**Attachment 3  
BALTHASAR I MORETUS, PUBLISHER OF THE BAROQUE**

**Preface**

When we speak of Balthasar I Moretus as the pre-eminent publisher of Baroque books in the first half of the 17th century, we immediately think of books with title pages and illustrations created by Peter Paul Rubens.[[1]](#footnote-1)This almost automatic association is the result of Rubens' impressive visual language, who with his countless allegorical representations, introduced a new style of expression to the illustration of books with this era. Yet these Baroque publications by Balthasar Moretus are much more than just the addition of a title page or an illustration designed by Rubens or one of his pupils. Moretus' editions are also outstanding because of the other decorative elements and the entire mise-en-page of the text, which shows a thoughtful balance between format and typeface. Moretus was not the only 17th-century publisher who published these kinds of books, but certainly was the one who had perfected their physical attributes. To achieve this, he meticulously followed the production of every book, from its beginning as a manuscript to the final printed copy. This article attempts to tell the abridged story of how he brought these beautiful books to life.

In this overview, we limit ourselves to just one aspect of Balthasar Moretus' activities as a publisher and ignore the financial aspects of publishing. The first question that Moretus asked when he was offered a new book for publication was whether he could turn a profit and sell enough copies of it. He usually insisted that the author either buy part of the print run and sell these copies himself or assume the financing of the book in whole or in part. While fascinating, an analysis of his decisions in this area is a study in itself. Once he was willing to publish a work and scheduled it for printing, he had to consider how the book was to look: what format, which paper, which typeface were best suited for a specific edition. Was it appropriate for the book to be illustrated and, if so, which artist could take it on? These and other decisions were always made with a mind for the costs involved. When an author opted for a large size of his book, Moretus automatically thought of the price tag that this choice entailed. Commercial considerations also played a part in his decisions. After all, the book also had to sell. While our attention is largely focused on the physical attributes of his editions, we must always be aware that all these publishing aspects are in fact inextricably linked.

**Preliminary remarks**

Balthasar Moretus was a publisher who was very active in determining how the new publication would look. The books themselves exhibit the result of his work as end products. In the case of the Plantin publishing house, we benefit from a wealth of archival documents having been preserved that provide deeper insight into the creation of these books.

There are two limitations we must keep in mind. We have no information about verbal agreements. A number of the key persons with whom Moretus consulted, such as Rubens or other artists regarding illustrations, were established in

Antwerp. Consultations between them did not take place via letters, but in personal conversations for which no written record exist. We are therefore missing a great deal of information. Fortunately for us now, Moretus' most important engraver, Cornelis I Galle, settled in Brussels for a few years. During that period in the 1630s, they had frequent correspondence, with shipments of copper plates and drawings going back and forth. This correspondence offers insightful information about the creation of the illustrations in the books and what was involved.

An important part of Balthasar's discussions with his authors regarding the production of their books was also conducted orally. There are regular references in Moretus' letters to conversations that had taken place earlier or he invites someone to discuss business face to face. When he writes in such cases "as we discussed regarding execution when you were here" and gives no further explanation, we can only guess the content of the conversation.

At first sight, Moretus' preserved correspondence seems very extensive. However, what has largely been preserved are the copies of the original letters sent by Balthasar Moretus. For convenience sake, when we speak about Balthasar's letters, we refer to the copies and not to the original letters. However, based on a few cases, it appears that when the original letters were retained, they largely correspond to the copies.[[2]](#footnote-2) So while Moretus' letters were preserved, the dozens of letters from the authors themselves are not. With a few exceptions, such as the numerous letters from Philippe Chifflet or from Bartholomaeus de los Rios, we have to make do solely with the letters from Balthasar. So, we read what Balthasar wrote, but we do not know what the author wrote in reply. Despite these limitations, the stored correspondence offers an abundance of information about the production of these editions from the Plantin publishing house. Nothing at all remains from other publishers from the 17th century and we can only rely on the books that their printing presses have produced.

