

Popes,



Poison

& Perfidy

A Renaissance megagame, by Paul Howarth

'Politics have no relation to morals' Machiavelli, The Prince

Popes, Poison & Perfidy

Venue:

St Thomas Centre

Ardwick Green North

Manchester

M12 6FZ

Train: Manchester Piccadilly

Ample free on road car parking in front of the venue

Free tea & coffee provided, Tesco Express across the Green.

Timetable:

9.30am - Arrival and registration

10.00am - Welcome and briefing

10.20am - Planning Phase

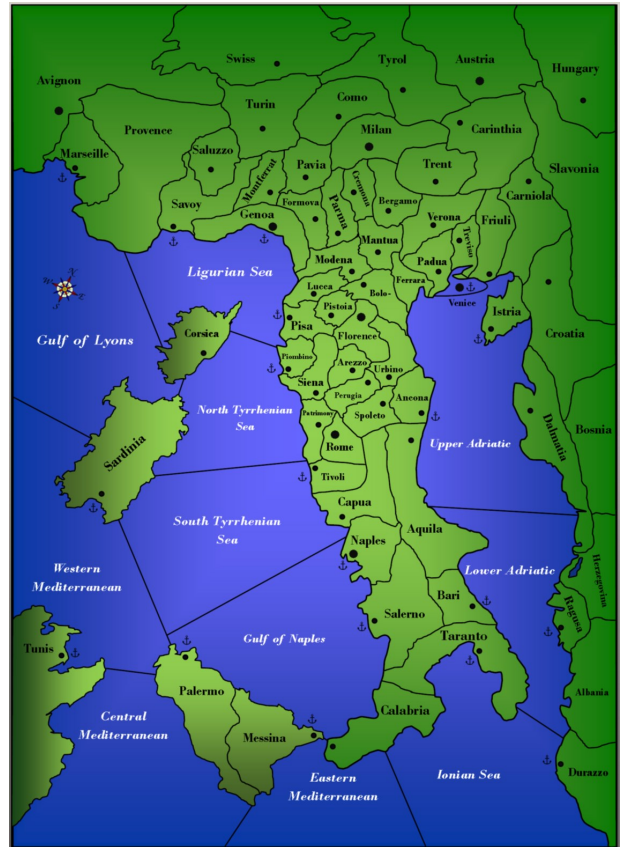
10.40am - Turn 1

4.10-4.30pm - Game End

5.00pm - Depart to the Pub for thorough debrief

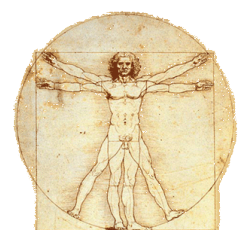
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Glossary

Austria	shorthand for the Holy Roman Empire (Maximillian is not crowned)
Control	a player who has an overview of the whole game and associated history able to answer queries and adjudge situations
Control Umpire	a player who is responsible for the running of a specific element of the game, such as trading, culture or movement at the map
Influence	an abstract amalgamation of long-standing friendship and enmities, favours on account and mutual self-interest. Represented by playing cards - State, Church & Personal
Major Power	one of the main protagonists in this era - France, Spain, Austria Others are non-played.
Minor Power	One of a number of city states, minor kingdoms, duchies and
Spain	shorthand for the Double Monarchy of Ferdinand & Isabella (of Aragon and Castile, respectively). Still technically two kingdoms.
Status	A measure of a team's Power or Prestige, displayed in public view



Welcome to the Megagame - first timers please read this!

If this is your first megagame then you need to remember that even though it will be confusing and (hopefully) engrossing, challenging and engaging in equal measure, you should remember two things:

- A) There will be many other people in exactly the same boat as you.
- B) Due to the very individual nature of megagames and emergent gameplay, even if experienced players **think** they know what's going on or will happen, they probably don't. By all means take advice from them, but also make sure you play your game.

