

Sword of Orthodoxy – Special and Optional Rules Page

This downloadable .pdf file written by R. Ben Madison and Bob Kasten provides special and optional rules for White Dog Games' game "Sword of Orthodoxy." An index to the rulebook is also provided for player use. The file is updated as of the date at the bottom of each page. Always use the most recent update!

Sword of Orthodoxy – Millennium Scenario Game Setup

The Scenario begins on Turn 15, in the year 1000, during the reign of the Emperor Basil II.

Place Turn Chits 15-28 in the Turn Chit Cup, and discard all the other Turn Chits. Now set up:

- (1) **"Factions"**: All Factions are placed in Constantinople.
- (2) **Path A Units**: Put the "Saracens" Tribe Tile in the Path A "Tribe" round box on the map, and turn all Path A Armies to their weak ("man") side. Put the two strongest Armies in the Zone box for Path A, and other Armies in Path A Reserves.
- (3) **Path B Units**: Put the "Normans" Tribe Tile in the Path B "Tribe" round box on the map, and turn all Path B Armies to their weak ("man") side. Put the strongest three Armies in the Zone box for Path B, and the rest in Path B Reserves.
- (4) **Path Γ Units**: Put the "Bulgarians" Tribe Tile in the Path Γ "Tribe" round box on the map, and turn all Path Γ Armies to their weak ("man") side. Put the two strongest Armies in the Zone box for Path Γ, and the rest in Path Γ Reserves. Put one **Monastery** in the Path Γ box.
- (5) **Path Δ Units**: Put the white "Armenia" Army in Lesser Armenia.
- (6) **Path E Units**: Put the gray "Buyid" Army in Melitene, and one **Akritai** in Cappadocia.
- (7) **Path Z Units**: Put the tan "Saracens" Army in Cilicia, and one **Akritai** in Ephesus.

(8) **Outpost Tiles:** The “Sicily” Outpost Tile goes in its box near Italy. All other Outpost Tiles remain on the Counter Tray. The “Lazica” Outpost Tile goes in the “Greek Fire” box (northeast corner of map). *You have the ability to use Greek Fire!* Place the **Egypt Muslim** Tile in the Egyptian Religion round box.

(9) The “**Mean Pope**” Tile goes in the Pope box on the map, the “**Khan!**” goes in the Syria Homeland, and the **Caliph** goes in the Persia Homeland.

(10) Put the “Macedonian” purple **Dynasty Tile** in the Dynasty box on the map, and put the Komnenid, Laskarid, and Palaiologian Dynasties in the Dynasty Cup. All other Dynasties stay on the Counter Tray. *When the purple Dynasties are all gone, remember to put all 14 Dynasty tiles back in the Cup and use their **black** sides when drawn.*

(11) Put the dark gray “Basil” **Basileus Tile** in the Basileus box on the map. The other 5 dark gray Basileus Tiles go in the Basileus Cup. The gold “Basileus” Tile goes in Constantinople. The “**Kiev**” Tile goes in the Kiev box, “Pagan” side up.

(12) Discard the “Σ” **Patriarchs**. From the six remaining, put a random **Patriarch** in the Patriarch box on the map (he has no effect the first Turn). The other 5 Patriarchs go into the Patriarchs Cup.

(13) On the Omnibus Markers Track, **Schism** is at 5, **Nike** is at 3, and **Solidus** is at 3.

(14) The “**Africa/Crete**” Tile goes on its “Crete” side in Zone A. The “**Italy/Balkans**” Tile goes on its “Balkans” side in Zone B. Put the “**EO +1**” Tile in the “Bulgarian Church” box next to Zone Γ.

(15) The two “**Colonists**” Tiles go in Damascus (Z) and Nisibis (E). Put the “**Military Event ■**” Tile in the little holding box on the “Military Events” display on the map. *Now you’re ready to play!*

SPECIAL SCENARIO RULES:

- 1) Ignore Leadership Phase (6.0) on Turn 15. All leaders start in place.
- 2) Crusades: The **first** time a Shield is drawn, Crusades begin (5.3.2).

