The 8e Dwarfs Handbook

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1 Introduction

Hi! Welcome to Greyhnir’s version of the 8th Edition Dwarf Handbook. Let me start off by saying that this idea was largely stolen from other forums including the High Elves, Lizardmen and Empire forums. I love the format they use and so I decided to make my own handbook based on the inspiration they have provided. I also do not claim to be any sort of expert, nor am I an accomplished tournament player, but I have played many games with the new book and have read many of the forums related to our new potential. I write this as a primer for myself and a tool for the Dwarf community. I fully expect many to disagree with some of what I say, but I encourage comment and I am open to changing my opinion too, so comment below and let me know what you think!

1.1 Assumptions

Before we begin, I will point out a few assumptions one should keep in mind with this handbook:

1. No comp is considered. I fully recognize that many do have some sort of very nifty comp system that probably makes Warhammer perfect, but the majority of Dawi don’t run into this type of environment and I don’t plan to make a guide with any sort of comp in mind. With that being said, if you feel strongly about it, make your own guide with your comp in mind and I will very much enjoy reading it!!

2. This handbook is written with the idea that you are building a competitive army. I fully enjoy playing themed list and trying new ideas “just because”. This guide is written with the idea that you are building a force for a competition and you plan to try to win. That said, I almost always find playing against a themed or “crazy” list more enjoyable than playing against a competitive one, so go ahead, despite what I say, fill that special up with bolt throwers!

3. This handbook is written with the idea that you are building an all-comers lists. This is not the handbook on how to build your army to crush any one specific army. The idea here is that Warhammer has two armies. Dwarfs; and everyone else.
1.2 Ratings Scale

OK, I’m going to use the standard color scale used by the other forums for this sort of thing; you know, so I don’t get confused and stuff:

**Red** is dead. This is a choice that’s so bad; it actively detracts from your army synergy and makes your list a worse one overall.

**Yellow** is conditional. It may shine in certain matchup or when used in certain ways, but in general it’s a subpar choice.

**Green** is the average. Not necessarily a great choice, but it’s rarely one you’ll end up regretting.

**Blue** is an above-average or exceptional choice. These options frequently increase army synergy and overall list strength.

**Purple** is the highest rating in this handbook, and it’s reserved for choices that should be staples in virtually all competitive lists. Don’t leave home without them.

2 Dwarfs Overall

What you can generally expect from a Dwarf Army

1. Dwarfs are an infantry centric army. With the exception of Gyros and War Machines, our entire army is infantry. This means you are somewhat limited in the overall tactics and strategy you can employ with Dwarfs. While our new army book has expanded our competitive options considerably, you still will not be fielding an army with hit and run raiding tactics (that’s a pretty Elgi thing to do anyways).

2. Dwarfs are an elite army. Our troops are all expensive but they are all for the most part good in combat. Your average Dwarf warrior will soundly defeat the average warrior in most other armies without too much difficulty, but this martial prowess comes at a cost... literally with lots of points.

3. Dwarfs can run and effective strategy with either an offensive or defensive builds. This is probably one of the best boons with our new book as while we can still castle up in a corner and frustrate the heck out of our opponents as they crash against the immovable rock that is the Dwarfs, we now have many options to take the fight to the enemy and do so very quickly.
3 Army-Wide Special Rules

Here we discuss our army specific rules (and there are quite a few)!

**Ancestral Grudge** - This rule can give your army an amazing punch in combat, or do nothing at all. Versus Skaven or Orcs & Goblins, it is guaranteed to be very helpful, but against anyone else this is pretty much only super effective with a dice roll of a 5 or 6 at the start of the game. The rule is fluffy, very situational and too random for my likes.

**Dwarf Crafted** - Not having the -1 to shooting when getting charged is great and a good rule. Many would rather have the old +1 to hit with Dwarf Handguns, but alas it isn’t to be. The fact this rule is part of pretty much every dwarf missile weapon makes it something that will make your stand and shoot reactions just that much more enjoyable.

**Resolute** - Getting +1 strength on the charge alone is great. Add this rule to some of the buffs we have available to our army now (most notably armor piercing) and it is simply amazing.

**Relentless** - Not having to pass a leadership test to march is nice, but with Dwarf leadership being so high I would rarely worry that I could not march. But the rule really shines because we never have to worry about that one key move failing based on a bad roll (especially with Gyrocopters/bombers)!

**Shieldwall** - Getting a +1 bonus to parry when charged may initially not sound like much, but you are essentially doubling your save chance against high strength attacks. This rule makes any unit armed with shields able to be considered a decent anvil unit. Combined with the Resolute special rule it also means that most of our shield armed troops get a bonus whether we charge or get charged. That equates to a win/win in my book!

