



RECREATING SPENSER  
THE IRISH CASTLE OF  
AN ENGLISH POET

# Table of Contents

Preface: From Website to iBook: Revisiting Edmund Spenser's Kilcolman Castle	i	Bawn Area: Sheela-Na-Gig	132
Ch. 1: Poetry, Rebellion and Plantation	1	Bawn Area: Garden and Bower	135
Introduction: Spenser in Ireland	2	Great Hall: Mantlepiece	139
The Desmond Rebellion, 1579-83, and the Irish Lords	4	Great Hall: Mether	142
Spenser and the New English Settle In	7	Ground Floor Parlor: Lute	146
The Munster Plantation, 1584-98	9	Ground Floor Parlor: Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I	147
Destruction of the Munster Plantation (1598)	15	Tower House Ground Floor: Mantle	149
Rivers	17	Tower House Parlor: Harp	155
Roads	22	Tower House Parlor: Raleigh's Window	157
Poetic Interludes: Spenser and Sir Walter Raleigh at Kilcolman	25	Tower House Privy: Privy, a.k.a. Garderobe	159
Ch. 2: Kilcolman Castle: Then and Now	35	Tower House Study: Desk with Papers, etc., including <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	161
History of the Castle	36	Tower House Study: Woodcut of St. George	164
Kilcolman Castle Today	41	Tower House Storage Room and Armory: Quilted Jack	166
Historic Images of Kilcolman	56	Tower House Storage Room and Armory: Weaponry	168
Ch. 3: Digital Reconstruction	64	Tower House Chapel: Altar-Table and Crucifix	170
Reconstruction	66	Tower House Bedroom: Crib and Fireplace	173
Modeling Methods and Sources for the Digital Reconstruction of Kilcolman Castle	71	Tower House Bedroom: Chest	176
Plans and Cross-Sections	75	Ch. 5: Virtual Kilcolman: New Realities	179
Exteriors	86	Virtual Reality	180
Interiors	110	Ch. 6: Appendices	182
Ch. 4: Sample Objects/Literary Connections	130	Appendix 1: Index of Contents of Website	183
Index to Chapter	131	Appendix 2: Select Bibliography of Published Works with Relevance to Archaeological Study of the Munster Plantation	185
		Appendix 3: Select Bibliography of Works Pertaining to Spenser, Raleigh, and the Archaeology and Settlement of the Munster Plantation	196

# PREFACE: FROM WEBSITE TO IBOOK: REVISITING EDMUND SPENSER'S KILCOLMAN CASTLE

This iBook showcases illustrations and subject matter taken directly from the website [\*Centering Spenser: a digital resource for Kilcolman Castle\*](#), an ongoing open-access digital humanities project based at East Carolina University.

The purpose of this iBook, like the website, is to educate the public and academia alike about Kilcolman Castle, a late-medieval tower house in County Cork, Ireland, at the time that it was occupied by the (in)famous English poet and colonial administrator Edmund Spenser (1552?-1599).

Only this Preface and Chapter 5, on Virtual Reality developments, are original to this iBook. This book like the website is written and designed by Thomas Herron with the exception of “Modeling Methods and Software” (Chapter 3, Section 2, below), written by Wesley Owens.

While this iBook cannot recreate some of the features of the website, it does offer a different (bibliographic) format for much of the website’s content and may be downloaded and read in a more convenient and/or conventional manner. A full list of contents of the website is found in Appendix 1 (below).

*Centering Spenser* is a multidisciplinary website focused on the colonial settlement in the province of Munster (in southwestern Ireland) and the associated writing of Spenser, one of the greatest poets and most notorious administrators of the English renaissance. The website offers in-depth information on Spenser's Irish world at his castle compound at Kilcolman, where he lived ca. 1589-98, during the last decade of his life. Spenser spent the previous decade elsewhere in Ireland, including Co. Kildare and Dublin, as both a writer and administrator. This book like the website displays Kilcolman visually and explores connections between the compound, its neighbors and much of Spenser's writing focusing on Ireland, including his later poetry, so as to enrich our understanding of the place and his writing, including the place of Kilcolman *in* his writing.

Created at the University Multimedia Center of East Carolina University (Director: Laurie Godwin) and directed and written by Thomas Herron (Professor of English, ECU), *Centering Spenser* went online in 2013 and has been updated numerous times since then. The first phase of the website created extensive essays and analyses as well as teaching resources, bibliographies, photographs, maps, diagrams and computerized reconstructions, many of which are displayed below. The second main phase of the website, begun in

2018 and released in 2020, reformatted the site's appearance and navigability. The renovation added substantive new features, including a link to this iBook and a tour of the castle in Virtual Reality (see Chapter 5, below).

Many hands and minds have gone into creating and advising on the website. Thanks are due above all to Laurie Godwin for her technical supervision and work on the project and to Joyce Joines Newman for inspiration and artistic direction. Thanks to Doug Barnum for his Virtual Reality wizardry. Various archaeological visitors to ECU over the years offered input, most importantly Eric Klingelhofer and James Lyttleton. Graduate Assistants at ECU have helped with the textual editing and digital modeling, and special thanks go to Wesley Owens in the latter regard. Sarah Parrish Meador and David Buchanan helped produce this iBook. All text and content, as on the *Centering Spenser* website, are copyright of Thomas Herron and East Carolina University, unless otherwise indicated.

Enjoy!

—Thomas Herron, Department of English, ECU (3/19/2020)





## INTRODUCTION: SPENSER IN IRELAND

Spenser's writing on Ireland is as controversial as it is compelling. Much of his poetry was written in Ireland and was directly influenced by his Irish experience, albeit (quite often) in oblique ways. A constant challenge for the reader is therefore to ascertain the extent of this influence. To do so is to better understand the purpose and meaning of Spenser's life and work.

Spenser's influence on Irish culture and vice-versa has always been acknowledged if not well understood. Modern scholarly interest in the general topic of "Spenser and Ireland" increased with the variorum projects on the poet in the 1930s and '40s, including a biography by Alexander Judson, and then surged in

# AMORETTI AND Epithalamion.

*Written not long since  
by Edmund  
Spenser.*



Printed for William  
Ponsonby. 1595.

the 1980s as part of a turn towards “New Historicist” criticism. Stephen Greenblatt’s seminal study in this regard, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), for example, has an influential chapter discussing Book II of Spenser’s epic *The Faerie Queene* in the context of New World and Irish colonialism. A group of fundamental books of literary criticism on the topic of Spenser and Ireland were produced in the 1990s and 2000s by Willy Maley, Andrew Hadfield, and Richard McCabe.

Outside of literary criticism, much scholarly work has been done in the last two generations on Spenser’s life and material circumstances, including *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (2012), by Andrew Hadfield, the first comprehensive biography of the poet published in sixty-eight years. The first-ever archaeological surveys and excavations at Kilcolman began in the 1990s, and archaeological studies of Kilcolman Castle produced by Eric Klingelhofer and David Newman Johnson form the basis of the reconstructive modeling of Kilcolman Castle found on the *Centering Spenser* website. Johnson’s study appears in the invaluable *Spenser Encyclopedia* (1990), another regular source for information given here on a wide range of Spenser-related topics. Many additional scholarly works on Spenser and Ireland are listed in the bibliographies of those published works as well as in bibliographies found in the below Appendices, which are taken in turn from the *Centering Spenser* website.

One way Spenser profited from his colonial situation was by finding time and occasion to write. While at Kilcolman, presumably, he composed later parts of his famous romance-epic, *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596, 1609), as well as some shorter poetry written in the late 1580s and through the ‘90s. The Munster Plantation (see below), and particularly Kilcolman, was arguably central to his life and crea-

tive imagination in this period. Spenser’s famous wooing and wedding poems, *Amoretti and Epithalamion* (1595), are concerned directly with making a home at Kilcolman with his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle. That poetry collection is therefore featured frequently on the *Centering Spenser* website concerning aspects of life in the castle. References to Ireland in other poems, such as those found in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (1595) and *The Faerie Queene* (including the “Mutabilitie Cantos,” published posthumously in 1609) are also discussed on the website and below in this iBook.

Spenser was not only a poet during his career as a planter and colonial administrator. He also wrote, c. 1596, an influential policy tract in prose, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, published posthumously (1633) but circulated widely before then. In it, Spenser describes native Irish culture in order to sharply denigrate it, so as to justify further reform, conquest and control of the Irish.

This iBook does not make a sustained argument regarding Spenser in Ireland but aims instead to present highlights and features from the *Centering Spenser* website. The following background information on Spenser’s settlement at Kilcolman is taken from the website, as is the subsequent material based on the “Object Descriptions” and other features.

## THE DESMOND REBELLION, 1579-83, AND THE IRISH LORDS

Gerald Fitz James Fitzgerald (c. 1533-83), fifteenth\* earl of Desmond, the main overlord of the western part of the province of Munster, rebelled against the crown in 1579. He died violently as a result, hunted down and decapitated in a glen in Co. Kerry in 1583. After his rebellion dwindled and collapsed, the government began the process of planning the Munster Plantation on his territory and on that of allies or subordinates who rebelled with him.

Gerald had frequently been a thorn in the crown's side, waging small wars against his neighbor (and son-in-law) to the east, Thomas Butler, the tenth earl of Ormond; suppressing native Irish lords such as the McCarthys, and ruling his corner of the country as a semi-independent palatinate or fiefdom. Both Desmond and Ormond (who also had extraordinary powers in his earldom in east Munster) were gaelicized Old English lords who operated as comfortably within Irish cultural and legal systems as within English ones. Many of Elizabeth's mightiest nobles chafed against Tudor rule, but few had the power and wealth of Desmond or Ormond. These two acted like feudal magnates and/or Irish kings in their domains, and both faced reprimands from the crown for breaking England's laws and flaunting the queen's authority.

Unlike Ormond (until his deathbed conversion to Catholicism), Desmond was a staunch Catholic. In the 1560s and '70s, Desmond spent years at a time locked up in the Tower of London. Other efforts were made by the crown to curtail his "liber-



The ruins of Askeaton Castle, Co. Limerick, a seat of the Desmond Lordship. (Photo credit unknown; openly accessed from the web)

ties” or extraordinary powers of jurisdiction over his palatinate territories.

As Queen Elizabeth sought to centralize and extend Tudor rule all across Ireland, successive New English provincial presidents of Munster, acting as crown agents, tried to curb Desmond’s powers. This process accelerated in the 1570s and helped to push Gerald into rebellion. Gerald reacted strongly to encroachments on his rights and territories. He also became swept up in Catholic, Counter-Reformation ideology and rhetoric that helped fuel outright rebellion. By the time Gerald formally rebelled in 1579, following his powerful brothers James and John, Ireland’s conflicts had already taken on a sectarian dimension as well as an international one. Both the Pope and Catholic Spain became involved in support of Desmond, for example by landing an armed expeditionary force at the promontory fort of Smerwick, Co. Kerry in 1580. The earl of Desmond failed to relieve the poor troops, who soon surrendered to the crown forces and were massacred. Sir Walter Raleigh was one of the captains put in charge of killing the foreign troops and Spenser was eye-witness to the deeds.

The rebellion coincided with the pro-Catholic Baltinglass rebellion against the Crown that shook the Dublin Pale. One suspects that Spenser’s horrible giant in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, the “rebellow[ing]” Orgoglio (I.viii.11.4 passim), whose name signifies pride, alludes to these over-mighty lords in Ireland. Spenser also satirizes (and warns against) the temporal power of the Catholic church and the King of Spain in this monstrous figure.

Spenser, in *The Faerie Queene* Book III, celebrates Sir Walter Raleigh’s part in fighting the Desmonds (see section on “Spenser and Raleigh” below). The horrific results of warfare and depopulation dur-

ing the rebellion also deeply impressed the poet. Spenser first came to Ireland to settle in Dublin, in 1580, as secretary to Lord Deputy of Ireland Arthur, Lord Grey. In Dublin, Spenser witnessed the suppression of the Baltinglass rebellion and Grey’s failed campaign against the gaelic chieftain Feach MacHugh O’Byrne in the nearby Wicklow mountains (see section on “Rivers” below).

Spenser also travelled with Grey to Munster during his campaign against Desmond. The rebellion and the harsh means used by crown forces to suppress it, including deliberate famine, caused widespread destruction and depopulation in the province. It is uncertain how many of the native population were killed or displaced--perhaps up to 48,000, or a third of the populace (McCormack, “The Social...”; McCormack, *The Earldom of Desmond* 193-4).

Spenser witnessed the destruction in Munster first-hand, and he describes the population of Munster as “like ghosts” digging up corpses to eat. Some starving peasants ate watercress and shamrocks, which were insufficient to keep them alive. Spenser then blames the suffering among the general populace squarely on the victims themselves for having rebelled in the first place:

ere one year and a half they were brought to such wretched-ness, as that any stony heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them. They looked [like] anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves, they did eat of the dead carrions, happy were they [who] could find them, yea and one another soon af-ter in so much as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves, and if they found a plot of water cress or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time, yet not

able long to continue therewithal, that in short space there were none almost left and a most populous and plentiful coun-try suddenly left void of man or beast. Yet sure in all that war there perished not many by the sword, but all by the extremity of famine, which they themselves had wrought. (Spenser, *A View* 104)

*mund Spenser: a variorum edition*, 11 vols (Baltimore, 1949), 9.39-231, 278-430.

After Grey's recall, in 1582, the war was successfully concluded by the tenth earl of Ormond, who had taken command of the queen's armies. Ormond used force and widespread pardons of rebels as means to pacify the enemy.

\*Labelled the fifteenth earl in genealogical tables of the authoritative *New History of Ireland*; known more commonly as the fourteenth earl, as in McGurk.

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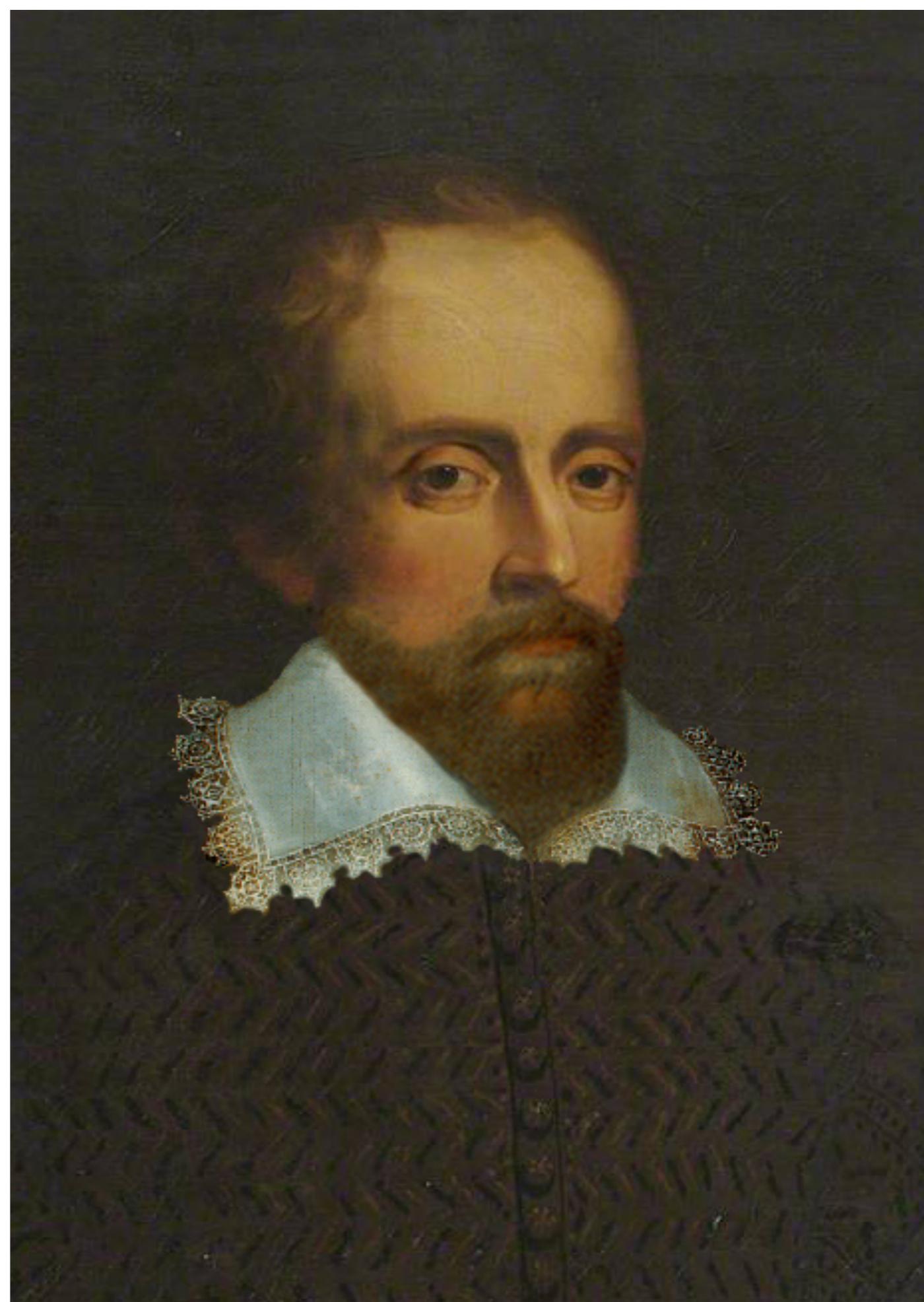
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Hypothetical portrait recreation of Spenser based on existing models. This image hangs next to that of his wife, Elizabeth Boyle, in the Tower House Parlor. Image by Joyce Joines Newman.

## SPENSER AND THE NEW ENGLISH SETTLE IN

As the Desmond rebellion was dying out, Spenser moved to Kilkullen, Co. Kildare, where he lived from 1582-4. He occupied Kilkolman sometime in the late 1580s. Kilkolman Castle was itself a trophy of the English crown's victory over Desmond, as it was formerly a property of the fifteenth earl's brother, Sir John of Desmond, who also died fighting the crown in the rebellion. At Kilkol-



man, Spenser was an “undertaker,” or major grantee, of over three thousand acres. Spenser’s grant at Kilcolman and other lands that he owned nearby were part of the vast colonial project known as the “Munster Plantation,” which occupied so-called “attainted” Desmond lands that were forfeited by the Irish rebels.

The Munster Plantation colonized the Irish so as to “reform” or replace them and their culture. The Plantation was neither the first nor last English colonial project in Ireland. The Plantation helped to supplant, exploit, and, in some cases, destroy many of the inhabitants who occupied the lands before the New English arrived (see also “Munster Plantation”, below).

The famous soldier, explorer, courtier, and writer, Sir Walter Raleigh, was also a Munster planter and visited Spenser at Kilcolman. Another famous Englishman, the scientist and explorer Thomas Harriot, was a tenant and employee on Raleigh’s plantation, as was the artist and former governor of the Virginia “Lost Colony,” John White.

Spenser, Raleigh, Harriot, White, and their fellow colonials were known as the “New English.” They were a different cultural group than the “Old English,” like the earls of Desmond and Ormond, who were descendants of the original English settlers in Ireland from the late-twelfth century on. The Old English had long occupied Munster along with the “native Irish,” or inhabitants of Gaelic ancestry and culture who were conquered by and intermarried with the Old English. Spenser criticizes these past efforts at English colonization. The Old English, he argues, had “degenerated” by intermingling with native Irish culture and families. Because of lack of proper government and their own inherently sinful nature (like all of humanity), the Old English had become corrupt and in dire need of reform. Their presence weakened the commonwealth and provoked rebellion, includ-

ing direct threats against the English government in Ireland and at home. Spenser advocates martial law and other harsh authoritarian methods in his political tract, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (c. 1596), as means towards reformation of the Old English and the Irish of non-English descent.

Backed with arms and the law under Queen Elizabeth I’s authority, many of the New English sought to change the supposedly barbaric and “degenerate” Old English and Irish, Catholic culture around them into a “civilized” Protestant, (more) English one that would be more loyal and profitable to the English crown. Spenser makes this argument in *A View* while worrying about his own situation: in 1596, around the time he composed the tract, another major rebellion in Ireland against the English crown, known as the Nine Years’ War, had already begun. It would eventually burn Spenser out of Kilcolman (see “Destruction of Plantation” below). Spenser died soon after in London, in 1599. The Munster Plantation was re-established in the early seventeenth century and included Spenser’s immediate family and later descendants.



Detail from map of "The Province of Mounster" (c. 1590) by Francis Jobson (National Library of Ireland). Planter holdings are shown as green outlines with names of undertakers and local lords, including "Spenser", "Lord Roche" and "Lord Barre" in red.

## THE MUNSTER PLANTATION, 1584-98

### *Background and Concepts*

Colonization of Ireland, including introduction of settlers and importation of English rule of law, had begun across the country with the Anglo-Norman conquest of the late-twelfth century. It is important to emphasize, therefore, how Spenser and his fellow New English planters in Munster saw themselves as renewing this previous, partly completed and ruined project. Unlike the English or Spanish in the New World, they would not have seen themselves so much as conquistadors in pagan, virginal *terra incognita*, but rather as virtuous citizens, soldiers, and Protestant reformers of a mostly Catholic, war-

torn, dilapidated and potentially lucrative kingdom, one that had belonged by right of conquest to England for hundreds of years.

Many prior inhabitants strongly resented the intrusion of these new colonists, administrators, and military men into their world. Native Irish and Old English families had long occupied the province before the arrival of the New English (see map of Gaelic and OE lordships). The New English were often seen as corrupt land-grabbers, political cronies and upstarts, and, of course, as English, and so as different than (and potentially threatening to) native Irish families and culture in particular. Irish culture had its own language, system of laws and social organization that had evolved over thou-

sands of years. The fact that the New English often resorted to violent methods to win advantage for their own faction, while also denigrating the native Irish as chronically rebellious and savage barbarians, only further exacerbated tensions in the country.

Many of the Old English families had themselves been well integrated with the native Irish before the sixteenth century. Spenser and others pejoratively described this process of acculturation as a “degeneration” from English culture and lineages, and they urged sharp reform of native Irish and Old English alike. Colonization was seen as one way to replace and reform a supposedly backward and corrupt Irish, Catholic culture. It also aimed to make the country more profitable for the English crown and to secure it against future threats from Continental powers such as Spain, who regularly threatened England.

Other colonial projects had been attempted in Tudor Ireland, such as the Laois-Offaly plantation in the Midlands, which began during the reign of Queen Mary I in the 1550s, as well as the attempted plantation of the Ards in Ulster in the early 1570s by Sir Thomas Smith and subsequent efforts there by the first earl of Essex. An abortive scheme to colonize part of Munster took place in the late 1560s (Piveronius). But the Munster Plantation was the largest such project yet attempted and pointed forward to larger, more successful projects to come.

According to Ciaran Brady, the Munster Plantation had the following innovations, “which entitled it to be seen as representing an important development in the history of English colonization”:

It was the first plantation scheme to be based on the attainder of a descendant of the original twelfth-century conquest [*i.e.*,

the Old English earl of Desmond]. [It was also unique in this regard.] It was the first of such projects to see the English government in Whitehall (rather than its representative in Dublin) take direct responsibility for an enterprise that might nowadays be described as a public-private partnership. It was the first to envisage the large-scale migration of people from England to Ireland on a planned and highly structured basis. And with its novel designations of “adventurers,” “servitors,” and “deserving natives” as recognized groups within the new social settlement, the Munster plantation became the model for future plantations in the seventeenth century, most notably the plantation of Ulster and, the most ambitious colonization scheme of them all, the “Cromwellian settlements” of the 1650s (87).

Contemporary propaganda promoting the plantation advertised the wealth to be found there through investment and hard work. Such tracts followed classical and humanist principles by trumpeting the value of “civilizing” and reforming the native population according to both ancient Roman and modern European (including English) models and standards.

### *Events*

The plantation began after the failed rebellion (1579-83) of the powerful fifteenth earl of Desmond (see Section 2). He was declared a traitor in 1579, and in 1582 his lands, stretching across parts of Counties Limerick, Cork, Waterford, and Kerry (and some small areas in Tipperary and Clare) were “attainted” or legally forfeited to the English crown (Brady 92). Once this occurred, “the fate of his widespread possessions began to interest a number of persons” (MacCarthy-Morrogh 4).

Desmond's lands and those of his confederates were opened up for possession and exploitation by so-called "adventurers," or New English settlers, so as to be re-populated, re-ordered and made profitable for their new owners and for the crown. The scheme was devised by planners in London under the direction of William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, and other administrators on behalf of the queen. It was a large-scale enterprise concentrated in the hands of a few "undertakers" (so called because they "undertook" the task), who were granted "plots" of land to develop on behalf of the government and for their own profit. Spenser, as deputy clerk of the council of Munster, was one of many New English administrators in the province who could influence and/or take advantage of these dramatic events (Jenkins).

The earl of Desmond was killed in 1583, and extensive crown-sponsored surveying of his lands began in September, 1584. The purpose was to discover the area forfeited, compute its value, and name the present occupier (MacCarthy-Morrogh 5). Initial estimates placed the prize at over 577,000 acres, although only 300,000 acres were eventually granted (MacCarthy-Morrogh 16, 287-89; Brady 92). Nearly that much in addition was "probably...allowed for mountain, rock, bog, swamps and other waste lands" but not recorded (Quinn 29; see also MacCarthy-Morrogh 288).

The process was a highly complicated one, due to the fact that some rebels who had been allied with Desmond and/or considered him their overlord had been pardoned (and their lands restored), and many property owners had not rebelled at all. Some survivors claimed that they owned the land under question and that Desmond or his confederates had only rented it from them, and so it should not have been forfeited to the New English. In other cases, property

boundaries were poorly or never surveyed and so were unclear. The results of the initial surveys and grants were themselves contested later on, a problem that plagued Spenser (for example) in his boundary disputes with his powerful neighbor, Maurice, Lord Roche. Spenser claimed that he acquired his lands legally after their forfeit by the attainted John of Desmond, the brother and ally of the earl of Desmond, whereas Roche claimed the properties as his own (Heffner). Partly as a result, Spenser allegorized the worldly "error" he found all around him in Munster in his poetry, including extensive use of legal terminology (Zurcher 183-202; Coughlan; Herron, *Spenser's Irish Work* 127-34).

A manuscript map (circa 1590) by the surveyor Francis Jobson (see beginning of this Section) shows English plantation holdings scattered across Desmond's old territories and marked by the names of the new owners, including "Spenser" near the middle and Sir Walter "Rawley" in the lower-right or south-east direction of the map.

Although eighty-six had been projected in 1586, only thirty-five original grantees or undertakers received parcels in 1588. These parcels ranged, typically, from 4,000 to 12,000 acres each. Sir Walter Raleigh (then a favorite with the Queen) was granted the exorbitant amount of 40,000 acres. Spenser, by contrast, wound up with 1,000 acres fewer than the 4,000 he had initially expected (Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser* 202). Raleigh's grant included some of the best plantation lands, located in the Blackwater River Valley in eastern Co. Cork and western Co. Waterford, and with river access to the sea near the town of Youghal (see Section 6, "Rivers", below). Raleigh's lands lay near those of another important undertaker, the Lord Chancellor of England, Sir Christopher Hatton. Raleigh's most famous tenants included the scientist and explorer Thomas Harriot, who lived at

Molanna Abbey and helped to survey Raleigh's lands, and John White, the artist and former governor of the Virginia colony.

Some of the initial grantees soon sold their lands. Spenser's Kilcolman Castle had first been granted to Andrew Reade, a lawyer in England who probably never visited Kilcolman and whose motives in owning the land remain mysterious; he may have served as a placeholder for Spenser (Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser* 200) and/or have been intimidated by Roche (Heffner 497-8). Many owners were "doomed to disappointment" given the troubles involved in inhabiting and developing the properties (MacCarthy-Morrogh 69). Still others, such as soldiers and "servitors" of the crown who had expected reward in lands for services rendered during the Desmond wars, were either excluded from the plantation or asked to rent from others. Many of them became disaffected and resentful of the undertakers (Brady 97-99).

The new owners were contracted to introduce settlers from England to work the land and nascent industries, as part of an effort to boost the economy and to anglicize the country. Approximately 4,000 settlers arrived between 1585 and 1598 (MacCarthy-Morrogh 118). Wool, hides and timber were major exports, and iron mills were begun (Power 31-2).

The undertakers never filled their quotas for imported labor from England and so often relied on local labor to work their estates. The plantation therefore had difficulty fulfilling its long-term goal of creating an English-style commonwealth at the expense of the so-called "degenerate" Old English and "savage" native Irish populations, who were meant to emulate the example of their conquerors. The plantation plots, moreover, were scattered across the province, thus adding to the planters' anxious sense of isolation and vulnerability.

Proper oversight by the government in London and Dublin and by local administrators, who might be corrupt, was difficult to achieve. Any progress was marred by frequent lawsuits between natives and newcomers and between the newcomers themselves, who sued each other over boundaries and other issues (MacCarthy-Morrogh 91-7).

The plantation was overrun and destroyed in October, 1598 during the Nine Years' War, by troops led by Hugh Maguire (see Section 5, "Destruction"). Spenser died as a refugee in London a few months after Munster's destruction. His wife and family would eventually return to Munster, and his eldest son inherited Kilcolman. The Munster Plantation was gradually revived after the war's close, in 1603, and continued to operate as a Protestant English colony in the heart of Desmond country. By 1640 the New English population had reached its peak of 22,000, with 4,000 of these people outside the original plantation areas (MacCarthy-Morrogh 260).

The overall, long-term impact of New English colonial projects such as the Munster Plantation on Ireland's early modern transformation is debated (Canny; Gillespie). Hard-learned experience there certainly influenced the planning of the more successful Ulster Plantation, begun formally in 1609. For Spenser, at least, the plantation and his castle were a central component of his life: they were his adopted home and a place that further inspired his pastoral and epic imagination (Canny 1-57; Herron, "Irish Archaeology" 243-246; Myers).

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Map of "The Province of Mounster" (c.1590) by the surveyor Francis Jobson (Copyright: National Library of Ireland).



Mallow Castle, Co. Cork, home of the Norris family and headquarters of the provincial government of Munster. Built ca. 1595, it withstood the 1598 rebellion and is now in ruins.

## DESTRUCTION OF THE MUNSTER PLANTATION (1598)

The destruction of the Munster Plantation came swiftly. The Nine Years' War, led by the "Arch-Rebel" Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, was fought mainly in the north of Ireland until 1598, when the floodgates burst and O'Neill's armies came to the southwest. Troops led by Aodh Mag Uidhir (Hugh Maguire), one of O'Neill's vassal chieftains in Ulster, rampaged through the plantation in October of that year, looting and burning indiscriminately and killing any settlers unwise enough to stay in their isolated homesteads.

What was a disaster for the planters was a boon for the people they threatened and replaced. The following verses are excerpted from a bardic poem by Eochaidh Ó hEodhasa that celebrates Maguire's

Munster campaign. The bard refers to himself in the first person as a loving admirer of Maguire:

Naráb aithreach leis ná lean

A thursu timcheall Éireann;

Go ndeach tharaim—ná tí m'ol—

An ní fá ngabhaim gúasacht.

Gidh eadh, is adhbhar téighthe

Dhá ghnúis shúaitnigh shoiléirthe

Slios gach múir ghormsháoththraigh gil ‘na  
dhlúimh thonngháothmhair theintigh.

I hope that neither he nor I

Will regret this circuit of Ireland

I sense danger in it:

May it pass—let my fear not come

And what ever the possible losses, And yet

—there is something to warm His honest

and noble face:

All the castle walls blue-burning

In a pall of wind-tossed fire!

To ward off the cold, Maguire warms himself by burning castles.

Some New Englishmen did resist the tide, most notably the Norris family at their great fortified house at Mallow, where Sir John Norris resided as President of Munster. The inhabitants of the south-central Limerick town of Kilmallock also withstood the storm, as did the town of Cork.

Most refugees, including Spenser, made their way to the safety of coastal towns like Cork. Spenser and presumably his family left from

there for London in December, where Spenser died on January 13, 1599.