Sword of Orthodoxy: Optional Circled Random Events

If you are using Optional Rule 5.3.8, apply the following optional random events when the corresponding circled letter appears on the current Turn Chit or Synopsis of Histories result. The symbol “■” indicates events found on the Synopsis. Other events are on the Turn Chits. *There are still some “TBA” (To Be Announced) events... feel free to suggest some on The Games of Ben Madison page on Facebook!*

- Ⓐ – **Earthquakes** strike Constantinople! Roll a die and place the “Theodosian Walls” Faction Tile in the corresponding box of the Omnibus Track. *It costs that many \$ to build it back.*
- Ⓑ ■ – **Justa Grata Honoria:** The Basileus’ cousin proposes marriage to Attila the Hun, leading to diplomatic chaos. If the Huns are currently on Path Γ, roll a die and reduce the number of Barbarian Armies on that Path by the number rolled (you must leave one remaining). *This can only happen once.*
- Ⓒ – **Fiscal Reforms** improve the economy. Roll a die and earn that many Solidus.
- Ⓓ – **Porphyrios the Whale:** Reports of sea monsters terrorize fleets. No Stolos can be placed on the map this Turn. Return any that are there to the “Lurking” round box.
- Ⓔ – **Pirates from Pisa:** If the “Holy Land” Outpost is on the map, lose \$2 from treasury.
- Ⓕ – **Khazar Allies.** If drawn from Turn 5 to 14, you earn 3 free attacks on Paths ΔEZ.
- Ⓖ – **Dark Ages:** If drawn from Turn 10 to 13, remove the University to the Counter Tray. The decline in urban living in the Empire leads to a collapse in formal learning.
- Ⓗ – **Christian Refugees** from the East help revive Byzantine scholarship. If the University is not on the map, you can build it for \$3. If it is on the map, roll a die and earn that many Solidus.
- Ⓘ – **Cyril and Methodius:** If Kiev is Pagan, roll a die; it goes Orthodox on a 🎲.
- Ⓝ ■ – **TBA**
- Ⓚ – **Dynasty Overthrown!** If the Pope is Mean, he intervenes to back a usurper who promises to recognize Rome as the supreme ecclesiastical authority. Discard the existing Dynasty and draw a replacement, but reduce Schism to zero.
- Ⓛ – **Trading Rights:** If drawn on Turns 15 to 19, Venice wins concessions and tax-free trading rights, including turning part of Constantinople into an Italian Hong Kong. Earn one free Hospital, but lose \$3 from your treasury.
- Ⓜ – **Malik Shah:** If the “Seljuks” are on the map when this Chit is drawn, you can spend any number of saved Solidus and roll a die. If the die roll is lower than the amount you spent, you strike a deal with Malik Shah, ruler of the Seljuks, to join forces against rebellious Seljuk clans in Anatolia. If you succeed, **retreat** all Seljuks back to the “Mountain” spaces on Paths ΔEZ, and likewise retreat any Muslim Colonists on those Paths to the “Mountain” spaces. *Units only retreat, they do not advance.*
- Ⓝ – **Catholic vs. Orthodox Riots** in Constantinople. Place one Riot (if possible) there.
- Ⓞ – **Mongol-Crusader Alliance:** If the Mongols appear on the map *this Turn*, discard all Muslim Colonists on Mongol Paths from the game.
- Ⓟ – **War of the Sicilian Vespers:** If there are Latins in Constantinople, get +1 DRM for any

attacks against them this turn. *Infighting among the post-Crusader Latin powers in the Mediterranean spills over into Constantinople.*

Ⓞ – **1381-1420:** Possible alliance with France against the Ottomans? TBA

Ⓡ – **Council of Florence:** If drawn on Turn 24-27, and you control no “Mountain” lands in the East, roll a die and earn that many \$olidus, but discard all Monasteries from the game. *The Basileus agrees to recognize the supremacy of the Pope in exchange for Western aid, turning the Orthodox Church against the Monarchy.*

Ⓢ ■ – **409-500:** TBA

Ⓣ ■ – **501-590:** TBA

Ⓤ ■ – **581-660:** TBA

① ■ – **Revolt of the Optimatoi:** Élite troops revolt over pay and treatment. TBA

② ■ – TBA

③ ■ – **Paulicians!** Dualist forerunners of the Cathars... this hurts you. TBA

④ ■ – **Blachernae Church Miracles:** Frequent miracles surrounding an icon of the Theotokos (Virgin Mary) inspire Orthodox devotion. Roll a die to reduce Schism.

⑤ ■ – **Heresy Trials:** Politically motivated charges against academics drive scholars into hiding. If the University Tile is on the map, roll a die and place it that many Turns ahead (it returns on the resulting Turn).

⑥ ■ – **Comet: Portent of Doom!** -1 DRM to the *first* Attack you make this Turn.

⑦ ■ – **Galata Tower:** Genoese rebuild Constantinople’s magnificent Galata Tower. Earn \$1.