4 Dwarfs Unit Analysis

4.1 Lords

**Thorgrim Grudgebearer** - A beast of a special character that gives all sorts of bonuses to the unit he joins on top of being able to destroy large monsters in a single stroke means that your movement 3 High King of the Dwarfs will never see a meaningful combat against any opponent
worth his salt. Thorgrim is great, but overpriced for anything but a grand army in my opinion.

**Thorgrim Ironbrow** - Fun and fluffy, sure, but competitive, no. Thorek is a more expensive Runelord with an Anvil of Doom that cannot take a Spellbreaker rune. With the inherent disadvantages of the Anvil combined with no ability to upgrade his magic defensive potential, Thorek is a worse choice than the Anvil on a normal Runelord; and that’s saying something.

**Ungrim Ironfist** - Solid combat Lord and gives you the ability to put a 100 point Runic Banner on a slayer unit makes Ungrim a good choice...if you are running an army heavily invested in slayers. Otherwise, leave him at the hold.

**Belgar Ironhammer** - A good tank in combat and with Always Strikes First and his one-time ability to double his attacks he is a real threat to most other characters or elite units. But at the end of the day he suffers from the same problem all of the other Dwarf Special Character Lords do; he’s way too expensive. In a larger game he could be a great addition, but otherwise I say you have better options in your normal Lord.

**Lord** - The only real choice worth considering constantly amongst the Lord options for the Dwarfs. With Thanes now having Ld 10, the Lord has slightly less worth as the army general now. In combat the Lord’s worth doesn’t lie in his ability to crush (though you can tool up a Lord to be killy), but as with the last book, it is in his ability to tank. By putting a Lord on Shieldbearers and upgrading him with the right runes you can make a Character with WS 7 T6 W6 1+ armour save and a 4+ ward save. He may only dish out strength 6 attacks, but he will never die. The only downside is all that protection is expensive.

**Runelord** - For the price of one Runelord you can get two Runesmiths with the ability to gain two Spellbreaking runes instead of one and the ability to give two units Armour-Piercing and Magic Resistance. There is simply no situation where taking a Runelord is better than two Runesmiths; and believe me, I’ve tried to find one. The Runelord’s ability to “upgrade” himself with an Anvil of Doom doesn’t help either. In a very large point game I might consider it, but because the Anvil forces your Runelord to become a war machine combined with the fact that the “spells” the Anvil grants you are rarely going to go off against
any opponent that understands even the basics of magic means the
Anvil is laughable. Maybe they’ll be more effective when 9th edition
rolls out; until then keep your Runelords in the hold making your
armour and far, far away from the battlefield.

Daemon Slayer - I believe the jury is still out on the Daemon Slayer. There
are quite a few tactics and builds that could make a Daemon Slayer
amazing. The fact that the Daemon Slayer has all the special rules of a
Dragon Slayer and the ability to force rerolls on ward saves makes him
a real threat in combat. His Achilles’ heel is the same as all Slayers: no
protection. This fact combined with the Daemon Slayer’s high points
cost means you have to build your force or strategy around taking one
to be effective which makes the Daemon Slayer a conditional choice.

4.2 Heroes

1. Josef Bugman - A way to get more rangers outside of Rare, the ability
to heal characters, and a Hero that buffs the unit he is in to be a great
scouting combat unit makes Bugman a great choice for someone with
a plan. He will fit nicely into most lists and gives you movement and
deployment options with a unit that will be a significant threat to the
enemy. He is not a must have choice, but depending on your build,
rarely a bad one.

2. Grimm Burloksson - If you have shooting in your army at all, he is a
good choice. In a gun line build, he becomes an exceptional choice.
He buffs shooting of almost all types to make them simply awesome.
The more shooting in your army, the better option he becomes.

3. Thane - A Thane can fill many different roles depending on how you
kit him out and what you want him to do. Make him the BSB and
depending on your army strategy give him a Runic Banner that could
give Vanguard, or Stubborn, or Ward saves against shooting or even
+4 for dispelling magic. Or go the other direction and give him a
+1 Armour Save with a 4+ Ward Save. You can throw him on an
Oathstone and throw him in an Ironbreaker Unit to make a super
strong anvil or simply build up a few cheap Thanes to grant Ld 10 to
units and add a little combat punch. There really are so many options
and few of them bar anything but a great choice. I should point out
that as a Dwarf general that despite Steadfast consistently rolls an 11
in combat, I consider a BSB Thane to be a staple in every list.
4. *Runesmith* - Last book they were mandatory, but you could swap out two for a Runelord without too much difference. A Runelord is a terrible option compared to two Runesmiths in this book. They confer Armour Piercing and Magic Resistance to any unit they join and can bring some interesting runic combos as well. Having multiple Runesmiths is the only way to get multiple Spellbreakers and for their bargain cost you should never leave home without one or three (I would argue a MINIMUM of one for every 1000 points you field).

