

A Brief Study of TSR Book Design

BY KEVIN CRAWFORD

DECEMBER 10, 2015

This document is an amateur book designer's best effort at a short and cursory analysis of the typography and book design used in early TSR *Dungeons & Dragons* game products. The examples studied range from the little brown books first published in 1975 to the BECMI boxed editions. This range was chosen as being most likely to be of interest and use to my particular audience, and is not meant to imply that a particular set of products is necessarily "more authentic" or better-designed than others in the TSR product line.

Those with more experience in using InDesign will also doubtless find ways to improve the included styles and objects. In most cases, I elected to use the simplest brute-force solution to a given design problem. While it may lack for elegance, these solutions should be relatively transparent to readers at a similar level of expertise.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I performed this work for the sake of my own education. Like many other gamers, I have a particular fondness for the artifacts of my own gaming youth. Combined with a natural and professional interest in typography, it seemed worthwhile to spend some time taking apart early TSR books and seeing just how their designers put them together in the first place.

USING THIS DOCUMENT

Other gamers and publishers are welcome to use this document for their own purposes, whether personal or commercial. Alongside this PDF should also be an InDesign source document with the requisite styles and objects embedded in the file. Anyone with access to InDesign through an Adobe Creative Cloud subscription should be able to copy-paste these styles and objects for their own work, or use the free Scribus layout software to load the IDML file version.

Not only would it give me a better acquaintance with the styles of my youth, it would be an opportunity to polish my Adobe InDesign skills. While I had no intention of perfectly replicating early TSR layouts in my own work, creating styles and objects that exactly matched these styles was a good working challenge to test my own style-creation abilities.

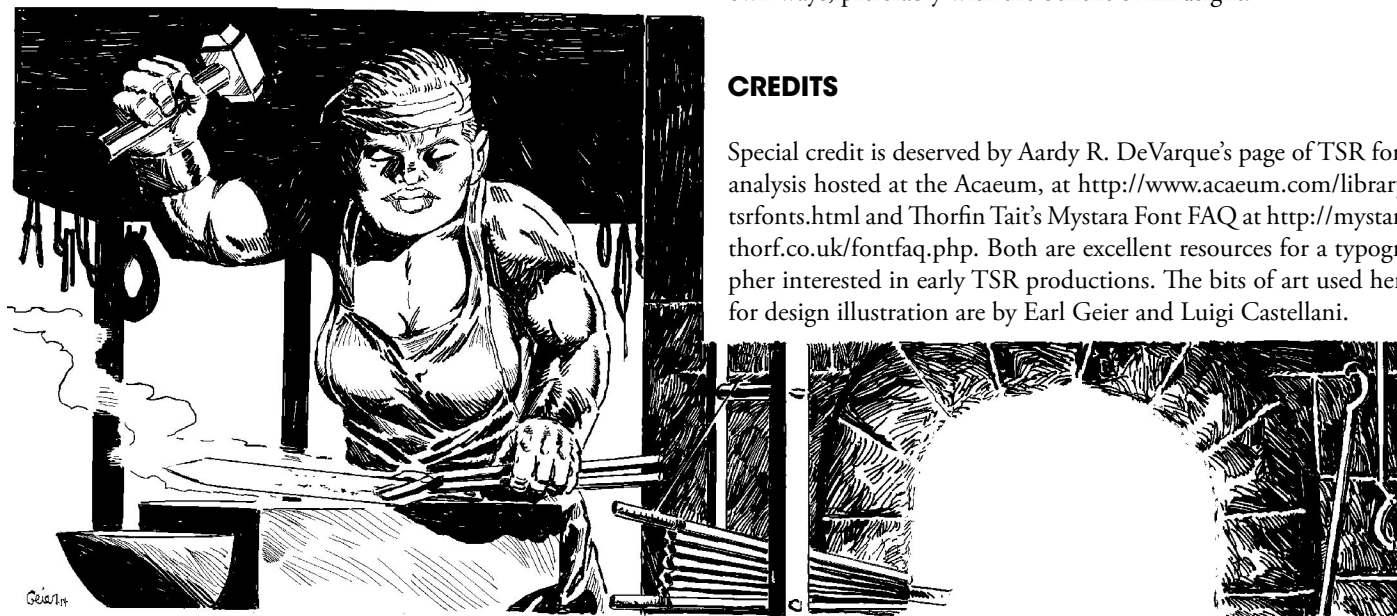
This is not to say, of course, that they *should* use them unchanged. A perfect replica brings up issues of trade dress duplication and suggests a certain lack of inventiveness from the creator. Aside from that, many of the products examined here weren't necessarily using the best possible typography in the first place. Many TSR modules, for example, weren't set to baseline grids. I was puzzled at this until I noticed how the inclusion of boxed text made it very difficult to break blocks at even line increments. As just one other example, the very limited space available in modules and booklets pressed for a kind of compression of whitespace that isn't to be encouraged.

Professional typographers and those with formal design training will doubtless find a great deal to improve in the following observations. My own expertise consists of nothing more exalted than a few years of patient fumbling. Anyone with an interest in lifting the styles and objects from this document is welcome to improve on them and bring about a more accurate reproduction.

Instead, designers should use these styles as references and hints for their own creativity. The clean simplicity of the early modules, the warmth of the B/X rulesets, the compact density of the first edition core books... these things are worth noticing and employing in your own ways, preferably with the benefit of hindsight.

CREDITS

Special credit is deserved by Aardy R. DeVarque's page of TSR font analysis hosted at the Acaem, at <http://www.acaem.com/library/tsrfonts.html> and Thorfin Tait's Mystara Font FAQ at <http://mystara.thorfin.co.uk/fontfaq.php>. Both are excellent resources for a typographer interested in early TSR productions. The bits of art used here for design illustration are by Earl Geier and Luigi Castellani.



BASIC TYPOGRAPHY CONCEPTS

Most of the readers who've bothered to download this study will be acquainted with some of the basic jargon of typesetting and book design. For the benefit of those who haven't been spending an unseemly amount of time cursing at a layout board, however, there are a few basic concepts that should be defined before you go on to the rest of the study.

TYPEFACES, FONTS, BASELINE GRIDS AND LEADING

A *typeface* is simply particular collection of hopefully-coherent lettering. Garamond is a typeface, for example, as is Comic Sans or Avant Garde. There can be multiple versions of a typeface, such as the many different cuttings of Garamond over the centuries. These versions share the same general style, but can vary in character width, details of each letter, and other subtle differences. Thus, the versions of Souvenir or Avant Garde that TSR used in their books may not be the exact same typefaces as those you use now.

A *font* is technically a particular size and sub-style of a particular typeface. Thus, you might say that the Futura typeface you're using comes in book and italic fonts. For most practical purposes these days, the word "font" is treated as synonymous with "typeface", though pedants will point out the difference. Font sizes are measured in *points* of 1/72 of an inch. Most RPG book body text is set in 10 point fonts, though you'll occasionally see them as small as 8 points or as large as 12.

A *baseline grid* is, in its simplest form, just a series of invisible horizontal lines down your page, just like the lines on notebook paper. Each line of text rests on a gridline, ensuring that with multiple columns on the page, each line always matches up with its partner in the adjoining column. The height of your baseline grid is derived from the point size of your chosen body font by way of the font's leading. A skilled designer uses a baseline grid for a lot more than evening up lines of body text, but this use is the one that will be most relevant in the study to follow.

Leading, (pronounced "ledding"), is the space between baseline grid lines. InDesign automatically sets a paragraph's leading to 120% of the text's point size, which is usually a good choice; if you've got 10 point text, you want 12 point leading. The smaller your text, the tighter the leading can be, while bigger text needs more leading to remain legible. You can override the automatic leading in an InDesign paragraph style if you want to tweak things.

HEADS AND SUBHEADS

Heads are headlines and other emphasized text used to set off a topic. The line above this paragraph is a head, for example. Usually you'll have a main head for a topic or page, and then "subheads" for individual subtopics. Heads should always be spaced out from the surrounding text, and there should always be more space before a head than between it and the following body text. For text set to a grid, this is simple; put two lines before, and one after.

Note that head spacing gets tricky if you're setting your body text to a baseline grid. If your head's leading is 14 points, for example, and your body text's leading is 12 points, then setting it to a grid will make a big empty space after the head as that 14 point leading gets put into two 12-point gridlines. If you've only got one gridline before it on the page, you can then end up with more space between the head and the body text than there is before it, which is wrong.

To deal with this, make your head's leading plus its following space equal to an even divisor of gridlines. This means it's better to have a 10 point subhead set in bold or small caps, which makes a 12 point leading, which fits neatly into a single gridline. For major section heads, you could use an 18 point head with 6 points of following space, thus creating a neat, even fit into two lines.

MARGINS AND INDENTATIONS

Margins have a traditional scale of size. The inside, spineward margin is always the smallest, after which is the top margin, then the outer margin, and then the bottom margin. For classically-composed books, there's always a mathematical relationship between the margins, just as there is between the page itself and the size of the text block; you might have a quarter-inch inside margin, half-inch top, three-quarters outer and full-inch bottom, for example.

As you'll see in the study, TSR's book designers didn't exactly agree with that. In most of their books, in fact, they exhibit a vigorous dislike of margins and try to shrink them to nothingness, with the exception of BECMI's gigantic headers.

Indentations don't appear much in TSR-era D&D books, as most of them use whitespace lines between paragraphs. As a general rule, if you're putting spaces between your paragraphs, you don't indent them, and vice-versa. If you do indent a paragraph, you usually do so by the width of a capital M, or an "em space" as it's called. As will be seen, TSR often preferred much deeper indentations in the books that used them.

As a special note, *indents never appear after a head*. The first paragraph after your head is always flush with the left margin, even if the paragraphs that come after it are indented. You see a lot of people making this mistake in their books. I certainly did in one of my early efforts.

STROKES AND FILLS

A *stroke* is a thin line under or around something. The line around boxed text is a stroke, for example, as is the thicker line underneath a table's title. As a general rule, you should be parsimonious with strokes. Every row in a table does not need to be stroked. Let the text guide the reader's eye on narrow tables, and fills on wide ones.

Fill is the coloring inside a box or cell. Tables with alternating light and dark rows have an "alternating fill", for example. Fills are most useful on wide tables that need hints to keep the eye on a line.