Spenser wrote or co-wrote a few short pieces at this time of crisis (the so-called “Brief Discourse of Ireland”) and carried them and other documents with him as a messenger to London. The documents attest to New English alarm at the situation, give administrative details on the Munster settlement, suggest a remedy to the crisis, and appeal to the queen for help.

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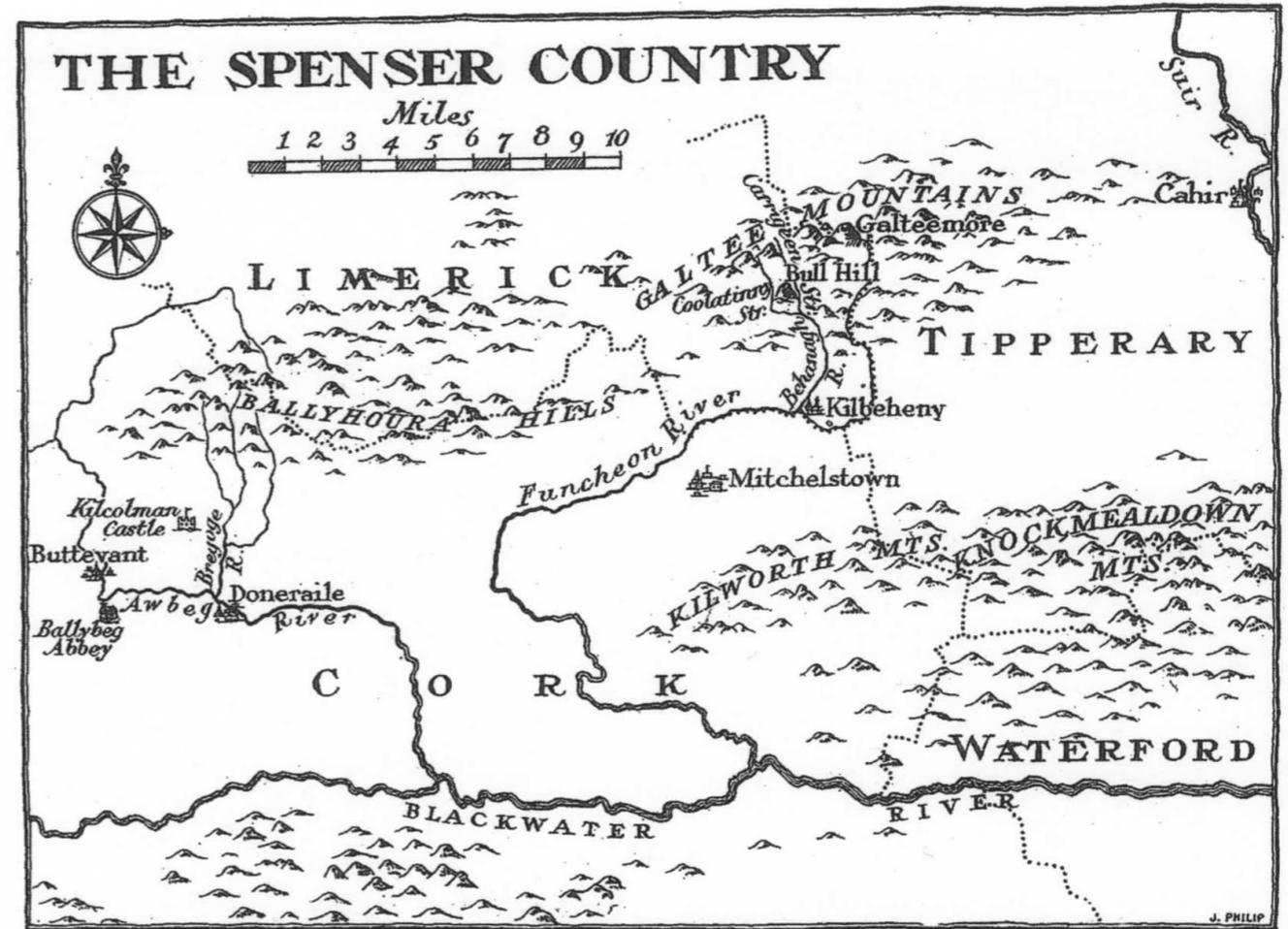
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## RIVERS

Travel by water in Munster was common and easier than by road, which was difficult and dangerous (Hadfield 198-9). Rivers were connected: in Co. Cork, smaller streams flowed into the deep River Lee, for example, and so down to the port town of Cork and into the sea; other waterways streamed into the Blackwater River and on to the port town of Youghal. To the north and west of Kilcolman, the great river Shannon runs past the city of Limerick and out to sea. To the east of Kilcolman, the river Suir runs down through the city of Kilkenny to New Ross and then to Waterford on the coast.

As far as they were navigable, these rivers connected Munster's farms and towns to points farther off, including Bristol and London, both of which had extensive trade contacts with Ireland. Munster ports also provided support to a vibrant fishing industry and to the fast-growing trade routes to the New World.

Spenser famously includes Irish waterways in his list of guests at the symbolic marriage of the rivers Thames and Medway, in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*:



"The Spenser Country" in Alexander Judson, *Spenser in Southern Ireland* (1933).

Ne thence the Irishe Riwers absent were,  
Sith no lesse famous then the rest they bee,  
And ioyne in neighbourhood of kingdome nere,  
Why should they not likewise in loue agree,  
And ioy likewise this solemne day to see?  
They saw it all, and present were in place;  
Though I them all according to their degree,  
Cannot recount, nor tell their hidden race,  
Nor read the saluage cuntreis, thorough which they pace.  
There was the Liffy rolling downe the lea,  
The sandy Slane, the stony Aubrian,  
The spacious Shenan spreading like a sea,  
The pleasant Boyne, the fishy fruitfull Ban,  
Swift Awniduff, which of the English man  
Is cal'de Blacke water, and the Liffar deep,  
Sad Trowis, that once his people ouerran,  
Strong Allo tumbling from Slewlogher steep,  
And Mulla mine, whose waues I whilom taught to weep.  
And there the three renowned brethren were,  
Which that great Gyant Blomius begot,

Of the faire Nymph Rheusa wandring there.  
One day, as she to shunne the season whot,  
Vnder Slewbloome in shady groue was got,  
This Gyant found her, and by force deflowr'd,  
Whereof conceiuing, she in time forth brought  
These three faire sons, which being thence forth powrd  
In three great riwers ran, and many countreis scowrd.  
The first, the gentle Shure that making way  
By sweet Clonmell, adornes rich Waterford;  
The next, the stubborne Newre, whose waters gray  
By faire Kilkenny and Rosseponde boord,  
The third, the goodly Barow, which doth hoord  
Great heapes of Salmons in his deepe bosome:  
All which long sundred, doe at last accord  
To ioyne in one, ere to the sea they come,  
So flowing all from one, all one at last become.  
There also was the wide embayed Mayre,  
The pleasaunt Bandon crownd with many a wood,  
The spreading Lee, that like an Island fayre  
Encloseth Corke with his deuided flood;

And balefull Oure, late staind with English blood:

With many more, whose names no tongue can tell.

All which that day in order seemly good

Did on the Thamys attend, and waited well

To doe their duefull seruice, as to them befell. (IV.xi.40-44)

Hadfield notes how this description highlights the rivers' importance to the "Irish economy and society, in providing transport links as well as sustenance" (329). The description also indicates "how little control the English have over Irish rivers" and, by symbolic association, the Irish they tried to rule. For example, Irish rebels made the "Oure" (a reference to the Avonbeg River) bloody and "balefull" for Spenser's patron Arthur, Lord Grey, when they ambushed Grey's troops in Glenmalure, Co. Wicklow, in 1580. Spenser commemorates the slaughter in his river description.

The story of the rape of a nymph by "that great Gyant Blomius," a mountain who thereby engenders the rivers Suir ("Shure"), the Nore ("Newre") and the Barrow ("Barow"), likewise portrays the Irish countryside as a threatening place as well as one steeped in place-name mythology (Herron). We are reminded of the "griesly foster" who chases the fair Florimell with "beastly lust" across a wilderness landscape in *FQ* III.i.16-17 before he and his brothers ambush Timias, aka Walter Raleigh, at a ford in a river in III.v; the river, in that allegory, could be an Irish one (Bednarz; see also Section 8, "Poetic Interludes," below).

Nonetheless, the above description of the marriage of the rivers presents an optimistic vision. "All which that day in order seemly good" attend upon the English rivers, whose congruent harmony is cele-

brated (and symbolically enacted) in the flowing verse of the poet's song. Rape and massacre in Ireland is translated into tribute in England. Central to Spenser's vision is the mythological archetype of the poet as an Orpheus-figure whose song flows as sweetly and softly as the waters. (Orpheus himself was, however, torn apart and his remains thrown into a river). In such cases, Spenser's figurative association of his own song (or poetry) with flowing water, including the wily Bregog river on his estate, demonstrates his desire to evade punishment and worldly complication in both England and Ireland (Kelsey); these places are, simultaneously, connected by his imagination.

All the major rivers of Munster would have played an important economic role in trade and the exploitation of the plantation. Securing them would have been important for the government, and living on them profitable for a planter. Spenser's (now demolished) castle at Renny, Co. Cork, for example, was a "prime site on the Blackwater" (Spenser calls it the "Broad water" and the "Allo" in "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe," line 123), and Buttevant Abbey, which he came to own in 1598, was built beside the small river Awbeg, which Spenser calls the "Mulla" and refers to as "Mulla mine" in *The Faerie Queene* (quoted above; see also reference to Buttevant and the Mulla in "Colin Clouts" lines 110-11). Into it flows the nearby Bregog, celebrated in the Faunus digression of "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe" (lines 104-55); the Awbeg then runs into the larger, navigable Blackwater River (Hadfield 363) (see the above map of "The Spenser Country").

All three rivers around Kilcolman as well as two others, the Funsheon (called the "Fanchin") and Behanna (called the "Molanna") are mythologized in Spenser's poetry in two separate Ovidian digressions,

which are also topographical fables. One is in “Colin Clouts Come Home Againe” and the other in “The Mutabilitie Cantos” of *The Faerie Queene*. In the “Mutabilitie Cantos,” the river-nymph Molanna betrays her mistress Cynthia (an allegorized Queen Elizabeth) in order to be united with her beloved Fanchin. The digressions, like the catalog of rivers, demonstrate that native Irish forces do not tend to obey the proper rule of law (quite the opposite), and that they are duly punished when they fail to do so.

Also in the “Mutabilitie Cantos,” Spenser admires the east Munster landscape of the river Suir: “The richest champian that may else be rid,/ And the faire Shure, in which are thousand Salmons bred” (FQ VII.vi.54.8-9). He emphasizes in sound, rhythm, and imagery the fertility of the land. Line 9 ends its sinuous course with the passive construction of the verb, “to breed,” and the salmon is associated with magic and strength in Irish mythology. “Shure” is rhythmically emphasized, and in the lines’ alliteration, the soft “s” of the river and its plentiful fish winds its way among the rougher “r’s” of the “rich” land (compare with “the sandy Slane” and “The spacious Shenan spreading like a sea,” above). The phrase “may else be rid” is commonly glossed as meaning, “as may be seen,” although the sense of “as may be cleared” [*i.e.*, of timber or brush] is also possible (cf. one meaning of “rid” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*). If so, the lines call attention to colonial industry. One might also hear a punning echo of riding, as in, “that may else be ridden on.”

Spenser thereby highlights the territory of a formidable overlord, Thomas Butler, 10th earl of Ormond, lord of the Suir. The knightly Ormond was the wealthy champion of this “champian,” or countryside, and a close cousin of Queen Elizabeth I. He was also one of the Munster undertakers, the only Irishman among the original grantees.

Elsewhere, Spenser compliments Ormond (and quite possibly his mansion at Carrick-on-Suir) in ambiguous fashion in a Dedicatory Sonnet appended to the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene*. In that poem, Spenser praises Ormond’s refined patronage of the arts, although the “waste” around Ormond’s “braue mansion” still needs some clearing.

Spenser clearly took a keen imaginative and territorial interest in Irish rivers. Rivers are contested territory between native and newcomer, subject and crown forces. Spenser’s spokesman Irenius in the *View of the Present State of Ireland* advocates building bridges “upon all rivers” and destroying fords “so as none might pass any other ways but by those bridges, and every bridge to have a gate, and a small gatehouse set thereon,” so as to control all traffic and to prevent crime among the locals (*View* 164).

The effort to control bridges and rivers in Ireland recalls an extremely violent episode in *The Faerie Queene* involving the villain Pollente. Pollente lives in a castle and tyrannically guards and tolls a bridge over a river “both swift and dangerous deepe withall” (V.ii.8.2). The hero of Justice Artegall confronts him, fights him in the river and beheads him in single combat, after which “His corps was carried downe along the Lee,/ Whose waters with his filthy bloud it stayned” (V.ii.19.1-2). Thus Pollente’s “powre [is] within iust compasse pen,” or contained by justice (V.ii.19.9). This justice encompasses Ireland: the reference to the “Lee” reminds the reader of the river of that name that flows through Cork city in Munster (the river is mentioned also at IV.xi.44.3-4).

Pollente’s name appropriately derives from Latin *pollentia*, “might” or “power”; he also “pols and pils” (*i.e.*, robs) the poor (V.ii.6.8). One can also emphasize a pun here on “poll,” meaning the top of the

head in English, since Artegall ironically makes a toll of his poll: his head is cut off and “pitcht vpon a pole” (V.ii.19.4). According to the *OED*, moreover, a “poll” was an Irish term, c. 1591, for a measure of land equivalent to fifty or sixty acres, also known as a “cartron.” Pollente can be associated through wordplay with specifically Irish territorial overlords.

After his death, Pollente’s “Castle” is subsequently assaulted, raided and razed. His daughter, Munera, who allegorizes bribery (with a possible echo of Munster in her name), has her golden hands chopped off by merciless justice. She, too, is thrown into the stream which “washt away her guilty blood” (V.ii.27.5). The episode is a highly disturbing one mingling blood and brutal justice in a potentially Irish landscape. Spenser elsewhere describes his adopted country in more peaceful terms.

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## ROADS

Both England and Ireland were more easily navigable by river than by road in the Tudor period, and Munster was no exception. Munster did have a road network, however, a “not especially bad” one (Hadfield 198). According to one modern calculation, it was normal for officials such as Spenser to travel twelve-nineteen miles per day by road in Munster and up to twenty-nine miles/day on occasion; the European average was approximately twenty-five miles/day (McCormack 35-6; cited in Hadfield 487).

Spenser would certainly have known how to ride a horse; such experience may have informed his opening image of the Red Crosse

Knight “pricking on the plain” and curbing his steed in *The Faerie Queene* I.i.1 (Hadfield 209-10).

Kilcolman Castle stood at a useful crossroads for the region. Nearby towns included Mallow, the seat of the Provincial President (occupied by the Norris family), only a few miles away. The impressively walled medieval town of Kilmallock lay fifteen miles to the north, en route to Limerick. According to Andrew Hadfield:

Close to the towns of Buttevant and Mallow, [Kilcolman] would have been a convenient site for someone who had to travel north to Limerick; south to Cork; and across country north-east

to the midland fortresses [and/or towns] of Clonmel, Kilkenny, and Carlow, on the route to Dublin. Spenser would indeed have had to travel frequently—as part of an armed convoy—along the established routes in the wide valleys between the Ballyhoura and Mullaghareirk mountains to Limerick; and between the Galtee and Knockmealdown mountains to the midlands (198).

Travel by night must have been miserable. The historian and New English propagandist John Hooker relates a story wherein Walter Raleigh, as a young captain fighting in the Desmond rebellion, ambushes and captures the rebellious David, Lord Roche in his castle twenty miles north of Cork city. Raleigh hauls Roche (and his wife) by night to Cork to prison:

But the night fell out to be verie tempestuous and foule, and therewith so darke, that no man could see hand or foot, nor yet discerne one another; and the waies also were so fowle, so full of balks, hillocks, pits, and rocks, that the souldiors thereby were maruellouslie troubled and incombred, some stumbled among the stones, some plunged into holes, and some by their often falls were not onelie hurt, but also lost their armour, and were maruellouslie spoiled: and besides that, they were among and in the middle of the enemies, who laie in sundrie ambushes, thinking verelie to haue intercepted them, and to haue set vpon them: but the darke night which was cumbersome to themselues, was a shadow to shrowd them from their enimies. And in the end, though with much trouble, they came to Corke in safetie, sauing one soldier named Iohn Phelium, who by his often falling and stumbling among the stones and rocks, did so hurt one of his feet, that he could neuer recouer the same, but did in the end consume and rot awaie (Hooker 6.444).

Roads could be dangerous places to travel during the day as well. Hadfield notes that “Densely forested areas, in particular on the sides of the Ballyhouras and Galtees and in the Vale of Aherlow, would have been carefully avoided by the English settlers, who tried to clear away as much forest land as they could” (198). In the *View*, Spenser’s spokesman Irenius advocates greatly enhancing security on roads as a means of better controlling territory and preventing robberies (164-5). Irenius suggests planting fortifications and bridges along the routeways and clearing them of trees for many yards on each side, so as to provide safety to travelers.

In his wedding poem, Spenser refers to the dawn in mythical terms that remind us of a great road network in the sky: he describes the celestial “siluer coche” of the “Rosy Morne long since left Tithones bed” (“Epithalamion” 75-6). (The real bride was, like Aurora in the myth, much younger than the groom.) Spenser’s invocation to the “Nymphes of Mulla” (“Epithalamion” 56) suggests that his bride awoke on her wedding morning near the Awbeg river in north Cork, *i.e.*, at Kilcolman or nearby. We do not, however, know how the mortal couple, poet and bride, got to church once they left their beds. After the ceremony, Edmund and Elizabeth returned to Kilcolman the same day or evening (lines 241 ff.).

The town of Youghal, where Spenser may have been married, was sixty miles away from Kilcolman (Hadfield 209). If so, we cannot therefore take literally the idea, implied by “Epithalamion,” that the groom and bride made the trip from Kilcolman to their wedding

church on the coast and back again in a day (a sequence of twenty-four hours marked by the twenty-four stanzas of the poem). They may have travelled by boat, although that would have been a long journey as well, half of it (the return) upstream (see Section 6, “Rivers,” above). An alternative scenario is that they got married near Kilcolman.

One problem with this idea is the mention of “roring Organs” during the ceremony (“Epithalamion” 218): Protestant churches in Youghal and Cork were wealthy enough to have had organs, but did any church in north Cork or southern Limerick have one? Perhaps in Kilmallock? Spenser got married at midsummer, when days are longest, and Kilmallock, fifteen miles away, could conceivably have been reached from Kilcolman by early afternoon for a ceremony, and then returned from at evening. Kilmallock’s Protestant church (St Peter and St Paul’s) employed professional choristers in the late sixteenth century (Seoighe). Is it possible that they had a small organ to accompany their singing, and that it was used during Spenser’s ceremony?

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View of Kilcolman ruin from the north. The “Raleigh window” is at right and a seasonal lake can be seen in the background.

## POETIC INTERLUDES: SPENSER AND SIR WALTER RALEIGH AT KILCOLMAN

Sir Walter Raleigh, the dashing adventurer, writer, courtier, advisor and favorite of Queen Elizabeth I, was also a veteran of Irish wars (in 1580-1) and a major landowner in Munster. He received over 40,000 acres along the Blackwater and Bride Rivers in southeastern Co. Cork and southwestern Co. Waterford, by far the largest initial grant of lands on the Plantation (see Section 4, “The Munster Plantation,” above). The acreage was four times the maximum allowed by statute and some of the best land on offer (by comparison, Spenser acquired second-hand one of the smallest grants, at just over 3,000 acres). Raleigh occasionally visited his lands in the late 1580s and early 1590s. He oversaw the planting of colonists as well as the in-

dustrial development of his property. In 1588-9, he was mayor of the coastal town of Youghal, where he may have lived in a house, “Myrtle Grove,” which still stands today [for the argument that Raleigh never lived in Myrtle Grove, see O’Keeffe and Kelly]. One of his tenants on the Plantation was the accomplished scientist and colonial explorer Thomas Harriot, who occupied Molana Abbey, Co. Waterford, near the outlet of the Blackwater River into the sea.

Raleigh’s tenants and agents worked hard at clearing Munster’s woods for timber, which had various industrial uses and fueled some of the first iron mills in Ireland. A major product was the barrel stave, for us in the wine trade with France and Spain. By 1596, Raleigh

was already losing interest in his Irish estates and eventually sold them in a fire-sale in 1602. Raleigh's lands were bought by Richard Boyle, a mid-level Munster adventurer and administrator who eventually became the first earl of Cork.

Another reason for Raleigh's trips to Ireland would have been to escape the political pressures of the court. While there he visited Spenser, whom he brought back to London with him in 1589 (a voyage mentioned in Spenser's poem "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe," published in 1595). Books I-III of *The Faerie Queene* were published in London in 1590. Parts were perhaps read by Spenser to Queen Elizabeth at court, while Raleigh was still at the height of his influence there. Spenser earned the status of poet laureate as well as a healthy pension of fifty pounds per annum as a reward. Raleigh therefore directly or indirectly helped Spenser gain entrée to the queen's presence, and we should think of *The Faerie Queene* (especially the edition of 1590) as a work with Raleigh's, not only Spenser's, interests in mind. Some of these interests were clearly Irish ones that pertained to their mutual colonial-imperial project in Munster.

#### *Raleigh in Spenser's Writing: The Faerie Queene I-III*

Spenser's epic involves Raleigh in many particulars: as a patron-dedicatee, as a reader, as a writer of commendatory sonnets (Raleigh wrote two of them for *The Faerie Queene*, both praising Spenser's work) and as a subject of topical allegory in *The Faerie Queene* (in both the 1590 and 1596 editions). Books I-III of have a lengthy dedicatory "Letter" to Raleigh appended to them. The letter gives background to the plot and explains the poem's literary principles, virtues and goals, among which are to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."

Spenser famously praises and advertises Raleigh's colonial ambitions in the New World when he mentions the ongoing exploration of Peru, the Amazon and "fruitfullest Virginia" in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* (II.Proem.2.9). Episodes from Raleigh's adventures in Ireland are dramatized in Book III in the allegorical character Timias, the squire of Prince Arthur. In the fifth canto of the Book, for example, Timias, a.k.a. Raleigh, fights three villains at a ford in a scene reminiscent of a fight that Raleigh had in reality against Irish rebels under the command of David, Lord Barry during the Desmond rebellion (1579-83) (Bednarz). The fight is chronicled in a contemporary history of the rebellion by John Hooker, included in the second edition (1586) of Raphael Holinshed's *Histories*.

In Spenser's account, Timias chases after a rude, lustful, countrified villain, or "foster fowle" (III.v.13.4), who wanted to rape a damsel in distress, the "faire Florimell." Prevented from doing so, the villain leads Timias into a forest. He conspires with his two angry or "yre"-filled brothers to ambush Timias there:

... for they were three

Vngratious children of one gracelesse syre...

So them with bitter words he stird to bloodie yre.

Forthwith themselues with their sad instruments

Of spoyle and murder they gan arme byliue,

And with him foorth into the forrest went,

To wreake the wrath, which he did earst reuiue

In their sterne brests, on him [*i.e.*, Timias] which late did driue

Their brother to reproch and shamefull flight:  
For they had vow'd, that neuer he aliue  
Out of that forest should escape their might;  
Vile rancour their rude harts had fild with such despight.  
Within that wood there was a couert glade,  
Foreby a narrow foord, to them well knowne,  
Through which it was vneath for wight to  
wade, And now by fortune it was ouerflowne:  
By that same way they knew that Squyre vnknowne  
Mote algates passe; for thy themselues they set  
There in await, with thicke woods ouer growne,  
And all the while their malice they did whet  
With cruell threats, his passage through the ford to let.  
It fortun'd, as they deuized had,  
The gentle Squyre came ryding that same way,  
Vnweeting of their wile and treason bad,  
And through the ford to passen did assay;  
But that fierce foster, which late fled away,  
Stoutly foorth stepping on the further shore,  
Him boldly bad his passage there to stay,

Till he had made amends, and full restore  
For all the damage, which he had him doen afore.  
With that at him a quiu'ring dart he threw,  
With so fell force and villainous despite,  
That through his habericon the forkehead flew,  
And through the linked mayles empierced quite,  
But had no power in his soft flesh to bite:  
That stroke the hardy Squire did sore displease,  
But more that him he could not come to smite;  
For by no meanes the high banke he could sease,  
But labour'd long in that deepe ford with vaine disease.  
And still the foster with his long bore-speare  
Him kept from landing at his wished will;  
Anone one sent out of the thicket neare  
A cruell shaft, headed with deadly ill,  
And fethered with an vnlucky quill;  
The wicked steele stayd not, till it did light  
In his left thigh, and deeply did it thrill:  
Exceeding grieve that wound in him empight,  
But more that with his foes he could not come to fight.

At last through wrath and vengeaunce making way,  
He on the bancke arrayud with mickle payne,  
Where the third brother him did sore assay,  
And drove at him with all his might and mayne  
A forest bill, which both his hands did strayne;  
But warily he did auoide the blow,  
And with his speare requited him agayne,  
That both his sides were thrilled with the throw,  
And a large streame of bloud out of the wound did  
flow. He tombling downe, with gnashing teeth did bite  
The bitter earth, and bad to lett him in  
Into the balefull house of endlesse night,  
Where wicked ghosts doe waile their former sin.  
Tho gan the battaile freshly to begin;  
For nathemore for that spectacle bad,  
Did th'other two their cruell vengeaunce blin [*i.e.*, stop].  
But both attonce on both sides him bestad [*i.e.*, beset],  
And load vpon him layd, his life for to haue had.  
Tho when that villain he [*i.e.*, Timias] auiz'd [*i.e.*, saw], which late

Affrighted had the fairest Florimell,  
Full of fiers fury, and indignant hate,  
To him he turned, and with rigor fell  
Smote him so rudely on the Pannikell [*i.e.*, skull],  
That to the chin he cleft his head in twaine:  
Downe on the ground his carkas groueling fell;  
His sinfull sowle with desperate disdaine,  
Out of her fleshly ferme fled to the place of paine [*i.e.*, to  
Hell]. That seeing now the only last of three,  
Who with that wicked shafte him wounded had,  
Trembling with horror, as that did foresee  
The fearefull end of his auengement sad,  
Through which he follow should his brethren bad,  
His bootelesse bow in feeble hand vpcought,  
And therewith shott an arrow at the lad [*i.e.*, at Timias];  
Which faintly fluttering, scarce his helmet raught,  
And glauncing fel to ground, but him annoyed naught.  
With that he would haue fled into the wood;  
But Timias him lightly ouerhent,  
Right as he entering was into the flood,

And strooke at him with force so violent,  
That headlesse him into the foord he sent:  
The carcass with the streame was carried downe,  
But th'head fell backward on the Continent.  
So mischief fel vpon the meaners crowne;  
They three be dead with shame, the Squire liues with renowne.  
He liues, but takes small ioy of his renowne;  
For of that cruell wound he bled so sore,  
That from his steed he fell in deadly swowne;  
Yet still the blood forth gusht in so great store,  
That he lay wallowd all in his owne gore.  
Now God thee keepe, thou gentlest squire aliue,  
Els shall thy louing Lord [*i.e.*, Prince Arthur] thee see no more,  
But both of comfort him thou shalt depriue,  
And eke thy selfe of honor, which thou didst atchiue.

(III.v.15-26)

The political allegorical significance of the fight at the ford is complex. At the time, Raleigh was serving as captain in the crown forces in Ireland commanded by Lord Deputy Arthur, Lord Grey, for whom Spenser served as secretary. Raleigh was also busy at the time angling for part of Lord Barry's estates, at Barryscourt, Co. Cork. (Many objects in the recreated castle portion of the *Centering*

*Spenser* website are copied from the present-day recreation of the Tudor-era household, castle and gardens of Barryscourt, which is open to visitors). The three villains in Spenser's episode could represent Raleigh's ambushers allied with Barry, and/or they could correspond more generally with the three Fitzgeralds who were the core leaders of the Desmond rebellion: the fifteenth earl, Gerald; his brother, John (whose estate at Kilcolman Spenser claimed as his own); and their cousin, James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald.



**Thistles at Kilcolman**

All three Fitzgeralds were killed during the rebellion and their lands eventually attainted. Raleigh played a key part in suppressing the rebellion through his deeds and, later, his advice to the queen at court. His fight at the ford was part of a larger struggle to tame the

revolt and so prepare the way for plantation; it also profited him personally (although his efforts to acquire Barryscourt in particular were unsuccessful).

Whatever their exact identity (if there is such a thing in Spenser's alle-gories), the three villains are described as woodsy, savage and vio-lent threats who deserve to be killed by Timias, who performs heroi-cally and who loosely allegorizes Raleigh.

*Raleigh in Spenser's Writing: "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe"*

Raleigh surfaces again in a different poem by Spenser, his lengthy pastoral canzone "Colin Clouts Comes Home Againe" (dated internally to "1591" but published in 1595 and containing details pertaining to events that occurred after 1591). In this poem, set in the Irish countryside, the shepherd "Colin" (an alias for Spenser himself) describes how the "shepherd of the Ocean" (an alias for Raleigh) visited him and shared verse and song with him.

One day (quoth he) I sat, (as was my trade)  
Vnder the foot of Mole that mountaine hore,  
Keeping my sheepe amongst the cooly shade,  
Of the greene alders by the Mullaes shore:  
There a straunge shepherd chaunst to find me out,  
Whether allured with my pipes delight,  
Whose pleasing sound yshrilled far about,  
Or thither led by chaunce, I know not right:

Whom when I asked from what place he came,  
And how he hight, himselfe he did yleepe,  
The sheheard of the Ocean by name,  
And said he came far from the main-sea deepe.  
He sitting me beside in that same shade,  
Prouoked me to plaie some pleasant fit,  
And when he heard the musicke which I made,  
He found himselfe full greatly pleasd at it:  
Yet æmuling my pipe, he tooke in hond  
My pipe before that æmuled of many,  
And plaid theron; (for well that skill he cond)  
Himselfe as skilfull in that art as any.  
He pip'd, I sung; and when he sung, I piped,  
By chaunge of turnes, each making other mery,  
Neither enuying other, nor enuied,  
So piped we, vntill we both were weary. ("Colin Clouts" 56-79)  
Raleigh and Spenser are part of a nation of willing servitors or "shepherds" for the Queen, called "Cynthia" after the virgin goddess of the moon (also known as Diana) in classical mythology:  
Those be the shepherds which my Cynthia serue,

At sea, beside a thousand moe at land:

For land and sea my Cynthia doth deserue

To haue in her commandement at hand. (“Colin Clouts” 260-3)

Despite his adoration and service to her, Raleigh had fallen out of favor with Queen Elizabeth and so was writing poetry to lament his sorry state. He also had appealed to the queen for mercy:

His[*i.e.*, Raleigh’s] song was all a lamentable lay,

Of great vnkindnesse, and of vsage hard,

Of Cynthia the Ladie of the sea,

Which from her presence faultlesse him debarde.

And euer and anon with singulfs rife,

He cryed out, to make his vndersong

Ah my loues queene, and goddesse of my life,

Who shall me pittie, when thou doest me wrong?

(Colin Clouts” 164-71)

The “song” referred to is likely to be Raleigh’s longest extant poem, a fragment entitled “Oceans Love to Scinthia,” *i.e.*, “Cynthia.” Spenser’s passage also refers either to a minor tiff at court before 1591, or to Raleigh’s great fall from the queen’s favor that occurred after the Throckmorton scandal broke in 1592 (see below).

Elsewhere in “Colin Clouts Come Home Againe,” Spenser describes his journey to visit Queen Elizabeth at court, brought there by Raleigh:

The shepheard of the Ocean [*i.e.*, Raleigh] (quoth he) [*i.e.*, Colin/Spenser]

Unto that Goddesse grace me first enhanced,

And to mine oaten pipe enclin’d her eare,

That she thenceforth therein gan take delight,

And it desir’d at timely houres to heare,

All were my notes but rude and roughly dight. (“Colin Clouts” 358-63)

As noted above, while at court, Spenser presented to the Queen the first part of his great epic, *The Faerie Queene*. In the Proem to Book III, Spenser describes a poem Raleigh wrote about the Queen, also called “Cynthia,” as “sweete verse, with Nectar sprinkled” (4.4).