⑧ ■ – **Tamerlane!** If the Ottomans are on the map, roll a die and add the number of “Mountain” Themes you control (max: 3). On a 7+, Tamerlane devastates the Ottomans and then dies. Replace any Ottomans on Paths Δ, E, and Z with Armenians, Buyids, and Nomads respectively.

⑨ ■ – **Better Cannons!** Pay \$2 to roll a die. On a 🎲, you now get a +1 DRM for battle on every Path, not just on Path B.

ERRATA:

Rule 11.3 needs to be clarified. “Muslim Colonists” on the map do not move unless the hostile Army ruling their Path is also Muslim. The rule should read as follows:

[11.3] **Muslim Colonists:** Each Muslim “Colonists” Tile on the map may advance at this time. If the next Theme closer to Constantinople is under **Muslim** rule (i.e. the Army on the Path is Muslim – 9.1.1), roll a die; on a 🎲 move the Tile one box closer to Constantinople (10.6.7). If the Army on the Path is the **Seljuks**, don’t roll the die – just move the Colonist forward one space.

If your rulebook is dated 2025, the rulebook already includes the revised wording of 11.3.

OPTIONAL RULES:

[A] **“Calling a Council”**: Instead of drawing a random Turn Chit (Rule 4.1), you (as Emperor) have the option of “calling an Ecumenical Council” to deal with the fracas *du jour* in Christian theology (see 5.3.1). This will always blow up in your face, but calling it at a time of your choosing can be better than letting it blow up at random.

To “call a Council”, just keep drawing random Turn Chits until one appears with a Council event (5.3.1). This is now your official Turn Chit for the Turn (4.1); put the rest of the ones you just drew back into the cup.

[B] **Delaying a Council**: *This is kind of the reverse of the preceding rule. If you draw a Turn Chit with an Ecumenical Council, you can choose not to call a Council, and put it back in the cup to draw another Chit. (If the next Chit you draw has a Council, you’re stuck with it.)*

[C] **Fewer Fiddly Factions**: Instead of putting lost or unbuilt Factions on the Counter Tray, put them face down in Constantinople. They don’t count as “Factions” for any purpose until they are built (flipped to their Faction sides). You’re not moving the counters all over the place.

[D] **Justinian and Civil War**: Rule 6.1.1 explains that a “Civil War” drawn on Turn 3 has no effect. This is to keep it from interfering with the rise of Justinian. If you want to allow the possibility of Justinian’s reign degenerating into civil war, use this rule:

If a “Civil War” icon appears on the Turn Chit drawn on Turn 3, conduct an ordinary Civil War (6.1.1). The Justinian Dynasty is considered the “incumbent”. If the Justinian Dynasty is victorious in the Civil War, return the would-be usurping Dynasty to the Dynasty Cup and proceed with the Turn. If the usurping Dynasty wins, discard both the Justinian Dynasty Tile and the “Justinian” Gray Basileus Tile; now draw a new Basileus to lead the newly established Dynasty, and proceed with the Turn. *Justinian and his family never get the chance to lead Byzantium to greatness!*

[E] **Italy Is Important**: In the basic game the Pope is removed from play when the “East-West Schism” Tile is drawn. A more historical rule is that you don’t remove the Pope from play until both (a) the East-West Schism is drawn, and (b) the “Balkans” Tile is face up on Path B. *The Byzantine military presence in Italy kept the Papacy at least more aware of events in the East. After the fall of Byzantine Italy in the 900s, the Papacy began to see the Eastern Church as even more distant and mysterious, and thus worthy of contempt.*

[F] **Historical Patriarchs**: Instead of randomly selecting Patriarchs, the following list gives you one great historical Patriarch associated with each 40-year Turn period. Simply skip the random Patriarch selection process and apply the automatic modification (add to Schism or income) listed below for each listed Turn (*e.g. +1 Schism on Turn 2 for Acacius*).

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Nestorius: +0 | (5) Sergius I: +1 Schism |
| (2) Acacius: +1 Schism | (6) Paul II: +1 \$olidus |
| (3) Anthimus: +1 Schism | (7) George I: +2 \$olidus |
| (4) John IV Nестeutes: +1 \$olidus | (8) Germanus I: +1 \$olidus |

- (9) Tarasius: +2 \$olidus
- (10) Methodius I: +1 Schism
- (11) Photius I: +1 Schism
- (12) Ignatius: +1 Schism
- (13) Nicholas I Mystikos: +1 \$olidus
- (14) Polyeuctus: +2 \$olidus
- (15) Sergius II: +1 \$olidus
- (16) Michael I Cerularius: +1 Schism
- (17) John VIII Xiphilinos: +1 \$olidus
- (18) John IX Agapetos: +1 \$olidus

- (19) Michael III of Anchialus: +1 \$olidus
- (20) John XI Bekkos: +1 Schism
- (21) Manuel I Charitopoulos: +0
- (22) Joseph I Galesiotes: +1 Schism
- (23) John XIII Glykys: +0
- (24) John XIV Kalekas: +1 Schism
- (25) Matthew I: +1 \$olidus
- (26) Gennadius Scholarius: +3 \$olidus
- (27) Dionysius I: +1 \$olidus

Historical note: If using the “Historical Patriarchs”, here is some biographical information on each of them. Thanks to Bob Kasten.

