Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by Hannibal Rex - 30 Apr 2023 06:38

Another blast from the past piece of data archaeology that deserves preservation.

web.archive.org/web/20010509025739/http:...r/102evaluation.html

Peasant, goblins, giant rat ,scout, Orc Mobs (1 turner)

These guys are dirt cheap for slot filling. Orc Mobs are the worst of the lot. Peasant is the cheapest to build and its banding can be a great boost and an excellent unit as part of a 3K starting regiment.

Goblins, IMO is the best quality unit of this lot, cheap, speed, visibility of 6 ! wood + hills terrain bonus, +2 banding with 2 hp and dirt cheap to build.

Giant rat is ok with banding+6 but you need to stack 7 of them together to maximize it ... great city defender when you can have more than 8 units to boost bonus and especially good vs the trample units like the Golems due to high strength from the banding bonus and only 1 hp anyway so the trample power is not extra effective vs them. Most often used in merc slot one.

Scout is useless as the goblin performs all the same functions only it's better in all categories.

Orc Mobs: only beginner use it ... no one use it even for slot filling.

Dwarf Runner (1 turner)

missile immmunity, terrain bonus (hill), 2nd cheapest 1 turner with 4 hp. I just love them. They are especially good to stack on ports since they fight as 1/4 and most people use a barge so their armies will only fight as a 2/1.

Archer, Giant Bat (1 turner)

Archer is the cheapest and 2nd fastest missile troop with a movement of 19 ! Good ST and +2 missile is just great. hp of 1 is its only weakness.

Bat is a fast flying scouting troop and strength tester of enemy/neutral cities. In the hands of a good warlord it can become a nasty harasser if you got no guards in your city especially early on ... so watch out ! It is also an excellent padding unit for nasty and expensive powerful flying unit early on to take cities over the mountain range or across water/river with no port in sight.

Elf infantry Light Infantry (1 turner)

E.Inf. has high str of 4, dwarf slayer ability on it and great movement of 24 with woods bonus. It's real weakness is 1 hp. The only real use is at the start when in your 3k games cause they are cheap and stack a few with some EC to take far away cities with 6 str.

Barbarian, Skeleton (1 turner)

Barbarian is ok but too expensive. Forget skeleton, it is useless even with its SelfWarding+2.

Heavy Infantry (1 turner)

You field this unit to "trick" your opponent (if I see you field this unit I will assume you are a beginner ... lol)

Gnoll, Dwarf Infantry, Pikeman, Zombie (1 turner)

Gnoll is the only one people use with some good effect. It's best used in bunches in a city with archery where the assassination has a chance to kill the 4 hp ground trample units so the archery can kill the remaining flyers.

Zombie is just too slow. Fear +1 is useless since Elf Cavalry is morale+2 and most people field E.C.

D.Inf is a very nice ST 3 HP 3 cannon fodder but too slow for my taste. Maybe as a castle defender ?

Orogs, Green Slime (2 turner)

These two are the cheapest two turners and Orogs is great for non-city non-hero fight with siege+1 and hill bonus. Slim got +2 acid, not bad but not great either. KGB never use them but Hydro has.

Light Cavalry, WolfRider (2 turner)

Both are very fast land units, I like to use L.C. in my 3K game but only for starting army. LC stack with Elf Cavalry can move 30 and stack two or three of them and race to the center within 3-5 turns and take out some villages and wait for my opponent ... very nice piece ... try it sometime as part of your start up 3K regiment. 1 E.C. and 1 or 2 L.C. in a stack and with wraith and Fire Elemental and dust wyrm you will have the fastest all bonus stack. But IMO all you need is 1 E.C. + 1-2 L.C. and take on villages. At most add a Wraith and cut your stack movement down only to 28 a turn. Huba huba.

Halflings (1 turner)

This is one of the few missile unit that can strike fear into Black/Blue Dragon with its ST2, Hp 2, and missile +3 especially inside a city. And its high missile bonus can cancel out other missile troop (especially moonguard's +4 missile). Massive production is the key to the success of this unit so it's useful in merc 2 slot where you get 12 from a medium quest and plenty from renouned. It is pretty expensive but worth it and can be found as free production in cities on the 'Lord Draconis' map. Dwarf Runner is the best unit to take this baby out so it is not "all powerful".

