

In 1998 two figures within the European antiquarian book trade having particular connections with librarians and collectors of legal and humanist materials passed away. **Hilda Rosenthal** died at the Hague earlier last year at a very advanced age. Her connections date back to pre-war Munich and its vibrant rare book world; through her husband Ludwig, the firm traces its origins well into the 19th century. A person of elegance and charm, she carried on a great tradition for nearly fifty years in the new post-war Western Europe. She will be missed by the librarians and bibliophiles who, over the years, acquired from her many lovely and important works of the 15th and 16th centuries.

**Christian Verbeke**, who died last fall at the age of 66, represented a younger generation of antiquarian booksellers; he was a dealer who got his start in the Boston area, although he finally settled in his native Belgium. His passing represents a very real loss to the law library community in Western Europe and North America. He was, to those who knew him well, more than an "antiquarian bookdealer" as he modestly described himself; he was a scholar, who knew books, not just for their trade value, but for their content and meaning to librarians and collectors. I have been fortunate to know many such, from E.M. Dring and Clifford Maggs and Alan Thomas of London to the still active Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine Stern in New York. In his way, Christian was a person of that world.

Mr. Verbeke studied law in the U.S. and this remained his preferred discipline, although over his thirty-year career his interests focused on continental and Roman law and history of law. As with all Dutch speakers, he was multilingual (and with perfect English); as well, he had a variety of interests in his career as a bookdealer in Boston, the English provinces and, finally, at Gouvy, a somewhat inaccessible little town in southeastern Belgium. He was active (or, perhaps better, an activist) in antiquarian booksellers' associations in New England, England and the continent; his articles and reports in trade journals entertained many, even though his comments may have occasioned collegial concern when he discussed some matter a few colleagues thought were better left unsaid.

I came to know Christian both in person, on visits to the U.K. and Belgium, and through his catalogues, which were always welcome and made

good reading. His offerings demonstrated a perception of the interesting and useful, as well as the rare and costly; particularly for the busy librarian, his annotations and descriptions were valuable, scholarly and, equally important, time-saving. Personally he was interesting and informative, with a rather dry approach, a most enjoyable and entertaining companion in small groups.

Christian was a member of a number of scholarly and professional societies. I first met him at a BIALL conference in the early 1980s - where he participated as a member, rather than a bookdealer. He was one of a small number of antiquarian booksellers who attended IALL meetings and had even been asked to participate in their professional programs. He leaves, in addition to his friends in the library and antiquarian book world, a reference work that many of us have used, his essential bibliography on the standard works of Belgian law, and now latest, in this Journal, his article on the appraisal of rare books. Those of us who buy antiquarian materials will miss Christian for his scholarship, his friends will regret the passing of a person, one with a range of interests far beyond books and bookselling.

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