



Boghall Castle in Lanarkshire, Scotland.
(Engraving by Samuel Sparrow after drawing by Francis Grose FSA, published March 4, 1790)
<http://www.stravaiging.com/history/castle/boghall-castle>

DID THE FLEMINGS COME FROM FLANDERS?

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HAMLET Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?
HORATIO Aye, my lord, and of calves' skins too.
HAMLET They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in this...

(The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: Act 5 Scene 1)

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a Fleming is a native or inhabitant of Flanders. In Middle English, the word Fleming is spelled *Flemyng*, occasionally *Flemmyng* or *Flemynge*. This was, in turn, derived from Old English: *Flæming*. Fleming is, moreover, a present-day family name that is borne by approximately 150,000 people, who, if gathered together from all the four corners of the world, would constitute a rather populous city, a virtual city that I would like to call Flemington. Surely, the correction of any historical inaccuracy with respect to the Fleming family name will be of interest to the citizens of Flemington, perhaps even to citizens of other virtual cities.

The history of the Fleming surname is particularly difficult to research

because of the ethnic connotation. It is commonly considered indisputable that immigrants from Flanders to the British Isles must typically have chosen Fleming as a family name. Intuition, however, can lead to untruth, and assumption is the mother of all mistakes.¹ (The world, after all, is not flat; it is round.) Before accepting an explanation of the origin of any family name, it is imperative that we first thoroughly examine the historical evidence of English surname formation that is contained in the surviving rolls and charters of the Middle Ages. Fortunately, this is not as difficult a task as it might appear. Various exchequer rolls from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that are preserved at the National Archives of Great Britain have in recent years been transcribed, edited, and published, either in book form or as searchable databases on the Internet.

We must distinguish between the two types of surname that occur in English documents of the Middle Ages. One type is the comparatively rare hereditary family name. The other type is the much more common byname (Middle English: *ekename*—additional name). Whether locative, occupational, or ethnic, a byname was seldom passed on from father to son except as a kind of patronymic. Thus, a certain Richard Taillour might have been a tailor, but he could also have been the son of a tailor who was surnamed Taillour, although not a tailor himself. In such a manner, a byname could become a hereditary family name. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the assumption of a family name may not have occurred generally among the English population until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the surviving poll tax returns of 1377, 1379, and 1381, even a cursory analysis of the various surnames that occur indicates that many of these are bynames, and not hereditary family names. Clear-cut examples of hereditary family names in these records are very unusual. Not only were men with surnames such as Taillour, Webbe, Baker, Smyth, or Miller usually the village tailor, weaver, baker, blacksmith, or miller; in village after village, specific surnames mostly occur only once in the records, which would hardly be the case had they been established family names. The prevalence of bynames (i.e. *ekenames*) in medieval English tax records probably reflects a naming tradition that arose among the populace of post-Conquest England in conjunction with the practice of christening children with Norman personal names.² In the lay subsidy returns of 1524 and 1525, many of the surnames that occurred in the fourteenth-century poll tax returns would appear to have become family names, but it was not until after 1538, the year parish record keeping was introduced in England, that the adoption of a proper family name by lower-class citizens who did not already have one would have become more or less mandatory.³ Thus, when searching the records for people surnamed Fleming, we must constantly remind ourselves that Fleming can either be a hereditary family name or just a surname that identifies a foreigner from Flanders.

The best place to start looking for Flemings from Flanders is at the website for the National Archives of Great Britain. We shall first search the catalogue using “le AND fleming” as search words:

http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?_aq=le%20fleming&dss=range&ro=any&p=1300%7C1200%7C1100%7C1000&ps=60

Le Fleming is the anglicized version of the original Anglo-Norman family name *le Flameng*, which was also spelled *le Flamang*, and *le Flamenc*. (All spelling variations of the name were pronounced identically, i.e. læ flamã.) I have used 1399

as a cut-off date for the search because by the late fourteenth century the Old-French surname had largely been superceded by the Middle-English surname without a definite article: *Flemyng* or *Flemmyng*, but very seldom *le Flemyng*. As we scroll down through the catalogue entries concerning 827 documents, we soon notice that most of the documents pertain to any of a number of historically prominent medieval families: the le Flemings of Southampton, Nottingham, York, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cumberland, Slane in Ireland (originally from Devonshire and Cornwall); and the le Flemings of Scotland who are recorded in the Ragman Rolls of 1296. In no document is there any mention of Flanders. Indeed, only a single document would seem to pertain to someone who would possibly have come from Flanders:

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C9060821>

When we download a scan of the document, we find that William Frombald's grandfather is called Frombald Flemyng, not Frombald le Flameng, even though the document is in French. The definite article has been used (incorrectly) by the editor in an explanatory note. It is interesting to see that both son and grandson are referred to in the document by the patronymic Frombald, and not by the epithet Flemyng. Frombald being a Flemish personal name, we may reasonably assume that the grandfather was from Flanders, but in this particular case Fleming would not seem to have become a family name.

Having made the acquaintance of people in the Middle Ages whose family name was le Fleming, let us institute a search for people who in documents may have been assigned the Middle-English word *Flemyng* as a surname denoting national origin, an epithet that would possibly have evolved into a family name:

http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?_or1=flemyng&_or2=flemmyng&_dss=range&_ro=any&_ps=60

Once again, scrolling down through catalogue entries concerning 853 documents, we find no mention of Flanders. There are, however, about 10 documents which refer to a certain John Horn, Fleming and fishmonger of London:

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/rd/3a7b7960-59a9-428b-b871-ee29f29ae7aa>

The earliest of these documents, from 1326, actually refers to him as John Flemynge:

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/rd/62b922f5-8f15-409b-9ce6-8cfa981b95e4>

Was John Horn the fishmonger a Fleming named Horn? Perhaps his descendants were surnamed Fleming. But if we use Horn as a search word instead of Flemyng/Flemmyng, restricting the search to the time period 1199 to 1399, we find that his father, Sir John Horn, was sheriff of London in 1270 and alderman for St. Magnus the Martyr near London Bridge. Sir John, it would appear, had three sons: John, Andrew, and Geoffrey; all of whom became wealthy fishmongers with residences along Bridge Street on the London side of the Thames. John Horn

Flemynge, who died before 1353, had a wife named Alice, a daughter named Goditha, a son named Thomas Horn, and, it would appear, also a son named John Horn, a fishmonger, who was alderman for Billingsgate Ward in 1377, 1379, and 1381, and was in 1381 accused of actively assisting the rebels in entering London during the Peasants' Revolt. Of the fishmongers named Horn that are to be found recorded in the city archives of London, only John Horn, son of Sir John Horn, is called a Fleming. Horn was obviously the family name, probably derived from the town of Hoorn in the Netherlands. Why John Horn the younger was called a Fleming must remain a mystery. Perhaps his mother was from Flanders.

The many thousands of names that were entered in the lay subsidy and poll tax returns of the fourteenth century are not available as a database at the National Archives. Some of these returns have, however, been transcribed and published in book form, namely the lay subsidy of 1334 and the poll taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381.⁴ These volumes are not indexed with regard to surnames, which makes surname research very laborious. Notwithstanding, should you work your way through the transcriptions as I have, entry by entry, you would soon become aware of the fact that Fleming, whether meant as a hereditary family name or as a byname, is not particularly common in these records. In most counties for which tax returns survive, there are only a few entries of tax-liable persons who are surnamed Fleming, and in some counties none at all. In County Essex, where Flemings would seem to have been particularly numerous, seventeen people during the 1377 and 1381 poll tax collections were recorded by the surname Flemyng, eleven men and six women. Four of the men are listed as weavers (*textorius*), which naturally conjures the notion that these particular Flemings might actually have been from Flanders, that the word Flemyng in these and various other cases was, perhaps, recorded by the scribe as a surname denoting national origin, and not as a family name.