USING AND MODIFYING THESE STYLES

All of the styles and tables in this document are intended to be easily stripped for use by other small publishers or people who just want to create their own material. The tips on using and modifying these objects refer to Adobe InDesign, as that's what I use myself, but the basic ideas are applicable to Scribus as well. It's my understanding that the .IDML file with this document should be importable by Scribus and some of the more recent versions of InDesign made before the current Creative Cloud release.

The tips here are no substitute for a few hours spent on the Adobe help pages for InDesign, but they should tip a reader off to some of the most important concepts to master if they're to use these styles and objects in their own publications.

THE VIRTUE OF CHANGE

I would strongly discourage commercial publishers from using these styles and layouts unchanged. Aside from questions of copying trade dress, the simple fact is that a lot of early TSR books weren't put together very well. Part of it was due to the natural difficulty of book design in a pre-digital age, and part was due to the fact that RPG books are extremely hard to lay out well, whatever tool you might be using.

Instead, I'd encourage you to use these styles and objects as starting points for your own creativity. You can make callbacks to classic gaming products in your choice of styles and designs, but you can remedy some of the issues they presented such as stingy margins, a lack of baseline grids, and body text font choices only a 70s-era mother could love.

USING STYLES IN INDESIGN

To get any meaningful use out of InDesign, you're going to need to be comfortable with using *paragraph styles*. A paragraph style is a kind of automatic formatting for the raw text of a paragraph. It defines everything about that paragraph – what font, what leading, what indent, what justification, what following spacing, right down to giving specific ranges of acceptable glyph size wiggle for smoothing hyphenation. By nesting character styles inside a paragraph style, you can make it do things like “Put everything in this paragraph in heavy all-caps Futura up to and including the first colon you find. Then put the rest in Adobe Garamond, but with a quarter-inch outdent.”

Once you've created a paragraph style, you just click somewhere in a paragraph, select the style from the pop-out menu on the workbar to the right, and it automatically is applied. If you've got this file open in InDesign you can play with it now, selecting styles from the various paragraph style folders and seeing how this paragraph changes in appearance.

Styles are enormously important in setting a book correctly. It would be ruinously difficult to set everything just right by manually highlighting text and choosing fonts and particulars from the top bar op-

tions. Using crude tricks like manual hard returns between paragraphs to create spaces just means that everything's going to be pushed out of alignment the first time the text changes. Instead, you want to control everything with styles, because it's faster, more reliable, and easier to change things later if you decide to do things differently. Just change the style, and everything that's currently using that style will change to match accordingly.

This document contains dozens of styles that have already been set to emulate their respective TSR book design origins. I've set a number of fussy little details with them, such as line-keep options, glyph size wiggling, and other such minutiae. If you want to make your own, the easiest way is to pick one that's close to what you want, copy it by dragging it onto the “new style” icon at the bottom of the window, and then make your alterations in the copy.

You'll also notice a number of *object styles* as well, under the Object Styles workbar button. In its simplest form, an object is just a rectangular space on the page where you put text or art. You can draw one with the Type Tool on the left-hand workbar. By default, text boxes will be “Two-Column Text” style. You can change this by selecting the object and picking a different object style, if you need a single-column object.

MASTER PAGES

A master page is the “background” of a layout page. It's where you put your page numbers, your running heads, and other universal page elements that appear on almost every page. You can find the master pages at the top of the list given in the Pages button on the workbar to the right. To apply a different master page, highlight the pages in the Pages list, right click, and select “Apply Master to Pages”.

Occasionally you'll need to tweak something on a page, such as a running head to reflect the page's topic, or clearing out running heads on a chapter title page. To do so, select the page in the Pages list, right click, and select “Override All Master Page Items”. This will let you delete or edit them on your page.

PREPARING THIS DOCUMENT FOR USE

Now that you've got the basic ideas in hand, how do you start laying things out? The easiest way is to first save this document as a new InDesign document. Delete all the unwanted master pages and all the excess document pages, clearing everything out. Now open up the original file, and use it to copy-paste in tables and other objects that you want to use from the original document, editing them around to fit your preferences.

Note that it's best to copy the objects in, change the styles to fit what you want, and then copy your new version elsewhere where it's needed. Otherwise, each import from the old document will also bring along the old styles with it, forcing you to change it over to your new, edited styles.

LBB ELEMENTS

The example elements here are drawn from the WotC reproduction of Book 1, titled "Men & Magic". The physical dimensions of the booklet are 7.5 inches tall and 5.25 inches wide. The text block on each page is single-column, with half-inch margins on all sides but the top, where a quarter-inch margin was used.

Spacing distinction was not always maintained between heads and body text. In most cases there is properly larger amount of space after the text that precedes a head than follows it. Other times there remains only a single line's spacing both before and after a head. Paragraph indents are also very deep, and could be made shallower.

For the sake of accurate reproduction I've left the head styles as-is with only one line following. If you set the final paragraph of a passage in "LBB Body Final" style, however, an additional line of blank space will be added after the paragraph.

Typefaces Used

Only three typefaces were used in the sample chosen – one for the body text, one for the game itself, and one for the title of the book on the title page. Modulations of the body typeface were used to provide subheads.

Body text for this edition of the LBBs is in Futura, here represented by Futura PT, which is available through Typekit for subscribers to Adobe CC. Heads are done in the same typeface in Heavy style, all-caps. Subheads are in Heavy style at the same point size as the body text, with normal capitalization for their text. Note that other printings used Univers in place of Futura.

The Futura used in the booklets evidently did not have an italic. Instead, underscoring was used wherever an italic would normally have been employed. For more modern sensibility, avoid underlining.

The title of the game itself appears to have been Quentin EF or some close relative. For highly decorative fonts such as this, avoid using them at anything smaller than 60 points, and 72 is perhaps better. Most decorative fonts lose their distinction at smaller sizes.

The title of the individual book was in Chisel D, which along with its close equivalents appears to be unavailable for use in PDFs. The Nauert used above is a marginal substitute and lacks a clear license.

Table Design

Table text was slightly larger than body text and did not appear to have been set to a baseline grid. Few of the tables had cell strokes of any kind, relying on whitespace and centered content to keep the eye oriented on the tables. A few elements did have light cell strokes along the bottom of the column header cells when long lists were involved.

If the contents of a cell are numeric, they are centered in the cell. If they are text, they are usually left-justified in the cell. Column heads are justified in the same way as their contents. Most are Futura in Heavy style, usually underscored, though some are Book style. Try not to let a page end with a table, if it's possible to avoid it. Because the tables have no real footer to them, it can lend a page foot an unfinished look if it trails away in a table's whitespace.

MULTI-COLUMN TABLE TYPE A:

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3

MULTI-COLUMN TABLE TYPE B:

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3

<u>Title Here</u>	<u>Multicolumn</u>	<u>Table Type</u>
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2

REWORKED CLASS DETAIL TABLE:

<u>Hooligan</u>	<u>XP Needed</u>	<u>Hit Dice</u>	<u>Attack</u>	<u>Spells & Level</u>					
				<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Mook	0	1d4	20	1	-	-	-	-	-
Thug	1,000	2d4	19	2	-	-	-	-	-
Brute	2,000	3d4	18	2	1	-	-	-	-
Cad	4,000	4d4	17	3	1	-	-	-	-
Savage	8,000	5d4	16	3	2	1	-	-	-
Riff-Raff	16,000	6d4	15	4	2	1	-	-	-
Ruffian	32,000	7d4	14	4	3	2	1	-	-
Goon	64,000	8d4	13	5	3	2	1	-	-
Hooligan	128,000	9d4	12	5	4	3	2	1	-
Legbreaker	256,000	9d4+1	11	5	4	3	2	1	-
Revolutionary	+128,000	9d4+2	10	5	5	4	3	2	1

SAVING THROWS:

<u>Class & Level</u>	<u>Poison & Death Spell</u>	<u>Polymorph, Paralysis & Wands</u>	<u>Petrification</u>	<u>Breath Weapon</u>	<u>Staves & Spells</u>
Hooligan 4-6	12	13	14	15	16
Hooligan 7-9	12	13	14	15	16
Hooligan 10+	12	13	14	15	16
Nimrod 1-5	12	13	14	15	16
Nimrod 6-10	12	13	14	15	16
Nimrod 11+	12	13	14	15	16

ATTACK MATRIX:

<u>Armor Class</u>	<u>Roll to Hit by Level</u>					
	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-9</u>	<u>10-12</u>	<u>13-15</u>	<u>16+</u>
9	11	9	7	5	3	2
8	12	10	8	6	5	3
7	13	11	9	7	6	4
6	14	12	10	8	7	5
5	15	13	11	9	8	6
4	16	14	12	10	9	7
3	17	15	13	11	10	8
2	18	16	14	12	11	9

EXAMPLE PAGES

DESIGNING THE PAGE:

Lines run the width of the page, which is acceptable on a booklet-sized page but should be avoided for sizes larger than 6 x 9 inches. Initial paragraphs are flush left with the margin, but following ones are indented by two-thirds of an inch.

This paragraph is set in "LBB Body Text", a style that automatically applies to the next paragraph after an "LBB Body Initial" style. This style will continue until you change a paragraph to something else.

To ensure the proper spacing for headers and other elements, set the final paragraph in "LBB Body Final" style to add an extra line of blank space, which will combine with the space before header styles to give the right distance between them and the prior text. If for some reason you don't want the extra space, leave the final paragraph in LBB Body Text style.

MONSTER ENTRIES: begin with all-caps underscored heavy monster names terminated at the first colon. The "LBB Body Monster" paragraph style automatically applies this format to a paragraph. These entries always have one blank line after them, with multiple entries thus stacking up with a line of blank space between each. Because of this spacing, indents are not appropriate for them.

Spell and Magic Item Entries: use heavy, non-underscored body text that also terminates at the first colon in the paragraph, and like monster entries forgo indentation in favor of line spacing after the entry.

EXAMPLE TABLE:

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3

Subheads Need Room

As you can see, the subheads should have 2 lines before and 1 line after. While you could theoretically drop the heads directly on top of the text and leave just 1 line before it to save space, that would be inadvisable on such a dense page. White space is not your enemy. It should be used to distinguish the page elements.

