

A TROJAN CONNECTION WITH BRITAIN



**Extract From
Kingdom Tidings**

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A LETTER TO JULIUS CAESAR

SCHOOLBOYS KNOW THE LETTER WRITTEN BY SCARACTACUS TO CLAUDIUS CAESAR. But not everyone knows the letter, written about a century earlier, from Cassilbellaunus to Julius Caesar. This is no doubt because it does not come to us from Latin sources. It is given in full by Geoffrey of Monmouth, the twelfth-century writer who, despite his detractors, possessed three advantages: he studied under his uncle, Uchtryd, Bishop of Llandaff, in South Wales; he was himself Bishop of St. Asaph, in North Wales; he also possessed an ancient manuscript from Brittany, which he quotes widely. From any of these sources he could have obtained a copy of the letter of Cassibeliaunus which we quote:

Cassibelaun, king of the Britons, to Calus Julius Caesar. We cannot but wonder, Caesar, at the avarice of the Roman people, since their insatiable thirst after money cannot let us alone whom the dangers of the ocean have placed in a manner out of the world; but they must have the presumption to covet our substance, which we have hitherto enjoyed in quiet. Neither is this indeed sufficient; we must also prefer subjection and slavery to them, before the enjoyment of our native liberty.

Your demand therefore, Caesar, is scandalous, since the same vein of nobility flows from Aeneas, in Britons and Romans, and one and the same chain of consanguinity shines in both: which ought to be a band of firm union and friendship. That was what you should have demanded of us, and not slavery: we have learned to admit of the one, but never to bear the other. And so much have we been accustomed to liberty, that we are perfectly ignorant what it is to submit to slavery. And if even the gods themselves should attempt to deprive us of our liberty, we would to the utmost of our power resist them in defence of it.

Know then, Caesar, that we are ready to fight for that and our kingdom if, as you threaten, you shall attempt to invade Britain.

The reference to Aeneas provides support for the fascinating belief that the ancient British royal line stemmed from Troy, as did, traditionally, the descent of certain of the early rulers: of Rome. The tradition that the Trojan leaders were Judahites is upheld by the Apocrypha record to the effect that the Spartan hierarchy claimed kinship with Judah. (*Historia Britonum*. Bk. IV ch. 2)



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