

# POMERIVM

## A SOLO GAME OF WARFARE AND INTRIGUE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE, INSPIRED BY LLOYD KRASSNER'S MARCH ON ROME

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*Note: this is a revised version of the rules that includes some minor changes on the version actually published on Lloyd Krassner's site - these changes have been reviewed and accepted by Steven Cranmer.*

### PREMISE

The time frame is somewhere between 50 and 150 AD. An emperor of long standing has just died. You happen to know with certainty that you are his intended successor, but he died before announcing this to the Senate. Your job: defeat the other powerful contenders to the throne and claim your rightful place as Emperor!

This paper-and-pencil game is a one-player variant on Lloyd Krassner's *March on Rome*. There are some aspects of the game that were inspired by several other of Krassner's WarpGames as well. The scope of the player's choices in the game is somewhat limited, possibly making this more of a simulation than a strategy game. However, it was my intent to construct something that can be played as a simple pastime rather than with a great deal of advanced forethought. Some suggestions for extensions are listed at the end of this document, and the reader is encouraged to make whatever changes seem appropriate.

### MAP

There are 8 "core" provinces and 10 "frontier" provinces. At the start of the game, the Roman Empire consists only of the core provinces, and all others are considered "lost". Imperial provinces are either controlled by generals or by procurators. A province is considered adjacent to another only if they touch on all or part of a side, or are connected by a sea route (dotted lines on map). Provinces touching corners only are not adjacent.

1	<b>Spain (core)</b>	10	<b>Germania</b>
2	<b>Gaul (core)</b>	11	<b>Noricum</b>
3	<b>Italy (core)</b>	12	<b>Dacia</b>
4	<b>Illyrica (core)</b>	13	<b>Thrace</b>
5	<b>Achaia (core)</b>	14	<b>Armenia</b>
6	<b>Asia (core)</b>	15	<b>Parthia</b>
7	<b>Syria (core)</b>	16	<b>Judaea</b>
8	<b>Africa (core)</b>	17	<b>Egypt</b>
9	<b>Britannia</b>	18	<b>Mauretania</b>

### SET-UP

The player is denoted as a 'PC' (Player Character), and the main opponents are denoted as 'NPC' (Non-Player Character) generals. The PC starts in a random core province (roll 1d8) with 2 + 1d6 legions.

There are 1 to 4 opposing NPC generals, all starting in other core provinces, determined randomly. The number of NPC generals and their legions are determined by rolling 1d12. Once the number of generals is determined, roll individually for each to obtain their legions and their starting core province. (If an occupied province is selected, roll again.)

1d12	no. of NPCs	legions per general
1-3	1	3 + 2d6
4-8	2	2 + 1d8
9-11	3	1 + 1d6
12	4	1 + 1d4

The legions belonging to PC and NPC generals do not go on the map; only markers of ownership go on the map. Legions are considered "instantly movable," because 1 turn equals 1 year, so they are accounted for as numbers, off the map.

All unoccupied core provinces are considered to be "senatorial provinces," and are governed by unambitious procurators. For each of these provinces, roll 1d6 to see if they have a legion garrisoned there or not:

1d6	no. of legions
1-4	0
5-6	1

Put white markers on senatorial provinces, and put markers for their legions on the map (to avoid off-board record-keeping for the procurators).

At the start of the game, all frontier provinces are not part of the Empire, and their military strengths are unknown.

## TURN SEQUENCE

I.	PC ACTIVITY
II.	NPC ACTIVITY
III.	RECRUITMENT PHASE
IV.	EVENT PHASE

### I. PC ACTIVITY

The PC can choose one of three options:

1. Do nothing and wait,
2. Attack a province adjacent to any province controlled by the PC (whether it is part of the Empire or not),  
or
3. Approach a province adjacent to any province controlled by the PC with an offer of alliance. If alliance negotiations break down, a battle occurs.

### II. NPC ACTIVITY

NPC generals have the same options as players, but their actions are determined randomly. The NPCs act in random order, re-determined every turn, by having each roll 1d20 and acting in ascending order of their rolls. Their actions are determined by rolling 1d6:

1d6	action
1	nothing
2-3	try for an alliance
4-6	attack

If an NPC is supposed to try for an alliance or attack a neighbor, first choose a random "home base" for the NPC out of that general's provinces (use whatever die spans the appropriate number). Then choose a random neighbor by rolling 1d6 and counting neighbors clockwise from due north.

*Examples: Starting in Africa, a 3 is rolled. The chosen neighbor is Mauretania. Starting in Gaul, a 2 is rolled. The chosen neighbor is Germania.*

## BATTLES

When a battle occurs, each side must first roll 1d6 for initiative. (The higher roll has the initiative, rolling again at ties.) The side *without* initiative first determines how many legions to devote to the battle (see below). The side *with* initiative then gets to decide how many legions to devote. For PCs, it is obvious that having the initiative allows a more intelligent choice. For NPCs and barbarians, having the initiative means that one adds 2 legions to the randomly determined value, if they are available.

If one side in the battle is a barbarian nation, their total number of armies (equivalent to Roman legions) available this turn, all of which will be devoted to the battle, is  $2 + 1d6$ . If left unconquered at the end of the turn, the remaining barbarian armies will disperse and they will raise  $2 + 1d6$  fresh armies next turn, if attacked again. If a barbarian nation is involved with more than one battle in a turn, they only roll  $2 + 1d6$  one time per turn.