**The supplied texts**

A common thread in Balthasar Moretus' approach as a publisher is the fact that, from beginning to end, he worked extremely scrupulously with an eye for the most minute detail. That began with the delivery of the text. He always took it on himself and not only had an eye for the content, but also for correct spelling and quotations. A striking example of Moretus' sense of detail in this area can be witnessed in the publication of the book by the Spanish author Carolus Neapolis, who had written a commentary on the *Fasti* of the Roman poet Ovid. When he confirmed receipt of the text at the end of 1635, Balthasar wrote that it contained quite a number of mistakes and that he'd had all the

quotations checked by his proofreaders. He would have preferred the text to have been in the author's handwriting. When authors check their own text after a secretary has transcribed it, they read over all the errors too easily:

Forgive me for boldly complaining about your secretary's mistakes. The great scholar Lipsius, my tutor, understood when I told him openly in the past that I preferred his handwriting, although he had a difficult handwriting, than a copy by someone else in a more accomplished hand. Although the author reads it, he no longer sees the errors because he is still in his head with his writing and explanation.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Often authors or agencies who wanted a text printed by the Plantin printing house were sent an entire series of questions about passages that Balthasar had doubts regarding the accuracy of the words or quotations.[[4]](#footnote-4) In addition to the spelling, word splits also had to be executed correctly. In a letter dated 25 February 1635 to Timotheus Hojus, the archbishop's secretary, he pointed out that splits such as "o-mnia" or "da-mnatione" were not permissible. Also words of Greek origin had to be split according to the correct constituent parts: therefore, "bla-sphemo" (blasphemy) was not allowed. That must be "blasphemo", wrote Moretus, in accordance with the etymology in Ancient Greek.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Paper, format and typeface**

Various factors played a role in the choice of paper, format and typeface of a new edition. In a number of cases, external circumstances allowed little or no choice. This was especially true for the choice of paper, in that Balthasar was very dependent on what was available on the market. In a time of an almost perpetual state of war, an uninterrupted paper supply was not a given. In the 1630s, Balthasar could buy so little paper because of the state of war that he was forced to postpone various publications. It was only at the end of the decade that he could gradually stabilise his crucial paper supply via the Northern Netherlands.

The quality of the paper was very important for many authors and customers. Certainly for his large luxurious editions, Balthasar Moretus always selected the best quality paper. Good paper and a pleasant typeface, he wrote to the abbot Antoine de Winghe, extends an invitation to read a text. If Dutch publishers use this for their worldly books, why should he not follow suit for religious   
  
  
works?[[6]](#footnote-6) In his opinion, his customers did not fuss about a penny more or less, so he could afford to print these editions on expensive paper. On 25 July 1630, he wrote to the Jesuit Balthasar Corderius, who wished to have the collected works by Dionysius Areopagita, a Greek theologian and philosopher from the 5th century, printed that such authors deserve to be printed on magnificent paper. Those who value pearls more than glass do not care about the price. Here too, he referred to Dutch publishers, who are eager to print their *booklets* on exquisite paper and are therefore highly prized.[[7]](#footnote-7) The reality, however, tended to throw a spanner in the works. A few months later, he informed Corderius that he could not obtain suitable paper for this edition and that the plan had to be shelved temporarily. Nevertheless, these examples show how much importance Moretus attached to high-quality paper.

For the book's format choice, Balthasar was guided by commercial motives. For example, for a poetry bundle, a larger quarto size was less suitable because it did not sell well. True poetry lovers preferred smaller formats. If he did print such a work in a larger format, it was for a special reason, as in the case of *Lyricorum libri IV* by the Polish poet Sarbievius. Balthasar printed the first edition from 1632 in quarto because the author dedicated his work to the Pope and thus required a larger format. Two years later, however, he printed a new edition in the small 24° format for enthusiasts.[[8]](#footnote-8) If the edition was financed by the author, Moretus would easily switch to publishing a book in a larger format and with a larger typeface. For the book *Epaenesis Iberica* by Luis Tribaldos de Toledo with a eulogy to Spain, he told Ludovicus Nonnius, who acted as the contact person, that he would print the work in quarto and with a large typeface, befitting the depiction of a great kingdom. Although he expected the work to sell poorly, it was the author who was solely responsible for the costs of the entire edition.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Sometimes Balthasar Moretus could not ignore the wishes of powerful nobles when they wanted a large format. A good example of this is the publication of *Officium hebdomadae sanctae* (a prayer book for the holy week) from 1638. Moretus always printed all editions of this publication in the small format in 24°. Only the edition from 1638 was in the large octavo format. The marquis of Mirabel had, after his visit to the printing house, informed Balthasar that the king had a preference for a larger format.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Also, for the format of the book about the siege of the city of Dôle in 1639, Archduke Ferdinand was given the choice: did he wish the book in octavo or would he prefer a folio edition so that the book fit with Hermannus Hugo's account of the siege of Breda of 1626?[[11]](#footnote-11) It was finally printed in a quarto format.

