

46. Ibid. xvi.
47. Based on an estimated total of 1,100 tenants-in-chief and 6000 subtenants listed in 1086, a multiplier of 5.0, and a total population of 1.6 million, cf. H. C. Darby, Domesday England (Cambridge, 1977), 87-91.
48. BL, Cotton MS. Tiberius B. v, fo. 76v (N. R. Ker, Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon, no. 22, art. a, s.x/xi); see edition in B. Thorpe, Diplomatarium Anglicum Ævi Saxonici (London, 1865), 649-51.
49. 'Personal Names in Place-Names', Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names, edd. A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, part I (EPNS 1(i); Cambridge, 1924), 165-89 (p. 178).
50. Ibid. 177.
51. Since giving the present paper, I have noticed the discussion (with illustrative family-trees) of the Hatfield names in H. B. Woolf, Old Germanic Principles of Namegiving (Baltimore, 1939), 139-42.
52. Anglo-Saxon Wills, ed. D. Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930), no. 3 (Sawyer no. 1539).
53. Whitelock, *ibid.* 113; Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici, ed. J. M. Kemble, 6 vols (London, 1839-48), no. 1290.
54. Modified from that in Whitelock, *ibid.* 14-15.

THE FAMILY OF Ó GNÍMH IN IRELAND AND SCOTLAND:
A LOOK AT THE SOURCES*

At the back of my mind when I suggested this subject for a session at the Aberdeen conference was the hope that I could involve Scottish colleagues in considering the origins of families in Ireland and Scotland who in modern times have the same surname: Agnew. I was therefore delighted when I learned that Professor Geoffrey Barrow would be at the conference, for I expected that he would be able to supply answers where I still had question-marks. Unfortunately Professor Barrow had duties which required his presence elsewhere and so he did not hear my paper. However, I have consulted him since then, and I refer later on to his opinion on 'the earliest "Scottish" Agnew on record' which he has kindly conveyed to me in a letter.

On the eastern side of the narrow sea that separates Scotland from Ireland we have the Agnews of Lochnaw in Galloway whose genealogical descent, as given in Burke's Peerage and Baronetage, starts with Andrew Agnew, Constable of Lochnaw and Sheriff of Wigtown in 1451. A very detailed account of their supposed antecedents, originating in Normandy in the tenth century, was compiled by a later Andrew Agnew and published, under the title The Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway, in 1893. This was a revised version of a work first published in 1864. I shall return to it later.

On the western side of the North Channel we have the family of Ó Gnímh whose members appear as professional Gaelic poets and as land-holders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although their family name is anglicised Ognieff (Ogneiffe, Ogneife) in the early years of the seventeenth century and some decades later as Ogneeve, it generally appears as Agnew after 1660.¹ The possibility that the Scottish and Irish families were identical in origin has been mooted and it cannot be ruled out without careful examination.

Let us first consider some linguistic aspects. The form of the Antrim surname in Irish sources, including what I believe is an autograph of the poet Fear Flatha, is Ó Gnímh.² Both Patrick Woulfe (Sloinnte Gaedheal is Gall, Dublin, 1927) and Edward Mac Lysaght (The Surnames of Ireland, Shannon, 1969) derive the name from the word gníomh 'deed'. However, as gníomh was originally a u-stem, with genitive gníomha,³ the form gnímh would be irregular. This does not mean that it would be impossible, for we have similar alternative genitives in Aonghus, gen. Aonghusa, Aonghuis, and Donnchadh, gen. Donnchadha, Donnchaidh. So a personal name *Gníomh might have given forms Ó Gnímh and Ó Gníomha as surnames. Moreover while anglicised forms Ognieff and Ogneeve could well represent Ó Gnímh, the form Agnew would be better explained as coming from Ó Gníomha /o:'g'n'i:və/ through /ɔ'g'n'i(:)u:/. And it may be significant that in an English translation accompanying the document which I believe was written by Fear Flatha, and which was also, I think, written by him, we find the anglicised form Fear Flaha O Gniuu.⁴ Both in the original Irish and in anglicised forms the stress in surnames is generally on the element after Ó or Mac. Hence shortening of /o:/ to /ɔ/ and hence /a/, as in Agnew, would not be surprising.⁵ Pronunciation of Agnew in the south of Ireland is now generally /'ag'n'u:/, with stress on the first syllable, while in the north it is /a'g'n'u:/, with stress on the second syllable. The latter would be more in accord with an Irish origin.

Next let us consider the evidence relating to persons with the surname Ó Gnímh or Ó Gníomha in Ireland. Oddly enough the only two pieces of evidence I have prior to

the sixteenth century relate to the south of Ireland. The first is in a tract on the topography and population features of the Fermoy area in Co. Cork, copies of which are found in the Book of Lismore, which was written towards the end of the fifteenth century, and in British Library Egerton 92, which is of similar date. The tract seems to relate to the period before the Anglo-Norman invasion, possibly the twelfth century. Among places mentioned in it is Garrán Ó nGnima as a fuilit hI Gnima⁶ 'Garrán Ó nGníomha from which are the Í Gníomha'. Medieval Irish orthography is such that we cannot say for sure whether the m was lenited or unlenited, but I have taken it as lenited. However, I have no other references to persons surnamed Ó Gníomha in this area. I might add that the tract contains references to many other families supposedly residing in the Fermoy area who are otherwise unknown there. As we shall see, at least one of these may be relevant to our examination of the Ó Gnímh family. The second piece of evidence from Munster dates from the year 1314 when a 'Thomas O Gnewe' was charged 'that he feloniously slew John le Grant at Balyglan' (which is Waterford) and was sentenced to be hanged.⁷ I have no further evidence of Ó Gníomhas or Ó Gnímh or Agnews in Munster, so I turn back to the Antrim family.

In the seventeenth-century tract 'De Scriptoribus Hibernicis' Dubhaltach Mac Fir Bhisigh listed the Í Gnímh among the professional poets, aos dána Éireann.⁸ Yet as far as I know there is no record of any poet of that name earlier than the second half of the sixteenth century. Indeed the total number of Í Gnímh poets that we can name is very small - apparently only four or five - and the earliest dateable composition by any of them is an address to Brian Ó Néill of Clannaboy in east Ulster who died in 1574. This was composed by Brian Ó Gnímh who also, I believe, was the author of three poems composed about members of the Mac Domhnaill family in or about the year 1586.⁹ It seems likely that Brian Ó Gnímh and his son, Fear Flatha, had the patronage of members of the latter family.

