When we speak of the point size of a classical (i.e. engraved in metal) this is a nominal value. Each character will have a different combination of height (total distance above the base line), depth (total distance below the base line) and width. Similarly in \TeX{} if we write:
\font\bffourteen = [... / MY-FONTS / LinLibertineRB.otf] at 14.0 pt
then 14.0 points is the nominal size. In \TeX{} we can precisely determine the above values by looking at the bounding box of a letter. We do this by placing the letter, or letters, in a hbox and the using the command \the as applied to the \ht, \dp and \wd of the box.

Suppose that we are interested in the letter “g”, which dips below the baseline. The text is set via \rm at a nominal point size of 12.5 points.

We first write:
\setbox0 \hbox{g },
and then determine the values as follows:
height = \the\ht0
depth = \the\dp0
width = \the\wd0
if we now run Xe\TeX{} we obtain:
height = 5.775pt, depth = 2.97499pt, width = 6.25pt

We can also obtain the maximum range for a given nominal point size by placing the entire alphabet inside a hbox:
\setbox1 \hbox{abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz }

height = 8.725pt, depth = 2.97499pt, width = 152.25pt

We note that if add the values of height and depth we obtain a value of about 11.7 points, which is below the nominal value of 12.5 points.