Spenser will complement Raleigh’s praise of the queen in that poem with his own poem, *The Faerie Queene*, which celebrates her political and personal virtues:

Ne let his [*i.e.*, Raleigh’s] fayrest Cynthia refuse,

In mirrours more then one her selfe to see,

But either Gloriana let her chuse,

Or in Belphoebe fashioned to bee:

In th’one her rule, in th’other her rare chastitee.

(*FQ* III.Proem.5.5-9)

Elizabeth will see herself allegorically in the “mirror” of Spenser’s verse, as Gloriana, the Fairy Queen, and as Belpheobe, yet another version of Diana (or “Cynthia”), the virginal goddess of the moon and the hunt in classical mythology. Both Spenser and Raleigh therefore portray Queen Elizabeth in similar mythological fashion. Spenser and Raleigh mirror each other’s actions “piping” or writing poetry back and forth to themselves in Ireland and in praise of the Queen when in London and Ireland.

*Raleigh in Spenser’s Writing: The Faerie Queene IV-VI*

Spenser did not only admire Raleigh in his poetry. He creates a different allegorical representation of him in Book IV (first published in 1596) of *The Faerie Queene*. Here, Raleigh-as-Timias appears as a melancholy, dejected but beseeching and finally redeemed lover of Belpheobe (IV.vii.38-46 and viii.2-18): the episode is interpreted as referring to the Throckmorton scandal of 1592, wherein Raleigh secretly impregnated and married one of the queen’s ladies-in-waiting, Elizabeth Throckmorton. For this he was thrown into the Tower of London by the enraged Queen. Raleigh was gradually restored to favor at court, but not until 1597.

In the episode, Timias appears changed, or rather degenerated from his former heroic self. He is “melancholy” and resides in a “Cabin” in a dark wood (IV.vii.38.9; 42.5). He has given up weapons, wine and women. He has been utterly forgotten:

His wonted warlike weapons all he broke,  
And threw away, with vow to vse no more,  
Ne thenceforth euer strike in battell stroke,  
Ne euer word to speake to woman more;

But in that wildernesse, of men forlore,  
And of the wicked world forgotten quight,  
His hard mishap in dolor to deplore,  
And wast his wretched daies in wofull plight;  
So on him selfe to wreake his follies owne despight.  
And eke his garment, to be thereto meet,  
He willfully did cut and shape anew;  
And his faire lockes, that wont with ointment sweet  
To be embaulm’d, and sweat out dainty dew,  
He let to grow and griesly to concrew,  
Vncomb’d, uncurl’d, and carelesly vnshed;  
That in short time his face they ouergrew,  
And ouer all his shoulders did dispred,  
That who he whilome was, vneath was to be red.  
There he continued in this carefull plight,  
Wretchedly wearing out his youthly yeares,  
Through wilfull penury consumed quight,  
That like a pined ghost he soone appears.  
For other food then that wilde forrest beares,  
Ne other drinke there did he euer tast,

Then running water, tempred with his teares,

The more his weakened body so to wast:

That out of all mens knowledge he was worne at last.

(*FQ* IV.vii.39-41)

The following canto continues this wretched description. Timias's unkempt hair disfigures his appearance: he is "With heary glib deform'd, and meiger face,/ Like ghost late risen from his graue agryz'd" (IV.viii.12.6–7). This portrays the very image, complete with Irish "glib" (a low-hanging forelock), of a dejected refugee of the Irish woods. Such refugees included rogue native soldiers known as woodkern. One also hears echoes in this passage of the ghostly victims of famine, described by Spenser in *A View*, as having suffered from (and caused) the Desmond rebellion. Timias in his shameful exile has degenerated to the level of the wild Irish.

Literary critic William Oram argues that Spenser is here criticizing Raleigh's immorality, which led him to squander his artistic and political potential. Spenser hopes that Raleigh will write more about "epic" deeds (to "thunder martial stowre," in Spenser's own words in his Dedicatory Sonnet to Raleigh) instead of wallowing in effete, Petrarchan self-pity, which was too much the fashion at court at the time.

There is clearly an Irish dimension here as well, however. The scene arguably reflects Spenser's disappointment with Raleigh because he needed Raleigh's political support at court and because Raleigh was his New English neighbor on the Plantation. The route to successful land grants and tenure in Munster ran in large part through the London court and law courts, including by sanction of the queen, whose great "grace... and bounty most rewardfull" Colin will

seek in person at court thanks to Raleigh ("Colin Clouts" 187). Spenser needed Raleigh's connections, so Raleigh's disgrace at court would have hurt him, too; Raleigh imperiled both his own and Spenser's Irish livelihood.

Spenser turns Timias into another version of the starving woodkern: a potentially treasonous (because rebellious and lustful) and certainly "savage" representation of a man, Raleigh, who was normally obsessed with his rich appearance at court. Spenser turns Timias into a figure of Irish-tinged famine and despair as a fitting psychological analogy for Raleigh's miserable state, cast out of the queen's favor and barred from her nourishing riches.

Moreover, according to his own letters written to Robert Cecil from prison in 1592, Raleigh's improper behavior in London opened him to further accusation and legal prosecution in Munster by his rival and enemy, Lord Deputy William Fitzwilliam. Raleigh states that his "disgraces" have "past the seas" and caused the Lord Deputy to punish him, including a "dispeopled" plantation. As D.B. Quinn relates, in 1592 Raleigh's lucrative timber and mill industry in Munster—another subject promoted in *The Faerie Queene*—was suspended for a year and a half as the Lord Deputy pressed him on treason charges for selling naval timber (and not only barrel staves, as permitted) to the Spanish and for channeling information to Catholic recusants from the Continent. The charges were eventually dropped, and Raleigh and his agent Henry Pyne had their timber industry restored. The Timias episode in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene* may allude to this recuperation of Raleigh's fortune and reputation: Timias, a moping lover, engraves "Belphebe" (*i.e.*, Queen Elizabeth) on "euery tree" (IV.vii.46) and will find help and relief from his goddess in the following canto.

Raleigh may appear in *The Faerie Queene* in other guises pertaining to Ireland: critics James Nohrnberg and Judith Owens, for example, see Raleigh satirized in the figure of the foolish satyr, Faunus, in Book VII, the “Mutabilitie Cantos” (1609), which are set explicitly in Ireland.

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2

## **KILCOLMAN CASTLE: THEN AND NOW**

## HISTORY OF THE CASTLE

Of all the places in Ireland associated with Spenser, Kilcolman Castle is most prominent. It is situated in north-central Co. Cork, roughly halfway between the cities of Cork and Limerick, three and one quarter miles north-northwest of the town of Doneraile. It sits on a low-lying ridge next to a marshy, seasonal lake to the south of the castle. The lake would have acted as a defensive barrier and would have attracted waterfowl and other animals that could be hunted: a marsh was not a wasteland, therefore, but a valuable resource. Kilcolman today lies adjacent to a bird sanctuary and is on private property, to the north and north-east stretch the low-lying Ballyhoura Mountains.



**Kilcolman is situated in fertile fields in north County Cork. View from the top of the tower ruin.**

## *Settlement History*

The area was occupied long before Spenser arrived. David Newman Johnson, in the most extensive description of the castle's history, describes early-medieval church sites and other monuments close by, including prehistoric ones. An Iron Age (c. 100BCE-400CE) fort lay elsewhere on the ridge, for example (Johnson 422). Later medieval settlements, including churches and monasteries, were built in the vicinity of the nearby town of Doneraile and environs (see archaeological survey map above). The name Kilcolman means "church of Colman," referring to a legendary saint from the sixth century CE who was famous as a royal poet (appropriately enough!). An early Christian church named after the saint would have stood nearby (Johnson 418-9).

Intriguingly, given its description as a "manor" in the original grant to Spenser, Johnson suggests that a "small medieval settlement" may have existed along the ridge near the castle (422). If so, archaeology has yet to find it; only select portions of the site have been excavated (Klingelhofer 109-31).

Nearby castles that would have been occupied by Spenser's Irish and Old English neighbors include Castlepook a large tower house completed in 1380 and once owned by the Shynan family (Hadfield 206). It now stands in ruins about two miles to the east of Kilcolman. It may be alluded to when a threatening "Pook," or Irish spirit, is mentioned by the poet in his marriage poem, "Epithalamion" (1595). The speaker of the poem also complains about the annoying croaking of frogs, whose descendants can still be found in the lake at Kilcolman.

The tower house structure was built in at least two stages before the time of Spenser's occupation: a "four story tower-house...probably

built by the sixth Earl of Desmond when he received the property from an uncle in 1418" as well as later additions (de Breffny 146; Newman Johnson 421). Walter A. Jones states that the castle was built in 1347 by the first earl of Desmond, but Johnson supports de Breffny and based on his own judgement of the building construction dismisses the earlier date in favor of the 1420s (239; see also Henley 72). Kenneth Nicholls states that Kilcolman was acquired by the Desmonds, c. 1430, from William, Lord Barry (190). The Barry family, along with the Roches, were Spenser's most powerful Old English aristocratic neighbors.

In the later-sixteenth century, the castle was acquired by Sir John Fitzgerald of Desmond, brother of the fifteenth "rebel" Earl of Desmond (Nicholls 190). Johnson follows Jones in stating that it was owned by the Sidneys for a time in 1568 [intriguingly, Sir Henry Sidney also owned, in 1576, Bridgetown Friary near Kilcolman; it passed on to Spenser's fellow-author, Lodowick Bryskett (Hadfield 363)] (419; 239). According to Spenser's own testimony in government documents, the estate was owned by Sir John at the time of the Desmond rebellion (1579-1583), when both Sir John and his brother the earl rebelled and were killed. Kilcolman, like other estates owned by the Desmonds, was among those attainted, or made forfeit to the crown, and thus became part of the Munster Plantation.

Spenser acquired the castle from the English undertaker Andrew Reade of Facombe, Co. Southampton, to whom it had first been assigned in 1587. Spenser's name appears on the Articles for the Undertakers (June 27, 1586) but not in association with Kilcolman. Spenser acquired the property from Reade sometime before 1589, by which time the castle had presumably become the poet's main residence. Spenser was granted 3,028 acres of land and the castle

by formal patent (October 26, 1590); he may have owned many more acres on the estate which were unfarmable or “waste.” The same patent names the castle “Hap Hazard.”

Spenser probably lived on site for approximately the last decade of his life (1589-1599), with intermittent travels as far as London. From 1589 until at least 1594, Spenser (and some of his New English neighbors) entered into prolonged lawsuits with his Old English neighbor, Maurice, Lord Roche, Viscount Fermoy, and his tenants, including Nicholas Shynan, over various parcels of land in and around Kilcolman. Lord Roche apparently claimed all of Kilcolman from Spenser (Heffner). Spenser lost part of the estate to Roche in 1592, but retained most of it, and he acquired lands nearby in the late 1590s, including Buttevant Friary, in the town of Doneraile (Buttevant), and the major castle (now demolished) and estate of Renny (Hadfield 362-3). The poet fled Kilcolman before it was sacked and burned in October, 1598, when the Munster Plantation was overrun by native Irish forces during the Nine Years’ War. Following Spenser's death in January, 1599, and the end of the war in 1603, the estate reverted to Spenser's wife and family.

### *Raleigh visits*

Sir Walter Raleigh may have visited Spenser at Kilcolman in 1589, before both men made a journey to London to conduct business and to present *The Faerie Queene* to Queen Elizabeth and her court. The first three books of the poem were dedicated in part to Raleigh and published in London in 1590. Spenser allegorizes himself and Raleigh as shepherds “piping” back and forth at Kilcolman, as if in a poetry contest, in his poem “Colin Clouts Come Home Againe” (c. 1591; published 1595). Spenser records that Raleigh piped him portions of a “lamentable lay” dedicated to Queen Eliza-

beth, most likely Raleigh's poetic fragment, “Oceans Love to Cynthia” (unpublished until the twentieth century). Legend has it that Raleigh and Spenser read their poetry to each other and shared tobacco pipes in the window-seat of the second story of the castle, called “Raleigh’s window” (see Chapter 1 Section 8, “Poetic Interludes,” above).



**The so-called “Raleigh” window with late-medieval, ogee-headed design.**

### *Building Type and Dimensions*

The ruins of Kilcolman today consist primarily of a tower house, a highly common form of small castle built in Ireland from the fourteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries. The greatest concentration of

these structures is in Munster. Tower houses were usually surrounded by a “bawn” or fortified wall to keep cattle in and raiders out. A small ruined south-east corner of the bawn can be seen above ground at Kilcolman.

It is uncertain how many stories the tower house would originally have had; six was not uncommon for the type (Johnson 421; Herron; Lyttleton and Herron; O’Keeffe, “Don’t Worry”). Our reconstruction on the *Centering Spenser* website is approximately six stories tall, including the roof and crenellations. As demonstrated by excavations conducted in the 1990s by Eric Klingelhofer, hence post-dating Johnson’s study, additions to the castle would have included the outlying Great Hall, probably built in the fifteenth century at the same time as the southern bawn wall; a south-facing cellar under the Great Hall was later filled in and a garderobe added onto the south-east corner (Klingelhofer 117). A kitchen also probably stood on premises. The substantive Ground-Floor Parlor situated between the Great Hall and the Tower House was added sometime in the sixteenth century. This Parlor has been likened to a “privy chamber” by Tadhg O’Keeffe (“Kilcolman” 13). It, along with the other structures, was burnt in 1598 and again c. 1615 (Klingelhofer 122), when it was owned by Spenser’s son, Sylvanus. The ruin as it stands today also has additions to it built during the nineteenth century.

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## KILCOLMAN CASTLE TODAY



View from the east. Kilcolman today stands on private land and is barely accessible. No modern roads lead to the castle, which is privately owned and surrounded by gated and fenced farmland. The seasonal lake and neighboring wooded land to the south and southeast of the castle (seen to the left in this picture) belong to a modern-day nature preserve. [Photos taken ca. 2000-2010]



View from the north of Kilcolman Castle ruins, from within the area of the "bawn" or enclosure, which is no longer extant. In Spenser's time the castle would have been at least two stories taller (including the roof and battlements) and much more substantial, with a complex of buildings situated on the eastern flank.

In the foreground is the nineteenth-century addition, a platform or patio built around and over the pre-existing vault and accessible from the stairs and doorway in the towerhouse. Behind the platform area stand the remains of the late-medieval towerhouse. On the left (east) side is the tower containing the staircase and garderobe. On the right, above the platform, is seen the outline of "Raleigh's window," where legend has it that Spenser and Sir Walter Raleigh discussed poetry and politics.



At center-bottom can be seen the original door into the tower house. It leads directly into a vaulted cellar.



The nineteenth-century platform addition is in the foreground. The Ballyhoura range of mountains can be glimpsed in the distance. To the south of the castle (in the background) is a marsh and seasonal lake, now part of a nature preserve.

Spenser, in his wedding poem "Epithalamion" (1595), curses the frogs that annoy him and his bride on their wedding night: "Ne let th'unpleasant night: / Ne let th'unpleasant quyre of frogs still croking / Make us to wish theyr choking" (lines 349-50). Far from being a nuisance only, the lake would have served as a natural defensive barrier for the castle and as a source of water and food.



In Spenser's day, the castle would have been taller, and a bawn wall enclosing the castle yard would have stood between the viewer and the castle. The Ballyhoura mountain range can barely be seen in the distance.

Spenser's residence in the castle may have begun as early as 1586-7 and was finished when fighting from the Nine Years' War (1594-1603) swept south and sacked the Munster plantation (and Kilcolman with it) in October, 1598. Spenser died a refugee in London early 1599. Legend has it that Spenser lost a child in the fire and also that the second half of his epic, *The Faerie Queene*, was lost in the displacement. Burn marks on the walls from the sacking of Kilcolman have been found, as well as burn marks from a fire a generation later, when the castle was occupied by Spenser's son, Sylvanus.



Because it is on a ridge, the castle from this direction would have looked even more imposing (the castle would also have had at least two more stories, including parapets). The castle would also have had a "bawn" (i.e., enclosure) wall directly in front of it, further protecting it and surrounding buildings from attack.

The door at the bottom of the tower house in this view is modern. Above it is seen an aperture and above it, "Raleigh's window." In the staircase block on the right (east) side can be seen three more arrow loops. At ground level can be seen an exit chute for the garderobe (modified in modern times), strategically located to drain towards the lake.



Staircase/garderobe block of the tower house (on left). The additional building complex (with Parlor and Great Hall) would have stood in the center of this photo. It was attached to the east side of the castle. Remains of the south wall of the Great Hall can still be seen (on right). That wall would have reinforced and/or doubled as the south-facing bawn wall.



Kilcolman castle stands on a ridge. In the foreground (right) can be see the remains of the south-east corner of the bawn wall, which doubled as the wall of the Great Hall on this side. The Hall and adjacent Parlor are no longer standing.



This shows the tower house from the vantage point of the marsh or seasonal lake to the south. The doorway at the bottom is formed from a pre-existing window loop (*i.e.*, opening) and now leads into the cellar. This indicates use of the cellar as a cattle byre in modern times.



Close-up of the castle, including "Raleigh's window," from the south. Note (to the right) the arrow slit in the staircase/garderobe tower on the same level as the window. Defense was paramount in the original castle design. The loop also serves as one of two windows for the privy.



Additional stories are missing from the top of the tower. An attacker would have been targeted by the arrow slits and windows, which also give fine views of the landscape. The ivy is no longer on the tower (as of 2009-10).



The door and the window immediately above the door, as well as the rectangular opening on the same level as the door (in the staircase/garderobe block), are all modern in-sertions. The arrow loop on the second level of the tower block is an original feature that provided defense. It also provides light to the staircase.



Close-up of lichen and plant life on the nineteenth-century stone addition to the castle. Up to six hundred years of exposure have taken their toll on the castle, as have raids, renovators and treasure-hunters.



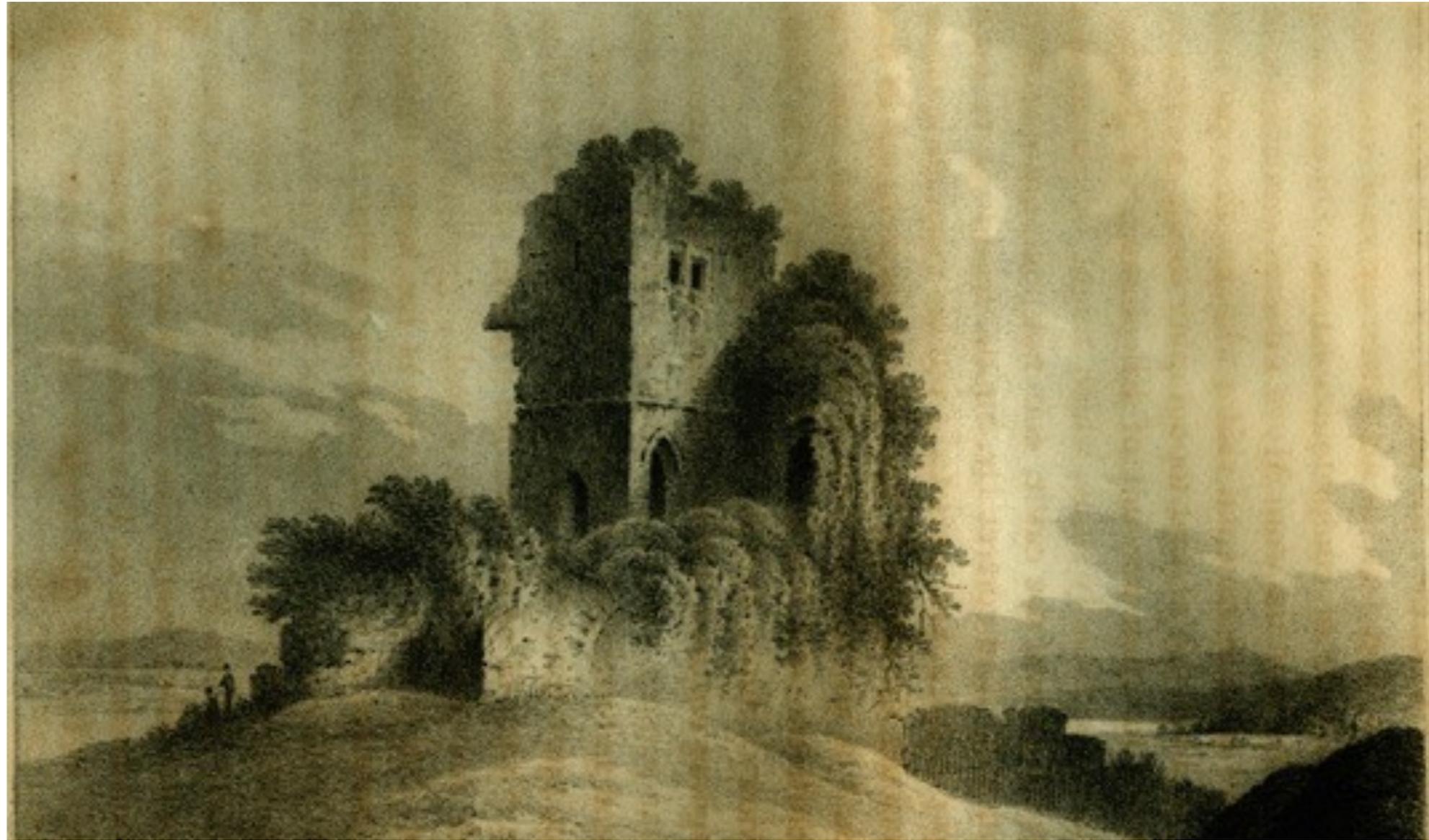
Entry to the castle is locked  
and forbidden.



## HISTORIC IMAGES OF KILCOLMAN



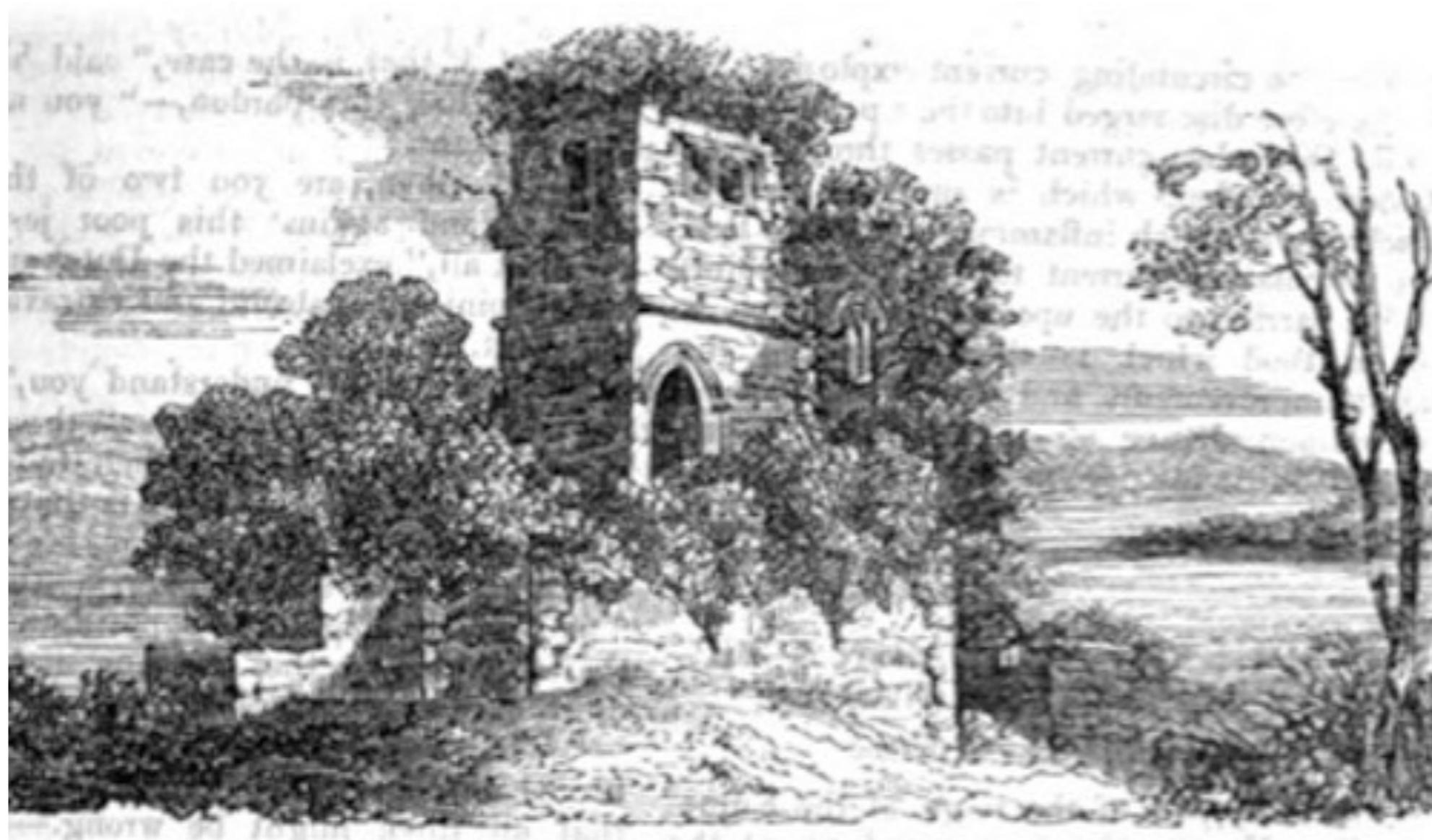
Kilcolman by T. Crofton  
Croker, *Researches in the South of  
Ireland* (London: John Murray,  
1824): 108-09.



Engraving of Kilcolman after T. Crofton Croker. From Mr. and Mrs. S.C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character, etc.* 3 vols (London: How and Parsons, 1841-3): 1.93.



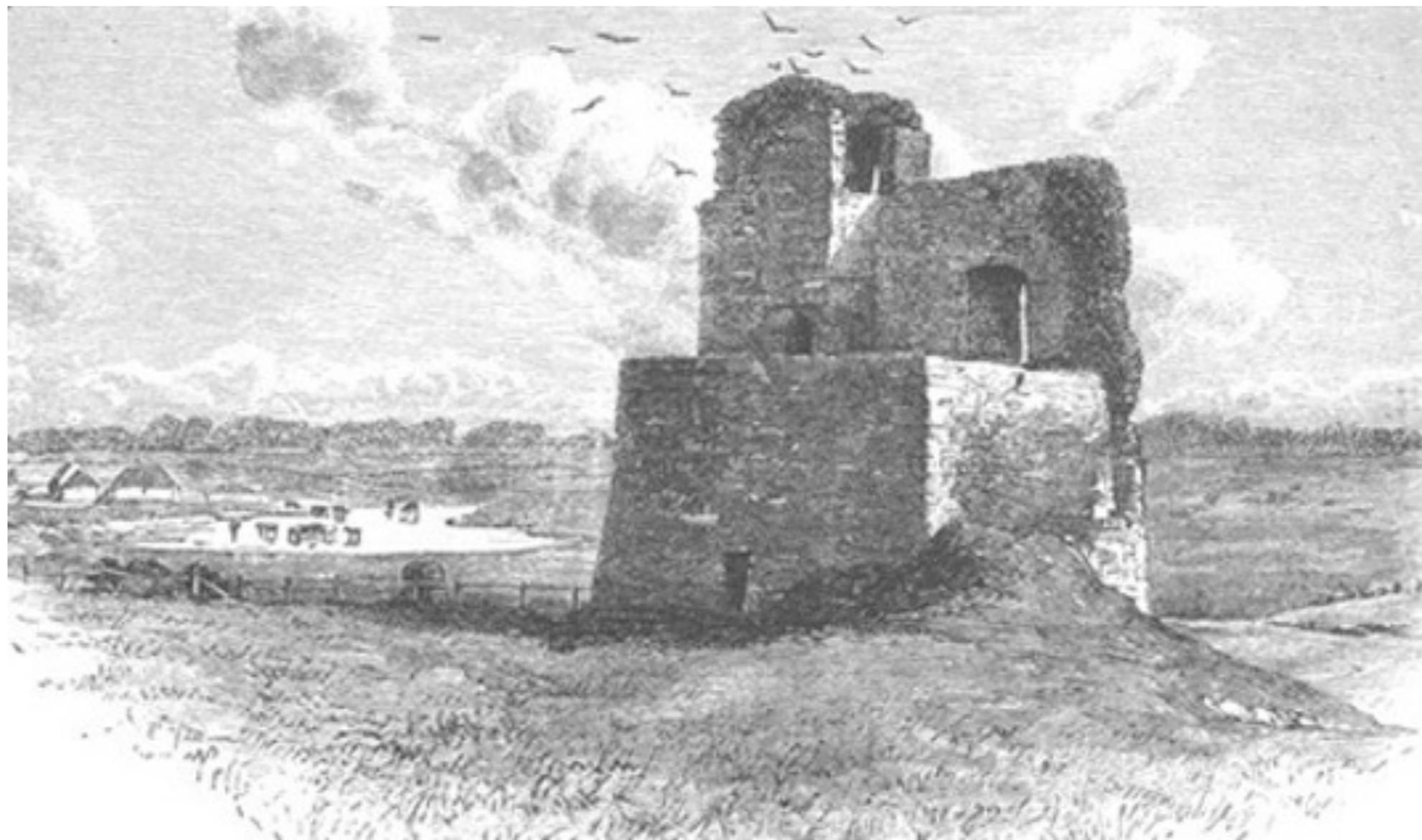
Ruins of Kilcolman, from *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* 33 (1839): 9.



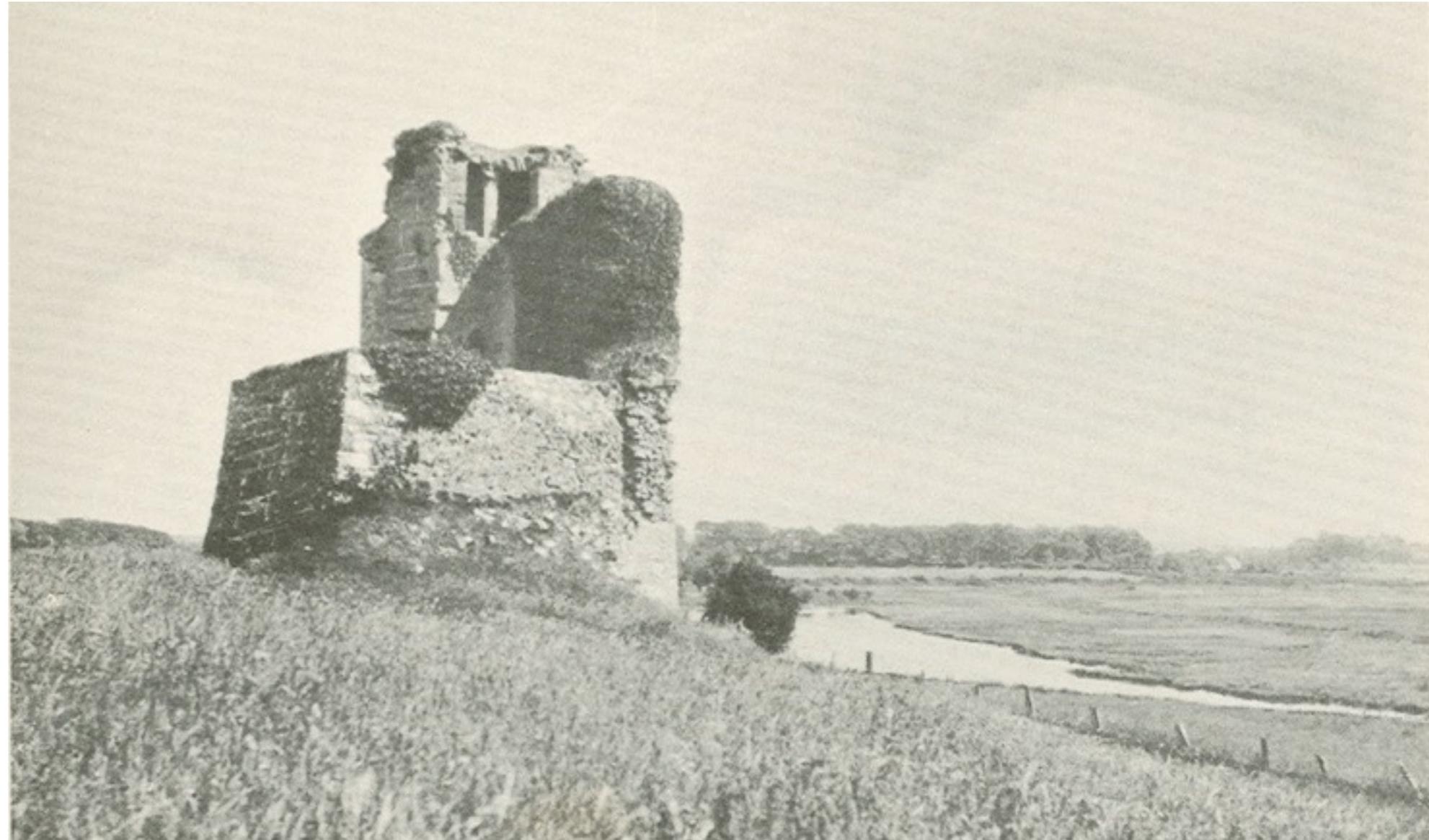
Kilcolman in W.H. Bartlett, *The Scenery and Antiquities of Ireland* 2 vols (London: George Virtue, 1841-2):II.144. Hand-painted. Various unexplained structures appear in this view on the hill. Note too the gothic elaboration in style and artificially heightened setting. In the foreground are a lime-kiln and cottage.