There are a number of stages that new players regularly go through:

Stage One - What am I supposed to do? *Players are slightly overwhelmed by the experience and number of people involved. Briefings and rules are forgotten and players find themselves bewildered and reacting to situations rather than taking advantage of the opportunity to network, negotiate and plan in the early game.*

Stage Two - What can I do? *After an hour or so of confusion, the lessons of the first couple of turns are starting to sink in and players see how the game works. Counters and cards are studied and rules half-remembered.*

Stage Three - Can I? *Having decided what they want to achieve, players are unsure about capabilities and want reassurance from the Control team before trying something they've read about in the handbook.*

Stage Four - How can I? *Players realise that unlike many other games, a megagame is designed to allow players to suggest things not covered by the rules, provided it is in keeping with the theme and discussed with Control. You may say anything you like to players (as long as you're willing to deal with the consequences), but please do not keep Control in the dark. They are there to facilitate and players as well.*

Ideally we want you to get to Stage Four as quickly as possible. Although this game uses components such as counters and cards to abstract certain aspects of reality and stimulate creativity, it is not a boardgame. Achieving your objectives will come from utilising them effectively, often by constructing a narrative and explaining how they work to your advantage.

To this end, in addition to the regular control team, there will also be a 'New Player' Control who you can go to if you're feeling lost or stressed and want any help. A megagame is at least partly about making your own fun, so please shout for help sooner rather than later. It's no fun being frustrated, either for you or for other players.

Remember:

1. There are no stupid questions, especially when you speak to Control.
2. If you try and think like a Renaissance person, you're off to a flying start.
3. The Control team need to be aware of treaties, marriages and espionage activity.
4. If the rules don't cover something and you have an inspired idea, see point 1.

'It is better to act and repent than not to act and regret.'

Game History - 1494 and all that

The game will start in 1494 in the middle of a fruitful era for most of Italy. Trade with the east continues to grow and as a result, commerce and culture are currently flourishing. The recent election of Rodrigo Borgia as the Spanish Pope Alexander VI was not met with universal approval and there were suspicions of vote-buying in the conclave, but that is already so much a part of Church tradition. Indeed, it is rumoured that France and Genoa spent vast sums supporting Cardinal Della Rovere's candidacy and he is yet suspected of plotting to overthrow the pope.

Since his election two years ago, Alexander has begun a process of appointing members of his family to important roles to support his reign. One 'nephew' Cesare replaced him as cardinal and another, Juan, is captain-general of the Papal armies, although he has little experience. His 'niece' Lucrezia was married to Giovanni Sforza to secure his family's support and his mistress Julia Farnese is known for propensity for intrigue.

At this time, the modern states of France, Spain and Austria do not exist. Calais is still in English hands and their raids are a recent memory for many. The Dual Monarchy of Ferdinand and Isabella has not yet united the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile. The Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian tries to exert control over hundreds of princes, electors and other nobles across Germany and has yet to be crowned by the Pope, (a rival for authority). Fighting in Hungary against the Ottoman Empire (not played) is a regular occurrence and whilst North German ports and the Low Countries also enjoy the benefits of trade, not enough of that wealth has made its way to Maximilian in Austria. Or at least that is his view.

For the City States themselves, there is fierce competition to be the richest, the most beautiful and most cultured city in all of Christendom, whilst maintaining independence. Rulers may be powerful nobles, or princes and kings, but all feel their affairs are not best served by the interests of the major powers.

Charles VIII of France feels somewhat overshadowed by his Spanish neighbours at the moment. Although Ferdinand and Isabella's rivalry with Portugal had led them missing out on the Azores and other islands, the recent discovery of the New World by Columbus has allowed them to consider a vast expansion of their power. They already have influence over Sicily and Sardinia through the Aragon dynasty (who will be part of the Spanish team) and must consider their current priorities carefully. In response, Charles has decided to re-claim his right to the throne of Naples and means to secure it by force of arms. He has amassed a powerful army, supported by a fearsome siege train and prepares to cross into Savoy. The stage is set...

Status

All of the major and minor powers will need to consider their status throughout the game, as whilst men is mortal, a legacy can live long in memory. The relative position of your city or kingdom will be adjudged by Control and take into account wealth, public works, the quality of artists commissioned and also your ability to exert control influence. It will be made apparent in two league tables, for the major and minor powers.

'If an injury has to be done to a man it should be so severe that his vengeance need not be feared.'

