

**The Historical
ARTHUR of GALLOWAY**

By

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Introduction.

King Arthur must be the widest known romantic hero of pre-mediaeval legend. The Bulletin of the Arthurian Society lists hundreds of books, papers, etc, involving the King and his Knights, drawn up over many years. His fame for chivalry has surfaced all over Europe : Arthurian imagery is associated with The Green Knight, Parceval, Tristram and Isolda, The Faerie Queen, The Red Dragon, and many other fictional characters : even with the Order of the Garter. He acquired an early aura similar to that of the later Robin Hood.

However, Hume the Scottish philosopher who wrote a history of England in the 1750s began to suggest that there was an historical Arthur separate from the English/Welsh legends. Most of the pre-Norman writers of history whose work included reference to Arthur had come from Scotland, including Aneirin³, Jocelinus⁴, Adamnan⁵ and Nennius⁷. In the 1860s, W.F.Skene, the doyen of Scottish Celtic historians, together with J.S.S.Glennie, noted that the preponderance of Arthurian sites were in Scotland, and concluded that there was indeed an historical Arthur, 'of the North', quite different from that of legend. Together they placed the historical Arthur's battles recorded by Nennius⁷ around the Antonine Wall, fighting Highlanders who were driving south in the ebb and flow of people following the end of the Roman occupation of Scotland, spreading mayhem in Galloway. Glennie¹⁷ was first into print with his article in Macmillan's Magazine, *A Journey through Arthurian Scotland* in 1867, followed by Skene¹⁸ a year later in *The Ancient Books of Wales*, and Glennie¹⁹ again in 1869 with his book *Arthurian Localities*. This has divided interest firmly between fictional legends of England and real history of Scotland, with recent interest in the historical Arthur supported in books by Carroll⁴⁰, Moffat⁴¹ and others, a pamphlet by Pate⁴³, ClannArthur⁵¹, and in The Scots Magazine.

Some Arthurian writers have lamented the lack of archaeological evidence for Arthur : but this we have clear for all to see in the form of ancient site names, and in particular the several Arthur's Seats and Arthurstones in Scotland. This paper sets out to draw together such evidence as can be found, especially from pre-Norman historical documents untainted by legends, site names, and dendro-ecology, and to analyse in a logical rather than an romantic manner, to produce the historical Arthur's origin, battles and death.. This paper locates fifty seven Arthurian sites in Scotland and suggests sites for twenty three battles fought by the historical Arthur in Scotland.

Because of the millennium and a half which separate us from Arthur and perhaps distortion of evidence, the conclusions of this paper must necessarily be based upon probability rather than certain proof. Its readers are invited to read the whole paper, and mull over in their minds whether the conclusions seems probable, likely, or unlikely : it seems improbable that anyone can say with certainty whether they are right or not, and in detail the order of Arthur's battles may upon further evidence be found to be different. But in coming to their conclusion, readers should try to ignore legend and fable from southern Britain.

The author would like to thank those many people who have helped towards producing this paper. Although spelling is consistent within this paper, except in quotations, it may not necessarily agree with spelling by other authors. And it lacks acute accents on Gaelic names, due to computer limitations.

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Superscript numbers in the text refer to the list of references on at the end of this paper.

Subscript numbers in the text refer to notes at the end of this paper.

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Section 1 – The Historical Background.

Let us start with the fiction. In about 1139 AD, Geoffrey of Monmouth²⁴, then at Oxford where he styled himself ‘Geoffrey Arturus’ and from 1151 AD Bishop of St Asaph, wrote his famous book, *The History of the Kings of Britain*¹⁰. This it seems was written in part to justify the Norman’s seizure of the throne of Britain. The climax of this book was the great King Arthur, Christian ruler of Britain, Ireland, Iceland, Norway, much of France and Italy, who held court at Caerleon-upon-Usk (naturally in Monmouthshire), who was the owner of a sword called Caliburn, and who was buried on the Isle of Avalon in 542 AD : his viceroys or knights included Kay, Bedevere and Lot, the father of Gawain : Geoffrey incorporated his earlier book, ‘The Prophecies of Merlin’ in his history. Robert Wace²⁴ wrote a poetical version of this in 1155 AD, introducing the Round Table and ‘The Past and Future King’, sleeping at Avalon until he ‘re-appears’ to rule again, typified by one of his alleged tombstones reading:-

Hic jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rex futurus.

Chrétien de Troyes²⁴, in a series of popular poems written in French around 1170 AD., added Perceval and the Holy Grail, Sir Lancelot of the Lake, Sir Tristram and others, and the court at Camelot. Almost a millennium after Arthur’s birth, Sir Thomas Malory, in Newgate Goal due to his part in the Wars of the Roses, wrote several Arthurian books including *Le Morte d’Arthur*, a concoction of earlier works which was printed in edited form by Claxton in 1485 AD, bringing Merlin prominently into the story, the sword in the stone, Excalibur and the Lady of the Lake, Lancelot’s romance with Guinevere, and so on. Many mediaeval authors carried on this fiction. More recently, who does not remember Tennyson’s famous lines on the battle of Camlann :-

So all day long the noise of battle roll’d
Around the mountains by the wintery sea,
Until King Arthur’s table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord.
Then because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedevere uplifted him,
And carried him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay a great ocean and on one lay a great water.
And the moon was full.

