

## Rome, Inc. Campaign Game Replay

With the rules for Rome, Inc. pretty much complete, I figured I'd do a replay of the four-scenario campaign game. The empire starts out with Augustus as Caesar, and his friend Agrippa as Consul. Only one War is on the map, an 8/1 (8 land strength, 1 naval strength) Cantabrian War in Hispania. Numerous provinces across the empire are in insurgency status, but legions and auxilia are stacked up against some of them, using the stick approach to make the provinces loyal. As the game moves along, more barbarian wars and leaders will appear along the frontier, and statesmen will show up, some welcome, others not. Let the games begin!

### 27 BCE Scenario

#### Turn 1 (27-19 BCE)

*Mutiny* and *Inflation* Events greet Augustus right off the bat, though the tax die rolls were good (low rolls can result in collecting double taxes in commands). A province was annexed in Syria, and the Praetorian Guard is grumbling (I won't always be too specific with the random events as I move along, unless one has a unique or profound effect on the current situation). A German War moves into Gallia, and a Sarmatian War plows into Moesia, running into a Roman force. British leader Boudicca shows up in the British homeland, wondering where the hell everyone is. If a Barbarian leader is drawn and there is no War for him (or her) to be placed on, they sit in their Homeland until one arrives, but still add Unrest. I draw *Claudian Emperors*, which makes Claudius an Imperial Statesmen and heir of Augustus. Imperial Statesmen automatically inherit the throne when Caesar dies. The Statesmen Claudius and Corbulo arrive and are sent to Hispania and Moesia, respectively, to deal with the wars in those areas. Meanwhile, revolts sweep through Pannonia and Moesia.

War! Corbulo scores a triumph against the Sarmatians, but Claudius, more of a politician than a military commander is thoroughly whipped by the Cantabrian War, sustaining six losses! The two wars yield a slight negative slide in prestige and increase in unrest. Overall, I suffered a slight reversal on Turn 1, but it could have been worse. In hindsight, I should have moved Agrippa to Hispania and made Claudius consul. It won't be the last mistake I make.

#### Turn 2 (18-10 BCE)

*Rebellion*, *Omens*, *Usurpers*, and a double *Adoption* Event, oh my. Augustus and Agrippa bite the bullet and as he is the only Imperial Statesmen in play Claudius becomes the new

Caesar. Quiet turn, relatively speaking. Only one Barbarian leader arrives and with no matching War just sits in his homeland. Money is low, so I don't purchase new units, and keep my legions and Auxilia in place to put down insurgencies. I pick up Paulinus, who has a high military ability of 4. Paulinus takes over Hispania, but he can only muster a -1 advantage over the War that had kicked Claudius' ass, and I don't want to risk a repeat (negative die roll modifiers benefit the player).

#### Turn 3 (9-1 BCE)

More *Inflation*, leaving the Treasury with just 12 Gold, and *Plague*. Legions have two levels – ordinary legions with one shield icon on its counter, and veteran legions with two shield icons on their reverse. The *Plague* Event flips one veteran in each command to its ordinary side, halving their strength, though they can be promoted back to veteran later, usually in a Triumph. I draw *Julian Emperors* and had to make the new statesman Macro Prefect of the Praetorian Guard because of his *Prefect* special ability. He and Claudius have high intrigue abilities, which doesn't bode well for either of them next turn. As Cicero would say, "Uff da!"

Claudius Caesar faced this precarious situation the best he could. Triumphs in Gallia and Hispania give a needed boost to Prestige and Gold. In Hispania the newly arrived statesman Corbulo (fresh from his Triumph in Moesia) attacks the irksome Cantabrian War with the support of the Fleet from Aegyptus. The War's strength is 8. Corbulo gathered 7 legions and 4 Auxilia, and with his military ability of 4 gave him a -7 to the 3d6 roll. A Triumph, I had to take 2 losses, so I eliminated 2 Auxilia for one loss and increased Unrest by one for the other. I also was able to promote a legion to veteran status. If I had not paid the cost to transfer the Aegyptian Fleet, the Triumph would have been downgraded to a Stalemate, as the Cantabrian War's naval supremacy would have negated the Triumph. However, the financial cost of transfer, and the next turn's cost in Unrest by not having the Fleet in Alexandria was worth it to essentially erase any Barbarian threat to Hispania. A well-administered, safe Hispania is an economic boon for the empire.

So far, I've managed to keep the Barbarians in check and snuffed out some insurgencies, but several factors have caused my treasury to shrink to a worrisome level. Pray I can squeeze more taxes from the ungrateful plebeians next turn and defeat Wars who are weak enough to trounce, but strong enough to yield spoils. With *Julian Emperors* in play, the Prefect tries to assassinate Caesar every turn. If it succeeds (a good chance, given their combined intrigue), the Imperial Statesman Germanicus would become Caesar. His abilities are not too shabby, so it might be for the better. Let's wait and see.

#### Turn 4 (1-9 CE)

Sure enough, random events produce *Assassin* AND *Conspiracy*, which resulted in the assassination of Claudius Caesar. Macro's *Prefect* special ability means he cannot be Caesar and is promptly murdered by disgruntled Praetorians. Germanicus is the senior *Julian Emperor*, and takes over at a time of heavy migration of Barbarian hordes and ill omens. Despite the migration threat, only the Pannonian War appears led by its leader, Bato, snaking its way south into Moesia Inferior. Meanwhile a Marcomannic War from last turn is menacing Gallia. I pull Caligula, who I shunt off to Pannonia.

I have a lot of units in the Barracks (basically a holding area for available units that can be purchased and put into play) and some Gold to play with, so I build a mix of units. On the whole Revolts favored the Romans. My military spending and transferring of units reduced the Treasury once again, but it's worth it when the Governor of Moesia, with an even modifier, managed a Triumph, with minimal losses against Bato and his 10/1 Illyrian War. It was a risky decision to attack with a 0 modifier, but I felt luck (auguries?) was on my side this time. If no statesman is Caesar, Consul, Prefect or a Governor you use the generic abilities printed in his command box. Unfortunately, the generic Governor of Moesia has a piss poor administration ability of 1, so I only garnered 10 Gold from the endeavor. Better than nothing. When a governor wins a Triumph, you check if he rebels. Up to this point the modifiers just weren't there to justify even rolling for Rebellion. It's easy to make a quick calculation of Unrest level, the number of Emperor counters in play, and other factors, to determine if a roll should be made. I have only 43 Prestige, which is a bit worrisome.