The Game Turn

	Political	Trade	Cultural	Military
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate with other powers • Acquire & play influence cards at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise Traders • Allocate Traders • Establish colonies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission artisans • Allocate budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise Armies, Fleets & Garrisons • Spend Reputation to purchase cards
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set tax rates 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign
Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm alliances & treaties • Work with spy control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve trade 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign • Establish Garrisons & pay for winter quarters
Winter	Team Time - receive reports from networks, taxes and trade income, artworks			

Each team will have a main contact umpire who will track influence, actions, finance and the mood of the people.

In addition, there will be control umpires running the main map, the trading game and the art game.

There will also be a group of political and espionage control, who will adjudicate on the impact of your efforts and give feedback, both to your team and also through public status ranking for major and minor powers.



Influence Cards

As a mechanic to support your interaction with non-played states, demonstrate relations within the Church and the power of your individual family or value at court, playing cards are used.

Large Blue Cards – State Influence.

These are used at the political table, individually or in groups as a total, to support your efforts in persuading NPC States of the justness of your cause. Higher value is better. You receive further cards by your actions and the strength of your alliances. To be most effective, you should consider the argument you use with those cards, as well other inducements you may be able to offer.

Large RED Cards – Church Influence.

These are used at the Papal table in a rummy style, similar to Personal Influence, to indicate efforts to win support for the Pope or stoke up antipathy. This will manifest itself in the Sheep and the Goats table, which shows the position of the cardinals. Senior members of the Church are generally not averse to enjoying a comfortable life...

Small BLUE Cards – Personal Influence.

These are used within smaller states to track the most powerful families, to see who takes responsibility for major decisions, the spy network and setting tax rates.

As cards represent favours owed, ‘the ear of the king’. old allegiances and a host of relationships, you are allowed to swap or donate them throughout the game. Control will be responsible for extra cards coming into play and will need convincing of the need to do so.

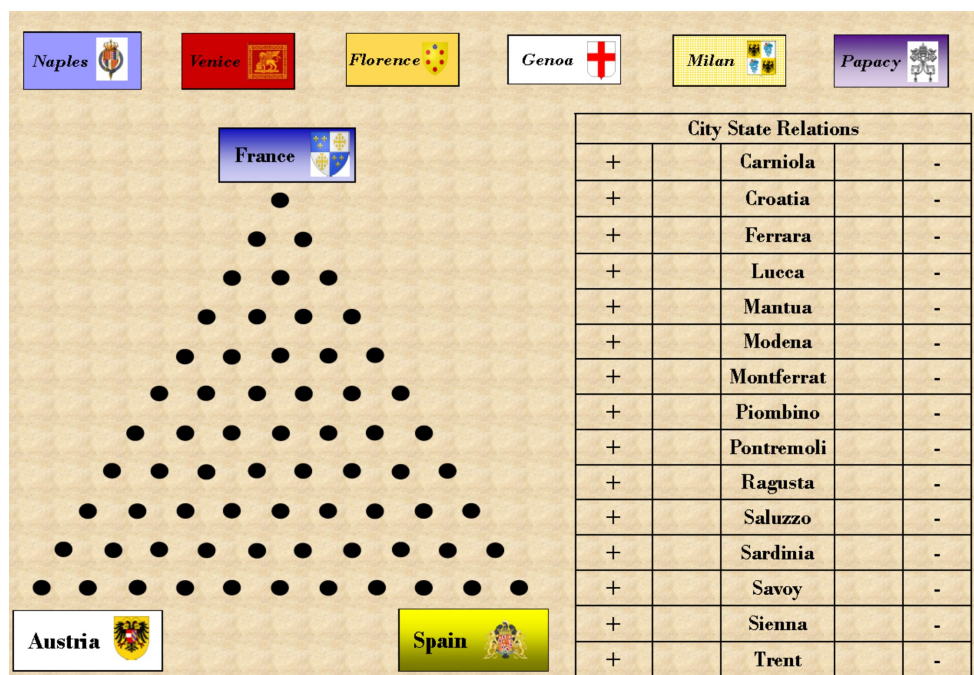
Influence cards may be lost through:

- assassination (of a player character or an NPC, represented by a card)
- poor decision-making, leading to a loss of status or public unrest
- a successful argument to Control

Influence - Political & Religious

Building positive relationships with other states is one of the key ways of achieving your aims in most cases war should be a last resort as it is expensive and risky, often putting your fate in the hands of men who fight for the highest bidder.