Heavy Cavalry, Ogres (2 turner)

Running about the same price tag as a halfling but are two turners. Useless units.

Catapult, Elf Cavalry, Wight (2 turners)

All great units but E.C. is the best there is and can be found as free production on many maps. fast to produce, cheap, and morale+2. You want to win ? Put it in your regular slot. I think E.C. is just too cheap. It should cost more than Hell Hound.

Catapult is siege+2 and best of all there is lots of free production in the neutral cites on many maps. Definitely only to be used in non-hero stacks. But I like Orogs or SE better.

Wight (+2 fear, good for counter E.C. stack but slow), if you got the points go for Dark Pegasis/wraith/liche/green dragon.

Imp, Ghoul (1 turner)

Expensive 1 turner but not all bad for merc. slot 2. The 1 turn production time is very nice since quest reward is based on "building time" so you will get 12 1 turner instead of 6 2 turners or 4 3 turner when you finish a medium quest merc. reward. Imp is a fast moving flyer with lightning special attack form so it's handy vs tramplers and a lightning shot removes missile immunity from a 4 hp land unit . Ghoul is slow but with a nice punch and +2 disease bonus. Both are tap expensive in regulars for my taste but stacks of imps from a Summoner can be useful if put together and in merc 2 will get you a massive 12 of them from a medium quest reward! They can take out even a Undead Dragon in a Fort+3 city. Lightning will take off those hit points. But not good against 2-3 dwarf in a village. So use them with care.

Ballistae, Gnoll x-bow, GiantBee, Troll (2 turner)

Keep Troll under the bridge, get Wight, Dark Pegasis, Wraith, Liche, or Green Dragon for your fear bonus.

Ballistae, a very nasty unit inside a city but only 1 hp with 1 missile bonus.

Gnoll x-bow, ST2 and Hp2 will give you a chance to do your assassination bonus even fighting against Blue Dragons but not Blacks since if you get a -1 combat bonus the Blackie has 50% chance to kill with acid before assassination. Take either Gnolls (cheaper/faster) or Gnoll Calv (more powerful) if you want assassination. Lucky no one use vampire + LifeDrain + Blue Dragon else the lightning can kill you too with the -1 hp from LifeDrain spell.

Bee is a much better version of the bat and with poison +4 it is icing on the cake ... tap expensive but very nice unit ... one of the best scouting units around and it's especially nasty to stack 5 or 6 of these together and hit an enemy city where he is massing non-hero stacks to poison 20+ men in one pop. merc 2 or ally 1 are good place since you might get it early on and do rush on to your enemy.

Elf Archer (1 turner)

Very expensive 1 turner but some think it worth the price with its +4 missile. I just love to use D. Runner to take these guys out. It got only 1 hp so it's vunerable to lightning (imp is great against these guys also) and it is slow. Can be found as free production on the 'colleges of magic' maps.

Harpy (2 turner)

Harpy is the cheapest curse unit and should only be used if you have poison/disease elsewhere in your set as it's too weak for hero stacks.

Dwarf x-bow, Hell Hound (1 turner)

D.x-bow is the most expensive 1 turner and you field it to fool people like me to think you are a beginner. Hp 3 is interesting. I think if it has 4hp (thus missile immunity) and its missile won't get cancel out then there is a good chance people might field this sloooow unit. As of now put it back to the mine to do some good.

Hell Hound is ok with fear +1 and move of 20 but has a high upkeep of 6 which is more than most 2 and

3 turners, but I never seen people field it. I think E.C. is the main reason. since this unit is useless against E.C. and everyone is stacking their troops with E.C.

Clay Golem, Mummy, Wargs (2 turner)

Mummy is good for missile immunity and poison +3 but very slow and expensive. Pretty good for merc. slot two.