#### Turn 5 (10-19 CE)

Well, this is interesting; random events brought *Assassin*, *Bodyguards* and *Conspiracy*. All that interaction results in the assassination of Germanicus, Caligula takes over, and is promptly bumped off by a second assassination, leaving the generic Caesar in charge with Sejanus as his Prefect. The Marcomannic War is knocking on Italia's door, so I deplete my treasury further to put some Auxilia in its way. Worrisome, but I did manage two Triumphs with minimal losses against the German and Nubian Wars that garnered decent, and much needed, Gold thanks to the administration abilities of the victorious commanders. Inched Prestige up to 53. Still not good enough.

Middle of the scenario, and things look glum for the Romans. Despite a Triumph in Africa, the Marcomannic War plundered its way to Pisae and made it a Barbarian Province. I string a ring of Praetorian Guards and Auxilia around the War. I could have attacked, but it would have been with a net modifier of 0, so I backed off, hoping it will

wander to another Province next turn. Wars move into an adjacent Province chosen at random, if not diverted by a mountain, river, or sea. In this case, next turn the War WILL move out of the now Barbarian Province of Pisae, WILL avoid crossing the mountains back into Rhaetia (Switzerland), but will take a road to Mediolanum, Ravenna or Rome? If they do head for Rome there is still one turn breathing space, as its first possible conversion would be to Insurgent, plus it gives me another adjacent Province to place more Auxilia. And if I'm truly lucky, the ineffectual Prefect Sejanus will fail his mortality roll and I can put someone better in his place. A lot of ifs. I don't like ifs.

#### Turn 6 (20-29 CE)

The generic Caesar is assassinated by Sejanus, who is killed by the Praetorian Guard, who hail the new emperor - generic Caesar II. Unfortunately, Silvanus fails his mortality roll (I just can't keep the good ones alive!). I draw three more statesmen and make Vitellius Consul and Galba Prefect, as his military ability can deal with the Marcomannic War in Italia. I hope his 4 Intrigue won't kill Caesar II.

Galba doubles the Gold raised in Italia and I manage to both increase Prestige and decrease Unrest. Great news! The Marcomannic War moves away from Rome and lands in Mediolanum. Still a threat that will need to be dealt with. Hopefully Galba is up to the task. After waiting around for like, forever, Boudicca is greeted by two British Wars. After grumbling about their tardiness, she leads them into Gallia. Tacfarinas shows up, only to find out his troops have been defeated, so he sits down in the Moorish Homeland and stews.

Galba has a -1 modifier against the Marcomannic War. I roll a 13, which is modified to 12, a Disaster. Since Galba has the *Stalemate* ability, we dodge that bullet, but that damn War is still there. Better news further north, as Plautius wipes out the smaller of the two British Wars. Slight chance for Rebellion, so I roll, but Plautius remains loyal, satisfied with his victory. 65 Prestige and 71 Gold in the bank. I like where my Statesmen are placed, though. Will be helpful next turn, unless mortality strikes again.

#### Turn 7 (30-39 CE)

Spoke too soon. *Assassination*, *Rebellion*, *Usurpers* and *Mutiny* Events all at once. *Assassination* takes effect immediately, with Caesar II being offed and the Prefect Galba becoming Caesar. Then, when rolling for Unrest, *Usurpers* and *Mutiny* did their part, killed Galba and Drusus succeeded to the throne. This was the worst possible outcome, as that irksome Marcomannic War moves back to Pisae, and the generic Prefect only has a wimpy 1 military ability. I would have had a good chance of defeating the War had Drusus been Prefect. Irrumabo!

For now, I have a sudden appearance by a Judean War led by Simeon. I gathered a force to deal with Boudicca and last British War. I rolled the double *Conquest* Event, so after each Triumph I can annex an extra Province, so it's worth going after those two Wars. First up are the Judeans. I have a -5 modifier. Should be quite doable. I roll triple sixes! The worst possible Disaster. In contrast, the attack on the Brits goes much better, a Triumph with only one loss. Now, what about the Marcomannic War. I have no modifier. Mamma Mia, what to do? It's a fourth and one call. Going for it! Defeat, with four losses. If Drusus had been there, the result would have been a 9. The fates were indeed unkind this turn. At least Plautius didn't rebel (fair chance of it).

#### Turn 8 (40-49 CE)

I am now on stable financial ground. A couple of statesmen failed mortality, including Nero, but Drusus hangs on through that and assassination. I have no more statesmen available. A Moorish War shows up and marches all the way down to Libya. Since its naval strength is only 1, it can't cross the Med over to Italia. Some comfort. Thankfully the Marcomannic War stays put, and the Judeans head south. However, a 12/2 Pannonian War swoops down from the north into Illyria. Really??

I make the faithful and efficient Corbulo the new Prefect. Maybe his magic will work against the Marcomanni. I can't bring a lot of military weight to bear on the other Wars, so I'm ignoring them. Revolts are pretty much ineffectual, and I manage to stomp out an insurgency in Pontica. Corbulo vs the Marcomanni: Triumph!! I take four losses, but gain 33 Gold, 6 Prestige, and drop Unrest to 0. And while Corbulo has a healthy military ability of 4, his popularity ability is a paltry 1, so there is no chance of him rebelling. Win-win all over. Prestige is now at 89. Getting there. I'm hoping that Pannonian War veers off into Moesia; will be a lot easier to deal with it.

#### Turn 9 (50-59 CE)

Ugh. Drusus is assassinated, and the Consul Vitellius becomes Caesar, and mortality comes knocking on the mighty Corbulo's door. RIP. Vitellius and Otho are the only named statesmen I have left. Attrition has been brutus, uh, I mean brutal. Usurpers and Mutiny are festering again. Some new Wars arrive; German with Arminius (a tough cookie), and another goddamned Marcomannic War, which makes a beeline toward Italia, stopping in Noricum. Vologases and his Parthian War finally make an appearance, and head straight into Syria.