AN ALTERNATE PAGE LAYOUT

This page demonstrates how you might use this set of styles on a conventional 8.5 x 11 inch US Letter-sized page. The most obvious difference is the presence of two columns of text. As soon as your page gets bigger than 6 x 9 inches you should start employing multiple columns in your design. It's too burdensome to the reader to make them scan a line of text almost eight inches long. By the time they get to the right-hand edge of the text block, they lose their place.

You also need to add more whitespace. Solid, relentless blocks of 10 point text are very hard on the reader, even if you break them up into multiple columns. Using a spaced paragraph style adds a little breathing room for the reader's eyes.

Using a larger page does give you more room for tables and art elements, but try not to go overboard with very large tables. Because the table styles used here don't have strokes or fills to help discipline the reader's attention, it's easy to lose your place in the table if you can't easily see all of it at once. Use alternate row fills for large tables.

You'll note that these paragraphs are set in "LBB Body Columned", a style intended for use in multiple columns of text. The paragraphs are not indented. Instead, a line of blank space is provided after each one. As always, indents and paragraph spacing are a "choose one" sort of choice. If you have one, you can't use the other.

If you decide to use these styles with a full letter-sized page, you'll also want to adjust the LBB Header and LBB Subhead styles so that their "next style" setting is set to LBB Body Columned instead of LBB Body Initial, the better to save yourself time when setting text.

LBB Design Strengths

While the design of the "Little Brown Books" is utterly lacking in the flash and color of more modern efforts, there are a number of very creditable qualities about it. Futura is a good typeface, and the way the LBBs use different weights and styles of it to provide for all the books' needs ensures that their fonts will always be in harmony. You don't really need multiple typefaces for your book, if you can weight and style the same face in sufficiently distinct ways.

This trick doesn't work for every typeface, however. If the one you're using for your body text only comes in one flavor, don't try to force it into serviceability by changing its size or applying software-based alterations to it. Look for another font in the same family.

The choice of a slightly larger font for table text is also a good move because there are no cell strokes or typeface differences to visually cue the reader to the table's presence. The larger body text immediately alerts the reader that they're looking at a table.

With these styles, however, you're going to have to be careful to be extremely disciplined about their usage. If you use a particular weight and style to indicate a particular type of element, like all-caps underlined heavy for monster entries, don't use it for anything else. The styles are all you have to cue the reader, so don't mix them.



REASONS FOR ZOMBIE JUBILATION

<u>d00</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Reason</u>
01-05	Brains	Brains	Brains
06-10	Brains	Brains	Brains
11-15	Brains	Brains	Brains
16-20	Brains	Brains	Brains
21-25	Brains	Brains	Brains
26-30	Brains	Brains	Brains
31-35	Brains	Brains	Brains
36-40	Brains	Brains	Brains
41-45	Brains	Brains	Brains
46-50	Brains	Brains	Brains
51-55	Brains	Brains	Brains
56-60	Brains	Brains	Brains
61-65	Brains	Brains	Brains
66-70	Brains	Brains	Brains
71-75	Brains	Brains	Brains
76-80	Brains	Brains	Brains
81-85	Brains	Brains	Brains
86-90	Brains	Brains	Brains
91-95	Brains	Brains	Brains
96-00	Brains	Brains	Brains

Early Module Elements

The example elements here are largely drawn from dungeon module B1, "In Search of the Unknown", first published in 1978, though some elements are taken from A1, "Slave Pits of the Undercity" published in 1980. Module styles were largely consistent within that time frame, albeit a few style tweaks distinguish them.

The largest difference between the two modules is the use of "boxed text" in A1 for the room descriptions, while B1 simply describes the room inline with the rest of the body text. The boxed text innovation appears first around 1980. Earlier modules, such as the GDQ series, T1, B1-B2, and X1 all use inline text. While omnibus modules that appear later use this inline text when reproducing these modules, new content from some point in 1980 onward relies on boxed room text.

TYPEFACES USED

Almost without exception, only two different typefaces were used in the early modules. For the earliest, including B1, Avant Garde Bold was used for title and heads while lighter weights were used for body text. Later modules such as the G123 omnibus used Helvetica Bold for the titles, though they also relied on Avant Garde for the interior body text, even though Avant Garde is really only meant for display uses.

Text for early modules appears to have been mostly set to a baseline grid, though this appears to have been sacrificed regularly for modules using boxed text. Heads sit very close to their following text, but usually have at least two lines of space before them.

The head styles given here follow that pattern and are not set to sit on a baseline grid. If you want a more tidy pair of columns you'll want to turn that on and be careful about your inclusion of tables, boxed text, or other material that doesn't fit neatly onto a grid.

TABLE DESIGN

Table design largely follows the pattern laid down in the LBBs. Each column is without strokes or fills, with numbers centered and text left-justified. Column heads use the same justification as their contents, and are usually normal bold text. A few have underlined column labels, and a few more use centered all-caps titles replicated by the "EM Section Head" style given here.

Unlike the LBBs, however, table text is at the same font size as body text. This makes it all the more important to be generous with whitespace when setting these tables, as there's little else to visually distinguish them.

Table Title	Column 2	Column 3
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2

Table Title	Column 2	Column 3
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2
Item	1	2

SHINY TREASURES

- 1) A scroll of **magic missile** done in glitter
- 2) A suit of **leather armor +1** sized for gnomes
- 3) A 500 gp faience chamberpot
- 4) A chromed **sword +1**

HAPLESS HENCHMEN

1. Phront the Misaligned
Str 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Con 11, Dex 11, Cha 12
2. Yorblad the Questionable
Str 4, Int 12, Wis 18, Con 5, Dex 11, Cha 9
3. Glinby Frume
Str 13, Int 8, Wis 4, Con 11, Dex 13, Cha 17
4. Lamentable Frimp
Str 10, Int 10, Wis 13, Con 5, Dex 15, Cha 13

The henchmen entries in the table above use the "EM Body Henchmen First Line" style, which automatically shifts to an indented style for the following stat line.

Thieves

1. Zorlon
2. Frintwort
3. Lorm
4. Wizlont
5. Hobbleby

Knaves

1. Zod
2. Raffnit
3. Glern

This faux two column style uses a table to get the same distinction, along with the "EM Body Text Numbered" styles to automatically number a list of items. By default, however, all numbering is continuous. To restart the count at 1 for the second column, right-click before Zod and choose "Restart Numbering".

PRE-1980 SECTION HEADING

These modules used text flush with the left margin. Text unrelated to specific dungeon rooms is set flush, though inset matter is indented by a quarter-inch or so, such as with lists like this:

- 1 suit of plate mail
- 7 wooden bandyclefs

Matter that deserves a subheading gets an all-caps heavy left-justified subhead like the one below.

ROOM ENTRY STYLES

Note that the subhead is assumed to come after body text, and thus have a line of space already before it due to the termination of the prior style. By default, it also provides a half-line space following the subhead. If you plant the subhead after an element which does not have at least a line of following space, you'll need to duplicate the subhead style and then give the new style whatever spacing you need.

4. **B1 STYLE ROOM.** In module B1, rooms were set flush with the left margin, with the room number followed by a period, then a roughly 1/3 inch tab, then the room name in normal caps terminated by a period. This "EM Room Title Flush" paragraph style automatically sets that style for text set in it.

5. **B2 STYLE ROOM:** In B2, however, rooms moved to a hanging indent style, with the room number flush with the left margin and the rest of the paragraph indented by about a quarter-inch. The "EM Room Title Indented B2" style automatically applies this style, shifting to "EM Body Indented" as the next style after a paragraph break.

Monsters are given only a name and a basic statline, such as mentioning an orc (AC 9, MV 12", HD 1, hp 8, #AT 1, D 1-6). Important figures sometimes receive all-caps normal text for their name, such as the CASTELLAN.

SPELL LIST STYLE

One element sometimes needed is a list of spells prepared by a given NPC. These appear in simple outdented form, with the outdent equal to the length of the spell level text. The easiest way to reproduce this is with a three-column table, resizing the first column to provide whatever indent spacing is needed.

First level: Magic Missile, Sleep Charm Person, Detect Magic

POST-1980 SECTION HEADING

Room entry styles changed notably post-1980.

4. DUNGEON ROOM:

This style is found chiefly in late 1980-era modules and later products. The boxed text generally includes whatever details might be obvious to the PCs at first glance. Use of boxed text can make it very challenging to set your text to a baseline grid, however. To simplify inline setting the boxed text is put into a single-cell table with a .75 stroke.

Further details relevant to the DM go after the boxed text, along with monster statistics. In modules of this era, monsters received very little call-out in the text itself, appearing in a regular face.

For example, the room might refer to two doom wombats (AC 5, MV 9", HD 4+1, hp 16, 8 #AT 1, D 1-4 + breath weapon). Individual NPCs of consequence sometimes receive boldface as a call-out, such as the mention of **Yorg the Hermit** (AC 9, MV 12", HD 1, hp 8, #AT 1, D 1-8).

Magical items also appear in boldface, as do spell names. When other rooms are cited in a room description they take the same heavy bold face as appears in the room entry. Thus, mention of this room would be as **DUNGEON ROOM**.

Areas with a single heading and multiple locations of importance are presented with a number for the main entry and lowercase letters for the sub-elements. The passage below is an example, though you'll note that the room title is in the EM Body Indented Spaced style, to provide a half-line of following space so as not to crowd the areas.

This space is undesirable for normal room headers as it pushes the boxed text too far away from the header. A full line's space is also undesirable, as it leaves the room title too far from the area title.

5. WOMBAT BATHS:

a. Caldarium:

Numerous wombats are scalded here.

Room details go here. such as they might be for such a location.

b. Frigidarium:

Numerous wombats are frosted here.

Room details go here. such as they might be for such a location.

Early Module Example Pages

The following few pages contain examples of each early module style in use. The text is taken from my adventure "The House of Bone and Amber" for *Spears of the Dawn* tweaked slightly to show the features of each design.

The first page replicates the styles used in B1, in particular the flush-left room descriptions and normal all-caps room titles. As with B1 itself the text is not set to a baseline grid. A designer who wanted to nod at this style might be well-served to change that.

The absence of boxed text spares the designer from having to deal with objects that don't break along convenient line increments. The EM Section Head style used for the column header is sized in 14 point with 6 points of following space, allowing for an even two grid lines of 10 point text.

