Path of Honors A1.6 – A Solo and Multiplayer Roman Republic Roll-and-Write for 1 - 6 Players (11/15/26)

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How to Play Video

How to play video

Version Log

1.25: Revised multiplayer rules from earlier versions that were not in 1.20.

1.26: Revised VP tokens and values; wordings of some rules clarified

1.3: Designer Statement added

1.4 Major tweaks in response to playtesting to strengthen multiplayer, mostly involving wealth

- Must spend wealth to make additional resource dice rolls after the first
- Luxuries changed to Displays of Wealth and more fully integrated in game
- Now players can use wealth to lower candidates' votes, not just raise
- Omens revised to increase multi-player competition and rivalries more active.
- Random starting lineages to add variety to game start.

1.5 Tweaked omens again so that omens affect every player they apply to to build more of a moment of collective gameplay experience.

1.6: (11/8/26) 1.5 balance problems: players becoming too OP. Raising of costs for displays of wealth reducing benefits especially political capital

Raised Display prices except for funeral games so they were at least 6 (i.e. required commitment of two full wealth dice rolls).

Doubled PC maintenance requirements for Dignitas

Raised bonus pc/turn by 1 for Cursus offices

Introduction

As a Roman aristocrat in the Middle Republic, strive to amass wealth, skill, and dignity. Compete to complete the Path of Honors by winning election to the highest political offices before your rivals.

Components

- Rulebook
- 1 Record Sheet for each player
- Up to 6 dice per player (6 is most convenient; 1 works in a pinch)

Solo Game: Order of Play

There are 12 turns in the game. Each turn begins with a player action phase. On turns where an election is held, an election phase follows the player action phase. An election may be held for two reasons:

Either

The Turn Track notes that it is the time for a particular election.

OR

The player wishes to run for an office they previously lost. So, for example, if the player loses the Quaestor election in turn 2 they may run again for quaestor on any subsequent turn.

Starting lineage: The player may randomly select their starting lineage by rolling a die and consulting **Random Starting Lineages for Players** table

A. Player action phase (take all steps in order)

1. Roll 1d6 and check the correct **Yearly Omens Table** (based on the current turn number in the game) for the year's omens and effects on gameplay.
2. **(Except on turn 1)** If the player won election to office the previous turn, determine Office Actions and Rewards, including those listed on the *Honores* chart (the top right of the record sheet. (see pages 4-5 for more detail). Record any VPs for the office on the Turn Track (bottom of the record sheet).
    a. If the player gains enough **dignitas** points from their Office Actions and Rewards to increase one **dignitas** level, that new level increase is effective immediately for determining **dignitas** maintenance costs (see step #4)
3. Roll the number of resource dice indicated by the **dignitas** level (**dignitas** is the top left box on the record sheet). **The rolling player may reroll any die or number of dice any number of times by spending 1 WEALTH for each rerolled die.** Any rolls of "1" at the end of this process provide no resources this turn and must check an infamy box.
    a. ***Example:*** Flavius rolls two dice, because they are at Level 1 Dignitas. They roll a "1", **infamy**, and a "5", 2 **political capital**. They have 3 **wealth** and could choose to reroll one die (for 1 **wealth**) or both dice (for 2 **wealth**). Hoping for something better than infamy (each point of which subtracts 1 from the player's final score), Flavius chooses to pay 1 wealth and re-roll the "1", but keep the "5".

4. Spend the **political capital** needed to maintain the player's current level of **dignitas**. The amount necessary is shown in the PC/Turn column of the ***Dignitas*** box for the player's level. Players must generate this **political capital** through resource dice and/or any bonus **political capital** from holding offices (recorded in the **Bonus PC/Turn** box in the top center of the record sheet.) If the sum of rolled **political capital** and bonus political capital is too little to maintain the current level

of **dignitas**, drop (erase) one box of **dignitas** for each point of **political capital** the player is short this turn. After the first box in a dignitas level is erased, the next lost point of dignitas that turn causes the player to drop a dignitas level and erase the last box on the lower level

5. Spend any remaining **political capital** to add **dignitas** points in the ***Dignitas*** box. As soon as all **dignitas** point boxes are filled on level I, II, III, or IV, the player moves to the next level of **dignitas** and checks the leftmost box indicating that level has been reached. The player immediately gains the increased number of resource dice for that new level. This includes using the higher number of dice for an election at the end of this turn. At the start of the next turn, the player must pay the **political capital** maintenance required for their new level of **dignitas**.
6. Spend **skill** points in the **Skills** table. Skills have levels from 1 to 3. The player must complete all boxes in a level to gain that level's bonus. They may take more than one turn to complete all the boxes necessary to go up a level. The player gains the level bonus for a newly earned level of skill immediately upon completing that new level (including using any skill bonuses for an election later that turn). ***If the player completes all three skill levels, they get the Victory Points for that skill and the cognomen associated with that skill.*** *Circle the VPs in the row of the skill in the Skill box.*
   Orator (oratory)
   Publicius (populism)
   Bellator (monomachy)
   Regulus (admin)
   Iustus (law)
   Magnus (command)
   [*(Optional), take the victory token with the associated cognomen for that skill and the VPs listed on the token.***]**
7. Spend **wealth** points on items in the **Luxuries** table. If the player purchases luxuries, they earn the Victory Points for those luxuries.
   If the player purchases the **Legendary Lineage** luxury, the may select a legendary lineage and list this at the top of the record sheet in the corresponding namespace:
   Mars, Venus, Hercules
   [(Optional) take the correct victory token and Victory Points for that luxury.]
8. For each "1" on a resource die (after the maximum three rolls), mark 1 **infamy** in the **Infamy** box.