One bright spot is that the *Colonies* Event beefed up my tax base. A lot of Revolts this turn, mainly in Gallia and

Pannonia. Both German and Parthian Wars, with strong leaders, would be hard nuts to crack, so my strategy will be to try to pin them down where they are. The Marcomannic War is positioned where I can't bring anything to bear on it. It IS occupying a veteran allied Province, so there's a chance I can keep it there. In the meantime, I'm going after the Judean and Moorish Wars. Moors: -4 net modifier, with an 11 result. Draw. Four losses, but at least I can promote a legion to veteran. Judean: -7 modifier, for a result of 5. Triumph. Only get 16 Gold out of it, but at least I got rid of that threat. Turn ends with a slight bump in Prestige, up to 92.

#### Turn 10 (60-69 CE)

The last of the Barbarians emerge from the frontier. I managed to keep all the current Wars in place, except the Illyrian War which wandered down a road to the Black Sea coast. Another German War forced Arminius and his Germanic hordes into Alpes. Both Vitallus and Otho survived. Inflation stifled tax growth a little. Not much I could do with the two German Wars and the Marcomanni in Ravenna, so left them alone. Invested a lot of Gold transferring legions and Auxilia all over the map to squelch insurgencies and concentrate against the Moorish and Parthian Wars, getting both down to a -3 modifier. A slight risk, but if I can Triumph over the 14/1 Parthian War it will be worth it.

And it was. Both Wars got destroyed! Nice haul in Gold and Prestige, and I kicked Unrest down to 0. No threat of Rebellion either. All that spending and maneuvering paid off. Much will depend on where that Marcomannic War goes next turn. If to Rome I can smother it with the Praetorian Guard and Auxilia, even though the generic Prefect is a wuss. Regardless, I should be able to place enough force in Rome to prevent a Revolt. Of course, assumption is the mother of all *Irrumabo*. And there was one. Vitellius could no longer avoid the assassin's dagger. The Prefect takes over as generic Caesar III, leaving poor old Otho as Consul.

Decent enough tax collection. Snuffed out a couple insurgencies and lost a couple Provinces to the Barbarians. Arminius and his Germans inched a Province closer to Rome while the other German War headed north. The Marcomannic War stayed put in Pisae, becoming an easy target. Attacked it with a -5 modifier and achieved a Triumph! Didn't get too much out of it, other than just getting rid of the War. No Rebellion. The scenario ends with a couple of Barbarian Provinces in Africa, and a slew of them across Gallia, Pannonia and Moesia. Britannia Superior remains an Ally, just. I manage to clear out most of Syria and all of Aegyptus, while Pontica remains about even. 122 Prestige for a draw.

## 70 CE Scenario

### Turn 1 (70-76 CE)

I extend the game into the 70 CE Scenario. Everything remains as is, except Prestige is reduced by 150, a stomach-churning -28. Ouch! And the Turn marker moves back to 1. The lonely Otho gets company in the form of Arrian and Trajan, with the latter being made Prefect, so he can deal with Arminius and his Germans in Italia, who are joined by a second Marcomannic War which had swung down from its homeland. Also, two Moorish Wars pop up in Africa and *Flavian Emperors* enters play, giving me some extra units to build and allowing Caesar to fight Wars (assuming he is any good), but increasing pay. Good for the troops, but bad for me.

I have over 400 Gold in the Treasury, which I use to full effect, purchasing two walls and four legions. Several Provinces are reduced to Barbarianism, but I also snuffed out two insurgencies. In the War Phase, I go after the Moors in Libya, crushing them in a Triumph. I was using the generic Governor of Africa, so didn't get too much out of it, other than a bunch of dead Moors. In Italia, Trajan hits the Marcomannic War with a -3 modifier and achieves a solid Triumph. I rake in 55 Gold and six Prestige. Not too shabby. No Rebellion. Got 16 Prestige out of the turn, now I am only -12.

### Turn 2 (77-83 CE)

Arrian fails morality. No assassination. I pick up Aelianus, whose special ability is *Prefect*, so I remove Trajan and place Aelianus in charge of Italia. Very annoying, as Arminius and his 14/2 German War is lurking in Ravenna. I make Trajan Consul and cart off Otho to Moesia. I send the newly arrived Cerialis and his *German* special ability to Gallia to handle Civilis and the other German War. Only one War shows up on the frontier, a Sarmatian, which, because of plethora of Barbarian Provinces in that area, easily migrates down to Illyria.

Wars: another Triumph against the second Moorish War. Again, not much gained, other than clearing out any threat to Africa early on. Bigger is the Triumph against Civilis and his Germans, with only one loss. Despite all that I'm having a hard time keeping back the swelling Barbarian Provinces. And, of course there's Arminius and his War, with a combined strength of 19. A lot of wishful thinking will be needed to handle that challenge.

### Turn 3 (84-90 CE)

"It's a cruel world. You said it yourself, Herr Hauptman." Quote from *The Blue Max*, but it applies to my frickin' random events rolls. *Terror*, *Barbarians*, *Praetorians*,

*Migration*, and *Inflation*. Cruel indeed. Admittedly, most modify die rolls that may not happen, so it could end up being not that bad. And the *Terror* Event means I lose Prestige equal to half Caesar's *Intrigue* ability, which, because he's generic, is only one Prestige. So maybe I shouldn't whine so much.

Two statesmen fail mortality, including Otho; but give him credit for sticking around so long as he did. Caesar III is assassinated (needed to roll a six after modifiers, and got it), and Aelianus is killed thanks to his *Prefect* special ability and Caesar IV takes control. Antoninus Pius is available, but his yet un-played *Antonine Emperors* counter will not arrive until the 138 CE scenario, so he does not become Caesar.

Barbarian movement was both troubling and bizarre. First off, Arminius and his German War march on Rome. Shall I deal with this (or at least try) with the generic Prefect or replace him with a statesman who can make a difference (Trajan, for example?). Maybe. Meanwhile, two Sarmatian Wars and one Dacian War dance around Moesia until they finally settle into Provinces. The rules for route priority and displacement caused all this confusion, but the brutes got it sorted out. The residents of Moesia probably didn't enjoy it, though.

From the statesmen box I get Pliny, who I put in Moesia, and *Adoptive Emperors*. I move Trajan to Prefect. Trajan and Caesar IV have a low combined *Intrigue*, low enough to stave off any assassination attempts for now. For the time being, though, I'll have to see if he can deal with Arminius & Co. I have a mix of Revolts – some Provinces go Barbarian, others I get rid of insurgents. But overall, the Barbarian push in the center continues, which isn't good for Italia.