There is evidence of members of the Ó Gnímh family holding lands in the Larne area of Co. Antrim in the first half of the seventeenth century, and the family were quite numerous, under the name Agnew, according to later documents, such as the Census of Ireland of 1659.¹⁰ Nevertheless I can find no record of them in the north of Ireland, either in the annals or in other documents, before the time of the Brian Ó Gnímh whom I have mentioned already. We must look elsewhere for information on their earlier history and origins. I might add that many puzzling features emerge when we examine the history of some other families of hereditary professional scholars, such as Clann Bhruaideadha and the Í Eóghusa in Ireland or the Mac Mhuirichs and the Morrisons in Scotland.¹¹

For the Ó Gnímh family there are, first of all, genealogies extant in seventeenth-century manuscripts. In three Royal Irish Academy manuscripts, E iv 4, fo. 13r, D i 3, fo. 60r, and 23 M 17, p. 107, we find, under the heading 'Geinealach Uí Gnímh':
Fear Flatha mac Briain mc (vl. mc. mc.) an Fhir Dhoirche mc Seaain (vl. Séin) mc Cormaic mc Maoil Mhithigh Óig mc Maoil Mhithigh Mhóir mc Gilli Pádraig mc Seaain (vl. Séin) Dúna Fiodháin mc Maoil Mhuire mc Eóin, .i. Gníomh (vl. An Gnim) ó bhfuil an sloinneadh (vl. fine) mc Aonghusa Móir (om. M) mc Alasdrainn mc Domhnaill mc Raghnaill 7c (mc Alasdrainn . . . 7c only in M which omits the following Giolla Pádraig etc.)

Giolla Pádraig mc Domhnaill mc Briain mc Cormaic mc Maoil Mhithigh Óig

This may be translated as:

Fear Flatha son of Brian son (vl. son of the son) of An Fear Doirche son of Seaán son of Cormac son of Maol Mithigh Óg son of Maol Mithigh Mór son of Gille Pádraig son of Seaán of Dún Fiodháin son of Maol Muire son of Eóin, that is Gníomh (vl. An Gníomh) from whom is the surname (vl. family) son of Aonghus Mór son of Alasdair son of Domhnall son of Raghnaill etc.

Giolla Pádraig son of Domhnall son of Brian son of Cormac son of Maol Mithigh Óg.

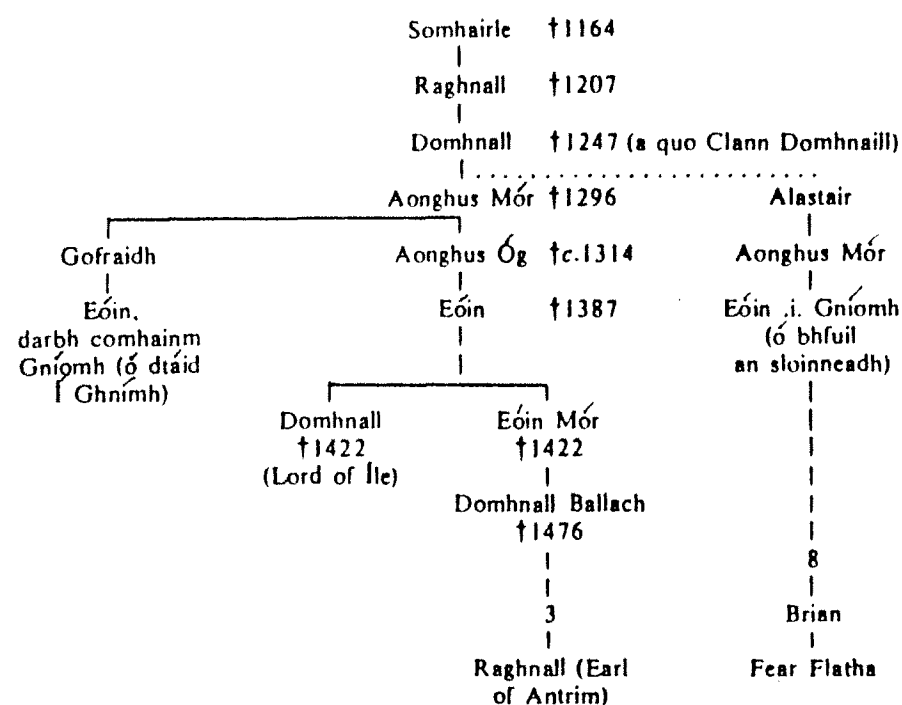
Although Dubhaltach Mac Fir Bhisigh did not include an Ó Gnímh genealogy in his 'Book of Genealogies', we do find one in two extant copies of his 'Abstract' of genealogies: in RIA 23 N 2, p. 130, and Maynooth B 8, p. 145. This, however, begins at a point much earlier in the line, namely with the supposed eponymous ancestor of the family:

Uí Gnímh annso .i. Eóin, darbo comhainm Gníomh ó dtáid Uí Gnímh, mac Gofradha, .i. rí Fionghall, mc Aonghuis Mhóir mc Domhnaill (a quo Clann Domhnaill), darbho dearbhráthair Ruaidhrí (a quo Clann Ruaidhrígh), mc Raghnaill, dar dhearbhráthair Dubhghall (ó dtáid Clann Dubhghaill), mc Somhairle 7c

Herewith the Í Gnímh, that is Eóin, who was also named Gníomh whence the Í Gnímh, son of Gofraidh, that is the king of the Fionghaill (Fair Foreigners), son of Aonghus Mór son of Domhnall (from whom are descended Clann Domhnaill), who had as brother Ruaidhrí (from whom are descended Clann Ruaidhrí), son of Raghnaill, who had as brother Dubhghall (from whom are descended Clann Dubhghaill), son of Somhairle etc.