5. *Master Engineer* - I struggled to determine if I should rate the Master Engineer as an average or exceptional choice. In the end, he is a cheap option to give some bonus to war machines and act as a guard for them as well. His worth goes up in a gun line build, just like Grimm Burloksson. While he doesn’t do as much as Grimm, he is much cheaper.

6. *Dragon Slayer* - The Dragon Slayer is a much cheaper option compared to the Daemon Slayer and fills pretty much the same roll. He still suffers from the Slayer bane of no protection, but a Dragon Slayer in a unit of Slayers can be very effective. The bottom line is while a Dragon Slayer is very good; he is still situational to your army build and strategy just like the Daemon Slayer.

### 4.3 Core

**Warriors** - You have two basic options: hand weapon and shield or great weapons. With the Resolute and Shieldwall special rules both of the options have merit. Hand weapon and shield warriors are the cheapest troops in our book and make a decent, cheap anvil unit but they really don’t have the strength to win combats, only to delay them. Great weapon armed warriors on the other hand have the strength to dish out the damage but with only heavy armor to protect them they tend to die in droves. They do make a decent hammer/damage unit especially when built up in a horde formation. The issue we run into with both of these warrior options is that we have much better troops that fill almost the same role, albeit at a much higher points cost. Over all, they are cheap and they are core, you can’t go too wrong by having them in your force.

**Quarrellers** - With quarrelers now having heavy armor we basically have a warrior armed with a crossbow. Since you can arm Quarrellers with
shields or great weapons you really have the same options as with
the warriors above but with the added bonus that they can shoot 30
inches. In a gun line or castle strategy Quarrellers are a must include.
As it is, there is rarely a list that cannot benefit from some sort of
Quarrelers presence if even a small unit to protect war machines. If
crossbows could move and shoot they would be an amazing choice.
Alas, they cannot, but quarrelers are still a great choice armed in any
configuration.

Thunderers - Thunderers fall into the same basic strategy and roles as
quarrelers with two significant distinctions. While Quarrellers have
crossbows, Thunderers have handguns and Thunderers do not have an
option to take great weapons. What this means is that Thunderers
can fill the shooty role or the anvil roll in a pinch, but cannot fill the
damage/hammer roll because of their lack of a great weapon option.
That being said, the armor piercing of handguns can be a significant
boon and may make this unit a good alternative to Quarrellers under
the right circumstances.

Longbeards - Longbeards are easily the best option in Core with better
Weapon Skill and Strength. In addition they have Immune to Psy-
chology and Old Grumblers special rules and can take a runic stan-
dard. Gone are the days where you could only take one unit of Long-
beards for every unit of Warriors. Now you can fill your entire core
requirement with Longbeard units. It is very hard to say not to take
Longbeards in your army. You can arm them like Warriors with hand
weapons and shields or with great weapons. They suffer from the
same issue as Warriors though as there are better anvil units out there
(Ironbreakers/Irondrakes) and better damage/hammer units out there
(Hammerers). Also like Warriors though, Longbeards are Core, so you
can’t go wrong by including them.

4.4 Special

Hammerers - Hammerers are the ultimate Dwarf... err... well, hammer.
This edition gives our Hammerers a much deserved two attacks along
with the Stubborn rule and the ability for any Hammerer to take a
challenge if the General is in the unit. The icing on the cake comes
with the Hammerers ability to take a 75 point Runic Banner, more
than any other unit can take minus the BSB. With the upgraded
attacks and special rules comes an upgraded price however, and that
is the first negative of this unit. The second is the fact for all their eliteness (is that even a word?), Hammerers still only have a 5+ save meaning they die just as fast as great weapon Warriors. This being said however, should a unit of Hammerers make it to combat and survive long enough to strike back at the enemy, that enemy will be hurting very badly indeed. The last thing to mention, and this is the main reason I believe Hammerers get the highest rating, is that their ability to take 75 point Runic Banners gives your army easy access to magic banners that can give a bubble of Stubborn, extra bonus to magic dispel, and even more. This is huge and should not be overlooked. In fact, I know of many that are now starting to field small 10 man units of Hammerers just to fit in more banner goodness.

Ironbreakers - If Hammerers are the ultimate Dwarf hammer, than Ironbreakers are the ultimate Dwarf anvil. With Gromil armour and a 5+ parry save that is constant due to the Shieldwall of Gromil special rule, a unit of Hammerers is the immovable rock in a sea of enemies. Put a tanked up Thane with an Oathstone in the unit and watch as your Ironbreakers get parry saves to the flanks and rear and become even more a pain for the enemy. With a myriad of ways to make them Stubborn a unit of Ironbreakers could tar pit some of the most elite enemy units for the entire game while the rest of your army wipes out the rest of his.

Miners - Take a warrior, give him a great weapon, move him to special and let him ambush and you now have a Miner. Miners cost the same as a similarly equipped warrior but gain the ability to ambush and even get a soft cover save on the turn they show up! The only downside of Miners compared to Warriors is that Warriors are Core. Depending on your plans (war machine hunters, flank attacks, full ambush army craziness) Miners can be a great option; it’s too bad there is so much competition for special points.