Speaking of which, even with Trajan's military ability of 5, all I can muster is an even net modifier. Under normal circumstances I probably wouldn't risk it, but we're talking the fate of Rome here. In Rome I have two Auxilia and a veteran Praetorian Guard. Hypothetically, if I were to forgo a War and chance a Revolt roll. The War and leader would have a die roll modifier of +5, and I would have a modifier of -4, for a net modifier of +1. That means, if I roll a 6, Rome becomes Insurgent. Doesn't mean the end of the game, but if left there, that insurgency would add a +1 modifier to the next Revolt check, unless the German War moves out of Rome. So, if I decide to fight and get a Triumph, great. If I don't and have losses, I could take from Rome, increasing the War's chances of moving next turn, but still being a threat. If I don't fight, I have a one in six chance of Rome converting to insurgent, and the Revolt check comes before Wars next turn. If it fails, game over. What to do? I attack. I roll a 10. Draw. Only one loss, so I eliminate the two Auxilia in Sardinia & Corsica and promote a Praetorian Guard in Pisae to veteran.

#### Turn 4 (91-97 CE)

*Assassin* and *Bodyguard* Events, but no assassination. However, Caesar IV fails mortality and Trajan waltzes in. Since *Flavian Emperors* is in play, he can still fight the War. Well played, Trajan. Well played. Thanks to Trajan's awesome administration ability of 5, I rake in the taxes and top 500 Gold! Helpful, as my unit maintenance is at 161. None of the in-place Wars move, and two more (German and Dacian with the Decebalus leader) enter and move south, pushing a Sarmatian War into Pontica.

Hadrian appears. His military ability is a decent 3, not much better than most generic governors, but he does have 5 administration. Given his abilities I see him best suited as Consul and place him there. Revolts go from good to bad and worse (I annex a Province in Britannia, and it stays that way), as Rome converts to insurgency! Time to attack Arminius. With Trajan and his mixed force of Praetorian Guards and Auxilia, I have -1 net modifier. Defeat with six losses! Somewhat offset by a Triumph in Moesia, but still not good. Dark times ahead.

#### Turn 5 (98-104 CE)

Good God, what's with these statesmen not staying alive?? Hadrian arrives last turn, then promptly falls dead. Thankfully Trajan stays healthy and avoids assassination. Still, grrrrr! Barbarians threaten my toehold in Britannia, a German War pushes into Hispania, and a Judean War pops up out of the desert. Worse, Arminius stays in Rome. Not good. I get Titus and Domitian. The former I send to Syria to deal with the Judeans, and the latter I make Consul. At this point, why not?

Revolts are hit and miss, but most importantly, the insurgency in Rome is put down. That leaves Trajan to attack Arminius again at -1 modifier. Result is a draw with four losses, which I can replace, plus I promote a unit to veteran status, which will help next turn. I also take out Wars in Gallia, Moesia, and Judean, netting me decent Gold and Prestige. All in all, I'm holding my own.

#### Turn 6 (105-111 CE)

WTF! Trajan fails mortality! Thankfully, Titus is around to become Caesar, and is OK, but those mortality rolls have been frustrating. I almost considered ignoring it, but backtracked. If that's how the game goes, so be it. Arminius has taken a liking to Rome and is staying put. I've got a German War wandering around Hispania, and a British War pitchforked across into Gallia by Calgacus and his Caledonian buddies, and now a Parthian War has snuck into Syria. I still have a couple of other Wars in Moesia and Pontica. But hey, I maxed out on taxes, and Titus and

Domitian make a great team for upping Prestige and putting down Unrest.

So many Wars to choose from. Of course, I make a play against Arminius. The previous promotion of a Praetorian Guard was offset by Trajan dying, so I'm back to a -1 modifier. Another draw with six losses, which, frankly, I can afford. I promote an Auxilia. The Italian drama continues. Meanwhile, I obtain a Triumph against a weak British War in Gallia and another over an otherwise strong Dacian War in Moesia and lose Prestige by having no Province in Britannia. End the turn with 85 Prestige.

#### Turn 7 (112-118 CE)

A turn of miracles. No mortality. No assassination. Only one War shows up. Gold coming out of everywhere, and straight into the pockets of my legions. Statesman Nerva arrives, and I send him packing to Hispania. "Have fun!" I maintain an Allied Province in Britannia and another in Pannonia. I lose a die roll of Prestige each turn for each command entirely controlled by Barbarians until I can fight my way back. Triumphs in Hispania, Gallia, AND in Rome! Finally got that Arminius and his German War monkey off my back. Picked up a draw against the Parthians and got a promotion out of it.

#### Turn 8 (119-125 CE)

I have a bit more flexibility in dealing with threats. Just four Barbarian counters are left to enter. One statesman. Once again, no deaths. From the random events I have *Assassins*. The Praetorian Guard kept things stable. I annex a Province in Britannia and it survives! The lone Allied Province in Pannonia needed a one to stay as is and got it. Failed to snuff out an insurgency in Pontica, but no big deal. Two Triumphs against the Parthian and Sarmatian Wars, which leaves no Wars on the map. All in all, things are looking good.

#### Turn 9 (126-131 CE)

Guess what? Titus dies. Domitian takes over and is the only statesman left. Two Wars arrive, Judean and Alan. The least of my worries. I manage to keep the one Province in Pannonia. The Alan War is out of reach, so I go after the 6/1 Judean War. Figured it would be easy, but it was a stalemate.

#### Turn 10 (132-137 CE)

The last turn is rather anticlimactic. Not surprisingly, Domitian's high Intrigue ability was his own worst enemy, and he is assassinated for, enter generic Caesar V. Inflation has spread across the Empire, and increased Unrest. The Judean War invades Alexandria, and a British War and a Dacian War move south. A couple of Revolts reduce

Veteran Allied Provinces, and the lone Barbarian Province in Hispania fanned insurgencies in two locations, which I was able to handle quite easily. Of the three Wars on the map, the British one is the most vulnerable, so I am taking another crack at it. Completely crush it in a laughably easy Triumph and annex Britannia Inferior as a Province. I end the scenario with 97 Prestige, a Minor Defeat, the worst result excluding outright Revolution, Bankruptcy, and the Fall of Rome.

## 138 CE Scenario

### Turn 1 (138-145 CE)

A new scenario, so the Turn marker returns to 1 and Prestige collapses to a negative-vibe-inducing -53. Still, the *Colonies* Event helps with taxes, and the *Assassin* Event fails to kill Caesar V. Apparently, this pisses him off and instigates a reign of terror – which results in a paltry loss of one Prestige. I bet the assassin was even thinking, “Is this idiot worth it?”