I take the first genealogy to be that of the poet Fear Flatha whose floruit was c. 1580-1645. He is traced back through nine or ten generations, that is about 300 years, to a certain Eóin who was also called Gníomh 'whence the surname' (or 'the family'). Mac Fir Bhisigh simply states that the Í Gnímh derive from Eóin who was also called Gníomh. When we compare the two traditions we see that Mac Fir Bhisigh has interposed Gofraidh, described as 'the king of the "Fionnghaill"', between Eóin and Aonghus Mór and has omitted Alasdair between Aonghus Mór and Domhnall mac Raghnaill. This may be a hint that the genealogies are inventions, but I am not sure.

Correlation of these Ó Gnímh genealogies with other genealogical material relating to Scottish and northern Irish families shows that the Í Gnímh are represented as having common ancestry with the families of Mac Domhnaill, Mac Dubhghaill and Mac Ruaidhrí, all going back to Somhairle who, according to other genealogies, was descended from Colla Uais, one of the three sons of Eochaidh Doimhléin who are supposed to have left Ireland and settled in Scotland in the fourth century. While scholars have in general accepted that the Macdonnells, as well as the Macdougals and the Macrorys, are descended from Somhairle who lived in the twelfth century, opinions have differed about the descent from Colla Uais and Eochaidh Doimhléin.¹² However, this question need not concern us here. What does concern us is the genealogical linking of the Ó Gnímh family with the MacDonnells which I set out in the following table in which the Mac Fir Bhisigh version is represented on the left and the other version is represented with a dotted line to the right, while MacDonnell genealogies are centred.



It is obvious that both of these genealogies represent the eponymous ancestor of the Í Gnímh as having lived in the fourteenth century, about a century before Domhnall Ballach Mac Domhnaill inherited the Glens of Antrim from his mother, Máire Biséd.¹³ This would lead us to believe that the Í Gnímh had their origins in Scotland and that later some of them crossed over to Ireland and received lands in Antrim from the MacDonnells. In this connection it is significant that the Fiant of 1602 referred to already is a pardon for Randal MacDonnell and others, including two members of the Ó Gnímh family.

One further item which adds weight to these genealogies, and to a Gaelic origin for the Í Gnímh, is the fact that a sixteenth-century Ó Gnímh poet accepted the tradition that his family and the MacDonnells shared a common ancestry going back to Eochaidh Doimhléin:

Dúinn ar-aon gíodh ionann fréamh,
meise a's fhuil Eachdhach Doimhléan,
mo lucht cuil is siad Saghsain
is ní hiad an fhuil Eachdhach-soin,¹⁴

'Though we are both from the same root, I and the blood of Eochaidh Doimhléin, it is the English who are my kindred and not the blood of that Eochaidh.'

A further indication of Scottish antecedents for the Ó Gnímh of Antrim is the fact that in a grant of 1624 relating to the tuath of Larne¹⁵ John O'Gneeve and Gilbert O'Gneeve are described as 'natives of Scotland, or of the blood of that nation.' In anticipation of what follows I call attention to the fact that these so-called 'natives of Scotland' are named O'Gneeve, not Agnew.

What I have set out so far seems to point to:

- (1) a fourteenth-century member of the Clann Domhnaill becoming the founder of a new family with the surname Ó Gnímh,¹⁶
- (2) members of that family taking to the profession of poetry and probably acting as hereditary poets to their close relations, the MacDonnells,
- (3) their transference to Antrim, possibly with some of the MacDonnells, in the fifteenth or sixteenth century,
- (4) the earliest attested anglicised forms of the surname, such as Ognieff, replaced later in the seventeenth century by Agnew,
- (5) no obvious connection between this family of Ó Gnímh and the Í Gníomha who were in Cork in the twelfth century or Thomas O Gnewe who was sentenced to be hanged in Waterford in 1314.

However, since the genealogies and the allusion in the poem referred to above may all be part of an attempt by late-comers in the ranks of the professional scholars to give themselves 'respectability' and roots, certain features of the family history as indicated in them need further examination, namely (i) the derivation of the name from a by-name or nick-name, viz. Gníomh, and (ii) the fact that the surname derived from this is Ó Gnímh. But first I must turn back to the Agnews of Galloway.

As mentioned at the outset, the Galloway Agnews appear to have provided Constables of Lochnaw and Sheriffs of Wigtown as far back as 1451. For their earlier history we have Andrew Agnew's account. A less detailed account was given by John M. Dickson in an article published in 1901,¹⁷ and it looks as if Dickson, as well as later scholars, such as George F. Black in The Surnames of Scotland (New York, 1946) and Edward Mac Lysaght in More Irish Families (Dublin, 1960), accepted the basic accuracy of Andrew Agnew's account in so far as it purported to describe how the Agnew family of Galloway had their roots in Normandy.

The salient points of that part of Andrew Agnew's account which links the Agnews of Galloway with a family of Agnews in Co. Antrim, in so far as they are immediately relevant to this paper; are as follows:

- (1) The Agnew family had their origins near Bayeux in Normandy where twins born to a Viking couple died but were miraculously restored to life through the intercession of St. Martin of Tours. Hence they became known as 'Agneaux de S. Martin', and in the course of time their descendants took as their surname various forms of the word Agneaux and spread from Normandy to England, to Ireland and eventually to Scotland.
- (2) One of these came to Ireland with the Anglo-Normans in 1171, went north with John de Courcy in 1176 and received the tuath of Latharna (Larne) as a reward and left descendants in that part of Antrim.
- (3) An Agnew Lord of Larne supported Edward Bruce when he came to Ireland in 1315, and later a son of his crossed over to Scotland and was received with favour by Bruce's natural son, Alexander, and was made Constable of Lochnaw and thus established the Agnew line there.

While Andrew Agnew, in corroboration of parts of his account of the Agnews in Normandy and England, cited documents supposedly extant when he was writing, he admitted that the Irish part 'rests entirely upon tradition, and is incapable of proof, no Irish charters or state papers of the date having been preserved.'¹⁸ He went on: 'At the same time there are some old written notices of the matter, and the traditions connecting the family with Larne are so strong and definite on both sides of the water that we give them for what they are worth.' It would appear that his main authority on

the Irish side of the water was a Rev. Classen Porter who had given an account of the Agnews in an article published in 1864 in the Northern Whig and who had sent Andrew Agnew 'a MS. collection of notices of the Agnews in Ireland . . . for perusal.'¹⁹ On the Scottish side he cited the genealogical manuscripts of Sir George Mackenzie in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh.