Wargs got +4 warding and good speed with fast production time. Good for merc. two also or against people who use a lot of assassination or playing Lord Dragonis setup map.

Clay Golem is a good cheap trample unit but too expensive with low strength. Only marginally useful when summoned in numbers by an Alchemist at a bless/strength city but a great cannon flodder taking on unknow neutral cities.

Giant (3 turner)

The cheapest 3 turner and a chaos+2 unit! Good for its price and best of all is found as free production on several maps. Stick in your regular slot and you got a cheap +2 chaos to give your enemy -1 and only hero with good leadership can counter that.

Ghost, Knight (2 turners)

Ghost is a more expensive/slower version of harpy,

Knight got +1 warding for group and a nice +2 bonus in the open. But cost just a tap too much. Put it in Merc. 2 or regular slot.

Cockatrice (3 turner)

Road runner on steroid. You cannot get anything faster than this guy. But it is a land unit so don't be expecting it to fly over the mountains. A tap expensive. But seen it used once in a while (mostly in ally 1), not a very effective combat unit for its cost. But great for "searching inv. stack or razing enemy sites/undefended cities early on" and especially deadly early on in the 1 army start game. For a 3K game, after turn 7 it is basically useless. 1 army game after turn 12 it is useless. Give of take a few turns.

Centaur, NightMares, Pegasis, Dark Pegasis (2 turner)

Nothing really good here and Dark Peg. is the one I've seen used for its speed/flight and fear+2 to counter E.C. The cost kill the rest.

Giant Scorpion (3 turner)

Make it a 2 turner or cut the cost else let it loose in desert.

Plague Carrier (2 turner)

Very expensive 2 turner. Excellent troop with ST7 and disease+5 when used as a hero trap combined with curse units and some archery but just too expensive for a hp of 1 and movement of 15.

Assassin, Medusae, Minotaur, Siege Engine, Dwarf Mutant (3 turner)

Assassin is great for merc slot 3 or ally slot 1. Don't put it anywhere else as the upkeep cost in regulars is so high (20 a pop per turn !) you'll be bankrupt fast. Assassin in merc 3 and with warrior +5 renown is a great hero stopper but since hero stack and assassination is not that tough anymore ... Ally slot 1 is better. Especially vunerable to Black/Blue dragons with only 1 str/hp so don't use it if you know your opponent uses those dragons.

IMO S.E. is a must have for its siege+4 bonus else it will be almost impossible to win the game.

Minotaur is a nasty chaos unit with +2 city bonus that makes it a very useful unit in non-hero stacks since blessed Minotaurs attack cities at 8/3. It can be fielded in regulars or merc 3 with Warrior and renouned. Ally 1 is not as great but see people do it sometimes.

All chaos bonus units are good units. So is any siege bonus unit. Reason: non-hero stack fight is more important now and these two type of bonus cannot be countered (excluding hero or expensive Ice guard).

Medusae, too expensive since its petrification is really a joke.

Dwarf Mutant is way too expensive and slow chaos unit compared to Giants and Minotaurs.

Reaver (2 turner)

Most expensive 2 turner, but with chaos+1 it is good for non-hero fight. Move 19 and pack a good punch. Cost should come down a tap.

Stone Golem (3 turner)

Too expensive and slow to produce but ok in merc slot 3 with Warrior and renouned. It's especially vunerable to any flying units with it's low str.

Elf Lord, Gnoll Cavalry, Knight Lord, Ice Demon, Wraith (3 turner)

Elf Lord is useless with 20% demon slayer and too expensive.

Gnoll Cavalry is the best all-around assassination unit. Fast, 40% assassination, good price for merc slot 3 or Ally 1, and got a good punch too. Can be found as free production on the 'Lord Draconis' map if you want to field it in your regulars. Since assassination test is tested ONCE per Battle so you need to survive to reuse it another day.

Ice Demon, another chaos unit, fast but not as strong or cheap as giant or minotaur but move 22 and is one of the summonable troop (so you can control the battle sequence). good unit if you got summoner else don't field it. Get giant or minotaur.