After taxes, I bring in more Wars and move them from their homelands. The Alan War moves east. The Dacian War in Illyria stays put, but is pushed south by another Dacian War, and both are shunted onward by a Vandal War. Thus, I have Dacians in Epirus and Macedonia, and the Vandals in Illyria. Quite the gathering. And a Moorish War shows up. I get one statesman, Alexander. An Imperial statesman, but *Severan Emperors* isn't in play yet, so I make him Consul, to assist a little with Bread & Circuses.

After Revolts, I hit the Moors and the Vandal War. The Moorish affair is simple, a draw with five losses. I eliminate two Auxilia, reduce Gold by 20 and increase Unrest by 2, and promote one legion. I use Caesar to fight the Vandal War. Caesar can use units from several commands for a modifier of -10. Triumph with six losses. I eliminate two pairs of Auxilia, decrease Gold by 20, and increase Unrest by two. I gain 18 Gold, almost winning gain what I had lost, increase Prestige by 4, drop Unrest to 0, and promote a legion. I annex Illyria, changing it from Allied to Veteran Allied, so next turn there's a 50% chance it will remain that way.

### Turn 2 (146-153 CE)

Another Moorish War shows up and heads west into an Allied Province. Two Parthian Wars show up at the same time, and push and shove each other west into Syria. I get two statesman and *Severan Emperors*, which changes the stacking rules, so now I can only have two legions in a Province, but up to four Auxilia, along with one Praetorian Guard and one Imperial Cavalry, which makes its first appearance. It increases pay again, very expensive.

Another issue is that one of the statesmen is a Severan Imperial, the truly useless, but dangerous Elagabalus. I place him in Aegyptus, hoping he'll get sunstroke before weaseling his way to the throne.

Apparently, all that Parthian shuffling irritated the populace and both Provinces they occupied went insurgent, as well as a Province in Gallia. I hit the Moors again and obtain a Triumph. Also go after the 11/1 Dacian War in Epirus. Another Triumph and I upgrade Illyria from veteran Allied to Insurgent. Sure enough, the surrounding Barbarian Provinces force it back to Veteran Allied. Tricky on my part. Avidius, the other statesman I got, I place in Moesia and hit the remaining Dacian War with three strong columns. Avidius has a 4 military ability and I get a modifier of -9. A cakewalk Triumph with only one loss. No chance of Rebellion.

### Turn 3 (154-161 CE)

Alexanders fail mortality. No assassination. The two Parthian Wars shift south while three new Wars (Caledonian, German and Marcomannic) cross the frontier, the 11/1 Marcomannic reaching Epirus, ignorantly walking into the Roman meatgrinder that just offed the hapless Dacians. I get three statesmen, including two Imperial, Commodus and Caracalla. I make the former Governor of Africa and the latter Prefect. This was a mixed blessing, as Caracalla is senior to Elagabalus and has a good chance to become Caesar, barring mortality. Unfortunately, if *Antonine Emperors* shows up Commodus will outrank them both. I annex Moesia Superior, upgrading it to Veteran Allied. Revolts are mixed. I hang onto the Allied footholds in Pannonia and Moesia. This has meant some tricky transferring in order to bring to bear enough force against the Wars. Both attacks against the Moors and Germans were draws. Achieved Triumphs against the Caledonian and Marcomannic Wars. No Rebellion.

### Turn 4 (162-169 CE)

Six statesmen in play with only one mortality failure, Elagabalus! But Caesar V didn't have long to breath a sigh of relief, as he was soon no longer breathing after being assassinated. Caracalla is Caesar. Admittedly, his abilities are superior than the generic Caesar, but his 5 Intrigue makes him vulnerable to assassination, and his *Terror* special ability is a liability. Not exactly a people person. See how he plays out.

I'm managing to keep my tax level high, giving me a lot of flexibility. The Moorish War heads back east, while the Alan War turns around and heads west. The German War slinks further into Italia while both Parthian Wars are locked in place. Only one War appears, but it's the big 13/1 Marcomannic, and it makes a beeline for Moesia Superior.

Not helpful. As expected, Moesia Superior is reduced to Allied, but other attempts at Revolts fail.

Those saved Allied Provinces assist in the two Wars I wage. I risk a zero-modifier attack by Avidius against the 13/1 Marcomannic War and roll a five with just one loss! Caracalla attacks the 14/1 Parthian War and achieves a Triumph, but with six losses. Still, both wins yield a treasure trove of Gold and Prestige and annex a Province. Avidius likewise annexes a Province. Bonus: no Rebellion possible. Overall, a decent turn.

### Turn 5 (170-177 CE)

A lucky start. I get a double *Colonies* Event, which will help with taxes and Revolts. Sweet. Caracalla survives an assassination (he needed a 1, and I rolled it). I guess they hired Wilius Coyotius as assassin again. Wars remain in place (all to make killing them easier, my dear), and only a British War shows up, and promptly invades Gallia, and wanders into a deathtrap. I annex a Barbarian Province in Britannia as I attempt to civilize this bleak outpost of the empire. Except for one Province (reduced from Veteran Allied to Allied only), the Barbarians fail to cause much dissent.

The Era of Four Triumphs: the 5/1 Moors in Africa, the 7/1 British in Gallia, 10/2 Germans in Italia and the 8/1 Parthian War in Syria. Overall, the modifiers of all four Wars look good for me, but it's been awhile since I rolled a disaster. Moors: a bloody Triumph with six losses, which I spread around. Nothing much yielded here, with the small War and Commodus' abysmal Administrative ability. But both Moorish Wars are now gone early in the scenario. British: an easier Triumph with just one loss. Germans: the strongest War and the easiest Triumph (rolled a 7 with a -7 modifier) with, again, just one loss. "Achtung, Praetorians!" Parthians: Avidius again stomps the Parthians for a Triumph with two losses. Avidius annexes the last two remaining Barbarian Provinces in Syria. I max out the treasury and gain 18 Prestige (Wars + annexations), and Unrest sinks to 0. No Rebellions remotely possible.