We can hardly be inspired with confidence in Andrew Agnew's version of the Irish connection when we find that, having quoted at one point a document which seemed to establish that Henry de Agneau had been drowned in the English Channel in March 1169-70, he later said 'Henry de Agneau may be presumed to have been one of the Norman knights who joined Henry II at Milford Haven . . . in 1171'.²⁰ Incidentally, in the account of the Agnews published by John M. Dickson it is a 'Sir Philip D'Agneaux' who is named as having accompanied Henry II in 1171, and the same Sir Philip is described as 'one of the twenty-two Anglo-Norman knights who threw in their lot' with John de Courcy in his invasion of Ulster in 1176.

Where does the truth lie? I have been assured by Irish colleagues that there is no evidence of Agnews as Lords of Larne between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries; nor is there, as far as I know, any mention of either a 'Henry' or a 'Philip' d'Agneau in Henry II's entourage in 1171. Such being the case we must turn to Andrew Agnew's alternative explanation of how the Agnews came to be in Galloway in the fifteenth century.

According to this alternative account the Scottish Agnews would have descended from a John Aygnell (or Aignell), a member of a Hertfordshire branch of the Agneaux family, who 'bidding a long adieu to the Hertfordshire home, and his half-brother Andrew, made his way to the Scottish capital',²¹ and this John Aygnell in due course arrived in Lochnaw, having been appointed Constable of the Castle of Lochnaw by King David II about 1363.²²

Taking the Ó Gnímh / Agnew stories as I have outlined them so far we find a remarkable agreement on one point, namely the placing of the founder of the Ó Gnímh and Agnew families sometime in the fourteenth century: (i) Eóin, alias Gníomh, who belonged originally to Clann Domhnaill, (ii) the son of the Agnew Lord of Larne who was favoured by Bruce's natural son Alexander, and (iii) the Hertfordshire John Aignell who became Constable of Lochnaw in the time of King David II.

However, a piece of evidence referred to by Professor Barrow in The Kingdom of the Scots (1973) suggests the possibility that while the Agnews were, indeed, of Norman origin, they were settled in Scotland several centuries before the first of them appears as Sheriff of Wigtown. This is 'a Liddesdale charter of c. 1200 issued by the younger Ranulf de Soules . . . and witnessed by William des Aigneus'.²³ Professor Barrow commented: 'William, incidentally, may be regarded as the first of the Scottish Agnews', and in a footnote he added: 'Correctly derived by Black, Surnames, 10, from Les Agneaux.' In a letter of 15 October 1984 Professor Barrow has confirmed this as his opinion. Unfortunately he has not referred me to any evidence that would help to bridge the gap between William des Aigneus of the charter of c. 1200, which related to a location in S.E. Scotland, and the first verifiable appearance of an Agnew in S.W. Scotland which lies in the fifteenth century. In this connection I quote from a letter of 11 June 1984 which I had from Mr Athol Murray of the Scottish Record Office in response to my enquiries:

The earliest document in the Agnew of Lochnaw muniments is a charter of 1426 by William Douglas of Leswalt to Andrew Agnew of the Office of Constable of Lochnale and associated lands. The grant of the hereditary office of Sheriff of

Wigtown (Galloway) came from James II 25 years later. There is nothing in the original document to show where the Agnews came from, nor the original spelling of the name which is given throughout as Agnew or occasionally Agneu. There is, moreover, nothing earlier than Sir Andrew Agnew's 19th century researches to link the family either with Normandy or with Ireland, apart from the acquisition of an estate in the parish of Kilwaghter co. Antrim in the 17th century.

Sir Andrew produced two different versions of the origins of the family in the two editions of The Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway. The second edition (1891) appears to give more evidence to corroborate his account of the family before 1426, but some of the details, such as an alleged charter of David II, 1365, of the keepership of Lochnale Castle, are not supported by any extant records. Sir Andrew's account of the family was severely criticised by P. H. M'Kerlie in the 2nd edition of his History of the Lands and their Owners in Galloway (Paisley, 1906) vol. i, 428-61. M'Kerlie's criticisms seem well-founded but I do not accept his alternative theory that the Agnews came from France at the time of the Douglas involvement there in the early 15th century. If the Andrew Agnew of 1426 had been a recent immigrant I do not think he would have used the Scottish form of the name immediately. Professor Barrow tells me that he has found evidence for Agnews in the south-west of Scotland at a much earlier date.

As for the Irish connection the only piece of evidence I can offer is a payment in 1460 to Andrew Agnew, Sheriff of Wigtown, for his expenses in going to Ireland 'versus Regulum Onele' by order of James II (Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, vii. 9). There seemed to be two possible explanations for this: as sheriff of Wigtown Agnew was the nearest Royal official to Ireland, or alternatively he had family or other connections there which would make him a suitable emissary. The phrase 'versus Regulum Onele' is, of course, open to different interpretations.

This last item is interesting for it provides the first definite evidence of an Agnew - whatever the original form of his name - being in Ulster. It seems likely that versus in this context means 'to visit'. The Regulus Onele might have been either Énrí Ó Néill who was inaugurated as King of Ulster in 1455 or the ruling member of Clannaboy. We have already seen that the earliest extant Ó Gnímh poem was addressed to an Ó Néill of Clannaboy. We may wonder, then, is this Agnew/Ó Néill contact part of the jig-saw that, when pieced together, may give us a fuller picture of the Ó Gnímh story. And we may also wonder are we to see another piece of the jig-saw in the fact that this contact came during the lifetime of Domhnall Ballach Mac Domhnaill (†1476) who had inherited from his mother, Máire Biséd, the seven tuatha of the Glens of Antrim in which we find members of the Ó Gnímh and Agnew families holding lands in later times.

As regards the supposed Norman origin of the Galloway Agnews there is a linguistic matter which deserves consideration, namely the fact that the forms of the name in Scotland are regularly spelled with -gn-. I have heard this pronounced as /'agnju/, /'apu/ and /'anju/, but I cannot say what the most common pronunciation in Galloway is. Pronunciation with /gn/ does not accord with the usual reflexes of etymological gn as Old French /ɲ/ and Anglo-Norman /n/. However Peter McClure informs me that in medieval England -gn- spellings of the Norman name are also regular, and conventional, presumably representing /ɲ/ or /n/ in speech, and that, as in the Christian name Agnes - commonly pronounced /anis/ as late as the eighteenth century - /gn/ probably occurs as a modern spelling-pronunciation.