B. Elections Phase (Required to Take Place at end of turns 2, 3, 4, 6, 12)

1. At most, only one election will be held on a turn. To determine which election, if any, will be held note the following rules:
   a. Historically, Roman aristocrats emphasized winning political offices ***suo anno***, "in their own year." This meant winning election to an office in the year one was first eligible, in other words, "in their own year." Holding an office *suo anno* brought the most prestige.

b. To reflect this, the elections listed in the Turn Track are listed *suo anno*, on the first turn the player is eligible for them (which is also the turn that brings the most VP for holding the office.)
    i. For example, the quaestor elections are held first on turn 2 and the tribune elections first on turn 4. If the player does not win election to those offices at those times (which would be *suo anno*), they may run for either office on a later turn, subject to the **Restrictions on office holding** (*see 1d, below*)
c. In any election phase, if the player has not yet held an office for which they are eligible and the *suo anno* turn has passed, they may opt to run for that office, subject to the **Restrictions on office holding** (*see 1d, below*).
    i. So, for example, if a player lost the *suo anno* tribune election (turn 4), they may run for election to tribune on any subsequent turn, subject to the **Restrictions on office holding** (*see 1d, below*).
d. **Restrictions on office holding**. There are several restrictions on the order in which political offices can and must be held. The player:
    i. cannot run for election to an office earlier than its *suo anno* listing in the Turn Track
    ii. may not hold the same office twice
    iii. cannot run for quaestor after they have held any other office.
    iv. cannot run for tribune if they have already been elected aedile at some point
    v. must hold the offices of the *cursus honorum*, "the path of honors" in order, each before the next office. In other words, the player must be aedile before praetor, and the player has to be praetor before consul.
    vi. Does not need to hold the office of quaestor or tribune to run for higher offices.

2. Holding an election
    a. **Before rolling any dice**, the player chooses how much **wealth**, if any, they wish to spend on campaigning and bribery. These are subtracted from the record sheet. 1 **wealth** point (denarius) adds +1 to player's votes total
    b. When rolling votes dice, the player first rolls the dice to determine the votes of their closest rival (known as the rival bot) for the election. The number of dice to roll for the rival bot can be found in the ***Honores*** section of the record sheet in the **Opp Dice**. column listing for that office (on the top right of the record sheet). The sum of the dice is the **vote total** for the rival bot.
    c. The player now rolls their current number of **resource dice** (based on their current level of **Dignitas**) and adds any **wealth** they chose to spend on

campaigning and bribery (in election step 3a) to the die roll. They should also add any voting bonuses for skills they have. The total of the dice rolled + any wealth spent + any skill bonuses that affect votes = the **vote total** for the player

d. If the player's **vote total** is higher than the rival bot's **vote total**, the player has won the election. Write the letter representing the office in the Turn Track for the round the election was won.
    i. The player immediately gains the PC Bonus associated with the office they have won. If the office is on the *Cursus Honorum* (aedile, praetor, consul) they have held it *suo anno.* [(*Optional) the player receives the corresponding victory token*.]

e. If the player's **total vote** roll < that of the opponent, the player loses the election. Ties are re-rolled with players adding the wealth and skill bonuses they included on the first election roll.

C. Taking Office Actions and Determining Office Rewards (See A.2)

1. If the player holds an office this turn (having won election to it at the end of the previous turn) they must take the required action of their office and see if they gained any political rewards from doing so.
    a. For some offices, namely Aedile and Praetor, the player also has one or more optional office actions they may choose to take. They do so now and record the rewards on their record sheet.
2. For the offices Tribune, Aedile, Praetor, Consul, the player uses the required action chart for their office (note; quaestor has no chart). (See pages 12-14 for tables).
    a. They select whether they want to attempt an action challenge level of I, II, or III. They must choose this **before** they roll for rewards
    b. They then roll 1d6. If they have any levels in the relevant skill listed under bonuses in the action chart, they may add +1 for every full level of that skill they have.
    c. If they roll at least the Min. Die Roll listed for the challenge, they earn the rewards listed under Rewards. Note: these rewards are in addition to any rewards (like PC points per turn and VPs) they receive for holding the office. ***If they win a cognomen (nickname) , write the cognomen in the player name spot and add +3 VPs in the VPs box for that turns office.*** [*(Optional) Take a cognomen victory token)*]
    d. If they do not roll at least the min die roll for the challenge level, the player earns no rewards for the round.
2. After these actions, the player checks off the office on the Honores track and gains any rewards from holding the office (listed on the *Honores* track). Any VP for Holding the office (listed in the *Honores* box) + any VPs gained through a successful action roll on the Office Actions and Rewards for that office are added together and written in the Office Held and VPs Box on the Turn Track.

a. Calculating VPs for an office. If the player has held an office on the first opportunity, *suo anno* (i.e. in the turn when the election is listed in the Turn Track) they receive the full VP value listed in the *Honores* box.. For every turn after the first opportunity, subtract 2 VPs from the base office score, but always having a reward of at least:

   1 VP for Quaestor, Tribune, or Aedile; 2 VP for Praetor; 4 VP for Consul; 5 VP for Censor.

   office. So, for example if a player wins election as quaestor or as tribune 1 turn after the scheduled time on the turn track, they receive 1 VP for holding that office. If they win an election 2 turns after the first opportunity, they still receive 1VP for those offices because they are always worth at least 1 Victory Point. If a player wins election as Consul 1 turn after the scheduled time on the track, they receive 6VP; for every turn after, holding the consulship is only worth 4VP.