Slayers - Unbreakable and orange, these guys will pound anything they get to fight in combat or hold them up until all the Slayers are dead. The new Deathblow rule allows them an attack even upon their death. While everyone eagerly awaits an FAQ to clarify many questions about this rule, the end result is the same: Slayers are can now be a competitive choice. Their problem is the same that it always has been, they have no protection, so they are easily magic’d and shot to death. Though with the ability to give them Vanguard via a Runic Standard,
this is a somewhat lessened issue. Slayers are fun, but you must have a specific purpose in mind for them when you build your list otherwise they will be free points for your opponent.

**Cannon** - I will start this by saying that I consider it mandatory for almost (there are exceptions) every list to have either a Cannon or Grudge Thrower to deal with enemy cannons, big monsters etc. There are very few ways other ways to deal with certain big threats in enemy armies and the range and amazing accuracy of these two war machines with the correct runes is the best way. Even though cannons are more expensive than they used to be, they are still an amazing deal. You can put Runes on them to make them have flaming attacks to deal with those pesky regeneration saves, let you reroll misfires, and a myriad of other options. Never underestimate the power of S10 D6 wounds caused by a 48 inch range attack.

**Gyrocopter** - Gyrocopters are so good now it makes my head hurt. For hardly any points, we get a 20" moving, template attacking, once per game bombing, T5 4+ armour save bundle of awesomeness. There are so many uses for Gyrocopters it is ridiculous. They are good for march blocking, war machine hunting, redirecting, charge blocking, chaff hunting, and enemy harassing. Oh, and half of them can upgrade to Vanguard. Take this amazing package, put it in Special and you can take up to 6. This is the new must have. In a competitive list I suggest a bare minimum of one Gyro per 1000 points, many suggest 2.

**Bolt Thrower** - I am one of those grumbling Longbeards that bemoans the fact that our armies rely on gunpowder and long for the days we simply killed Goblins with our bare hands! (grumble, grumble) I had so much hope for the Bolt Thrower in the new book, but alas I was to be disappointed. The Bolt Thrower is competing against many other great choices in Special and is simply overpriced points wise. It does have some limited utility; it can be great with the right runes and an Engineer to shoot down enemy fliers or to deal with other threats in the enemy army, but for the points there are simply so many other things that do the same thing. It is hard to see any war machine choice that fills a role the Gyrocopter doesn't do better and for the points, the Bolt Thrower rarely makes sense.

**Grudge Thrower** - I will start this by saying that I consider it mandatory
for almost (there are exceptions) every list to have either a Cannon or Grudge Thrower to deal with enemy cannons, big monsters etc. There are very few ways other ways to deal with certain big threats in enemy armies and the range and amazing accuracy of these two war machines with the correct runes is the best way. The Grunge thrower is the perfect tool to smash those large, low toughness enemy units into oblivion. With the correct runes you can be amazingly accurate with a Grudge Thrower, so much so that I have seen enemy Characters sniped with it! Remember that a Grudge Thrower causes D6 wounds under that center hole and you can increase the strength to 4(10) with Runes making this an even greater threat against even elite troops and monsters!

4.5 Rare

Organ Gun - We now have to roll to hit, but with runes or a Master Engineer (or both!) this is not that big of a deal. We are much less likely to roll on the misfire chart as we have to roll a misfire on two artillery dice before doing so, and to make things even better, we can put a Rune of Forging on the war machine to reroll misfires! I actually think Organ Guns are better than the old book for the simple reason I have yet to have one blow up on me with the new rules. The potential damage this thing can dish out coupled with its 30 inch range will have most enemies making the destruction of your Organ Guns a number one priority, and rightly so! S5, armour piercing with a possibility of up to 20 shots is nothing to scoff at! I almost made this a must take choice, but there are so many options in Rare that can fulfill a similar role that you really do have a hard time making a decision as to what to bring.

Flame Cannon - A Flame Cannon fulfills a similar roll to the Organ Gun, though as a fire thrower it obviously works very differently. With the right Runes, a Flame Cannon can be absolutely devastating and by supercharging your shot you can possibly even hit the enemy on turn one! The one downside of the Flame Cannon is that its range is not quite as optimal as an Organ Gun and therefore requires careful deployment. With the right enemy, some skill and a little luck the Flame Cannon can be the bane of your enemy for the entire game!

Rangers - For the same cost and stats as a Quarreler with a great weapon you get a Quarreler with Scout and Throwing Axes. In addition,
they have a minimum unit size of 5 models making them to be the perfect Vanguard blockers. The downside? They are competing with some other amazing choices in Rare and as a Chaff unit, they are subpar with other similar units in other armies since they do not have skirmish and their primary missile weapon, the crossbow, is Move or Shoot. In certain builds making two large units and putting them in your opponents face on Turn one can be fun, but you will more likely see one or two units used as mentioned above, chaff and Vanguard blockers. A good choice, though it would have been great if they could Skirmish.