Kilcolman Castle. Richard Lovett, *Irish Pictures Drawn With Pen and Pencil* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1888): 99.



The Ruins of Kilcolman Castle and  
the Lake, from Alexander  
Judson, *Spenser in Southern  
Ireland* (Bloomington, IN:  
Principia Press, 1933): 9.



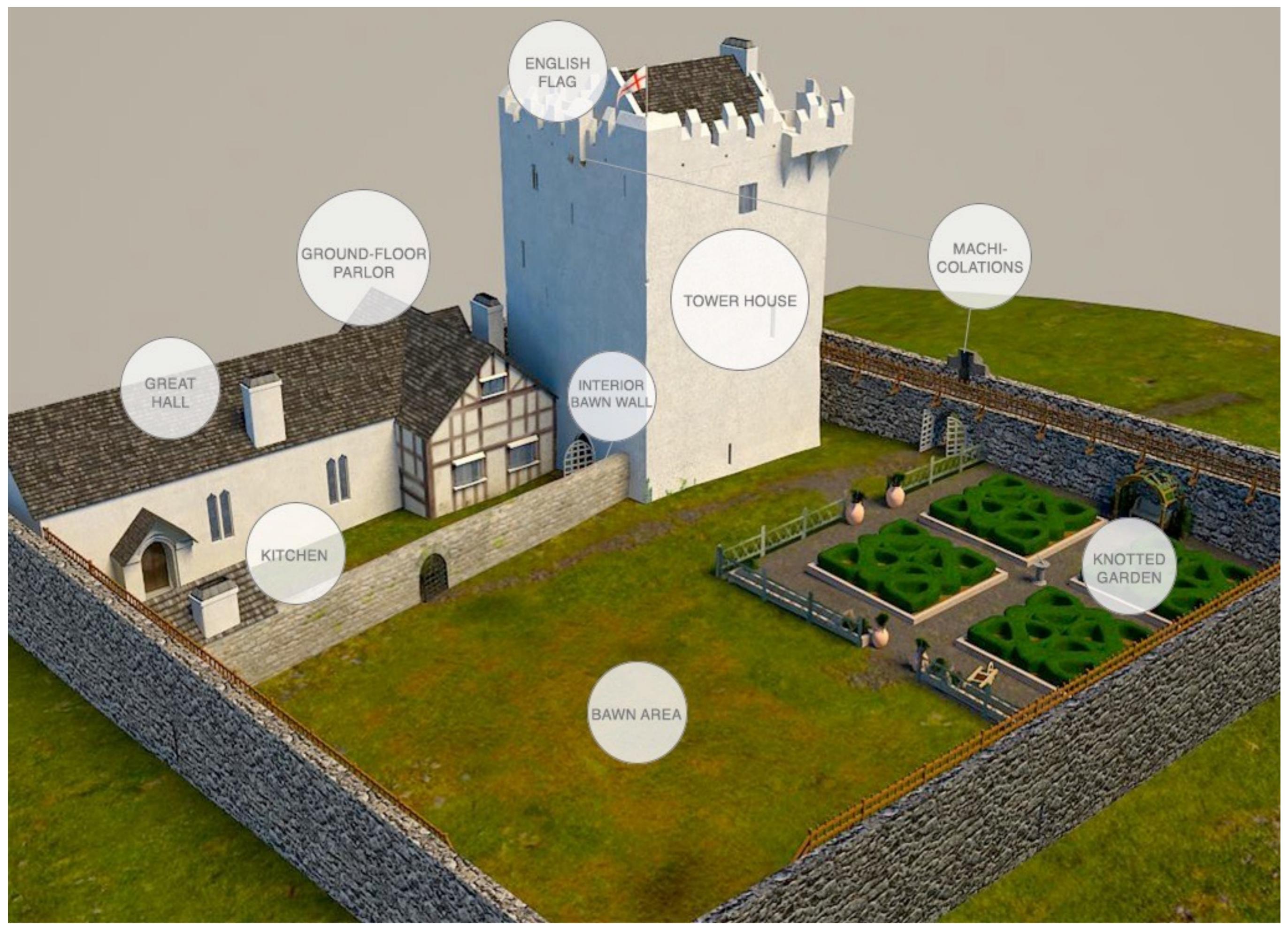
Oil Painting of Kilcolman Castle in 1965, by Rigby Graham.





3

# DIGITAL RECONSTRUCTION



ENGLISH  
FLAG

GROUND-FLOOR  
PARLOR

GREAT  
HALL

TOWER HOUSE

MACHI-  
COLATIONS

INTERIOR  
BAWN WALL

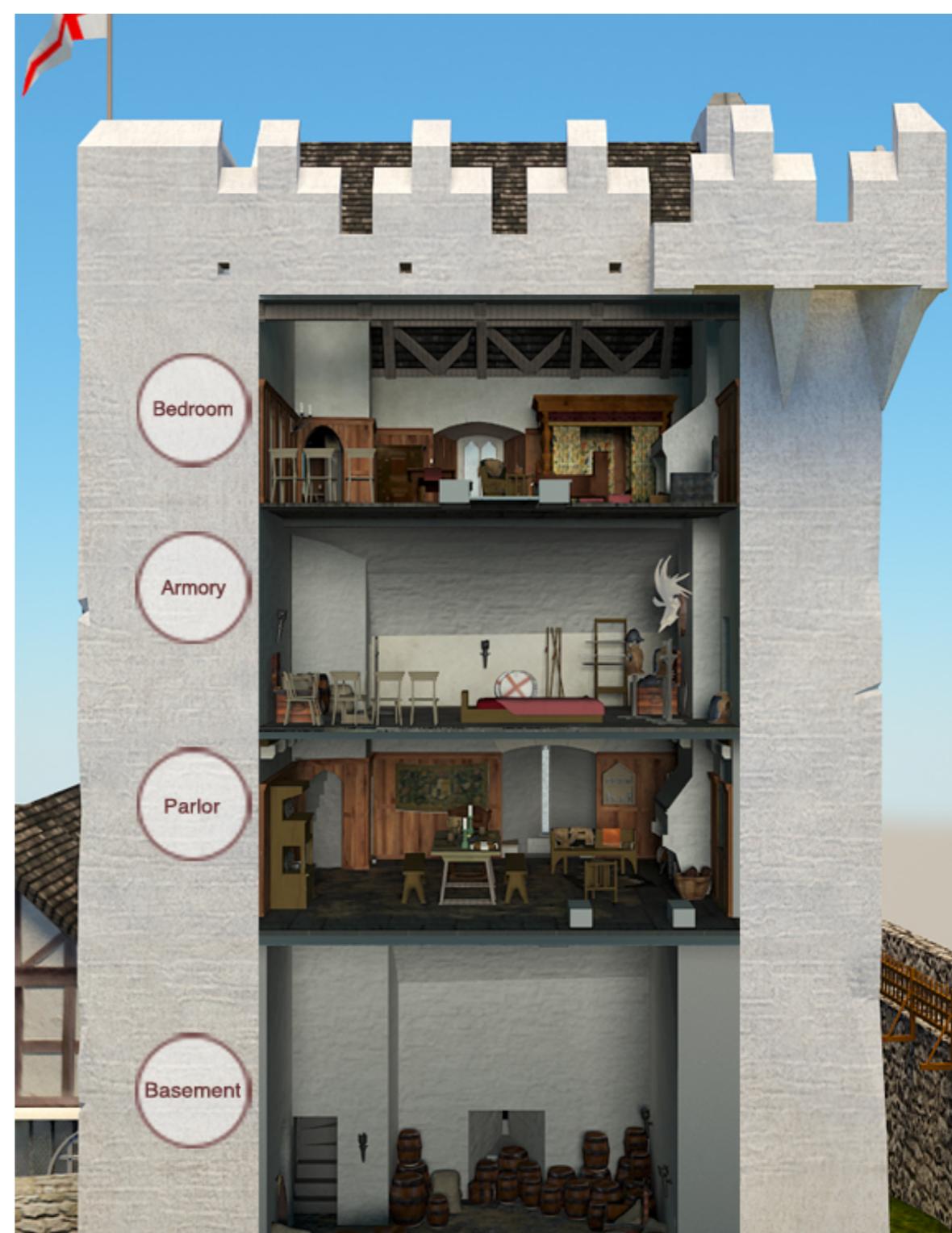
KITCHEN

KNOTTED  
GARDEN

BAWN AREA

## RECONSTRUCTION

The Kilcolman Castle compound consisted of many buildings and man-made features, some of which have not yet been located (Kilcolman has been only partially excavated: see excavation diagrams). The existence of four buildings is attested by archaeological remains. These are the Great Hall, the ground-floor Parlor, the Tower House, and a Service Building (possibly a Kitchen). Of these four, only the ruins of the Tower House can be seen above ground. Small portions of the “bawn” (enclosure) wall have also been excavated and are visible today.



**Model of tower house. View from north with wall removed and rooms labeled. The tower is six stories high including roof.**

The Great Hall was probably a fifteenth-century building and predated Spenser's occupation. It served for meetings and ceremonial functions, including "dispensing manorial justice" (Klingelhofer, *Castles and Colonists...* 117, 121). We have put a suitably grand entrance, modeled on a late-medieval English church door and porch, on the north side, facing the inner bawn wall (this inner bawn wall and its terminus at the northeastern corner of the Tower House is itself speculative). The entrance leads into a corridor or "screen passage" that allows access to the Great Hall itself (to the west) and, at the end of the passage, a toilet or "privy" (to the east). The privy is an addition from the late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth century, and was built at the time that the cellar underneath the Great Hall was filled in (Klingelhofer, *Castles and Colonists...* 117). The walls of the Great Hall are deliberately kept bare according to the standards of the time. The large table at the hall's west end and the fireplace with its mantelpiece are designed to impress visitors.

The ground-floor Parlor was built sometime during the sixteenth century, possibly during Spenser's tenure at Kilcolman. It is situated between the Great Hall and the Tower House and would have functioned in a more private manner than the Great Hall: as a living room, a dining room, and, as we have configured it, a workplace of various kinds. We have placed Spenser's administrative desk here as well as a spinning wheel. Despite its privacy, the Parlor could have an important public function, as business could be conducted here, and visitors allowed into it would notice the large portraits of Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Walter Raleigh hanging on the south wall [Tadhg O'Keefe has argued that the building "may have fulfilled... the role that the privy chamber possessed in royal contexts: a gathering place for an inner circle, the mere permission to enter being in itself a signifier of status and friendship." (O'Keefe 13)]. A fireplace

on the west wall and large curtain covering the length of the east wall would help decorate and keep the room warm (the curtain is modeled on one recreated at Barryscourt, Co. Cork). Behind the curtain, at the north end of the east wall, is a gun-loop with a direct view of the entrance to the Great Hall.

Both the ground-floor Parlor and the Great Hall have wood-shingle roofs. No slate roofing tiles were found during excavations, indicating that the roofs were made of wood or thatch. The buildings also have fireplaces and ample windows, which attest to changing tastes in building styles during the sixteenth century (traces of leaded glass were found in the excavations). Privacy and comfort, including natural light and ornate, wall-mounted fireplaces, were increasingly valued in domestic dwellings in the period.

It is uncertain whether or not the ground-floor Parlor would have had two separate stories separated by a floor, or been one large, open two-story room, as we have decided here to reconstruct it (Klingelhofer, *Castles and Colonists...* 122).

A hold-over from earlier medieval times is the Tower House, which was built in two phases. Tower houses were ubiquitous in late medieval Ireland, with a great concentration in Munster, including Counties Cork and Limerick. Estimates suggest "that over 2,900 castles (including mottes and late fortified manor houses) were constructed in Ireland between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries, and of these, it has been recognized that the vast majority were tower houses" (Lyttleton 25, citing Leask 153). Many have disappeared, many stand in ruin and a only few have been restored in modern times.

According to James Lyttleton, in regard to Irish tower houses, "Late medieval architecture is linked by one common denominator, that is,

its variability in form and scale” (31). The Irish tower house typically had many rooms with various uses. It is very difficult, based on surviving documentary and archaeological evidence, to ascertain patterns concerning the function of individual rooms beyond the obvious (*i.e.*, the privy). Even rooms with obvious functions might have had surprising uses (for example, privies were used for hanging and disinfecting clothes, because of the lime disinfectant that was regularly poured down them).

The ruin of Kilcolman currently reaches four stories high, and most of the ruin has only three stories; we have built it six stories tall, with a two-story cellar at bottom and two-story bedroom at top; the crenellations and roof at top comprise the sixth story. The true height of the tower is unknown, although “a total of six floors was not uncommon in the south and west of Ireland” (Newman Johnson 421). For an estimate of a shorter height, see Klingelhofer, *Castles and Colonists* 120 and O’Keeffe, who writes that “its floor-area suggests that it was probably four storeys high (it was certainly no more than five)” (O’Keeffe 10). One thing is certain: the Tower House was much larger, different and more formidable-looking than it appears today (Herron). Standing on top of such a tower would have afforded extensive views of the surrounding landscape, including (to the north and east) the Ballyhoura mountain range, which appears in Spenser’s poetry.

Tower houses were described by contemporary visitors as either warm and hospitable or dark and cold places (de Breffny 18-19; Lyttleton 30-31). They were built with defense in mind, which helps to explain their thick walls, crenellations, narrow spiral staircases, small and infrequent windows (these could double as arrow-loops), “murder holes” for dropping objects, etc. (one feature that Kilcolman’s

tower house currently lacks is an interior murder hole over the entrance). Nonetheless, most tower houses were also built to live in, and some tower houses were built with ample windows, especially on upper, harder-to-reach stories. Furthermore, larger windows and other comforts were frequently added according to fashion and need as time progressed.

Sixteenth-century tower houses had wall-mounted fireplaces and very often had wooden wall paneling, floors and rafters, all of which (along with wall hangings and furniture) increased warmth and comfort. Scattered straw and/or rugs would cover the floors. Artificial light came from candles, wall-mounted torches and/or waxed rushes (not recreated here). Recently renovated Irish tower houses, such as the one at Ballyportry, Co. Clare, are comfortable to live in and catch the natural light in surprising ways (according to personal correspondence with owners Pat Wallace and Siobhan Cuffe; on the reconstruction of Ballyportry, see Wallace). White-washing the interiors would also help brighten the rooms.

The exteriors of tower houses were colored grey-to-white (and/or possibly other colors), being covered with a lime-based rendering called “harling” (Lyttleton 30). The bleak, grey, rough stone exterior on most ruins today is therefore not indicative of their original appearance. A good example of harling today can be found on the recently restored fortified house at Monkstown, in a suburb of Cork city.

We have placed Spenser’s study and bedroom on the 5th story, at the top of the tower. These rooms therefore lie above (in ascending order) a stone-vaulted basement storage area (1st-2nd stories); a parlor and privy (3rd story); and a chapel and storage/weapons room (4th story). Above the bedroom and study are the castle roof and parapets with Irish-style crenellations (6th story).

The use of these spaces is entirely conjectural, as are most features above the third story. It makes sense to put food and heavy goods in the basement, an easily accessible, cool and undecorated room. Also, considerations of privacy and the safety of Spenser and his family prompted us to place the main bedroom at the top of the tower (the storage/weapons room has a guest-bed in it). This follows the practice of the reconstructed tower house interior at Barryscourt, Co. Cork, which has a bedroom at the top of the tower house. On the contrary, a contemporary (early 17th-century) account of Irish (Gaelic) tower houses by Luke Gernon describes a bedroom on a lower level and a great hall at the top (de Breffny 18). David Newman Johnson suggests that the room on the fourth story that we have made into a chapel “would have made a pleasant bedchamber” (421). We hope our reconstruction will prompt further debate.

The Service Building (possibly a Kitchen) is conjectural; it is located where a small portion of a rebuilt wall with clay bonding was found (Klingelhofer, “Edmund Spenser...” 138, 142). The enclosed walkway connecting it to the Great Hall is entirely conjectural. We can be sure that Kilcolman had a kitchen in an outlying building somewhere, but where exactly is not yet known. Similarly, kitchen gardens and orchards almost certainly existed somewhere in or around the compound but have not yet been found. A hypothetical pleasure garden is shown here.

Other buildings such as a smithy, carpentry, store-rooms, stables, sheds, etc., would undoubtedly have existed inside the bawn-area courtyard and/or outside of it, although no traces of them have yet been found. None is shown in the reconstruction here, therefore the yard looks much less cluttered and busy than it would normally have been.

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# MODELING METHODS AND SOURCES FOR THE DIGITAL RECONSTRUCTION OF KILCOLMAN CASTLE

*Modeling Methods and Software*

By Wesley Owens

(5/2012; edited by Thomas Herron 1/17/2014)

The process for recreating Kilcolman Castle for the web was a multi-faceted and time-consuming one. After research and numerous discussions with archaeologists and art historians, sketches were drawn up of each level of the tower house and built to scale in Autodesk Maya using geometric shapes made up of four-sided polygons. What makes this task difficult is the fact that all that remains of the castle are the first- and second-level vault and stairwell with adjacent wardrobe chamber and small rooms, which reach up to the fourth level. Another wall on the third level remains with “Raleigh’s Window” still intact.

The castle was recreated, including missing floors, great hall and ground-floor parlor, using a method called Boolean Differencing, whereby specific shapes such as windows and doorways are cut out from the walls of each level. Textures are created in Adobe Photoshop and projected onto the outer and inner walls of the tower house while “bump maps” are also applied to give the flat surfaces the illusion of texture. Lighting is added later and is used to give the

scene realism while making sure everything is visible in the final render.

A virtual camera is created in Maya software and a virtual tour is animated using a series of key frames. The computer will render the animation through the camera’s lens, compiling all the light, shadows, textures, reflections, and other details into a series of frames that make up the final animation.

Without interior details, of course, a tour of the castle would be rather stale. We used reference video and images of original artifacts, physical recreations of nearby castles, and historic prints and paintings to create the digital objects that fill the living spaces of the castle. Often we used the editing tools in Photoshop to pull textures directly from the borrowed images to use on the digital replicas. For example, HD video of several real objects (facsimiles of early modern pieces) was used. One object in particular, a wooden cupboard displaying silver platters, was recreated by extruding faces of a polygonal cube to create the basic shape, then refining the edges by adjusting the vertices where the polygon edges meet. Similar to wrapping a present, the polygonal object was then wrapped with a texture map created in Photoshop. A screenshot from the HD video was blended into the texture map so that the actual carvings from the real cupboard are now integrated into the digital 3D model of Kilcolman Castle.

Other software used in the creation of the website itself include Adobe Dreamweaver, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe After Effects.

Funding, software and hardware for this project were provided by ECU and its University Multimedia Center.

### *Modeling Sources*

By Thomas Herron

Much of the modeling was done based on on-site visitation, as well as in consultation with experts listed on the Acknowledgements page of this book, including (especially) Eric Klingelhofer and James Lyttleton.

Special thanks for this document goes to Joyce Joines Newman and Wesley Owens. The finished castle recreation is by necessity speculative and was not approved in every detail by every advisor.

Various unspecified details throughout the website reconstruction are taken from a visit to the reconstructed and finely appointed late-medieval towerhouse at Barryscourt Castle, Co. Cork. To the OPW guide who kindly gave us a tour outside of normal visiting hours, we offer our sincere thanks. Published details from Barryscourt as well as additional sources are listed here (including Works Cited). Specific locations are listed in parentheses, usually following the page number of a citation, *e.g.*, “David Sweetman, Medieval castles of Ireland p. 49 (Dublin Castle)” indicates a reference to Dublin Castle on p. 49 of Sweetman’s book.

Further sources (for the gardens, for example) can be found under the relevant Object Description listings on the *Centering Spenser* website.

### *Tower-house*

#### **Windows:**

Sweetman, *Medieval Castles*, p.49 (Dublin Castle) [illustration from John Derricke, *Image of Irelande* (1581)]; p. 159, 160 (Barryscourt)

#### **Machicolation over E entrance:**

Leask, *Irish Castles*, p. 19

Carroll, *Castles*, p. 33

Sweetman, *Irish Castles*, pp. 12-13, p. 28 (Ballagharahin)

#### **NW Corner Bartizan:**

Sweetman, *Medieval Castles*, p. 150 (Aughnanure); p. 170 (Ballymalis); p. 189 (Ballycowan)

Leask, *Irish Castles*, p. 105 (Ballymalis); p. 130 (Coppinger’s Court)

#### **Roof/gables/drain holes:**

Ashtown Castle, Dublin

Leask, *Irish Castles*, p. 83 (Clara); p. 120 (Dunsoghly)

Sweetman, *Medieval Castles*, p. 167 (Pallas)

Potterton, *Medieval Trim*, p. 245 (Trim)

**Battlements:**

Leask, Irish Castles, p. 81, p. 85 (Clara)

Carroll, Castles, p. 136

Sweetman, Medieval Castles, p. 49 (Dublin)

Sweetman, Irish Castles, p. 10 (Trim); pp. 26-27 (Bunratty)

**Corner Tower:**

Potterton, Medieval Trim, p. 245 (Trim)

McNeill, Castles in Ireland, p. 215 (Roodstown)

**Fireplace/Chimney:**

Ashtown Castle, Dublin

Sweetman, Irish Castles, p. 19 (Trim); p. 42

Sweetman, Medieval Castles, p. 167 (Pallas); pp. 160-1 (Barryscourt); p.170 (Ballymalis)

Leask, Irish Castles, p. 107 (Rockfleet) [chimney on long side, not gable end]

*Great Hall*

**Windows:**

Sweetman, Medieval Castles, p. 121 (Askeaton)

Leask, Irish Castles, pp. 84-85 (Clara); p. 95 (Askeaton)

McNeill, Castles in Ireland, pp. 178-9 (Askeaton)

**Roof/gables:**

Pollock, "Barryscourt Hall", p. 264 (Barryscourt)

Leask, Irish Castles, p. 90 (Derryhivenny)

McNeill, Castles in Ireland, pp. 176-7 (Askeaton)

**Fireplace/Chimney:**

Sweetman, Medieval Castles, p. 160 (Barryscourt)

*Ground Floor Parlor*

**Fireplace/chimney:**

Klingelhofer, "Edmund Spenser" [placement of chimney]

Entrance:

Sweetman, Medieval Castles, p. 188 (Donegal) [keystone]

Johnson, "A Renaissance doorway", pp. 254-5 (Bremore)

**Windows:**

Longford Castle , Wiltshire

Sweetman, Medieval Castles, p. 156 (Grange)

Sweetman, Irish Castles, pp. 30-31 (Donegal)

Leask, Irish Castles, p. 127 (Burntcourt)

*Bawn Wall*

**Top edge:**

Sweetman, Medieval Castles, p. 49 (from Derricke, Image of Irelande)

Leask, *Irish Castles*, p.90 (Derryhivenny)

### **Windows:**

Breen, *Gaelic Lordship*, p. 153 (Carriganass)

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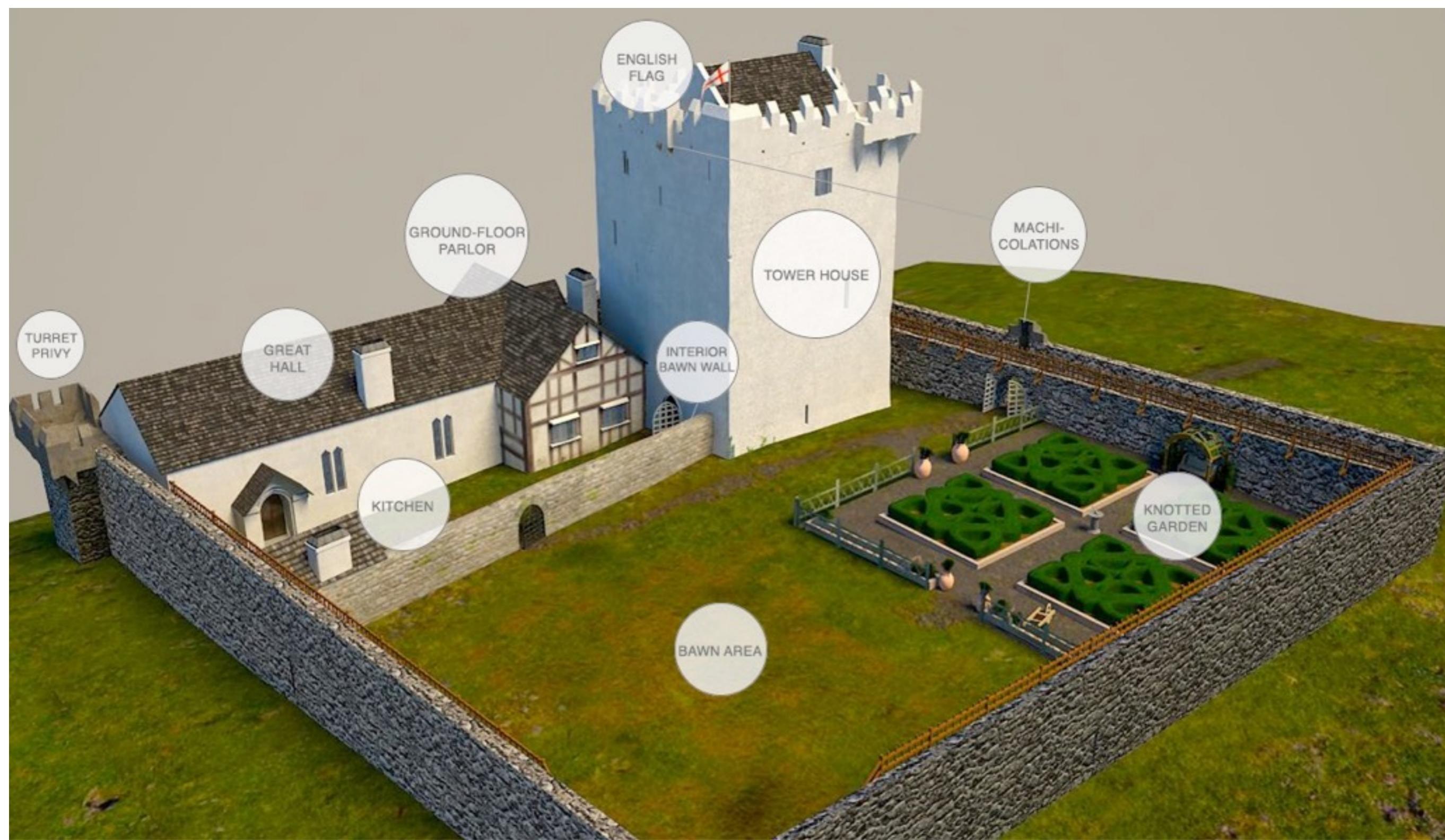
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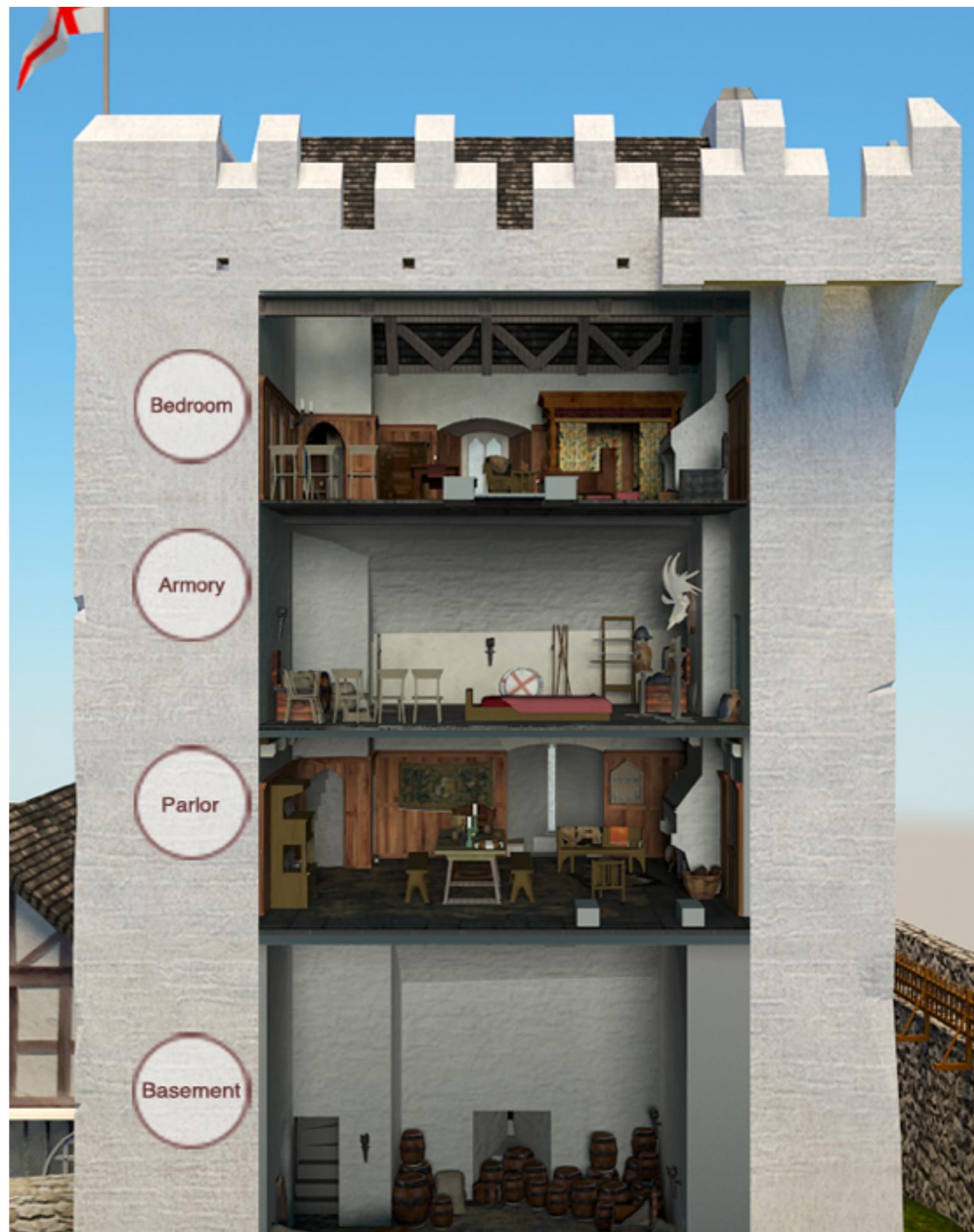
## PLANS AND CROSS-SECTIONS



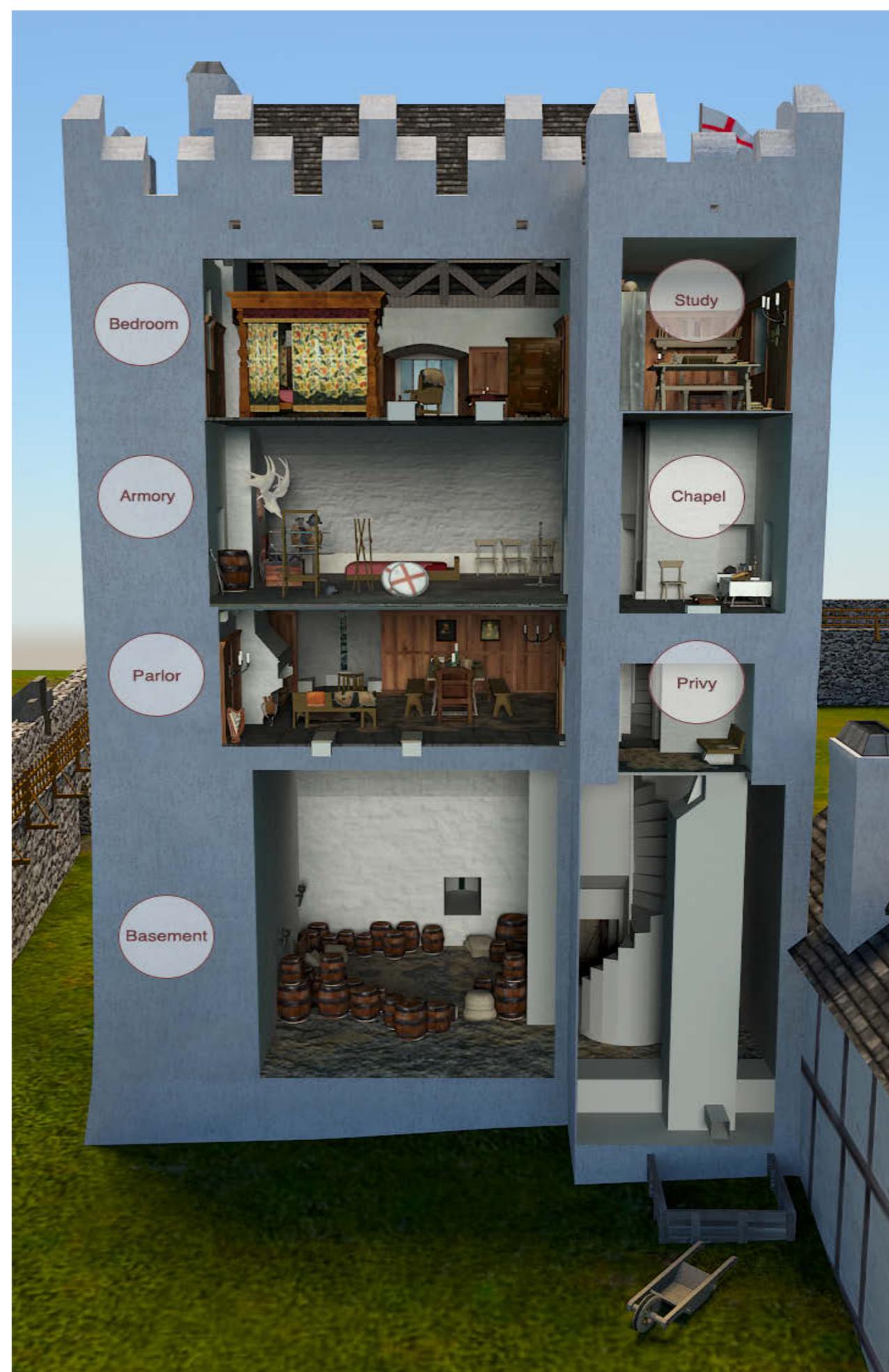


View of castle complex from the northeast. The bawn area would likely have contained more structures and would have been much more cluttered in real life.