Much more useful in our search for evidence of the word Fleming used as a surname denoting national origin are the returns of the alien subsidies that were levied between 1440 and 1487. These returns have been researched and edited under the auspices of the Arts & Humanities Research Council and made available for researchers at:

<http://www.englishimmigrants.com/>

If we go to "Advanced Search" and type Fleming into the box labeled "Nationality/Place of Origin" we discover an alphabetical list of 1163 people who the editors conclude must have immigrated to England from Flanders. Although reference to a specific document preserved at the National Archives is given for each name, it is not possible to view any of the documents in order to check the actual wording of the entries, as these documents have not yet been digitalized; thus, we must assume that as long as the nationality of a particular person is not enclosed in brackets when we open the "full record" tab, the nationality of this person is evident from the context of the original document. However, once we have scrolled down the list to where people surnamed Fleming (Flemyng/Flemmyng) are recorded, we find that both place of origin and nationality in the full record are almost always enclosed in brackets, apparently indicating that the person's nationality cannot be ascertained from the context of the original document. These approximately 250 tax-liable persons, with a few exceptions, have been classified in

the database as Flemish solely by evidence of their Fleming surname. But as we have seen, in medieval records Fleming can either be a family name or a surname that denotes national origin. Considering the fact that both Scots and Irish living in England were usually obliged to pay tax as aliens in the fifteenth century, we can assume that some of these 250 people named Fleming were not Flemish. But despite our not being able to determine which Flemings were from Ireland or Scotland, and which were from Flanders, are there any generalizations that we can safely make concerning those who must actually have come from Flanders? To begin with, we may assume that many were illiterate. Additionally, as first generation immigrants, many were not fluent in English. And perhaps most importantly, none had taken the family name Fleming with them out of Flanders. Fleming is not a word in Flemish (i.e. Middle-Dutch). I suggest that, like the great majority of other people who were recorded in the alien subsidy rolls, foreigners from Flanders were given a surname in English by the tax collectors at the time of liability evaluation. Moreover, many of these foreigners were probably not aware of the fact that they had been honoured with a particular surname.

Searching the database for people with the surname Flemyng/Flemmyng gives 248 results. The subsidy rolls and other contemporary records show that five of these people were from Ireland, one person was from Scotland, and one person was from Brabant. The rest are unspecified in the rolls as to national origin, but in the database are assumed to have been from Flanders, apparently because of the surname. Searching the database using "dutchman" as a keyword gives 1,170 results (Dewcheman, Docheman, Duchman, etc.). Twenty-three were from Flanders, three from "Dutchland," two from Brabant, one from Cleves, and one from France. The rest are unspecified in the rolls as to national origin, but are assumed in the database to have been from the Low Countries. Using "frenchman" as a keyword gives 2,004 results (Frenchman, Frenschman, Frenscheman, Frensch, etc.). Fifty-six were from Holland, twenty-two from Normandy, ten from Ireland, and four from Scotland. National origin is unspecified in 1,884 results; however, these people are assumed to have been from France.

Leaving the *England's Immigrants* database, we shall now consult the 1881 census of Great Britain by means of the software entitled *The British 19th Century Surname Atlas* (<http://www.archersoftware.co.uk/satlas01.htm>). This census enumerates 13,663 individuals as having the family name Fleming/Flemming, 65 individuals as having the name Dutchman, and 15 individuals as having the name Frenchman. These statistics almost speak for themselves. The surnames Dutchman and Frenchman, two of the most common in the alien subsidy rolls,⁵ apparently did not become family names to any significant extent. From this we can conclude that these two surnames were probably not used by tax collectors in the fifteenth century to denote families; they were used as a convenient way to record the nationality of those who were liable to pay the alien subsidy. The word Fleming was from the twelfth century an established family name, but it was occasionally also used as a surname for foreigners from Flanders. Nevertheless, I can see no credible reason to conclude, without direct supporting evidence, that Fleming should have been taken by foreigners as a hereditary family name any more than Dutchman and Frenchman were. I cannot, of course, prove that no immigrant from Flanders to the British Isles ever adopted Fleming as a family name, but I can conclusively show that this cannot have occurred on a regular basis, that is to say, "typically." The evidence is in the statistics from the 1881 census. Let us compare