**Irondrakes** - Everyone agrees that Irondrakes are great, just how great is what we all argue about. Part of that argument revolves around the fact that there are numerous effective ways to field them. They excel as part of a gun line, as protectors for a war machine park, as flank guards and even as a good anvil unit. They are basically an Ironbreaker but replace the shield with an 18 inch S5 armour piercing, flaming attacks gun that can move and shoot. Then upgrade the armor to have a 6+ ward save and a 2+ ward save against flaming attacks. If those stats don’t get you salivating all over your beard then how about the fact that the unit champion can upgrade his weapon to a S8 24 inch range missile weapon? In addition to all the gear they can take and all the roles they can fill, they also can take a Runic Banner giving those lots of options. The favorite is to slap a couple of Runes of Slowness on them and laugh as your opponent takes multiple Stand and Shoot charge reactions. They are expensive and are competing against many other great options in Rare, but they should never leave you wanting.

**Gyrobomber** - The first time you drop the large template from the Gyrobomber over a unit of Goblins or other low toughness model and roll a Hit on that artillery dice you will wonder why you don’t take two of these in every game. But alas, as fun as that day will be when it comes, most of the time the Gyrobomber doesn’t get that awesome shot. At its core, a Gyrobomber really fills the same role as the Gyrocopter except that it cost half-again as many points, cannot vanguard, it’s Clatter Gun is much less reliable compared to the Gyrocopter’s Steam Cannon, and is a Rare instead of Special choice. While its bombing attack can be devastating, it is limited and can be wholly inaccurate compared to other Dawi weaponry which can fill almost the same roll. Enemy armies fear large templates generally though
and will make any Gyrobombers you field a priority target. All of the
above means that a Dawi general needs to be especially careful where
and how he moves a Gyrobomber and when he attacks.

5 Dwarf Item/Rune Analysis

5.1 Ancestral Heirlooms

5.1.1 Magic Weapons

The Hammer of Karak Drazh - Expensive for an item that will rarely
have any benefit. Even when this item gives you a benefit of the +3
initiative the fact that you reduce the enemy initiative only in that
close combat phase is pathetically useless.

Red Axe of Karak Eight Peaks - A great Item that has loads of benefits; if
you are fighting Skaven or Orcs & Goblins. Otherwise, it is useless.

5.1.2 Magic Armor

Magnificent Armour of Borek Beetlebrow - Expensive armour that to be
worth the points you need to know you’ll be fighting very high strength
enemies. Against anything less than strength 6 this armour is not
worth it.

5.1.3 Enchanted Items

Silver Horn of Vengeance - If you’ve built part of your army strategy around
this item it could be a very nasty surprise for your opponent, especially
if he is of the Elven variety.

Fiery Ring of Thori - A S4 Breath Weapon for a decently low cost. You
can rarely go wrong having this in your army.

5.1.4 Magic Standards

Banner of Lost Holds - Very expensive and can only be taken by our BSB.
Being able to reroll To Wound rolls is huge, especially for any Lords or
Thanes. That being said to really get your money’s worth you almost
need to ensure this goes in a Death Star unit or at the very least a
unit you KNOW will get to crush the opponent’s main unit. A good
banner, but still somewhat situational.
5.2 Runic Items

5.2.1 Weapon Runes

Master Rune of Skalf Blackhammer - The most expensive Weapon Rune and while it is nice to almost auto wound an enemy, the fact that you’re still hitting with your base strength modifier means anything you would want to invest these kind of points in to kill will have a very good armour save. There are much better options if you want to kill a high toughness enemy and they cost significantly less.

Master Rune of Smiting - D6 wounds is great and I imagine there may be a build or two out there that can really make this work, but it is a very expensive rune. We Dawi have many options for causing multiple wounds (Cannons, Grudge Throwers, Gyrobombers, etc) so this is not necessarily needed.

Master Rune of Alaric the Mad - Since most Characters that would use this can get a great weapon and most likely will have Armour Piercing due to a Runesmith this is rarely a good choice. Perhaps if you are running it on a Slayer that has a specific mission to take out a heavily armored foe... but even then you still have to wound that foe and they will most likely have a high toughness. This Rune is situational at best.

Master Rune of Breaking - You can really mess up someone’s plans with this rune if especially if used in a challenge. The problem is, as with most weapon runes, there are combinations and runes out there that are more effective in taking out the enemy than simply disarming him.

Master Rune of Dragon Slaying - Great rune... if you know a Dragon will be on the other side of the table... otherwise, useless.

