs).¹⁴⁵ Although Sir Ralph Ellerker and Sir Hugh Paulet were unable to kill the population of Desvres directly during their raid in 1545, they destroyed the bakeries, breweries, houses and mills, thus denying the returning population access to food and shelter.¹⁴⁶ Steven Kaplan has shown how the destruction of buildings such as mills created 'a secondary form of subsistence crisis — a flour crisis', so that people starved even when grain was available.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁰ *Elis Gruffydd*, 28, 37.

¹⁴¹ *Inventaire sommaire . . . Beauvais*, ed. Rose, 16; AM Amiens BB 25, fos. 56^v–57^r.

¹⁴² AM Amiens BB 25, fo. 137^v.

¹⁴³ Potter, *War and Government in the French Provinces*, 213.

¹⁴⁴ *LP*, xx, pt 2, no. 993; *Cal. State Papers, Spain, 1545–1546*, no. 180.

¹⁴⁵ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 293; Potter, *Henry VIII and Francis I*, 270; Baron d'Ordre, 'Siège de Boulogne', 41, 121.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, SP 1/202, fo. 84^r (*LP*, xx, pt 1, no. 962).

¹⁴⁷ Kaplan, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy*, i, p. xviii.

English commanders aimed completely to destroy both the grain stores and the means to produce food in the Boulonnais. On 28 September 1544, English soldiers under the command of Thomas Howard attacked Étaples where ‘they, . . . made great ravages in the supply of food and burnt three big ships full of wheat and other food as well as more than a dozen small food ships in the haven’. They also burnt the town which contained the breweries of the French king which were filled with food in the pipes, hogsheads, barrels and vats, and burnt all the houses which had been built to keep the grains of corn to be baked and brewed, and killed a number of people.¹⁴⁸

The systematic destruction of crops and livestock, combined with the destruction of the means of producing food, created a man-made famine in the Boulonnais in the 1540s. In contrast, the short journey across the Channel meant that the English soldiers and settlers could be supplied with grain and other foodstuffs shipped over from England.¹⁴⁹

The effects of starvation were compounded by the impact of disease. In particular, a reduced calorie diet combined with exposure to cold and damp caused by the deliberate destruction of homes meant that diseases were often fatal owing to the weakened condition of the body.¹⁵⁰ Elis Gruffydd remarked that as he passed through the village of Neufchâtel he saw ‘as many as a hundred people, old and young, with not one healthy man among them, but all shivering with ague [a malarial fever], and death in their faces from the scarcity and lack of bread to strengthen them’.¹⁵¹ The armies also brought plague in their wake, which spread across the Boulonnais in 1544 and persisted throughout the rest of the decade.¹⁵² The virulence of the plague outbreak at Boulogne was so great that the town

¹⁴⁸ ‘Boulogne and Calais’, ed. Davies, 38.

¹⁴⁹ *Acts of the Privy Council, 1542–1547*, 246, 289, 301, 335, 347, 356, 387, 426, 498, 508, 515, 538, 557–8, 559.

¹⁵⁰ Guido Alfani, *Calamities and the Economy in Renaissance Italy: The Grand Tour of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, trans. Christine Calvert (Houndmills, 2013), 43–56; Andrew A. Appleby, ‘Disease or Famine? Mortality in Cumberland and Westmorland, 1580–1640’, *Economic History Review*, xxvi (1973); Philip Benedict, ‘Civil War and Natural Disaster in Northern France’, in Peter Clark (ed.), *The European Crisis of the 1590s* (London, 1985); Gutmann, *War and Rural Life*, 158–9.

¹⁵¹ *Elis Gruffydd*, 28.

¹⁵² Bertrand, *Précis de l’histoire*, 118; ‘Boulogne sous l’occupation anglaise en 1549’, ed. D. Haigneré, *Bulletin de la Société Académique de l’Arrondissement de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, i (1864–72), 443–4; ‘Récit du siège’, ed. Haigneré, 290–1; *Inventaire sommaire . . .*

(cont. on p. 43)

became known as a tomb, with English soldiers and civilian settlers fearing to go there.¹⁵³ In addition to plague, the armies brought other epidemic diseases with them, including the English Sweats (possibly Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome).¹⁵⁴ Disease spread quickly among starving refugee populations in the Boulonnais, who were either packed into overcrowded towns or forced to live in makeshift refugee camps in the woods. Unhygienic living conditions and malnutrition also encouraged the spread of dysentery, which was often fatal.¹⁵⁵ Overall, it is likely that disease killed more people than direct attacks and starvation during the conflict of 1544–6.