the total number of Flemings enumerated in the census (13,663) to the total number of Douglasses (16,432). The Douglas family name (and the personal name Douglas) originated as the hereditary surname of the descendants of William de Dufglas, who flourished in the late twelfth century. No theories of multiple origins for the Douglas surname have ever been proposed. It would thus appear possible, at least judging by the numbers, that Fleming could also have originated in the twelfth century as the hereditary surname of a single extended family, despite the ethnic connotation. Other single-origin family names in the census were: Gordon (Richard and Adam de Gordun, late twelfth century) 18,872; Bruce (Robert de Brus, late eleventh century) 14,039; Crawford (John de Craufurd, twelfth century) 14,684; and Sinclair (William de Sancto Claro, eleventh century) 15,465. Compare these to the surname Scott, which is a family name that, again judging by the numbers, would, more likely than Fleming, have multiple origins. In the *England's Immigrants* database, there are 1,031 people listed by this surname. In the 1881 census, 75,808 people were enumerated as having the family name Scott.

The earliest records of the le Fleming (*le Flameng/Flamang*) family name are from the second half of the twelfth century. Erkenbald le Fleming, grandson of Erkenbald Flandrensis, was advisor to Henry II of England, and in this capacity he was in some way involved in the plot to rid the king of a certain troublesome priest named Thomas Becket. William le Fleming served as chamberlain to Queen Eleanor, consort of Henry II, during the years of her imprisonment, 1173-1189. Richard le Fleming was justiciar under Richard I and King John, and also sheriff of Cornwall. A different Richard le Fleming was sheriff of South Glamorgan in Wales at the turn of the thirteenth century. (This Richard le Fleming accompanied King John to Ireland in 1210.) Alard le Fleming was a military advisor and commander during the reigns of Richard I and King John, and during the minority of Henry III. (Alard le Fleming and his son Hugh were also with King John on the crossing to Waterford, Ireland in 1210.) Stephen le Fleming, son of Erkenbald, commanding nine knights and supplying fifty horses, accompanied Prince John to Ireland in 1186. Reiner le Fleming was the steward of William le Meschin, lord of Coupland in Cumberland. Michael le Fleming, probably Reiner le Fleming's brother, was a prominent landholder near Furness Abbey in Cumberland. Baldwin le Fleming of Biggar, younger brother of Erkenbald le Fleming, settled in Scotland during the reign of David I. And Jordan le Fleming was captured by English forces while defending King William the Lion at the Battle of Alnwick in 1174.⁶ Nowhere in the records can we find evidence that any of these men were from Flanders. By applying the principle of Occam's razor, I think we can thus disregard the theory that immigrants to the British Isles from Flanders typically chose Fleming as a family name. The theory is not supported by any evidence other than the misleadingly obvious fact that, in English, natives of Flanders are called Flemings.

The point I wish to make is that the history of the Fleming family of the British Isles actually does go back to one of the companions of William the Conqueror, namely Erkenbald Flandrensis of Rouen in Normandy, whose father, Erkenbald Vicecomes, would appear to have hailed from Saint-Omer in Flanders. The grandsons of Erkenbald Flandrensis became known by the surname "le Flameng" probably because Erkenbald Flandrensis had been well-known to the French-speaking Normans by that epithet. It is true, Fleming is at present a relatively common family name, which according to the National Records of Scotland website (<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital->

[events/births/popular-names/archive/100-most-common-surnames](http://www.familynames.com/uk/100-most-common-surnames)) ranks number 86 among family names in Scotland. Compare this ranking to that of various names reputed to be of single origin such as Gordon (ranking 50), Bruce (73), Crawford (75), Sinclair (79), and Douglas (88). I am suggesting that Fleming is a relatively common name, not because many unrelated families have, in the past, assumed Fleming as a family name, but because of the phenomenon known as genetic drift; that is to say, various generations in this family, as well as in other ancient families of similar ranking, happened to produce an unusually large number of male children. All the same, I am on no account implying that the citizens of our virtual "Flemington" are all descended from one man. Like every other ancient family, the Flemings have had their fair share of premarital and extramarital liaisons. Men with family names other than Fleming have sired sons who afterwards were surnamed Fleming. In addition, families of no relation whatsoever to the ancestral Fleming family of the British Isles have probably from time to time assumed Fleming as their surname, perhaps even some families from Flanders. I have found no record of this actually having occurred, but I have little doubt that it did. In the course of time, the name has likely been purloined quite a few times. Moreover, it is important to remember that some of the citizens of virtual Flemington are descended from Fleming families that originated on the European continent. The earliest record of the German/Pomeranian Flemming family is that of Henricus Flemmingus de Havelberg in the *Codex diplomaticus Brandenburgensis* from 1209. Concerning this family see:

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flemming_%28Adelsgeschlecht%29

In addition, there is a Fleming family that appears to have originated in the Belgian province of Hainaut, more specifically in the medieval territory of the Tournaisis. The earliest record of a member of this family that I have been able to find is in a lease from 1384 by Jehan de Bauwegines and Laurench le Flameng, receivers of the town of Tournai, to Piat de Leuse, of a piece of land near the little gate "des norriers" at a rent of 15s. Furthermore, Nicholas le Flameng was elected abbot of Saint-Martin in Tournai in 1465, and was succeeded by his nephew, Jean le Flameng in 1489.⁷ From the 15th century to the present, Flameng is a fairly common surname in records of the neighbouring Belgian provinces of Hainaut and Walloon Brabant. Present-day spelling variations of the Flameng surname are Flamen, Flamenc, and Flament/ Flamant, all pronounced in the same manner (flamã). In the archives of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain & Ireland⁸ we find sixteenth and seventeenth century records of about twenty individuals (families) with these surnames, Flamen being the most common. All of these people would appear to have been Huguenots who came as refugees to England from either France or from the Southern Netherlands. However, if we return to the census of 1881, we find only one individual with the ancient Flameng family name. Thus it would seem that Flameng, Flamen, Flamenc, and Flament did not long survive as family names in England. The foreign refugees who originally brought these names to England probably tired of hearing their name pronounced so atrociously and decided to change it to Fleming.

The idea that the surname Fleming must have been taken as a family name by various unrelated families with origins in Flanders is centuries old. In the Domesday survey of 1085-6, we find a number of individuals who were recorded by

the Latin epithet *Flandrensis*. The list is not long. We have *Walterus Flandrensis*, a tenant-in-chief in Bedfordshire, whose name is usually rendered in English as “Walter the Fleming,” although in genealogical literature you can sometimes find him erroneously named “Walter le Fleming.” We also have *Balduini Flandrensis*, *Turstino Flandrensis*, *Hugo Flandrensis*, *Odo Flandrensis*, *Rainbertus Flandrensis*, *Winemarus Flandrensis*, and *Erchenbaldus Flandrensis*. The last man on the list, Erkenbald of Rouen, was, as far as records show, the only one of these men to have descendants surnamed “le Fleming.” The le Flemings first appear in rolls and charters of the reigns of Henry II of England and William I of Scotland. These were all very high-ranking men. However, the le Flemings were also surnamed *Flandrensis* in many documents, as were other men who actually did come from Flanders. This apparent anomaly led eighteenth-century genealogists to conclude that all of the men named le Fleming or *Flandrensis* in twelfth-century documents were from Flanders. A interesting example of the misinformation to which this conclusion has led is found in the *People of Medieval Scotland* database (db.poms.ac.uk):

[http://db.poms.ac.uk/search/search?
basic_search_type=people&query=fleming&ordering=&years=1093-
1314&show_all=false](http://db.poms.ac.uk/search/search?basic_search_type=people&query=fleming&ordering=&years=1093-1314&show_all=false)

Each of the 57 entries concerns someone who in the database has been surnamed Fleming. However, if we go to the documents from which these names have been taken, we find that in many of the documents, the surname that actually occurs is *Flandrensis*, and not Fleming. A search using *flandrensis* as a key word does not turn up any results. How many of these 57 entries concern men who were members of the early Scottish Fleming family (*Flamang/Flandrensis*), and how many concern foreigners from Flanders (*Flandrensis*)? Whatever the case may be, it is apparent that Fleming and *Flandrensis* are not particularly unusual surnames in Scottish documents of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Would not this be an indication of multiple origins for the Fleming surname? Surprisingly, if we search the database for individuals recorded by the surname Comyn, we turn up 67 results.⁹