The second page sets the same text in B2 style, in the standard format used until some time in 1980. Again, this text is not set to a baseline grid, but in the absence of unevenly-sized page elements there's no reason you couldn't fix that in your own work. The heavy bold room names are the same 10 points as the body text, so they won't interfere with a clean grid setting.

The third page sets the text in A1 style, the major difference being the inclusion of boxed text for the GM to read to the players. The value of the text to the GM is a debate for a different time. What is not debatable is that it presents a number of new challenges for the person setting the text.

The boxed text can't be broken over columns, and it is highly undesirable to have the box text at the foot of one column and the following body text starting at the head of the next. At least a paragraph's worth of text should stick with the box.

These limits cause each room to have a much larger minimum footprint in a column than the B1 or B2 styles. While putting only four or five lines of a room in one column and wrapping the rest into the next may not be wonderful typesetting, it's at least tolerable. Boxed text makes that impossible - you need to fit the boxed text plus at least two or three lines of the following body text before you can reasonably wrap it.



The final page in the sequence is a hybrid style that takes its basic feel from B2, but sets it to a baseline grid and introduces a monster stat block callout. Tables do present something of a challenge to this style, because the additional cell padding causes tables to occupy an uneven amount of vertical space. The easiest way to deal with this is to just click-drag the table's height until it fills an even grid increment. Art slots also need to be adjusted carefully to fit the increment of the baseline.

THE TOMBS OF THE FAITHFUL

The Old Lord favored his most loyal living servants with the serenity of true death. Their remains were lodged here in tunnels dedicated to their memory.

1. CHAMBER OF UNENDING LONGING. The air of this chamber is filled with a haze of dust-fine powdered bone, a thick layer resting on every flat surface. At the far wall, four withered, mummified Nebeti (AC 7, MV 12", HD 1, hp 3,3,4,5, #AT 1, D 1-6) are clawing at the stone wall with fleshless arms. Shackled by Akhen's curses in death and forbidden to leave by the tomb's entrance, their only thought was to return to their families. Their efforts have dug the room out of the bedrock; as their bones are slowly ground to powder, the magic that animates them restores the broken limbs from the dust. They will ignore intruders unless some effort is made to stop them. Even if destroyed, they will eventually reanimate until their remains are taken from the House.

2. AMBER MUMMIFICATION ROOM. A complex array of vats, cauldrons, pipes, and furnaces fill this room, and the smell of sweet pine still lingers in the air. The Old Lord experimented extensively with amber encasement as a technique for staving off the withering of Eternal flesh, and his final experiment involved a recently-discarded Eternal concubine. The young Nebeti girl stands against the far wall, the perfect flowering of her beauty glazed in an inch-thick layer of gleaming amber. The girl has been "alive" in the fashion of the Eternal and conscious for forty years, and nothing remains of her self-awareness but a burning desire to see the Old Lord destroyed. If the amber is touched, a last heroic convulsion on her part will allow her to crack the amber shell, screaming of "the key in the yellow skull" in the Deshrite tongue, referring to the key she hid to the Old Lord's private sanctum. Once cracked, the shell will collapse into powder and shards. Her long-entombed body will soon follow after, the vigor of her own motions breaking her into a brown dust indistinguishable from the amber.

3. DEFLESHING ROOM. Four smooth-glazed clay tanks dominate this chamber, each one the size of a large sarcophagus and covered by a marble lid. Within three of the tanks, the desiccated husks of ancient flesh-eating beetles lie in heaps around the yellowed bones they were meant to clean. Within the northeast tank, the beetles died after feasting upon the corpse of a witch, and the sorcerer's hateful spirit has animated the husks. They will swarm out of the tank as soon as the lid is slid aside (AC 5, MV 9", HD 3, hp 15, #AT 1, D 1-6). The beetle swarm is immune to common weapons, while any behavior that would logically destroy a great many beetles will inflict 1d8 damage on it. Magic, torches, or burning oil will do double damage to the swarm.

Art Slot. Stretch it to get an even page foot.

4. OSSUARY. The bones of faithful minions were immured here in the ossuary, stacked high along the walls in patterns fixed by mortar and keystone-skulls. A shrine to one of the serpent-headed Gods Below is erected against the far wall, a few ancient offerings left before the fanged face.

Incense worth 50 silver ingots.

A black glass **dagger +1**.

A green glass bottle filled with a brownish crust of long-dried blood.

A cup of beaten gold worth 100 silver ingots.

Taking any of the offerings will inflict a **curse** on the profaner, forcing them to fail their next saving throw.

5. FRESCO ROOM. A Nebeti painter was commanded to decorate this room with wall frescoes celebrating the glorious deeds of the Old Lord and his faithful servants. The conquest of Paraku is depicted in bloody fashion, with the undying legions of the Eternal swarming over the wall and Old Lord Akhen at their head. Foul banquets of human flesh and festivities of more horrid variety still are shown interspersed with scenes of torment and grinding labor inflicted upon the wretched inhabitants of the city. In particular, the Old Lord is shown threatening the Nebeti with a green bowl, a thing that seems to induce terror.

The floor of the chamber is parquetry of rotting wood. A faint cloud of black mold puffs upward at each step.

6. NICHED HALL. The walls of this chamber are lined with small niches for the bones of the dead, each one labeled with a carving in small Deshrite glyphs. Most of them are Nebeti names, though some seem to be the bones of Lokossan collaborators.

THE TOMBS OF THE FAITHFUL

The Old Lord favored his most loyal living servants with the serenity of true death. Their remains were lodged here in tunnels dedicated to their memory.

- 1. CHAMBER OF UNENDING LONGING:** The air of this chamber is filled with a haze of dust-fine powdered bone, a thick layer resting on every flat surface. At the far wall, four withered, mummified Nebeti (AC 7, MV 12", HD 1, hp 3,3,4,5, #AT 1, D 1-6) are clawing at the stone wall with fleshless arms. Shackled by Akhen's curses in death and forbidden to leave by the tomb's entrance, their only thought was to return to their families. Their efforts have dug the room out of the bedrock; as their bones are slowly ground to powder, the magic that animates them restores the broken limbs from the dust. They will ignore intruders unless some effort is made to stop them. Even if destroyed, they will eventually reanimate until their remains are taken from the House.
- 2. AMBER MUMMIFICATION ROOM:** A complex array of vats, cauldrons, pipes, and furnaces fill this room, and the smell of sweet pine still lingers in the air. The Old Lord experimented extensively with amber encasement as a technique for staving off the withering of Eternal flesh, and his final experiment involved a recently-discarded Eternal concubine. The young Nebeti girl stands against the far wall, the perfect flowering of her beauty glazed in an inch-thick layer of gleaming amber. The girl has been "alive" in the fashion of the Eternal and conscious for forty years, and nothing remains of her self-awareness but a burning desire to see the Old Lord destroyed. If the amber is touched, a last heroic convulsion on her part will allow her to crack the amber shell, screaming of "the key in the yellow skull" in the Deshrite tongue, referring to the key she hid to the Old Lord's private sanctum. Once cracked, the shell will collapse into powder and shards. Her long-entombed body will soon follow after, the vigor of her own motions breaking her into a brown dust indistinguishable from the amber.
- 3. DEFLESHING ROOM:** Four smooth-glazed clay tanks dominate this chamber, each one the size of a large sarcophagus and covered by a marble lid. Within three of the tanks, the desiccated husks of ancient flesh-eating beetles lie in heaps around the yellowed bones they were meant to clean. Within the northeast tank, the beetles died after feasting upon the corpse of a witch, and the sorcerer's hateful spirit has animated the husks. They will swarm out of the tank as soon as the lid is slid aside (AC 5, MV 9", HD 3, hp 15, #AT 1, D 1-6). The beetle swarm is immune to common weapons. Magic, torches, or burning oil will do double damage.

Art Slot. Stretch it to get an even page foot.

- 4. OSSUARY:** The bones of faithful minions were immured here in the ossuary, stacked high along the walls in patterns fixed by mortar and keystone-skulls. A shrine to one of the serpent-headed Gods Below is erected against the far wall, a few ancient offerings left before the fanged face.

Incense worth 50 silver ingots.

A black glass **dagger +1**.

A green glass bottle filled with a brownish crust of long-dried blood.

A cup of beaten gold worth 100 silver ingots.

Taking any of the offerings will inflict a **curse** on the profaner, forcing them to fail the next saving throw they attempt.

- 5. FRESCO ROOM:** A Nebeti painter was commanded to decorate this room with wall frescoes celebrating the glorious deeds of the Old Lord and his faithful servants. The conquest of Paraku is depicted in bloody fashion, with the undying legions of the Eternal swarming over the wall and Old Lord Akhen at their head. Foul banquets of human flesh and festivities of more horrid variety still are shown interspersed with scenes of torment and grinding labor inflicted upon the wretched inhabitants of the city. In particular, the Old Lord is shown threatening the Nebeti with a green bowl, a thing that seems to induce a special terror. The floor of the chamber is parquetry of rotting wood. A faint cloud of black mold puffs upward at each step.
- 6. NICHED HALL:** The walls of this chamber are lined with small niches for the bones of the dead, each one labeled with a carving in small Deshrite glyphs. Most of them are Nebeti names, though some seem to be the bones of Lokossan collaborators.

THE TOMBS OF THE FAITHFUL

The Old Lord favored his most loyal living servants with the serenity of true death. Their remains were lodged here in tunnels dedicated to their memory.

1. CHAMBER OF UNENDING LONGING:

The air of this chamber is filled with a haze of dust-fine powdered bone, a thick layer resting on every flat surface. Four withered human shapes are clawing desperately at the gouged stone wall on the far side of the room.

At the far wall, four withered, mummified Nebeti (AC 7, MV 12", HD 1, hp 3,3,4,5, #AT 1, D 1-6) are clawing at the stone wall with fleshless arms. Shackled by Akhen's curses in death and forbidden to leave by the tomb's entrance, their only thought was to return to their families. Their efforts have dug the room out of the bedrock; as their bones are slowly ground to powder, the magic that animates them restores the broken limbs from the dust. They will ignore intruders unless some effort is made to stop them. Even if destroyed, they will eventually reanimate until their remains are taken from the House.