Before leaving the Galloway Agnews I must consider briefly the possibility that they were in fact of Gaelic origin, that is that the form Agnew, attested from the fifteenth century, is an early anglicisation of Ó Gníomha or Ó Gnímh. On this point Professor John Mac Queen wrote to me as follows:

Agnew fits so well with other Galloway names - Adougan, Ahannay, Aschennan, Askalok, Asloan, probably Adair, where the initial A is a reflex of Ó, as in Ó Gnímh - that I cannot see any real possibility of a different line of linguistic descent for the Lochnaw family name.

Once more I am at a point where I need further help from Scottish scholars, for I must confess that I lack detailed information on the forms and history of Gaelic surnames in Scotland. In general one associates the prefix Mac, rather than Ó, with Scottish surnames, but the Galloway names mentioned by Professor Mac Queen suggest that Ó-names occurred. One must ask, then, are these names which evolved on Scottish soil or are they names brought in by migrants from Ireland. I quote here, from a recent letter to me, a comment by Uilliam Mac Mhathain (William Matheson):

With regard to the other Galloway surnames you mention it seems quite likely that they are of Irish provenance. In this connection I might mention that, as you may be aware, several surnames of the Ó type are on record in Kintyre; and there may well have been similar migratory movements across the Irish Channel into Galloway.

This brings me back to the earliest evidence of the surname Ó Gníomha in Ireland, the reference to Í Ghníomha in the tract on Fermoy in Cork, for one cannot but be struck by the fact that alongside the Í Ghníomha named there we find another family named Ó hAnnadha (I Annada in the MSS.), who, like the Í Ghníomha, are not otherwise known in the area but whose name could very well be the original form of another Galloway family name, that of Ahannay. Perhaps future research will determine whether or not this is pure coincidence.

And here I must turn back once more to the element Gníomh from which the surname Ó Gnímh is supposed to have been derived. As far as I know the only suggestion that has been made about its etymology is that it is the old verbal noun of gníid 'acts'. The word gníomh is also used as a land-measure and hence in place-names, such as Gníomh go leith (Gneevegullia) in Co. Kerry. However, there is another - though admittedly highly questionable - possibility: that the name is a borrowing from Old Norse Grímr. The possibility first occurred to me when I noted in two seventeenth-century versions of early Irish annals the name Gnim appearing with reference to a leader of the Vikings of Cork who was killed in the Fermoy area in the year 867. In a copy of some fragments of Irish annals transcribed by Dubhaltach Mac Fir Bhisigh this Viking is named Gnim Cínnsiolach (or Gnim Cínnsiolaig),²⁴ while in the Annals of the Four Masters (s. anno 865) he is Gnim beolu. Since he has been identified as Grímr Selshofuð²⁵ we have the possibility that we should add Gníomh to the list of personal names which the Irish borrowed from the Scandinavians, viz. Amhlaoibh, Cofraidh, Íomhar, Raghnall, Sichfrith, and so on.²⁶ I admit straight away that there are linguistic difficulties: (i) the final lenited m /v/ in place of the unlenited nasal in Grímr, and (ii) the change of initial gr to gn.

As regards the first there is, one may suppose, the possibility of analogy with some other borrowed name, such as Amlaíb from ON Óláfr in which the final b = /v/. The initial syllable of this name, with Aml (= /a^vl/) from Ól, demonstrates the

linguistic complexity of the process of name borrowing. And if the equation of Irish Tomrar to ON Thórarrr and of Tomrir to ON Thórir is correct²⁷ we have two further instances of a liquid (r) in ON giving rise in Irish to a consonant cluster containing a bilabial lenited nasal interposed before the liquid. We can point to a certain amount of variation in later times between lenited bilabials (nasal and non-nasal) and unlenited bilabial nasal. Thus Oéntrab or Ointreb, which had final /v/, has become Aontroim with unlenited /m/, and OI dermat, vn. of do-ruimnethar 'forgets', has modern reflexes dearmad and dearúd (from *dearmhad). Furthermore delenition is manifested in modern Irish dialects in a number of words, such as cúimre (from cúimhne), láimsiú (from láimhsiughadh), suíreach (from suaimhneach) in Co. Galway, scamóg (from scamhóg) in Co. Cork, and coiméad or cimeád (from coimhead) in many dialects.

The second change is the reverse of one which took place generally in Scottish Gaelic and Manx, in the dialects of much of the northern half of Ireland, and occasionally in Munster dialects, whereby cnoc changes to croc, gníomh to gríomh, mná to mrá, tnúth to trúth, imnídhe to imrí, etc. There is nothing inherently impossible in the reverse change with cr- becoming cn-, etc., and examples can be cited from modern sources, thus cneamh from creamh 'wild garlic', gníomh from gríobh 'griffin', pnéacha from préamhacha 'roots', and a Chníost from a Chríost 'o Christ'. An important factor is the question of the date at which such interchanges might have been likely to take place. T. F. O'Rahilly described the change of n to r in the groups cn, etc., as 'a comparatively late one', pointing out that 'English spellings of Irish names in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries show little or no trace of it.'²⁸ Interestingly enough, he cited the spelling Gryve na manach for Gníomh na Manach (in Co. Waterford) in an English document of 1551, but he described this as 'quite exceptional.'

Notwithstanding O'Rahilly's view about the date of the change, Eric Hamp showed some years ago that there is evidence from some centuries earlier of the substitution of r for n in such a consonant cluster.²⁹ The example discussed by him is interesting, for it shows the change taking place in an area of mixed population. The core of his argument is that Ronyan of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales was originally Ninian and the form with initial r developed in some sandhi context, such as S(h)ant-Ninian /hənt'niN'ɛn' / > /hən-'tɪN'ɛn' / > /ən-'tʃiN'ɛn' / > /ən-'trɪN'ɛn' /. He explained that 'Either of the last two forms could be heard by English speakers, then, as Tronyan, etc. . . . or when coupled afresh with seint either by themselves or by Gaelic speakers, this could emerge as Ronyan, etc.' As to date Hamp pointed out that Watson had cited early instances of the name with initial r: Rineyan (1301 in Barn's Calendar), and 'Norse Rinans-ey (now North Ronaldsay, in the Orkneys) in Heimskringla, if this is in fact the same name.'

