

# The Oikonia Campaign Player's Guide

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## Introduction

This tabletop roleplaying game campaign will use the Oikonia campaign imagined by Friend Folio. There are two kinds of players in the campaign. One is a player who plays both as a traditional tabletop RPG character and as a faction leader. Other players will play as faction leaders only. If you are the latter sort of player, you can skip the last paragraph of this Introduction and the only other section you need to read is entitled "Leading a Faction" below.

Oikonia is a world that in one small but important way is much like C.S. Lewis's Narnia. In his *Chronicles of Narnia*, C.S. Lewis imagines a fantasy world in which the true God of Christianity, the Triune God, is also the God of that world. What if God also had to bring salvation to a fantasy world different, and yet similar to our own? That is the premise of Narnia. Oikonia uses the same premise, though its specifics are certainly different.

The Oikonia Campaign will not be a story-based campaign in which the referee tries to guide the players and their characters through a meticulously crafted narrative. Almost unavoidably, this style leads to railroading in which player and character decisions don't actually matter very much. Instead, the Oikonia Campaign will focus on three principles that will open up the world of Oikonia to whatever motives and actions the players and their characters wish to pursue. The principles of the Oikonia Campaign are: Rules As Written, 1-to-1 Timekeeping, and Faction Play.

The Oikonia Campaign uses the *Adventures Dark & Deep* (ADD) ruleset. This is a variant of First Edition *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* that incorporates and balances many of the rules that Gary Gygax wrote in *Unearthed Arcana*. Some (not all) material from *Adventures Great & Glorious*, *Swords of Cthulhu*, and *Book of Lost Lore* will be used as well. In some cases, optional rules in the ADD *Player's Manual* will be followed and are outlined below. Other cases of rules that tend to not get much direct attention but will be followed scrupulously are also highlighted below. Finally, I will be following a fair amount of advice and insights found in the First Edition *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Dungeon Master's Guide* written by Gary Gygax. This will inform some of the ways the campaign is run as well. All of this will be discussed in the section below, "Adventuring in Oikonia."

## Players & Characters

### *The Referee*

Sometimes called the "Dungeon Master" or "Game Master," we'll also be using the more general term "Referee." The Referee is responsible for keeping track of the rules, helping players to follow them, and pulling together prepared materials for the players and their characters to go on adventures. Sometimes those prepared materials come from the Referee himself, other times they may come from Faction Leaders.

### *Adventuring Characters*

Some players will play as traditional adventuring characters. These are individual warriors, mages,

clerics, and thieves, as well as several other archetypes.

### ***Faction Leaders***

Other players will take on the role of various faction leaders, men (or women) such as the Baron of a given area, the head of the Wizard's School, the Bishop of several area congregations, the tribal chief of the kobolds, the evil necromancer or chaos cultist in his lair outside of town, etc. Some Faction Leaders will find themselves closely allied with the adventuring characters. Others will find themselves opposed to such characters. The players who control Faction Leaders will be responsible for setting in motion that faction's next set of sensible actions from week to week. More information can be found below in "Leading a Faction."

## **Principles of Play**

### ***Rules As Written***

Tabletop roleplaying games have a lot of rules. The rulebooks are often well over a hundred pages long with large pages and small text. As daunting as this may seem, in order to play the game in the book you actually do have to follow the rules. Over the decades, many roleplaying game players and game masters have simply ignored rules that were considered inconvenient or time-consuming. However, this often introduces problems to the game that may or may not be readily apparent. Often, a careful following of the rules solves more problems than simply abandoning certain rules. Additionally, any rule regularly followed becomes less burdensome and time-consuming as players get familiar with it. Another aspect of following the rules is not fudging dice results or ignoring the most likely (or imperative) actions of monsters simply because they bring about a disfavorable result. Let bad things happen, and when good things happen they will be all the more sweet. Thus, the principle of Rules As Written is to follow all the game rules (in some cases, these will be optional rules in the rulebook), and not to overlook things that may seem inconvenient (e.g., encumbrance) or fudge events that don't turn out "right."