Magnificent writing, which in all honesty sounds like the Mull of Galloway ! Both Pate⁴³ and Carroll⁴⁰ state that ‘Lyonesse’ was a mal-interpretation of the French word ‘Liones’ used by Chrétien, properly translated as ‘Lothian’.

Let us be realistic. This is all Norman-inspired fiction, extended by the Tudors, fictionalised to justify their occupancy on the Throne of England. As far back as 1142 AD, almost immediately after Geoffrey had published his book, William of Malmesbury wrote in his *Novella Historia*:-

Everything this man (Geoffrey of Monmouth) wrote about Arthur and his successors, or indeed about his predecessors, from Vortigern onwards, was made up, partly by himself, partly by others, either from an inordinate love of lying, or for the sake of pleasing the Britons.

To find the truth about the historical Arthur, we have to ignore all this fiction, and look primarily at the pre-Norman written histories, and such other non-fictional sources as can be found. Let us turn to history.

First, a note on pre-Norman language. Accept for the present that the historical Arthur was alive around 500 AD. At that time, the people of Scotland north of the Forth/Clyde divide (loosely called Highlanders in this paper) comprised the Picts to the east who spoke the P form of Celtic similar to the present Welsh, and Scots to the west, the Irish who were immigrating into Scotland, bringing the Q form of the Celtic language, similar to the present Gaelic and to that of Ireland. From the Forth/Clyde divide southwards, the country was divided into the eastern part (loosely called Saxons) speaking a Germanic fore-runner of English, and the remainder west of a line roughly from The Humber to Devon (loosely called Britons) also speaking the P form of Celtic. This is shown diagrammatically on Chart 1. So we are not surprised to find Welsh bards came from Strathclyde and Edinburgh. And that the Celtic name 'Arthur' or 'Artair' as likely came from Glasgow as Tintagel.

The first history written after Arthur's death seems to have been *The Ruin of Britain* by Gildas¹, written around 540 AD, only a few years after Arthur's death, (or maybe 560 AD). Gildas was a monk of dubious accuracy from Strathclyde, who visited Ireland, Rome and France, and who wrote a fierce denunciation of Britain, ending :-

Here, or even earlier, I should have finished this tearful history.

There is not a word of Arthur in his history. He mentions Ambrosius Aurelianus, who defeated a Saxon force in the 490s AD at, he said, Badon Hill.

The 6th century *Elegy for Garaint* of uncertain date mentions 'Arthur's Heroes who cut with steel.' Taliesin² the Bard of Rheged writing in the late 500s AD wrote at least twelve poems lauding Urien's (Chart 3) campaigns against the Saxons. But there is no mention of an Arthur in any of these, although Arthur appears in later poems under his name whose author is uncertain, seemingly involving Scottish sites.

Aneirin³ in about 600 AD wrote *The Gododdin*, said to be the earliest surviving Scottish narrative poem, lamenting the slaughter of a Scottish force some 300 strong from Edinburgh, under the command of Caeawg, who were invading England, perhaps in the wake of Urien's attack on the Saxons, until they attacked the fort at Catterick, presumably Saxon held although the poem does not say so, where they were slaughtered. There is one reference to Arthur in this, praising Cynaval, 'the slayer of hosts'. 'He was an Arthur in the midst of exhausting conflict'. Arthur as a fighter, not as a king, but at least remembered around Edinburgh.

The *Senchus fer nAlban*³³ probably written in Irish in the mid 600s gives the male genealogy of the kings of Dalriada. It lists one Arthur, the grandson of King Aidan. Adamnan⁵ writing his *Life of St Columba* in around 700 AD quoted Arthur as a son of King Aidan : either way, this Arthur was too late to be the 'King' Arthur – more on this in sections 2 and 9.

The early 700s AD take us into the very extensive historical writings of The Venerable Bede⁶, a Saxon priest in Tyneside. If Arthur had been a great Christian King who brought Christianity to the Saxon tribes, surely we would have found him praised by Bede. But not a mention : not a mention. Bede praises Gildas, and enlarges on his comment about Ambrosius, correcting Gildas' name of his battle site to Baddesdown Hill : Bede dates this battle at 494 AD, 44 years after the Angles had arrived in England in 450 AD.

We then move forward another century to *The History of the Britons*, written around 800 AD by Nennius⁷, another monk from Strathclyde who had moved to Wales, with later additions. Nennius was a respected historian, apparently fluent in Welsh, English, Latin and Old Irish, who stated in his opening that he collected bits and pieces of history from the annals of Jerome, Eusebius, Isidore, Prosper, the Scots, the Saxons, and from tradition, with the implication that it none may be totally complete. Certainly his story that Britain was governed by a King Britto at the time of The Flood is pure fable. On the other hand, his statement that the Scots emigrated from Spain to Ireland, and from there to Dalriada in the Highlands, is correct. In his history we again find Ambrosius. But quite separately there is the first detailed description of Arthur and his battles (reproduced in section 2c). Nennius