Wraith (+3 fear move 28) is great to compliment/counter Elf Cavalry (morale +2 and move 32)

Knight Lord with useless dragon slayer ability but very nice open field +2 bonus and it is one of the unit can get up to ST15. A tap too expensive for my taste but I sometime stack it with my hero and fight other hero outside the castle. That 20% dragon slaying abilities is not good enough. Missile troops are actually better dragon slayers. One missile hit and dragon and all other flyers go bye bye.

Dust Wyrm (4 turner)

Siege +3 with fast movement and great terrain bonus. Too expensive for my taste.

Eagle, Griffon, Unicorn (3 turner)

These 3 turn low ST flyers (Eagle/Griffon) are too expensive and useless against those cheap 1 turners missile troops. Griffon can occasionally be useful in ally 1 on smaller maps if the opponent relies heavily on trample units.

Unicorn is the only good one here with +3 morale, 28 movement, woods move bonus and woods +5. However the abundance of high bonus fear units really reduces it's effectiveness when Elf Calv is much cheaper and faster to produce.

MoonGuard (3 turner)

Nasty +4 missile troop. Great combo when field in merc-3 with renown hero since they are so effective vs flyers and especially good vs Blue/Black dragons and trample units. (missile come before trample and all you need is one hit). Weakness: any land unit with 4 hp will render your missile useless. (so it is VERY nasty when stack with curse+disease unit inside a city. perfect hero trap).

IceGuard (3 turner)

Most expensive 3 turner, the only fortification troop around. For most players that +1 fortify is just too expensive. I still have a mix feelings about it. Very useful put it inside a +3 fortification city. I have only seen it in merc 3 slot due to time/cost to build them.

Archon Elephant, Liche (4 turner)

Archon is great for stacking with wizard to make it morale +5 at level 6 (heroism spell) else it is no good since every one got either liche or Green Dragon in their regular or ally slot I mean EVERYONE. It can be found as free production on the 'White Knights' map which is the only one where you should ever consider it as one regulars. Otherwise place it in Ally 2/3 or Ally 4 if you use a Priest who can summon them thus control its fighting sequence.

Elephant is a high ST trample unit, 2nd to Iron Golem in city fight. It can also take on dragons even up if they get blessed or built at a +1 str site and the low production cost of 800 is super cheap so you can fill plenty of non-hero stacks full of elephants. Best of all they get medals from fights ridiculously easy so field them in your regulars as opposed to ally slots. Can be fielded in merc slot 3 for a high cost but combined with a Warrior as a slot 1/2 hero it can be a deadly combo in non 3k games. Heh ... even in a 3K game. And if you can do renown on a city with hit+1 then you also have it as missile crasher with 4hp. Iron Golem with trample+3 can do short work on these guys in a city fight. And watch out for all flyers specailly Black and Blue Dragon. Make it hip 4 with priest/bard spells is another good way to go.

Liche is the cheapest high power unit around with fear +4 put it in reg. or ally slot, you cannot do wrong with this guy. Slow land moving unit.

Cave Wrym, Fire Demon, Iron Golem, Rock elemental, Spectres (4 turner)

All very nice quality troops with I.G. leading the popularity contest.

Cave W. is a land 4 hper (thus missile immunity), siege +2, and high st ... good unit to stack in front of hero stack to stop archery and protect dragons. Also great in ally 2 where you get some early from ruins/quest and send them to take far away cities on their own or to raze some enemy cities. But they

fear trample units with high ST.

Fire Demon got ST8, hp3, move 20, and chaos +3 is great for its price and is summonable so field it to control its fighting sequence. Make sense to field it if you got summoner. Fear I.G. also.

Iron G. ST 6, +3 trample, and +1 city bonus to easily make it the greatest city crusher, but not as effective against high ST flyers (immune to trample) or get hit by missile troop first. And it only move 16 but lots of warlords field it to counter lots of nasty land units and in city fight it is the best land unit around. Again, make it a 4hper and you take away the threat of missile troops. However, Black Dragon will eat it for lunch.