### Turn 6 (178-186 CE)

Change of plan, as I am hit by *Mutiny*, *Rebellion*, *Terror* and *Assassination* Events. As expected, Caracalla is knocked off and with the Prefect Macrinus becomes Caesar (Statesman with the *Prefect* special ability can become Caesar once *Severan Emperors* is in play). I receive *Antonine Emperors* (which stops me from annexing a Province every turn), Marcus Aurelius and Niger. I had another statesman with the *Prefect* special ability, Plautianus, so when Macrinus became Caesar, he moves into the Prefect spot. I place Marcus in Aegyptus to hopefully double the taxes there, but overall, my finances are very stable. Two Wars show up, an

Alamannic, which moves into Gallia, and a Parthian, which shuffles across the border into Syria. Both are in positions not conducive for Wars, so the turn ends with two Provinces Revolting, but nothing else.

### Turn 7 (187-195 CE)

Next turn took care of Macrinus Caesar by morality, along with two average statesmen Pertinax and Julianus. As the lead Imperial Statesman, Marcus Aurelius takes over. Pray to the gods he sticks around to make a difference. Two Wars enter the fray. An 8/2 German War moves into the Alpes, and a Parthian 12/1 War joins the 8/1 Parthian War in Syria. I have just two Barbarian counters left in the War Box. Admittedly, I haven't kept track if all the leaders, if any, have been released so far (there were two in the initial pool). My attitude is, "I'll find out next turn." In the meantime, I have five Wars on the map.

### Turn 8 (196-204 CE)

I receive the final two statesmen (Laetus and Albinus) and send them off to Pontica and Moesia. Usurpers increase Unrest to 12, but I erase it with B&C and Gold (Gold trumps grumbling). Looking at the strategic situation, I opt to just go after the Alamannic War in Gallia. The other Wars, ironically, I want to move further inland so I can increase the forces I can bring against them. For now, where they are at, they pose no threat, other than to encourage Revolts. The 3D6 Unrest roll has been a non-issue. This turn I rolled double Praetorians, adding 2 to the Unrest roll, but I still rolled low. Regardless, my management of the Unrest level has been key in keeping this roll non-threatening.

The War has a naval strength of 1. I had to transfer a Fleet to equal this or any Triumph would be reduced to a stalemate. It's very easy to neglect transferring a Fleet or Fleets to a War, especially when you're fixated on concentrating military units to gain superiority over the War. I was guilty of this early in my playtesting, and, I admit, on some occasions, when I saw I didn't have a Fleet, I transferred one and paid the Gold for it. That's called cheating. Now, if I forget, I just let it go and see what happens. There will be times, early on, where you'll want to transfer a Fleet to a War to stave off a stalemate, but in doing so, will leave a Province without a Fleet that is required to have one (like Alexandria) to prevent an increase in Unrest. Give and take. In my opinion, having a Fleet or Fleets in place to possibly get a Triumph outweighs the one Unrest next turn. But each situation will determine what's best.

I fight the 10/1 Alamannic War with maximum allowed legions and Auxilia in two adjacent Provinces in Gallia (four legions, eight Auxilia) with one veteran. That strength, with the Governor of Gallia's 3 military ability gives me a -6

modifier. I roll a 10, down to 4 for another Triumph, but I sustain six losses. I eliminate four Auxilia for two losses, then decrease 20 Gold for another two losses, and increase Unrest by two for the remaining two losses, however, Unrest is dropped back to 0 because I lose five Unrest (half the War's strength). Turn ends with 75 Gold and 78 Prestige.

### Turn 9 (205-213 CE)

Conspiracies lurk in Rome, but no assassinations. However, Commodus and Niger succumb to mortality. Commodus stuck around for quite a while; I'll give the bastard that. The Wars don't move much, and the remaining Barbarians arrive – one a Caledonian War that moves to Britannia Superior. The other is the Marcomannic leader Ballomar, who will just sit and stew for the meantime, adding one point to Unrest per turn (next scenario will bring in a Marcomannic War at some point, so he will see some action eventually).

No more statesmen to pick from. Keeping everyone in place. The Caledonian War is only a 4/1, so the Governor of Britannia should have no problem with it. The 12/1 Parthian slid into a Province that makes it a target for Avidius. I'll make the easily-affordable transfers and Auxilia purchases to make sure those two Wars will suffer – I hope.

Speaking of Prestige, it's time to gain some more by killing Barbarians. First are the Caledonians, the two white dice are twos, so it ends as a stalemate. When rolling a War 3d6 a triple (like 555) means a Disaster, a double on the two white dice means a Stalemate. Given how weak the War was, this was a surprise, but it WILL happen. The combat system awards good use of force, but still allows for surprises that one can't anticipate, as opposed to knowing what results to expect on a CRT. In narrative terms, the Caledonians somehow caught the massive Roman force doing its maneuvers, saw it was in a bind, and was able to conduct a skillful fighting withdrawal. They live to fight another day.

Not so the Parthians. Between the Roman forces, Allies, and Avidius' military ability, I had a -9 modifier against the War. I roll an 8, with two losses. A resounding Triumph against the 12/1 Parthian War. Thanks to Avidius' *Parthia* special ability I'm able to annex two Provinces in Syria, converting two Allied Provinces to Veteran Allied Provinces. The remaining 10/1 Parthian War is in Mesopotamia, ripe for destruction next turn if it stays there or heads west. If it somehow migrates east to Babylonia, it has no effect on matters. Either way, that War is not an issue anymore. Granted, I could attack it if given the chance and suffer a Disaster, but as you have seen, I have not shied away from fights.

Keep in mind, depending where Wars are, and what your internal situation is, it's sometimes worth it to leave them alone for the time being. Or, on the flip side, send a

politically dangerous statesman against a War in the hopes Disaster ensues. Rolling triples is rare, but such a strategy is real. Another thing, in this Triumph against the Parthians, I had two losses. Two Auxilia equals one loss, so I eliminated four Auxilia. Those units go back to the Barracks and can be bought again. When legions are eliminated, they are gone forever. You may have a situation where you're low on Gold and Unrest is high that you may want to consider eliminating a legion. I've done it, but it's always my last option. Basically, Auxilia is the cheap gift that keeps on giving.