states specifically that Arthur was not a king, but a battle leader – Dux Bellorum for those familiar with Latin. Nennius states that he was fighting against ‘them’ : given so much fictional history, many writers have assumed that he was fighting Saxons. But no-where does Nennius say this, although he mentions Saxons to fix to date. In Strathclyde, Nennius may have been brought up on tales of Arthur’s battles against the Highlanders, as he lists twelve successful battles (that mystic Christian number !) won by Arthur (Section 2c) which Skene placed in the central belt of Scotland, culminating at Badon Hill, a name we have seen above used erroneously by Gildas, which Nennius dated in his annals at 516 AD. His annals states against 537 AD “The Action of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut fell. And there was a pestilence in Britain and in Ireland.” Skene²⁰ (far from pre-Norman!) states that Medraut was the son of Llew₁ of Edinburgh and brother of Owein’s mistress Thaney (Chart 3). A remarkable confirmation of the date 537 AD has come from an unusual source : a palaeo-ecological study (Section 3) has indicated unusual weather leading to famine in 536/7 AD. So Nennius seems accurate. Nennius evidently knew a great deal about Arthur, and notably declined to give him the title ‘King’, even though he must have been known as that by Nennius’ time. But those who have read the Pictish Chronicle will have noted that this seems to give this title to every ruler from the King of Scotland down to the local laird. It seems more than co-incidence that this monk who wrote most about Arthur came from Strathclyde.

Let us move on. In the 900s AD, two historical documents with reference to northern Britain survive. *The Chronicle of the Pictish and Scottish Kings*⁸, more generally known as *The Pictish Chronicle*, is one. In vain do we look for Arthur in this. Certainly its author does not recognise Arthur as a King ruling Britain, let alone Ireland, Iceland, Norway, etc. *The Chronicles of Cumbria*⁹, compiled before 977 AD, probably from earlier documents, give no reference to Arthur other than confirmation of his battles of Badon in 516 AD and Camlann in 537 AD as quoted by Nennius.

Lastly, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*¹¹, Parker’s Chronicle seemingly written around 1000 AD and Laud’s Chronicle in the 1150s AD. Surely if this great Christian King had converted the Saxons to Christianity, he would have had a high place of honour in these chronicles. But not a word of him. Around 538 AD they just mention an eclipse of the sun.

So the only conclusion tenable from these written pre-Norman histories is that Arthur was a Christian battle commander who evidently did not convert the Saxon tribes to Christianity, fought at least twelve battles against ‘them’ culminating in the Battle of Badon Hill in 516 AD, and was killed in 537 AD at the Battle of Camlann. So who was he fighting ? The only name which is historically connected with Camlann is Medraut, probably Arthur’s younger and disastrous ally (Section 4b). Certainly, the idea that Arthur was fighting Saxons put forward by Geoffrey and continued by many writers has no substance in pre-Norman history.

When we turn to post-Norman histories, detailed in section 3 and written at least five hundred years after Arthur’s death, we must treat these with suspicion. The statement in Triad 1 (Section 4b) seems likely confirmation that the historical Arthur came from the head of Loch Ryan, very probable as Wigtownshire was Christian following the arrival of St Ninian a century or thereabouts before Arthur’s birth. These histories offer little else. There seem to be no records of Arthur’s ancestors or relations : the suggestion that his sister Morgan was married to Urien seems more relevant to Arthur MacAidan (Section 9). At Loch Ryan he was possibly a chief of the Novantae, and friendly with his neighbours Llew and Arawn, the ‘kings’ of Galloway and brothers of Urien (Chart 3), whose writ seemingly ran to Dunragit, which may support a friendship with Urien. Far from being a romantic hero of history, history paints Arthur as a failure, in spite of his battle successes, only temporarily postponing the Highland advance : it was St Columba and those whom he inspired who brought peace to Scotland.

History should be a matter of fact : in fact, it is mostly an interpretation of uncertain and sometimes dubious records, with conclusions based upon probability rather than certainty. All we learn from these early histories tells us little about him. Let us look in more detail at the records, and add site names as a further source of evidence.

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Section 2 – Pre-Norman Records.

Section 1 has emphasised the importance of pre-Norman records, which are not tainted by the legends introduced by Geoffrey of Monmouth. The following five records, all pre-Norman, list references to people called Arthur :-

2a The Senchus fer nAlban

‘*The History of the Men of Scotland*’ lists the genealogy of the leaders of Dalriada. It was written in Irish in the middle of the seventh century, its author unknown. The following is an extract from the translation quoted by Bannerman³³ (slightly simplified), reproduced with permission of Scottish Academic Press Ltd :-

‘Fergus M_r, son of Erc, had one son, Domangart. Domangart, moreover, had two sons, Gabrán and Comgell.

Comgell had one son Conall. Conall had seven sons, Loingsech, Nechtan, Artán, Tuatán, Tutio and Corpri. Gabrán moreover had five sons, Aedán, Eoganán, Cuilidach, Domnall and Domangart.

Aedán had seven sons, Eocho Bude, Eochaid Find, Tuathal, Bran, Báithíne, Conaing and Gartnait.

Eocho Bude, son of Aedán, had eight sons, Domnall Brecc, Domnall Dond, Conall Crandonma, Conall Becc, Connad Cerr, Failbe, Domangart and Cú-cen-mathair.

Eochaid Find had eight sons, Báetán, Predan, Pledan, Cormac, Cr_náan, Feradach, Fedlimid and Capléni.