The format of a book also partly determined the size of the typeface. Of course, it was not so easy to choose a single typeface for an entire publication. This is where the craftsmanship of Balthasar Moretus and his type setters was demonstrated in the selection of the various font sizes and types in the right proportions for the various parts of the book such as the preface, the index and the marginalia. In a text, certain words had to be in italics or in capitals and also had to comply with the rules of the art. In a discussion with Antoine de Winghe, Moretus wrote briefly that De Winghe must have faith in him and his craftsmanship.[[12]](#footnote-12) A larger typeface was always easier for older people. Certain prayer books had already been printed in a larger font by Balthasar's father Jan I Moretus so that older clergymen could read the texts. The prayer book *Praxis quotidiana divini amoris* by the Jesuit Petrus Franciscus Chifflet of 1631 was also printed in a large typeface. Balthasar had chosen this because, in his words, it would please his Highness (who had it commissioned) and be more beneficial for older readers.[[13]](#footnote-13)

For some authors, the terms octavo or quarto for the format or "ascendonica" or "canon cleyn" for the typeface was part of a secret language that only printers understood. It was much easier to simply cut out the desired format from paper and show it. Moretus often sent a *specimen* to the author. This was a sample of a few pages with a piece of text, printed on the type of paper and with the typeface he wanted to use for the entire book. Based on this, an author could easily judge whether or not the proposal was right for him. In this manner, on 17 June 1616, he sent a *specimen* to Jacobus Bosius of his work on the cross, *Crux triumphans et gloriosa*. He immediately approved it and wrote back on 9 July 1616 that he had looked upon the *specimen* "with happy eyes".[[14]](#footnote-14)

Even once the typeface had been chosen, the letters still had to be available. Balthasar was able to utilise the vast collection of stamps and moulds that Christoffel Plantin had assembled in the 16th century. With that, he was able to have new letters cast. After all, lead letters wear out easily and had to be constantly replaced. When he started working on the already mentioned *Opera* of Dionysius Areopagita, Moretus was not satisfied with the quality of the letters and first had them recast, which of course caused a delay of a few weeks. Good quality, however, was more important than speedy execution.

**The illustrations**

Together with the title page, illustrations in a book are striking visual features of a publication and therefore required great care. They are now often the most attractive aspect of these Baroque editions, but were also of great significance in the 17th century. Those who encounter a sloppy title page will not be inclined to buy or read the book. The creation of illustrations and in particular engravings, however, was an expensive matter and many authors were often concerned about the costs. Some thought they would be cheaper if they contacted an artist themselves to produce the design drawings or an engraver to cut the copper plates, but that was easier said than done. Balthasar Moretus was never very happy when authors wanted to arrange for the illustrations for their books themselves. He always wanted to ensure that the drawings and engravings were made according to the rules of the art and a disagreement in this regard led to friction more than once.