3. After the player completes these office actions they are considered to have completed their term in office

End of Game and Scoring

(*Note: the victory tokens are a recent addition and have not been fully tweaked yet*)

1. The solo game ends at the end of turn 12
2. Using the score sheet, add up the following **Victory Points**
   + The **Victory Point** value of any luxury tokens
   + The **Victory Point** value of any skill levels(for completing each levels of a skill)
   + +3 **Victory Points** for any cognomens earned (on top of the VPs for completing each level of that skill)
   + The **Victory Point** rewards from holding office (Listed on the Office Held and VPs box on the Turn Track) See C.2.a for calculation.
   + **dignitas** points earned at level V Dignitas. 1 **dignitas** point = 1 **Victory Point**
3. And subtract any **infamy** points to gain the final score
   - A final score of 70+: Earn a Caesarian victory
   - A final score of 60+: Earn a Fabian victory
   - A final score of 40+: Earn a Ciceronian victory

Multiplayer Rules for up to 6 players

The multi-player version of Path of Honors follows the same rules of the solo version (order of play in the Action Phase and Elections Phase, number of turns in the game (12)) except for changes in how and when elections are held and a minor change to scoring. The changes are listed here:

Number of turns in a complete game

Multiplayer games end after 15 turns. This allows a bit more flexibility and space for players to climb the Path of Honors and for some players to win a later election to an office (not ***suo anno*** see pg. 3) and still be competitive.

Identify a first player

The designated first player in the game is the player who says something in Latin first. When the new turn begins, the first player is the one immediately to the left of the current first player. At the start of each turn, the player immediately to the left of the first player becomes the new first player.

Omens

The first player rolls for the year's omens using the table corresponding to the current turn of the game (1-4; 5-10; 11+). Unless otherwise stated, the omen result affects all players. If the roll results in a penalty and a player cannot pay the penalty, they receive +1 infamy.

Elections Phase

During the elections phase, any player, beginning with the first player (see above) can announce they will run for a single office they are eligible for (and for which it is either >= the suo anno year listed on the track), or pass. Note: the specific turns in which *suo anno* elections are held on the single player Turn Track is ignored in multiplayer. Instead points for offices are gained based on the order in which players hold the office. The first player to hold a given office will be suo anno and getting the most points for the office - the amount listed in the Honores box on the record sheet (see Multiplayer Scoring below) The rules of office-holding eligibility in multiplayer are somewhat different. Most commonly, a player will try to hold each office in the order listed in the Honores box. The strict rules, however are that a player:

i. Cannot run for an office on the first turn
ii. Can only run for one office in a single turn
iii. Cannot hold an office and run for election in the same turn (note, this may mean a player wishes to skip being quaestor or tribune so they can run for Aedile in turn 4, the first possible turn)

iv. Does not need to be quaestor or tribune before Aedile, but **cannot run for Aedile until** turn at least turn 4 (age requirements)
v. Cannot hold the same office twice
vi. Cannot run for quaestor after they have held any other office.
vii. Cannot run for tribune if they have already been elected aedile at some point
viii. Must hold the offices of the *cursus honorum*, "the path of honors" in order, each before the next office. In other words, the player must be aedile before praetor, and the player has to be praetor before consul.
ix. Does not need to hold the office of quaestor or tribune to run for higher offices.

Historical Note: *The Romans had fairly strict rules about the offices an individual could hold, including minimum ages, prerequisite offices, the need to take a year off between elected offices, the sometimes-ignored rule that one could not hold most offices twice, and so on. This is reflected in the rules for office holding in the game.*

Declaring elections: At the start of the election phase, the first player Players may call an election for any office they are eligible for during the election phase (so the suo anno listings of offices of when elections must be held on the single player turn track are ignored). More than one election may be held during the elections phase, but no player can run for more than 1 office during the holding elections phase.

If the first player chooses to run for an office, they declare the office they will run for. Then each player in order starting with the player to the left of the first player must declare if they will

A. Run for the election that has been already declared by a player
B. OR Declare they will run for an election that has not yet been declared
C. OR Pass and not run for any office

Once all players have either passed or declared they will run for an election, elections will be held in the order they were declared. For example, if:

1. the first player declares they will run for aedile (and is eligible)
2. The second player declares they will also run for aedile (and is eligible)
3. The third player decides instead to declare they will run for Tribune
4. The fourth player passes

Then there will be two elections, first the election for aedile and second the election for Tribune.

Supporting Candidates or Oneself
Before each declared election roll, any player can bribe the voters in favor of any candidate at the rate of 1 wealth = +1 to that candidate's vote roll. So they may, for example, spend wealth to improve the vote roll of another player they support.

Opposing and Undermining Candidates
Before each declared election roll, any player can also bribe the voters to vote against against any candidate at the rate of 1 wealth = -1 to that candidate's vote roll. So they may, for example, spend wealth to decrease the chances of success for a candidate.

Note on Supporting and Opposing Candidates

It is fully within the rules for players to individually or collectively undermine a candidate's vote rolls to the point that it is impossible for them to win an election. Provoking and mitigating this can be the product of tabletalk negotiations between players.

Election with only one candidate includes an oppo-bot
The oppo-bot (a term I picked up from Tory Brown's *Votes for Women*) will also run for each otherwise uncontested election to provide a minimum vote that the highest rolling player must surpass to win the election. Designate a player and have them roll the number of oppo-bot dice designated in the *Honores* box in the row for the particular office.

Multiplayer Cognomens

Once a player earns a cognomen, no other player can earn that same cognomen

Multiplayer Scoring

For scoring, the player who first holds an office receives the full victory points for the office. Each successive holder of the office reduces the full victory point score for the office by 2 to a minimum no lower than:

2 VPs for Quaestor, Tribune, and Aedile.

4 VPs for Praetor

6 VPs for Consul

8 VPs for Censor

So, for example, the first player to be praetor earns 6 VP, the second 4 VP, every holder afterwards 4VP.