Rock Elemental is another 4 hp land unit with +3 selfwarding and the main reason for others to field a good trample unit like IG to counter this unit. Park it on the hill is the best for its hill+3 bonus. Very nasty but luckily it is slow.

Spectres, flyer, good strength with +6 curse. Nasty unit especially in a hero fight (reason: curse can do away with medals and bless prior to battle) great in fights against the dreaded Shaman with Beserker spells.

Air Elementals, Fire Elementals (4 turner)

Flyer with low ST and very expensive, fire elemental is the fastest chaos unit and very nice stack with EC, LC, Wraith in a 3K game to give you a fast moving stack with all kinds bonus. Too expensive esp in allies where it cost 200 in ally 2 compared to 90 for Spectre/I.G/Archon all of which are better units. Ally 3 is the only place for it.

Slayer Knight, Treant (4 turners)

Slayer knight is a chaos +4, high quality unit. It can be found as free production on the 'White Knights' map, Treant is land 4 hp (missile immunity) with good siege bonus but just too slow to be useful and IG eat it for snack unless it is in the woods or flying in a hero stack.

Undead Beast (5 turner)

Basically a Slayer Knight that takes 1 more turn to build and costs more to make but has 4 extra moves per turn and 1 higher ST. Unless you need the extra 4 moves (you won't if you are already dragging around a 16 move Siege Engine in your hero stack) you are better off with the Slayer Knight. Hero stacker, great ally slot 3 or regular slot 8 (put your most expensive unit in regular slot 7).

Silver Dragon (5 turner)

No way, too expensive. It is at most a 4 turner with that kind of price tag. On rare occasions in sets with Black Dragons in regulars I have seen it in Ally 4 to give Wizard +5 Morale bonus with heroism spell.

Gold Dragon (5 turner)

A dragon with +4 morale that's very handicapped due to the +5 fear of the Green Dragon cancelling it out totally. With liche becoming more popular it's making a slight comeback. Mostly seen in Ally 4 but it's hard to play effectively with this dragon in your set when Red/Green/Blue/Black/Undead are so much easier to use. Abundence of fear itmes make it worse. But Gold+SlayerKnight+Liche in a 3K game stack with Hero casting morale+1 spell can do some serious "Gold Rush" ...

Undead Dragon, Green Gragon (5 turner)

Green Dragon is popular in a regular slot (slot 7 or slot 8) with fear +5 to counter all morale bonus's. Lately the Liche has been seen more often in regulars due to rarity of +5 morale in hero stacks.

Undead Dragon is the only 4 hp dragon and curse+5 big bully, huba huba, great for hero fight but watch out for Blue/Black Dragon and missile troops that can really cut down your effectiveness. Much cheaper in regulars than Black/Blue and can be found as free production in the cities on the 'Elthorn' map. Only field this dragon if you have a Shaman hero and you run 'evil eye spell'. They also get medals much faster than other dragons and can't lose them from curse!!! (*I tested that, it's not true* -HR)

Red Dragon (5 turner)

The only +5 chaos unit and fast becoming the most popular dragon in regulars to counter the Wizard's +5 leadership which is so common. Can be found as free production on the 'White Knights' map where it should always be in your regulars on that map.

Blue Dragon (5 turner)

Don't field this unit if you know your opponent use Black Dragon. There is a bug in lightning attack form. If you get hit by acid your lightning attack is gone. On very rare occasions can be found as free production on the 'draconis and Undead Legion' map. It's especially deadly when combined with the chain lightning spell from a Wizard if acid fail.

Black Dragon (5 turner)

Cost the most but worth it. Put it in reg slot 7 or ally slot 4. You gonna love the respect people give you. Trample units against it are useless, high ST missile unit get cut in half. You do need to worry about those one turner missile troopers like halfling and elf archer when you attack a city but only 1/2 will survive your acid attack. However, that is where they nickle and dime you to death. Very sad. But when you use them in hero's fight you will get great result.

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by KGB - 30 Apr 2023 18:55

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This is really out of date even if it was interesting at one time. It predates so many changes in the game (Stormheim, KHeroes and so on).