A regularly recurring problem was the size of the design drawing or the copper plate that did not match the size of the book in which the image was to be arranged. For his work *Consolation aux affligez par la malice des hommes*, published in 1632, Mathieu de Morgues had proposed that the artist Nicolas van der Horst would make the designs in Brussels and that Cornelis Galle would then engrave them. However, the design was too large for the book. Van der Horst had not drawn a shrub, but a whole tree, and Van der Horst's tree was nowhere to be found in a botanical work on trees.[[15]](#footnote-15) Balthasar Moretus certainly paid attention to these kinds of things. Another example was the copper plate that Philippe Chifflet had sent as an illustration to be printed in his book *La couronne des roses* from 1638. Since it was too big for the book, Balthasar sent the plate back to Chifflet.[[16]](#footnote-16) Even Rubens once produced a design drawing that was too large. Rubens had drawn a design for the title page of Hermannus Hugo's book on the siege of Breda, *Obsidio Bredana*. Moretus wrote to the author on 21 January 1626 that he had received the drawing, but added: "it is, however, somewhat larger and must be redrawn according to the format indicated by the red lines on the attached paper".[[17]](#footnote-17)

However, the issue Moretus had to impress upon his authors and artists most frequently, was that enough space be reserved for the title. A striking example of this is the title that Frederick de Marselaer had had designed by Theodore van Loon for his book *Legatus*. Balthasar was not satisfied with the title itself. First, the name of the author was larger than that of the king and, secondly, there was insufficient room for the entire title that de Marselaer had proposed. To ensure the title fit into the copper plate, the addition “PHILIPPO IV HISPANIARVM ET INDIARVM REGI” was simply shortened to “AD PHILIPPVM IV HISPANIARVM REGEM”.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The title proposal for the missal for the Diocese of Cologne that Moretus had put forward in 1626 was also too long. If the full title was to be included, it could only be achieved in such small lettering that is was impossible for the engraver to execute it legible with an engraved plate.[[19]](#footnote-19)

When an author provided the copper plates himself, Balthasar Moretus sometimes had more work (and costs) than if he just had them engraved anew. For his work on coats of arms, *De symbolis heroicis libri IX* (1634), the Italian Jesuit Silvester Petrasancta had delivered all 290 emblems to be used in his book. Where Balthasar first cautiously wrote that he wished the plates would have been engraved a bit better, he became more and more critical when the engraver Andries Pauwels started the corrective work. The plates turned out to be too thin to rework properly and some had to be completely re-engraved.[[20]](#footnote-20) According to the payment accounts, Andries Pauwels indeed worked on the improvement of the plates from 13 December 1633 until 23 June 1634. That would end up costing Moretus an additional 268 guilders which he had not factored in.[[21]](#footnote-21)

If an author truly insisted on having the copper plates made himself, then Balthasar at least wanted the title page to be engraved by Cornelis Galle. After all, the title was the first thing a reader saw. For example, this was the arrangement with the illustrations in the book by Hermannus Hugo on the siege of Breda (1626). Hugo had the copper plates engraved at his expense in Brussels. For the title page, which was drawn by Rubens, Moretus thought that only Galle could do Rubens' work justice as an engraving, as eventually transpired.

In order to avoid all these problems, Balthasar Moretus preferred to arrange the creation of the illustrations himself. He called on the services of various artists in Antwerp. The most famous of these was of course Peter Paul Rubens, "the Apelles of our time", as Balthasar regularly compared him to the legendary Greek painter from the 4th century BC. There were also Peeter de Jode or Erasmus Quellinus who provided design drawings for Balthasar's editions.

Most designs for title pages were from Rubens.[[22]](#footnote-22) The ideas for these designs came about in consultation with Balthasar Moretus. Occasionally, Balthasar made sketches of a design, which Rubens went on to refine. The most famous of these is the title page of the *Breviarium Romanum* from 1614. Balthasar indicated where he envisaged a particular composition on the title page and Rubens then fleshed out the figures fully. In other cases, Rubens wrote a short explanation of the reason he had depicted certain figures the way he had, such as his design for the title page of the poetry book by the Jesuits Bernardus Bauhusius, Balduinus Cabillavus and Carolus Malapertius from 1634. He wrote at the top: "Here you can see Muse of Poetry with Minerva of Virtue, united in a Hermathene statue. I chose Muse instead of Mercury, which is justified based on various examples. I do not know if you will appreciate my idea. I am happier with it than others may be and have even complemented myself on it".[[23]](#footnote-23)

