Printing types of Pierre Haultin (ca.1510-87)
Part I: Roman types

He did not enjoy the celebrity of Claude Garamont, nor was he, as Robert Granjon, employed by the greatest printing offices of his time. Nonetheless the 'Pierre Haultin, tailleur des lettres d'imprimerie' mentioned from the mid 1540s on in archive documents, deserves attention. If one had to name the most outstanding names of the for that matter very fecund French sixteenth-century type design, surely he would be on the short list. Anyhow, being available for sale unto the first quarter of the nineteenth century, several of Haultin's typefaces exhibit the same extraordinary longevity as that of his two more renowned colleagues.

In typographical history he played a double role. First he lend a hand with the vast printing and publishing campaign, launched by Calvin and Geneva from the 1550s on to provide the French-speaking world with pocket-sized devotional and scriptural books in the vernacular tongue. Secondly, as a designer he developed a new style of roman type, sturdier, heavier, perhaps less royal or elegant but certainly more economical than the earlier sixteenth-century romans of the Estienne or Garamont fashion. Thus he set the tone for what can been characterized as 'Huguenot typography' (Carter, 1969b, pp. 535-6). The new design anticipated a trend towards narrower and more compact romans with a greater x-height and visibility, which gained favour in the next centuries, mainly in Protestant countries.

There exists no comprehensive survey of Haultin’s work as a type designer and the present paper aims to fill up that gap. It tries to cover his romans, italics, Greeks, and music types, but not his printer’s flowers, a less amenable topic. It has much been furthered by earlier research by Desgraves on the Haultins in La Rochelle (1960; 1965), Parent on Paris printing (1974), Gilmont on Crespin (1981), Chambers (1983), Noailly (1988) and Guillo (1991) on French
bibles and music printing. But it remains a provisional attempt and will need correction and upgrading.

Data on Haultin’s birthdate and youth are scant and uncertain. Fournier’s information (1765, pp. 5-6) that about 1528 Haultin engraved Attaingnant’s earliest single impression music or Le Bé’s report that he was born before 1500, worked from before 1530 and employed Garamont, has been met with sound scepticism (Heartz, 1969, p. 49; Carter, 1967, p. 42). Two minor facts cannot be disputed: his birthplace (Villaine-sous-la-Flèche near Angers; Chaix, 1954, p. 142; Droz, 1970, vol. 4, p. 374) and his marriage to Marie Vadé, of a typefounders family (Renouard, 1901, p. 270; Parent, 1974, pp. 82, 140), both events occurring at dates unknown to us.

Archival sources start to mention Haultin half a dozen times in the late 1540s at Paris. A bond to sell a music type to Nicolas Du Chemin, an association with the same, and another with the printer René Avril (all dated 1546), an agreement to teach woodcutting and copperplate engraving (1547), and finally a sale of five sets of matrices to an otherwise unknown Mathieu Chrétien (1549) are reported by Lesure (1953, p. 270) and Parent (1974, pp. 71-4, 82, 144). In 1549-50 his Paris imprint appears on four or five books (a Greek New Testament, and works by Clenardus, Dioscorides, Aesop and possibly Fuchs; see Renouard, vol. 4, pp. 60-6) and on half a dozen pamphlets (ordonnances and edicts). The books were produced in association with the printer Benoit Prevost; the pamphlets with Nicole Pléau, widow of the king’s binder, Estienne Roffet. Presumably Haultin acted here as a publisher, not as a printer.

He was also a woodcutter and copperplate engraver, as the 1547 contract attests (Parent, 1974, p. 73, n. 3); it seems premature to point to particular items, except perhaps for some delicious woodcut initials and headpieces, appearing in early imprints of Ruelle, Du Chemin and Crespin, in Fezandat’s Chansons of 1556, Guevara’s Marc Aurele (Paris, Jean Le Royer, 1565) and in Haultin’s Institution de la religion chrétienne (Baudrier, vol. 3, p. 98) and Calendrier historial, published in 1565, 1567, and 1571, in Lyons, Paris and La Rochelle respectively (Droz, 1970, vol. 3, p. 13; Guillo, 1991, pp. 374-5, No. 112). They are well designed and mix arabesque leaves, human figures or dots in a startling and personal style.

In October 1550 Haultin left Paris, professedly for three months (Parent, 1974, p. 82, n. 1). In fact he went to Geneva (and later intermittently to Lyons) only to return to Paris, first for short stays in 1555 and 1562, thereafter (in 1565) for about five years. Seen in the light of his later career, we may assume that he fled Paris because of his adherence to the Reformation. From 1548 on an alliance of the Sorbonne, Parliament and newly crowned King Henry II effectively enforced in Paris a steadily tightening religious repression, causing an exodus of Protestants to Geneva. One of the better known of these was the King’s printer for Latin and Greek, Robert Estienne.

Haultin’s sojourn in Geneva is well documented. In September 1551 ‘Maistre