Many years later (2006 era I think) I along with a few other players started doing a cost based analysis of all the units in the game. It assigned X cost for each power, movement, strength, hits etc so that the costs for the units could be properly adjusted. I think we got through the 1 and maybe 2 turn units before we ran out of steam. I'd be happy to post that for you if your interested.

KGB

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by Hannibal Rex - 30 Apr 2023 20:56

Absolutely, I'd really appreciate it. I was hoping to hear your input from time to time, KGB. Especially when it comes to heroes, there's going to be a lot of pitfalls in getting the balance right, and your experience in creating the K4 set would be invaluable.

I know it's way out of date for the K4SH meta of the multiplayer community, but I'm still taking vanilla 1.02 as the starting point for my own mod, so these old unit assessments are very instructive to me.

Ultimately, I think the unit limit of 15 per army set, 8 units per stack, and the way higher tier bonuses make lower ones obsolete, means that it's fruitless to attempt to make each unit multiplayer competitive. That's something I accept. What I'm hoping to achieve is more to to give each unit a fair price compared to similar units, and rework and rein in the efficiency outliers, such as Elven Cavalry or Siege Engines.

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by KGB - 30 Apr 2023 22:15

Here it is in rar format.

Inside are files in xls and doc format which you can upload and read online.

KGB

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by Hannibal Rex - 01 May 2023 14:00

There are some good ideas in those spreadsheets, but it will take me a while to fully absorb everything. Meanwhile, I want to illustrate my own thought processes, both to ask for feedback and because articulating them will help me to move forward.

Let's talk about basic human infantry; **Light Infantry**, **Heavy Infantry**, **Pikemen**, **Peasants** and **Barbarians** .

Light Infantry and **Heavy Infantry** have been staples since Warlords 1. Originally, they have a significant difference in strength, 3 and 5, and heavy infantry took 2 turns to build. In Warlords 2, the strength difference shrunk to 2 and 3, and in Warlords 2 Deluxe both now only cost 1 turn to build, leaving the gold cost as the the main difference.

The Light Infantry statline is mostly fine. A 2/2 unit with 18 movement. (18 movement is also the default for all heroes in my current plan). To give them a bit of distinction, I'm increasing View to 3 and buffing their medals chance. Both to represent a unit with good discipline, mobility and situational awareness. (Medals chance will be its own subject at some point.) I've decided to take 25 gold/turn as my ballpark figure for city income (including sites), and as my baseline cheap combat unit, I'm taking a single city's gold income as the cost to set up production for them. If I kept 50 gold, all other units with similar stats would need to have their cost raised to similar levels.

Now compare **Peasants**. In vanilla, they have an absurdly low gold cost of 1, while their statline becomes 4/2 once they have their full banding bonus. They completely outclass light infantry and even vanilla heavy infantry on all fronts. Thematically, Peasants represent an even cheaper combat unit than Light Infantry, practically untrained and unequipped, so they need to have worse stats. I'm keeping the 2 hp, but 1 strength is too low to be justified. My solution is 1 strength with banding reduced to +1. A single peasant is weaker than light infantry, two or more match it but will never outclass it. Movement gets reduced to 16. They can no longer keep up with starting heroes, but are still practically equal to light infantry as cheap garrison troops. View and medal chance is worse, and my price tag for them is 15 gold.

That's my basic approach. Arguably, with those changes, neither might be worth a unit slot in a competitive army list, but as I said, that's not the primary concern, at least for now.

I like **Pikemen** as designed. With 3 hp, they have half again the staying power of light infantry, and can absorb a trample attack. Field +1 makes them cost effective on the move, but gives no advantage in attacking or defending cities. 16 movent is a fair downgrade from light infantry in turn. Here, I only want to adjust the gold cost.

The problem comes when comparing them to **Heavy Infantry**. They have the same movement, and 3/2 vs 2/3 is not really a significant difference. In Warlords 1, Heavy Infantry was comparable t o Dwarf Infantry, which sits at the top of 1 turn combat units in DLR. A 4/2 statline would be comparable to the Dwarfs' 3/3, but is already in the 2 turn range in DLR (Orogs). So my approach is to give heavy infantry a city +1 combat bonus, while reducing movement to 15. Now they and pikemen have clearly different niches, and they justify a price tag similar to dwarfs. In theory, they become the staple expensive 1 turn

garrison unit.