The input of the author himself was also required for the conception of the design. For the title of his edition on Ovid, the Spanish author Carolus Neapolis thought that Moretus and Rubens would come up with a design for the title. Balthasar had written to him on 28 November 1637 that both he and Rubens had doubts as to what design to choose and asked him what he chose.[[24]](#footnote-24) A few months later, he explained to the author in a letter from 8 March 1638 that he and Rubens really wanted to know the opinion of the author to hear if he agreed with their ideas about the design for the title page or if they had to change it.[[25]](#footnote-25)

An author did not always agree with the design that Rubens had drafted. Clergy regularly had a problem with the nudity of the allegorical female figures on the title page. In 1628, Balthasar Corderius’ edition of a collection of Bible commentaries by Greek church fathers on the Gospel of Luke (*Catena Graecorum patrum in Lucam*) was published. It shows how a woman, who represents the truth, is hanging a garland of precious stones around the neck of the evangelist Luke. Moretus wrote to Corderius that he had heard through another Antwerp Jesuit, Heribert Rosweyde, that the author wondered whether the figure representing the truth was not perhaps depicted too naked. Moretus reassured Corderius: Rubens had told him that was not the case.[[26]](#footnote-26) Abbot Antoine de Winghe then asked questions about the position of Mary on the right side of Christ on the title page of Ludovicus Blosius' *Opera*, but Rubens pointed to a verse from the Psalms to justify his drawing.[[27]](#footnote-27) De Winghe's reaction to this is not known.

Moretus wrote to Balthasar Corderius that he usually informed Rubens six months in advance when he needed a new design so that he had time to devise something. He then drew his design during his free time. If he had to create a drawing during his work hours, Rubens would charge at least 100 guilders per drawing.[[28]](#footnote-28) The amounts that Rubens charged Balthasar Moretus for designs were indeed not particularly high: he asked 20 guilders for designs for a book in folio, 12 for a book in quarto, 8 for one in octavo and only 5 guilders for 24°.[[29]](#footnote-29) For his designs for the 1614 breviary, he had even asked less: for all the design drawings for the ten illustrations and the title page together he asked 132 guilders, which amounts to only 12 guilders per drawing. In this manner, he remained well below the rate of other artists. Peeter de Jode received 27 guilders in 1632 for the design of a title on philosophy by Rodericus de Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus* in 1632.[[30]](#footnote-30) Nicolas van der Horst also had a higher rate and charged 26 guilders and 8 nickles for his title drawing for the book on Marie de Medicis' entry into Brussels, *Histoire curieuse de tout ce qui c'est passé a l'entree de la reyne mere* in   
  
December 1632.[[31]](#footnote-31) Rubens's pupil, Erasmus Quellinus, charged slightly less than Van der Horst, but, at 24 guilders for a design drawing for a folio issue and 15 guilders for a quarto publication, still stayed under the amount that Rubens received.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The amounts that the artists received, in their turn, always remained well below the amounts that the engravers charged for their work. For the title page of Corderius’ *Catena graecorum patrum in Lucam* from 1628, for which Rubens received 20 guilders, Cornelis Galle charged 80 guilders for the engraving. For *Cursus philosophicus* by Arriaga, he charged an even higher sum of 95 guilders (for which De Jode had received 27 guilders for the drawing). After all, engraving a copper plate with a burin was much more intensive and time-consuming work than making a drawing.

Cornelis I Galle was Rubens’ favorite engraver.[[33]](#footnote-33) As long as his brother Theodore lived, Cornelis Galle received the orders and payments through his brother's engraving atelier.[[34]](#footnote-34) This atelier took care of both the engraving of the copper plates, the reworking of used plates so that they could be reused and reprinted. After Theodore Galle's death, Cornelis Galle went his own way and, although he remained Balthasar Moretus' first choice as an engraver, other engravers also occasionally worked for the Plantin publishing house. Balthasar Moretus was especially critical of title engravings. When Cornelis II Galle was still being trained by his father, Balthasar thought he needed some additional instructions about engraving title pages. He wrote to Cornelis I Galle on 23 December 1636:

“U.L. sone sal believen te letten op de proportie vande gedruckte letteren, namentlyck op de L ende E waerinne hy meest gemist heeft inden titel van Lipsius. Als wanneer hy eens te t’Antwerpen sal comen, sal hem lichtelyck komen instrueren in meerder perfectie van de letteren te snyden, als in goede proportie vande linien te houden”.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Making the design drawings, engraving the plates, printing samples and possible corrections had to be organised as smoothly as possible so that no time was lost. Balthasar Moretus arranged all dispatches and contacts between authors and artists. We witness his organisation in practice in the period that Cornelis I Galle lived in Brussels and there was regular correspondence between Antwerp and Brussels. As an example, let us take the work of Juan Caramuel Lobkowitz in defence of the Spanish monarchy, *Philippus Prudens* that was published in 1639. A series of portraits of Portuguese kings appeared in the first part. Moretus had reused the copper plates of these portraits from an edition by Petrus and Joannes Bellerus from 1621. Because they did not fully meet his high quality requirements, he had Quellinus make corrections on the prints. Balthasar sent Galle the 23 portrait plates along with the prints with Quellinus' corrections on 28 September 1638. Galle replied that he was missing two portraits and asked what was more urgent now, the book by Lobkowitz or that by   
  
Jean Boyvin about the siege of Dôle. The priority was the book by Lobkowitz, in which Galle had to pay particular attention to the portrait of Ferdinand. However, Galle did not know whether he was to be depicted in armour or in the robes of a cardinal. Moretus duly provided him with the necessary information. The correspondence between Moretus and Galle continues in this manner for a few months and we are privy to the progress of the engraving work as if we are sitting in the front row as spectators.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Once the illustrations were complete, it also had to be decided where they were to be arranged in the book. This also had to be done according to the rules of the art. A letter to Benedictus van Haeften, abbot of Affligem, regarding the publication of his *Regia via crucis* (1635) sheds light on this. In addition to the title page, which was designed by Rubens and engraved by Cornelis Galle, the book also contains 38 engravings with representations related to the cross. Balthasar had arranged them so that they could be printed at the beginning of each corresponding chapter. As an example of how it should not be done, he referred to a previous work by Van Haeften, *Schola cordis* (the school of the heart), illustrated with engravings by Boëtius à Bolswert, published by Hieronymus Verdussen in 1629:

"I know this is different than in *Schola cordis*, however, the absurdity is that often, because of a lack of text, some pages, which we call right pages, are left empty. If you prefer to have the illustrations placed on the left page, you need to send me supplements for every chapter that follows the images so that the same deformity does not occur as in *Schola cordis*. Biverus has provided us with supplements in the same way to add or omit pieces as required for the uniform placement of the illustrations. With the same aim, he has granted permission to omit some of his text".[[37]](#footnote-37)

In *Schola cordis*, it indeed regularly occurs that the text of a chapter ends on the left page, leaving the right page completely blank and the engraving is printed on the next left page.[[38]](#footnote-38) In order to avoid these annoying empty pages, it was therefore necessary to let the text run a little longer so that a number of lines could be printed on the right page or to shorten the text so that it did not go beyond the right page.

If it did occur that a page would remain blank, there were other means to solve this problem. Either an additional illustration could be printed or a quote from the Bible, from a church father or from a classical author could be included, depending on the contents of the book. In the already mentioned work by Mathieu de Morgues, *Consolation aux affligez par la malice des hommes*, Balthasar saw that, following the author's dedication to Marie de Medici, p. 12 would remain blank if   
  
he wanted to start the main text, as is the custom, on a right-hand side. De Morgues had the choice to think of a suitable quote that could be printed or he could choose a representation of King David as an illustration.[[39]](#footnote-39) He preferred the latter as can be seen in the book.