The first player to be aedile earns 4 VP, every holder afterward, 2VP

Player Record Sheet

NAME: _____

Praenomen **Nomen** **Cognomen(s)** (+3 VP per cognomen)

DIGNITAS

BONUS
Pol. Cap. /Turn:

Lvl	Political Capital	PC /Turn	Dice
☑ I	☐☐☐☐	-	⚀⚁
☐ II	☐☐☐☐☐☐	4	⚀⚁⚂
☐ III	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	8	⚀⚁⚂⚃
☐ IV	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	16	⚀⚁⚂⚃⚄
☐ V	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	20	⚀⚁⚂⚃⚄⚅

For level V, 1PC = 2VP

HONORES (OFFICES)

Office	Opp. Dice	Pol. Cap. Bonus	VP 1st Place
☐ CENSOR	7	--	12
☐ CONSUL	6	+4	10
☐ PRAETOR	5	+3	8
☐ AEDILE	4	+2	6
☐ TRIBUNE	3	+1	4
☐ QUAESTOR	2	+1	4

TURN ORDER – PHASES

1. Roll Yearly Omens
2. Complete Office (if any)
3. Roll resource Dice
4. Collect wealth
5. Dignitas maintenance
6. Increase dignitas
7. Spend skill points (add any earned cognomen)
8. Purchase luxuries
9. Elections

SKILLS

Skill	Level	Effect per Completed Level	VP / Lvl
ORATORY	1☐☐ 2☐☐ 3☐☐	+1 political capital / turn	3
MONOMACHY	1☐ 2☐ 3☐	+1 votes up through Aedile election	1
LAW	1☐☐ 2☐☐ 3☐☐☐	Change one resource die (not 1) to 5	2
POPULISM	1☐☐ 2☐☐ 3☐☐☐	+2 votes for elections	2
POLITICKING	1☐☐ 2☐☐ 3☐☐☐	+1 votes for elections; +2 PC / turn	2
ADMIN.	1☐☐ 2☐☐ 3☐☐☐	Change one resource die (not 1) +/-1/turn	2
COMMAND	1☐☐ 2☐☐ 3☐☐☐	+4 votes for consulship election	3

WEALTH

DISPLAYS OF WEALTH

Display	Cost	Effects	VPs
☐ FUNERAL GAMES*	3	+2 victory points this turn	2
☐ LEGENDARY LINEAGE	6	+1 votes	2
☐ FORUM DOMUS	9	1 free level populism; +1 political capital / turn	4
☐ EPIC DRAMA	6	+1 monomachy; +1 political capital / turn	2
☐ NEGOTII	9	+2 wealth / turn;	2
☐ MONEY LENDING	9	+1 pol. cap. & +2 wealth / turn	2
☐ PALATINE DOMUS	9	+2 pol. cap. / turn	4
☐ EXTENSIVE LIBRARY	12	+2 skill boxes to any combo of Oratory, Law, or Admin.	2
☐ EQUESTRIAN STATUE	12	+2 pol. cap. / turn (req: consulship)	4
☐ VICTORY TEMPLE	12	+4 pol. cap. / turn (req: solid victory (II) as consul)	4
☐ TRIUMPHAL ARCH	12	+4 pol. cap. / turn (req: triumphant victory (III) as consul)	6

INFAMY:

☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐

TURN TRACK

Turn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Office Held & VPs earned															
Required Election (Solo)		Q		T		A		P		C		CE			
Election (Multi player)	X														
Office Won End of Turn															

Offices: (Q)uaestor (T)ribune (A)edile (P)raetor (C)onsul (CE)nsor

SCORE

Displays of Wealth _____
\+
Skills _____
\+
Offices & Rewards _____
=
Subtotal _____
\-
infamy _____
=
Final Score _____

⚀ 1 INFAMY ⚁ 1 SKILL or 2 WEALTH ⚂ 1 PC or 2 SKILL ⚃ 2 POLITICAL CAPITAL (PC) ⚄ 3 WEALTH ⚅ 1 PC & 1 WEALTH

Random Starting Lineages for Players (Optional)

To add more variety, roll 1d6 and consult this table to represent Romans of different (elite) backgrounds.

Roll (1d6)	Lineage	Starting Bonuses
1	Claudius Marcellus	Start with Epic drama (Marcellus at Clastidium) Complete Level 2 of Monomachy Gain +2 boxes of Command after completing praetorship
2	Cornelius Scipio Africanus Aemilianus	Epic drama (Scipio at Carthage) +2 boxes Level 1 dignitas checked Complete Level 1 Oratory Gain +2 boxes of Command after completing praetorship
3	Licinius Crassus	Money Lending (Displays of Wealth) 1 complete level of Politicking
4	Sempronius Gracchus	Complete Level 2 Populism Complete Level 2 Oratory
5	Tullius Cicero	Complete Level 2 Oratory Complete Level 1 Law
6	Julius Caesar	Complete Level 1 Oratory Complete Level 1 Populism Complete Level 1 Admin.

Yearly Omens and Events

Turns 1-4

Roll	Description of Omen	Effect this turn
1	Dirt fell from the sky like rain in Anagnia; A comet streaked across the sky at Lanuvium; Blood oozed from the hearthfire of Marcus Valerius (Liv. 45.16)	-2 to Office Reward Rolls this turn
2	The sacrifices this year presented were auspicious and suggested that the leaders of the Republic would do worthy deeds.	+2 dignitas
3	Plague erupted in some surrounding towns. The skies rained earth, lightning struck soldiers under Appius Claudius' command. (Liv. 10.31)	-2 wealth
4	The skies opened and a multitude of stone tablets fell, inscribed with threats such as, "Mars has sharpened his sword." (Plut. Fab. 2)	+1 infamy
5	Stones rained from the sky and flames fanned by the slightest of breezes reduced several Romans' clothes to ashes (Obsequens 3)	-1 political capital or erase 1 box of dignitas
6	A snake with four legs walked through the city; Two ships burst into flame from a lightning strike; a wolf ran through the streets during daytime (Liv. 41.9)	+1 skill point

