

Legio IX Hispana

A magical tale set in the Etz Chaim universe

Chapter 1

16th year of Hadrian Empower of Rome. (133ce)

The Roman Province of Judea was in revolt, the power and authority of the Empire was being questioned, the Emperor had walled off the Empire, and had consolidated the power and might of Rome as an occupying force designed to maintain Roman Authority, the days of Roman Aggression were over. In the far corner of the empire, in an unimportant province, the 9th Hispanic Legion, waited for a change, they had a changing of the guard, along with a new Legion Legate (Commander of the Legion appointed by the Roman Senate) the Emperor had new Orders, they were to travel to Judea and help bring the unruly Judeans back to imperial rule. The emperor was sending legions from several places in the empire to deal with this insertion, he wanted it to be handled quickly but, in a way, to teach other provinces that the might of Rome was impossible to beat. It was a mighty force that occupied the town of Eboracum in the Roman province of Britannia. They had done campaigns against the local Barbarians, they had many successful campaigns against the barbarians of Germania in Nijmegen.

Their orders were to March south to Londinium, where they were to meet with the Classis Britannica (Roman Naval Fleet stationed in Britain) and travel with haste to Caesarea Maritima. General Sextus Julius Severus was going to lead their efforts when they arrive, he would assume control of the Roman forces already there. Legio X Gemina was going to meet up with them enroute.

The young Legion Legate, Not only had to mobilize his 5000 men of his legion, but also he had a number of specialized craftsmen, and others who had become attached to the legion over the years, many of which were veterans of the legion, who choose to serve the legion in a professional manner. All together he was going to fit 5500 men on to a 12 newly constructed Hexareme, his men would do most of the work, as the Navy couldn't be spared from Britannia, but at least each of the ships would have a small crew of experienced sailors. The plan was the New ships would then be used to transfer slaves taken from Judea to parts distant parts of the empire to separate the Judeans from each other, to reduce the chance of further rebellion. As it has been found that Judeans in the Empire became quite loyal, the 9th had about 100 Jews, and even a few of the new Christian Sect.

Londinium

After a march of three weeks, from Eboracum to Londinium, stopping at Lindum, and Durobrivae. They met the Governor of Britannia and their new General Sextus Julius Severus, the legion was formed for his review, The Legate was proud of this moment, he new this was when he was going to be truly tested as a man, he new only glory would follow.

General sextus, then transferred the hundred Judeans from the legion, and had then stay in Londum to reinforce the Legions staying on Britain, he admitted this was for sake of the Legion, and for their own sake, so as to not have mixed loyalties.

The General then ordered the men to their ships. The general and a handful of his personal servants, and 400 men set sail first. Little did the Legate know, they would be the only ship to arrive in Judea.

The rest of the legion boarded their ships and set oar and sail to the heart of the empire, this was the last time the Legio IX Hispana would be seen. The Legate and the rest of the legion on their 12 ships, with the General on a 13th ship set sail. The trip would take just over a month.

Litus Saxonicum (English Channel)

The fleet of thirteen ships did well staying together until they made it to the narrow channel Litus Saxonicum to the right Britannia to the left Gaul, as it was still winter, the weather was most foul. There was wind and stormy seas, each ship tried to maintain a distance which allowed them to see the ship in front of them, unfortunately the lead ship had vanished from view during the storm. The ships captains didn't realize that the General felt it was safer to find safe harbor and wait out the storm on land, rather than risk the violent strait.

After two days struggle the ships had made it clear of the storm and had managed to stay clear of disaster. However, they were forced out into open ocean with no land in sight. The Legate had the ships gather together to do a headcount, and to issue order. Of the 13 ships, they had lost 2, the General's ship and the final ship which also had the horses.

An Ocean somewhere new

The fleet was now 11 ships, with no land in sight, the Legate issued the order that they would set sail due East until they made landfall. The weather was warm, and the skies were clear, they thought that maybe they had somehow already made it to near Africa, as the waters anywhere else where never this warm.

As they traveled, they saw many new sights in the waters, plus they had passed a few small islands.

They sailed for two weeks before making sight of continental land, some of the crew had grown fearful that maybe they had been cursed by Neptune and where in some mythical hidden ocean ruled by the Sea God.

On the 15th day since the set out from Londinium they saw land off to the distance, they also saw a strange sight over head in the skies, it was a flying animal that looked nothing like a bird, It had bat like wings, with a long neck and head, with a tail which was nearly as long as the rest of it's body. It circled once at a distance and never came close.