On the purely phonetic side Hamp's final analysis is interesting:

Old Irish had two phonemes /N/ (which I call "emphatic") and /n/ (which I call "non-emphatic"). To judge by the evidence of the modern dialects, /N/ was probably an ambi-dental nasal continuant with the tongue fanned out along the teeth, while /n/ was probably a short continuant with alveolar contact. In articulation /n/ may not have been too far from /r/, which was probably a single-flap alveolar, as contrasted with /R/. If, during the Old Irish period, /n/ after /k, g, m, t/ had a special allophone, say with tongue retraction, the phonetic distance between /n/ and /r/ in this position would have been even less. At any rate, by the time of, say, 1300 the allophone of /n/ in this position had

become something like /r̄/, so that English speakers often rendered it with their /r/ phoneme as the closest fit; the Norse may have done likewise.

By 1500, at least in many dialects, this [r̄] had become /r/ with nasalization of the following vowel, thus giving the present-day set-up. It may be that the phonemic shift was made possible by the setting up of an independent nasalization phoneme /̃/; thus the nasalization of [r̄], which had formerly been the component which kept the segment in the /n/ phoneme, now was independent, leaving the tongue-retraction to joint the /r/ phoneme. The source of the /̃/ may be the falling together of bh /b̃/ and mh /m̃/ (a nasalized bilabial spirant), when the latter surrendered its nasal component in certain positions to the adjacent vowel; cf. Middle Irish spelling confusions such as noeb : noem "holy, saint".

A spelling that seems to establish that tr could have been replacing tn in Ireland as early as the beginning of the twelfth century is in 'Lebor na hUidre' in the hand of the main scribe. This is mertrech (LU 9098) which must be for regular meirtnech. It is noteworthy also that Irish mn in Luimnech became mr in non-Irish forms in the twelfth century, thus Hlýmrek in ON (Heimskringla) and Limericum in Latin (Expugnatio Hibernica). I have already given a few late examples of cn, gn, and pn for earlier cr, gr and pr. A comparatively early example may be the name Bricne which occurs in a bardic poem composed no later than 1298 and extant in a fourteenth-century manuscript.³⁰ I believe that this is simply another form of Bricre, Oí Bricriu.

In the light of the preceding discussion what I would now tentatively suggest is that the nasality of the final part of ON Grímr could have affected the preceding segments of the form, sounding as /gr̄:m(r)/ or even /gr̄̃:m(r)/, and that, with the opposite development to that postulated by Hamp, this could have become /g̃n̄'i:m/, and subsequently /g̃n̄'i:̃v/, in the mouths of Gaelic speakers, and as such could have been adopted as a personal name. Alternatively it could have been borrowed as /g̃r̄'i:m/ and have developed later to /g̃n̄'i:m/ and thence to /g̃n̄'i:̃v/. Either development would account for the annalistic form Gnim used as an equivalent of the name of the ninth-century Viking Grímr Selshofuð. But there is still the problem of the lack of any further evidence of a personal name Gníomh being in use. It might be pointed out, however, that the Viking Grímr, alias Gnim (= Gníomh) was active and died in the Cork area, and it could be argued that the twelfth-century Cork family name Ó Gníomha implies an ancestor *Gníomh and that this conjunction of facts lends support to the proposed derivation of a name Gníomh from Grímr. But admittedly there is an immense gap to be bridged, even in this Munster locale.

When we turn to the Antrim / Scottish side of the picture the lack of evidence is even more serious. The possibility of a development Grímr to Gním (= Gníomh) is the same, but there seems to be no local evidence to point to such a derivation. All we seem to have are (i) family names Ó Gnímh (and later Agnew) in Antrim and Agnew in Galloway, and (ii) a statement that a by-name Gníomh, applied to a fourteenth-century member of the Clann Domhnaill named Eóin, gave the Ó Gnímh family their surname. There seems to be no hint that the sobriquet Gníomh is a Gaelic calque on ON grímr.

There is, indeed, an item which points to the use, in a Galloway context, of an adjective grym as a sobriquet just about the time that the term Gníomh is supposed to

have been applied to Eóin (Mac Domhnaill): Archibaldus . . . dictus Grym sive Terribilis.³¹ But this does not relate to an Agnew, but to Archibald Douglas (primus hoc nomine comes de Douglas) whose family were prominent in Galloway in the fourteenth century.

There remain, then, the actual forms of the Irish surname, south and north, that is Ó Gníomha and Ó Gnímh. First of all it can be stated that there is nothing unlikely about the formation of an Ó-surname based on a borrowed name. Examples are Ó hÍomhair, Ó Siochfradha and Ó hUiginn. Secondly it is commonly accepted that surnames formed with Ó are in general older than those formed with Mac. In fact it is easy to point to families where a Mac-surname distinguishes an offshoot from a wider family group with an Ó-surname. Thus the Mac Diarmada and Mac Donnchadha families are offshoots of the Ó Maoil Ruanaidh family, and so on. And we may recall that according to Scottish tradition the Mac Mhuireadhaigh (Mhuirich) family were an offshoot of the Ó Dálaigh family, their eponymous ancestor being the Irish poet, Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh. There seems to be some overlapping in time between the later Ó-surnames and the earliest Mac-surnames, but formation of an Ó-surname after about 1200 would be unusual. So while there need be no question about the normality of the southern Í Gníomha from this point of view, there must be some doubt about the form Ó Gnímh as a fourteenth-century family name, for *Mac Gnímh (or *Mac Gníomha) would seem to be more likely. In fact a development Mac Gníomha to Mhac Gníomha to 'ac Gníomha to Agnew would be quite normal.

On the other hand the concept of Ó as a formant was clearly not abandoned, for a thirteenth-century poet invented the names Ó hAllmharáin 'Mr Stranger', Ó hArgadáin 'Mr Money' and Ó hIarrataigh 'Mr Suppliant', with etymological bases allmhuir 'one from overseas', airgead 'money' and iarraidh 'seeking'.³²

Before setting out some possibilities which emerge from the preceding discussion, I must add two more items which, it seems to me, increase the number of possibilities but also may eventually prove significant.

