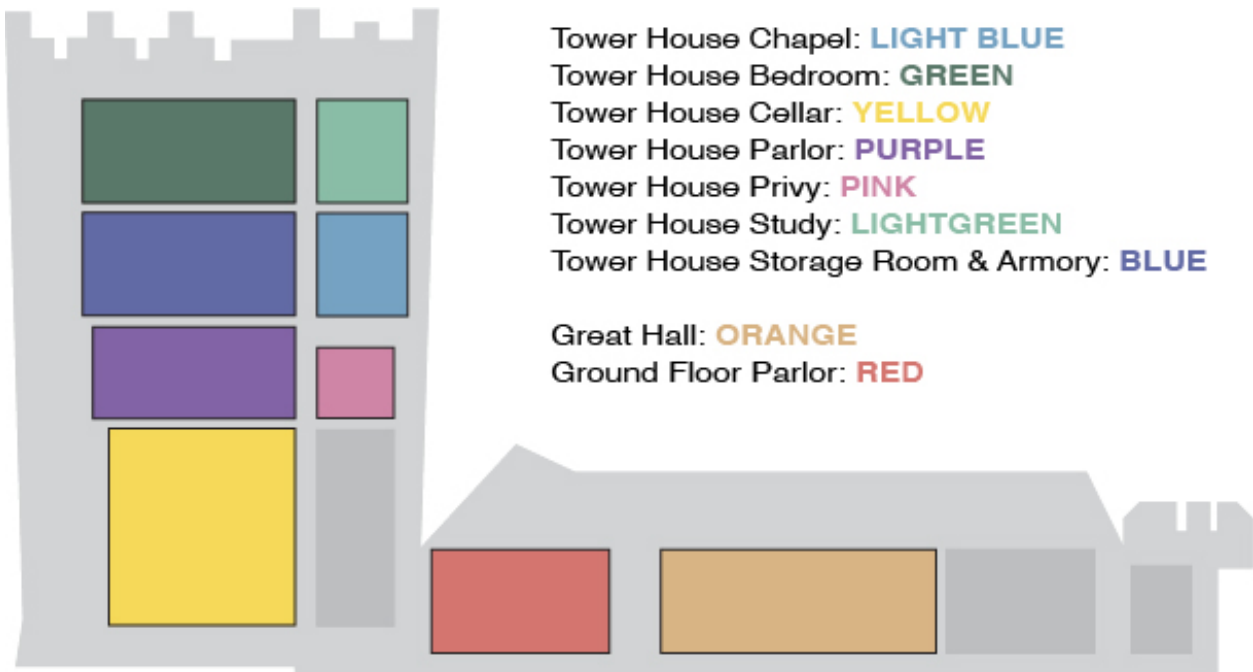
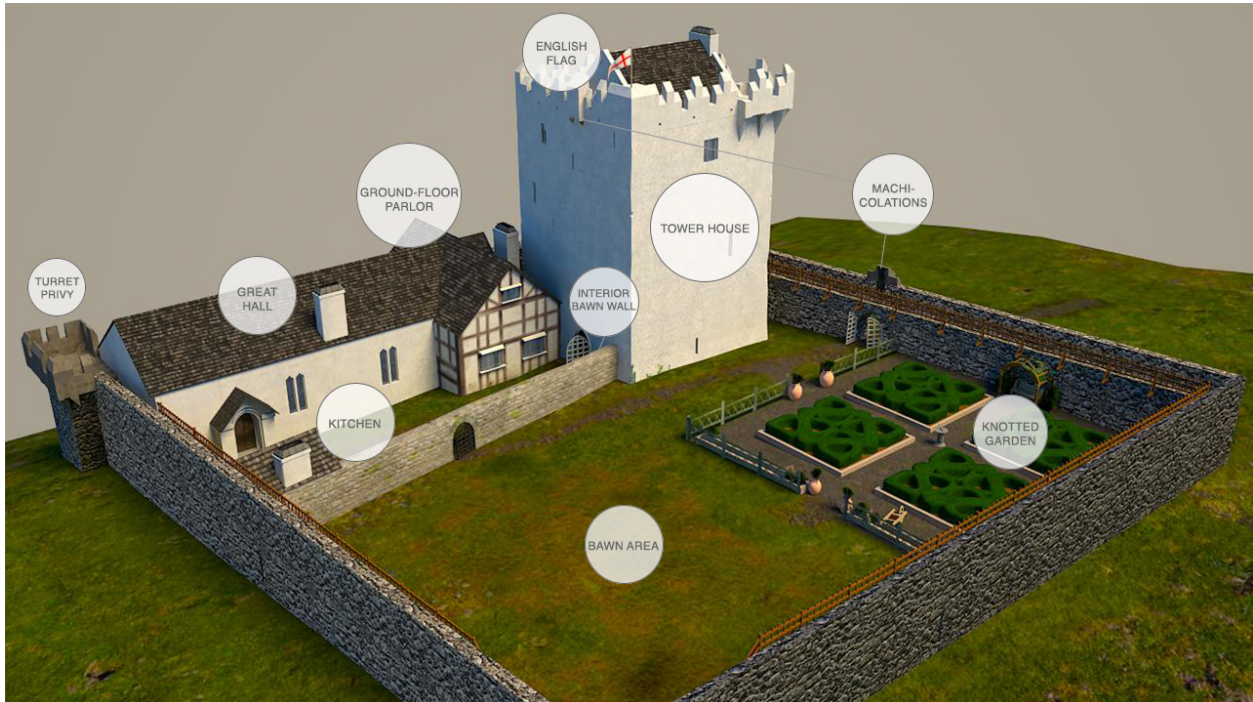