Numerous contemporary sources attest to the key role that a combination of famine and plague played in depopulating the Boulonnais in the mid 1540s. Writing in 1545, Louis Brésin (from Saint-Omer, which bordered the Boulonnais) estimated that 50,000 people had died in less than six months as the result of famine, plague and poverty caused by the English invasion.¹⁵⁶ The municipal deliberations of the town of Senlis (which lay just on the edge of the conflict zone) also describe the devastating effects that famine and plague caused to the region in the mid 1540s.¹⁵⁷ Numerous other first-hand accounts confirm these impressions of the extreme depopulation of the Boulonnais, with some writers likening the region to a desert — devoid of people, buildings and

(n. 152 cont.)

Beauvais, ed. Rose, 16–17; AM Senlis BB 6, fo. 40^r; AM Amiens BB, fos. 88^v, 104^r, 106^v, 111^v, 124^r, 126^v–130^r; Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 178, 190, 193.

¹⁵³ *Acts of the Privy Council, 1542–1547*, 202, 218; Antoine Leroi, *Histoire de Notre-Dame de Boulogne* (1681), 9th edn (Paris, 1839), 75–6; *Elis Gruffydd*, 36–7; *State Papers . . . Henry VIII*, x, 114; TNA SP 1/193, fo. 123^r (*LP*, xix, pt 2, no. 415).

¹⁵⁴ *Elis Gruffydd*, 37; Leslie, ‘Siege and Capture of Boulogne’, 197. For the debate about the nature of the disease, see Alan Dyer, ‘The English Sweating Sickness of 1551: An Epidemic Anatomized’, *Medical History*, xli (1997); E. Bridson, ‘The English “Sweate” (*Sudor Anglicus*) and Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome’, *Journal of Biomedical Science*, lviii (2001); Paul Heyman, Leopold Simons and Cristel Cochez, ‘Were the English Sweating Sickness and the Picardy Sweat Caused by Hantaviruses?’, *Viruses*, vi (2014); Mark Taviner, Guy Thwaites and Vanya Gant, ‘The English Sweating Sickness, 1485–1551: A Viral Pulmonary Disease?’, *Medical History*, xlii (1998).

¹⁵⁵ *Elis Gruffydd*, 21; Leslie, ‘Siege and Capture of Boulogne’, 197; Alfani, *Calamities and the Economy*, 45; Andrew A. Appleby, ‘Epidemics and Famine in the Little Ice Age’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, x (1980), 656.

¹⁵⁶ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 190. Belleforest cites the same figures in his *Grandes Annales*: Potter, *War and Government*, 212.

¹⁵⁷ AM Senlis BB 6, fol. 41^v.

sustenance.¹⁵⁸ Certainly, as John Lynn has demonstrated, early modern governments deliberately used scorched-earth tactics to create ‘an artificial desert’.¹⁵⁹ The impression of total devastation in the Boulonnais contained in these narrative sources is borne out by the official inquiries (*enquêtes*), which provide specific details about the level of the destruction. For example, 270 out of the 300 houses in the village of Verton were destroyed during the war and the inhabitants ‘had been taken or killed by the enemy, others were dead from disease or from poverty [that is, starvation] and the rest forced to beg in neighbouring towns’.¹⁶⁰ Verton’s experience of the English conquest was typical of villages across the region.¹⁶¹ While the deliberate depopulation of a region through war, disease and famine is traditionally seen as being specific to Ireland in the sixteenth century (most notably with the establishment of the Munster colony), the same combination of factors caused the extreme depopulation of the Boulonnais in the 1540s and prepared the ground for its resettlement by English colonists.¹⁶²

As the war continued, the English introduced scorched-earth tactics into areas bordering the Boulonnais. Indeed, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the English attempted to expand their conquest by depopulating parts of Picardy. Certainly, control of this region was an avowed aim of the English crown from the outset of the invasion.¹⁶³ When Henry VIII arrived in France in mid July 1544, he abandoned the customary assertion of his wider claims to the kingdom of

¹⁵⁸ Morin, ‘Chroniques du siège de Boulogne’, 260; Deseille, ‘Introduction à l’histoire du pays Boulonnais’, 46. For contemporary impressions of the extreme depopulation of the Boulonnais, see also TNA, SP 1/219, fo. 118^r (*LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 950).