[http://db.poms.ac.uk/search/search?
basic_search_type=people&query=comyn&ordering=&years=1093-
1314&show_all=false](http://db.poms.ac.uk/search/search?basic_search_type=people&query=comyn&ordering=&years=1093-1314&show_all=false)

The Comyn surname (afterwards spelled Cumming, Cummings, Cummin, and Cummins) is generally considered to have originated in a single family. Robert de Comines, who was made Earl of Northumberland by William the Conqueror in 1067, was probably from Comines in French Flanders.¹⁰ I wonder if he and Erkenbald *Flandrensis* were related to one another. Erkenbald was almost certainly from the line of the castellans of Saint-Omer, a family that the Belgian historian Ernest Warlop called “the House of Menen.”¹¹ The distance between the French towns of Comines and Menen is only about twelve kilometers. But regardless of whether or not Robert and Erkenbald were related, I hope that in all the above I have managed to shake your belief in the theory that the Flemings came from Flanders, if indeed you have entertained such a belief.

- 1 “Assumption is the mother of all mistakes” is attributed to American political scientist Eugene Lewis Fordsworthe.
- 2 The wide-spread practice among the general population of England of assigning to a person a byname in addition to the baptismal name probably predates the Norman Conquest, although little evidence of the practice can be found in Anglo-Saxon documents. The Norman knightly class began to use their fathers' or grandfathers' locative or, in a few cases, ethnic bynames as hereditary family names in the twelfth century. This fashion of adopting a family name eventually spread to other people of high social status. I suggest, however, that people of relatively low social standing mostly continued to be distinguished by their patronyms or by their specific locative, occupational, and ethnic bynames, which prior to the fifteenth century seldom developed into hereditary family names. Nevertheless, bynames were just as useful to the tax collector as family names when it came to reporting to the Crown which particular William among many had (or had not) paid his taxes.
- 3 I would like you to imagine the vicar of some small parish in England. The year is 1545. He has recently baptised the first-born child of the village baker and is presently occupied with the task of recording the baptism in his register. “John, your child must have a family name. His Majesty commands it. You can choose any name you like. Shall I write Baker? Or if you do not like Baker, what do you say to Smith? Or what about Jones? Your father's name, like yours, is John, but he is originally from Wales.” I suggest that the progenitors of many present-day family names may have lived no longer ago than the sixteenth century. The predominant theory at present is that most families in England had adopted a hereditary family name by the turn of the fifteenth century. In my estimation, this theory is disproved by the great number of surnames that occur in the early censuses of Great Britain (1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, and 1881) that were far too rare to have originated as family names as early as in the fourteenth century. I would also like to suggest that family names such as Smith, Jones, Williams, Taylor, Brown, Davies, Evans, Wilson, Thomas, and Johnson are particularly common today because they were particularly convenient choices for a surname in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Hundreds of families may have assumed Smith as a family name, not because the family father or grandfather was a blacksmith, but simply because Smith was one of the first names that sprang to mind. When hard-pressed, it is not easy to be imaginative, which is what makes Smith and Jones such attractive choices for an alias.
- 4 *The Lay Subsidy of 1334*, Robin E. Glasscock, OUP/British Academy (1975); and *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381*, Carolyn Fenwick, OUP/British Academy, 3 volumes (1998-2005). A comparison of these two very important sets of records would seem to show the extent to which many (hereditary) surname lineages may have become extinct between 1334 and 1377. The Black Death struck England in 1348-1350, with an estimated mortality rate of 50%; and in 1361-1362, with an estimated mortality rate of 20%.