In the case of France, Spain and Austria this will be represented by a triangular grid, on which played and non-played states each have colour-coded piece, placed to show their relationship with the three main powers.



This is where your State Influence cards (Blue) are used. As treaties are announced and deals brokered, played states move their pieces themselves. If the major powers wish to try and move an NPC piece, this will be done through discussion with political control and reflect cards played, negotiations, bribes, etc. To determine the relationship of the minor powers to non-played states, there is a simple tracker, allowing a range from strongly positive, to strongly negative.

Influence on NPC states may be lost by your state's actions or those of others and will be judged by control.

Influence - Personal (*The same game mechanic is used for Church Influence cards*)

In this era, the concern for many will not be their individual fortunes, but those of their family. The legacy you leave is everything, whether you are the Holy Roman Emperor or a noble in Naples. Absolute monarchs will generally focus on external rivals and threats to their rule. You and the land are one. Control may highlight situations in your lands which are of concern or other threats.

Within city states or the Vatican though, there are interminable battles to determine the most influential family or the cardinal best-placed to succeed the Holy Father. Factors such as supportive nobles, advantageous marriages, 'tame' clergy are all abstracted by the use of playing cards.

You will receive a hand of cards at the start of the game, which may be traded with other players and added to by using your initiative. Cards are played face up on your team board in 'sets' and scored according to the (slightly adapted) rules of rummy as follows:

- 3 or 4 of a kind (1 influence point per card)
- A run of 3 or more (1 influence point per card)
- A run of 3 or more of the same suit (2 influence points per card)

As in the game, played sets can be added to (to turn 3 of a kind into 4, for example), but regardless of who plays the card, the owner of the set benefits and perhaps owes a favour).

'A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise'

State Board

Each of the powers will have a board to track their state. See the example of Florence below.

Each state will possess cards relating to each area they currently control. To exert control over an area, it is necessary to have an army (not garrison or fleet) in uncontested possession of the area at the end of Autumn. Tax gained that winter will be at the low rate.









Players have laid out the influence cards they wish to display, which will demonstrate which family can ultimately make the decisions within the state. In the case of most minor powers, they should perhaps be wary of being too autocratic, at least until they have the measure of the rest of their team.*

You can also see the tax level decided upon for each of the regions under Florence's control. This is declared during the summer phase and Control will provide the tax revenue during the winter phase. Tax levels that are consistently high or deemed unfair may well have consequences.

Finally, there is the public acclaim track. This will demonstrate how the lower orders feel about their lords and masters. If it falls too low then influence will be lost, particularly by the ruling family, which may well lead to new rulers.

Major Powers will have a similar board, but instead of the riff-raff, the acquiescence and support of the nobility will be tracked, as well as a list of priorities requiring attention beyond Italy. These will often come from Control, but it is possible that a suitable argument could allow other major powers to influence events (e.g. paying the Dutch to rebel and distract Spain).

***‘The new ruler must determine all the injuries that he will need to inflict.
He must inflict them once and for all.’***

<div></div> <div>City of Florence</div> <div></div>		Public Acclaim				
Influence		Tax Level				
Medici	 	High				
Valeri		Medium				
Vespucci		Low				
Savanorola						



Money



- The game currencies are the silver SOLDINO and the gold FLORIN (=10 Soldino).

State income (Received in the winter):

- A set amount in Florins is received from each province based on the tax level set. This may be reduced due to rebellion or plague.
- In addition, trade will bring extra tax revenue into the country (in Soldino).

Personal income comes from (Received in the winter):

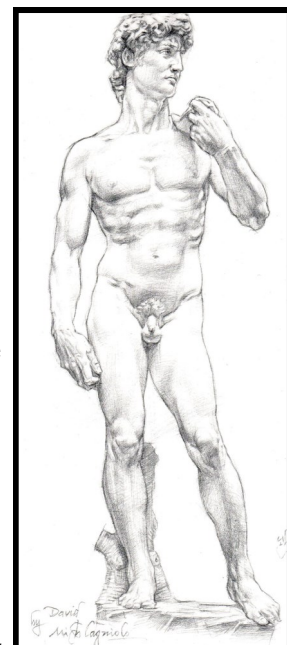
- Family estates (each card will state annual income in Soldino)
- Trading interests (dependent on how much trade your city does)
- Church holdings (monasteries and benefices, or Church appointments)

Loans

- It is possible for both players and states to ask bankers for loans at any time. This will be at 20%, payable in 12 months. Speak to Control.