When the copper plates were finally finished, they still had to be printed on the printed sheets of the book, along with text. This was a lengthy process that often demanded significant time resources, especially when the book had a large number of illustrations. As an example, let us take the already mentioned book by Benedictus van Haeften, *De regia via crucis*. After finishing the printing of the text, Theodore Galle's studio printed the engravings in a first series of 300 copies in July 1635. In 1637, a second series of 100 copies followed, in October 1641, (after Balthasar's death) a series of 200 copies, in 1649, a further 250 copies, in 1651, 100 copies, and finally, almost 20 years after the printing of the text, a final group of 550 copies. Thus, between the printing of the book's text and printing the engraved title page and illustrations, there could be a difference of several years. Those who bought a copy with the first fresh prints of the copper plates were lucky, while those who bought a copy with prints of worn plates later, were less fortunate.

**Initials and closing pieces**

Although they may not immediately attract attention as strongly as title pages and full-page illustrations, various decorative elements largely determine the appearance of a book published by Balthasar Moretus. These include initials, printing marks and all kinds of closing pieces. Together with the illustrations, they provide the typical baroque character of Moretus' publications. Many of these closing pieces, small illustrations printed to complete a part of the book, are minor works of art themselves. The importance that Balthasar Moretus attached to this is evident from the fact that in the 1630s, he commissioned a valued artist such as Erasmus Quellinus to draw such closing pieces. He also regularly commissioned Quellinus to create new designs for drawings of new initials.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Initials and closing pieces were woodcuts that could be put together in one piece with the lead letters. After Christoffel van Sichem had provided the new woodcuts in the 1620s, Christoffel Jegher came into Balthasar Moretus' permanent service from 1625 with the commission to provide new woodcuts. For religious works, initials were gilded with a religious image that related to the letter of the initial (the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Mary, the Annunciation, for the letter A for example, or an image of King David for the letter D); for non-religious works, Jegher cut new decorative initials with plant motifs. For example, in 1629, he cut dozens of "foliage letters" and, in June 1631, new initials destined for the bible edition in quarto, for the Dionysius Areopagita *Opera*   
  
and for the Seneca *Opera*. Although they were made for a particular edition, these initials and closing pieces could also be used in future editions.

**The title**

Finally, a striking title was necessary for a book to sell well. For Balthasar Moretus it was important to find a title that described the contents of the book as clearly as possible. Two examples can illustrate this well. In 1634, he printed a text edition for the Jesuit Aegidius Bucherius of a work about time calculation employed by Victorius Aquitanus, a Roman author from the 5th century, supplemented with Bucherius' comments. Initially, Moretus followed Bucherius' proposal and printed the title as: “In Victorii Aquitani canonem paschalem scriptum anno christi vulgari cccclvii. & nunc primùm in lucem editum commentarius …”. The work was already fully printed in the autumn of 1633, but Balthasar still had doubts about the title. In a letter dated 22 December 1633, he proposed a different title to Bucherius: “De emendatione temporum …”. He thus moved the emphasis away from Victorius Aquitanus' text edition to the subject itself, namely time calculation. This should entice readers to buy the book.[[41]](#footnote-41) Bucherius' response has not been preserved. The title of the book was reprinted in February 1634 with the word "emendatione" replace by "doctrina". The result is that some copies of the book have the first title page, others the second. Moretus' intervention in the title did not improve the situation. The book sold very badly and three years later, at a time when he could not obtain paper for new editions, he complained bitterly that he wished he could change Bucherius' book into unprinted paper so he could reuse it.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Moretus was also unhappy with the title that Hugo Sempilius had chosen for his mathematical work for the same reason. The title "Prodromus mathematicus" (meaning: "mathematical precursor") did not say anything about the contents of the book. Moretus chose a simple title: "The disciplinis mathematicis" and it is with this title that the book was published in 1635.[[43]](#footnote-43)