### Turn 10 (214-221 CE)

Well, Avidius did some good work, but mortality finally caught up with him. Oh well. Bad enough, the usual internal crap crops up; *Mutiny*, *Conspiracy*, *Usurpers*, and *Persecution* (granted, I lost only one Prestige from *Persecution*). Marcus Aurelius outwits the conspirators and escapes assassination. The taxes keep flowing in and the Plebians don't seem to mind for the most part. I did snuff out the last insurgency in Africa; totally loyal now. Everywhere else Allied Provinces stayed as such, though one was downgraded from Veteran to simply Allied. No big loss. The Wars all stayed put, which provides possibilities for three of them. That Alan War has been content just putzing around the Caucasuses, and no one seems to care. So, forget them. Time to go after the other Wars.

Caledonians: this time they weren't so lucky. An easy Triumph with two losses, all from the Auxilia. They gave their lives for the glory of Rome. Parthians: this one was interesting, in that the War was deep in Allied territory, the Allies contributing almost half of the combat strength against it (with one Province providing all my troops and necessary Fleet). Another Triumph with two losses. Again, the Auxilia took one for the team. Germans: a combo of Auxilia, allies, Praetorian Guard and Imperial Cavalry that got a Triumph with just one loss. You guessed it, Auxilia.

The result was a motherload of Gold and 118 Prestige for a draw, it would have been 171 Prestige and a Victory if I had not been dragged down by the weight of the previous scenario. Looking back at my earlier posts I had a lot of doom and gloom. I admit, things are looking a little better. I still need to get through this scenario, and then tackle the final one. Final scenario coming up.

## 222 CE Scenario

### Turn 1 (222-228 CE)

Good news, no more threats from Africa or Britannia. Bad news, 118 Prestige minus 150 Prestige for expanding the scenario leaves me with -32 Prestige. I have some serious

spadework to do if I want to keep my reputation intact. Also, some ginormous Wars will be crossing the frontier in Central Europe and the Middle East. New foes, both externally and internally. Let's start the fun. I have Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, and two other statesmen from the 138 CE scenario holding governorships. The Alan War is still camped out in the Caucasus, and the leader Ballomar is waiting for the final Marcomannic War to show up.

The turn starts with *Migration* and *Inflation*, both not good. But on the plus side no mortality or assassinations. Aurelius continues to help with taxes, and after expenses I'm at 138 Gold. I can live with that. Only the Alan War is around, and it finally moves into a Province. Even so, I'll have some breathing space the next couple of turns to add to the budget. Meanwhile two Persian Wars pop up and crowd themselves into eastern Syria. In a way, kind of nice to have that threat appear early. Bad news is they are the smaller of the four Persian Wars, but still dangerous as 11/1 and 9/1.

For statesmen I get Valerian and Aurelian. The latter has an impressive 5 military ability, so I send him off to Syria. The former I send to Hispania to increase its tax potential. I do the usual B&C, but don't spend Gold to increase Prestige. Unrest, which was at 5, is dropped to 0. An insurgency flares up in Britannia and, not unexpected, Babylonia becomes a Barbarian Province of the Persian Empire.

That said, the 11/1 Persian War hanging out in Mesopotamia and is ripe for attack. I oblige with Aurelian & Co. Thankfully, I have enough legions in Syria to transfer at zero cost, I buy some Auxilia, and end up with a -9 modifier. I roll a total of six with two losses (bye-bye Auxilia). Triumph with a nice haul in Gold and Prestige. No Rebellion. A nice start.

### Turn 2 (229-236 CE)

*Plague* demotes several veteran units (I've rolled this result several times). I also roll *Adoption*, which can add more statesmen, and *Praetorian*, which adds 1 to the Unrest roll. I had to demote a Praetorian Guard, so assassination was possible again on a roll of a 6, but Aurelius survives (+4 for the combined Intrigue of Caesar and Prefect, +6 for the six Emperor counters in play, and -4 for the Praetorian Guard and Imperial Cavalry). No mortality either.

The Alan War stays put (lazy bastards), but ANOTHER Persian War (13/1) appears, and pushes the other Persian War out of the way. And the 9/2 Frankish War marches into an insurgent Province in Gallia. The Franks and Persians are positioned to receive my counter-attacks. Syria isn't much of a problem, financially, but going after the Frankish War requires some spending if I decide to go that way.

I receive two statesmen, one of which is Odaenath, who has a special ability against Persian Wars. I put him in Syria to deal with the Persians and can annex an extra Province if he wins a Triumph. Aurelian is packed off to Gallia to deal to get frank with the Franks. The other statesman, Gordian, I send to Hispania. Militarily, he's useless, and has low intrigue, but does bump up Administration. A useful idiot. I also invest 50 Gold to boost my Prestige by five. Chance for Unrest so I roll. A modified 21, so things remain calm.

Except in Mesopotamia, I roll low in all Revolts, erasing the insurgency in Belgica, where the Frankish War is lurking. The poor Alan War continues to fail to fan the flames of Unrest. Time for War. Franks: Aurelian leads a force of legions and Auxilia for a -4 modifier. I roll a six with two losses. Easy Triumph. Promote a legion and annex Germania Inferior. Persian: -7 modifier. Triumph with four losses; four Auxilia and -20 Gold. Promote a legion. Between the two Wars a decent haul in Gold and Prestige. Chance of Rebellion in Syria, and Odaenath seizes his chance to become Caesar by rolling, so finally we have a Civil War. Rebellion not possible in Gallia.

### Turn 3 (236-242 CE)

Next turn starts with mixed random events. *Bodyguards* give Caesar -2 on the Assassination die roll, *Conquest*, which is always good, but offset slightly by *Mutiny*. Statesman Laetus fails mortality, but everyone else survives, including Marcus Aurelius Caesar and Odaenath, who spreads his Rebellion to Pontica, and Moesia, but fails to take Aegyptus.

The Alan War moves north and may convert a Province to Barbarian. Persians stay put, and a Nubian War moves into Aegyptus. I get one more statesman, Gallienus with the *Gothic* special ability who I make Governor of Pannonia. I send Aurelian to Aegyptus to deal with the 4/1 Nubian War (Aurelian's military ability is higher than the Nubian's strength).

Two Provinces in Britannia and Pannonia revert to Barbarian, but other Revolts that should have happened, didn't. The Province where the Alan War was in needed a roll of anything other than a one or two, but I rolled a one. Two Wars arrive. The Rebel Odaenath fights the Persian War, a Triumph with five losses (taken from Auxilia and Gold), so he had his uses. Against the Nubians, another Triumph with just one loss (I reduced a veteran legion, but simply promoted it back to veteran). Another nice haul in Gold and Prestige, and with Unrest knocked down to 0, there is no chance of Rebellion. Nothing to annex in Aegyptus, but in Syria I upgrade one Province to Veteran Allied and another to Insurgent.