Master Rune of Flight - You can do some pretty nifty stuff with this rune, but you have to get in at short range and then “shoot” with this and it may not even hit. You would really need to build up a strategy around this rune to have it worth it as it is a rare case where you would be in range to use this rune and you would not want to charge.

Master Rune of Snorri Spangelhelm - Dwarf Weapon Skill is already very high so you often are hitting at a 3+ anyways. On a Slayer, this could be a good rune to ensure your deathblow makes its mark. That being
said, this is a pretty cheap way to ensure you almost always hit in combat and that is definitely worth something.

**Master Rune of Swiftness** - This has many of the same ups and downs as the Master Rune of Snorri Spangelhelm with the difference that such a rune could very well be a cheap way to ensure a Dragon or Daemon Slayer gets a bunch of attacks before dying.

**Rune of Daemon Slaying** - If you know you are fighting Daemons, lots of cool ways to own your opponent, otherwise, useless.

**Rune of Fire** - This rune can be an easy, cheap way to give your Characters a magical, flaming attack to deal with those pesky ethereal and regeneration saves. Two of these runes give you a breath weapon, but the Fiery Ring of Thori is cheaper and does the same thing (though you don’t get the magical/flaming attacks). Three of these runes is very expensive and simply gives the breath attack D3 wounds. Worth the single rune for sure, possibly worth two if you have already used the Ring of Thori elsewhere. Three of them are not worth it in my opinion.

**Rune of Fury** - This rune grants an extra attack for one, adds Frenzy for two and adds the ability to add attacks for each successful attack made for three. For the single rune this could be worth the cost, though the extra cost for Frenzy and extra attacks is debatable. With the right Slayer this could be quite the blender if you have the right target and he survives to use his attacks. It could be paired with the Master Rune of Snorri or possibly Swiftness to good effect.

**Rune of Dismay** - If Dwarfs had lower leadership, this may have been a good choice, as it is, the Fear/Terror/Leadership minus are really only going to be worth the points against low leadership armies. For the Dwarfs, this rune is situational at best.

**Rune of Cleaving** - This rune was the one that could have made all the other weapons runes worth their cost, but alas they went about it in a very strange way. The first rune, while cheap, only grants Armour Piercing, which in our army meta of needing to bring multiple Runesmiths which already confer this ability makes this Rune useless most of the time. A second rune gives you the +1S but at a cost more than the +1S sword from the BRB. The 3rd rune gives Killing Blow which is an OK rule but you are using up all of your weapon rune slots to get there...
is there use for the Rune of Cleaving? Yes, but it could have been so much better.

**Rune of Might** - Finally! A weapon rune that is actually worth taking! If you are going to use a runic weapon and actually try to do anything worthwhile with it, there is a very good chance that weapon has a Rune of Might on it. It is somewhat situational as it only doubles the user’s strength vs. a T5 or higher enemy, but to be honest this is exactly where we need the strength bonus anyways. A second rune adds the D3 multiple wounds rule and is priced OK for what it does, but the issue here is that you’re taking points away from the oft needed armour runes. Overall you can rarely go wrong with this rune unless you are fighting an army entirely made up of Goblins.

**Rune of Striking** - This rune gives bonus’s to Weapon Skill and can even give re-rolls for failed to hit rolls. Overall, the costs for these runes are reasonable but because Dwarfs often have higher Weapon Skill compared to our opponents the benefit is more situational than it would seem at first. Still the ability to reroll failed hits is well priced and could find use in a few builds.

**Grudge Rune** - The rune is fluffy, but almost useless. Even at its bargain price, the Grudge rune requires you to tell your opponent which of his Characters your Character will be going after and any opponent worth his salt will ensure that you never get to make those points you spent worth anything.

**Rune of Parrying** - Enemies have a -1 to hit your character in close combat. This is basically a defensive rune on a weapon which allows you to not take an armour rune slot. As you will most often be building a tank character as opposed to killy character this rune becomes very attractive. Even by itself, you will rarely regret spending points on this rune.

**Rune of Speed** - This is the cheapest weapon rune and therefore an excellent way to avoid the Rule of Pride or to simply give your character a magical attack to deal with ethereals. Each one gives you an additional +1 to Initiative and therefore gives you almost the same benefits as the Hammer of Karak Drazh at a fraction of the cost. The only reason this wasn’t a /textcolorblueblue is because an initiative bonus is of limited advantage to a Dwarf since we have such low Initiative to start with.
5.2.2 Armour Runes

Master Rune of Adamant - Toughness of 10 is amazing, but it comes at a hefty price. In addition to being the most expensive armour rune in the book, you cannot take any other armor rune with this rune. This rune can be powerful when combined with a Lord on Shieldbearers but leaves you precious few points to do any other runic items. There really are much better options and very few situations where T10 is a better option than other runic combinations for the same cost.

Master Rune of Gromil - This is how you get a Thane a 1+ armour save. The Lord can get a 1+ save along with 2 extra wounds for just a few more points by adding Shieldbearers so this rune is really just for a Thane. This also makes a good option for a BSB that you don’t plan to put a Runic Banner on.