These are the sons of Conaing, son of Aedán, Rigallán, Ferchar, Artan, Artúr, Dondchad, Domangart, Nechtan, Ném and Crumíne.

Four sons of Gartnait, son of Aedán

Two sons of Tuathal, son of Morgand, son of Eochaid Find, son of Aedán, son of Gabrán.’

The Arthur or Artúr in this record – Arthur MacAidan – appears in Section 9.

2b The Life of Saint Columba

This ‘life’ was written by Adamnan⁵ in about 700 AD. Chapter VIII reads :-

‘At another time, before the above-mentioned battle (Battle of Miathi), the saint asked King Aidan about his successor to the crown. The king answered that of his three sons, Arthur, Eochoid Find and Domingart, he knew not which should have the kingdom, after him. Then at once the saint prophesied on this wise, ‘None of these three shall be king, for they shall all fall in battle, slain by their enemies : but if thou hast any younger sons, let them come to me and that one of them whom the Lord has chosen to be king will at once rush to my lap.’ When they were called, Eochoid Buide, according to the word of the saint, advanced and rested on his bosom. Immediately the saint kissed him, and, giving him his blessing, said to his father, ‘This one shall survive and reign after thee, and his sons shall reign after him’ And these things were fully accomplished afterwards in their time. For Arthur and Eochoid Find

were not long after killed in the Battle of Miathi. Domingart was also defeated and slain in the battle in Saxonia ; while Eochoid Buide succeeded his father on the throne.’

Adamnan was an old man when he wrote this, a century and a half after these happenings : he seems to have been confused between Aidan’s sons and grandsons, both Arthur and Domingart being his quoted as grandsons in *The Senchus*.

2c Nennius⁷ History

Nennius’ *History of the Britons* was written in around 800 AD. The following is an extract :-

‘ARTHUR

At that time the Saxons were waxing strong in number and were increasing in Britain. When Hengist was dead, Octha, his son, passed from the northern part of Britain to the kingdom of the Kentishmen and from him are sprung the kings of the Kentishmen.

Then it was that Arthur was wont to fight against them in those days with the kings of the Britons, but he himself was dux bellorum, *leader of battles*. The first battle was at the mouth of the river, which is called Glein. The second, third, fourth and fifth on another river, which is called Dubglas and is in the region of Linnuis. The sixth battle on the river which is called Bassas. The seventh was a battle in the wood of Celidon, that is Cat Coit Celidon. The eighth was the battle of Castellum Guinnion, in which Arthur carried the image of Saint Mary, ever virgin, on his shoulders₂, and the pagans were put to flight on that day and there was a great slaughter of them through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and through the power of Saint Mary the Virgin, his mother. The ninth battle was fought at the City of the Legion. The tenth battle was fought on the shore of a river which is called Tribruit. The eleventh battle occurred on the mountain which is called Agned. The twelfth was the battle on Mount Badon, in which there fell together in one day nine hundred and sixty men in one onset of Arthur, and no one laid them low save himself alone. And in all the battles he remained victor.

And they, while they were being overcome in all the battles, used to seek for assistance from Germania and were being increasingly without intermission, and they used to bring kings from Germania to rule over them in Britain up to the time when Ida reigned₂, who was the son of Eobba. He was the first king of Beornica.’

2d Nennius’ Annals of the Britons⁷

It is not certain who wrote these annals, as they continue to 954 AD, long after Nennius’ death. They bear great similarity to the Annals of Cumbria, suggesting a similar source if not the same author. They contain two references to Arthur :-

516 AD The Battle of Badon, in which Arthur carried the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ for three days and three nights on his shoulders₃, and the Britons were victorious.

537 AD The Action of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut fell. And there was a pestilence in Britain and in Ireland.

2e The Welsh Annals⁹

These are otherwise known as the *Annals of Cumbria*, and like Nennius’ Annals appear to have been written in the late 900s AD, possibly by the same author. The sole Arthurian

references which they contain is confirmation of the dates of the battles of Badon and Camlann.

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Section 3 – Palaeo-ecology

In Section 1, it was noted that Nennius' statement that there was a famine in 537 AD was confirmed by a palaeo-ecological study. This section details that study.

Professor Mike Baillie⁴² of the School of Archaeology and Palaeo-ecology at Queen's University, Belfast, has put together his findings on dendrochronology (the dating of tree rings) with results from ice cores, carbon dating and historical records, and with the possible causes of major natural catastrophic occurrences, from earthquake, volcano clouds or meteor impact, in his book *Exodus to Arthur*. In particular, this book concentrates on :-

2354 BC	An explosion of a comet or meteor leading destruction in Egypt and the Exodus.
1628 BC	Major explosion of Santorini leading to world-wide destruction.
1159 BC	Major eruption of Hekla 3 in Iceland leading to famine over Britain, Ireland, Norway, etc.
208 BC	Cause unknown but effects world wide including famine in China.
540 AD	Arthur's death.