- 5 The surname Smith occurs about 320 times in the database at *England's Immigrants*; the surname Taylor occurs about 775 times; and the surname Johnson occurs about 1,690 times. (Interestingly, the surname Jones occurs only 14 times.) The surname French, which occurs about 169 times in the database, is particularly interesting in relation to the Fleming surname. The 1881 census enumerates 14,607 individuals as having the surname French. French is an early (probably fourteenth-century) corruption of the Anglo-Norman family name *de Freyne*, which first occurs in English documents during the twelfth century. French is also the abbreviated form of the word Frenchman (Frensche', French', Frenche', etc.), which was used in medieval documents as a surname for foreigners from France. Did foreigners from France typically adopt French as their family name? I have found no evidence that they did. Other variations of the ancient de Freyne family name are Frain and Frayne, together accounting for 598 individuals in the 1881 census.
- 6 For historical information concerning these individuals please see my books: *A Genealogical History of the Barons Slane* (2008), *A Genealogy of the Ancient Flemings* (2010), *The Ancestry of the Earl of Wigton* (2011), *Wigton Revisited* (2014), *Facing the Other Way: Conversations with my Daughter* (2015). <http://www.amazon.com>
- 7 de Grieck, Pieter-Jan. *De Benedictijnse Geschiedschrijving in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (CA. 1150-1550)* p. 640
- 8 <http://www.huguenotsociety.org.uk/publications/cdrom.html>
- 9 Amanda Beam, John Bradley, Dauvit Broun, John Rueben Davies, Matthew Hammond, Michele Pasin (with others), *The People of Medieval Scotland, 1093-1314* (Glasgow and London, 2012) www.poms.ac.uk [accessed 20 March 2015]. Other names in this database include Gordon (24 records), Douglas (29 records), Crawford (31 records), Bruce (42 records), Sinclair (18 records), Scott (74 records). “Flemings” listed under the surname Fleming who were probably not members of the medieval Fleming family include: Peter Fleming, Stephen Fleming, Theobald Fleming, Matthew Fleming, Everard Fleming, Copin Fleming, Berewald Fleming, Baldwin Fleming, Walter Fleming (son of John), William Ridel (lord of Flemington), and William Fleming of Stanhouse.
- 10 1881 census results for Cummin(s)/Cumming(s): 13,147; and Fleming/Flemming: 13,663. Results in just the Scottish census of 1881: Cumming—3,741; and Fleming—6,665. 1880 United States census results for Cummin(s)/Cumming(s): 32,599; and Fleming/Flemming: 28,452. Robert de Comines (*Rodberto de Cumines* according to Orderic Vitalis in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vol.II, p. 220, otherwise referred to by the chroniclers as *Rodbertum cognomento Cumin*) was killed in Durham in 1069. It has been suggested that Earl Robert's surname might have had a connection, not to Comines in French Flanders, but to the condiment cumin (*cuminum cyminum*). The earl might thus have been a spice merchant, or something of the sort. (See: Alan Young, *William Cumin: Border Politics and the Bishopric of Durham, 1141-1144*, Borthwick Publications [1978] pp. 4-6.) However, the surname does actually appear in early Flemish charters. A certain *Walkerus de Cumines* witnessed a charter by Robert II of Flanders in 1094. Earl Robert de Comines was, perhaps, related to Alard de Comines, who was lord of Comines according to a charter of Baldwin V of Flanders dated 1047. (See: <http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/FLEMISH>

[%20NOBILITY.htm](#) Seigneurs de Comines.) He appears to have had two sons (or grandsons or grandnephews), William and John. William, who became Bishop of Durham and Lord Chancellor of Scotland, did not have any descendants as far as is known. John, who was killed during the Anarchy, had three sons, William, Osbert, and Richard. Richard, son of John de Comines, along with Waldeve, son of Baldwin of Biggar (le Fleming), and Jordan le Fleming, was captured by English forces at the Battle of Alnwick in 1174. According to Hector Boece (1465-1536), Sir John Comyn, known as the Red Comyn, Richard de Comyn's great-great-great-grandson, was murdered in 1306 by Robert the Bruce (later Robert I of Scotland), Roger de Kirkpatrick, and Robert le Fleming, who would likely have been the great-great-great-grandson of Jordan le Fleming. (Medieval Scotland was a small place, was it not?)

11 Ernest Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility Before 1300*, Kortrijk (1975), Vol. I, pp. 105-136.