The PC decides freely how many legions, out of the total number owned, to devote to any one battle. NPC generals decide by rolling 1d6 on the following table. Every party's total legion ownership is "public knowledge," so the NPC's decision depends on whether his or her opponent is stronger, weaker, or equal in total legions:

1d6	opponent stronger	opponent equal	opponent weaker
1	40%	30%	20%
2	50%	40%	30%
3-4	70%	50%	40%
5	85%	75%	70%
6	100%	100%	90%

The NPC thus devotes this percentage of the total number of legions owned to the battle, rounding up. The battle is resolved by fighting 1d6 "segments," similar to *Culture and Conquest*. In each segment, each side rolls 3d6 (the side with initiative goes first). Each time a 1 comes up, the opponent loses X legions, where X is determined by the total number of legions on both sides of the battle:

total	X
2-13	1
14-26	2
27-39	3
40-52	4

and so on. If a battle ends in an equal number of legions on both sides, keep adding segments until the tie is broken. The winner is the side with more legions at the end, and the winner takes the province at stake. If a general has lost his or her last province, the remaining legions disappear.

## ALLIANCES

Alliances are effectively "mergers" between the two sides. Once an offer is made, two things must be determined: (1) the response to the offer, and (2) which side will be dominant when the merger is completed. (The side not dominant effectively disappears from the game.)

Dominance is decided between PC generals and NPC generals by which side has more total legions. This same criterion applies when two NPC generals decide to ally. However, when any general allies with either a procurator or a barbarian nation, the general will always be dominant.

PCs can of course turn down any offer where they will not end up dominant. NPC general responses are determined by rolling 1d6 on the following table:

1d6	NPC will be dominant	NPC won't be dominant
1-2	YES	YES
3-6	YES	NO

Procurator and barbarian responses are determined by rolling 1d6 on the following table:

1d6	Procurator	Barbarian
1	YES	YES
2-5	YES	NO
6	NO	NO

Any response of "NO" leads to a battle between the two sides. A response of "YES" leads to the dominant party obtaining all legions owned by the other party. (A barbarian nation has 2 + 1d6 legions to provide in an alliance.)

## III. RECRUITMENT PHASE

Each PC and NPC general gains 1 legion per province controlled.

#### IV. EVENT PHASE

1d6 events occur throughout the known world each turn. For each event, roll 1d20 on the following table. Events are resolved immediately.

1d20	Event
1	Assassination
2-3	New general arises
4-7	Epidemic
8-12	Prosperity
13-16	Local rebellion
17-20	Barbarian invasion

**Assassination:** A random general is killed. Both the PC and NPCs are liable (not procurators). If the PC general is chosen, the game is over; if a NPC is killed divide up the legions of the NPC throughout the ex-general's territory and make them senatorial.

**New general arises:** This only occurs if the total number of generals (PC + NPC) is 2 or less, and there exists at least 1 lost or senatorial province. If a new general can indeed arise, set up the new NPC like at the start of the game, with 2 + 1d6 legions. First roll 1d8 if there are core provinces open (keep rolling if provinces occupied by generals are chosen). If the new NPC arises in a senatorial province, and that procurator has a legion, then it can be added to the new general's total. If all core provinces are occupied by generals, roll 1d20 for all provinces. If the total number of generals (PC + NPC) is greater than 2 then roll 1D6 for every senatorial province: on a result of 6 a new legion is put in the relative region.

**Epidemic:** Roll 1d20 for a random province. The general or procurator in control loses 1 legion, but does not lose control of the province if the total number of legions goes to zero. Lost provinces are not affected.

**Prosperity:** Same as epidemic, but it is a gain of 1 legion for the general or procurator in control.

**Local rebellion:** Same as epidemic (with a loss of 1 legion), but if the owner's total goes to zero, consider the province lost and no longer part of the Empire.

**Barbarian invasion:** Roll 1d8 on the table below to determine which invader invades. Follow the "invasion route" in the table. The first province that is a part of the Empire is the one that is hit by 2 + 1d6 legions of barbarians. If the barbarians win, the province is lost and all remaining Roman legions (that were devoted to the battle) are killed. If the barbarians lose, all remaining barbarian legions are killed.

1d8	Invader	Route
1	Picts	Brit - Gaul
2	Celts	Germ - Gaul - Italy
3	Huns	Dacia - Noric - Gaul - Italy - Illy - Achaia - Thrace
4	Vandals	Dacia - Noric - Gaul - Spain - Mauret
5	Ostrogoths	Dacia - Achaia - Asia
6	Visigoths	Thrace - Achaia - Illy - Italy - Gaul - Spain
7	Armenians	Armen - Asia - Thrace - Achaia
8	Parthians	Parthia - Syria - Asia - Thrace

The invasions apply to ANY "non-lost" province, i.e., any controlled by PC, NPC, or procurator. If it's a procuratorial province and there are no legions there, the barbarians take over immediately and the province is lost.

#### VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of any turn, if the PC general controls at least 3 provinces and there are no other surviving NPC generals, the PC wins. If the PC (or any NPC) loses all owned provinces or is assassinated, he or she is out of the game.

## POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS

- In battles, include the possibility for either side to surrender, or to have the attacker give up for any other reason.
- Include character traits and abilities, such as military skill, charisma, political ambition, and superstition. These can add flavor and affect the outcomes of battles and alliance negotiations, and possibly give generals the chance to avoid assassination.
- Create random tables for generals' ages, ancestries (patrician, plebs, freed slave, etc.) and names (praenomina, nomina, cognomina).
- Allow generals to devote resources to non-military areas, but without introducing the added complexity of money (or "tribute"), which would probably be too time-consuming to keep track of for the NPCs. Generals could curry favor with the populace or make improvements in cities (like the Wonders of *Culture and Conquest?*).
- Add more political backstabbing (see *March on Rome*).