**Attachment 1
BALTHASAR I MORETUS: A SHORT BIOGRAPHY**

Balthasar I Moretus, grandson of Christoffel Plantin, was the head of the Officina Plantiniana publishing house between 1610 and 1641 and ushered in a period of great prosperity for the publisher. Not only was he able to restart and bolster the highly profitable export of liturgical works to Spain, but he was also able to build a flawless reputation for his company throughout the rest of Europe thanks to the masterly editions of numerous erudite works.

Balthasar was born on 23 July 1574, life dealing him a bitter hand. At birth, his father feared losing both mother and child and he was born paralysed on his entire right side from the ordeal. Because the boy turned out to be rather intelligent and mastered left-handed writing, his father trained him as a proofreader in his family's publishing business. From 1586, he was a pupil in the Latin school in the Antwerp cathedral and in October 1592 he studied under the renowned humanist Justus Lipsius in Leuven for several months to perfect his Latin. However, Balthasar became seriously ill there and his father brought him back to Antwerp after a disagreement. From then on, he was employed in his father's company as a proofreader and was entrusted with the firm's Latin correspondence.

Balthasar's younger brother Jan II Moretus also worked in the company and was responsible for book sales. In 1604, the year before Jan II married Maria de Sweert in July 1605, the two brothers asked their parents for an annual income for their work. They concluded an agreement with their parents that, in exchange for their wages, they would represent the interests of *Officina Plantiniana*, promising that they would keep the company as a single entity.

When Jan I died on 22 September 1610, the brothers assumed control of the company. Their division of tasks worked well, with Balthasar leading the publishing and printing business and Jan II handling the business of the book trade. When Jan II unexpectedly passed away in 1618, Balthasar was left alone. He entered into a partnership with Jan II's widow, Maria de Sweert, and her brother, Jan van Meurs, who would manage the book trade. However, following bitter quarrels, their collaboration would come to an end in 1629. By the 1630s, Balthasar was no longer alone. He was able to procure the help of a few reliable and efficient employees such as his nephew Louis Moerentorf, Jan Ottens and Philips Collaert, who ensured the daily operations of the printing business and bookstore. In the meantime, Balthasar II Moretus, the son of Jan II, had also completed his education and became more and more involved in the company's operations. On 8 July 1641, Balthasar I Moretus, passed away just before his 67th birthday.

The publications Balthasar Moretus sold were often voluminous and luxurious books with theological or historical tracts and editions of classical authors. These were often accompanied by impressive illustrations whose allegorical designs by Peter Paul Rubens speak to the imagination in a profound way. Balthasar Moretus was well aware of the quality of his editions. To a priest who wished to print a book with him but did not have sufficient means to pay for it, he wrote “forgive me for my stance, but I cannot print for the same price as other printers may, just as the painter Rubens does not paint for the same price as other painters”. With his eye-catching editions, we often forget

that he also produced a great many simple printed material, such as the numerous ordinances for the city of Antwerp, political pamphlets or humble prayer books.

Balthasar Moretus lived in a difficult age for book sales. The incessant wars in the German Empire slowly strangled the company's activities on the Frankfurt stock exchange, where his father was able to sell a large portion of his books, culminating in the cessation of all activities in the 1630s. Moreover, he had to regularly deal with the illegal reprinting of his books in Lyon and Amsterdam. Fortunately for him, he was able to rely on the large sales market in Spain, which continued increasing in importance.

Balthasar I Moretus was a reserved man. Apart from a few short visits to Brussels and Scherpenheuvel, he did not travel. Even when his presence was required to defend his affairs, such as for the publication of his *Biblia regia* in Rome, he chose to stay in Antwerp with the excuse that his presence was required at the printing house and that his paralysis did not permit travel. He did, however, follow the current affairs of his time at home and abroad with great interest, of which he informed himself by reading various news items that he commented extensively on in his correspondence.

Balthasar had been very concerned about family matters. Not only did he care for his older brother Melchior, who suffered mental problems, but also for the eldest son of his brother, Jan III, who was also afflicted by mental incapacity. In 1631, he realised that only a miracle could bring Jan III around, so he put all hope for the familiar succession of the Plantin publishing house on the shoulders of his cousin Balthasar II.

Balthasar I Moretus never married. In his home on the Vrijdagmarkt, which he had rebuilt into a beautiful mansion, he surrounded himself with works of art and, above all else, books, which he had been collecting since his youth. For the sake of modesty, he never allowed himself to be painted until later life so that only portraits of him as an elderly man exist.