Culture

- There is a bidding system for artisans and in spring a number will be available for hire.
- All artisans have specialisms indicated on their card, as well as their reputation in words on the front.
- Players bid for each one in turn as they are revealed.
- This sum is to engage the artist ONLY. The patron must then commit money to the project.
- For public works, such as buildings, bridges, fountains, this should be SUBSTANTIAL if you even want the work to be completed.
- Public works are to the benefit of the city's beauty and may be seen as such by the lower orders. Paintings and statues mark the individual as an aesthete.
- Culture Control Umpire will adjudicate in the summer which artisans have produced masterpieces, based on their reputation and the sums spent.
- On completion, players are given an appropriate postcard, for display. Masterpieces will be appropriately marked.



Trade

This is obviously an important aspect of life in Italy during this era. The system which has been adopted is fairly abstract but allows trade between cities on the map and destination ports in both the east and west. Although players may have a personal interest in trading, they are representing the trading interests of all in their team and everyone will benefit from success.

Spring

During the Spring phase traders visit the trade table and allocate ships to routes for the East and the West. The West is generally safer, but less prosperous at this point. They may also pay for extra trade ships at an initial cost of 2 Florins each.

There will also be bonus income to powers which trade with every destination in the East or the West.

The East	Alexandria	Constantinople	Levant	Tripoli
The West	England	Germany	Netherlands	Tangier

Summer

Each port will have a provisional revenue value attached to its wares at this point. During the summer phase Control will calculate how what they are actually worth, after drawing cards for hazards, such as bandits, sandstorms or other delays. Also, in both East and West, one port each year will be at a premium, due to demand. This will not become apparent until the Summer though, so you may want to cover your options.

Colonies - These are placed in eastern ports and each one allows a player to avoid one local hazard card, whether sandstorms, bandits, etc. This represents local knowledge in sourcing alternative supplies.

Some players will start with one or two colonies which they are free to place in any port of their choosing. During the game, players may establish further colonies in ports (max3/power/port). The first of a player's colonies in a port costs 5 Solido, then 7, then 9.

Autumn

During Autumn traders need to return to find out how their ships have fared. This will involve flicking their ship counters across the board (see below for an example) towards their destination and avoiding 'Lost at Sea' and 'Pirate' bands on the board. The effect of pirates may be reduced by paying for fleet patrols in the Spring phase.

Winter

Money is calculated and distributed to powers.

Lost at Sea	Revenue x1	P P	Revenue x1	P P P	Revenue x2	Lost at Sea	Alexandria Revenue 5
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'Never was anything great achieved without danger'

Espionage & Intrigue

The game will contain both general and hidden knowledge.

General knowledge will be announced and apparent to the whole room. Hidden knowledge is available at the right price and with the right contracts.

Spy Networks

Each team will start with one network, reporting to one player, usually the player with the most influence. This must be maintained each turn.

Networks have a value for effectiveness and breadth, expressed in words. You must interpret this as you see fit. It may be possible to expand or even create new networks.

Umpires will feed back hidden knowledge during the game, based on the effectiveness of your network. Networks are also useful in preventing assassinations.

Assassins & Agents

Assassins range from paid professionals, through religious zealots, to members of an individual's household (or an associate). Each has their own strengths and weaknesses.

You may start the game with access to them, or have to utilise your spy network (and influence cards) to find likely candidates, which impairs their ability to gather intelligence).

If an assassination attempt is made, then a test is made against the agents of the spy network to see if they can prevent it, or if not, can they capture the assassin and make them talk?

Gold and your own network itself can be used to boost their chance of success, but at the risk of compromising the network.



It should be noted that high profile assassinations are rare and very difficult, although removing key supporters of your enemies may be somewhat easier (and will see them lose influence as a result).



‘The more sand has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it.’