- Nestorius (428–431) - His tenure led to the Nestorian Schism.
- Acacius (471–489) - Known for his role in the Acacian Schism due to the Henotikon.
- Menas (536–552) - Associated with the Three Chapters controversy.
- John IV Nesteutes (582–595) - Significant for the monastic reforms and his role in early Christological disputes.
- Sergius I (610–638) - Promoted Monothelism, which later was condemned.
- Paul II (641–653) - During his time, the Lateran Council dealt with Monothelism.
- George I (679–686) - His time saw the condemnation of Monothelism at the Third Council of Constantinople.
- Germanus I (715–730) - Opposed Iconoclasm, leading to his resignation.
- Tarasius (784–806) - Presided over the Second Council of Nicaea, ending the first period of Iconoclasm.
- Nicephorus I (806–815) - A strong opponent of Iconoclasm.
- Photius I (858–867, 877–886) - His election led to the Photian Schism with Rome.
- Ignatius (847–858, 867–877) - His conflict with Photius was central to the Photian Schism.
- Nicholas I Mystikos (901–907, 912–925) - Known for his diplomacy and attempts at healing the schism with Rome.
- Polyeuctus (956–970) - His time was marked by the growth of monasticism.
- Sergius II (1001–1019) - His tenure saw the continuation of Byzantine influence in the Church.
- Michael I Cerularius (1043–1058) - Associated with the Great Schism of 1054.
- John VIII Xiphilinos (1063–1075) - Known for his legal reforms.
- John IX Agapetos (1111–1134) - His time saw attempts at reconciliation with Rome.
- Michael III of Anchialus (1170–1178) - His reign was relatively peaceful.
- John XI Bekkos (1275–1282) - Promoted the Union of Lyons, which was contentious.
- Manuel I Charitopoulos (1240–1255) - Patriarch during the Latin Empire's rule over Constantinople.
- Joseph I Galesiotes (1266–1275, 1282–1283) - Involved in the controversial Union of Lyons.
- John XIII Glykys (1315–1319) - His time was marked by internal church politics.
- John XIV Kalekas (1334–1347) - Involved in the Hesychast controversy.
- Matthew I (1397–1410) - His term was during a period of Ottoman expansion.
- Gennadius Scholarius (1453–1463, 1464–1465) - The first patriarch under Ottoman rule.

- Dionysius I (1466–1467, 1488–1490) - Served multiple terms and was known for his resistance to Latin influence.

[G] Anatolian Plateau: The colonization abilities of the Seljuks in Rule 11.3 are simple but a little too impressive. Instead, only apply the magical colonization ability of the Seljuks on **Path E**.

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previous version!

Player Advice by *Bob Kasten*

(Spoilers!)

After playing a lot of games now there are a few commonalities and guidelines I have used. I am sharing these to see how well they align with Ben's (and everyone else's) expectations.

If something is possible it is usually worth doing.

9 (January 2025)

Push hard for Reforms as quickly as possible.

Get the Monasteries up as soon as possible so gold can be banked in big \$\$\$ turns.

In the early game, if you escape the frequent plague, use the Basileus as much as possible.

Keep Hospitals, Akritai, and lots of attacks in the far east to keep the Persians at bay and ease the Saracen and Seljuk pressure when or if it happens.

Get rid of the Vandals whenever possible and make use of the Excubitors, Akritai and Magister Militum to get high value attacks.

Converting Kiev to Orthodox before the Mongols destroy it can be worth it if you have the \$\$.

It's often a good idea to let Zones B and Γ fill up with low quality armies, so you can attack them with the Magister Militum to easily build up Nike.

The West can usually be kept under control fairly easily. But be careful of a Rex showing up!

Don't worry too much about Factions. It ends up being easier to attack armies via shifting forces than it is to spend 5 gold on Hagia Sophia. Factions can get burned up defending the city from Saracens. But you want to avoid giving armies siege attempts which consumes Factions.

NEVER end a turn with Schism above 5!