### ***1-to-1 Timekeeping***

In the First Edition *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Dungeon Master's Guide*, Gary Gygax wrote in all capital letters: "YOU CAN NOT HAVE A MEANINGFUL CAMPAIGN IF STRICT TIME RECORDS ARE NOT KEPT" (pg 37). He also wrote a couple of paragraphs later: "it is best to use 1 actual day = 1 game day when no play is happening" (pg 37). For a very long time, this wisdom from Gary was completely ignored. However, in the last couple of years it has becoming the fundamental lynchpin of restoring meaning, fun, depth of play, and enjoyment for all players.

Nearly every aspect of play is improved by following Gary's wisdom about time-keeping and synchronizing one day in the game to one day in real life. In the first place, it creates reasonable time for the Referee to prepare for the next session of play. Second, it makes player decisions much more meaningful and crucial. If the party has no cleric and must rest to recover all hit points, then resting characters may be unavailable for quite some time. On the other hand, cleric players become much more valuable now than simple "heal bots." If the Paladin's summoned warhorse dies he must wait ten years--both in game and in *real time*--before summoning another. How much more will he cautiously work to preserve his mount's life? And how much more tension will there be with his calling to show bravery even when the odds look bad? Third, 1-to-1 Timekeeping creates room for Faction Play (described below). The rediscovery of 1-to-1 Timekeeping has been the most important improvement to roleplaying in decades.

As an example of how this works, let's say the party goes on an adventure to a dungeon that is two

days' travel away from the town they started in. They get there and begin delving into the dungeon. However, they cannot stay in a dangerous dungeon for too long. Before the players finish their session, they must find a way to get their characters out, lest their characters be "stuck" camping in the dungeon for a week (a prospect that almost certainly ends with their death). Having successfully extracted themselves and some treasure from the dungeon after about 24 hours of game time, they wearily head back to town, which takes another two days. Also, because they sustained some wounds and there are no clerics, they are looking at another four days of bed rest to heal up. In total, the characters are committed to nine days of activity. While all of this is played out on a single evening, this means those characters are unavailable to use again until nine days later on the real-life calendar.

Should the players wish to do another session before those nine days are up, there is a simple solution: play a different set of characters (perhaps creating new ones). This adds richness to the campaign and the story that the players are creating by their actions. Perhaps this new set of characters has different goals and objectives that end up going at odds against the original set. How the players resolve this conflict--sometimes conflict between two characters both played by the same player!--can be an immense source of pleasure and immersion.

### ***Faction Play***

Faction Play involves having players take control of entire factions through the leadership of a particular persona or group of personas. These could be nearly anything from various organizations generally considered part of the "forces of good," to more neutral or even evil forces. The same players who are controlling adventuring characters are also involved in controlling these factions within the game setting. This also creates the opportunity for others who are not playing adventuring characters to participate. The important insight here is to begin doing this kind of play from the very beginning of the campaign, rather than waiting for the adventuring characters to become faction leaders themselves (though this also can happen).

This aspect of play requires 1-to-1 Timekeeping, which creates the necessary time to consult with Faction Leaders, have their intentions play out in time, and keep the actions of the players and the factions moving together at the same speed.

## **Adventuring in Oikonia**

### ***Rolling a New Character***

The method for rolling a new character will be Method 1 in the *Adventures Dark & Deep Player's Manual* (PM): roll 3d6 six times, with each score assigned to the character's ability scores in order (e.g., the result of the first 3d6 is the Strength score, the result of the second 3d6 is the Intelligence score, etc.). The player may roll three sets of six scores and choose the one most favorable to them. If such abysmal scores are rolled all three times that not a single set has any positive adjustments from the scores, then three new sets of scores may be rolled, but the old ones must be discarded. After a set of ability scores are chosen, then race and class are chosen in that order (obviously, the player may plan toward a particular class by choosing a race that helps them meet a minimum ability score). Then class abilities are recorded appropriately, equipment is purchased, and other details about the character are fleshed out (age, height, weight, social class, etc.). All characters begin at level 1 unless you are otherwise instructed by the Referee.

Method 1 often results in characters which have some uncomfortable weaknesses. Rather than being discouraged by this, see it as an opportunity for your personal skill in playing the game to flourish and overcome the odds presented by your character's weak points.

## ***Character Races***

None of the "dark races" (Skiagens) such as Drow, Duergar, etc. are available to play as characters... for now. Although the fiction of Oikonia features dragons as one of the original six races, playing a dragon character is not available as an option.