Turns 5-10

Roll	Description of Omen	Effect this turn
1	Grape vines though young and green burst into flame. Meanwhile the chalk rained from the sky at Cales and blood showered down in Rome. (Liv. 24.10)	-2 wealth from crop failures
2	A comet streaked through the sky and a Roman cow began to speak. The statue of Apollo on the Cumae capitol began to weep and a snake with a large colorful crest was spotted at the temple of Good Fortune (Liv. 43.13)	+2 skill points
3	Earth rained to the ground in Campania and wool tufts blossomed from the trees of Veii (Obsequens 12)	+2 wealth from bountiful harvests.
4	Lightning struck the Statue of Victoria atop the Temple of Concord as streams of blood flowed at the Forum Subertanum. Eretium reported stone falling from the sky and a mule gave birth to a horse. (Liv. 26.23)	-3 to first player's vote rolls
5	A comet streaked through the sky and a Roman cow began to speak. The statue of Apollo on the Cumae capitol began to weep and a snake with a large colorful crest was spotted at the temple of Good Fortune (Liv. 43.13)	buildings or statues cost -2
6	Phantom warships were seen on the Amasenus river, while weapons of war wielded in earnest rang out from the temple of Jupiter Vicilinus. (Liv. 24.44)	+2 to Office Reward Tables rolls

Turns 11+

Roll	Description of Omen	Effects this turn
1	Earth rained to the ground in Campania and wool tufts blossomed from the trees of Veii (Obsequens 12)	+3 wealth for excellent harvests
2	A flock of crows flew towards your rival landing on this and that, crowing and cawing and pecking, even assaulting humans in between their cacophonies. (Plut. Cic. 47)	-2 skill points or must erase 2 total boxes from any combination of skills
3	The skies rained so severely that a number of statues on the Capitoline hill fell over; lightning struck the temples. (Obsequens 7)	-2 wealth and +1 infamy for any owner of domus or statues -3 wealth and +2 infamy for anyone who has built a victory temple
4	The spring stubbles of winter wheat looks promising throughout Italy **OR** Phantom warships were seen on the Amasenus river, while weapons of war wielded in earnest rang out from the temple of Jupiter Vicilinus. (Liv. 24.44)	+3 to first player's votes roll this turn
5	The earth split asunder outside Velitone, leaving a chasm. Livestock omens abounded: a two-headed lamb and a pig with a human head were reported. (liv. 32.9)	buildings or statues cost -3
6	In the vicinity of Frusino a bull spoke, uttering portentous words for the upcoming elections (Obsequens 15)	+3 to Office Reward Tables rolls this turn

Historical note: *The omens are inspired by actual omen sightings described in ancient sources. Most public omens Romans reported (or at least the Roman historians who passed them on) were negative. To include some positive effects I have modified the implication of some omens but cited the original omen when I have done so.*

Office Reward Tables and Bonus Actions in Office

1. Determine what level of achievement the player wishes to achieve in office.
2. Roll 1 die and add +1 for each level of the skill listed under bonuses. When 2 skills are listed, choose the skill with the most ranks.
3. If the die roll + bonuses is at least the number shown on the table under success, the player records the rewards on their record sheet
4. Some offices come with additional bonus actions. Take these bonus actions as instructed

Tribune

Tribune Required Action - Pick Challenge Level

Action Level	Legislative Achievement	Success (Min. roll)	Bonus Skill (+1 / level)	Reward
I	Small agrarian law: found a colony in Gaul	2	Populism	+1 dignitas
II	Substantial agrarian law: found 3 colonies in Italy	4	Populism	+2 dignitas; +1 populism
III	Colossal redistribution of the *ager publicus* to poorer Roman farmers. Gain cognomen, *Publicola*	6	Populism	+3 dignitas; +1 populism; +2 VP Cognomen "Publicola"

Aedile

Aedile Optional Actions (Note: *An Aedile may do both actions and spend up to 3 wealth for each action.***)**

Sponsor Games: Gain 1 VP for every point of wealth spent up to a maximum of 3 wealth.
Subsidize Grain: Gain 1 VP for every point of wealth spent up to a maximum of 3 wealth.

Aedile Required Action- Pick Challenge Level

Level	City Maintenance Achievement	Success (Min. roll)	Bonus Skill (+1 / level)	Reward
I	Maintain sewage systems in Rome	2	Admin	+1 dignitas
II	Restore the facades of temples in the Forum	4	Admin	+2 dignitas; +1 populism
III	Construct a fantastic new aqueduct	6	Admin	+3 dignitas; +1 populism; +2 VP;

	system; gain cognomen *Fabricius*			Cognomen “Fabricius”

Praetor

First roll a die to determine whether the player’s praetorship is spent adjudicating legal cases at Rome (1-2) or governing one of the provinces of Spain (3-6)

Praetor at Rome - Required Action - Pick Challenge Level

Action Level	City Administration Achievement	Success (Min. roll)	Bonus Skill (+1 / level)	Reward
I	Administer justice competently	2	Law/Admin	+2 dignitas;
II	Earn a reputation for impartial and inspired edicts	4	Law/Admin	+4 dignitas; +1 PC/turn
III	Revise and codify laws into more efficient justice system; gain cognomen Sapiens	6	Law/Admin	+6 dignitas; +2 PC/turn Cognomen “Sapiens”

Praetor in Spain - Optional Action

Extort from province: Steal wealth of the province & gain3-5 wealth points for 1-3 infamy points (3-1, 4-2, 5-3).