Against the 540 event he details :-

520 AD	Growth of USA foxtail starts to decline
535 AD	Extreme cold in Sierra Nevada. Growth of European oak, Finnish pine and US foxtail rapidly falling.
536 AD	Second coldest summer in 1500 years. Extreme cold in Fennoscandia. Severe European dry fog. Irish Annals refer to a 'failure of bread'. Famine in China and the star Canopus not seen. Chinese capital evacuated.
537 AD	Mortality in Britain and Ireland. Chinese famine continues. European dry fog continues.
538 AD	Anomalous 'eclipse' recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles.
539 AD	Irish Annals refer to 'failure of bread'
540 AD	Another anomalous 'eclipse' recorded. Growth of European oak and US foxtail at minimum. Irish bog oak starts to show notable reduced growth.
542 AD	Justinian plague in Egypt. Irish bog oak and Finnish pine still showing reduced growth. European oak growth recovering.

This seems good confirmation of Nennius' statement for 537 AD 'And there was a pestilence in Britain and Ireland'. As to its cause, Professor Baillie has found no evidence that this world-wide occurrence was due to volcanic dust, as indicated by acidity of ice cores, and suggests good evidence that the 'dry fog' was dust from of a comet or asteroid bursting, perhaps in the Irish Sea but more likely as it entered Earth's atmosphere, responsible for the anomalous eclipses of 538 and 540 AD. Perhaps several occurrences, in about 520 AD, 536 AD and in 540 AD as Earth passed through an asteroid belt.

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Section 4 – Post-Norman Records.

Any records made after Geoffrey of Monmouth's book was published after the Normans conquered Britain are of dubious historical value. This section lists three such records :-

4a The *Easter Annals*

The British Library contains a set of Easter tables believed to date from the early 11th century. They make two mentions of Arthur :-

499 or 518 AD. The battle of Badon in which Arthur carried the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ on his shoulders, for three days and three nights and the Britons were the victors.

537 or 539 AD The battle of Camlann, in which Arthur and Modred perished. And there was a plague in Britain and Ireland.

This is just a repeat of the information from Gildas and Nennius.

4b - The *Welsh Triads*¹².

The *Welsh Triads* originated in the sixth century but now only exist as a post-Norman document, composed from other mainly post-Norman documents, a mixture of legend and history, with an evident desire to relate things in threes, even if by invention, and so of dubious historical value. In one internet version, Triad 1 quotes Arthur as Chief Prince or Lord of Pen Rhionydd in the North, of Celliwig in Cornwall and Mynyw in Wales (with a suggestion that Wales was added to this triad at the request of a Welsh bishop). This Triad thus seem to offer a 50/50 chance that Arthur came from Pen Rhionydd. Pate supports the suggestion of Skene that 'in the North' referred to the Welsh-speaking peoples of Cumbria, Galloway and Strathclyde, and adds that Pen Rhionydd means 'The Head of Loch Rion', now spelt Ryan. The odds-on favourite as Galloway had been mainly Christian since the arrival of St Ninian roughly a century before (Cornwall was pagan until missionaries from Wales landed at St Ives in 480 AD.⁴⁵). And, as we shall see below, Arthur's battles were north of Loch Ryan.

This conclusion may be taken further. The Roman road to Loch Ryan ran to their fort at Rerigonium₂₂, which probably stood at the head of the Messan Burn valley, in those days a flooded valley forming a sheltered port used by the Romans' west coast fleet, accessing directly into Loch Ryan. After the Romans left in about 165 AD, the civil settlement by the fort would certainly have continued, and may well have been Arthur's caput 'at the head of Loch Ryan' where he learnt Roman cavalry skills. A millennium later, this settlement had grown to the now lost town of Innermessan, shown by Pont around the Norman motte there₂₃.

Arthur is listed in the Triads as one of the Three Generous Men of Britain, and his son Llachau one of the Three Learned Men of Britain. Triad 57 refers to Arthur's three queens, curiously all named Gwenhwyfar, and triad 58 to his three mistresses. There are references to Arthur's Court, attended by three Sovereigns, three Frivolous Bards, three Unrestricted Guests, three 'Compeers', three Knights of Battle (Cadwr, Lancelot and Owein) and three Counselling Knights (through whose advice Arthur became Emperor of Rome). Arthur is mentioned in connection with three Red Ravagers, three Concealments, three Closures and three Disclosures, but not with the three Red-Speared Bards, three Ardent Lovers, three Fettered Men, three Battle-Horsemen, three Powerful Shepherds, three Roving Fleets and their Commanders, etc. There is no evidence that all the references refer to the same Arthur, and no evidence as to the date of any. Lancelot was the invention of Chrétien, and Owein son of Urien died sixty years after the historical Arthur. 'Emperor of Rome?' A large 'pinch of salt' is necessary !

There is one other reference to Arthur of significance. Triad 60 listed Three Unfortunate Counsels of the Island of Britain, listing as the third:-

The three-fold dividing by Arthur of his men with Medrawd at Camlann.

This appears to state that the historical Medrawd or Medraut was Arthur's ally, and not his enemy as others have placed him, at least at this disastrous battle. Medraut does not seem the origin of the evil Modred or Mordred of fictional legend.

4c. The *Annals of Ulster*¹³.

These annals naturally concentrate on Irish matters, but do list some happenings in Dalriada and the Pictish part of Scotland. Between the start of these annals in 431 AD and 630 AD, there is only one reference to Arthur ;-

467 AD. Death of Uter Pendragon, King of England, to whom succeeded his son, *ie* King Arthur, *ie* who ordained the round table. (a later handwritten addition).