## ***Additional Character Classes***

The following character classes can also be available to the players above and beyond the standard classes found in the PM. For some of these classes, special circumstances may be necessary to make sense of how a character of a particular class is adventuring as a player-controlled character in Oikonia. The Referee may be more prone to allow such characters if the player makes an investment in buying the appropriate supplement book for himself.

- Assassin (Appendix A of the PM)
- Blackguard (*Book of Lost Lore*)
- Cultist (*Swords of Cthulhu*)
- Scholar (*Swords of Cthulhu*)
- Skald (*Book of Lost Lore*)

## ***Secondary Skills***

This is a new concept in *Adventures Dark & Deep* that should be carefully reviewed by incoming players. The rules for Secondary Skills are found on pages 67-68 in the PM with a listing of available Secondary Skills on pages 68-74. Additional Secondary Skills can be found in other supplement books by BRW Games and may be allowed at the Referees' discretion and in accord with the setting of Oikonia.

## ***Encumbrance***

Encumbrance will be tracked according to the normal rules in the PM (page 85). Players will be expected to accurately keep record of the weight their characters are carrying (including spell components).

## ***Gaining Levels***

The optional rule for training to gain levels on page 86 of the PM will be used with the following tweak to that optional rule: the training time and cost necessary will follow Gary Gygax's rules on page 86 of the First Edition *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Dungeon Master's Guide*. The gist is this: roleplay your character well with respect to his archetype and the cost and length of time training will be relatively short, but if you roleplay against archetype (and almost invariably let down other players and characters in the process) then your training time and cost will increase, perhaps significantly.

## ***Initiative***

Initiative is a slightly more complicated affair in *Adventures Dark & Deep* than in other roleplaying games. This will eventually become second-nature, but expect to spend some time figuring this out at first. Make sure to read the PM's rules on initiative for yourself and get a sense of it before your first session of play.

## ***Unarmed Combat***

An under-appreciated aspect of the rules are the things that can be done via unarmed combat. Players are advised to review these rules on pages 100-101 of the PM.

## ***Critical Hits and Fumbles***

The optional rules for Critical Hits and Fumbles will be used on page 103-104 of the PM. Method A will be used for Critical Hits (double damage on a roll of natural 20). Fumbles will also use its own Method A (minimum damage with a chance to drop the weapon on rolling a natural 1).

## ***Spells and Spell Components***

Spells in the *Adventures Dark & Deep* game (like the AD&D game it is derived from) may have verbal, somatic, and material components. All three will be tracked in the Oikonia Campaign. If the spell has a verbal component, your character must actually be able to speak. If the spell has a somatic component, your character must have general freedom of movement (e.g., not be bound with ropes, etc.). If the spell has material components, your character must actually have those materials on hand. Rules for obtaining spell components are not explicitly included in the *Adventures Dark & Deep* Core Books, so we will be using the article *Living in a Material World* by Michael Dobson in *Dragon* #81 (Jan 1984) as the basis for determining price and availability of spell components. There is no guarantee that the components in the article will match up perfectly with the spells in the PM, so the Referee and players will need to come to appropriate rulings as needed.

## ***Human Sacrifice***

The rules for human sacrifice as a surrogate for magical aging will be used (pg 113, PM), though one expects that this will pertain more to NPCs and perhaps Faction Leaders than to adventuring characters (but one never knows).

## ***Mass Combat***

"Mass Combat" refers to, essentially, large-scale battles between armies, or at least groups approaching the size of armies (large skirmish patrols, etc.). There are at least four possible ways to resolve mass combat available to us.

- *Use Normal Combat Rules, Scaled Up:* The way suggested by Gary Gygax in the First Edition *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Player's Handbook* is to simply use the normal combat rules of the game, but each character/miniature on the combat map represents 10 or 20 individuals depending on the scale of miniatures used. This has the advantage of requiring no additional rules to be read or understood. It has the disadvantage of having less specificity regarding the effects of terrain, etc. that rules made specifically for mass combat could have.
- *Use Turning Point Skirmishes:* The *Adventures Great & Glorious* supplement has rules for determining the outcome of mass combat based on the idea of critical "turning point" skirmishes that take place during the course of the battle. These are combats on the small scale of individual hero characters or monsters whose success on one side or failure on the other are representative of rallying or crushing the spirit of one side or the other. Essentially, the outcome of the smaller skirmish combat has a similar effect on the armies at large. This has the advantage of making the actions of the characters in the midst of the battle take center stage. It has the disadvantage of being even more of an abstraction than simply scaling up the normal combat rules.
- *Use Chainmail:* The game *Chainmail* and the "Fantasy Supplement" it included at the back of its book is the wargame created by Gary Gygax that directly led to the writing and publishing of *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1974. The advantage is that it's a fully realized mass combat game with sensible and easy to understand rules. The disadvantages are that it's yet more rules to learn and it may not have important insights built up in wargaming in the intervening time since it was written.
- *Use One Page Rules:* *One Page Rules* is a free set of rules online for miniature wargames that