Praetor in Spain - Required Action - Pick Challenge Level

Action Level	Provincial Administration Achievement	Success (Min. roll)	Bonus Skill (+1 / level)	Reward
I	Competent administration with an attention to justice for provincials	2	Command/Admin	+2 dignitas; +1 Wealth
II	Competent administration that generates new revenue in the province	4	Command/Admin	+4 dignitas; +2 Wealth
III	Superlative administration and command: Defend the province against barbarian attacks. Gain the cognomen *Ibericus*	6	Command/Admin	+6 dignitas; +3 Wealth Cognomen “Ibericus”

Consul

Required Action

Action Level	Provincial Administration Achievement	Success (Min. roll)	Bonus Skill (+1 / level)	Reward
I	Hound the enemy strategically and keep the army intact	2	Command	+2 dignitas; +1 Wealth
II	Win a significant victory in pitched battle against the enemy army	4	Command	+4 dignitas; +2 Wealth
III	Win a crushing victory over the enemy, worthy of a triumphal procession in Rome. Earn the cognomen Marcellis	6	Command	+6 dignitas; +3 Wealth Cognomen “Marcellus”

Designer Statement

Roman politicians in the Republic were a fractious, competitive lot even when the Republic held together. They compared and judged each others' marks of elite status, ranking themselves regularly against their rivals, superiors, and inferiors. This mindset is tough in some respects to teach to teenage students (thankfully), but critical for understanding some of the imperial and political drives that ultimately collapsed the Republic.

As a history teacher, game designer, and Roman historian, I wanted to design a game that helped students better understand the competitive system and behaviors of career aristocrats, scions of the socio-political-economic elite that aspired to live their pedigree and summit the ladder of increasingly more prestigious political offices, the *Cursus Honorum*, or "Path of Honors." This path was conventional rather than legal for much of Roman Republic history but commonly included the magistracies of Aedile, Praetor, and Consul. The game's focus: how these competitive aristocrats, even when the political system was fully functioning, competed intensely to hold ever higher offices and surpass their peers and rivals in the distinctions, honors, and perquisites of office-holding. Those who were most successful at winning offices worked their way up the political ladder. They did so by guarding their honor and stewarding their political capital and resources, by acquiring and using wealth to acquire the material components of elite life and facilitate political campaigning and even bribery. Political elections were a very serious business and the ingrained cultural understanding that rivals were to be utterly bested, even in the smoother internal politics of the mid Republic, helped pave the way for the violent electoral and legislative breaches of the late Republic. So, I wanted the game to promote and illustrate some of the political aristocracy's behaviors to players. Behaviors such as:

- Besting their opponents by winning higher offices earlier than their age-mates and other rivals
- Utilizing and developing personal talents, abilities and public reputations to gain the support of voters
- Maximizing the opportunities for enrichment and prestige during office-holding
- Displaying their socioeconomic status through an increasingly materially lavish lifestyle
- Maintaining their political standing and earning higher offices through steadily acquiring and using political capital in many forms.

I wanted students, and indeed any players, to better appreciate the zero-sum-game approach many politicians took to winning offices and honors. For this competitive aristocratic system

that undergirded a great deal of political life in the Roman Republic and is one key for analyzing the political disruptions and eventual civil wars that collapsed the Republic.

I was also set on making this game a Roll-And-Write, one where players rolled dice and recorded information on their record sheet. Why? Well, my pedagogy in general and with history class games very much influences my game design. To me:

1. Games as a form of history are fundamentally different from text history, especially because they present the past as one or more models of what I call historical problem spaces.
2. As a different form of history, asking whether a game is "historically accurate,"and comparing it to a text account of the past, I think, misses the point of the game medium: games present agents making goal-oriented choices in simplified simulations of world systems
3. So instead of dissecting a game system into a list of discrete propositions and asking if each proposition is "accurate" in its discrete details, I ask my students the cognitively more challenging question. Does a particular game have defensible models of its problem space. In other words, does valid historical evidence support that: some agents **like** those in the game, had goals **like** those in the game, and were in a setting **like** that in the game, with resources and tools, and other agents **like** those in the game, and could make choices and decisions **like** those in the game?
4. The most important learning comes from students purposefully playing a game, then analyzing the game and using valid historical evidence to determine where the game is more or less defensible. As part of doing so, teachers and students can draw upon the more defensible models as tools to think about documented historical agency in systems.

With these principles, I never intended the Roll-and-Write genre to be a template for accurate history in the sense of #2 above. I did hope it would let me develop some defensible core models in a game genre advantageous for classrooms. I was certainly inspired by Matt Leacock's *Roll through the Ages: The Bronze Age* to give the genre a try. That game offers a simple, certainly abstracted, but broadly defensible historical model of (some) decisions to allocate resources made in Bronze Age "civilizations." Certainly defensible enough to play purposefully and examine evidence to support or refute in discussion. Importantly it also did so in 45 minutes or or fewer of gameplay. Finally, it used only a few simple materials of record sheet, dice and pegboards with a few pegs. The length of playtime, simplicity and limited game pieces that made setup and breakdown very fast made it a superior game for classrooms. I wanted to lean even more into the material simplicity of the genre for Path of Honors and craft a game that could be played with just a paper record sheet and a set of standard dice . I set out to craft a game with this logistical footprint that would be easy to set-up, reasonably quick to play, and clean-up.

So, how does one go about designing a Roll-and-Write game about young-but aging Roman aristocrats competing fiercely over time for successively higher offices and honors? There are many Roll-and-Writes, though almost no historical ones, and again. *Roll through The Ages*, and to a lesser extent, 1572: The Lost Expedition both inspired me to use dice to generate random resources for a player each turn. So while one could design role-playing games, take-that card games or all sorts of other games about electoral competition, I went for dice and resource management. I had played with the lock-in multi-roll mechanic in Yahtzee and RTTA before, used it for a class game on peasant agriculture and thought it was an engaging mechanic. So quite early on, the PoH Roll-and-Write became a dice rolling, semi-randomized (through multiple rolls and lock-in choices). A player agent with unpredictable kinds and amounts of resources every turn, would decide how to manage and spend those resources in order to beat rivals and win the most offices possible. Arguably a resource-management game can defensibly abstract Roman political behavior, a Roman political problem space. Rarely, if ever, did Roman politicians really have access to all the resources they wanted, when they wanted, in the quantity they wanted. Very few of us ever do. So gameplay would focus on determining how and which resources to prioritize during the dice roll phase, and then how to spend and use those resulting resources to best political effect.

