

FACTION BRIEFING: IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD

Historic Context

The Roman Emperor is the ruler of the Roman Empire. The various titles of the Emperor include Augustus, Caesar, *imperator* (commander), *princeps civitatis* (first citizen), and republican titles such as *princeps senatus* (first man of the Senate), consul, censor, and *pontifex maximus* (chief high priest). The Emperor is not a hereditary position. The legitimacy of the Emperor depends on their control of the army, and recognition by the Senate.

The Imperial Household (*Domus*) was made up of the members of the imperial family, their slaves, freedmen, and various officials. The Emperor had a *consilium*, a group of friends, advisors and jurists. The government of the Roman Empire included a mixture of officials from the imperial household, and the older institutions of Republican government. Government secretariats were run by an equestrian *procurator* and an imperial freedman *adiutor*. The number of procurators was small, around 180 in the mid-3rd century. While the third century was a period of growth in the bureaucracy, it remained relatively small.

The imperial estates (*res privata*) were managed by imperial freedmen. The imperial estate included both the private property of the Emperor (*Patrimonium*) and the crown lands belonging to the imperial office. Through a complex process of gifts, legacies, and confiscations, the emperors accumulated extensive properties in Italy and the provinces. These properties were passed on the death of the emperor to their successor in office, not to their private heirs.

The access that members of the imperial household had to the Emperor could give ambitious individuals great power and influence. It could also lead to a rapid downfall and execution.



Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD) and members of the Imperial family offer sacrifice in gratitude for success against Germanic tribes. In the backgrounds stands the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline (this is the only extant portrayal of this roman temple). Bas-relief from the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, Rome, now in the Capitoline Museum in Rome.

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Player Goals

The Imperial Household has many roles for Equestrian class characters. As such, obtaining membership of the Imperial Household faction is a goal for many players. Once in the household, survival becomes the goal. Individuals may also have secret ambitions.

Faction Goals

The Imperial household sits at the apex of power in the Roman Empire. Its general goals are:

- Restore discipline and loyalty to the armies of the Roman Empire;
- Maintain or increase the authority and power of the Emperor and the Imperial Household;
- Preserve of the borders and unity of the Roman Empire;
- The Emperor should not take out loans or mortgages.

Household Roles

The exact number of player roles will depend on how many players there are in the game. The list of roles is in order of most to least important. If all roles are not filled, the unfilled roles will be added to the responsibilities of other imperial household members.

- Emperor
- Commander of the Praetorian Guard (the Imperial bodyguard)
- *A Rationibus*, official in charge of the imperial bureaucracy
- Governor of Egypt (and commander of its legion)
- *Ab Epistulis*, an official responsible for the emperor's correspondence and diplomacy
- Commander of the Legio Parthica III (stationed just outside Rome)
- Commander of the Praetorian Fleets (naval fleets and marines in Italy, and the naval training reserve)
- Commander of the Urban Cohorts (a paramilitary force in Rome).

Emperor

The Emperor is the head of the Imperial Household faction and the most powerful character in the game. The actions of the Emperor have a major impact on the unity of the empire. The Emperor may change frequently – a new Emperor every game round would match the historic outcomes. All members of this faction should be prepared to brief new Emperors on how their role functions.

The stress of the job of Emperor, means the Emperor makes one automatic mortality check each game round. This is in addition to any checks required for plague, conspiracies, or defeat in battle.

In addition to choosing imperial policy reforms, and making policy option choices as a faction leader, the Emperor gets a number of imperial actions they can take each game round equal to the maximum possible die roll on their political die (e.g. eight actions for a **d8** political die):

- **Adlectio:** The Emperor can appoint an Equestrian to the Senate. The Equestrian must have at least three *latifunda* and 10 Wealth Points. This promotes that character's Political die.
- **Adoption:** The Emperor can formally adopt another character as their heir. This promotes that character's Political die. If the Emperor dies of natural causes, their heir becomes Emperor.
- **Assignments:** The Emperor can assign an Equestrian player to a different Equestrian role. A Senator with a Dux or Legate assignment can be recalled to Rome. A Senator in Rome can be sent to a region as Dux or Legate.

- **Consul:** Assign the office of Consul to a Senator. This promotes that character's Political die. There can be two Consuls at a time.
- **Decennial:** If you survive three game rounds as Emperor, you can celebrate your reign with bonus Imperial Unity points equal to a political die roll.
- **Games:** the Emperor can spend Wealth Points to sponsor entertainment in Rome, to keep the people of Rome happy.
- **Promotion:** The Emperor can promote an Equestrian within the ranks of the imperial government. This increases the character's salary by one Wealth Point each game round, to a maximum of six Wealth Points per game round.
- **Reforms:** The Emperor can implement a reform (see below).
- **Trade:** The Emperor can engage in trade.

Praetorian Prefect

The Praetorian Prefect commands the largest body of soldiers in close proximity to Rome and the Emperor, including a small contingent of cavalry. As the direct subordinate of the Emperor, they often acted as an executive deputy. The Praetorian Prefects also had responsibility for maintaining public order in Italy, and hearing appeals from provincial governors. The Praetorian Prefect is responsible for advising the Emperor on matters of security.

The Praetorian Prefect gets a free Conspiracy action each game round.

A Rationibus

This was the most important bureau in Rome, dealing with imperial finances and logistics. This role is responsible for interacting with Treasury Control on behalf of the Imperial household. For each official assigned to the imperial bureaucracy, the Emperor can choose one imperial reform option each game round. At the start of the game, the following imperial reforms are known:

- Increase taxes – increase resources for most Roman factions
- Piety – sacrifice to the Gods and improve imperial unity
- Senate – transfer power from the Emperor to the Senate (or vice versa)
- Nova officia – increase the number of players in the imperial bureaucracy
- Raise legion – recruits large Infantry tokens
- Dynasty – if the Emperor dies of natural causes, their next character is a child Emperor
- Caesar – an adopted heir becomes Co-Emperor, able to command Roman Field Armies
- Each official assigned to the imperial bureaucracy can reveal one new imperial reform option each game round. This is the closest this megagame has to a “science” or “technology” role in the game.

Ab Epistulis

Office with responsibility for the emperor's correspondence. This includes diplomacy on behalf of the Emperor with all other factions in the game.

Imperial Household Resources

The Imperial Household has a fixed RP income of 8 RP at the start of the game and a variable income of 1d6 RP because of its control of the province of Egypt. The household can mint coins for an extra 1d4 RP, but this may trigger inflation.

Legio Parthica III

This is an infantry legion stationed just outside Rome. Together with the Praetorian Guard, it gives the Emperor a small military reserve for facing the threat of attack by barbarians or usurpers.

Praetorian Fleets

These are the ships and marines stationed at Mesinum and Ravenna. This includes responsibility for training naval reinforcements for all the Roman fleets.

Urban Cohorts

This is a paramilitary force mainly used to maintain order in Rome.

Rome

The people of Rome are prone to rioting, especially if there is a shortage of grain from Egypt. In general, the Roman mob is not as influential as it was during the days of the Roman Republic.

Imperial Estates

The Emperor owns land and other economic assets around the Empire. If a region is in rebellion against the Emperor, it exerts control over the imperial property in that region. This imposes disadvantage on the Emperor's variable RP income die roll.