Barbarians are fast, hardy, brave but undisciplined outdoorsmen that justify their movement 20, hills move bonus, view 3 and banding +2. However, I don't want them to outclass heavy infantry with a similar 4/2 statline but faster movement, so I'm reducing their starting strength to 1. Lone barbarians can be outfought by light infantry, but they're better in numbers, with 3/2 stats at a fairly low gold cost. I'm thinking ~50 for now.

While i'm at it, I'll also include a write up of **Skeletons**. In vanilla, the have an absurdly high cost for their statline at 75, which is a remnant of having once had Fear +1 instead of Warding +2. but even then, it arguably wasn't justified. Skeletons also make up the lowest tier Necromancy unit. I like Necromancy as an ability, even though it's not very practical to use. It deserves a buff compared to Renown and summoning spells, and the only way to do that is to buff the units it creates. So for Skeletons, I'm changing them to 3/1 from 2/1. That's still weaker than the 2/2 of light infantry and peasants, which justifies them being the cheapest unit in my mod, at a cost of 10 gold.

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by Hannibal Rex - 01 May 2023 14:22

I've written this earlier at the Warlords subreddit, but i'm also adding it here for feedback:

Here's my current thinking on how to rework units with a siege bonus.

Orogs: the thematic reasoning why they have a siege bonus is a bit thin; D&D Orogs are based on Tolkien's Uruk-hai, which were notable for using explosives at the siege of Helm's Deep, so maybe that's an explanation. Big, disciplined orcs who like to blow stuff up works for me. Ultimately, low end bonuses aren't very competitive, but Orogs have good movement, so they have a niche. They'll be mostly unchanged.

Catapults: This is the bread and butter cheap siege unit. No big changes here, though a cheap unit with poor stats that you only bring for its stack bonus is a bit tricky to place in the fight order, so it doesn't get destroyed before actual combat units. Human players can rearrange the fight order, but the computer can't. I might give it minor buffs for that reason.

Siege Engines: This used to be a pactically mandatory unit in competitive multiplayer because it has the highest siege bonus of all units. I'm going to nerf it, because I want the more fantastical units to be at the top tier. Siege +3, movement 15. Being slightly slower than catapults keeps a niche for the latter ones.

Dust Wyrms: They are getting buffed to become the top tier siege unit, with good stats, siege +4, movement 18. They'll be noticably more expensive, so including them will require trade-offs. They lose the hills movement bonus, being more adapted to loose soil. Think the movie Tremors.

Treants: These will be the alternative to Dust Wyrms. Same +4 siege bonus, but slow movement (15). In return, they have better combat stats and 4hp missile immunity.

Cave Wyrms: Compared to Dust Wyrms, an expensive unit with a lower stack bonus but stronger combat stats is problematic, because the higher stack bonus is just competitively so much more important. My solution is to remove their siege bonus entirely, and give them acid +3 instead. This turns them into a front line combat unit, a cheaper alternative to Black Dragons. It works well thematically for me - they use acidic secretions to dig through rock. They get a hills move bonus instead of the Dust Wyrms.

There are also going to be changes about which heroes get access to the siege bonus; Thieves are going to remain top tier, with cheap siege to represent subterfuge and bribery. Monks and Shamans are probably going to lose it. Generals, Alchemists, Wizards, and maybe Rangers will have access as abilities and/or spells.

One additional point, thinking about Orogs also made me consider giving **Dwarf Infantry** an equal Siege +1 bonus. This would give them some extra kick, justifying a higher price tag than heavy infantry despite their slow movement.

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by KGB - 01 May 2023 14:38

It's your mod, so ultimately you can do what you want. But I will say that units that don't move at least 16 are DOA (dead on arrival) other than for city defense. In other words, if they don't keep up with a Siege Engine / Catapult they are useless. That's why in the costing charts you'll see that units that move < 16 get a very cheap cost.