Rune of Fortitude - In a Dwarf world where the tank is king, the Rune of Fortitude is one of the standby armour runes. With a single rune you can get +1T for a decent point cost. Add a second and get a 5+ ward save for good measure. These are both great bases for combos that can make your Thane or Lord super hard to kill. A third Rune of Fortitude affords you some additional protection against multiple wounds but tends to be a bit pricy for what it does.

Rune of Iron - When taking runic armor, a combination that includes the Rune of Iron is almost a no brainer. The first rune gets you +1 wound, the second adds +1 Toughness and the 3rd adds 5+ regeneration. You will rarely see a competitive list that doesn’t include this rune in some combination.

Rune of Shielding - This rune gives a 2+ ward save against shooting and magic missiles and does so for a reasonable price. The problem is, however, that you will rarely have an opportunity where a character would be susceptible to even suffering a wound from shooting or magic missiles. Maybe on a Master Engineer assigned to protect some war machines? It is very situational.

Rune of Preservation - This used to be a staple in our old book and it is still very useful many builds that are meant to be defensive in nature often don’t find room for this rune on their armour. It is OK for points so it will never be a bad choice, there are simply many more options that often push this rune out of the running.
Rune of Impact - This rune is cheap and gives an impact hit at the wearer’s base strength. It is only one impact hit and only hits on the charge so the question is how many times do you plan for your character to charge in the game and is this one time attack worth the extra points? In my opinion, it is rarely worth it.

Rune of Stone - This gives +1 to your armour save. The cost of this rune is a steal and the Rule of Pride doesn’t apply so you can give it to any amount of characters. This rune means that you should never have a character that doesn’t have at least a single rune... and that rune should be the Rune of Stone.

5.2.3 Banner Runes

Master Rune of Groth One-Eye - You can have a 12” bubble of stubborn Dwarfs. Do I really need to say more? The only reason this didn’t fall into the must take category is because the rune cost keeps it locked to either the BSB or a unit of Hammerers... who are already stubborn. It is still a great banner and Dwarf enemies will hate the name Groth One-Eye!

Master Rune of Stromni Redbeard - This runic banner had so much potential if it had only been cheaper! As it is, you could use the points spent on this to instead bolster your units or gain other banners that are so much more useful! I don’t ever expect to see this Banner hit the table. It really is too bad... I consider this banner a missed opportunity.

Master Rune of Valaya - I expect I will get some amount of pushback by not making this an auto include banner. As it is this banner is amazing and in any game of over 2500 points I agree this becomes a purple. But below that mark, this banner is simply awesome even if not an auto-include. The additional +2 to dispel is very helpful, especially against magic heavy armies. The secondary ability which helps to dispel remains in play spells is only marginally helpful since we can use the power dice we generate in our own magic phase to do the same thing. We would only need them for anything else (casting spells) if we took an Anvil of Doom... which we shouldn’t be doing anyways.

Master Rune of Grungi - Yet another amazing choice for our banners! A 6 inch bubble of 5+ ward saves against shooting and magic missiles is awesome. Add to that fact that the bearer of the standard gets a 4+
wards save. If you could take this on something other than the BSB it would be an auto include. Still, this rune is pure awesomeness.

**Rune of Battle** - This rune, like the Stromni Redbeard rune had so much potential! If only it had been 10 or 15 points cheaper! Alas the biggest problem with this rune besides its slightly overinflated price is the fact that it suffers from being a substandard rune choice amongst so many other good ones. There are still other runes that are cheaper for dealing with Rule of Pride issues so you really won’t see this rune except in very specific builds or very large armies.

**Rune of Slowness** - This is a great option and very affordable for what it does. The basic idea here is to cause your enemy to fail his charge so you can charge instead. This works great on great weapon Longbeards, Hammerers and even Ironbreakers. It is absolutely AMAZING on Iron-drakes. Watch your opponent cry as he charges, takes your Drakegun stand and shoot, then fails his charge so you can shoot him again next turn and if he is brave enough, take another stand and shoot reaction to charge again. On a unit of Irondrakes, this rune really becomes a must take item.

**Rune of Sanctuary** - This rune is of very limited use on its own due to the fact that Runesmiths give Magic Resistance to any unit they join. The real benefit in this rune is its very low points cost which makes it an ideal rune to use in order to avoid the Rule of Pride. There is also some limited application in higher points games to confer a higher Magic Resistance since you can stack this rune.

**Rune of Stoicism** - This is Groth One-Eye’s little brother. This just gives stubborn to the unit bearing it and at a very reasonable price. Take it for all the reasons you’d take One-Eye but you can put it on unit standards.