2. AMBER MUMMIFICATION ROOM:

A complex array of vats, cauldrons, pipes, and furnaces fill this room, and the smell of sweet pine still lingers in the air. Against the far wall, a huge slab of amber encases the body of a beautiful young woman.

The Old Lord experimented extensively with amber encasement as a technique for staving off the withering of Eternal flesh, and his final experiment involved a recently-discarded Eternal concubine. The girl has been "alive" in the fashion of the Eternal and conscious for forty years, and nothing remains of her self-awareness but a burning desire to see the Old Lord destroyed. If the amber is touched, a last heroic convulsion on her part will allow her to crack the amber shell, screaming of "the key in the yellow skull" in the Deshrite tongue, referring to the key she hid to the Old Lord's private sanctum. Once cracked, the shell will collapse into powder and shards. Her long-entombed body will soon follow after, the vigor of her own motions breaking her into powder indistinguishable from the amber.

Art slot for footer spot art to even the page.

3. DEFLESHING ROOM:

Four smooth-glazed clay tanks dominate this chamber, each one the size of a large sarcophagus and covered by a marble lid.

Within three of the tanks, the desiccated husks of ancient flesh-eating beetles lie in heaps around the yellowed bones they were meant to clean. Within the northeast tank, the beetles died after feasting upon the corpse of a witch, and the sorcerer's hateful spirit has animated the husks. They will swarm out of the tank as soon as the lid is slid aside (AC 5, MV 9", HD 3, hp 15, #AT 1, D 1-6). The beetle swarm is immune to common weapons. Magic, torches, or burning oil will do double damage.

4. OSSUARY:

Countless bones pile high along the walls in patterns fixed by mortar and keystone-skulls. A shrine to one of the serpent-headed Gods Below is erected against the far wall, a few ancient offerings left before the fanged face.

The bones of faithful minions were immured here in the ossuary. The offerings are largely worthless, but a few still have some value.

Incense worth 50 silver ingots.

A black glass **dagger +1**.

A green glass bottle filled with a brownish crust of long-dried blood.

A cup of beaten gold worth 100 silver ingots.

Taking any of the offerings will inflict a **curse** on the profaner, forcing them to fail the next saving throw they attempt.

5. FRESCO ROOM:

Wall frescoes celebrate the glorious deeds of the Old Lord and his faithful servants. The conquest of Paraku is depicted in bloody fashion, with the undying legions of the Eternal swarming over the wall and Old Lord Akhen at their head. Foul banquets of human flesh and festivities of more horrid variety still are shown interspersed with scenes of torment and grinding labor inflicted upon the wretched inhabitants of the city. In particular, the Old Lord is shown threatening the Nebeti with a green bowl, a thing that seems to induce a special terror. The floor of the chamber is parquetry of rotting wood, and a faint cloud of black mold puffs upward at each step you take.

A Nebeti painter was commanded to decorate this room with celebratory frescoes.

THE TOMBS OF THE FAITHFUL

The Old Lord favored his most loyal living servants with the serenity of true death. Their remains were lodged here in tunnels dedicated to their memory.

1. CHAMBER OF UNENDING LONGING: The air of this chamber is filled with a haze of dust-fine powdered bone, a thick layer resting on every flat surface. At the far wall, four withered, mummified Nebeti are clawing at the stone wall with fleshless arms. Shackled by Akhen's curses in death and forbidden to leave by the tomb's entrance, their only thought was to return to their families. Their efforts have dug the room out of the bedrock; as their bones are slowly ground to powder, the magic that animates them restores the broken limbs from the dust. They will ignore intruders unless some effort is made to stop them. Even if destroyed, they will eventually reanimate if their remains lie within the House.

Nebeti (4): AC 7, MV 12", HD 1, hp 3, 3, 4, 5, #AT 1, D 1-6

2. AMBER MUMMIFICATION ROOM: A complex array of vats, cauldrons, pipes, and furnaces fill this room, and the smell of sweet pine still lingers in the air. The Old Lord experimented extensively with amber encasement as a technique for staving off the withering of Eternal flesh, and his final experiment involved a recently-discarded Eternal concubine. The young Nebeti girl stands against the far wall, the perfect flowering of her beauty glazed in an inch-thick layer of gleaming amber.

The girl has been "alive" in the fashion of the Eternal and conscious for forty years, and nothing remains of her self-awareness but a burning desire to see the Old Lord destroyed. If the amber is touched, a last heroic convulsion on her part will allow her to crack the amber shell, screaming of "the key in the yellow skull" in the Deshrite tongue, referring to the key she hid to the Old Lord's private sanctum. Once cracked, the shell will collapse into powder and shards. Her long-entombed body will soon follow after, the vigor of her own motions breaking her into a powder indistinguishable from the amber.

3. DEFLESHING ROOM: Four smooth-glazed clay tanks dominate this chamber, each one the size of a large sarcophagus and covered by a marble lid. Within three of the tanks, the desiccated husks of ancient flesh-eating beetles lie in heaps around the yellowed bones they were meant to clean. Within the northeast tank, the beetles died after feasting upon the corpse of a witch, and the sorcerer's hateful spirit has animated the husks. They will swarm out

Art Slot. Stretch it to get an even page foot.

of the tank as soon as the lid is slid aside. The beetle swarm is immune to common weapons. Magic, torches, or burning oil will do double damage.

Beetle Swarm: AC 5, MV 9", HD 3, hp 15, #AT 1, D 1-6

4. OSSUARY: The bones of faithful minions were immured here in the ossuary, stacked high along the walls in patterns fixed by mortar and keystone-skulls. A shrine to one of the serpent-headed Gods Below is erected against the far wall, a few ancient offerings left before the fanged face.

Incense worth 50 silver ingots.

A black glass **dagger +1**.

A green glass bottle filled with a brownish crust of long-dried blood.

A cup of beaten gold worth 100 silver ingots.

Taking any of the offerings will inflict a **curse** on the profaner, forcing them to fail the next saving throw they attempt to make.

5. FRESCO ROOM: A Nebeti painter was commanded to decorate this room with wall frescoes celebrating the glorious deeds of the Old Lord and his faithful servants. The conquest of Paraku is depicted in bloody fashion, with the undying legions of the Eternal swarming over the wall and Old Lord Akhen at their head. Foul banquets of human flesh and festivities of more horrid variety still are shown interspersed with scenes of torment and grinding labor inflicted upon the wretched inhabitants of the city. In particular, the Old Lord is shown threatening the Nebeti with a green bowl, a thing that seems to induce a special terror. The floor of the chamber is parquetry of rotting wood. A faint cloud of black mold puffs upward at each step.

1E CORE BOOK ELEMENTS

The observations here are drawn from the WoTC reproductions of the Players Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide, and Monster Manual. I haven't bothered to dig my originals out of storage, as the reproductions were fashioned to be as faithful as was practical.

Unsurprisingly, most of the styles used in these books were very similar to those used in the later editions of the LBBs. Italic Futura was available and used in lieu of underlining. Also, importantly, the text appears to have been set to a grid, and so the styles in this document have been set accordingly. Because of this grid, head leading is much more regular. Each head gets two blank lines above and one after.

Also noteworthy is the shift from the LBBs' indented paragraphs to spaced paragraphs, with one line of whitespace separating individual paragraphs in a column. The larger page size of these core books makes for a greater need for whitespace.

There are a number of noticeable flaws in the setting, most notably the presence of widows and orphans in more than a few columns. The PHB's page 30 is one such example, with a decapitated list of monk thief skills. Runt lines are also fairly common, with the final line of a paragraph consisting of only one or two words. This same setting flaw is visible in the modules set during the same era, especially B1.

One quality also worth noting is the extremely stingy margin space allowed to these books, with individual margins no more than a third of an inch or so on the upper, lower, and outer sides and probably no more than a half-inch on the spineward margin. This can cause readability issues, as it's very easy for the text to end up crawling into the spine due to the stingy inside margin.

If you're setting your own books in a style inspired by these volumes, you would be well-advised to change this margin choice. Most black-and-white POD print processes require at least a half-inch margin on every side, though DriveThruRPG/RPGNow is currently able to do full bleed on all their books.

Running Heads

The 1e core books had an interesting type of double running head on each page, with all-caps oblique Times New Roman in about a 12-point weight. Each head labeled the main topic of the column beneath it. InDesign can be easily set up to provide section labeling in running heads, as is shown later in the B/X page setup, but there's no simple way to automate this kind of acute micro-labeling.

The master page spread for this section of the document is set to automatically apply default running heads to each column. If you want to mimic this element of the design, you're going to need to manually override each page's master page elements and just type in an appropriate running head. Do this *after* finishing the set.

Typefaces Used

The 1e core books continued to use the Quentin EF and Chisel D for the game title used in the LBBs, along with Futura for the interior text. An italicized font for Futura was evidently obtained, as underlining gave way to italics for those terms in need of emphasis. Times New Roman oblique or possibly condensed oblique was used for the running heads and for the book title itself on the title page.

Table Design

Many tables were *not* set to a grid, and the table styles here reflect that. You may need to manually drag the tables taller or shorter to make sure the surrounding text hits the page in a graceful way. The example tables here have also had their cell styles changed so that the left-hand cell padding has been removed, so that left-justified table text hits the margin at the same place as the body text.

The 1e core books introduce the use of table fills. Most of the fills are about 20% density and go in a 3 filled/3 empty pattern, though this isn't always maintained. Table strokes are almost nonexistent, with the one of the few examples I noticed appearing in the monster lists in the Dungeon Master's Guide, where a stroke separates each individual monster line from its peers.

ATTRIBUTE TABLE I.

Ability Score	General Information
3	Bonuses and penalties go here.
4-5	Bonuses and penalties go here.
6-8	Bonuses and penalties go here.
9-12	Bonuses and penalties go here.
13-15	Bonuses and penalties go here.
16-17	Bonuses and penalties go here.
18	Bonuses and penalties go here.
19	Bonuses and penalties go here.
20	Bonuses and penalties go here.
21	Bonuses and penalties go here.
22	Bonuses and penalties go here.
23	Bonuses and penalties go here.
24	Bonuses and penalties go here.
25	Bonuses and penalties go here.
28	Bonuses and penalties go here.
27	Bonuses and penalties go here.