## Ground Floor Storage Teacher Pack



### 1. Introduction: Economy and Trade

This room explores aspects of Ireland's economic life during the sixteenth century. It begins with the mantle as an important piece of material culture. The mantle was the subject of great criticism by English observers who claimed that it symbolised barbarity and facilitated uncivil and unlawful behaviour amongst the Irish. However, it was an extremely practical garment which found demand in continental markets. The grain sacks represent the second station which addresses the main features of the Irish economy and domestic trade. The class then moves on to the barrels for an assessment of international trade. The final station, the chest, provides an overview of the hazards encountered by domestic traders and international merchants. Many contemporary English sources portrayed the Irish economy as backward and isolated. However, this class demonstrates that Ireland and Irish commodities were part of much wider international trading networks during the early modern period.

## 2. Extra textual context and sources

### The Mantle:

- a) In addition to Spenser's comments about the mantle as "a fit house for an out-law", he also referred to it in relation to prostitutes, which he calls "Mona-shul", or "going women":

"Thus necessary and fitting is a mantle, for a bad man, and surely for a bad huswife it is no lesse convenient, for some of them that bee wandering woe men, called of them Mona-shul, it is a halfe a wardrobe; for in summer you shal find her arrayed commonly but in her smock and mantle to be more ready for her light services: in Winter, and in her travaile, it is her cloake and safeguard, and also a coverlet for her lewde exercise. And when she hath filled her vessell, under it she can hide both her burden, and her blame; yea, and when her bastard is borne, it serves instead of swaddling clouts. And for all other good women which love to doe but little worke, how handsome it is to lye in and sleepe, or to louse themselves in the sun-shine, they that have beene but a while in Ireland can well witness."<sup>1</sup>

- b) Image: Lucas d'Heere, "Irish as they stand accoutred being at the service of the late King Henry", c. 1575

This portion of a drawing by Lucas d'Heere depicts an Irish woman wearing a mantle.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland*, eds. A. Hadfield and W. Maley (Oxford, 1997), p. 58.