Now for the Dénouement as Marcus Caesar squares off toe-toe with the Rebel Odaenath. With the full weight of the

Loyal Empire behind his Marcus crushes the Rebellion and Odaenath is executed, but demoted three Legions, not good. Still he did well against the Persians (I believe there is one more Persian War to appear).

#### Turn 4 (243-249 CE)

Some OK random events. The Alan War slides along the south shore of the Black Sea, and a Moorish War shows up and travels east. I get statesman Decius, who I appoint Consul, and send Gallienus to Africa. This switch helps B&C. I invest in some Auxilia to help against the Moors and to take care of the insurgency in Syria. I have a small window to attack the Alan War, but holding off to see if it foolishly moves south. I take care of the insurgency in Syria, but the Alans reduce a Province to Allied! I have an easy Triumph against the Moors. No Rebellion. Heading into mid-game I have -6 Prestige. Looks like I will break even soon. Still a lot of Wars to enter, so I'm trying to be frugal in expenses.

#### Turn 5 (250-255 CE)

I survive two assassination attempts and all statesmen survive mortality. Big turnaround from the bloodbaths of the previous scenarios. The Alan War slides further east, and a 11/1 Marcomannic War joins up with the patient Ballomar and immediately marches to Ravenna in Italia, next to Rome. Ballomar has a military strength of 4 which means I have a problem. I receive Aurelian, who I send to Pontica to deal with the Alan War. Given my budget, I think I'll deal with the Alan War, then see where the Marcomannic War goes.

Holy cannoli! I roll triple 6's for Unrest, which combined with the *Praetorians* Event (which I didn't think much of) kills Aurelius Caesar! By succession, Consul Decius becomes Caesar. Did not see that coming. Marcomanni cause insurgency in Ravenna, and I lose a Province in Moesia to the Barbarians. On the bright side, I have a Triumph against the Alan War, though had to spend 38 Gold to transfer/buy units to fight that War. Not a good turn.

#### Turn 6 (256-261 CE)

*Mutiny* and *Usurpers* increase Unrest to 16. *Deification* adds four to Prestige, and the Prefect fails mortality, allowing Carus a statesman with *Prefect* special ability to take his place. Decius survives assassination. *Colonies* help with taxes, but I still end up with only about 80 Gold, half of which I use in B&C to reduce Unrest. Good investment, as I miss Unrest by one. The Marcomannic War remains in Ravenna and a Nubian War invades Aegyptus. The Prefect Carus attacks the Marcomannic War with a -3 modifier. Triumph with four losses. The 6/1 Nubian War is also taken out. Rebellion is barely avoided.

#### Turn 7 (262-267 CE)

*Conquest, Terror* and the *Prefect* Carus dies. Another statesman with the *Prefect* special ability (Philip the Arab) takes over, but wants more, offs Decius Caesar, and seizes the throne. No Wars are the map initially, but two big Gothic Wars show up, along with the Persian leader Shapur. The 13/3 Gothic War crosses the Black Sea into Pontica, and the 15/3 Gothic War heads for Thracia. Uh-oh.

I receive three statesmen. One, appropriately named Gothicus, has the *Gothic* special ability, so off to Pontica he goes. I'm forced to spend what little Gold I have rushing reinforcements to Pontica, where I have a fair enough chance to defeat the Gothic War there. I send the inept Gordian to Moesia with two legions to attack the other War, hoping I can reduce the pay bill.

After Revolts (a mixed bag), I have Gordian pitch into the Gothic War. Slaughter. Both legions lost, Unrest increased, and Prestige decreased. Other War: -3 modifier. Draw with six losses. I eliminate two legions and, demote two and eliminate four Auxilia. This brings pay down to a manageable 163. Ironically, I don't mind the losses. I only have three turns left and with 60 Prestige I need 40 more to avoid Defeat.

#### Turn 8 (268-273 CE)

Assassination has almost become automatic, with Aemilian taking over as Caesar. Along with the two Gothic Wars (which remain in place), an Alamannic War moves into Germania Superior and a Vandal War invades Moesia Superior. I invest in some reinforcements and transfers to go after these new Wars and transfer new guy Probus to Moesia to use his *Vandal* special ability. Revolts go my way, keeping some key Provinces allied to assist in Wars. Aemilian Caesar concentrates forces from Gallia and Hispania against the Alamannic War for -4 modifier. Triumph with five losses, winning back Gold that I spent on units. Probus attacks the Vandals with a -5 modifier for a Stalemate. Lose some units and demote two legions. No Rebellion.

#### Turn 9 (274-279 CE)

Three mortalities, including my two good commanders, Gothicus and Probus. Aemilian Caesar survives the first assassination attempt, but not the second. Prefect Timesitheus is crowned. He's not too shabby, and his Intrigue is just 2, so he may stick around for a while. Two more Wars show up, the Palmyrene in Syria, and Burgundian, which moves down to a favorite stomping ground for Wars, Ravenna.

Maximinus and Diocletian arrive. The former I send to Syria, where I still have a few legions to work with, the latter I make Consul where his high Administration will boost Prestige. I make Gordian Prefect. Inept, but his Intrigue is 1, so the current Caesar should survive. At this stage, it's not a huge deal. I invest a bit more in B&C and bringing in some Auxilia. Using Timesitheus and a -5 modifier I win a Triumph over the Burgundians with five losses. Against the Palmyrenes I draw with six losses. Ouch. No Rebellion.

#### **Turn 10** (280-286 CE)

Final turn! One mortality and no assassination. Gordian did his one duty. *Inflation* and *Omens* didn't help, though I did get double taxes in a couple of commands, and I ended up with over 200 Gold. As it is the last turn the eight (!) remaining Barbarian counters in the War Box come into play. A consequence of having a few turns with only one arriving. Four leaders and four Wars; Saxons, Franks and Alamanni swarm into Gallia and Italia, and Persians move into Syria. With the other Wars staying put, there's no real threat, especially since it's just one turn I will have to deal with this. Does raise the Unrest level somewhat. I get the remaining four statesmen as well. I only attempt one War, against the Moors. I get a Triumph in garbage time, leaving me with 102 Prestige for a Draw. Overall, it was a fun, varied extended game, with highs and lows. It accurately reflects the frustrations of running Rome, Inc.