CLASSIC CLASS TABLE

Experience Points	Experience Level	10-Sided Dice for Accumulated Hit Points	Level Title
0–2,000	1	1	Swordguy
2,001–4,000	2	2	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	3	3	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	4	4	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	5	5	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	6	6	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	7	7	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	8	8	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	9	9	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	10	9+3	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	11	9+6	Swordguy

As can be seen to the left, the classic class table tried to cram a great deal of text into its column headers. The style below is more compact.

ALTERNATE CLASS TABLE

XP	Level	Hit Dice	Level Title
0–2,000	1	1d10	Swordguy
2,001–4,000	2	2d10	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	3	3d10	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	4	4d10	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	5	5d10	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	6	6d10	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	7	7d10	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	8	8d10	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	9	9d10	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	10	9d10+3	Swordguy
4,001–8,000	11	9d10+6	Swordguy

SPELLS USABLE BY CLASS AND LEVEL — MAGIC-USERS

Magic-User Level	Magic-User Spell Level								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	4	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-
11	4	4	4	3	3	-	-	-	-
12	4	4	4	4	4	1	-	-	-
13	5	5	5	4	4	2	-	-	-
14	5	5	5	4	4	2	1	-	-
15	5	5	5	5	5	2	1	-	-
16	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	1	-
17	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	2	-
18	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	2	1

The table above examples one of the standard class spell tables from the PHB. You'll note the somewhat intricate division of the header rows so as to ensure that the class name and the class spell level labels are even on the lines. For classes with fewer spell levels than 9, the excess levels can just be lopped off the right.

Some tables in the books are done without fills, particularly in the equipment section. The tables below are examples of the style. Note the empty "gutter" column in the middle of the first table to separate the right-justified prices from the left-justified items in the next column. Also note how the subsections are created by merging columns and leaving blank rows above them to provide spacing.

UNFILLED TABLE STYLE

Armor

Leather	5 g.p.	Gummi	77 g.p.
Wombat	60 g.p.	Neutronium	100 g.p.
Tinfoil	12 g.p.	Optimism	0 g.p.

Weapons

Bandyclef	6 g.p.	Weasel	4 g.p.
Harsh Words	0 g.p.	Bardiche	7 g.p.
Photon Torpedo	588 g.p.	Spam	2 g.p.

INSET LIST TABLE

Class	Known Weapons	Non-Prof. Penalty	Prof. Gained
CLERIC	2	-3	1/4 levels
Reformed	1	-4	1/4 levels
Orthodox	3	-2	1/3 levels
FIGHTER	4	-2	1/3 levels
Lover	0	-8	None

B/X Elements

The styles used in this section were drawn largely from the Moldvay Basic and Cook Expert books and the short run of modules that shared their basic design sensibilities – X1 through X5 and the two Basic modules B3 and B4. The solo modules M1 and M2 also seem to partake of this style.

B/X styles relied on two-column pages set almost exclusively in various weights of Souvenir. As with earlier products, the text was not set to a baseline grid and the spacing between paragraphs and headers was often varied to ensure that the columns hit an even foot. Most pages use a running head about a quarter-inch from the top of the page, the master pages here automatically using the page's section name.

Modules for B/X largely adopted the boxed text format that was standard for TSR at the time, though X1 was produced before this format change and used a heavy room name run-in not unlike that used in B2.

Typefaces Used

Quentin EF makes an appearance on the covers of Moldvay Basic and Cook Expert, but the rest of these books are set entirely in two different weights of Souvenir. The strong visual character of Souvenir tends to make these products stand out noticeably from earlier TSR products.

This is not necessarily a good thing. Souvenir was something close to the Comic Sans of the 70s, and it does not have a good reputation among typographers. If you do decide to use Souvenir for your own products, you may find it best to use it as a visual reference to B/X, and not for the sake of its own dubious charms.

A “free” version of Souvenir called Soutane can be found here and there on the net, but actual provenance and licensing terms are very unclear for it, and all versions I've seen have been locked against embedding it in a document, making it largely useless for a designer's purposes.

If you choose to use Souvenir for your text, you should keep in mind that it is a substantially wider typeface than the Avant Garde used in earlier products. If you set a page in Souvenir and then decide to swap to a different typeface, you're going to have to deal with the changed text length.

Table Design

Table design continues to use the unstroked, unfilled styles used in the LBBs, albeit with Souvenir as the base typeface. Table font sizes are the same as body text sizes. Column headers are sometimes underlined to provide some visual distinction and are usually set heavier than the table text. Unlike the LBBs, table titles are usually centered.

Multi-Column Table Type A

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3

MULTI-COLUMN TABLE TYPE B

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3

Untitled	Table	Column 3	Column 4
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3
Item	1	2	3

CLASS STYLE A

<u>Level</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Exp. Points</u>	<u>Hit Dice</u>	<u>Spells</u>
1	Example	0	1d6	1 first level
2	Example	1,500	2d6	2 first level
3	Example	3,000	3d6	1 first level + 1 second
4	Example	6,000	4d6	Etc.
5	Example	12,000	5d6	Etc.
6	Example	24,000	6d6	Etc.
7	Example	48,000	7d6	Etc.
8	Example	96,000	8d6	Etc.
9+	Example	200,000	9d6	Etc.

CLASS STYLE B

<u>Level</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Exp. Points</u>	<u>Hit Dice</u>	<u>Spells</u>					
				<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
1	Example	0	1d6	1	-	-	-	-	-
2	Example	1,500	2d6	2	-	-	-	-	-
3	Example	3,000	3d6	2	1	-	-	-	-
4	Example	6,000	4d6	2	2	-	-	-	-
5	Example	12,000	5d6	2	2	1	-	-	-
6	Example	24,000	6d6	3	2	2	-	-	-
7	Example	48,000	7d6	3	2	2	1	-	-
8	Example	96,000	8d6	3	3	2	2	-	-
9+	Example	200,000	9d6	3	3	3	2	1	-

To get a partially-underlined header like that for Exp. Points, newline after the Exp. to create two paragraphs, then set them in different styles. To stretch an underline beyond the word itself, you can fake it with spaces. If your entry is multiline, as with Spells for level 3, make sure all your cells are vertically justified toward the top, to ensure that the text for each level entry lines up correctly.

Six columns for spells are about all you can fit into this format, and even that comes at the cost of room for level titles. You can get some real estate back by using "Lvl" as a level abbreviation, and "HD" in place of Hit Dice, but you'll have to drop the Title column entirely if you want to take it out to the classic nine spell levels. Optionally, break out the spell progression entirely as below, adding rows as needed.

Below you can see two optional wide formats for the same class information. The Thief Abilities entries could be replaced by saving throw totals, a lengthy special ability summary for each level, or anything else that requires significant real estate. A boldface font could also be used for column headers, but such use would cramp the thief skill titles and can be problematic when horizontal space is at a premium.

CHARLATAN SPELL PROGRESSION

<u>Level</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Be careful when resizing tables horizontally. It's easy to overstretch columns like Level that should be narrow.

CLASS STYLE WIDE A

<u>Level</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Exp. Points</u>	<u>Hit Dice</u>	<u>Spells</u>								
				<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
1	Example	0	1d6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Example	1,500	2d6	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Example	3,000	3d6	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Example	6,000	4d6	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

CLASS STYLE WIDE B

<u>Level</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Exp. Points</u>	<u>Hit Dice</u>	<u>Open Locks</u>	<u>Remove Traps</u>	<u>Thief Abilities</u>				<u>Hear Noise</u>
						<u>Pick Pockets</u>	<u>Move Silently</u>	<u>Climb Surfaces</u>	<u>Hide in Shadows</u>	
1	Example	0	1d6	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	1-2
2	Example	1,500	2d6	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	1-2
3	Example	200,000	3d6	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	1-3
4	Example	400,000	4d6	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	1-4

B/X STYLES

Spell entries can be tricky due to the lengthy spell names and the difficulty of packing them in horizontally. The brief summary table below can be used between lists of spell entries, but it's still usually necessary to have a full list of spells in a single place somewhere in the chapter. The wide table below can work for this, but it's rarely possible to fit more than five levels of spells horizontally at a time. If necessary, just repeat the table for levels 6-9 and stretch it horizontally so it hits the same margins. Make sure the numbering column on the left isn't allowed to expand, however. You can also play with font sizes.

First Level Spells

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Magic Missile | 7. Magic Missile |
| 2. Magic Missile | 8. Magic Missile |
| 3. Magic Missile | 9. Magic Missile |
| 4. Magic Missile | 10. Magic Missile |
| 5. Magic Missile | 11. Magic Missile |
| 6. Magic Missile | 12. Magic Missile |

Fribnel's Dire Wombat

Range: 50'

Duration: 1 hour/level

This spell entry style is simple and compact, for a system that doesn't have many distinguishing elements to track for a given spell. Note that as usual, the text description of a spell does not go into a table cell. Sometimes a spell's description has to break over a column or page despite the designer's best efforts, and a cell can't break. Also note the left-hand cell padding on the spell name's cell is removed to allow for it to hit the description text's left margin.

CHARLATAN SPELLS

	<u>First Level</u>	<u>Second Level</u>	<u>Third Level</u>	<u>Fourth Level</u>	<u>Fifth Level</u>
1	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name
2	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name
3	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name	Lengthy Spell Name

CATEGORIZED INDENT TABLE

Item	Cost
Gubbins	
Item	1
Item	6
Item	3
Thingamajigs	
Item	10
Item	12
Whatchamacallits	
Item	4

Used occasionally for equipment lists and other vertical lists that need some kind of subcategorization, you can reproduce this effect with a simple table trick. To reproduce the above, first create a three-column table. Merge all the header row cells. Merge the leftmost two subhead cells. Then for each subcategory row, merge the leftmost two cells and put the cell contents in a column header style. The unmerged cells of the first row will provide an even indent you can shift as needed.

You can also get the same effect with styles – just create a new “Table Subcategory” style that segues into an indented “Table Entry” style. Tables are more easily resized, though.

Magic item entries in B/X usually start with a bold normal run-in that terminates at the first colon. The style given below shows an example of such an entry. The entries in the books are compressed, with no following space between items, and so this style has no following set. Also note that magic item names referenced in B/X products are always rendered in boldface. The “B/X Item Entry Text” style recapitulates this style.