¹⁵⁹ John A. Lynn, ‘A Brutal Necessity? The Devastation of the Palatinate, 1688–1689’, in Grimsley and Rogers (eds.), *Civilians in the Path of War*, 92.

¹⁶⁰ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 293.

¹⁶¹ Potter, *Henry VIII and Francis I*, 270; Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 286, 280, 293.

¹⁶² For depopulation in Munster, see Canny, *Making Ireland British*, ch. 3; R. Dunlop, ‘The Plantation of Munster, 1584–1589’, *English Historical Review*, iii (1888), 250; Michael MacCarthy-Morrogh, *The Munster Plantation: English Migration to Southern Ireland 1583–1641* (Oxford, 1986), 26–30; Maley, *Salvaging Spenser*, 51, 58–59, 62–8; Piveronus, ‘Sir Warham St Leger and the First Munster Plantation’, 27; Patrick J. O’Connor, ‘The Munster Plantation Era: Rebellion, Survey and Land Transfer in North County Kerry’, *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society*, xv (1982), 18.

¹⁶³ TNA, SP 1/189, fo. 165^v (*LP*, xix, pt 1, no. 849).

France. Instead of summoning ‘all within the realme of Fraunce to come in & knowledge theyr dutyes of allegiance to his Majesty’, Henry restricted his summons to the people living ‘within [Pica]rdye [and the] countie of Bulloyn’ — the two regions where he concentrated his military actions in 1544–6.¹⁶⁴ The claims to Picardy and the Boulonnais formed part of Henry’s efforts to justify his conquest of these regions. As Henry saw it, all those who failed to take an oath of loyalty to him (the vast majority of the population) forfeited their lives and property. Certainly, English soldiers considered themselves to be fighting to extend Henry’s rule over both Picardy and the Boulonnais.¹⁶⁵ Once English commanders had destroyed the Boulonnais, they turned their attentions to Picardy. For example, Le Tréport (while technically in Normandy) lay on the river Bresle at the extremity of Picardy. By taking control of the town, the English would have effectively secured the western borders of Picardy. Accordingly, Sir John Dudley attacked and burned Le Tréport on 19 September 1545, with the English soldiers ‘killing all [the] men and women they could catch’.¹⁶⁶ As well as slaughtering the population of Le Tréport, English forces began systematically to destroy the Picard countryside in 1545. For example, Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Cheney ‘burned St. Richards [Saint-Riquier] and divers towns and villages on the Somme to the gates of Abbeville’.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the French believed that the English were attempting to expand the borders of their conquest into Picardy through violence and depopulation.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, English sources confirm that Henry VIII’s commanders made direct attacks on French villages as a means to extend the scope of their conquest and harm the French crown. During the peace talks of June 1546, the privy council instructed the earl of Hertford to ‘destroy the three villages, that Wee shuld have hadde by this treaty, in which they bragg they have kept all this while during the warre, with asmuche

¹⁶⁴ TNA, SP 1/190, fo. 78^f (*LP*, xix, pt 1, no. 933).

¹⁶⁵ *Elis Gruffydd*, 32, 37.

¹⁶⁶ *LP*, xx, pt 2, no. 493; *Cal. State Papers, Spain, 1545–1546*, no. 143.

¹⁶⁷ *LP*, xx, pt 2, no. 494. See also: *Holinshed’s Chronicles*, iii, 843; ‘Récit du siège’, ed. Haigneré, 292–3; *LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 558, 559; *Cal. State Papers, Spain, 1545–1546*, no. 239.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Récit du siège’, ed. Haigneré, 293; ‘Documents inédits ou rarissimes’, ed. Rosny, 441.

besides, as he conveniently maye, which shuld be to the comodite of thennemye'.¹⁶⁹

Yet the destruction of these villages was not necessary, as the treaty of Camp (7 June 1546) brought an end to the war in the Boulonnais and paved the way for the development of an English colony.¹⁷⁰ While this treaty is largely forgotten today, it represents an important moment in the development of the English crown's colonial policy. In particular, by the terms of the treaty Henry was to rule the Boulonnais as king of England, rather than as king of France. This marked a complete reversal of Henry's earlier policy towards France, which was based on dynastic right. In June 1546, the English crown attempted to develop an ethnically English colony.¹⁷¹ Restrictive measures were introduced against the remaining French population, while the former residents of the Boulonnais were prevented from returning to their homes. The region was then surveyed, mapped and divided into plots. Indeed, English surveyors redrew the socio-political topography of the region and imposed an English parish system on it.¹⁷² The colony was devised to follow a Roman model (years before the application of this system in Ireland) and the members of the Boulogne garrison were given plots of land to farm, while further land was rented out to civilian settlers from the southern counties of England.¹⁷³