intentionally tries to keep things simple but "realistic" (as realistic as fantasy settings can be). These are contemporary wargaming rules that benefit(?) from decades of insights. On the other hand, they are an approximation of Warhammer wargaming rules, so they come from a different genealogy than *Dungeons & Dragons* (from whence ADD originates).

At the outset of this campaign, I have not made a definitive decision regarding which method to use consistently. Possibly we will try them all, with Faction Leaders involved in Mass Combat agreeing to try one method or another as we feel this out together. If there is any one method that I suspect will win the day and become the campaign's consistent standard, I would think it would either be scaled up normal combat or *Chainmail*.

## **Leading a Faction**

### ***The Mantle of Leadership***

Playing as a Faction Leader involves directing larger numbers of people and resources than nearly any starting character would ever have, but it comes at the cost that the Faction Leader himself often cannot spend his time adventuring. The supposition is that such a person has a "day job" conducting acts of leadership that many others are depending on him to carry out. For example, the Baron must manage his castle and barony. He cannot simply take himself off to a dungeon to recover treasure lest his leadership be sorely needed... or lest someone tries to take his domain from him while he is away (or worse yet, arrange for his untimely death). No, such dungeon delving and wilderness trekking is what the adventuring characters are for! For this reason, despite the larger scale of projects such leaders can undertake, they themselves have limited reach and movement and must rely on others to carry out the small scale actions.

Faction Leaders, therefore, have the duty of setting direction and course, and even giving specific orders to specific individuals, but the direct course of action those individuals take to carry out the orders, the outcome that takes place, or the timeframe in which these things come to a conclusion, is often out of the direct control of the Faction Leader.

When playing as a Faction Leader, then, you are put in the position of being able to bend the general thrust of large-scale events, but the smaller-scale results must depend on others. However, there are certainly situations, such as going to war (discussed below) where a more active role can be taken by the leader.

### ***Staying Informed***

There are two respects in which those playing Faction Leaders must stay informed. First, the player himself must stay informed of what is going on in the Campaign world. Not everything that occurs in the Campaign world will necessarily be known by the Faction Leader he is playing, at least not right away, but keeping abreast of events will make things easier for the player as he guides the Faction Leader's decisions. The way to stay informed in this respect is to read the Campaign Log whenever it is updated (<https://www.friendfolio.xyz/oikonia>).

The other sense in which the Faction Leader stays informed is by having agents within the Campaign world who go and gather information for him. As Faction Leader you may send out spies or scouts to gather information. Or you may personally involve yourself in events from which you can gather information, for example, making a point to go to the King's yearly gala and do what you can to scrounge up information about something important happening in the kingdom or the King's court. In this regard, your imagination and cleverness is limited only by the resources and people at your Faction Leader's disposal. Whatever your Faction Leader does to gather information, the Referee will inform

you as to what the result of that information-gathering is, which could be answered almost immediately or it may take a few weeks or even months for a spy to report back.

### ***Taking Action***

Once you have gotten yourself up to date with the latest information, your Faction Leader will want to do something with that information. You will have certain motives or desires, projects you want to see completed, enemies to do away with, treasures or power to hoard. What you do with the people and resources at your disposal to take action and make things happen is, again, limited only by your imagination and cleverness combined with the strictures of time, money, and human ability. Be creative!