Horn of Uselessness: While appearing magical to those with suitably refined powers of arcane perception, the **Horn of Useleness** obstinately refuses to reveal any ability that might not be natural to a horn of its type.

Other passages call out specific sub-sections with an all caps run-in. These sub-sections are used sparingly but usually have the normal following after each paragraph. The “B/X Subsection Run-In” style emulates this format. Note that you might want to trade out the colon delimiter for a period, as the Souvenir colon is out of scale for the all-caps run-in.

DIRE PORTENTS: Upon noticing a Dire Portent, the party's henchmen will be so paralyzed with fear as to refuse to move from the spot for 1d6 days unless plied with 50 g.p. each in inducements.

This subsection style does not have an indent.

BECMI Elements

The BECMI series of books is particularly interesting for its reliance on a three-column layout and an extremely expansive header. Almost all TSR books of this era relied on a two-column layout, but the BECMI series used three columns for a number of purposes.

BECMI text is very dense. The default body text uses a flush initial paragraph with following paragraphs relying on a 1/8th inch indent. The body text size is nine points, unlike the 10-point Futura preferred in earlier AD&D products.

Perhaps the most immediately striking characteristic of the BECMI rulebooks is the enormous top margin. The running head used here is actually far closer to the top of the page than in the actual BECMI books, which set the line on which the running header rests about an inch and a half down from the top of the page.

To give comparisons, the bottom margin is only a half-inch wide from text block to page bottom, and about a quarter-inch from the bottom of the page number to the edge of the page. The outer margin is a half-inch and the inner margin is about 5/8ths of an inch.

I confess that I have no idea why they set such a huge top margin. The usual canons of page design insist on a large bottom margin to give the page a sound footing and help give the reader someplace to put their thumbs while reading.

The running heads were designed in two formats. For the opening spread of a section the running head was grounded on one thin line and one thick line, as you see on this page and its opposite. The following pages of that section had only a single thin line, as you see on the next spread.

This head style appears to have been carried through at least some of the BECMI-era modules, though not all of them. An interesting variation can be seen in CM6, "Where Chaos Reigns", where the empty header space is often filled with a spot illustration matching the text. B10, "Night's Dark Terror" dispatches it entirely, using instead a repeated bit of spot art along the top of the page. Yet in B11 and B12 it once again makes its appearance.

From my examination of the modules, it looks as if the UK modules such as B10, CM6, X8, and O2 often replaced the empty header with spot

art, often to very good effect given the artists involved. If you keep this design quirk, you might do likewise.

One other habit of the designers was to break through the running head with illustrations that sometimes went right to the upper edge of the page. Luigi Castellani's illustration opposite is an example of this design element.

Illustrations and other page elements in the BECMI books almost invariably fit exactly into the column width. Illustrations were one, two, or three columns wide, with almost no variation.

It seems a puzzling choice on the whole. The BECMI layout is so extremely dense and with such small type that it seems fairly inexplicable that the designers should give up so much space at the top of the page to no visible purpose, particularly when the bottom margin is so ungenerous.

This three-column style persists in the BECMI modules of this era as well as the rulebooks. It appears to be fairly universal for BECMI products until the era of the Rules Cyclopedica. Interestingly enough, while the RC uses the three-column layout, the module series published after late 1990 such as the Thunder Rift series and the Hollow World module series revert to a two-column layout.

The BECMI books and especially the modules made heavy use of boxed text. Perhaps as a consequence, the body text was not set to a grid.

Typeface and Setting Details

Thanks to the research work of Jon Peterson, the author of *Playing At The World*, we have an actual style sheet for the X6 module "Quagmire". With this, we can determine the exact style settings used for most of the BECMI books and modules. This may have varied between individual products due to the vagaries of the text, but it's a good starting point for analyzing the page layout for the line as a whole.

The interior text for BECMI books is almost entirely different weights of Baskerville. This example is set in the free Libre Baskerville font, though readers are advised to make sure they've got the .TTF TrueType files, as the most recent .OTF OpenType font version doesn't seem to agree well with InDesign's composer.

The front cover of BECMI uses a custom tweak of Quentin TF for the



"Dungeons & Dragons" text, while other title page text is done in Korinna. Later modules made use of Feinart for maps and running heads, and the Baldur font by Mad Irishman Productions seems to be the only available clone of the font.

The text itself is set in 9 point body type with 10 point leading. This is a very tight set. If left to its own devices, InDesign will automatically assign leading equal to the traditional 120% of the font size, but the technical challenge of coming up with 10.8-point type in 1983 seems to have left TSR inclined to go with a flat 10-point leading rather than 11. The provided styles in this file go with the TSR standard, but if you use them in your own, I'd seriously consider opening up the leading to 10.8 or 11 points.

As a special note, an examination of the actual products shows that the module leading doesn't really look as severe as what you see here on this page. It's possible the leading was tweaked before the final print, but I think it's more likely that the Baskerville that TSR was using was not as severe as the Libre Baskerville this document uses. These tiny differences in font details can make a large difference in the actual print.

Headers were scaled to 10, 12, 14, and 18 points, with 18 reserved for page heads and 10 used for most minor heads. In the styles used here, 10 points have also been used for table labels. Minor heads have been given the same 10-point leading as body text to help even the display, though you may notice that it cramps dungeon room titles uncomfortably if they run more than one line.

For BECMI books, subheads appear to have an equal amount of whitespace before and after them, about one line's worth. The style in this document uses a 10 point font for the minor heads with a 10 point following space. Combined with the 1

pica following space after the BECMI Body Text Indented style, it ensures the head is just barely closer to the following text than to the preceding body text. More distinction would be preferable, but this is closest to the style as it appeared in print.

Each column in the classic TSR style is 14 picas wide, with three columns per page. The gutter between columns is to be 1.5 picas. This has been adjusted for the margins here.

Strictly speaking with this TSR style, the inside margin should be 2 picas and the outside 3 picas, following the traditional canon that the outside margin should be wider than the inner margin. Contrary to this, you'll notice that this document has a wider inside margin than outside.

I've done it this way due to the different print environments between a classic TSR saddle-stitch module and a more probable modern print-on-demand perfect-bound book. A saddle-stitch book tends to open very easily and have a comparatively "loose" binding that it allows it to lie mostly flat, showing the entire spread. A perfect-bound book tends to be tighter, especially with a very short book. Opening them perfectly flat can harm the binding in a way that saddle-stitch booklets don't suffer from, so I granted the inside margin a little more space to compensate for that, and allow the text to be comfortably legible without flattening the book.

Table Design

BECMI tables make heavy use of very thick, dark strokes at head and foot, usually with a lighter stroke after the table's title. This stroke pattern is repeated in multiple places, even on text elements that aren't actually tables. The "order of combat" sequence on page 58 of the Basic player's book is stroked in this way. The table text itself is identical to the body text, with column and row labels only sometimes in bold. Table titles are given in all-caps bold.

Some text is called out in a filled gray box, usually as a chunk of example text or player instructions. Rather than inserting an entire sidebar object, it can be easiest to just use a filled table cell with the appropriate padding. The default fill appears to be fairly dense, and so changing it to 20% at most is perhaps advisable.

EXAMPLE: This is such an example callout. Remember that adding elements like this makes it that much harder to set text to a grid, unless your callout box just happens to fit exactly into the lines. You can stretch table cells vertically to help provide this coincidence.

With BECMI tables, the designer clearly was averse to having a partial intrusion of a table into a column, so if what you have to set is too wide to fit one column, the table should be precisely two columns wide, or three columns if you need to claim space.

Table designers are also advised to use a lot of whitespace. The BECMI table defaults use only normal body text, so there's no clue to the eye that you're looking at a table line. Giving a little extra space around each table entry can help.

Variations On A Theme

While the styles given above were drawn from an in-house style sheet for X6, it's clear that they were not universally followed in the BECMI product line. Below, I list some of the changes in style I've noticed through the BECMI line. The notes aren't exhaustive, but they might provide some hints for elaboration.

X7 followed the X6 style almost exactly. The same huge header and tiny footer was used.

X8 was a British effort. It shared the same header and footer, but used section-specific header art to offset the running head, and had a noticeable absence of the public-domain animal art visible in X6 and X7.

X10 has not a single piece of original art inside it. Even the "Interior Artist" title page entry is blank. Everything is either public domain, a map, or recycled from B4 or X3.

X11, published in 1986, marks a distinct shift in the footer and header margins. Some of the gigantic header is shifted down to the footer, making the latter perhaps an inch high. The header remains distinctly larger. This rebalancing continues on in X12, published in 1987.

This seems to be a style change adopted sometime in 1986, as you see the same difference appear in "B1-9: In Search of Adventure". The header/footer heights are rebalanced in the same way for that module. The

exact timing appears to have been sometime between the Master-level modules M1 and M2, the former being printed in 1985 and using the old, huge header while the latter appeared in 1986 and used the rebalanced header. The same alteration is visible between CM7 in 1986 and CM8 in 1987, however, so it seems that the old style was carried through for at least some 1986 publications.

B10, "Night's Dark Terror" in 1986 is *sui generis*. Showing the British tendency to vary from the US theme, they dropped the header entirely. Instead, they use black border decorations with inset corner art for each section, and use a running footer at the bottom with the section title repeated next to the page number.

Around 1989, it seems that the style for the running heads at the top of each page changed to the Feinan font. This may have been inspired by the 1987 release of the first Gazetteer for Karamaikos, though that product line also had all the other headers also shifted to Feinan. This change of all the headers seems to have been limited in scope, however, as the DDA modules were still using Baskerville heads for their columns in 1991.

The Hollow World boxed set came out in 1990 during the line's dying days, when more experimentation seemed to be in order – along with economizing. All use a two-column format and sane headers and footers, but internal art is extremely sparse. This style appears to have been maintained at least through the HWA adventure series. The header setting in these products is noticeably better than earlier in the BECMI main line, with heads set closer to the following text than the preceding matter. The typesetter is a little vague about indents, however, sometimes putting one in the first paragraph of a section and sometimes using a proper justified paragraph. No Feinan was used.

Sometime around 1991, the cover logo for BECMI products changed, visible between DDA2 in 1990 and DDA3 in 1991. The urge for economy seems to have been maintained, if not increased. The cover illo for DDA2, for example, is a cut taken from the Dark Sun setting.