The Annals of Ulster were written over many years by various writers, and included matter from many now lost annals. There was no such person as Uter or Uther Pendragon : it was a title, not a name, seemingly meaning 'Wonderful War Leader', and Welsh not English. This entry must have been added to the Annals of Ulster by someone who had read one of the legendary histories, after Wace had introduced the round table in 1155 AD.

There are several references to Kings of Dalriada in the Annals of Ulster, which appear in Section 9.

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Section 5 – Arthurian Site Names.

5a. Arthurian site names north of Hadrian's Wall

The bulk of Arthurian site names in Britain occur in Scotland, where in the absence of legendary connections the name 'Arthur' does suggest some real person of that name was associated with the site. The following names come mainly from the Ordnance Survey Pathfinder gazetteer^{61/62}, courtesy of the National Library's Map Room, augmented by Glennie's book¹⁹, www.streetmap.uk⁶³, and by correspondence. Information on hill forts came from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

No	SITE	ORD. MAP REF.	LOCATION	CONNECTION WITH 'KING' ARTHUR	PROBABLE ARTHUR BATTLES
1	Arthur Fowlie	NK 1137	A sea rock off Buchan Ness, Aberdeenshire.	Nil.	-
2	Arthur Seat	NY 4978	Kershope Forest near Liddel Water	Typical Arthur battle 'seat' near two river crossings.	An unrecorded battle.

3	Arthur's Bridge	NJ 2567	Bridge over the Lossie River near Lossiemouth, Morray Firth.	Nil	-
4	Arthur's Castle	NS 3875	Castle Hill by Dumbarton.	Fanciful name based upon 53.	-
5	Arthur's Craigs	NS 8344	Hazelbank to south of the Clyde, west of Lanark.	Typical Arthur battle 'seat' over-looking the Clyde.	An unrecorded battle.
6	Arthur's Fountain	NS 9520	By Crawford.	Camp on his way North ?	-
7	Arthur's Garden	NR 989?	Isle of Colonsay.	Nil.	-
8	Arthur's Hope	NT 7160	Hillside by the Grain Burn, near Ellenford Bridge in the Lammermuir Hill.	Typical Arthur's 'seat'. Probable base for the attack on the White Castle.	Nennius' Battle 8.
9	Arthur's Leg		Between Beith and Dunlop, Ayrshire.	Nil	-
10	Arthur's Loch	HU 2756	Shetland Isles.	Nil	-
11	Arthur's O'on	NS 8782	Temple by Falkirk and the Camelon, forts.	Close to Arthur's 'Camelot'.	Nenius' Camlann..
12	Arthur's Point	NJ 4065	Near Ullapool.	Nil	-
13	Arthur's Pool	NH 1979	On the River Broom in Wester Ross.	Nil	-
14	Arthur's Seat, and Ben Arthur	NN 2605	Side of 'The Cobbler', alias 'Ben Arthur' at the head of Loch Long.	Overlooking battle sites in Glens Douglas and Croe.	Nennius' Battles 2,3, 4 & 5.
15	Arthur's Seat	NT 2772	Overlooking or perhaps a fort in Holyrood Park..	Probably 'Mount Agned'.	Nennius' Battle 11.
16	Arthur's Seat	NT 1112	Hart Fell at the head of Annandale	A high site for observation	-
17	Arthur's Seat	Near NO 5048	Rock on Dunbarrow Hill by Dunnichen, Strathmore.	A typical Arthur battle 'seat' overlooking Dean Water.	Nennius' Battle 10.
18	Arthur's Seat	Near NR 9650	North end of the Isle of Arran.	Nil	-
19	Arthur's Slunk	NX 0646	A cave or hollow north of Ardwall Point in the Rhinns of Galloway.	Perhaps a Christian place of retreat : or just a hide.	-
20	Arthur's Wood	NT 5849	Near Lauder.	Nil.	-

21	Arthurbank & Arthur Fold	NO 2542	Dwellings near Arthurstone, in Strathmore.	May reflect his presence.	-
22	Arthuret	NY 3867	Near Longtown..	Nil.	-
23	Arthurhouse	NO 7674	West of Inverberbie, South of Aberdeen	May reflect his presence.	-
24	Arthurlie and Arthurstone	NS 4958	Suburb of Barrhead near Glasgow.	Legendary camp site of Arthur.	-
25	Arthurseat	NK 0437	South of Peterhead.	Another 'seat'.	An unrecorded battle.
26	Arthurshiel	NT 5829	Relief and Cottage south of St Boswell.	Perhaps part of the legends of the Eildon Hills.	-
27	Arthurshiels and Arthurshiels Wood	NT 0041 & NS 9941	Wood and farm north west of Biggar overlooking the Clyde.	A probable Arthur camp site.	-
28	Arthurston	NS 4019	The reference is south west of Coynton, near Ayr..	Not on Ordnance Survey Web maps.	-
29	Arthurstone	NS 5579	Near Blanehead..	A probable Arthur camp site on his way to Nennius' Battle 1.	-
30	Arthurstone	NO 2642	Close to the River Isla a tributary of the Tay in Perthshire.	A probable Arthur camp site on his way to Nennius' Battle 10.	-
31	Arthursund		North East of Falkirk. Possibly a corruption of Arthurstone.	Another camp site ?	-
32	Arthurville	NH 7781	A dwelling.	Nil	-
33	Black Arthur's Well	NJ 5224	Alias Holy Well, near Rhynie, Morrayshire.	Nil	-
34	Cairn of Arthurhouse	NO 7674	North East of Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire.	Nil	-
35	Carthur Hill	NY 1894	A hill fort north of Boreland.	A typical Arthur's 'seat' by Dryffe Water.	An unrecorded battle.
36	Cave Arthur	NK 0732	Cruden Bay, North of Aberdeen.	Nil	-
37	Knockarthur	NC 7506	Near Dornoch Firth.	Nil	-