The Art of War

This game will feature combat between armies, sea battles and sieges. Player characters are able to be involved in all these as generals, represented by chess knights on the table. Troops moving without a general figure will be less effective in combat.

A key feature is the fact that many of the more able generals are mercenaries (the famed *condottieri*) and as such, available for hire to the highest bidder. France, Spain and Austria will all have their own generals, but may choose to supplement or replace them with mercenaries is appropriate. Unless armies belong to France and Spain, or are later citizen armies, they will generally consist of mercenaries and may be subject to bribes. These will be judged by Map control, based on circumstances.



Reputation is very important and soldiers will be keen to fight for those who bring success and loot to their troops. Each general will start the game with a number of reputation counters. If for any reason they run out of reputation (which will make them less effective as commanders, they may sojourn in Hungary, fighting the Ottomans on behalf of the Holy Roman Emperor for a season or two and repair their good name.

If you wish to conquer a province a CONQUER order must be issued in the autumn term by an occupying army, which must remain there to extract taxes. If there is a city, it MUST be taken, by coup de main, storm or bribery.

Units

Generally, forces are split into armies (various types) and fleets (all the same). Armies and fleets are usually raised in Spring. It may be possible to raise them at other times, but there will be a premium. Armies must be paid for each season (professionals over winter). Fleets are paid for by the year.

Armies, fleets and garrisons. You should be aware that it may be possible to maintain an army without paying for it (at Control discretion), although this will probably lead to looting and make them very susceptible to bribery. Unpaid units will have an arrears marker placed on them, so other players will be aware...

Cards

Mercenary and stratagem cards are also available to help tip the balance. In both cases they are paid for using general's reputation counters in the Spring phase.

Mercenary cards do not represent additional units, but rather troops in the army playing a pivotal role in a battle and as such they are discarded after playing.

Stratagem cards represent individual skill and experience as a general may or may not be discarded- it will say on the card (a innovative tactic might soon become common practice and unremarkable).

'There is no avoiding war, it can only be postponed to the advantage of your enemy.'

Army Types	Cost (Season)	Combat	Notes
Army	1 Florin	2d6	
Professional Army	2 Florin	3d6	Start in home territory - pay over winter too.
Citizen Militia	2 Florin	3d6	Hard to bribe, limited numbers, home territory
Elite Mercenaries	3 Florin	3d6	Hard to bribe, bonus card, Start home territory
Elite Professionals	3 Florin	3d6	Hard to bribe, bonus card, home territory, E,S,A only

Army Orders - 4 actions per season: no orders, units will hold in place	
Move	1 Region. Write the destination
Loot	1 Region. Marker placed & 1d6 Solido (roll 4-6, +1 Reputation too)
Coup de Main (Action straight after moving to a fortified city)	Action after moving to a fortified city Up to 2 stratagem cards each Defender draws two cards and adds 2 to higher. Also +2 for army/garrison in city. Attacker must roll 2d6 and beat defender's score Successful Coup de Main: +2 Reputation
Besiege	Add a siege counter to a city per action (each grants a +1 bonus, +2 if there is an army in the city rather than a garrison – more mouths to feed)
Storm (players may negotiate until dice rolled).	Each side may play up to 2 stratagem/unit cards for bonuses. +2 if port blockaded Defender draws one number card (extra card for city walls and/ an army in the city). Attacker must roll higher than highest score on 2d6. If successful, city is taken, any army or garrison destroyed. Conquer order many then be given. +1 reputation for winning a storm or repelling.
Battle (players may negotiate a settlement at any point before dice are rolled).	Step 1: Play up to 2 stratagem or mercenary cards Step 2: Condottieri may commit 1 reputation point for a possible bonus (Roll 1d6. 1-2 wounded. 3-4 wounded and +1. 5-6 +1) Step 3: Add modifiers. Defending home city +1, Outnumber 2:1 or more +1 Step 4: Roll 2d6/3d6 depending on type. Each additional army adds 1d6. Take two highest numbers plus modifiers and consult results: Results: Difference 0-3: inconclusive. Moving armies retreat where they came from. May return if further actions permit. Difference 4-5: Minor victory. 1 Reputation and loser retreats. Difference 6+: Major Victory. 2 Reputation and loser has one army destroyed. Others must retreat. Commander has a 50% chance of being wounded.
Pacify	Put down a rebellion
Conquer	Autumn ONLY and army must stay in place. Card given to owner. MEDIUM tax maximum

The Naval Game

Fleets are paid for in Spring for the whole year.	Cost	Combat	Notes
Fleet	3 Florins	2d6	Pay at the main map
Anti-Piracy Patrol	5 Solido	N/A	Pay at the trade map
Additional Trader	2 Florins	N/A	Initial cost - may rise

Fleet Orders - 4 actions per season, resolved simultaneously. No orders, hold.