### ***Preparing for Adventurers***

Occasionally, as Faction Leader, you will need to be prepared for what the adventurers may be doing or even taking action to influence what they are doing. For example, you may offer them a reward in gold to undertake some task for you. Or you may be making sure that the plans of the adventurers do not come to fruition, for whatever reason, by taking action to stymie them. As part of this, the Referee may sometimes ask you to make specific preparations. Let's say that you are playing the Hobgoblin commander of an army of evil humanoids (goblins, kobolds, orcs, etc.) who have taken up residency in a dilapidated but functional keep at the border. Your scouts have told you that a party of adventurers is approaching and intends to take some sort of action against you in the keep (it's unclear what). The Referee may ask you to prepare a map of the keep, taking note of any special preparations you make for the adventurer's arrival (placement of patrols and troops, the placement and setting of any traps, etc.). In such cases, some graph paper and/or simple RPG mapping software may be helpful (for example RPG Map Editor 2: <https://deepnight.net/tools/rpg-map/>). When the adventurers are led through their session by the Referee, your decisions will directly contribute to what takes place in the adventure, and the results, of course, will be reported back to you.

### ***Going to War***

It may happen that, in the course of time, or even as an explicit goal of yours, your faction goes to war against one or more other factions in the game. This can be incredibly exciting. When something like this happens, you have a couple of options. On the one hand, you could play out the battle(s) yourself (see the section on "Mass Combat" above) against whoever else is involved. On the other hand, you could ask a surrogate to step in and handle the battle for you and simply let you know what the results are. That surrogate could be the Referee or it could be a talented wargamer of your choosing. It's up to you!

### ***Imprisonment, Death, and Other Negative Results***

It may be that the outcome of your decisions and actions goes poorly for you. Leaders are always the targets of rivals who wish to steal away for themselves the power, wealth, or notoriety you possess. Should your Faction Leader end up imprisoned, dead, or otherwise reduced to a powerless state, the answer to, "what happens next" is really quite simple. If you are only playing a Faction Leader but not an adventuring character, then you can either ask to receive a new Faction Leader, or you can decide you'd rather quit playing. The latter is fine. There will be no hard feelings. If you are playing an adventuring character and intend to continue doing so, then you will be assigned a new Faction Leader to control.

## ***Time Commitment***

The Time Commitment in being a Faction Leader can be relatively small, or it can be quite large if you prefer. For example, if you want to indulge in spending more time, the Referee may not need you to map out every detail of your palace, but if you'd like to, he may give you the go-ahead. On the other hand, if you don't really want to invest too much time, most weekly decisions and actions as Faction Leader will probably take no longer than 15-20 minutes to simply read the last Campaign Log, think about the situation as it has updated, and then tell the Referee what you want to try to move things toward over the course of the next week.

## **Tools of the Trade**

### ***Friend Folio Website***

The Friend Folio website is found at [www.friendfolio.xyz](http://www.friendfolio.xyz). Campaign Logs will be recorded here (<https://www.friendfolio.xyz/oikonia>) and other important documents and resources for the Campaign can be found here as well.

### ***Friend Folio Forum***

Interaction between players in the Oikonia campaign, as well as the general building up of our roleplaying game community can take place at the Friend Folio forum. Come check it out! <https://forum.friendfolio.xyz>. This is a suggested place for Faction Leaders who become aware of one another to send private messages to each other, though this may also happen with Signal, Session, SMS text messages, or many other ways.

### ***Session***

This is an encrypted private messaging system and it is the only one that runs on the privacy-enhanced tablet used by the Oikonia Campaign Referee. Ask the Referee for his Session ID and you will be able to message him that way as well as have video and voice calls. This is preferred for long-distance gaming. However, at this time, Session does not support video or voice calls with more than two participants. Once they do support more, there will be no reason to use anything besides this.

### ***Signal***

Similar to Session, Signal is an end-to-end encrypted private messaging system, but this one is tied to your phone number, so it is slightly less private and secure. That said, it is a top-notch app and it supports multiple parties in a voice or video call. In those times when we have players from more than one remote location, we will have to use Signal. Unfortunately, the Referee will have to use it on his phone so you'll be on a really tiny screen.

### ***What We Are NOT Using***

We are not using heavy-weight virtual tabletop software such as Roll20, etc. The reason for avoiding these things is that they are generally more trouble than they are worth. With video chat and local miniatures, it shouldn't be too difficult to handle combat without introducing a whole other layer of complexity with managing digital resources. Plus it's so much more fun and satisfying to roll real dice.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for your time in reading this Player's Guide for the Oikonia Campaign. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback, please don't hesitate to contact the Referee.