38	Little & Meikle Arthur Grain	NS 8811 & NS 8711	Two lochs near Wanlockhead.	On the way from Pennyarthur to Loch Arthur.	An unrecorded battle.
39	Loch Arthur	NX 9068	Near Dumfries.	On the way to his next 'seat'.	An unrecorded battle.
40	Lord Arthur's Hill & Cairn	NJ 5119	Near Alford.	Nil	-
41	McArthur Head	NR 4659	West coast of Islay.	Nil	-
42	Pennyarthur	NS 4803	A ridge near Dal-melington overlooking the rivers Doon and Muck.	A typical Arthur's 'seat'.	An unrecorded battle.
43	Port Arthur	HU 3939	Shetlands Islands.	Nil	-
44	Prince Arthur's Cairn	NO 2594	Balmoral Estate.	Nil	-

When we turn to Gaelic names, the Ordnance Survey Website⁶² yields eleven more sites which include the P-Celtic 'Artair'.

45	Agaidh Artair (The Face of Arthur)	NN 2411	Rock in Glen Kinglass, north of The Cobler and Beinn Ime.	Nil	-
46	Allt Feith Mhic Artair	NM 8048	Tributary of Glensandra River, near Kingairlock, Highland.	Nil	-
47	Allt Tir Artair	NN 5836	A stream, running into the west end of Loch Tay near Morenish, Highland.	A probable river crossing battle site.	An unrecorded battle
48	Creag Artair (Arthur's Crag)	NN 4420	A crag on the south of Stob Binnein, overlooking two streams to the west of Loch Voil.	A typical Arthur's 'seat'.	An unrecorded battle
49	Meill Mhic Artur	NM 8199	Rocky Hill overlooking No 45 above.	Nil	-
50	Feith Mhic Artair	NM 5736	A flat land near 46 above.	See 46 above.	-
51	Sidhean Allt Mhic-Artair	NM 5022	A woodland spring in Brollass, Argyll.	Nil	-

52	Struath Artair (Arthur's Stream)	NR 8693	A stream at Glassary by Lochgilphead.	Nil	
53	Suidhe Artair (Arthur's Seat)	NS 3875	A Seat on Dumbarton Rock.	Typical Arthur's 'seat' overlooking the mouth of the Clyde.	Nennius' Battle 1 ?
54	Suidhe Artair (Arthur's Seat)	NK 0437	A Seat at the head of Glenlivet, Aberdeenshire.	Possible un-recorded battle.	An unrecorded battle.
55	Tir Artair (Arthur's Land)	NN 5834	Land on the north west end of Loch Tay.	See 47 above.	-
56	Uamh an Tartair	NC 2109	A mountain cave overlooking Knockan, Highland.	Nil	-

If we revert to Latin, Dumbarton Rock carried the 57th name, *Castrum Arthuri*, in 1367 AD.

It is notable that none of the two hundred and eighty four Munros in Scotland carry the name Arthur : he was a man of battle sites, not of high places.

5b. – Arthuret

Many writers assume that Arthuret is in some way connected with Arthur. The *Annals of Wales*, alias the pre-Norman *Annales Cumbriae*⁹, said to have been compiled before 977 AD, deal exclusively with pre-Norman events. Against the year 573 AD is the entry 'The Battle of Armerid (variously spelt) between the sons of Eliffer and Gwenddolau, son of Ceidio; in which Gwenddolau fell : Merlin went mad'. (Ceidio is spelt 'Ceidiaw' in Triad 29). One can wonder what Merlin was doing in 573 AD if he had been one of Arthur's team, and why he went mad. If he was contemporary with Arthur, he must have been a very old man by 573 AD. Like Gildas and Nennius, Merlin was reported to come from Strathclyde, and Merlin's grave stands, at least by legend, at Drummelziar by the River Tweed, killed after this battle. Several writers including Carroll suggest that the real Merlin was Myrddin, the Bard of Gwenddolau, which would explain why he was killed fleeing from this battle : Myrddin had no connection with Arthur. Arterid, Arfderydd or Armerid seems to have been the same place as Arthuret in Cumbria, the anglicised name of Ardderyd, at which battle²⁵ three Christian Kings of the Britons, Rhydderch Hael of Strathclyde, Urien of Rheged and Melgun of North Wales (Chart 3) crushed Gwenddolau, a pagan prince : Rhydderch extended his Christian domain southwards. This was long after Arthur's death. There does not appear to be any connection with Arthur.

5c. – Arthurian site names south of Hadrian's Wall.