Attention has been called to the form O'Gneeve in a grant of 1624³³ relating to the tuath of Larne. Although the persons named were described as 'natives of Scotland, or of the blood of that nation', they presumably regarded themselves as members of the Ó Gnímh family, some of whom were tenants of Randal MacDonnell in 1602 and probably before that.

We have already seen evidence of one of the Agnews of Galloway being in Ulster about 1460. In The Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway Andrew Agnew claimed that subsequent to that time 'The sheriffs, father and son, had been frequently called across the Channel . . . both on public and private business'.³⁴ Once more there is the unsatisfactory lack of evidence to support this and other statements: 'we are unable accurately to trace the exact nature and length of their tenures in Antrim, although their employment on missions by the Parliamentary Government, as well as earlier Scottish kings, seemed to imply local connection and influence.' This did not inhibit Agnew from further speculation. Thus:

When Sorley Boye's son was confirmed in his seizure of the Route, one of his first acts had been to offer grants of land to the Agnews, apparently in recognition of prior claims.

Sorley Boye was a contemporary of Sir Andrew, the seventh sheriff, and his son, Sir Randall M'Donnell, had grown up on terms of intimacy with Sir Patrick, the eighth sheriff.

Having referred to the acquisition by Sir Randall MacDonnell of a grant of 333,000 acres in Antrim, Agnew went on:

On being installed as a petty king, he seems to have pressed his friend, Sir Patrick Agnew, to hold various estates in Larne, Glenarm, and Kilwaughter under him. The papers connected with these first dealings have been lost, but charters have been preserved dated as early as 1622, all in the form of renewals.

Up to this point Agnew cited no firm evidence but in the following pages he gave an account of a visit to Dunluce made by Sir Patrick Agnew and his son in 1636 on which occasion two agreements were drawn up and executed: (i) an indenture made between Sir Randal MacDonnell and Sir Patrick Agnew whereby MacDonnell demised unto Agnew 'all that his three tounland which is now in the possession of the said Sir Patrick Agnew and his Tenants in the Loch of Larne, viz. Lelies Drumminidonachie, Drummiho with Beliaderdawn, etc., according to the ancient bounds and limits of the same, as the said Sir Patrick now enjoys the same', and (ii) an instrument, signed by Sir Patrick Agnew and his son, Andrew, ratifying and securing to a Patrick Agnew of Ballikeill in Larne the right and title to the land of Ballikeill which had previously been held, under an instrument of 20 July 1622, by the assignee's father, also Patrick.

These documents would certainly seem to support a claim that the Agnews of Galloway had a long-standing connection with Larne as landholders. As for the land of Ballikeill held in 1622 by a Patrick Agnew, it is worth noting that a Patrick Agnew of Ballygally is said by Éamonn Ó Tuathail³⁵ to have been High Sheriff of Co. Antrim in 1668. In this connection Ó Tuathail quotes from a 'Description of the County of Antrim' compiled in 1683 in which the author, Richard Dobbs, referred to 'Ballygelly hill' between Larne and Glenarm. Dobbs wrote: 'Under this hill is a small Building about 16 feet square upon a rock in the Sea, where one Agnew, an Irish Poet, dwelt in old Times'. If, as seems likely, Ballykeill and Ballygally and Ballygelly are all the one place, we would seem to have here a further indication of association between the Scottish Agnews and the Ó Gnímh family of poets.

The second item which I have to bring in at this point has to do with a coincidence of occurrence of some Christian names in the Ó Gnímh and Agnew families. Briefly they are as follows:

- (1) a. In the Ó Gnímh genealogy Gille Pádraig (= Patrick) is named as son of Seaán (= John) who was grandson of Eóin, alias Gníomh, and who was therefore the first Ó Gníomh. His floruit might have been c. 1440.
- b. According to Andrew Agnew³⁶ the first Hereditary Sheriff, who married in 1426 and died in 1484, had a natural son, Patrick, as well as sons, Andrew and Gilbert. The floruit of this Patrick [Agnew] might also have been c. 1440.

Among the legitimate descendants of the first Andrew Agnew listed for the following two centuries there are seven Patricks, the name being equalled in frequency of occurrence only by Andrew.

- (2) a. One of the persons named in the 1624 grant already cited was Gilbert O'Gneeve.
- b. In the genealogical details of the Agnew family for the period c. 1400-1600 the name Gilbert occurs twice.

The name Gilbert is sometimes used as an equivalent of Gaelic Gille Brighde.

- (3) a. Names Fear Doirche and Domhnall occur in the Ó Gnímh genealogies.

- b. Names Fardorrhagh and Daniel, referring to O'Gneeves, occur in an inquisition of 1635.³⁷

It remains to set out some possibilities regarding links between the Ó Gnímh and Agnew families that emerge from the above.

- (1) The surname Ó Gnímh, with variant form Ó Gníomha, derives from an eponymous ancestor called Gníomh whose name may derive from ON Grímr.
- (2) An Ó Gníomha family inhabited an area in Co. Cork in the twelfth century, but apart from one fourteenth-century reference, there is no further trace of them in east Munster.
- (3) The listing of the Í Ghnímh among *aos dána Éireann* suggests that their association with the profession of poetry goes back further than the time of Brian Ó Gnímh (c. 1550-1600). They might have been among families of professional scholars who emerged in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, many of whom subsequently migrated from their place of origin.³⁸ They could have had their origins in Cork, have found their way from Cork to Galloway and, having established themselves there, left descendants who retained the Ó Gnímh surname which, however, might have been anglicised early to Agnew in accordance with a local tendency.
- (4) In the fifteenth century a member of the Galloway family of Agnew/Ó Gnímh named Andrew acquired power and prestige and was appointed Constable of Lochnaw and Sheriff of Wigtown, and his legitimate heirs continued to hold lands and office in Galloway.
- (5) This Andrew Agnew's duties caused him to visit Antrim in 1460 about the time that Domhnall Ballach Mac Domhnaill of Scotland inherited the seven *tuatha* of the Glens of Antrim from his mother.
- (6) Since Gille Pádraig Ó Gnímh, son of Seaán Dúna Fiodháin who was the first Ó Gnímh of the supposed Mac Domhnaill/Ó Gnímh line, would have been a contemporary of Patrick [Agnew], illegitimate son of Andrew Agnew, it is possible that the seventeenth-century genealogists or some earlier person wrongly linked the Ó Gnímh line with that of Mac Domhnaill. Their Ó Gnímh surname might have had a much earlier origin, hinted at in the preceding sections.
- (7) The association of the Ó Gnímh poets with the O'Neills and the MacDonnells could have begun in the fifteenth century. Early contacts between Andrew Agnew as Sheriff of Galloway and Domhnall Mac Domhnaill as new proprietor of the Glens of Antrim could have led to lands in the Larne area being granted to an Agnew relation using the name Ó Gnímh, and this could have been the beginning of the association of the Ó Gnímh poets with both the O'Neills and the MacDonnells.

