

Chapter 4 – King Leopold

King Leopold’s reign (157 – 193) marked a change in the kingdom. Whereas his predecessors were primarily known for establishing the kingdom, conquering territory, and bolstering the military, King Leopold is often called Leopold the Explorer for his efforts in scouting the kingdom’s far reaches and islands. There is some speculation that this moniker is intended as a political insult in that it appears weak in comparisons to titles such as “the Conqueror”, but it remains as his most popular title, so we shall uphold it. Initially, Leopold’s expeditions were led by his knights, but while they were experienced with travel, their cartography and other scientific skills were found to be lacking. The fool’s private log contains a story when two of these men were brought before the king and asked to explain a contradiction between their maps, and when both claimed to be in the right, both maps were thrown out and they were ordered to make a new one together. (Note: accounts from the fool are always to be taken with a grain of salt.) In private, Leopold spoke to his advisors about the need for education, but the concept was so foreign that it did not reach fruition in his lifetime. Despite this, his efforts are considered to have been largely successful in terms of learning more about the more uncivilized lands of his kingdom. Indeed, when compared against our current knowledge, the maps are not far from the terrain.

There is one exception. Historians have pored through royal documents coming from this age, and many claim that there exists an island to the north, in the Faarian Sea, simply named Chaos. However, that is the only thing they agree on. The creatures on the island are always different between accounts and are rarely found in other parts of the kingdom. Some men have described “longer”, more hostile versions of livestock. Other reported beasts the size of warships, potentially thought to have been the dragons from myth. Some claimed to have found an advanced tribe of hostile humans with strange weaponry that left small holes in men, even with armor. One expedition claimed to have encountered its own members. As a related note, the church contains records from this time of multiple

sailors' wives bringing in their "possessed" husbands after a voyage, which is a rare example of one of these reports potentially having credibility. The fool privately wrote that King Leopold had become more obsessed with the island with each tale, which possibly explains why there are so many reported expeditions. Those who boarded the island, which was not common, made conflicting maps with different size and terrain. Theo Pallas, one of the greatest explorers of the age, eventually led an expedition to this island with the goal of setting things straight. Half of his crew returned a year later without him, stating that any of the men who stepped on to the island had started clawing at themselves while screaming.

These expeditions continued until King Leopold himself set off for the island and never returned. Expeditions and all other trips to Chaos were banned at the beginning of King Godwin's reign. The fool made jokes about Godwin not wanting his father to return, but the policy was welcome among the knights and sailors who had feared being "requested" to go by the late king. Unfortunately, due to this policy, it was not for 300 years before it was realized that Chaos had disappeared without a trace, leaving more questions in its wake.