In the whole of Cumbria, Northumbria and Durham south of Hadrian's Wall, the Ordnance Survey⁶² only shows three sites including the name Arthur, all in Cumbria, Arthur's Pike at NY4620 a hill by Ulleswater, Stone Arthur at NY3409 a cairn north of Grassmere, and Arthur's Wood at SD3799 on the west side of Windermere. Glennie¹⁹ added Arthur's Hill at Newcastle, Arthur's Chair at Houseteads, and of course Arthur's Round Table by Penrith, a Neolithic henge from long before Arthur. This does not suggest that Arthur had any battles south of Hadrian's Wall. The one and only Arthur's Seat shown on the Ordnance Survey⁶² south of Hadrian's Wall is at TQ3253 in suburban Surrey, although a rocky ledge at Tintagel overlooking the sea has become known as Arthur's Seat. Two Neolithic burial chambers at

Swansea and Herefordshire have acquired the name ‘Arthur’s Stone’, like to two chamber tombs near Gatehouse of Fleet which were locally known as the graves of Arthur and his Knights until they were excavated.

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Section 6 – Literary Background.

In this section we look at more modern written works specific to Arthur.

6a Arthur’s Recorded Battles, according to the authors.

The earliest list of Arthur’s battles was made by Nennius⁷ who listed twelve battles which Arthur won, and the one fatal battle he lost. Skene¹⁸ and Glennie¹⁹ were the first to try to locate these in Scotland : in the last fifteen years, several writers have questioned their choice, some with support and some with alternatives.

Battle 1 was described by Nennius as at the mouth of the River Glein. Skene¹⁸ and Glennie¹⁹ placed this battle at the mouth of the River Glen by Irvine, supported by McHardy⁴⁶. Carroll⁴⁰ placed it at the River Glen in Northumberland, and Moffat⁴¹ at the River Glen in the Cheviots. However, Pate⁴³ stated that the word used by Nennius, ‘Glein’ means clear, and implies a clear flowing river, with no necessary connection to any ‘Glen’ : in 2000 AD he suggested that this battle might have been on the Skyreburn near Gatehouse of Fleet.

Nennius’ placed his Battles 2,3,4 and 5 at ‘Dubglas in the region of Linnuis’. Skene and Glennie placed these battles on the river Douglas which runs into Loch Lomond – there are two of these – stating that ‘Linnuis’ was an old name for Lennox. This is supported by McKerracher³⁹ and Pate. Carroll does not know where these battles were fought : Moffat places them on the Firth of Forth : McHardy suggests the source of a River Douglas which runs into the Clyde near Lanark.

Battle 6 which Nennius described as ‘River Bassas’ has raised much disagreement. Skene and Glennie believed that ‘Bassas’ was an old Celtic word for ‘drumlins’, and therefore placed this battle where the rivers Bonny and Carron meet at Dunipace, north of Falkirk, a junction characterised by the surrounding drumlins (suggesting that perhaps Dunipace had originally been ‘Dun y Bass’ or something similar). McHardy does not disagree. Kerracher and Moffat opted out of any opinion on this battle, and Carroll placed it somewhere near the Bass Rock. Pate suggested a site on the Forth near Stirling.

Nennius’ Battle 7 was placed at ‘Cat Coit Celidon’. All the writers agree that this was a forest in Scotland : their only disagreement is which ? Skene, Glennie and Moffat all put it was in the Tweeddale/Etrick area : Carroll is a bit vague : Pate places the battle in a forest near Perth : McHardy agrees that it was in a forest.

Nennius’ Battle 8 was described as ‘Castellum Guinnion’ – The White Castle. Three of the writers agreed on this : Skene, Glennie and Pate all put this at the junction of the rivers Gala and Heriot, an area formerly known as Wedale and a typical Arthur battle site. McKerracher placed it in Ayrshire, Carroll on Hadrian’s Wall, and Pate at Fintry.

Nennius’ Battle 9 was placed at the ‘City of the Legion’. This produced no agreement amongst the authors, two placing it at Chester, two at Dumbarton, one at York and one at Carlisle. McHardy places it at Camelot. This is discussed in more detail below in section 6b.

Nennius’ Battle 10 was another river battle, which he described as ‘River Tribut’. Skene, Glennie and Pate all place this on the Forth : Moffat places it by Brememium : McHardy discussed the translation.

Nennius’ Battle 11 he placed at ‘Mount Agned’. Skene, Glennie and McKerracher place this at Edinburgh. McHardy does not disagree. Carroll places this at High Rochester.

Nennius’ Battle 12 which he dates at 516 AD he named ‘Badon Hill’. Skene, Glennie and Pate all place this at Boudon or Bowdon Hill near Linlithgow. Carroll perhaps confused

by Gildas' mis-use of the battle name said it was long before Arthur's life. Moffat places it a Bath in England, probably again confused by Gildas. McHardy does not comment.

Arthur's final battle, dated by Nennius as occurring in 537 AD, he named 'Camlann'. Moffat places it at Arthuret, (clearly wrong, see section 5b above). McKerracher places it at Birdoswald. Carroll north of Stirling. Skene, Glennie, Pate and Gourlay²⁵ all place this final battle at Camelon on the River Carron, the old Roman fort described below. McHardy does not disagree.

These results are summarised in the table in page 17 below.