## **Grain Sacks and Barrels: Economy and International Trade:**

More about “A Discourse of Ireland”: The anonymous source from which these two excerpts come is interesting for a number of reasons. It is a colonial tract which builds an economic argument for the establishment of colonies in Ireland. Like other colonial tracts, it was very critical of the native populations. However, written near the end of the Nine Years’ War, it argued that Ireland was ready for a full conquest and that the Irish people would be easily subdued. It maintained that the divisions and devastation caused by the war made it an ideal time to launch colonial ventures. Key to understanding the treatise is that the author was trying to attract colonial investors and settlers to Ireland. This was a challenge since the war and news of the overthrow of the Munster plantation would certainly have deterred people from venturing to Ireland. Thus, this treatise presented Ireland as a fertile land with abundant resources ready to be exploited. It also asserted that Ireland was ideally located to become a base to dominate the entire Atlantic trade. The author assured his readers that all these economic benefits would be easily won as the Irish were nearly fully subdued and were, by nature, more docile than other reports alleged.

For more detail about this source, see, David B. Quinn, “‘A Discourse of Ireland’ (Circa 1599): A Sidelight on English Colonial Policy”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 47, 3, Section C (1942), pp. 151-166.

### **2(a). Additional Resources**

Podcast link: Grace O’Malley episode on BBC, *You’re Dead To Me* podcast series:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p095dkp7>

- To date, the lives of early modern Irish women have been underrepresented in histories of the period. Gráinne Ní Mháille, anglicized to Grace O’Malley and popularly known as the “Pirate Queen”, is one of the most famous women in Irish history. She is also one of the most famous pirates in early modern Europe. This podcast explores her life and reputation.

### **3. Bibliography**

Ruth A. Canning, ‘Profits and Patriotism: Nicholas Weston, Old English Merchants, and Ireland’s Nine Years War, 1594–1603’, *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2016), pp. 1–28.

Steven G. Ellis, *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors, 1447-1603: English Expansion and the End of Gaelic Rule* (Harlow, 1998), pp. 35-38.

Susan Flavin, *Consumption and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Ireland* (Woodbridge, 2014)

Connie Kelleher, “Pirate Ports and Harbours of West Cork in the Early Seventeenth Century”, *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, Vol. 8 (2013), pp. 347-366.

Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth-Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 33-34; 39-49.

Ada Longfield, “Anglo-Irish Trade in the Sixteenth Century as Illustrated by the English Customs Accounts and Port Books”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. 36 (1921-1924), pp. 317-332.

Mary Ann Lyons, *Franco-Irish Relations, 1500-1610: Politics, Migration and Trade* (Woodbridge, 2003)

David B. Quinn, “‘A Discourse of Ireland’ (Circa 1599): A Sidelight on English Colonial Policy”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 47, 3, Section C (1942), pp. 151-166.

John R. Ziegler, “Irish Mantles, English Nationalism: Apparel and National Identity in Early Modern English and Irish Texts”, *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, Vol 13, No. 1 (2013), pp. 73-95.

### **4. Teaching Plan**

Different economies are driven by different means of production, different commodities, and different currencies. Students should consider how outside observers tend to judge the success of agriculture, industry, and trade based on their understanding of their own economies. How has this affected the way the Irish economy has been portrayed in surviving sources? How reliable are English sources for the study of agriculture and economy in early modern Ireland?

#### Class Discussion Questions

- 1) What is a mantle and why was it practical?

- 2) Why were English observers so critical of the mantle? How do Spenser's comments about the mantle reflect wider English attitudes towards the native Irish?
- 3) What were the chief staples of the domestic economy in Ireland?
- 4) Why were crown charters so important to urban communities?
- 5) Considering how critical so many English authors were about Ireland, why did the author of "A Discourse of Ireland" praise Ireland's natural resources and harbors?
- 6) What were Ireland's main exports during the early modern period?
- 7) What were the chief imports, and why?
- 8) What challenges could international merchants encounter when venturing to Ireland?
- 9) Listen to the podcast (link above). What do you think makes Gráinne Ní Mháille (Grace O'Malley) remarkable?