



Type Spaces

Peter Burnhill

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Type Spaces examines pages of books printed and published by Aldus Manutius in Venice around 1500. By measuring the word-spaces, author Peter Burnhill discerns a system of measurement at work and comes up with the surprising suggestion that this printing shows a unified system of dimensions: of type size, of "leading" or line-increment, of line length, and of text area. He argues that the exceptional figures of Manutius and his punchcutter, Francesco Griffo, used a set of "in-house norms."

This system of unified measurement has a rationality that can apply to any process of type design, in any age, and with any system of production, making the book relevant even for contemporary designers. Since the passing of metal type, we have had no clear method of measuring type size and Burnhill's work suggests a new (or very old) approach to measurement in typography.

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