And so, I designed and used Path of Honors in multiple classes and developed the current prototype. Here, I'd like to list some core mechanics of the games and briefly discuss how and why I think they do and do not connect to our historical understandings and evidence at various points.

1. **RESOURCES:** Ultimately, I decided upon four resources: wealth, skill, political capital, and infamy. They are meant to represent the tangible and intangible resources that a successful Roman politician would need to have and use successfully to succeed in their pursuit of honors. They abstract from what the evidence tells us about the specifics of electoral competition, and general competition for status. My reads of the evidence suggests Roman aristocrats did marshall resources **like** these to gain political advantages **like** these to win offices and profit from holding them.

    Wealth in game can be used to acquire more luxuries and bribe (or gift) voters. I called it wealth to at least try to promote the understanding that Roman wealth came from land far more than currency, even though wealth essentially functions as a currency in the game. In initial design passes, wealth was used almost solely in elections, representing the influence of effective campaigning and favors, promises, or outright bribery–since there was no bright line between them for most Romans. Later came the possibility to acquire various luxuries for victory points. Why, though, one might ask, does a game about political competition make it theoretically possible to win based mostly on acquiring luxury estates, possessions, etc. instead of only holding the highest offices? A fair question. Certainly the political elite who measured competition seem to have done so primarily in terms of political success based on holding the highest offices. Each of these offices added to one's reputation and dignity. Of course the most

successful office holders benefited from those ranks–like the consulars who may have had some right to speak first in the senate.. In reality, however, the distinction between those of the equestrian class–the class of those wealthy enough to serve as cavalry in Roman armies–and the political class–those who held offices and were or aspired to gain senatorial status–was porous. They were part of the same socio-economic elite, the cavalry class, and defined by wealth, luxury, status, and family. Many in the cavalry class chose not to run for office. In short, many did not play this political competitive "game" but still operated and were recognized as elite. One might think of influential equestrians like Titus Pomponius Atticus, friend and associate not only to Cicero, or the publicani tax farmers and equestrian jurors. To reflect this dignified equestrian life, I wanted an alternate, but difficult way to win the game besides politics, a way to recognize that larger elite segment of society that did not engage in the electoral arena.

Skill represents the tangible and intangible resources, including time, that must be devoted to developing and/or promoting skills. I started with oratory as skill, recalling well Second Century BCE Historian Polybius' comment that young Roman elites like Scipio Aemilianus developed their skill at oratory at the start of their political assent, and remembering Late 1st - early Second Century CE biographer Plutarch's assertion that the Elder Cato first built influence with the extra-urban locals near his estates by pleading their legal cases. From there I added monomachy, thinking of Marcellus (cos. 222, etc.) and Plutarch's assertion that that young aristocrat was known for this ability–Cato the Elder too. Skills as an aid to elections is definitely a point I would discuss with student players when debriefing. We rarely, if ever, hear of Roman candidates promoting their administrative skills, for example or of them being elected because of that particular skill. Far more often, they rhetorically focused on their personal *virtus* ("manly martial courage" as they understood it) and their use of that *virtus* to serve the Republic. But skills like these must often have been critical in successfully carrying out the tasks Roman magistrates had to carry out, and thus helpful in winning offices and gaining a distinguished reputation (*Dignitas* in the game). I tried to develop in-game bonuses to skills that would correspond to the magisterial tasks common to the different offices. The skills chosen most for gameplay reasons are the bonuses for Command and Law. Nate Rosenstein (my advisor as it happens) demonstrated 35 years ago in *Imperatores Victi* that consuls who lost battles had just as good a chance (though that was still rare) of gaining a second consulship as those who were never defeated. But the sources do suggest at times that Romans campaigned on being good leaders of soldiers; one can think of First Century BCE historian Livy's accounts of electoral speeches. And regardless of how the Romans explained it, the ability to command successfully surely made at least a bit of difference in actual military outcomes. So I opted for command as a resources. And for Law, I needed something with a desirable gameplay effect that linked to the praetorship when I had already

assigned the others. Jurists, like the legendary legal scholar Quintus Mucius Scaevola (consul 95 BCE) held high office and were known for their legal knowledge. It is not at all clear, of course, that a reputation for that knowledge helped them win election and certainly no reason to suppose it necessarily helped with resource management (i.e. dice rolling). Ultimately, I assigned Victory Points and cognomens to completing skill tracks for the same reasons I included luxuries as a source of Victory Points: one might become a very influential and honored Roman without holding all the offices, even though those of consular or even censorial rank insisted holding these offices marked the pinnacle of status.

Political Capital represents all the resources that enabled a Roman politician to successfully engage in political activities: politicking with others effectively, earning and promoting distinctions, winning voters, speaking persuasively in the senate, forming and keeping important social/political connections, gaining a positive reputation, and so on. Wealth, Family ancestry, reputation, intimidation, achievement, rhetorical abilities, displays of battle scars and spoils from enemies, skill at negotiating, a near obsessive focus on presenting oneself as the best of the best; these all contributed to a Roman politician's political capital. As the most critical resource in the game's problem space, political capital has two game functions. One is to maintain the player agent's current *Dignitas* ("dignity") level, their overall status and power level. The other is to allow the player agent to increase their Dignitas level. As the core marker of status and power, *Dignitas* in this game provides the player agent with increasing numbers of resource dice (which are also the voter dice). So as the game presents it, a higher level of *Dignitas* requires more political capital to maintain, but gives access to greater resources and the potential to persuade more voters (i.e. roll more dice). I am not attached to *dignitas*, "dignity" as the only name for this status. Regardless of the umbrella term, though, social resources like glory and martial courage (gloria and virtus) contributed to a broader overall socio-political status, which I have presented as *dignitas*.