Tower House Interior. View from north. The “Raleigh window” can be seen in the third-story parlor above the two-story “Base-ment” Cellar. The floors above the third story no longer exist. Their reconstruction here is entirely hypothetical.



Tower House Interior. View from south. Except for the Chapel on the fourth floor (on the right, middle), the floors above the third story no longer exist. Their reconstruction here is entirely hypothetical.



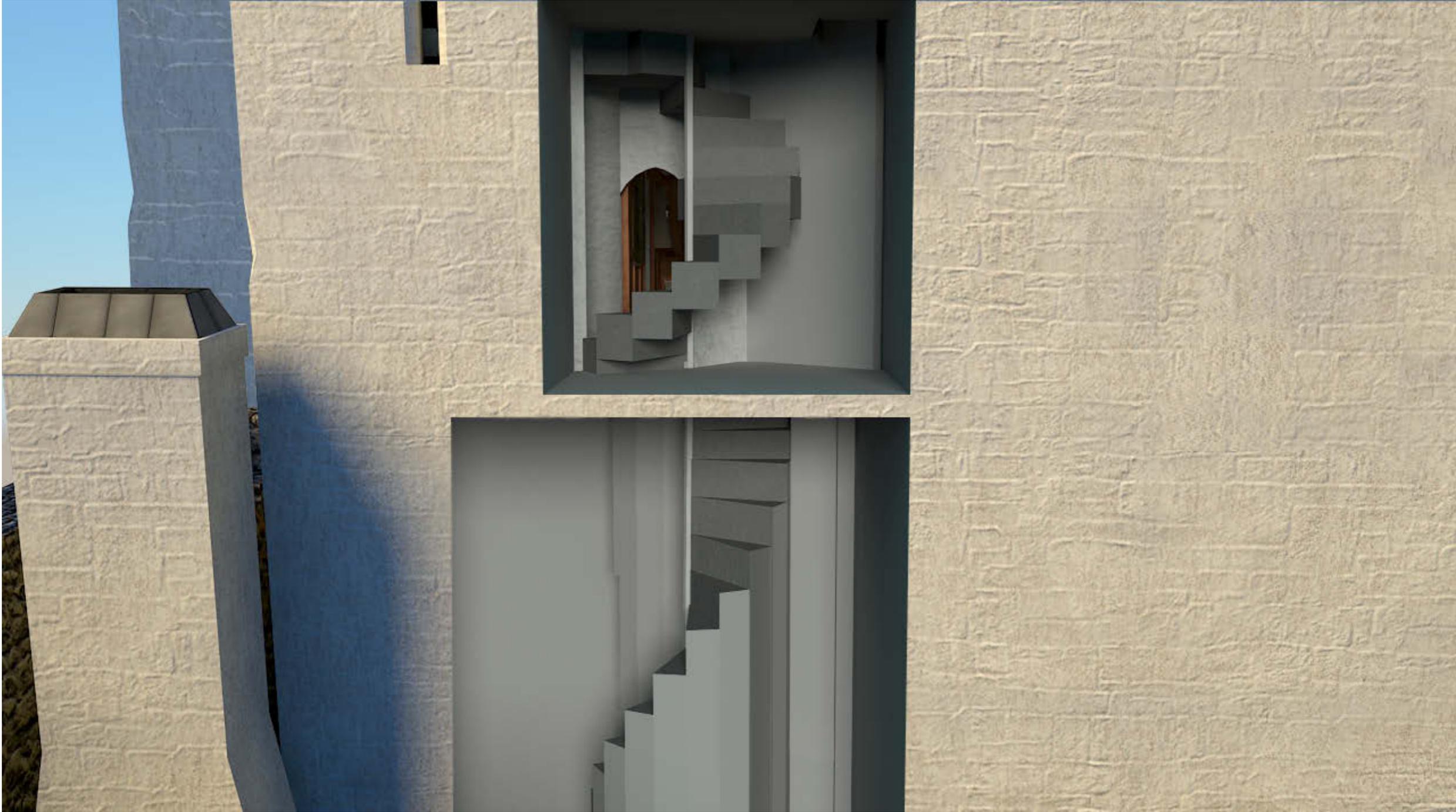


Ground-Floor Parlor, Great Hall, Screen Passage, Cellar Space, and Turret Privy. View from South.

Tower House. View from the east with some walls removed. Detail of 'intermural' stairs (below) and spiral staircase (above).



Tower House. View from east with some walls removed. Spiral staircase descending from third-floor parlor into the basement storage room.



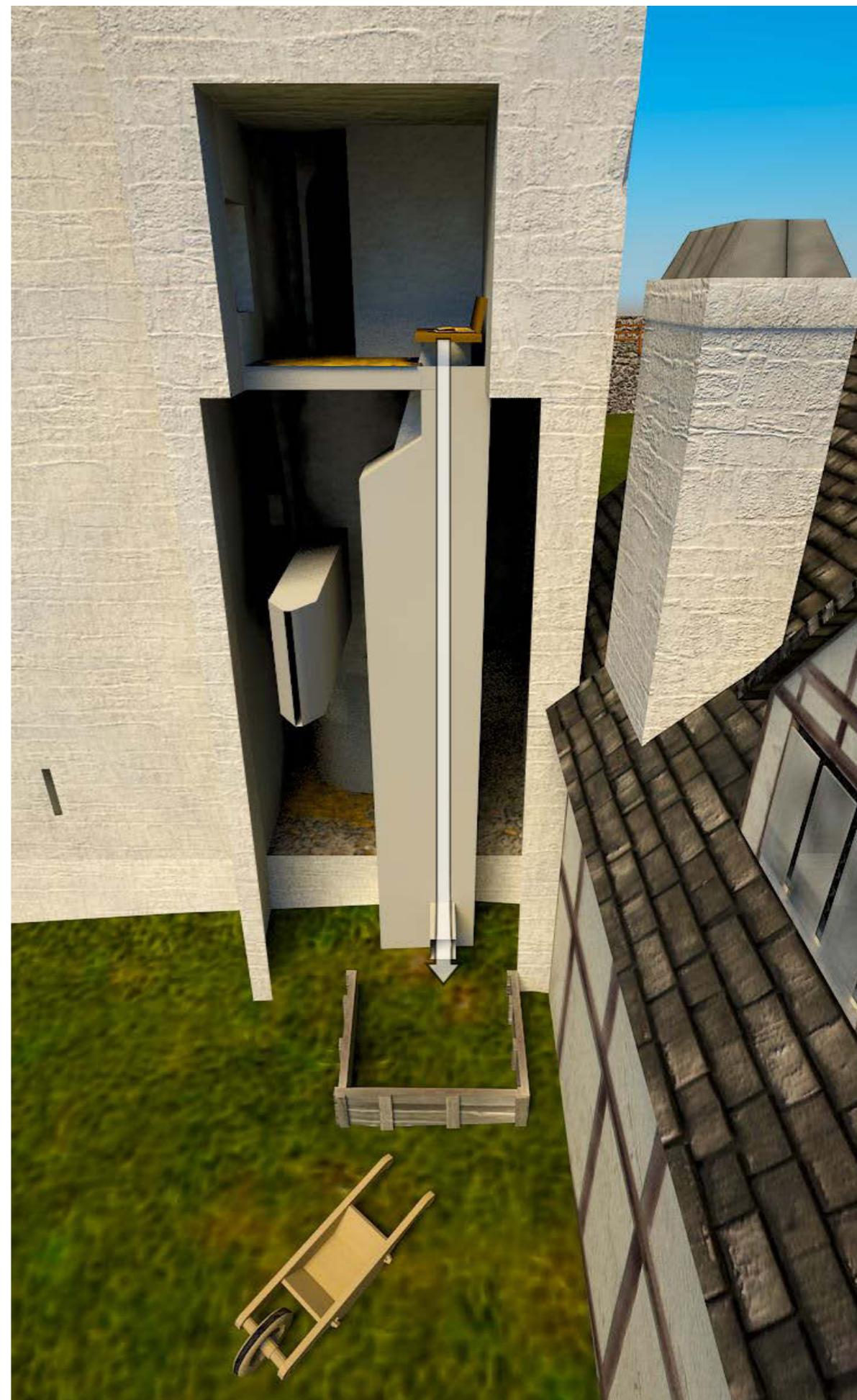
Tower House. View from east with some walls removed and stairs made visible.



Tower House. View from east with some walls removed. Outside entry is at bottom, with wooden door behind a yett (or iron gate). A falcon sits on the ramparts.



Tower House Privy. View from south with outer wall removed and trajectory of waste demonstrated.



Privy in southeast corner turret of the bawn. Interior and exterior views. A mantle hangs by the door. (For more on man-tles, see the Object Descriptions chapter.)



## EXTERIORS



View from northeast.



Tower House and bawn wall. View from west.



Tower house and Elizabethan knotted garden. View from east.



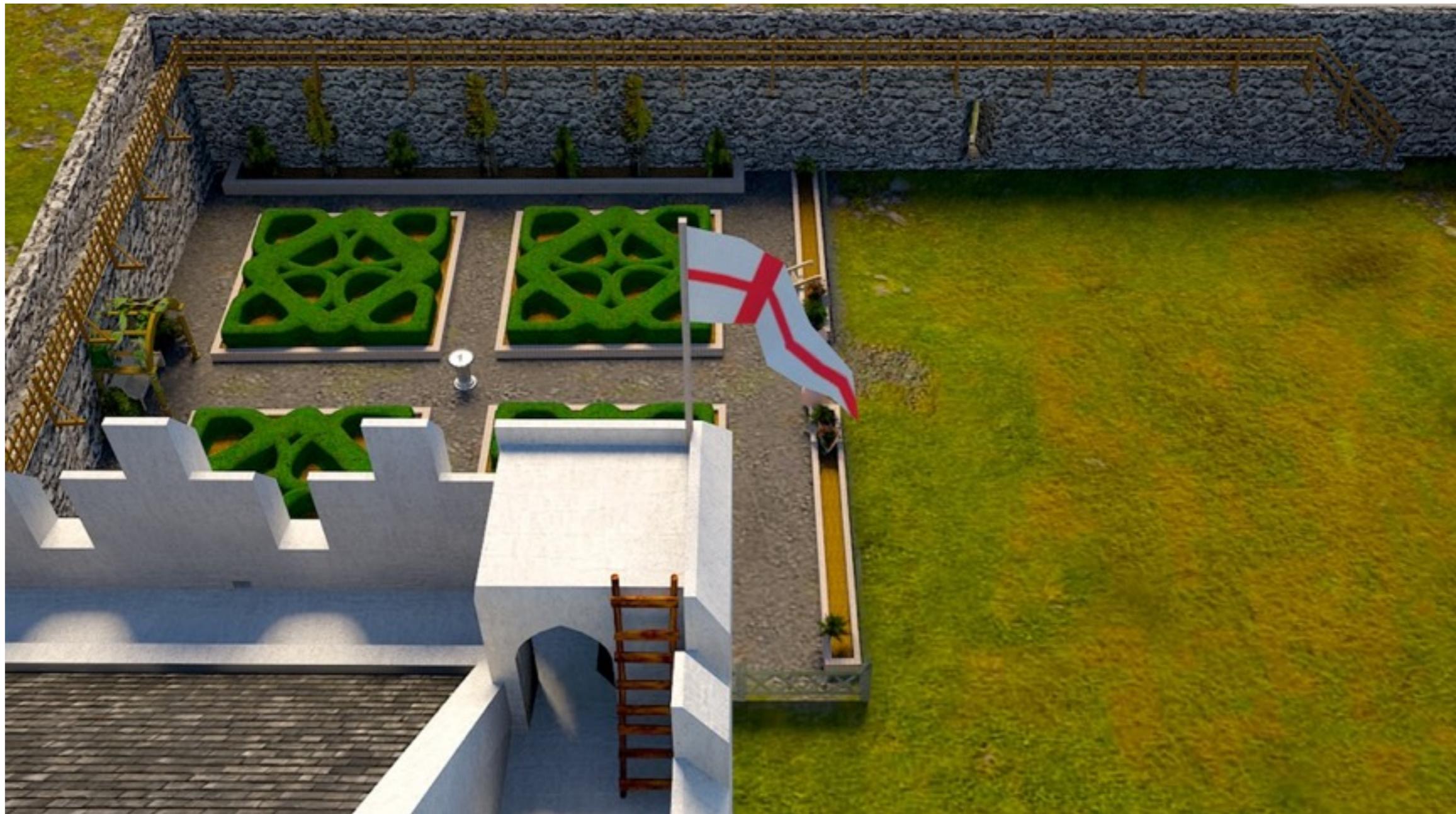
View from south.



Overhead of castle complex. The turret on the southeast corner of the bawn wall allows for sight- and fire-lines along the close exterior of the bawn.



View from south of northeast corner of Tower House and pleasure garden with sundial in center. St. George's cross, the symbol of England, blows in the breeze on a pennant.



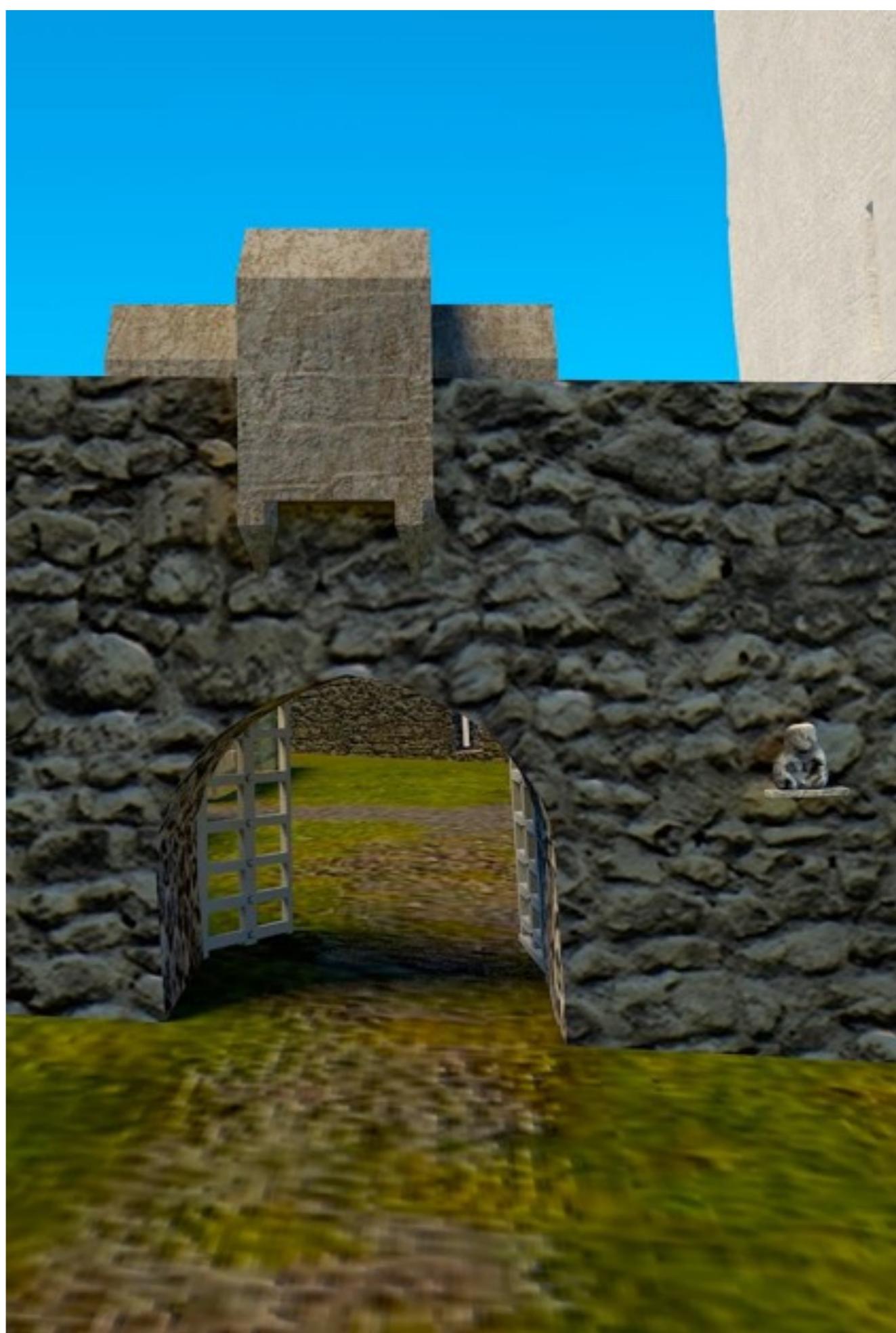
View from southwest.



Bawn, knotted garden and bower. View from north.



Entrance to bawn. View from west. A machicolation guards the entrance.



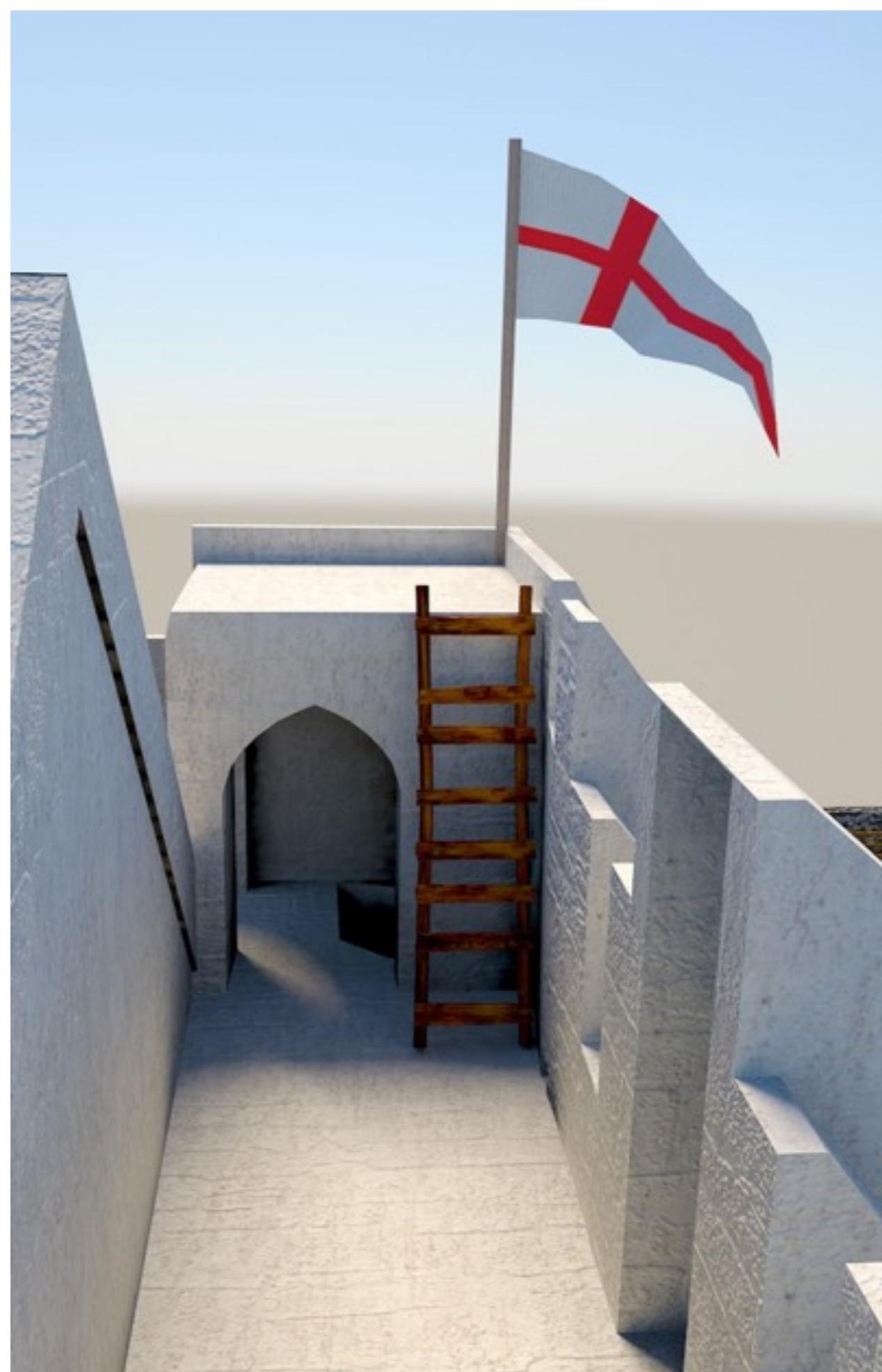
A sheela-na-gig is situated in the western bawn wall. These exhibition-ist statues were relatively common in Ireland. This one is modeled on one found at nearby Glanworth Castle, Co. Cork, a stronghold of the Old English Lord Roche, Spenser's nemesis. For more on sheela-na-gigs, see the Object Descriptions chapter.



Turret at south-east corner of bawn. View from east. Note Irish-style crenellations, window and privy-chute exit.



Entrance to staircase from  
ramparts of Tower House. View  
from south.



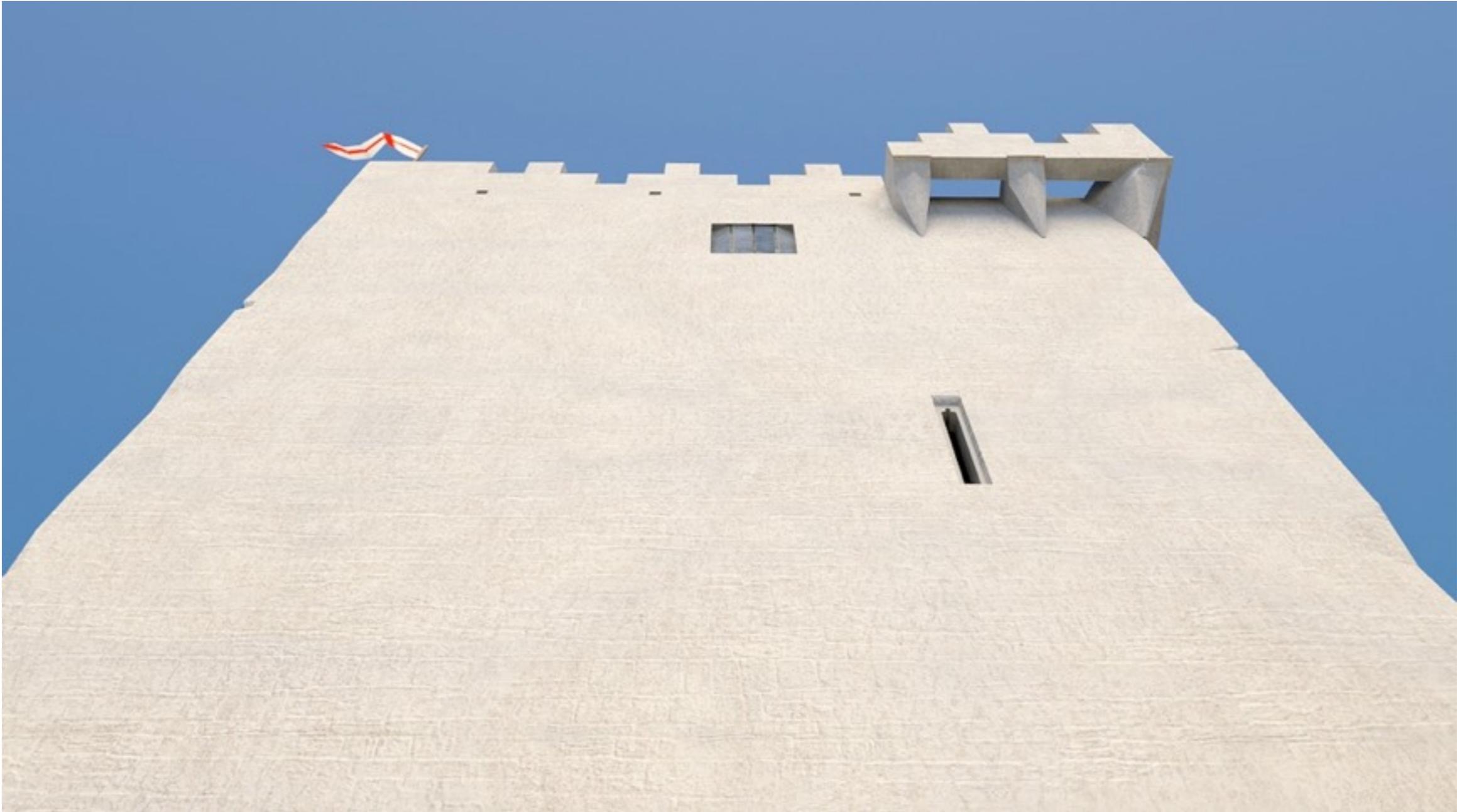
Tower House. View from south. The building is white-washed, and the “Raleigh window” can be seen on the left, near the middle of the building.



Tower House and front of Ground Floor Parlor (on left). View from east. A gunloop is seen facing the viewer at ground level in the sidewall of the Parlor.



Tower House. View from north.



Tower House and front of Ground-Floor Parlor. View from east. Note machicolation at top; it allowed objects to be dropped down in front of the tower house entrance, to guard it.



Great Hall and Ground Floor Parlor, view from north. The entrance to the tower house (with *yett*, or iron gate) is to the right at bottom. The kitchen is across the yard to the left and is connected to the Great Hall by a covered passage.



Ground Floor Parlor and entrance to the Tower House,  
with yett or gate in front of an open wooden door. Inner  
bawn wall is on right.



Ground Floor Parlor and  
Great Hall. View from north.



Great Hall. View from north.



Great Hall. View of entrance  
with porch door.



Kitchen (on left) and entrance to Great Hall.



Great Hall, Parlor, Tower House, and inner bawn wall. View from east.



INTERIORS

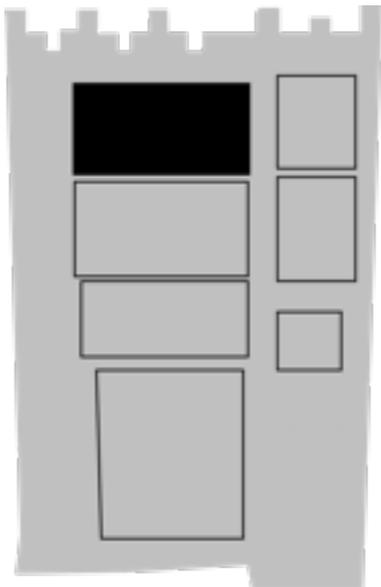


This section features the following scheme to help readers understand the physical location of the rooms in our reconstructed model of Kilcolman Castle. The scheme is a view of Kilcolman Castle from the south. In the image below, each room is featured in a different color. A black-and-grey-scale version is used in the following sections.



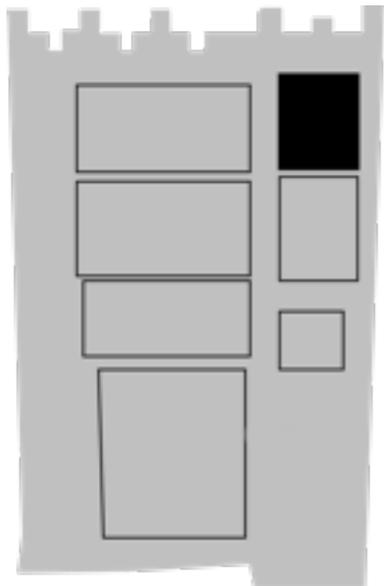


**Tower House Bedroom:** View from above with roof removed. The Study is in the southeast corner of the building, at the right-bottom of the picture. Note Irish-style crenellations around the ramparts.





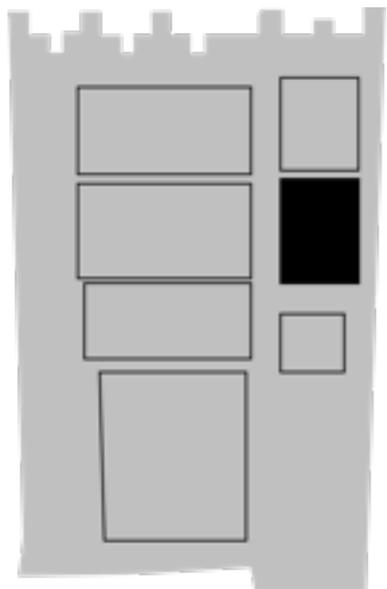
**Tower House Bedroom:** View from north. Windows are more secure and hence larger on this floor than on lower levels of the tower house: the higher the floor, the more difficult they are to access. Larger windows also let in more light. The two doors on the left (east) wall lead to the stairs (up and down). Spenser's Study can be seen through the door facing the viewer.