It must be clear by now that I have reached no conclusions about the origins of either the Irish or Scottish families which I have been discussing. I have, I believe, found a number of pieces of information which I liken to jig-saw puzzle pieces, but I cannot say whether the missing pieces, if found, would join them all together to make one unit or would give us two, or perhaps three, separate units. I can only hope that future research will give us some answers.

NOTES

*This is a revised version of the paper given on 31 March, 1984, at the XVIth Annual Conference of the Council for Name Studies held in Aberdeen.

1. For various forms see the 'Fiants' etc. as cited by T. F. O'Rahilly in Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad. 36 C 6 (1922), and other source material cited by É. Ó Tuathail in Éigse VI (1948-52) 157-60.
2. See Celtica XVI (1984) 141.
3. Irish Grammatical Tracts II §95.
4. See n.2 above.
5. In this connection see Professor MacQueen's comments quoted on p.64 below.
6. Ériu X (1926-8) 170, 11. 1-2.
7. Cal. Just. Rolls Ire., 1308-1314, p. 314. Unfortunately the original has been lost.
8. Celtica I (1946-50) 92.
9. I have given bibliographical references to all four poems in Celtica XVI, 153.
10. Judging from Fiant No. 6633 of 1602 'Ogneiff', 'Ferflaha Ogneiffe' and 'Bernard Oge Ogneife' were tenants of Randal MacDonnell. For later evidence of members of the family in the Larne area see Éigse VI, 157-60.
11. T. F. O'Rahilly argued (Scot. Gael. Stud. V (1943) 101-5) that the Morrisons had migrated 'at some unascertained date' from the Inishowen peninsula in Donegal to Scotland where they settled especially in Lewis and Harris, and that the earliest of them to have lived in Scotland would have been named Ó Muirgheasáin. As regards the use in Scotland of the forms Morrison or Morison as surname he said: 'Once the literary tradition had been broken, the Ó, unfamiliar to Scotsmen, inevitably fell out; and as the name Muirgheasáin was likewise unknown outside the surname, it became easily corrupted. It was inevitable that in English the name should be assimilated to the unrelated English "Morrison" (meaning "son of Morris or Maurice"); and the anglicized form seems to have influenced the Gaelic.'
12. For further discussion see Celtica XVI, 144-50.
13. For Máire see the MacDonnell genealogy in Celtica XVI, 144-5.
14. A normalised version of q. 23 of the text published in P. Walsh, Irish Chiefs and Leaders (Dublin, 1960), pp. 72-8.
15. Cal. Pat. Rolls James I, p. 585b.
16. Since the 'Seaán Dúna Fiodháin mc Maoil Mhuire' of the genealogy is the first person who, in the normal way of things, could have had the surname Ó Gnímh, the epithet 'Dún Fiodháin' could be significant. However, I have failed to discover its location. There is a townland named Doonfin near Ballycastle in Co. Antrim. On the other hand in the recension of the Deirdre story in the Glenmasan manuscript there is mention of Dún Finn and Dún Fiodhgha (vl. Dún Fiodh) as places in Scotland familiar to Deirdre (Ir. Texte II, 1, p. 127). Dr Colm Ó Baoill has called my attention to a Dunian near Jedburgh in Roxburghshire. But I have no compelling reason for equating Dún Fiodháin with any of these.

17. 'The Agnews in County Antrim', Ulster Journal of Archaeology, New Series, VII, 166-71.
18. Op. cit. I, 208.
19. Ibid. X and 209.
20. Ibid. 196 and 211.
21. Ibid. 207.
22. Ibid. 213.
23. Op. cit. 326, where the reader is referred to R. C. Reid, 'Some early de Soulis Charters', in Dumfriesshire Trans., 3rd Series, XXVI (1949) 155-6.
24. Fragmentary Annals of Ireland, ed. J. Radner (Dublin, 1978), p. 124.
25. Ibid. p. 222. I cannot explain the element beolu in the AFM form of the name. It looks as if Cinnsiolach, which I would read in place of the editor's Cinnsiolaig, may be a calque on Selshqfuð 'seal-head' with one element translated (i.e. cinn = hqfuð), and the other echoed in a semi-Irish form (i.e. siolach = sels).
26. See NOMINA 3 (1979) 48-50.
27. Frag. Ann. Irel. p. 227.
28. Irish Dialects Past and Present (Dublin, 1932, rev. ed. 1972), p. 22.
29. Celtica III (1956) 290-4.
30. The Book of Magauran, ed. L. McKenna (Dublin, 1947) Poem VI, q. 9.
31. Joannis de Fordun Scotichronica: cum Supplementis et Continuatione Walteri Boweri, Insulae Sancti Columbae Abbatis (Edinburgh, 1775), Liber. xv, Cap. xi.
32. The Book of Magauran, loc. cit. The poet, Giolla Pádraig Mac Náimhín, was petitioning Brian Mág Shamhradháin († 1298) for help.
33. See n. 15.
34. Op. cit. II, 43-5, for this and the following quotations. I have been informed by Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochnaw that the two documents are among the Lochnaw papers which are on loan to the Scottish Record Office. Their reference numbers there are GD154, Nos. 505 and 506.
35. Éigse VI, 159.
36. Op. cit. II, 430.
37. Éigse VI, 159.
38. See Proinsias Mac Cana, 'The Rise of the Later Schools of Filidheacht' in Ériu XXV (1974) 126-46.