A more detailed cataloging of the differences would doubtless find even more style shifts over the years, but this should be enough to encourage your own variations.

THUG EXPERIENCE TABLE		
Level	Title	XP
1	Hooligan	0-1,500
2	Hooligan	1,501-3,000
3	Hooligan	1,501-3,000
4	Hooligan	1,501-3,000
5	Hooligan	1,501-3,000
6	Hooligan	1,501-3,000
7	Hooligan	1,501-3,000
8	Hooligan	1,501-3,000
9	Hooligan	1,501-3,000
10	Hooligan	1,501-3,000

These are example templates for some of the more important BECMI character generation tables. There are only three strokes used for most of these tables, and none of them involve row fills or other shading.

All begin with a 3-point stroke across the top of the title, then a 1-point stroke beneath the bottom of the column labels, and then a 1-point stroke at the table foot. When a table has multiple title lines, such as below with the magic thug experience table and the Spell Levels label, there is sometimes another one-point stroke between the major and minor table column titles.



THUG SAVING THROWS				
Level:	1-3	4-6	7-9	10
Death Ray or Poison	12	8	4	2
Magic Wands	13	10	7	4
Paralysis or Turn to Stone	13	10	7	4
Dragon Breath	15	11	7	3
Rod, Staff or Spell	15	11	7	3

MAGIC THUG EXPERIENCE TABLE									
Level	Title	XP	Spell Levels						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	Hooligan	0-1,500	1	-	-	-	-	-	
2	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	2	-	-	-	-	-	
3	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	2	1	-	-	-	-	
4	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	2	2	-	-	-	-	
5	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	3	2	1	-	-	-	
6	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	3	2	2	-	-	-	
7	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	3	2	2	1	-	-	
8	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	3	3	2	2	-	-	
9	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	3	3	2	2	1	-	
10	Hooligan	1,501-3,000	3	3	3	2	2	-	

THUG ABILITIES TABLE								
Level	Open Locks	Find Traps	Remove Traps	Pick Pockets	Move Silently	Climb Sheer Surfaces	Hide in Shadows	Hear Noise
1	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
2	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
3	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
4	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
5	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
6	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
7	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
9	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
10+	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%

BECMI Spell Entry

Range: 0 (Caster only)

Duration: A long lunch

Effect: The caster calls forth a flan.

This BECMI spell block is simple, but this edition's spells rarely needed anything more than this. The table has been adjusted to have no left cell padding so that the text is flush with the following description.

A little additional space has been added after the table as well, as there's otherwise little distinction between the Effect line of the table and the descriptive text. The top cell has been padded vertically a little, to give the bolded title more emphasis, and the padding on the three lower lines has been reduced to add cohesiveness.

Magic Item Descriptions

Rather than the outdent used in B/X, BECMI magic item lists often prefer to indent the first line. As with B/X, there is no whitespace between items. An alternate format found in Mentzer Basic instead uses a flush paragraph with a bold run-in and whitespace before and after.

Trumpet of Ache: This trumpet sounds only the very worst song, accompanied by the ugliest guitar.

Monster Stat Blocks

BECMI modules commonly used a simple text block callout for the monster statistics of an adventure, usually set inline with the area description. In some cases, such as with CM7, the monster statistics were gathered together in a single table. All text was set in regular type, with no bolding or other weight changes. One line of whitespace lead and followed the block, as below.

Wombat: AC 0; HD 12***; hp 60; AT 3; D 3-18 (x2)/2-16; MV 180'(60')/360'(120'); Save F24; AL N; THAC0 9; SA clerical spell use.

The example above is outdented, though some modules set the block flush left. The extremely tight leading is also very obvious, which makes it particularly hard to read when so many numbers and abbreviations are packed so closely together.

Spell List Format

Spells appear in an outdented format, with italic spell names.

First level: *cause light wounds, darkness, detect magic, cause fear*
Second level: *find traps, hold person, know alignment, silence 15' radius*

FIRST LEVEL CLASS SPELLS

1. Glower
2. Glower
3. Glower
4. Glower
5. Glower
6. Glower
7. Glower
8. Glower
9. Glower
10. Glower
11. Glower
12. Glower

Class spell lists usually stick to the column format, with however many tables as are necessary to cover all the spell levels. The table provided above has had the cell padding reduced below the title in order to tighten the list.

Monster Wide Block

	<u>Variant Type A</u>	<u>Variant Type B</u>	<u>Variant Type C</u>
Armor Class:	5	5	5
Hit Dice:	3*	3*	3*
Move:	90' (30')	90' (30')	90' (30')
Attacks:	1	1	1
Damage:	Energy Drain	Energy Drain	Energy Drain
No. Appearing:	1-6 (1-8)	1-6 (1-8)	1-6 (1-8)
Save As:	Fighter: 3	Fighter: 3	Fighter: 3
Morale:	12	12	12
Treasure Type:	B	B	B
Alignment:	Chaotic	Chaotic	Chaotic
XP Value:	50	50	50

While the variant stats of the wide block are spread evenly over the available columns, the text that goes with the monster descriptions remains in the column format. The typographer clearly had a difficult job fitting the monster lists into the available space, and some of their decisions appear to be owed to the necessity of cramming in as much text as possible.

Monster Tall Block

Armor Class: 5
Hit Dice: 3*
Move: 90' (30')
Attacks: 1
Damage: Energy Drain
No. Appearing: 1-6 (1-8)
Save As: Fighter: 3
Morale: 12
Treasure Type: B
Alignment: Chaotic
XP Value: 50

Monster descriptions usually appear in this tall block format. In cases where multiple monster variations are needed, the block is split over multiple columns as below, with strokes beneath the variant column labels.

Note also that the cell padding has been adjusted on the rows to tighten the block and make it more cohesive. The block title has been given extra padding as well.

Designers who wish to nod to the BECMI design style might be advised to open up the layout, particularly when it comes to monster lists or similar large information dumps. Many of the compromises that the designer made in fitting all the monsters into the space provided could be alleviated by simply giving the text more pages and allowing more whitespace.

Example BECMI Module Page

The Tombs of the Faithful

The Old Lord favored his most loyal living servants with the serenity of true death. Their remains were lodged here in tunnels dedicated to their memory.

1. CHAMBER OF UNENDING LONGING

The air of this chamber is filled with a haze of dust-fine powdered bone, a thick layer resting on every flat surface. Four withered human shapes are clawing desperately at the gouged stone wall on the far side of the room.

At the far wall, four withered, mummified Nebeti are clawing at the stone wall with fleshless arms. Shackled by Akhen's curses in death and forbidden to leave by the tomb's entrance, their only thought was to return to their families. Their efforts have dug the room out of the bedrock; as their bones are slowly ground to powder, the magic that animates them restores the broken limbs from the dust. They will ignore intruders unless some effort is made to stop them. Even if destroyed, they will eventually reanimate until their remains are taken from the House.

Nebeti: AC 7, HD 1, hp 3, 3, 4, 5, #AT 1, D 1-6, MV 12", Save F1, AL N, THAC0 20

2. AMBER MUMMIFICATION ROOM

A complex array of vats, cauldrons, pipes, and furnaces fill this room, and the smell of sweet pine still lingers in the air. Against the far wall, a huge slab of amber encases the body of a beautiful young woman.

The Old Lord experimented extensively with amber encasement as a technique for staving off the withering of Eternal flesh, and his final experiment involved a recently-discarded Eternal concubine. The girl has been "alive" in the fashion of the Eternal and conscious for forty years, and nothing remains of her self-awareness but a burning desire to see the Old Lord destroyed.

If the amber is touched, a last heroic convulsion on her part will allow her to crack the amber shell, screaming of "the key in the yellow skull" in

the Deshrite tongue, referring to the key she hid to the Old Lord's private sanctum. Once cracked, the shell will collapse into powder and shards. Her long-entombed body will soon follow after, the vigor of her own motions breaking her into powder indistinguishable from the amber.

3. DEFLESHING ROOM

Four smooth-glazed clay tanks dominate this chamber, each one the size of a large sarcophagus and covered by a marble lid.

Within three of the tanks, the desiccated husks of ancient flesh-eating beetles lie in heaps around the yellowed bones they were meant to clean. Within the northeast tank, the beetles died after feasting upon the corpse of a witch, and the sorcerer's hateful spirit has animated the husks. They will swarm out of the tank as soon as the lid is slid aside. The beetle swarm is immune to common weapons. Magic, torches, or burning oil will do double damage.

Undead Beetle Swarm: AC 7, HD 1, hp 3, 3, 4, 5, #AT 1, D 1-6, MV 12", Save F1, AL N, THAC0 20

4. OSSUARY

Countless bones pile high along the walls in patterns fixed by mortar and keystone-skulls. A shrine to one of the serpent-headed Gods Below is erected against the far wall, a few ancient offerings left before the fanged face.

The bones of faithful minions were immured here in the ossuary. The offerings are largely worthless, but a few still have some value.

Incense worth 50 silver ingots.

A black glass *dagger* +1.

A green glass bottle filled with a brownish crust of long-dried blood.

A cup of beaten gold worth 100 sp.

Taking any of the offerings will inflict a *curse* on the profaner, forcing them to fail the next saving throw they attempt.

Art slot. Stretch to even the rooms as needed by the set.

5. FRESCO ROOM:

Wall frescoes celebrate the glorious deeds of the Old Lord and his faithful servants. The conquest of Paraku is depicted in bloody fashion, with the undying legions of the Eternal swarming over the wall and Old Lord Akhen at their head. Foul banquets of human flesh and festivities of more horrid variety still are shown interspersed with scenes of torment and grinding labor inflicted upon the wretched inhabitants of the city. In particular, the Old Lord is shown threatening the Nebeti with a green bowl, a thing that seems to induce a special terror. The floor of the chamber is parquetry of rotting wood, and a faint cloud of black mold puffs upward at each step you take.

A Nebeti painter was commanded to decorate this room with frescoes.

Comments on the Design

Even a brief comparison with the AD&D and B/X module pages earlier in this document will show how much more densely the average BECMI module page was set. The nine-point type and aversion to whitespace make for a tight set.

In my own opinion, it's not worth following this lead in modern module designs. The rigid 32-page or 20-page module footprint of the early hobby is no longer applicable with modern POD processes, and the cost of an extra five or six pages to let the set breathe is trivial.