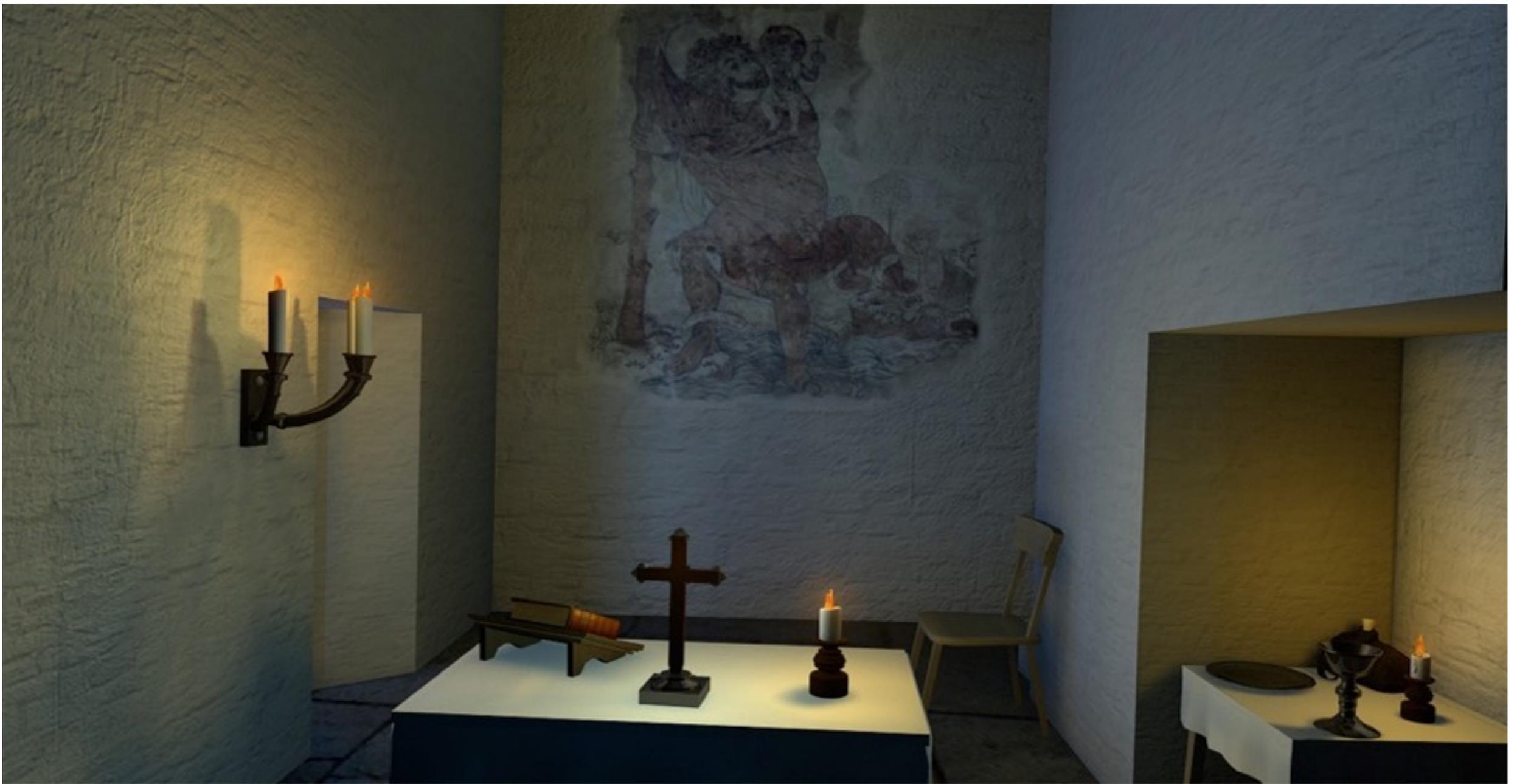
**Tower House Study:** View from above. *The Faerie Queene* by Spenser is open on his desk.



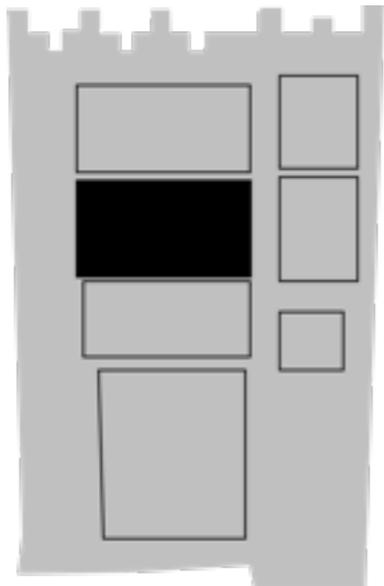
**Tower House Study:** View from east. Among the books and papers are a skull and a Spanish-style helmet.



**Tower House Chapel:** View from above.  
Windows face south and east.



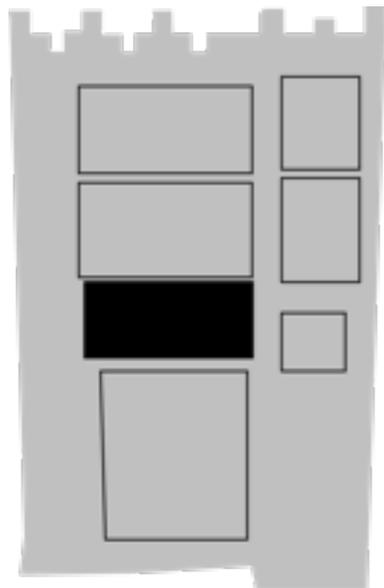
**Tower House Chapel:** View from east. The entrance to the staircase, to the north, is on the right out of sight. A window is on the south wall. The make-shift altar (a table and cloth) stands beneath the east window. A small recess in the wall, or ambry, containing a leather vessel for wine, a pewter plate and chalice (for religious services) can be seen on the right.



**Tower House Storage Room and Armory:** View from above. A wooden floor partitions the room from the parlor below it. Near the north wall is a simple bed for visitors. Entrance to the staircase is on the left.



**Tower House Storage Room and Armory:** On view are swords, helmets, 'darts,' shields and armor, including quilted jacks, a.k.a. 'checklaton' in Spenser's writing.

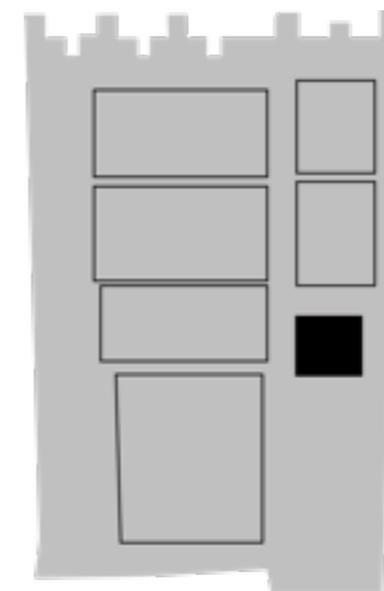


**Tower House Parlor:** View from above. The table has been set for eating. When not in use, it and the chairs were likely lined up against the walls.



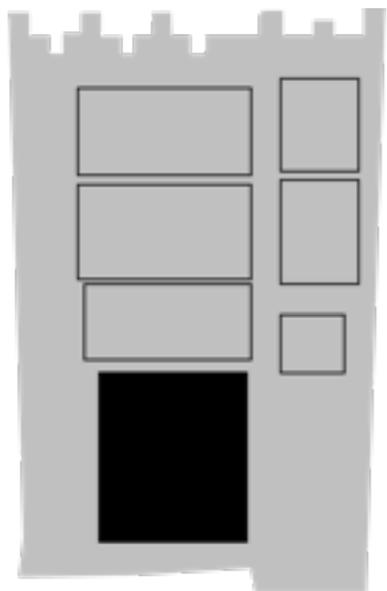
**Tower House Parlor:** View from north. The doorway to the downward stairwell can be seen on the left. The 'Raleigh window' can be seen facing center. The room would be used for dining and recreation. Pewter dishes are on the sideboard, wall-shelves and table. A harp can be seen facing on the right. The room has oak paneling for warmth. The floor is littered with straw. The stone-flagged floor rests on the storage-room vault below, and wooden rafters hold up the ceiling beneath the storage room, above.

**Tower House Privy and Stairs:** View from southeast with walls removed and privy chute exposed.





**Tower House Privy:** View from south.



**Tower House Ground Floor:** View from above. Bedrock can be seen protruding from the floor. A sword and mantle rest by the entryway on the right.



**Tower House Ground Floor:** View from north. The room would normally be cool and dark, and is used for storage and foodstuffs. A mantle hangs by the entryway, on the left. Next to the entryway is the doorway to the stairwell. Kilcolman's Tower House is unusual in having no antechamber or vestibule at its entrance.



**Great Hall:** View from above. The fireplace is on the north wall. The entry to the ground-floor Parlor is on the left. The smaller, middle chamber is a 'screen passage' with a door on the north wall that leads out through a porch into the yard. Underneath the side-table against the south wall of the screen passage is a trapdoor leading to a filled-in cellar. The chamber on the far right is a corridor. It has a door on the north wall that leads to the kitchen passage. The door at bottom right leads to a privy chamber, located in the southeast corner tower of the bawn.



**Great Hall:** View from southeast. View from doorway of the screen passage.



**Ground Floor Parlor:** View from above. A trestle table has been set for eating and a lute, book, and spinning wheel all sit idle. An administrative desk sits in the top-left corner and a tapestry hangs by the fireplace on the west wall. Portraits of Sir Walter Raleigh and Queen Elizabeth I hang on the south wall. A doorway to the Great Hall is at bottom left and a gun-loop with view of the yard is at bottom right.



**Ground Floor Parlor:** View from north. A trestle table stands in the middle. Its construction allows for quick dismantling. A pot sits on the fire next to a basket of wood. Portraits of Sir Walter Raleigh and Queen Elizabeth I are on the south wall.



4

## SAMPLE OBJECTS/ LITERARY CONNECTIONS

## INDEX TO CHAPTER

The castle reconstruction features many recreated objects. Each area of the castle is represented here, and each features the following sample objects:

*Section One:* Bawn Area (featuring the sheela-na-gig)

*Section Two:* The Great Hall (featuring the mantelpiece)

*Section Three:* The Ground Floor Parlor (featuring the lute and portrait of Queen Elizabeth I)

*Section Four:* The Tower House Chapel (featuring the altar table and crucifix),

*Section Five:* The Tower House Bedroom (featuring the crib, fireplace and chest)

*Section Six:* The Tower House Ground Floor (featuring the mantle)

*Section Seven:* The Tower House Parlor (featuring “Raleigh’s Window” and the harp)

*Section Eight:* The Tower House Privy (featuring the privy *aka* garderobe)

*Section Nine:* The Tower House Study (featuring the desk with papers, etc., including *The Faerie Queene* and woodcut of St George)

*Section Ten:* The Tower House Storage Room and Armory (featuring the quilted jack and weaponry)



## BAWN AREA: SHEELA-NA-GIG

The sheela-na-gig is a “female exhibitionist figure” carved in stone and found most often in the walls of medieval Irish and British buildings, usually castles or churches. Over one hundred are known to exist in Ireland, roughly twice the number as in Britain. They typically show grimacing old women holding their vulvas. Their purpose and symbolism is unknown, although various theories include warnings against the sin of lust; warding off of evil (hence functioning like a gargoyle on a church); fertility symbols; and charms to assist with childbirth (Manning).

Our sheela-na-gig at Kilcolman is modeled on a sandstone carving found buried in a dungeon (in the seventeenth century or before) at Glanworth Castle, Co. Cork. Glanworth was the second-most-important center of the Roche family, after Castletownroche, Co. Cork.

The date and ultimate provenance of the Glanworth specimen is unknown. Another sheela-na-gig figure is known from Castletownroche, and one has been found in the wall of the tower house at Fantstown, near Kilmallock, Co. Limerick. The Fantstown specimen is located in the north-eastern corner of the tower house and is evident as one approaches the main doorway.

This sheela-na-gig greets a visitor entering the main gate of the bawn, or outer-wall enclosure of the castle complex. We imagine that Spenser or the previous occupants of the castle, such as Sir John of Desmond, intended the sculpture to ward off evil, including enemies. Spenser’s second wife, Elizabeth, had a son with the poet and could also have appreciated any association of the sculpture with the pains of childbirth.



## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

When night falls over the newlywed couple in Spenser's wedding poem, "Epithalamion", the speaker calls out on various demons of the night (including the Irish "Pouke") not to disturb them in the comfort of their castle, as they make love ("Epithalamion" 334-52). According to Hugh MacLean and Anne Lake Prescott, "Spenser's strategy" at this "liminal moment of sexuality," a time of "transition and initiation," is "to evoke and then shoo away grotesque fantasy figures" (641). For similar reasons, the poet earlier compares his bride to Medusa ("Epithalamion" 190) who "astonisht" onlookers at her wedding (with a pun in astonisht on turning to "stone"). Read one way, their alarm at her charm is a means of dispelling any potential ill will that the townspeople might bear towards the bride, for they clearly admire her beauty, as well. Read another way, Spenser is himself frightened by specters of female sexuality; it is something that must be overcome if he is to prosper and flourish in Ireland.

The most famous hag in Spenser's oeuvre is surely the witch Duessa (her name, implying duplicity, is also an Irish name, meaning "little black one"), who is stripped and whose shame is exposed in Book I.viii of *The Faerie Queene*:

Such as she was, their eies might her behold,  
That her misshaped parts did them appall,  
A loathly, wrinckled hag, ill fauoured, old,  
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told.  
Her crafty head was altogether bald,  
And as in hate of honorable eld,  
Was ouergrowne with scurfe and filthy scald;

Her teeth out of her rotten gummes were feld,  
And her sowre breath abhominably smeld;  
Her dried dugs, lyke bladders lacking wind,  
Hong downe, and filthy matter from them weld;  
Her wrizled skin as rough, as maple rind,  
So scabby was, that would haue loathd all womankind.  
(*FQ* I.viii.46.6-47)

She is monstrous, with animal-like feet and other "filthy feature" that is "open showne" (stanzas 48-49). The imagery comes from the Bible (cf. Isaiah 3.17, 24) and other places and again presents to the reader a haunting specter of female sexuality gone bad, since Duessa had earlier appeared as a beautiful seductress. Her scabbiness here indicates age and disease, including syphilis or perhaps leprosy, a disease that afflicted the unfaithful Cressida in medieval legend. She is allowed to wander off into the wilderness by the heroes of holiness Arthur and Red Crosse Knight, from whence she will later return to cause more confusion. Duessa is not a sheelana-gig, but like the one we've posted next to Spenser's bawn gate, she represents a grotesque portrayal of female sexuality. She must be grappled with, comprehended and evaded if the Englishman is to prosper in Ireland.

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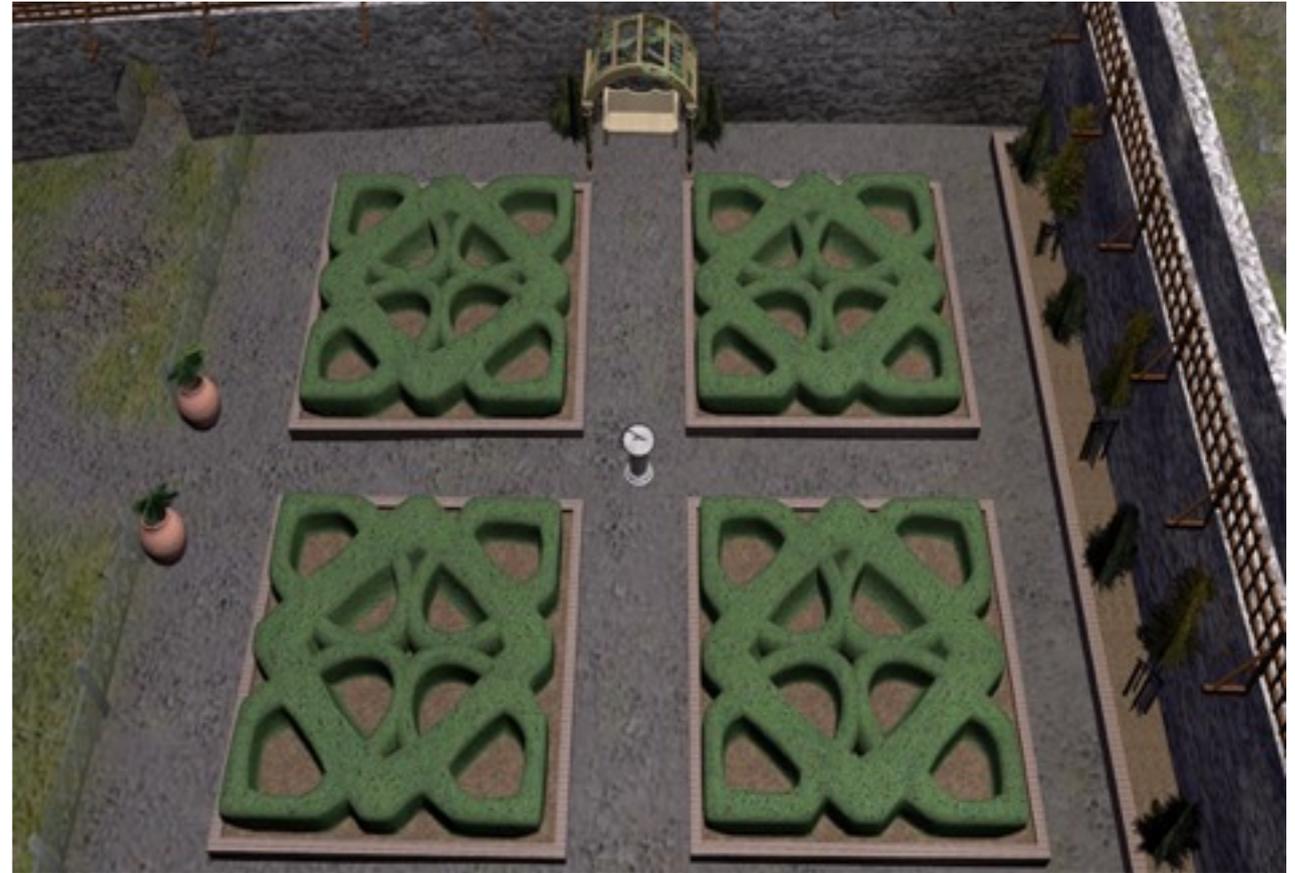
## BAWN AREA: GARDEN AND BOWER

No traces of a garden have been found at Kilcolman. Very little of its bawn area has been excavated, however, and so something may yet be found comparable to what exists at Barryscourt, Co. Cork; Rothe House, Kilkenny; and Drimnagh Castle, Dublin (minus the moat). It is almost certain that Spenser had some form of kitchen garden for growing fruit, vegetables and herbs.

Spenser also likely had an orchard somewhere on his estate. It is possible that he had a pleasure garden as well, such as that pictured here.

This garden has symmetrically designed, interlaced or “knotted” hedges according to Elizabethan patterns. The small, vine-laden arbor (or bower) for sitting and admiring the view of the garden, with its central sundial, is modeled on that at Kenilworth in England (the lavish estate of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, Spenser’s sometime patron). Some details are taken from the garden-arbor structures in the weird dream-allegory *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499) of Francesco Colonna.

As was conventional, the garden is situated so that its patterns can also be appreciated from above, by those standing on the bawn wall or looking out of the north-facing windows of the tower house, or from its ramparts.



## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

Spenser in his literary works is clearly enamored of gardens, which were places of great beauty and status in Elizabethan England, as they are in *The Faerie Queene*. They are places of art and contemplation, for thinking in and on. The deeply philosophical and mythological “Garden of Adonis” is the centerpiece of Book III of *The Faerie Queene*, the Book of Chastity. [“Chastity” for Spenser did not indicate virginity only, but rather the virtues of fertility under proper, loving (including wedded) circumstances.] A decadent and licentious garden with fountains in it, the Bower of Bliss, appears at the conclusion of Book II and is destroyed by Guyon, the hero of Temperance.

Both the Garden of Adonis and the Bower of Bliss (as well as others) have been read by critics as having Ireland-related allegorical significance: in the former, we see an emphasis on seeding, the life-cycle and creative fertility, which may reflect Spenser’s own ideals as a “genius” creating art on his newly won plantation. In the latter, we see the sad consequences of trading heroic action for sensual, enervating ease: of living for the moment and enjoying your surroundings (including love poetry) far too much. Doughty knights must remain virtuous, armed and vigilant.

In Spenser’s *Amoretti* #89, the final sonnet in the sequence, the poet imagines himself as a dove (a “Culuer”) missing its mate. She is beautiful and he longs for sight of her. Her “sweet aspect” inspires both God and man to be with her: “Whose sweet aspect both God and man can moue,/ In her vnspotted pleasauns to delight.” A “pleasauns” in this case signifies both the pleasure area of a garden and “pleasantness” more generally. Should the poet not have the sight and use of his love’s figurative pleasure garden, he complains, “Dark is my day, whyles her fayre light I mis,/ And dead my life that wants such liuelv blis.” (*Amoretti* 89.11-14).

In *Amoretti* 64, dubbed the “garden sonnet” by critics, Spenser in a *blazon*, or poetic catalog on his mistress’ fair parts (a trope familiar also from the Song of Solomon in the Bible), compares his new bride, Elizabeth Boyle, to a garden:

Comming to kisse her lyps, (such grace I found)

Me seemd I smelt a gardin of sweet flowres:  
that dainty odours from them threw around for  
damzels fit to decke their louers bowres.

Her lips did smell lyke vnto Gillyflowers,  
her ruddy cheeks lyke vnto Roses red:

her snowy browes lyke budded Bellamoures,  
her louely eyes lyke Pincks but newly spred,  
Her goodly bosome lyke a Strawberry bed,

her neck like to a bouch of Cullambynes:  
her brest lyke lillyes, ere theyr leaues be shed,  
her nipples lyke yong blossomd Iessemynes:

Such fragrant flowers doe giue most odorous smell,  
but her sweet odour did them all excell.

The sonnet immediately precedes #65, wherein Spenser compares his bride to a “gentle birde... within her cage” that “singes and feeds her fill,” once she has entered into her engagement “bands” with him. The “cage” brings his house or tower to mind. Birds are also attracted to gardens, and some gardens, like Kenilworth, had aviaries in them. The same “bondage” has captured the poet and tied him to her. They are a pair of love-birds.

Spenser closes Sonnet 65 with a rhyming couplet, wherein a reference to a “brasen towre” is rhymed with “sacred bowre”:

There fayth doth fearlesse dwell in brasen towre,  
and spotlesse pleasure builds her sacred bowre.  
(*Amoretti* 65.13-14)

Spenser envisions both tower and bower side by side: a “bower” could refer to an inner apartment in a mansion, including bedrooms and boudoirs (see *Oxford English Dictionary* q.v. “bower”), or to a place in a garden, such as an “arbor” or “place closed in or overarched with branches of trees, shrubs, or other plants” (*Oxford English Dictionary* q.v. “bower”; see also the reference to the “bowre” in 64.4, above, and to the “Bower of Bliss,” the pleasure garden in *The Faerie Queene* II.xii). Tower and bower here function as a mutual unit, like man and wife: the sonnet couplet brings the couple to mind. Similarly, Sonnet 64 (the garden sonnet) appears adjacent to Sonnet 65 (the tower sonnet): another coupling. Figuratively, the poet would himself correspond with the strong, masculine and sheltering hard tower (“brasen” connotes both bold and brassy), which is full of “fayth” that is “fearlesse.” His bride, correspondingly, would be the chaste or “spotlesse” and “sacred” “bowre” of “pleasure” that he anticipates enjoying on his wedding night. In that garden-room he and she will grow children.

Alternatively, it could be that Spenser sees his bride as the tower as well as the bower. In “Epithalamion”, the wedding poem that follows *Amoretti*, the poet returns to the use of the blazon to describe his bride. He compares her features to jewels, fruit [“Her cheekes lyke apples which the sun hath rudded,/ Her lips lyke cheryes charming men to byte” (“Epithalamion” 173-4)] and flowers, and her “snowie

necke” is

...lyke to a marble towre,  
And all her body like a pallace fayre,  
Ascending vppe with many a stately stayre,  
To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre.  
(*Epithalamion* 177-80)

The poet follows Song of Solomon 7.4 in comparing her neck to a tower. The “bower” here in turn is clearly a room at the top of the tower. As in Sonnet 64, it could easily be perfumed with garden flowers, since it is the “sweet” “seat” of her “honor” and “chastity.” It is her mind, but also, in the poet’s mind, quite possibly a bedroom. In Spenser’s poetry, towers and garden bowers, like bride and groom—all sites of fertility and creativity—accompany and blend into one another.

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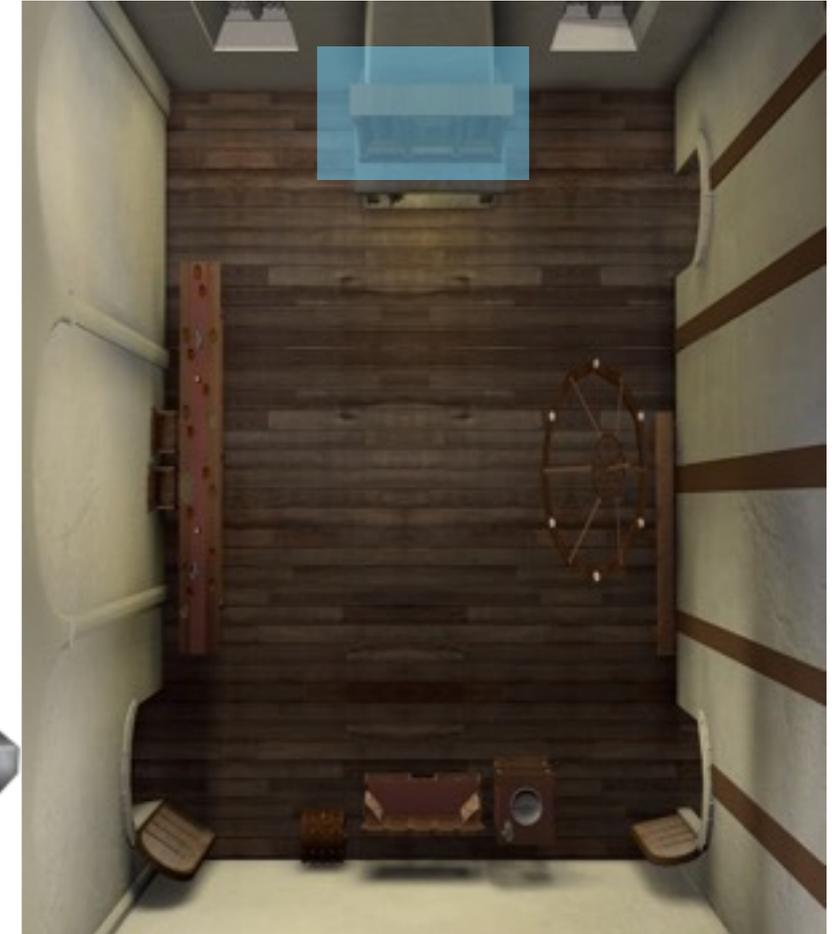
## GREAT HALL: MANTELPIECE

This great oak mantelpiece is fancifully modeled after two different early modern wall-pieces found in situ in Ireland today: 1) the allegorical figures in plaster wainscoting in the Long Gallery of Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary, commissioned in the 1560s by the house's owner, Thomas Butler, tenth earl of Ormond, and 2) the undated oak mantelpiece in Sir Walter Raleigh's house at Myrtle Grove, Youghal, Co. Cork. In the Long Gallery at Carrick-on-Suir, the wainscoting running around the room shows the allegorized figures of Justice (holding a sword) and Equity (holding a scale) alternating with busts of Queen Elizabeth I and King Edward VI.



In the parlor at Myrtle Grove, a (West-)English-style oak mantelpiece shows the allegorical figures of Faith, Hope and Charity amid other detail-work.

The recreated mantelpiece at Kilcolman shows the paired figures of Faith (holding an anchor, an emblem of hope) and Justice (holding a sword). Both are modeled closely on the plaster figures at Carrick-on-Suir. In between them is the rose, a symbol of the English monarch. The rose connotes the Tudor family lineage as well as Queen Elizabeth herself, whose portrait is in the parlor next door.



The Great Hall was used mainly for important gatherings and ceremonial occasions. Spenser, a Protestant and lord of the manor (both owner and administrator), would conceivably have administered justice in this room, including arbitration over minor dis-

putes between his tenants and other business on the plantation, all administered in the name of the English crown. Business conducted in front of the mantelpiece would have reminded supplicants of English law, religion and power in Munster.



## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

The rose was the Tudor family badge and an apt symbol for the queen's beauty. In *The Faerie Queene*, Elizabeth is described in allegorical guise as Gloriana, the Fairy Queen, "that glorious flowre," from whence her name: "Therefore they *Glorian* call that glorious flowre,/ Long mayst thou Glorian liue, in glory and great powre" (*FQ* II.x.76.8-9); she is "that goodly glorious flowre... sprung of the auncient stocke of Princes straine" (*FQ* IV.viii.33.6-7).

Elizabeth was closely associated with other flowers as well, such as the lily, a symbol of virginal purity (Elizabeth never married and carried the sobriquet "The Virgin Queen"), and the *fleur-de-lis*, either the lily or the iris. The fleur-de-lis in royal English heraldry connoted imperial power. It is figured on the queen's scepter in portraits, for example, and was a stock symbol of the French monarchy. Elizabeth, like her forbearers, claimed monarchy over England, Wales, France and Ireland. It is interesting in this regard that the Irish word for "iris" is *gloriam*, also spelled *gloriam* in the early modern period (according the *Dictionary of the Irish Language*): a word close to glorian.

The sword is a symbol of Justice. Artegall, the principal hero of Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, the Book of Justice, is introduced along with his sword, "Chrysaor, that all other swords excelled" (*FQ* V.i.9.8). With it, Artegall dispenses a rough justice to villains who oppose him. Queen Elizabeth is allegorically figured in the book as Mercilla, who must not let her sword (*i.e.*, the sword of state) grow rusty out of disuse and excessive mercy.

The 1596 edition of *The Faerie Queene* shows an anchor on its title page, an emblem of hope (*anchora spei*). The anchor was also the emblem of printer Richard Field. (The title page of the 1596 edition can be seen open on the desk in the Tower House Study in Section 9). The character of Speranza (her name meaning "hope") offers her "siluer anchor" to the sinful hero Red Crosse Knight in Book I.x.22.2-3 of *The Faerie Queene*. Visitors to the Great Hall recreated here, who were loyal to Queen Elizabeth, would find symbols of faith, hope and justice to comfort them amid the turmoil surrounding Kilcolman.

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## GREAT HALL: METHER

On the main banqueting table in the Great Hall sits a “methers,” which is a four-sided, four-handled Irish drinking vessel carved of wood. See also the methers in the Tower House Parlor on the *Centering Spenser* website.

An example from the 16th century with the provenance “Kilcolman, Co. Cork” is currently in the Limerick Museum.

Other objects on the table here, in the Parlor and in the Tower House Parlor, are modeled after Tudor-era facsimiles in wood and pewter found at Barrycourt Castle, Co. Cork.