Move	2 Regions. Write the destination name on the card. Moving fleets can change orders to battle a patrol, retreat from them or try to evade (Roll 5-6, but not available to convoys)
Patrol	1 Region. Allows fleet to intercept those moving through it. Both fleets may change one of their orders after resolution
Loot	Raid 1 coastal region. Marker placed & 1d6 Solido (roll 4-6, +1 Reputation too)
Convoy	Escort 1 army across up to 2 regions. May not evade patrols.
Blockade	Use in conjunction with a siege: +2 to storm attempt
Battle	Battle Step 1: Play stratagem cards and add fleet bonus Battle Step 2: Roll dice (1d6 + number of ships) and select 2 highest to add to step 1 - Difference of 0-3 Inconclusive. Remain in region - Difference of 4-5 – minor victory. Reputation and loser retreats - Difference of 6+ - major victory. 2 Reputation and loser has a fleet destroyed

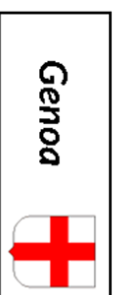


‘No enterprise is more likely to succeed than one concealed from the enemy until it is ripe for execution.’



Room 7

Room 6
Control Room



Screen

OHP

Map

Trade

Culture

Politics

Papacy

Florence



Naples



Room
1

Room 2 - Refreshments

Hot Water Boilers

Kitchen

Popes, Poison & Perfidy - Playsheet

Turn Sequence	
Spring (15 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising armies • Allocate trade routes • Contracting artists
Summer (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map movement and combat • Political negotiations • Feedback from spies
Autumn (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map movement and combat • Political negotiations • Trade adjudication • Completed artworks issued
Winter (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income distributed • Feedback from spies

Army Types	Cost (Campaign)	Cost (Winter)	Combat
Army	1 Florin	5 Solido	2d6
Standing Army	1.5 Florins	5 Solido	3d6
Citizen Militia	2 Florins	NA	3d6
Elite Mercenaries	3 Florins		3d6
Elite Professionals	3 Florins		3d6

Fleet Types	Cost
Fleet	3 Florins
Anti-Piracy Patrol	3 Solido

Colony	1st Colony	2nd Colony	3rd Colony (max)
Costs	5 Solido	7 Solido	9 Solido

Army Orders (4/season)	
Move	1 Region
Loot	1d6 Soldino, 1 Reputation Marker
Coup de Main	Up to 2 Stratagem Defender—best of 2 cards, +2. +2 for garrison/army Attacker beats on 2d6
Besiege	+1 siege marker +1 to Storm (2 if army in city)
Storm	Up to 2 Stratagem Defender - 1 card, Best of two for garrison/army Attacker beats on 2d6
Battle	Up to 2 Stratagem cards each Stake reputation (1d6) Home city, 2:1 or more, +1 2d6/3d6, best two dice (extra army +1d6) Difference 0-3: inconclusive. Difference 4-5: Minor victory Difference 6+: Major Victory, 1 army

Fleet Orders - 4 actions/season	
Move	2 Regions. Evade Patrol on 5-6
Patrol	1 Region.
Loot	Marker placed & 1d6 Solido
Convoy	May not evade patrols
Blockade	+2 to storm roll
Battle	Up to 2 Stratagem Cards (1d6 + 1d6/fleet), and select 2 highest - Difference of 0-3 Inconclusive. - Difference of 4-5 – minor victory - Difference of 6+ - major victory. Fleet destroyed

Reputation	
Minor Victory	1
Major Victory	2
Coup de Main	2
Win/Lose Siege	+1/-1
Loot (roll 4-6)	1
Season in Balkans	1
Any other Control ruling	