The next Morning, they made landfall, the beach was sandy, the land was covered in tall wild grasses, however the land was impossibly flat. The legate had never seen a land which was so flat as to have no hills and no signs of human settlement.

The Legate gave orders for the men to offload, the ships here, and make camp. They would stay a day here and scout the lands around them, and then set sail in two days heading north along the coast.

For those unaware of how to navigate in the ancient world without GPS, Compasses, and many other modern inventions, they would watch the sky, the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, north is Left when facing east, south is right when facing east. They also had maps of the nights sky that showed where the stars should be at any given time of the year. Our modern technology made humans lazy, however during roman times ever the greenest youngest Legate could navigate using stars and the sun, he also had experience sea captains, who had a few other tricks, to include special clockwork calendars to watch the movement of the planets. Those sea captains however were the first to know there was something very wrong with the nights sky. The stars where all in the wrong places, they could sort of make out a few constellations, but they were seriously warped from what they were used to. The planets were also out of sync, but not as much as the Stars. The greatest change was the Sun was not as bright and had a slightly different tone. Only the sea captains noticed this, and they choose not to worry their passengers.

After two days of scouting they found signs of human habitation. However, they did find trails and campsites, but nothing permeanant. There was also wild game, although some of it was nothing like what they had seen before, or even heard of.

They had hunted and killed a massive bird which stood as tall as a tree, if not for their Pilum it would have killed the 5th Cohort who had been scouting due east. When they returned, they had to ask for help from several cohorts to bring the body back, as it almost weighed as much as an elephant. The bird had small wings compared to its body, and it had a tail like a massive lizard. The legions cooks used its meat to feed the legion, and to resupply what had been used on the journey so far. The Legate found it hard to believe such a monstrous bird could exist but felt that it must have been a legendary dragon he had read about as a child, his mother had taught him the legends of the Greeks, which always fascinated him. Roman was always too practical to be caught up in inventing mythical monsters his father had taught, there was always someone human willing to be a monster, and that was what he should fear.

After they scouted and restocked food and supplies they sailed north, following the coastline, after 5 days they found the mouth of a great river, and the first village of humans they had seen. The natives where primitive and feared the Roman legionaries. However, when they took a close inspection of these people, they found that they where strange indeed. Unlike Africans who they were expecting these people did not have black or brown skin, but instead their skin was the color of grass, it was green. They where also half as tall as a man, they had long pointed ears, and were mostly hairless. It was also hard to tell the males from the females, as their women had very slight breasts and they didn't cover themselves.

They however seemed friendly, and not hostile. Their village elder, or shaman. Did a few sparkly magic tricks, eventually the elder spoke in perfect Latin. "Greetings Human"

The legate was able to find out that the elder wasn't actually speaking in Latin, but used a spell to translate tongues, and that he had never heard of Africa or Rome. However, there was an empire that ruled the world, only it wasn't an empire of mortals. The dragons ruled all humanoid kind. Even his people the Goblins had to pay taxes to Dragons. Although most Goblins worked deep in mines, and under the earth. His tribe was freeborn, and only had to pay tribute once a year in the flesh of virgin adult. Dragons had a thing for fresh virgins.

These goblins apparently practiced vile human sacrifices much like Carthage. The Legate felt his blood boil as he was told that on the longest day these little green men would offer up their children to appease so dragon deity. He decided to restrain himself from violence until he had some idea where in the world he was. However, he was ready to order his men to kill the leaders and take everyone else as slaves. Roman Slavery was better for these people than Barbaric child sacrifices.

They talked for several hours, and the Shaman produced a world map. It was like nothing he had seen before. The Legate knew the shape of the World from Roman map makers, and he was aware that Greek philosophers said the world was a large ball. But when the Goblin Shaman brought out a highly detailed globe. He was amazed. The goblin pointed out where they were on the map. However as hard as he reviewed the globe, he found no evidence of the Mare Nostrum, no evidence of any lands he was familiar with.

The legate then went over to his officers and had his legion march on the simple goblin village. He captured them all quickly without bloodshed and pressed them into Slavery.

They then packed up all everything from the village and stored them on the ships. His plan was simple, if they were lost, and if they couldn't find evidence of how to return home. They would bring Roman Justice to these primitive Barbarians. He'd make an Extension of the Roman Empire here in these strange lands.

They then took the great ships up the river since the map showed that about 100 miles up river was a city of Humans like them.