**Strollaz’ Rune** - This is how you make your Dawi an effective all close combat army. The rune grants Vanguard and is very reasonably priced. You can build a list with multiple banners with this rune on it and be in your opponent’s face on Turn 1!

**Rune of Courage** - This rune grants immunity to psychology. We are an army of Leadership 9 warriors; we will very rarely care about panic. This rune is at best an add-on in order to avoid the Rule of Pride.
**Ancestor Rune** - To take a Leadership test on one die is great... but it is pretty situational at the best of times. Still, this can sometimes be better than a re-roll of normal leadership if you get caught in a bad combat situation. It could save you, but you often won’t find the room to fit this in compared to other, better Banner Runes.

### 5.2.4 Talismanic Runes

**Master Rune of Balance** - Despite the Grumbling of my fellow Dawi over the nerf this rune received, I still believe the Master Rune of Balance to be an OK choice, especially in high point games. The biggest problem this rune has is that it competes against the Master Rune of Valaya as our key magic defense item and it will lose to Valaya every time. Stealing a power die from your opponent is very powerful but since it now goes off only half the time it is simply not reliable compared to Valaya and therefore a secondary choice. Still, in those games where you can fit in both of them, the Master Rune of Balance becomes much more fun.

**Master Rune of Spite** - A nice, fluffy rune that is almost useless. If you have a character kitted out to do any sort of battle whether it be as a tank or killy, there are so many better options. If it were 10 Points cheaper, then maybe it would be worth it. I originally rated this as a red/bad choice but then someone pointed out here on the forums that you could put this on a cheap but still important character like a Runesmith and it could be used to actually kill a challenge or assassin character. This idea, while obviously situational is very plausible and would be very funny. I plan to try this out very soon.

**Master Rune of Passage** - See Master Rune of Spite above. Of all the things you can control in your competitive force, terrain is rarely one of them. I’m not sure this would be worth it even at 5 points.

**Rune of Warding** - Add +1 ward save for each one and it is reasonably priced. Any character kitted out with any sort of protection will usually have at least one of this rune.

**Rune of Spellbreaking** - The most important rune in our arsenal. One is a dispel scroll, two kill the spell on a 4+ roll (the old Spelleater). Take it as a breaker or as an eater, I don’t care... just make sure you have one per Runesmith/Runelord. Period.
**Rune of Luck** - Gives a re-roll that can be used offensively or defensively and could save your Dawi hide at a key part of the battle. It is cheap enough to be used as a way to avoid the Rule of Pride on other Talismanic Runes and therefore is extremely useful.

**Rune of the Furnace** - You get a 2+ ward save against flaming attacks (you’d be surprised how many are out there) and it is so cheap it is the first rune one goes for to avoid the Rule of Pride. It is a no-brainer choice.

### 5.3 Engineering Runes

**Master Rune of Immolation** - This rune is interesting, fluffy, and fun. However, competitive, it is not. I have seen some strategies that leave a war machine park flank exposed with a war machine that has this rune on it as a way to trick or weaken the enemy. The idea has merit but you have to build at least part of your force with this rune in mind. To make things worse, you will probably never be able to pull this trick off against the same opponent twice.

**Master Rune of Disguise** - This rune has gotten so much better with our update. Now you get hard cover and you get it for a decent price. The downside is that compared to the bonus given by the Master Engineer, this is second rate. Still, to add an Engineer cost quite a bit more points so overall, not a bad rune.

**Rune of Penetrating** - A single rune gives the +1 Strength and a second gives a reroll to wound. A single Rune of Penetrating should be mandatory on a Grudge Thrower and seriously considered on a Bolt Thrower. You could also have some fun with an Organ Gun, but there are usually much better runes to choose from.

**Stalwart Rune** - This rune is cheap enough to use as a Rule of Pride bypass but with war machines you will most likely not see the need. It is an interesting bonus for the +1 combat resolution, but with such low armor and only 3 wounds, you will rarely get to benefit from the combat resolution. Adding a second Stalwart Rune in order to get Unbreakable is more helpful but comes at double the price and would rarely be worth that additional cost.

**Rune of Accuracy** - A must take with a Grudge Thrower, Organ Gun and perhaps even the Bolt Thrower as well (wait, why are you taking a
bolt thrower?). The Organ Gun and Bolt Thrower also benefit from a Master Engineer, so there are other ways to make these war machines more accurate as well. Bolt Throwers will usually only get 4-6 shots per game and they need to ensure high success for to hit rolls. No matter how you cut it, this rune will be in the vast majority of Dawi Throngs.

**Rune of Forging** - There is rarely a reason you shouldn’t take this rune on two thirds of your war machines. This is why we are better than the Umgi. Nuff said.

**Flakkson’s Rune of Seeking** - This rune is cheap and very situational. If you know you’ll be facing flyers and you are taking bolt throwers, than this is a no brainer.

**Rune of Burning** - So cheap and can take away Regeneration. You should always have at least one war machine with this rune.