Peasants: Since they are not fighters (as you noted) they should only have 1 hit to represent that (plus they lack armor). Then you can leave the banding 'as is' so they are OK as a mob of peasants.

Skeletons: If you aren't going to bring in the Stormheim units, you could give them 3/1 strength/hits with Archery +1 (Skeleton archers are a staple of fantasy) instead of the Banding I gave them. That makes them semi-useful vs fliers.

It's hard to know if the rest of your changes are going to matter much. 20 move Barbarians will always be superior to Lt/Hv Inf or even Pikemen due to the 20 movement which will let them capture cities faster. Hits on defense don't matter vs trample (the Golems and Elephants) so the only defining thing will be the extra movement.

KGB

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by Hannibal Rex - 01 May 2023 15:18

At one point, I (briefly) considered reducing hero default speed to 16 and adjusting all units downward, to slow down expansion and make the game play closer to Warlords 2, but I decided that would be too invasive. On the other end, I'm more seriously considering capping the fastest flyers at 30 and ground units at 28, for a different approach to the same problem of fast expansion.

There's a whole bunch of vanilla units with movement 15 (Rock Elementals, Treants, Gnolls, etc.) I'm more wary of accelerating the game than of slowing it down, but it's a valid point. 15 is 'very slow' in my classification, with the 3 units that are even slower (zombies, dwarf infantry, mummies) are considered of having a severe extra penalty. You can see in my second post that I've slowed down Siege Engines to 15 too. I'm not going to keep odd movement (19, 25) beyond 16, except maybe for boats.

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by KGB - 01 May 2023 16:29

A cap on max speed of 28/30 is fine. To be honest, only a couple of units move more than that anyway so it's not like your going to be making huge changes there. That's why in my spread sheet I costed out extra movement quite high so that if you wanted a unit that moved 28 you had to pay for it (no more super cheap Elf Calv).

One thing that I don't understand is the idea that you are fixing all hero movement at 18. What's the reasoning behind that? War2 could do that because all you had a was 1 hero. But the idea in DLR is that heroes are different and should move differently and have different strengths/hits etc.

Slowing down Siege unit is going to be unpopular. In fact it's only going to make heroes with Siege skill that much better in comparison (they don't have to drag along a slow unit) esp if they have a speed skill.

One thing you didn't mention, but are you going for a thematic balance? By that I mean will someone making an evil set (like a Lord Bane) get access to Siege, Fear, Morale, Archery etc? Or are you just going for a general balance and assume players are going to build custom sets that aren't theme based.

KGB

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Re: Unit Evaluation by HydroJackson & KGB

Posted by Hannibal Rex - 02 May 2023 07:18

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Having equal starting movement for heroes is my work-in-progress starting point, as is having universal xp and ap progression. Adjustments to that would happen later, to fine tune the balance.

As I see it, differences in movement lead to different rates of xp gain right out of the gate, compounding into faster leveling for faster heroes even with equal xp charts. Down the line, having heroes with faster movement requiring 10-20% more xp to level up would be a way to make the classes more distinct again, but first I want to find a satisfying baseline. Two of the changes that Xheroes made to K4 are somthing I intend to carry over, having both Speed and Teleport cost 3AP, and increasing the mana cost to 15 for the later. Having teleport heroes start with lower base movement would be another thing to try.

As for thematic balance, the way I see it, there are a lot of "theme-agnostic" units like catapults, siege engines generic infantry and archers, etc. that can go into any army set without disrupting the theme. Having thematic units for each ability would be a reason to include and adapt custom units like Stormheim. But a few of my ideas go in that direction - for example, I want to buff ice demons to be (near) equal to fire demons, but with fear instead of chaos, so they're now a non-flying alternative to wraiths. Having more options for thematic competitive army sets would definitely be a plus.

I have absolutely zero graphics skills, otherwise my dream alternative in that regard would be to adapt units from the wider Warlords lore (4,Battlecry, Puzzle Quest...) for DLR.

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