In the previous issue of *TUGboat*, Charles Bigelow reviewed two books by Hendrik D.L. Vervliet. Alas, Hendrik Vervliet passed away on August 5th, 2020, at the age of 96.

In his career, Vervliet was a professor and librarian of the University of Antwerp as well as professor of book and library history of the University of Amsterdam. However, he worked mainly at the Museum Plantin-Moretus at Antwerp where he was still present a very few years ago: he never stopped working and, despite age and illness, was still writing papers, most recently on Granjon’s civilité types, his first love.


The *Conspectus* is a meticulous catalogue of the four hundred and nine typefaces cut in sixteenth-century France. Each typeface is illustrated with an image of the characters at actual size, with examples of use in context, date of occurrences, and bibliography (an example page, cropped to the text, is shown below). This is done with Vervliet’s customary rigor: precise measurement of a type with the x-height, the height of capital letters and the height of 20 solid text lines (a concept adapted from the old method of Proctor-McKerrow and which allows determination of the body size). These parameters minimize the errors of attribution of types, which are rather frequent. Remember, for instance, that Claude Garamont designed about two dozen Roman types with more or less the same appearance: without precise measurements, how could you distinguish them? Vervliet was an entomologist or a paleontologist! In fact, he defined himself as a palaeotypographer, and already some historians of type use his method. The history of types restarts on a good track.

I have been in touch with Hendrik for about twelve years and I always have been fascinated by his rigor together with his kindness. He always answered my questions and quite often went to the Plantin Museum to send me scans.

His passing has been as discreet as he was during all his life. However, he was a great man. Fortunately his printed work will remain. No valuable work on European typography can ignore his writings.

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