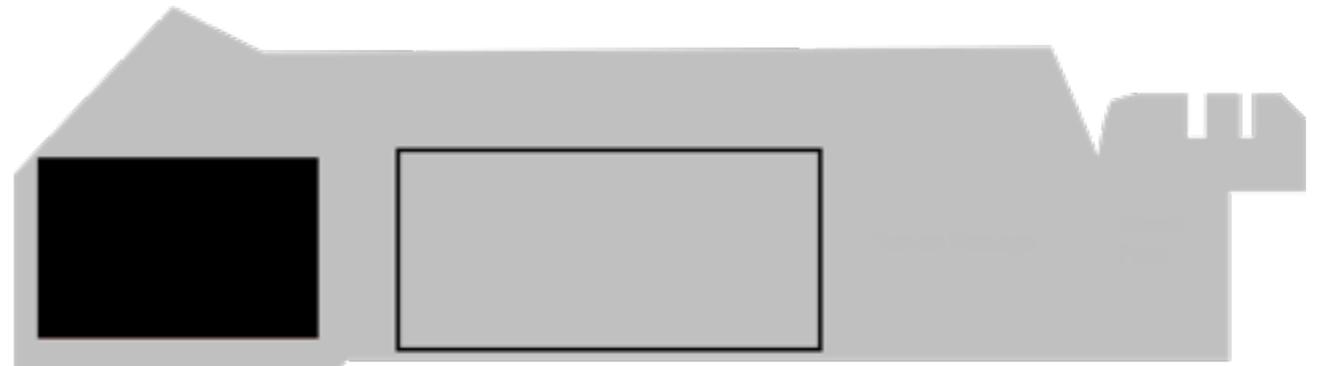


## GROUND FLOOR PARLOR: LUTE

The lute was a popular renaissance instrument similar to the modern-day guitar.

Eric Klingelhofer's excavations of Kilcolman in the mid-1990s uncovered a tuning peg for a lute or similar stringed instrument. The find was located in a stratification level that could be contemporary with Spenser's occupation of the site. Although its dating is uncertain, it may have been in use in Spenser's household there in the 1590s.

Featured on *Centering Spenser: A digital resource for Kilcolman Castle* is "[Mr. Dowland's Midnight](#)" by the Elizabethan lutenist John Dowland (played by Christopher Morrongiello; reproduced with permissions).



## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

A poem attributed to Spenser and published posthumously by James Ware in 1633, “Verses upon the said Earles Lute,” is reported to have been carved upon the lute of Richard Boyle, first earl of Cork. Boyle was a cousin of Spenser’s second wife, Elizabeth Boyle, who lived with Spenser at Kilcolman. Richard Boyle was involved in the English administration in Munster from the 1580s on, and he eventually purchased (in 1602) the Munster holdings of Sir Walter Raleigh, which helped him (Boyle) to become fabulously wealthy and to buy his earldom from the British monarch, James I.

Spenser’s poem reads as follows:

Whilst vitall sapp did make me spring,  
And leafe and bough did flourish brave,  
I then was dumbe and could not sing,  
Ne had the voice which now I have:  
  
But when the axe my life did end,  
The Muses nine this voice did send. (“Verses upon the said Earles Lute”)

What does this tell us about Spenser’s life as a poet and a planter? It indicates that the felling of trees is a necessary sacrifice that leads to the making of instruments, such as the lute, which create (or accompany) the “voice” of the “Muses nine.” The nine Muses in classical tradition are the goddesses who inspire learning and the arts, including poetry and history. Spenser refers to the Muses often in his poetry and wrote a set of poems entitled *Tears of the Muses*, published in his *Complaints* volume (1591). But the poem does more than praise instruments; it identifies industrial activity on the land as the source of art. Boyle’s lands were famous for their timber, and so Spenser

connects tree-cutting, which made things like lutes, with the inspiration of poets who earned their livelihood from the land (and who were, presumably, patronized by wealthy men such as Boyle).

The most famous of mythological poets was Orpheus, whose song in nature calmed the beasts and made the trees bend to hear him. Spenser’s famous refrain to his wedding poem, “Epithalamion,” celebrates how the “woods” around him in Munster “eccho” and “ring” to his song. In such a moment the bridegroom-poet, Spenser, is like Orpheus, who is able to charm the landscape and make it harmonize with, or echo, his song. By analogy, whoever played the earl of Cork’s lute would be in the position of Orpheus, making the woods (including the instrument which is made out of wood) echo and harmonize with poetic song. Orpheus was himself torn apart by savage forces (by orgiastic maenads, or female celebrants of Bacchus) and his head and harp floated down a river. But the ideal concept of the power of his song lives on [see the reference to Orpheus’ harp on a river in Spenser’s *Ruines of Time* 604-9, published in *Complaints* (1591), wherein the Orphic harp is that of Sir Philip Sidney.

Not all music was pleasant to Spenser’s ears. Music could also be a luxurious distraction from more virtuous deeds. For example, in *The Faerie Queene*, in the vainglorious House of Pride, a place ruled by the queen Lucifera, we witness a royal feast “in commune hall.” Here we find

... many Minstrales maken melody,  
To driue away the dull melancholy,

And many Bardes, that to the trembling chord  
Can tune their timely voices cunningly,  
And many Chroniclers, that can record  
Old loues, and warres for Ladies doen by many a Lord. (FQ I.v.3.4-9)

One can imagine Spenser spending many a long day and evening at Kilcolman playing and listening to songs accompanied by lute, and/or listening to Irish “bards” (as Spenser’s spokesman, Irenius, says he has done in the *View*, pp. 72-5), and/or writing his own chronicle of “Fierce warres and faithfull loues,” as he calls his historical epic, *The Faerie Queene* (FQ I.Proem.i.9). Such art was only worthwhile, however, if it led to virtuous action, including work on the land.

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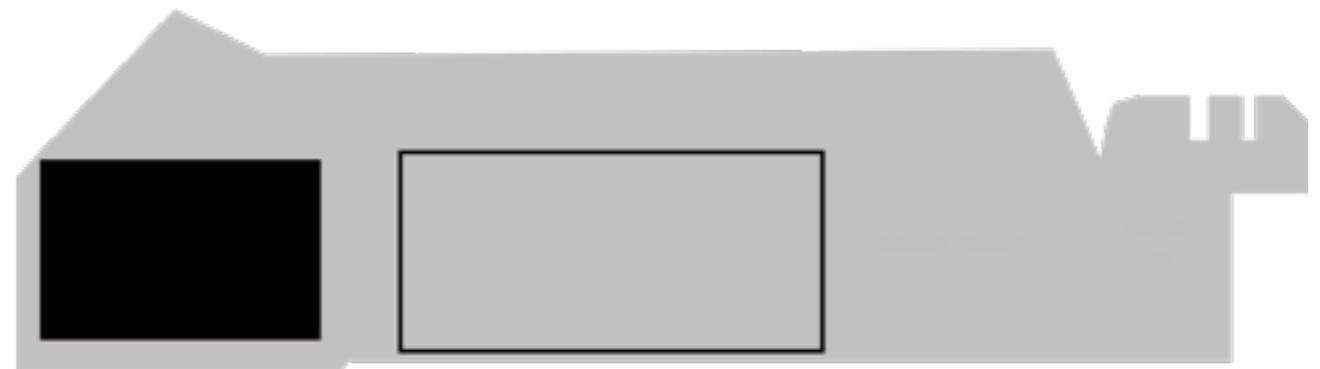
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“Mr. Dowland’s Midnight” in the *Margaret Board Lute Book*, Royal Academy of Music, Robert Spencer Collection, MS 603: f. 26v.

## GROUND FLOOR PARLOR: PORTRAIT OF QUEEN ELIZABETH I

This oil portrait is copied from a painting currently owned by the Elizabethan Gardens, Manteo, North Carolina. It is a variant of the famous "Ditchley Portrait" and was probably painted in the 1590s by the studio of Marcus Gheeraerts the younger.

There is no evidence that Spenser owned such a portrait. If he did own one like it, he may have displayed it in a semi-public place, as a demonstration of his property, taste and political connections. In the early modern period, public display of paintings was unusual, and so the painting hangs here, in the Ground Floor Parlor, rather than in the more public Great Hall.



Picture galleries existed in early modern Ireland, for example at Ormond Castle, Carrick-on-Suir, whose attached Elizabethan mansion was built in the 1560s by Thomas Butler, tenth earl of Ormond and cousin of Queen Elizabeth I. Ormond's castle at Kilkenny also held paintings in the early modern period. Paintings were typically hung alongside tapestries (such as those in the house of Busyrane and viewed by the heroine Britomart in *The Faerie Queene* III.xi). For this reason a tapestry also hangs in this room in the castle reconstruction. It is questionable whether or not a mid-level functionary and new landowner such as Spenser could afford such luxury items, but it is possible.

A painting of Elizabeth, the "Virgin Queen," would call attention to Spenser's complex relationship with his monarch. She was his patron and employer. In 1590, after Spenser visited the court and presented his poetry there, the queen granted him a sizeable pension of 50 pounds per annum. In Ireland, Spenser served as administrator of his estate on behalf of the English crown, and therefore any authority he had ultimately emanated from the queen in London. Enter the parlor and you not only met Spenser's family, but a likeness of her majesty as well.

### LITERARY CONNECTIONS

Spenser paints a complicated picture of Queen Elizabeth in his poetry. The queen was a powerful patron and subject of his work. She is allegorized as "Gloriana" or the inspirational Fairy Queen of *The Faerie Queene*, and she is praised elsewhere in fulsome terms in his poetry (in "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe", for example). In Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, the main hero of the epic, Prince Arthur, sees Gloriana in a dream vision and is inspired towards virtuous action on her behalf:

Whiles euery sence the humour sweet embayd,  
And slombring soft my hart did steale away  
Me seemed, by my side a royall Mayd  
Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay:  
So fayre a creature yet saw neuer sunny day.  
Mostly goodly glee and louely blandishment  
She to me made, and badd me loue her deare;  
For dearely sure her loue was to me bent,  
As when iust time expired should appeare.  
But whether dreames delude, or true it were,  
Was neuer hart so rauisht with delight,  
Ne liuing man like wordes did euer heare,  
As she to me deliuered all that night;

And at her parting said, She Queene of Faries hight....

From that day forth I lou'd that face diuyn;  
From that day forth I cast in carefull mynd,  
To seeke her out with labor, and long tyne,... (FQ I.ix.13-15)

Simultaneously, Spenser's satiric nature led him to criticize the queen and her court. Elizabeth appears to be satirized for her pride and worldly decadence in the figure of "Lucifera," who rules over the House of Pride earlier in Book I:

High aboue all a cloth of State was spred,  
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day,  
On which there sate most braue embellished  
With royall robes and gorgeous array,  
A mayden Queene, that shone as Titans ray,  
In glistring gold, and perelesse pretious stone;  
Yet her bright blazing beautie did assay  
To dim the brightnesse of her glorious throne,  
As enuying her selfe, that too exceeding shone. (*FQ* I.iv.8)

This portrait hanging in the ground-floor Parlor captures some of that same ambiguity: it shows the richly adorned Queen Elizabeth in all her splendid majesty but, uncharacteristically for such a portrait in this period, it does not hide her age. The mortal corruption of her flesh and her vanity is evident: wrinkles, veins, jewels and lace all command our attention. Like Oliver Cromwell in a later age, she has been painted "warts and all," but with a difference.

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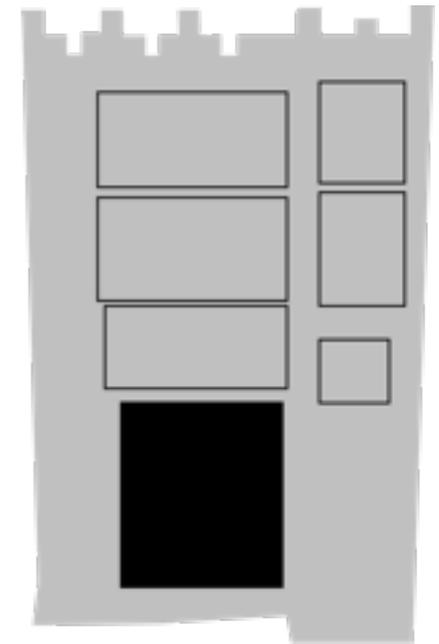
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## TOWER HOUSE GROUND FLOOR: MANTLE

A mantle is a common type of heavy woolen cloak found in medieval and early modern Ireland. Fantastic, colorful and richly woven varieties are described in medieval Irish poetry. Elaborate and expensive mantles would have been worn by the rich and noble. Plainer, more workaday kinds are found here in our reconstruction of Kilcolman, as befits Spenser's status as a prosperous but not rich English gentleman. If Spenser and his family didn't wear mantles, their servants likely did.

Early modern mantles have been found in modern times preserved in bogs. For example, a plain, semi-coarse example from the sixteenth century is on display in the National Museum of Ireland. The museum also holds a fragment of a different type of mantle, the shaggy woven (or "rya") kind. A shaggy fringe can be seen at the top of mantles in the sixteenth-century illustrations of John Derricke.





Reconstruction of mantle by Robin Haller and students School of Art and Design, East Carolina University, 2013



Sixteenth-century illustration by John Derricke of Rorie Oge O'Moore, a wild kerne and a defeated rebel leader, wearing a shaggy-fringed ("rya") mantle

## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

In Spenser's prose dialogue and political policy tract, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (c. 1596; pub. 1633), Spenser's alter-ego Irenius discusses with Eudoxus the ancient and barbaric origins of the mantle, before listing its practical and treacherous uses by the Irish.

*Irenius:* They have another custom from the Scythians that is the wearing of mantles and long glibs, which is a thick curled bush of hair hanging down over their eyes, and monstrously disguising them, which are both very bad and hurtful.

*Eudoxus:* Do you think that the mantle comes from the Scythians? I would surely think otherwise: For by that which I have read it appears that most nations in the world anciently used the mantle. [...]

*Iren:* I cannot deny but anciently it was common to most, and yet since disused and laid away. But in this latter age of the world since the decay of the Roman empire, it was renewed and brought in again by those Northern nations when breaking out of their cold caves and frozen habitation into the sweet soil of Europe. They brought with them their usual weeds [*i.e.*, clothes], fit to shield the cold and that continual frost, to which they had at home been inured. The which yet they left not of, by reason that they were in perpetual wars with the nations where they had invaded, but still removing from place to place carried always with them that weed as their house, their bed, and their garment. Coming

lastly into Ireland, they found there more special use thereof, by reason of the raw cold climate. From whom it is now grown into that general use in which that people now have it. [...]

*Eudox:* Since then the necessity thereof is so commodious as you allege, that it is [serving] in stead of housing, bedding, and clothing. What reason have you then to wish, so necessary a thing [to] cast off?

*Iren:* Because the commodities do not countervail the discommodity. For the inconveniences which thereby do arise, are much more many: for it is a fit house for an outlaw, a meet bed for a rebel, and apt cloak for a thief. First, the outlaw being for his many crimes and villainies banished from the towns and houses of honest men, and wandering in waste places far from danger of law, makes his mantle his house, and under it covers himself from the wrath of heaven, from the offence of the earth, and from the sight of men. When it rains it is his pentice [*i.e.*, "pent-house" or makeshift shelter], when it blows it is his tent, when it freezes, it is his tabernacle. In summer he can wear it loose, in winter he can wrap it close, at all times he can use it, never heavy, never cumbersome. Likewise for a rebel it is

as serviceable: for in his war that he makes (if at least it deserves the name of “war”), when he still flies from his foe and lurks in the thick woods and straight passages, waiting for advantages, it is his bed, yea and almost all his household stuff. For the wood is his house against all weathers, and his mantle is his cave to sleep in: therein he wraps his self round and ensconces him self strongly against the gnats, which in the country do more annoy the naked rebels, while they keep the woods, and do more sharply wound them than all their enemies swords or spears, which can seldom come nigh them. Yea and oftentimes their mantle serves them when they are near driven, being wrapped about their left arms in stead of a target [*i.e.*, a small shield], for it is hard to cut through it with a sword. Besides, it is light to bear, light to throw away, and being as they then commonly are naked, it is to them all in all.

Lastly, for a thief it is so handsome, as it may seem it was first invented for him: for under it he can cleanly convey any fit pillage that comes handsomely in his way. And when he goes abroad in the night on freebooting, it is his best and surest friend: for lying as they often do, two or three nights together abroad to watch for their booty, with that they can prettily shroud themselves under a bush or a backside, till they may conveniently do their errand. And when all is done, he can

in his mantle pass through any town or company, being close-hooded over his head, as he uses [to keep] from knowledge of any to whom he is endangered. Besides all this, he or any man else that is disposed to mischief or villainy may under his mantle go privily armed without suspicion of any, carry his headpiece, his skene [*i.e.*, long knife] or pistol, if he please to be always in a readiness. Thus necessary and fitting is a mantle for a bad man. And surely for a bad housewife [*i.e.*, woman], it is no less convenient. For some of them that be these wandering women, called of them Monashut, it is half a wardrobe: for in summer you shall find her arrayed commonly, but [*i.e.*, “only”] in her smock and mantle, to bee more ready for the light services. In winter and in her travel, it is her cloak and safe-gear, and also a coverlet for her lewd exercise. And when she has filled her vessel [*i.e.*, become pregnant], under it she can hide both her burden and her blame. Yea and when her bastard is borne, it [*i.e.*, the mantle] serves in stead of all her swaddling clothes. And as for all other good women which love to do but little work, how handsome it is to lie in and sleep, or to louse themselves in the sunshine, they that have been but a while in Ireland can well witness. Sure I am that you will think it very unfit for good housewives to stir in or to busy herself about her housewifery in sort as they should. These be some of the abuses for which I would think it meet to forbid all mantles.

[*A View of the Present State of Ireland*, MS Rawlinson B.478 (Bodleian Library, Oxford), 31r-33r. Some words are modernized.]

Spenser mentions mantles in various places in his poetry. In *The Faerie Queene*, for example, the treacherous, shape-changing villain Malengin (or “Guyle”) lives in a “hollow cave” (V.ix.10.1), has “hollow” eyes, long “curled” hair and wears a mantle-like cloak on his back (over his torn pants, or “breech”):

Full dreadfull wight he was, as euer went  
Vpon the earth, with hollow eyes deepe pent,  
And long curld locks, that downe his shoulders shagged,  
And on his backe an vnc outh vestiment  
Made of straunge stuffe, but all to worne and ragged,  
And vnderneath his breech was all to torne and iagged.  
(V.ix.10.4-9)

As such, Malengin resembles a half-starved and dangerous Irish refugee or rebel.

In Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser associates the personified figure of Night, an evil hag, with a mantle: “griesly *Night*, with visage deadly sad...in a foule blacke pitchy mantle clad” (I.v.20.1-3). In a standard metaphor for the time, Night covers the world in darkness with her “mantle” or cloak. The passage has a political tinge, furthermore, in that she hides crimes, including “traitorous” ones:

Vnder thy mantle black there hidden ly,  
Light-shonning thefts, and traiterous intent,  
Abhorred bloodshed, and vile felony. (III.iv.58.1-3)

The description of Night’s “bloodshed” and “traitorous intent” gives it/her political resonances that would align it/her with the rebellious and dangerous Irish, as described in the *View*.

Conversely, Spenser invokes “night so long expected” with its “sable mantle” in his wedding poem, “Epithalamion,” asking that it keep him and his bride safe from the threats surrounding his castle:

Now welcome night, thou night so long expected...  
Spread thy broad wing ouer my loue and me,  
That no man may vs see,  
And in thy sable mantle vs enwrap,  
From feare of perrill and foule horror free.  
Let no false treason seeke vs to entrap,  
Nor any dread disquiet once annoy  
The safety of our ioy:  
But let the night be calme and quiet some,  
Without tempestuous storms or sad afray.  
 (“Epithalamion” 315-27)

The “mantle” here, while representing dangerous “night,” paradoxically protects the married couple from the threats that might disturb their well-being (including supernatural threats that are listed in the following stanza: they include the “evil” Irish spirit, the “Pouke” or *pouca*). As such, the poet is asking the evil forces of the night to confound themselves by keeping themselves hidden, which in turn allows the couple to stay safely obscure, perhaps hidden under a mantle used for a bedcovering. In this case, Spenser may have in mind another description of the mantle in the *View*, where it is described as a garment of Venus lined with stars (as is the night). A mantle could be put to good or bad, ugly or positive uses, depending on the intent of the owner.

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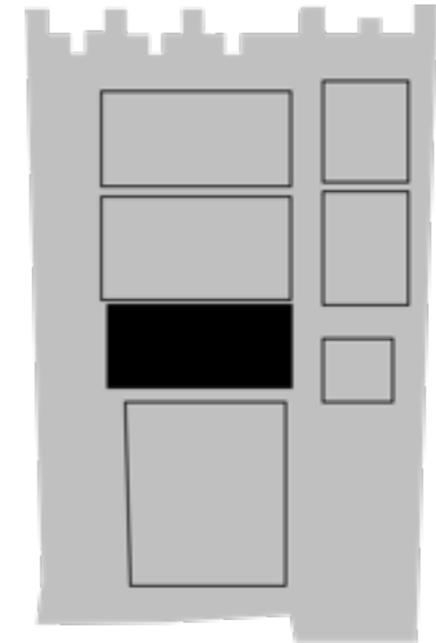
## TOWER HOUSE PARLOR: HARP

The Irish were and are famous for their skill on the harp. The harp is Ireland's national symbol and became so by decree of King Henry VIII, when it was also featured on Irish coinage.

The early modern harp used by the Irish would have been smaller than modern versions used in concerts today. It would have been made of highly decorated wood with wire strings.

A representative example from the period is the famous "Brian Boru" harp now held at Trinity College, Dublin. In the woodcuts to John Derricke's *Image of Ireland* (1581), a harp is pictured being played to accompany a singer or reciter of poetry at a native Irish lord's feast. An audio sample of a wire-stringed harp (featuring Patrick Ball playing a composition by the eighteenth-century composer Carolan), can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTWwq8GvAOE> (accessed 3/19/2020).

Music was clearly played at Kilcolman. A lute-key that may be contemporary with Spenser's occupation of the castle was found in the excavations of the 1990s (see Ground Floor Parlor: Lute). As a local lord, Spenser could well have had native musicians play music for him on various instruments, including the harp. Spenser's granddaughter, Catherine, married Ludovicus O'Cahill, son of Daniel Duffe O'Cahill, the harper of



Queen Anne of Denmark, wife of King James I of Great Britain.

### LITERARY CONNECTIONS

In his *View of the Present State of Ireland* (c. 1596), Spenser's spokesman Irenius complains of how unruly young Irishmen are incited to violent, disruptive deeds by heroic poetry in Irish. Their bards praise those whose "music was not the harp nor lays of love, but the cries of people and clashing of armour" (*View* 75).

In the House of Pride episode in Book I of *The Faerie Queene* (1590), the sinfully proud queen Lucifera has at her court "many Bardes, that to the trembling chord/ Can tune their timely voices cunningly" (*FQ* I.v.3.6-7), which may be a reference to the harp.

In his poem "The Ruines of Time," included in his collection *Complaints* (1591), Spenser's speaker in a dream vision sees "th'Harpe of Philisides now dead," "stroong all with siluer twyne,/ And made of golde and costlie yuorie," "come floating down the "Lee." The harp is also compared to that of Orpheus, who tamed "Wylde beasts and forrests" with it ("The Ruines of Time" 603-9).

In the allegory, "Philisides" is the great Protestant hero Sir Philip Sidney (d. 1586), and the "Lee" may or may not refer to the river of that name in Munster (it could also be the "lea" or bank of the river). We might therefore see this dream-vision as Spenser's nostalgic fantasy, meant to inspire Sidney-type heroes to once again tame Irish "wylde beasts and forrests" with their poetry and heroic deeds.

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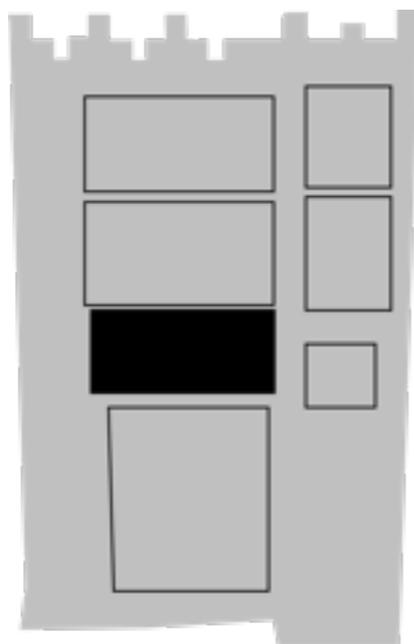
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## TOWER HOUSE PARLOR: RALEIGH'S WINDOW



Remains of this south-facing, ogee-headed window still exist in the wall of the tower house. For a contemporary picture, see Chapter 2, p. 38.

The view from the window would be of the marsh adjacent to the castle. The window is dubbed "Raleigh's window" today because, as legend has it, Spenser and Raleigh sat here and smoked pipes and conversed when Raleigh visited Kilcolman in 1589 (see Chapter 1, Section 8: "Poetic Interludes").

## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

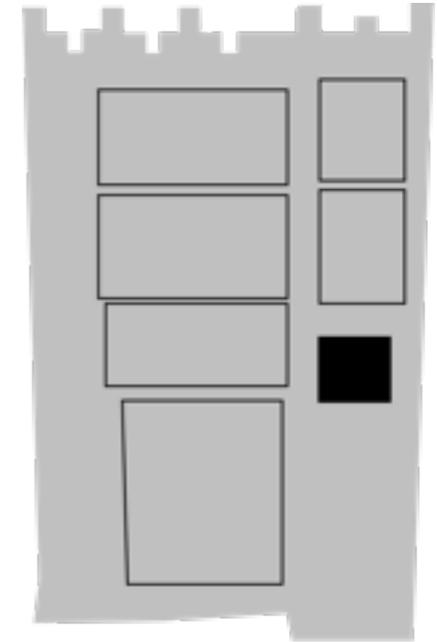
Raleigh's visit to Kilcolman is immortalized in Spenser's pastoral poem, *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (1595). Spenser's alter-ego Colin Clout describes this encounter as beginning outside, under an alder tree:

One day (quoth he) I sat, (as was my trade)  
Vnder the foote of Mole that mountaine hore,  
Keeping my sheepe amongst the cooly shade,  
Of the greene alders by the Mullaes shore:  
There a straunge shepheard chaunst to find me out,  
Whether allured with my pipes delight,  
Whose pleasing sound yshrilled far about,  
Or thither led by chaunce, I know not right:  
Whom when I asked from what place he came,  
And how he hight, himselfe he did ycleepe,  
The shepheard of the Ocean by name,  
And said he came far from the main-sea deepe.  
He sitting me beside in that same shade,  
Prouoked me to plaie some pleasant fit,  
And when he heard the musicke which I made,  
He found himselfe full greatly pleasd at it:  
Yet aemuling my pipe, he tooke in hond  
My pipe before that aemuled of many,  
And plaid theron; (for well that skill he cond)  
Himselfe as skilfull in that art as any.  
He pip'd, I sung; and when he sung, I piped,  
By chaunge of turnes, each making other mery,  
Neither enuying other, nor enuied,  
So piped we, vntill we both were weary.  
(*Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* 56-79).

The "shepheard of the Ocean" is Raleigh. Spenser's description of a "piping" contest is a pastoral conceit, indicating that they shared poetry with one another (whether or not they actually played pipes as well). In the distance is "Mole," Spenser's name for Galtymore, the highest mountain in the nearby Ballyhoura Hills to the north of Kilcolman.

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## TOWER HOUSE PRIVY: PRIVY, A.K.A. GARDEROBE

Archaeological remains from Spenser's privy indicate an ample and healthy diet enjoyed by his household, including various game and high-quality wheat.

Moss could have served for wiping. Waste would have fallen down a two-story chute, exiting out the south side (or back) of the castle, where it would have been shoveled away and/or disinfected with a covering of lime.

Two-seater privies were not uncommon. An example is found today in Barryscourt Castle, Co. Cork. Newman Johnson refers to modern-

day Kilcolman's missing "stone" privy seat although a wooden seat (as here) could also have been in place in Spenser's time.

Placed on the seat for reading is a treatise on the flush toilet, *A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, called The Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596) by the inventor of the device, the courtier poet and epic translator Sir John Harington.

Another privy lies on the east end of the Great Hall.

## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

In *The Faerie Queene* (1590), Spenser describes a castle, the House of Temperance, in figurative terms as like a human body. There is a privy attached by “conduit pipe” to the kitchen, which represents the stomach in Spenser’s allegory:

But all the liquour, which was fowle and waste,  
Not good nor seruiceable elles for ought,  
They in another great rownd vessell plaste,  
Till by a conduit pipe it thence were brought:  
And all the rest, that noyous was, and nought,  
By secret wayes, that none might it espy,  
Was close conuaid, and to the backgate brought,  
That cleped was Port Esquiline, whereby  
It was auoided quite, and throwne out priuily. (*FQ* II.ix.32)

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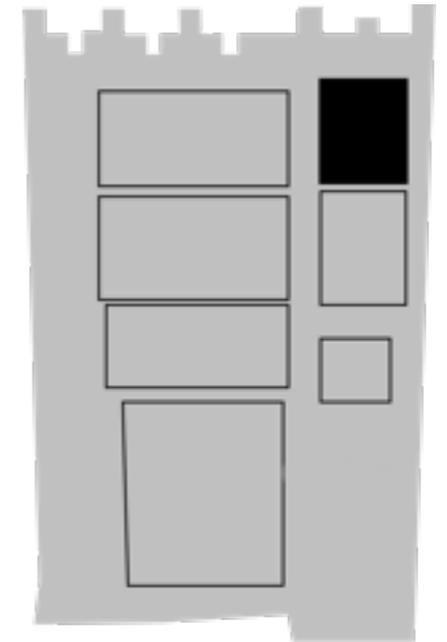
## TOWER HOUSE STUDY: DESK WITH PAPERS, ETC., INCLUDING *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

This desk, with various papers on and around it, indicates Spenser's life as a creative writer. In the Ground Floor Parlor of the castle complex is another desk. That area functions as Spenser's "office" for administrative writing.

Both desks are modeled loosely on that of St Jerome in Albrecht Dürer's famous print (1514). Spenser would certainly have found inspiration in the early church fathers when writing his own divinely inspired work.

Many writers, such as Michel de Montaigne, Friederich Holderlein and William Butler Yeats, were attracted to towers to work in. Perhaps the physical location on high inspired lofty thoughts, just as it removed one from distractions down below. In the castle recreation here, Spenser's study is adjacent to his bedroom and above the chapel, both powerful places for the heart and mind.

Almost all surviving examples of Spenser's handwriting are in the form of letters written while he was secretary to Lord Deputy of Ireland Arthur, Lord Grey or when writing on behalf of other administrators, such as John Norris, President of Munster and his planter neighbor nearby to the south (at Mallow Castle, County Cork). A



few rare examples of Spenser's annotations to poems do exist, however.

On the desk lies Spenser's magnum opus, *The Faerie Queene*, open to the title page of the second (1596) edition. As the page declares, it was published in London and "printed for" William Ponsonbie. It shows the emblem (or device) of the printer, Richard Field: the anchora spei or "anchor of hope" that descends from the heavens. Writing epic poetry was both inspired and weighty business, and it took hope for Spenser to make the perilous land-and-sea-journey to London, so as to oversee publication of his work (see the description of such a voyage in Spenser's poem *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, 1595). It took more hope to return again and to keep writing at Kilcolman, as the political storm-clouds gathered in the north. The name of Spenser's estate, "Hap-hazard," indicated its precarious nature.

### LITERARY CONNECTIONS

In Book II of *The Faerie Queene* is found the House of Temperance, a castle based allegorically on the human body, wherein the kitchen is the stomach, private rooms are the heart, and so on. The castle's turret, a "blessed bowre" (*FQ* II.ix.47.5) functions as the head. It has many rooms, three of which function as the principle parts of the mind and/or higher soul. "Three honorable sages" (47.8) live there, *i.e.*, foresight, judgment and memory. The first of these sages, named "Phantastes," has "a sharpe foresight, and a working wit/ That never idle was, ne once would rest a whit" and he imagines all sorts of

... idle thoughtes and fantasies,  
Deuices, dreames, opinions vnsound,  
Shewes, visions, sooth-sayes, and prophesies;

And all that fained is, as leasings, tales, and lies. (*FQ* II.ix.51.6-9)

The other two men represent the sager and more serious aspects of the mind. The second, judgment (who is unnamed in the poem), has walls

... painted faire with memorable gestes,  
Of famous Wisards, and with picturals  
Of Magistrates, of courts, of tribunals,  
Of commen wealthes, of states, of pollicy,  
Of lawes, of iudgementes, and of decretals;  
All artes, all science, all Philosophy,  
And all that in the world was ay thought wittily. (53.3-9)

The third of these men, "Eumnestes," represents memory, and

His chamber all was hangd about with rolls,  
And old records from auncient times deriud,  
Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolls, That  
were all worm-eaten, and full of canker holes. (57.6-9)

Combined, the men could represent a well-rounded (and somewhat satirical) portrait of Spenser at Kilcolman: a man of intense poetic imagination and fancy

minis-judicate, ing antiquarian chronicles (inserted into *The* based on his prodigious reading and



who philosophized, adorned and dedicated on his while also writing histories or *Faerie Queene* memory.