There was a deliberate move away from medieval conceptions of landholding (where different nationalities and jurisdictions coexisted in one region) to one that was based on a more recognisably modern form of sovereignty operating within fixed national boundaries. Before the establishment of English rule, the

¹⁶⁹ *State Papers . . . Henry VIII*, xi, 191.

¹⁷⁰ TNA, SP 1/220, fos. 41^r–44^v (*LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1014); Thomas Rymer, *Foedera, conventiones, literae, et cujuscunque generis acta publica, inter reges Angliae et alios quosvis imperatores, reges, pontifices principes, vel, communitates habita aut tractate, ab ineunte saeculo duodecimo, viz. ab anno 1101, ad nostra usque tempora, habita aut tractata: ex autographis, infra secretiores archivorum regionum thesaurarias, per multa saecula reconditis, fideliter exscripta. In lucem missa de mandato regio*, 20 vols (1704–35), xv, 93; *LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1015; *LP*, xxi, pt 1, nos. 1025, 1033, 1047, 1058, 1083; *Cal. State Papers, Spain, 1545–1546*, nos. 271, 271, 276, 277, 279.

¹⁷¹ *LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1033, 1047; *Cal. State Papers, Spain, 1545–1546*, nos. 273, 276.

¹⁷² TNA, SP 1/223, fos. 21^r–22^f (*LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1414), 37^r–45^r (*LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1427); *LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1428.

¹⁷³ TNA, SP 1/223, fos. 24^f–25^f (*LP*, xxi, pt 1, 1415), 88^f–92^v (*LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1444); *LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1428.

Boulonnais was a patchwork of jurisdictions, with individual villages being ruled by either the king of France or the Holy Roman Emperor. As well as blocking the French population from returning, Henry VIII also restricted the legal claims his imperial allies had to these lands. Despite the fact that many imperial nobles had fought alongside the English to gain control of the Boulonnais, the Tudor crown disregarded their legal claims to these lands, which were divided up and parcelled out to settlers.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the annexation of imperial lands and their distribution to subjects of the English crown was present from the beginning of the campaign. Whereas Thomas Howard's scorched-earth campaign of 1522 deliberately avoided attacking imperial villages in the Boulonnais, these same villages were targeted for depopulation in 1544. For example, English and Irish soldiers destroyed 200 houses (out of 300) at the imperial village of Berck in 1544, so that its population fell from 1,800 to 250.¹⁷⁵

Furthermore, whereas at the beginning of his reign Henry VIII had claimed the right to territory in France through dynastic inheritance, during the Boulogne campaign English officials emphasized his legal claim to this territory through the right of the conquest. By holding the Boulonnais through conquest (rather than as the king of France), Henry VIII was able to do as he wanted with these lands, including depopulating them of their native inhabitants and repopling the region with English settlers. Indeed, English officials consistently asserted Henry's right to hold these lands through the right of conquest.¹⁷⁶ For example, on 18 October 1544 the earl of Hertford told Francis I's representatives that Henry would 'kepe stil Boulloyn and Boullonnoys as iust conquest in [a] warre lafully begonne'.¹⁷⁷ While Henry's dynastic claims never entirely disappeared from political

¹⁷⁴ This dispute over lands continued right up to Henry's death: *LP*, xxi, pt 2, nos. 238, 239, 255, 392, 547, 609, 735; *Cal. State Papers, Spain, 1545–1546*, nos. 331, 332, 343, 365, 372, 383.

¹⁷⁵ Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre*, 293; Potter, *Henry VIII and Francis I*, 270. Other imperial villages received the same treatment: Potter, *War and Government*, 212–13.