Infamy builds a push-your-luck mechanic for player agents attempting to roll a second or third time to get exactly the resources they want. There were many potential sources of infamy for Romans, of political stigma that could influence a Roman's reputation negatively. Roman political invective is well documented as is rivals seizing upon their rivals' episodes of embarrassment or impropriety (or scandal). One could think of the invectives Cicero and Clodius launched at each other. Or Cicero and Catiline. Or Cicero and … well, clearly Cicero liked to do this, but we have bits of other aristocrats acting the same. Of course, politicians could move beyond moments of infamy.

2. **OFFICES:** Of course, the actual *Cursus Honorum*, "Path of Honors", needed to be represented in this game. But the offices that were considered essential to the cursus

varied over the centuries. In the early second century it seems to have been law that one must hold the praetorship before the more powerful consulship. But one might be elected either a tribune or aedile before holding those offices or neither. These complexities are ignored to capture the essential idea that the highest offices, especially praetor and consul, were ranked and holding many of them added greatly to one's political clout.

Historically no fewer than two of each kind of political office were open every year (or every 5 years for the censorship). This allowed each magistrate to veto his partner and limit magisterial political innovation. Why leave this important feature out? In the solo game, the extra office is not necessary since the game focuses on elections with only a quick dice roll for the actual term in office (starting with Tribune) through the Office Reward Tables and Bonus Actions in Office (see p. 12). There is nothing to veto and no need to emphasize that Roman magistracies came in pairs. Even in the multiplayer game, partnered magistrates are ignored to suggest to the player agent that available offices are limited for the rising politician.

Since I wanted to include as full a career arc as possible of a Roman pursuing offices, I included Quaestor and Tribune, both of which, when they were held at all, were usually held before the aedileship. Historically for much of the Republic one might skip being aedile altogether before holding the praetorship and consulship, though custom promoted holding all three. Historically, a pair of plebeian aediles and a pair of curule aediles were elected each year, and Romans from patrician families could not run for the former.

On that note, this game ignores patrician status because it overly complicates the model of electoral competition (and political capital in the game should be understood to include ancestry and reputation, which distinguished plebeian families certainly had in the second century, not just patricians). Further, it is not at all clear what the difference in function was between the two kinds of aediles.

To represent the detail that some Roman politicians boasted when they held a political office at their earliest eligible age i.e. *suo anno* as Cicero crowed, the Victory Points for winning an office go down if the player agent does not win election to it when it is first open, both in solo and multiplayer versions.

The Office Reward Tables and Bonus Actions in Office (see p. 12) come from the historical functions of these magistrates in the middle and late Republic, which we know chiefly from Livy and to a lesser extent, Plutarch, and to an even lesser extent, Polybius. Tying each bonus table to a particular skill or skills is meant to add historical flavor to the main jobs of magistrates (so Law and Admin, for example, to represent praetors' common roles as judges and provincial governors).

Finally, a note on the pacing on the solo-player game mode. The pace is quite brisk with elections for offices coming every other year. This turn between offices points to the law

that one must not currently hold and office when running for a new office–a rule that led to Tiberius Gracchus' murder but was apparently abandoned by the time of his younger brother Gaius. It also provides some needed time for the player to build up resources in between campaigns. Ultimately the pacing does a good job, I think, keeping the spirit of the solo player constantly working to excel and be ready for the next rung on the political ladder. Players in multiplayer can, of course, decide whether they wish to keep to that brisk pace.

3. **ELECTIONS:** Voting and elections are deliberately kept simply. The distinction between the population-biased tribal assembly or plebeian assembly (which are often not clearly distinguished in the sources) and the wealth-biased centuriate assembly is not included. Elections and voters in this system are an abstraction. Since the total pips on the dice rolls for votes are not meant to represent 1-to-1 actual numbers of voters (and don't) but rather the level of success in an election vote, one can easily imagine the votes to be either tribal or centuriate assemblies. Plus I think the complexities of both tribal and centuriate voting, not least of all the order in which voting blocs voted, are not helpful for this game's goals.

CONCLUSION. I could certainly continue and look even deeper at the assumptions and evidence involved in designing Path of Honors, but I hope I have given you, the player, some insight into my thinking as I designed. I sincerely hope you enjoy playing the game and see and experience some or all of what I would argue are reasonably defensible abstractions of Roman Republican electoral careers that can be compared to the historical evidence. One can certainly list discrete points where the game does not seem to match precise textual details or historical accounts ancient and modern. But I hope the game is on solid ground in its overall model of the historical problem space of an aspiring political aristocrat: *Some* Romans ***like*** *these in the game*, had goals ***like*** *these in the game*, were in a political and socio-economic setting ***like*** *this in the game*, with resources ***like*** *these* in the game and rivals ***like*** *these in the game*. And, in order to achieve these goals and surpass these rivals they were able to choose, and decide an act in these ways shown in the game. They, as I noted at the beginning of this statement

- Sought to best their opponents by winning higher offices earlier than their age-mates and other rivals
- Utilized and developed personal talents, abilities and public reputations to gain the support of voters
- Maximized the opportunities for enrichment and prestige during office-holding
- Displayed their socioeconomic status through an increasingly materially lavish lifestyle
- Maintained their political standing and earn higher offices through steadily acquiring and using political capital

Hopefully, the game puts players into the problem space of a Roman lifelong political aspirant, and in doing so, better equips them to understand the systems of imperialism and political

rivalry that were undergirded by the *Cursus Honorum* and understand better the actors who ripped the Republic apart. If I get really lucky, they'll want to do some more reading and investigation too!