Daniel Taupin, 1936–2003

It was with great sadness that I heard of Daniel Taupin's fatal fall from the Rochail, in the Oisans region of the French Alps last year, after a successful solo ascent.

I first met Daniel in 1994 at CERN in Geneva, at the inaugural presentation of Omega by Yannis Haralambous and myself. Lots of grey hair going off in all directions, a big booming heavily French-accented voice, strongly held opinions — just who was this guy?

Over time, at EuroTEX and GUTenberg meetings, I got to know Daniel better. He always focused on the details and the exceptional cases. I share this concern and always try to instill it in my software engineering students.

But he didn't just talk. He built working software. His MusixTEX, used to produce many of today's online musical archives, is a highly complex piece of software, that deals with *all* of the exceptions. It can be used to typeset just about any piece of music in the Western musical tradition, and probably more.

Daniel was also well-known in French climbing circles, and played a key rôle in developing standards for sharing popular climbs between the competitive and recreational styles. Courageous and generous to the core, he was even labelled a "dangerous terrorist" by the French state in 1992 for having, with some friends, removed the fixed pitons from the *via ferata* climb of the famed Aiguille du Midi, done to restore the integrity of the climbing experience.

He brought his typesetting and climbing interests together by using TEX and MetaPost together to produce typeset maps of France showing some of the most popular climbs, thereby showing the way forward.

Daniel's death was untimely. My research team here in Sydney had started to examine questions of high-quality typeset music and maps. Just as we were preparing to get in touch with Daniel, with future collaboration in mind, we received a copy of an email from Fabrice Popineau, announcing Daniel's fall.

I last saw Daniel at the Toulouse GUTenberg meeting in 2000. The evening of the banquet, held in Cintegabelle, the village where Lionel Jospin, the French Prime Minister, was also counsellor-general, we visited the church, which holds one of the finest organs in the French south-west. After the talk and recital, Daniel was explaining to us the difficulties of playing an organ that he had recently found in a church near Paris that was not tuned as a well-tempered clavier. Only certain pieces, in certain keys, could be played with success.

As always, this colourful *personnage* had something to say.

Farewell Daniel, you will be missed.

⋄ John Plaice