¹⁷⁶ *LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1461; TNA, SP 1/224, fo. 35^r (*LP*, xxi, pt 2, no. 19); TNA, SP 1/223, fo. 48^{r–v} (*LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1429); *LP*, xix, pt 2, no. 368; TNA, SP 1/193, fos. 205^{r–v} (*LP*, xix, pt 2, no. 456); TNA, SP 1/199, fos. 188^{r–v} (*LP*, xx, pt 1, 499); TNA, SP 1/212, fo. 65^{r–v} (*LP*, xx, pt 2, no. 1003); *Cal. State Papers, Spain, 1544*, no. 266; *Cal. State Papers, Spain, 1545–1546*, no. 307.

¹⁷⁷ TNA, SP 1/193, fo. 206^r (*LP*, xix, pt 2, no. 456).

discourse, they always remained in the background of the peace negotiations, with the English only threatening to assert them in order to encourage the French to agree to Henry's demands for the annexation of the Boulonnais.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, economic exploitation of the land was central to Henry's assertion of his right to the Boulonnais through conquest. As early as June 1544, Lord Russell advised Henry VIII to conquer the Boulonnais rather than march on Paris (which Henry and Charles V agreed in 1543 was to be the principal objective of their invasion of France) by emphasizing the fertility of the region.¹⁷⁹ By minimizing the native population's legal claims to the land (whether French or imperial), the Boulonnais' natural resources could be confiscated by the English crown. For example, the English blocked the efforts of the lady of Fiennes to reclaim her village (where six lucrative quarries were located) as an imperial territory. Instead, her lands were apportioned to English settlers and Welsh soldiers.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, the proclamations that crown officials read out in England to encourage settlers to relocate to the Boulogne colony emphasized the fertility of the land — a strategy that the English crown also used when it attempted to establish colonies in Ireland later in the sixteenth century.¹⁸¹

III

The character of English violence in sixteenth-century Ireland was not unique, and Laois and Offaly were not the first colonies of a nascent British Empire. As this article has shown, the English crown pursued a policy of mass violence in France that was designed to inflict the maximum amount of damage on the civilian population of the Boulonnais. Irish historians often assert that the English crown's policy of conquest and colonization caused Ireland to suffer the most substantial population decline in early modern Europe.¹⁸² Recently, David

¹⁷⁸ *SP, Henry VIII*, x, 728, 732, 755, 777.

¹⁷⁹ TNA, SP 1/189, fo. 116^v (*LP*, xix, pt 1, no. 816).

¹⁸⁰ TNA, SP 1/207, fo. 121^v (*LP*, xx, pt 2, no. 337); *SP, Henry VIII*, x, 703–4; TNA, SP 1/204, fo. 118^f (*LP*, xxi, pt 1, no. 1228); Grummitt, *Calais Garrison*, 7.

¹⁸¹ TNA, SP 1/223, fo. 88^f (*LP*, xxi, pt. 1, no. 1444).

¹⁸² For example, historians estimate that Ireland's population declined by between 20 per cent and 25 per cent as a result of war in the 1640s and 1650s: Pádraig Lenihan, 'War and Population, 1649–1652', *Irish Economic and Social History*, xxiv (1997), 8; Parker, *Global Crisis*, 360; Smyth, 'Towards a Cultural Geography', 90.

Edwards has estimated that six decades of warfare in Tudor Ireland caused a population decline of between 7.5 and 10 per cent, making it 'one of the most destructive conflicts anywhere in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe'.¹⁸³ Yet English actions in the Boulonnais in the 1540s led to a population decline of approximately 90 per cent — probably more. The English armies operating in the Boulonnais in the mid 1540s were not acting beyond European norms; indeed, the burnings of crops, destruction of buildings and attacks on civilians were common features of warfare in sixteenth-century Europe. Nonetheless, while other parts of Western Europe also suffered extreme depopulation as a result of prolonged warfare, the English campaign in the Boulonnais was different in that it paved the way for the establishment of a colony. As well as clearing the population from the land, the English also obliterated their legal claims to this territory by systematically destroying archives across the region, especially those containing land and property deeds.¹⁸⁴

France is ignored in the historiography of the early British Empire, but the Tudor monarchy first implemented its ideas about government and colonial settlement in its French territories. Indeed, it should be no surprise that these developments first took place in France because it (rather than Ireland) was the principal focus of the English crown's expansionist policy during the first half of the sixteenth century. While Thomas Howard put forward proposals for the conquest and settlement of Ireland in 1522, the Tudor monarch first put this policy into practice in France in the 1540s. Indeed, English colonies had been founded in France during the Hundred Years War, most notably at Calais by Edward III and at Harfleur by Henry V, which provided models for the English to draw on in the mid 1540s. Yet while there was some English settlement in parts of northern France during the early fifteenth century, the Lancastrian conflicts were not colonial wars. There was no effort to favour English settlers over the 'loyal' native inhabitants of regions such as Normandy and Picardy, and there was no effort to impose English laws or customs on these people. In this respect, the establishment of the Boulogne colony was a major

¹⁸³ Edwards, 'Tudor Ireland', 23.