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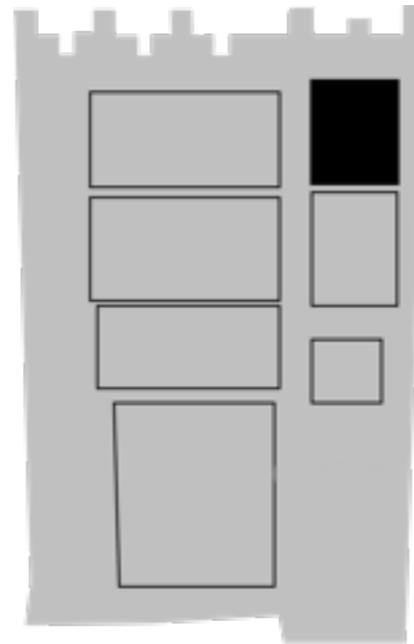
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## TOWER HOUSE STUDY: WOODCUT OF ST GEORGE

The only woodcut to be published in the 1590 and 1596 editions of *The Faerie Queene* is this woodcut of St George, which appeared facing the opening of Book II. It had been used by the printer of *The Faerie Queene*, John Wolfe, in earlier publications. George was far from unknown in Ireland. An annual celebration of the saint, complete with procession and dragon, occurred in Dublin until the 1570s. In Munster, a curious artifact of the Desmond lordship—a rare example of something that actually remains—is a sixteenth-century Desmond coat of arms carved on whalebone, now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. It shows a mounted horseman spearing a dragon. The carving appears to

have been tampered with (exactly when is uncertain), so that the mounted horseman has been turned into an image of St George.

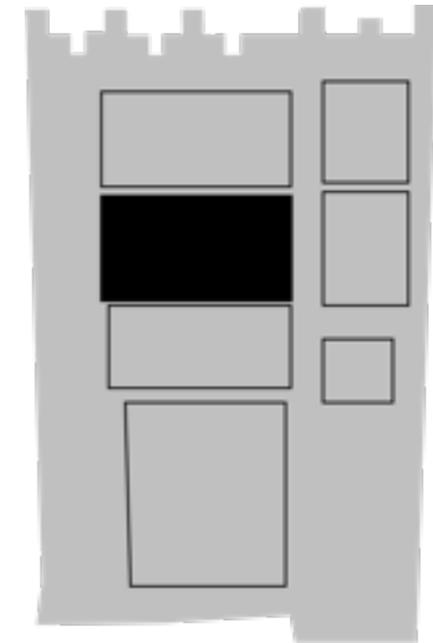


## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

The hero of Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, the book of Holiness, is Red Crosse Knight, who becomes St George by fighting against the Dragon in canto xi. St George is the patron saint of England, and the Dragon bears signs that would indicate its identity as Satan (“that old dragon” of the Book of Revelation). It also has features that would indicate topical references to Pope Gregory XIII (whose emblem was a dragon), Spain, and Ireland all wrapped into one. Its black and red scales are compared to an army’s shields, for example (black and red were the colors of the Castilian, *i.e.*, Spanish monarchy), it has “sail”-like wings (shades of the Spanish Armada, which was dispersed by the English and a storm, and which crashed in part on Irish shores) and its tail is wrapped in “boughts and knots” and pointed with a double sting: the words evoke the Irish *bonnaught* (Irish *buanaight*), a term for the predatory billeting by mercenary soldiers that squeezed the country and that New English administrators tried to reform or eliminate. When the giant Dragon is slain, it is measured “To proue how many acres he did spred of land” (*FQ* I.xii.11.9). Accordingly, the downfall of the noble house of Desmond led to its attainder, including the forfeiture, measurement and plantation of its land by opportunists such as Spenser.

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## TOWER HOUSE STORAGE ROOM AND ARMORY: QUILTED JACK

Spenser was known for his experience in several wars. His reputation in this regard helped secure him the nomination of Sheriff of Cork soon before his death. The Munster planters were responsible, in part, for their own security, including supplying able-bodied men and equipment for militias in time of need. Many weapons would have been stored in secure levels of a tower house, including areas like this one between main floors.



## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

This particular item, a “quilted leather jack,” Spenser describes as an English type of protective garment used by the Irish in his *View of the Present State of Ireland* (c. 1596).

In the same passage in the *View*, the speaker Irenius confusingly compares it to “Checklaton,” a costly article of clothing worn by the character Sir Thopas in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. In *The Faerie Queene*, the fierce character Disdayne appears in a quilted jacket and checklaton:

He wore no armour, ne for none did care,  
As no whit dreading any liuing wight;  
But in a Iacket quilted richly rare,  
Vpon checklaton he was straungely dight,  
And on his head a roll of linnen plight,  
Like to the Mores of Malaber he wore;  
With which his locks, as blacke as pitchy night,  
Were bound about, and voyded from before,  
And in his hand a mighty yron club he bore. (*The Faerie Queene*  
VI.vii.43)

Disdayne wears a turban, like the “Mores of Malaber,” thus making him into a middle-eastern threat as much as an Irish one. There may be yet further confusion intended by Spenser: O’More is an Irish name, and Irish women (if not men) wore turban-like linen wraps on their heads in Spenser’s day.

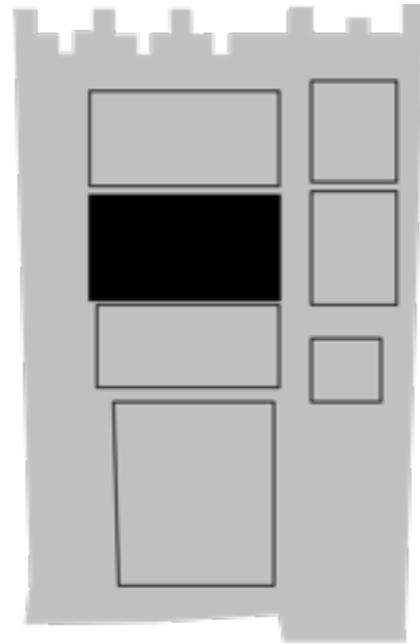
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## TOWER HOUSE STORAGE ROOM AND ARMORY: WEAPONRY

Spenser was known for his experience in several wars. His reputation in this regard helped secure him the nomination of Sheriff of Cork soon before his death. The Munster planters were responsible, in part, for their own security, including supplying able-bodied men and equipment for militias in time of need. Many weapons would have been stored in secure levels of a tower house, including areas like this one between main floors.

Estates would often have had their own smithies and carpentries that could have made weapons, farm and household goods.

### LITERARY CONNECTIONS

*The Faerie Queene* is full of weapons used for fighting on foot and horseback. In a few cases, we learn about weapons manufacture. Book I.i.8-9 presents a Virgilian catalog of trees described according to their industrial, medicinal and folkloric uses. We read this catalog when the hero of Book I, Red Crosse Knight, and his lady Una are caught by a rainstorm and enter into a forest for shelter at the very beginning of the epic:

And fourth they passe, with pleasure forward led,  
Ioying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,  
Which therein shrouded from the tempest dred,  
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.  
Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,  
The sayling Pine, the Cedar proud and tall,  
The vine-propp Elme, the Poplar neuer dry,



The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all,  
The Aspine good for stauers, the Cypresse funerall.

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours  
And Poets sage, the Firre that weepeth still,  
The Willow worne of forlorne Paramours,  
The Eugh obedient to the benders will,  
The Birch for shaftes, the Sallow for the mill,  
The Mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,  
The warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill,  
The fruitfull Oliue, and the Platane round,  
The caruer Holme, the Maple seeldom inward sound. (*FQ* I.i.8-9)

The trees listed here have both positive and negative uses and connotations. It is possible that the “Aspine good for stauers” refers to barrel staves, but it might also refer to weapon “staves” (such as those held by Irish-looking villains in *FQ* II.ix.13.7).

Images of violence and warfare are clustered in the second stanza in particular: laurel for crowning “mightie Conquerours,” the yew (“Eugh”) for bows, myrrh with its “bitter wound” (an apparent allusion to myrrh’s association with the crucified Christ in the Bible, Mark 15.23), the birch for arrow “shaftes,” and the beech for “war” chariots (cf. Homer’s *Iliad* 5.839). Spenser opens his epic with images of trees fashioned for heroic and deadly uses.

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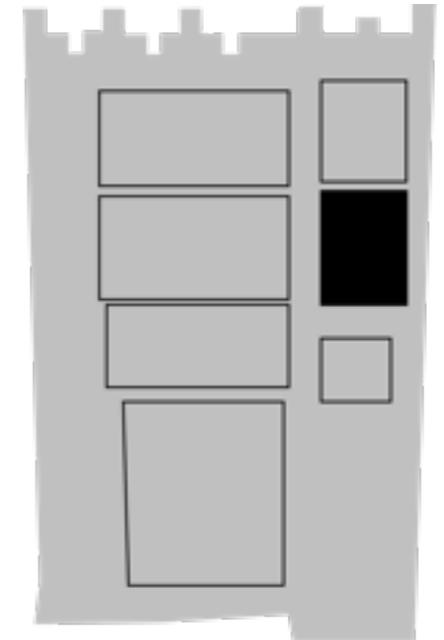
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## TOWER HOUSE CHAPEL: ALTAR-TABLE AND CRUCIFIX

Many tower houses had a private chapel. The east-facing window and layout of this room, including an “aumbry” (a niche), suggests that it could have served as a chapel before Spenser took possession of the tower house. If so, then Spenser could have modified it for his own household use as a religious space.

Spenser was a Protestant, but what kind of Protestant is open to debate. To what extent did he sympathize with the rituals and doctrine of the Anglican, or “high” church, which had parallels with the older, Catholic faith? By contrast, how “puritanical,” and therefore mistrustful of vestigial Catholic ceremonies and doctrine, was he?

How much did he desire continued radical reform of the church following Lutheran or Calvinist principles?

Furthermore, did he believe in *structural* as well as *doctrinal* reform in the church? To what degree for each? How did his opinions evolve? Was he a more hot-headed reformer as a young man, before he came to Ireland? Or was he sympathetic towards tolerant and syncretic religious practices?

As he grew older, how did Ireland’s religious politics influence him? One could argue that his status as a minority English Protestant hardened his militant anti-Catholic and apocalyptic beliefs, a logical reac-

tion to the threats he found surrounding him. He exhibits such beliefs in works he wrote as a young man, for example in his first publication (1569), a translation of the work of Dutch reformer Jan van der Noot.

Spenser's written works give us conflicting impressions concerning his beliefs and where he stood in relation to the current reform of England and Ireland's Protestant and Catholic churches. We have therefore taken the controversial step of creating a modest but icon-filled chapel at Kilcolman. An image of the Christ hangs on the crucifix (many Protestants abhorred the idea of presenting an image of their god, preferring instead a plain crucifix), and a late-medieval mural of St Christopher brightens up the wall. It is imagined here as a visible remnant of the previous inhabitants of the same chapel, which Spenser chose not to white-wash. On the makeshift altar (a table and cloth) lies a Bible, chalice and crucifix. A cushion sits below for kneeling in prayer.

Which Bible was Spenser reading? We leave that unspecified although he likely owned a copy of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559) for worship purposes.

## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

Spenser seems to hate—he ridicules, satirizes and demonizes—the institution of the Catholic church, including the papacy, which he equates in *The Faerie Queene* Book I (for example) with the Whore of Babylon and the Antichrist. In this he follows the Calvinist commentary in the *Geneva Bible* (1560). He had political worries in this regard: the armies of the Catholic empire Spain regularly interfered in Ireland and the Netherlands, and tried to in England, a drama played out repeatedly in the allegories of Book V of *The Faerie Queene* and in other places in his poetry, such as the Orgoglio episode in Book I.

Nonetheless, without censure or irony, Spenser includes Catholic imagery and ideas in his House of Holiness episode in Book I.x of *The Faerie Queene*. Here the Red Crosse Knight undergoes a scourging of the flesh. That hero, the hero of holiness, then becomes St George, a saint from the old liturgy, also the patron saint of England, who undergoes a symbolic crucifixion fighting against the Dragon in canto xi. Saints were redolent of Catholicism, and George becomes an icon or image of Christ himself as we read along. Spenser describes him in words, not images, but Spenser's words are highly imagistic. The 1590 *Faerie Queene* included one woodcut, an image of St George defeating the dragon: in other words, a sort of icon (this woodcut can be found hanging on the bookshelf in his study).

Spenser also appears to be anti-Catholic in his artistic temperament. At the end of Book II, for example, published in the same volume, the hero of temperance, Guyon, violently destroys the highly artistic, if luxurious and decadent, Bower of Bliss. Spenser therefore appears to promote iconoclasm (or image-destruction) at any cost: a radical Protestant idea.

Ireland itself Spenser admires for once being a “holy-Island” that “florished in fame/ Of wealths and goodnesse, far aboute the rest” (*The Faerie Queene* VII.vi.37.7, 38.1-2), a compliment to its ancient status as an island famed for its saints and scholars, long before the Protestant Reformation occurred. Yet in Spenser’s day Ireland had—from his point of view—degenerated to a bad condition, occupied by rebellious papists and no-good, feckless Protestant church appointees (as we hear in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*).

For Spenser, the best cure for Ireland’s perillous spiritual condition was reformed, state-sponsored religion that would follow a political re-conquest and reformation of the country. Spenser would, presumably, uphold this religion at Kilcolman. In his poem, “Colin Clouts Come Home Againe,” Spenser’s alter-ego Colin Clout, having visited London (to the east) and returned to Kilcolman (in the west), enthusiastically describes to his fellow shepherds the “lookes” of “Cynthia,” *i.e.*, Queen Elizabeth I, whom he saw at court. Her looks and favor inspire religious devotion in him, and he compares her to the sun shining from the “windowes of the east”:

like beames of the morning Sun,  
Forth looking through the windowes of the East:  
When first the fleecie cattell haue begun  
Vpon the perled grasse to make their feast.  
Her thoughts are like the fume of Franckincence,  
Which from a golden Censer forth doth rise:  
And throwing forth sweet odours mounts fro thence  
In rolling globes vp to the vaulted skies. (lines 604-11)

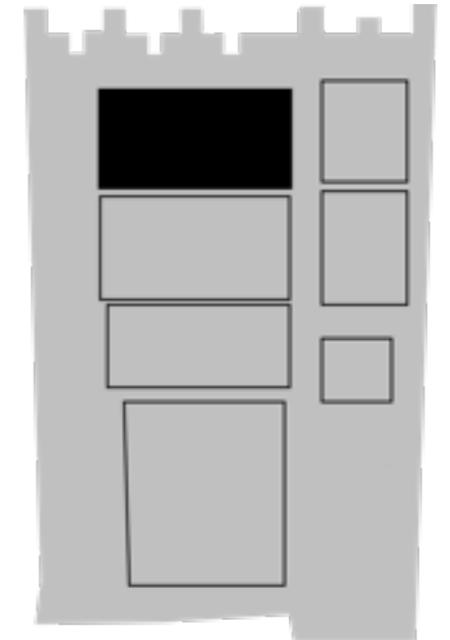
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## TOWER HOUSE BEDROOM: CRIB AND FIREPLACE



Near the fireplace was a logical place to stay warm at all times of year in chilly Ireland.

Spenser raised at least three children at Kilcolman: from his second marriage (in 1594, to Elizabeth Boyle), a son, Peregrine; from his first marriage (in 1579, to Machabeus Chylde), a daughter, Katherine, and a son, Sylvanus. Sylvanus and his descendants would end up inheriting Kilcolman. A crib was a hopeful sign that a landed gentleman's name and property would be passed on to his heirs.

Child mortality was a constant in the early modern period.

Spenser's contemporary, the writer Ben Jonson, reported that Spenser lost another child, a baby, in the destruction of the castle in 1598. How trustworthy this statement is is unclear. Jonson also said that Spenser died penniless, which is unlikely, and Jonson regularly focused on the death of children in his creative work. He may therefore have been embellishing an already dramatic story about the poet's narrow escape during the uprising.

A story, told by the antiquarian James Ware in his preface to Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland* (1633), relates that a different sort of child, i.e., the unpublished remainder of *The Faerie Queene*, was lost in transit following the desertion of his castle.

## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

Children are an occasional feature of Spenser's poetry. Some, like the infant Ruddymane in *The Faerie Queene*, appear in highly traumatic circumstances: Ruddymane is found playing in the blood of his dying mother, Amavia, who has stabbed herself (*FQ* II.i.39ff). Ruddymane, whose name means "red hand," has been read by one of Spenser's early commentators, John Upton, as alluding to the heraldic Red Hand of Ulster, and hence to the threat of violence and rebellion in the north (from whence soldiers came to sack Kilcolman, for example). Amavia, likewise, could evoke the Irish queen of the fairies (cf. Shakespeare's "Queen Mab" in *Romeo and Juliet*). Ruddymane's deceased father, Mordant, might glance at the English soldier, Cap-tain Mordant, who according to state papers was reprimanded for bad behavior in Ireland in the mid-1580s. With the Ruddymane epi-sode, is Spenser somehow allegorizing the bloody mess that Ireland was in?

Other children, like the "thousand thousand naked babes" in the ever-fertile Garden of Adonis (*FQ* III.vi.32.3) or the cupids (or amoretti) in his courtship poems, *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, stand for erotic creativity and new life in Spenser's work. For example, in "Epithalamion," the "sons of Venus," *i.e.*, cupids, *amoretti* or "winged loves," symbolize Spenser's sonnets themselves, titled *Amoretti*. These cupids fly and "play" around his bedroom at Kilcolman on his wedding night, which the speaker hopes will stay silently peaceful and free from threat while the couple makes love:

But let stil Silence trew night watches keepe,  
That sacred peace may in assurance rayne,  
And tymely sleep, when it is tyme to sleepe,  
May poure his limbs forth on your pleasant playne,

The whiles an hundred little winged loues,  
Like diuers feathered doues,  
Shall fly and flutter round about your bed,  
And in the secret darke, that none reprocues,  
Their prety stealthes shal worke, and snares shal spread To  
filch away sweet snatches of delight,  
Conceald through couert night.  
Ye sonnes of Venus, play your sports at will,  
For greedy pleasure, carelesse of your toyes,  
Thinks more vpon her paradise of ioyes,  
Then what ye do, albe it good or ill.  
All night therefore attend your merry play,  
For it will soone be day:  
Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing,  
Ne will the woods now answer, nor your Eccho ring.  
(*"Epithalamion"* 353-71)

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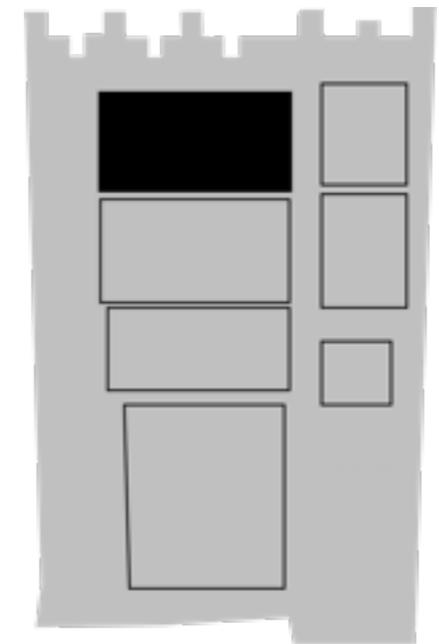
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## TOWER HOUSE BEDROOM: CHEST

A good place to put money or other precious objects in a tower house was on the top floor, because that would be the hardest place for an invader or thief to reach.

The metal chest here is of the kind with elaborate locking mechanisms.

The chest is a Spanish model; Spenser could have purchased or salvaged similar models from the flotsam and jetsam washed up on Irish shores in the sixteenth century, including after ships from the Great Armada crashed there in 1588. In 1587, in a brief period of piracy (or opportunism, depending on the legal interpretation), Spenser captained a seized Spanish ship, loaded with wine, and sailed it from the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry to Cork harbor.



## LITERARY CONNECTIONS

Spenser's employer Arthur, Lord Grey wrote to Queen Elizabeth during the Desmond rebellion that the Spanish besieged at Smerwick had a "coffer" in which they stored all their "treasure." It was duly seized and its contents of silver ("plate") coins distributed among his men.

The Munster Plantation offered Spenser himself significant opportunity in land, treasure and status. He, like his fellow New Englishmen, or like Guyon, the hero of Temperance who resists the snares of Mammon (in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*), had to be on guard against its corrupting influences. He also had to guard against thieves.

The treasure inside the chest might remind us of Spenser's bride, described in Amoretti 15 as containing "all this worlds riches that may farre be found." Her lips are like "Rubies," her eyes like "Saphyres," and so forth, but most fair of all is "her mind adord with vertues manifold." In the following wedding poem, "Epithalamion," we hear that "all her body" is "like a pallace fayre,/ Ascending vppe with many a stately stayre,/ To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre" (178-80). Elizabeth Boyle was herself a prize to be won.

A chest lost at sea is fought over by two sons of "Milesio," Amidas and Bracidas, in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* (the "Book of Justice"). Artegall, the hero of Justice, finds Amidas and Bracidas fighting over a

... Coffe strong,  
Fast bound on euery side with iron bands,  
But seeming to haue suffred mickle wrong,

Either by being wreckt vppon the sands,  
Or being carried farre from forraine lands. (*FQ* V.iv.5.1-5)

The ensuing story involves a complicated legal matter, involving a dispute over land lost and found (land washed from one brother to the other by action of the sea), wives lost and found (the wife of one brother eloped with the other; the other wife floated back the other way), as well as treasure lost and found (the chest floated, accompanied by wife, from the one brother to the other). Artegall, acting as judge, resolves the dispute through the principle of salvage (or, put crudely, finders-keepers): to whom the land, treasure and wife goes, thanks to the action of the sea, so belongs the ownership of each:

For what the mighty Sea hath once possest,  
And plucked quite from all possessors hand,  
Whether by rage of waues, that neuer rest,  
Or else by wracke, that wretches hath distrest,  
He [*i.e.*, the Sea] may dispose by his imperiall might,  
As thing at randon left, to whom he list. (*FQ* V.iv.19.2-7)

The episode has clear Irish significance in that Milesio was the legendary king of Spain who colonized prehistoric Ireland, according to Irish legend. His descendants were the Irish themselves. In Spenser's poem, however, it is possible that one brother stands allegorically for Ireland and the other for England, Scotland and/or Wales. In either case, the resolution offered here indicates that Spenser fantasized about such a judgment being applied to his Irish situation. Artegall's decision echoes the judgment of Dame Nature in *The Faerie Queene* Book VII ("The Mutabilitie Cantos"), which occurs on Arlo Hill, near Kilcolman: in that episode, Jove is allowed to keep

the power that he took by force and is “confirm’d in his imperiall see,” or throne (FQ VII.vii.59.7). Spenser, by “imperiall might,” design and fortune, ended up with land, wife and treasure at Kilcolman, until the seas of fate took them all away again.

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5

# VIRTUAL KILCOLMAN: NEW REALITIES

## VIRTUAL REALITY

Digital Humanities are an ideal platform with which to explore the interdisciplinary character of Spenser's world and literary output. Spenser studies have had an increasing digital presence in places such as *Spenser Review*, the on-line newsletter-journal of the International Spenser Society. Simultaneously, 3-D modeling and 360-degree photography of historic sites is increasingly popular, and these models are easily adapted for uses in Virtual Reality (VR).



Sophisticated and widely disseminated versions of cultural-monument tours adapted to VR can be found on platforms like Google Culture and Google Explorer. Many of these tours are self-guided and most of them are based on 360-degree photography of present-day monuments, combined with Google Earth-type navigation. Other educational VR websites focused on early modern monuments are listed below.

The *Centering Spenser* website features a preliminary “beta” version of a tour of Kilcolman Castle:

<http://core.ecu.edu/umc/Munster/wondaVR.html>

The tour is being developed by Doug Barnum at East Carolina University for use in Virtual Reality applications for Android phones and for the Oculus Go headset. Barnum has also placed a preliminary version of the tour on the web platform WondaVR, which is accessible on phones and desktop computers. The model allows room-to-room exploration of the castle compound; interactivity is restricted to a few key pop-up features or “interpretive stations” that explore objects found within stationary 360-degree views of each room.

It is hoped that a more fully interactive rooms can be developed in the future for the Oculus Rift device. Oculus Rift headsets are ideal spaces for such virtual tours thanks to their powerful gaming-style abilities (compare with the VR tour of Anne Frank’s House currently available on the Oculus Rift store). Such tours will benefit academics, students, and the general public alike.

*Sample VR Websites featuring Early Modern Monuments:*

*Virtual St Paul’s Cathedral Project:* <https://vpcp.chass.ncsu.edu>

[models St Paul’s cathedral in London as it looked before the great fire of 1666.]

*Charles V/R:* <https://greenhousestudios.uconn.edu/charlesvr/>

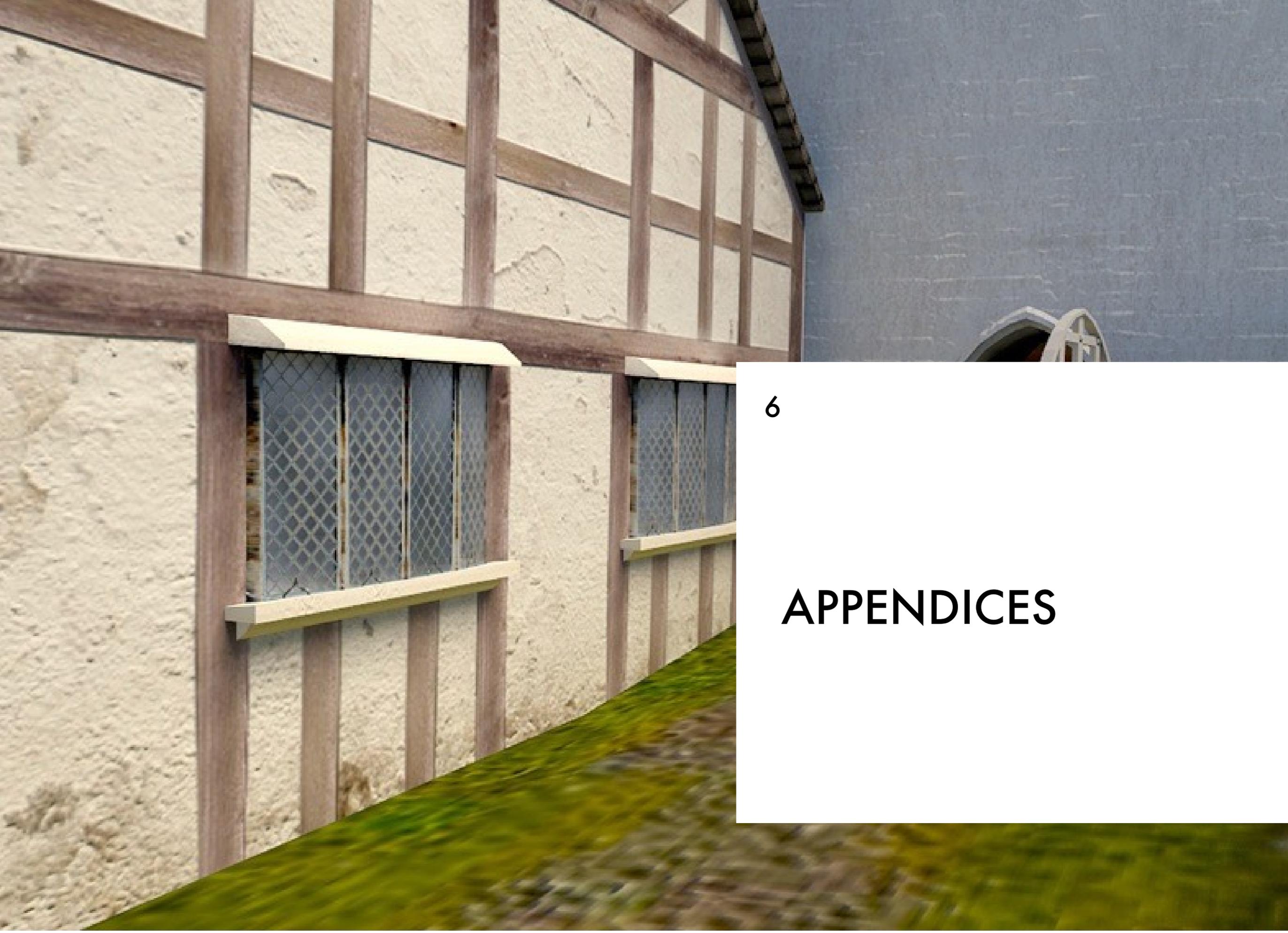
[recreates in VR a particular event, the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1530, in sacred architectural circumstances.]

*Reconstructing the Rose:* <https://reconstructingtherose.tome.press>

[uses archaeology and documentary research to offer a richly detailed, multifaceted and scholarly presentation of this famous London theater once used by Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare.]



**Author Thomas Herron demonstrates the Kilcolman Castle VR model on an Oculus Go headset to Professor Jennifer Vaught (Kalamazoo, MI, May 2019).**



6

## APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1: INDEX OF CONTENTS OF WEBSITE

This general index highlights content that appears on the *Centering Spenser* website.

## Overview:

- Purpose and Subject
- Spenser and His “New English” Community at Kilcolman
- Audience, Features and Methods
- Appeal

## Biography/Timeline

- Spenser Biography
- Interactive Timeline of Spenser in Ireland
- Timeline of Spenser’s Life

## Kilcolman

- Interactive Jobson Map (c. 1590) of Plantation
- Stylized Map With Kilcolman
- Settlement at Kilcolman:
  - Virtual Tour
  - Interactive Tour
  - Object Descriptions

- Castle Image Gallery
- Cross Sections and Plans
- Excavation Diagrams of Buildings & Finds
- Kilcolman Today Image Gallery
- Historic Image Gallery
- Interactive Jobson Map (c. 1590) of Plantation
- Stylized Map With Kilcolman
- Map and List of Munster Plantations, c. 1590
- Map of Kilcolman Archaeology Sites
- Modern Munster Maps
- Ordnance Survey Map (Orthographic, Historic)
- Kilcolman Castle History
- Life at Kilcolman: Uses of Buildings
- The Munster Plantation
- Spenser and Raleigh
- Rivers
- Roads
- Desmond Rebellion (1579-83)
- Destruction of Munster Plantation (1598)
- Kilcolman Today Image Gallery

- Historic Image Gallery

### **Castle Reconstruction**

- Virtual Tour
- Interactive Tour
- Object Descriptions
- Reconstructed Kilcolman Image Gallery
- Cross Sections and Plans

### **Bibliographies and Sources**

- Select bibliography of published works with relevance to an archaeological study of the Munster Plantation
- Select bibliography of works pertaining to Spenser, Raleigh and the archaeology and settlement of the Munster Plantation
- Spenser and Ireland Bibliography (to 1996)
- Edmund Spenser World Bibliography

### **Resources**

- Index of citations of Spenser's prose and poetry on the *Centering Spenser* website
- Index of places and characters referenced in Spenser's works on the *Centering Spenser* website
- Index of major subjects on the *Centering Spenser* website

## APPENDIX 2: SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHED WORKS WITH RELEVANCE TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE MUNSTER PLANTATION

Compiled 5/20/2013 by James Lyttleton

Resistivity testing at Kilcolman in 1993, during archaeological excavations directed by Eric Klingelhofer (Photo: E. Klingelhofer).



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# APPENDIX 3: SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS PERTAINING TO SPENSER, RALEIGH, AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND SETTLEMENT OF THE MUNSTER PLANTATION

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