¹⁸⁴ Hauttefeuille and Bénard, *Histoire de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, i, 247.

shift in English attitudes to its overseas territories. Indeed, it represented a return to the colonial policy employed in Wales during the reign of Edward I, which set a clear precedent for colonial ventures in the sixteenth century.¹⁸⁵

Rather than Ireland acting as the laboratory for the development of new methods of violence, the widespread use of scorched earth was introduced there during the mid sixteenth century by men who had experience of the French wars. While David Edwards notes that it was under Lord Leonard Grey that the escalation of violence in Ireland began, there was nothing novel in this violence.¹⁸⁶ Grey was simply implementing in Ireland the methods he had used against the French during the 1520s (as did Sir William Skeffington, who followed Grey as Lord Deputy of Ireland).¹⁸⁷ While historians have noted the links between the people involved in the colonization of Ireland and of America in the late sixteenth century, they have failed to see the close links that existed between those who drove the policies of conquest and colonization in France and in Ireland decades earlier. For example, the earl of Hertford was the commander of English armies in France during the mid 1540s and it was under his domination of the Privy Council that plans for the colonization of France were devised and implemented. With the death of Henry VIII in January 1547 and the ascension of his young son Edward VI to the throne, Hertford took effective control of the kingdom. Ruling as the Protector Somerset, he revived plans for the development of colonies in Ireland, which followed the same pattern as the colony established in the Boulonnais.¹⁸⁸

Many of the hallmarks of colonial genocide, which some historians believe the English first developed during the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland, were already present in Henry VIII's actions in the Boulonnais in 1540s, including: the use of scorched-earth tactics; the characterization of the indigenous population as 'wild'; the centrality of land use; and the slaughter of civilians and murderous response to outbreaks of

¹⁸⁵ R. R. Davies, 'Colonial Wales', *Past and Present*, no. 65 (Nov. 1974); R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093–1343* (Oxford, 2002), 145–6, 149–51, 153–4.

¹⁸⁶ Edwards, 'Escalation of Violence in Sixteenth-Century Ireland', 54.

¹⁸⁷ Gunn, 'Duke of Suffolk's March on Paris', 598, 616.

¹⁸⁸ *Cal. State Papers, Ireland, 1509–1573*, 86–7.

native resistance. In short, the English crown systematically and deliberately depopulated the Boulonnais through war and starvation in order to create an ethnically English colony based around a Roman model. Indeed, the English strategy of using soldier-farmers to colonize a region was an early example of what would become a common feature of European state expansion, from the establishment of British rule in North America to Adolf Hitler's colonial projects in Eastern Europe.¹⁸⁹ There was nothing problematic for the English crown about implementing this form of colonial policy in France in the 1540s because the forced removal of a group of people to clear the way for the establishment of a colony was endorsed by biblical precedent and permitted by the right of conquest. The slaughter of peasants could be justified because they had resisted Henry's rule, while the use of scorched-earth tactics was widely sanctioned in contemporary laws of war.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps Boulogne's longest legacy was that the depopulation of a territory could be legitimized by the right of conquest. From Ireland in the late sixteenth century to Tasmania in the late nineteenth, the English (and later British) regularly invoked this justification for imperial expansion as they depopulated lands and established colonies across the globe.¹⁹¹

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¹⁸⁹ David Day, *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others* (Oxford, 2008), 93, 116; Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in the Ukraine* (Chapel Hill, 2005), 24–9. See also: Christopher R. Browning, 'The Nazi Empire', in Bloxham and Moses (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, 410–11, 418–20.

¹⁹⁰ Vitoria, *Political Writings*, 317.

¹⁹¹ Canny, 'Ideology of English Colonization', 578; Day, *Conquest*, 97; Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (New York, 2014), 44–5, 48–9; Piveronus, 'Sir Warham St Leger and the First Munster Plantation', 21; Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), 31.