**Conclusion**

The entire process of printing a book was a long and complex one in which numerous aspects of the book required necessary attention. Balthasar Moretus meticulously monitored all these various steps. Rushing to complete a project was not his way. His favourite motto, which appeared in his letters regularly and which was attributed to the Roman statesman Cato, was "Sat cito si sat ben", which means: the work may be done quickly, but, above all, well. Thus, authors usually got to see a sample before their work was definitively printed. His energy in meticulously monitoring everything is especially impressive when one also considers that his attention had to be spread over dozens of editions simultaneously. Given that he had to pay so much attention to all those details simultaneously, it is a small miracle that there were so few errors. Yet errors did occur on occasion. For example, in 1630, incorrect illustrations were printed on the title pages of the *Diurnale Romanum* in 32°. Instead of the intended engraving with Peter and Paul, an illustration was printed depicting Saint Francis, which belonged to the prayer books for the Franciscans, the *Officia propria sanctorum Ordinis minorum*.[[44]](#footnote-44) Balthasar only found out once dozens of copies had already been sent out. To correct the mistake, the title pages had to be reprinted with the correct image and returned.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Balthasar Moretus had some bad luck with several editions. In 1629, he had started printing an edition of the works of a Spanish bishop at the expense of a Spanish nobleman, Don Francisco Bravo. He had already printed 15 sections (with a print run of 763 copies each) when Bravo died, leaving him at an impasse with the work that had already started. The already printed sheets were worthless to him and, at most, were only usable as wrapping paper.[[46]](#footnote-46) Even the editions that were closest to his heart, including a new edition of the Abraham Ortelius' atlas, the collected works of his adored tutor Justus Lipsius, a new edition of the *Biblia regia*, had to be discontinued halfway through printing or were unsuccessful commercially.

Despite these less successful projects, Balthasar Moretus was a particularly successful publisher. This was largely down to his exceptional talent for seamlessly organising the work of everyone involved in the printing of an edition: authors, artists, his own staff and others. His talent for mediation very often came in handy. As a publisher, he always kept an eye on the commercial viability of his publications and, often with a great deal of patience and diplomacy, he was also usually successful in reorienting his authors in the direction he thought best. Thanks to this organisational talent, the excellent work of his setters and printers and the artistic qualities of the artists who collaborated with him, he was able to realise these baroque publications that still astonish us by their unsurpassed perfection in print and illustration.

1. See the box for further information about Balthasar Moretus. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. An example are the letters to Antoine van Winghe, abbot of Liessies, which have been preserved in the Archives départementales in Lille. When compared with the copies that were kept in the Plantin-Moretus Museum, it appears that they largely correspond. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Ignosce quaeso, si liberius de amanuensis vitiis sim questus. Aegre haud olim tulit Sapientiae et Litterarum Antistes Justus Lipsius, Doctor meus, cum aperte ei indicarem malle me ipsius autographum, inscitâ licet manu scriptum, quam elegantiori alterius descriptum. Nam auctor etsi relegat, suae scriptionis et sententiae memor, scriptionis menda haud advertit.” (MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 302). References to archival documents from the Plantin-Moretus Museum are hereinafter abbreviated to “MPM Arch.”, followed by the number. The titles of the archival documents are taken from Jan Denucé, *Musaeum Plantin-Moretus: inventaris op het Plantijnsch archief – inventaire des archives Plantiniennes*, Antwerp, 1926. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See, among other things, the series “dubia” (doubts) sent to Bartholomaeus De los Rios about his *Phoenix Thenensis* in MPM Arch. 120, *Imprimerie 1637-1655*, p. 89-92, or the endless discussions about *Missale Coloniense* in MPM Arch. 119, *Imprimerie 1626-1636*, p. 27-104. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. (MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “Chartam vero candidiorem in omnibus exemplaribus assumam, ut soleo in libris precationum ut et typorum et chartae elegantiâ ad eas legendas invitentur. Batavi fere semper in libris vanis chartâ candidiore utuntur, quidni ego in libris sacris et piis?” (MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 132, a letter from 13 October 1634). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “Nam auctores illi antiqui nitidius imprimi merentur, et qui margaritam prae vitro aestimare novit, pretium haud curat. Et vero Batavi praeeunt in libellis nitidiori charta excudendis, ac magno proinde aestimandis” (MPM Arch. 144, *Copie de Lettres 1628-1633*, p. 115). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “Et quia Pontifici Optimo Maximo inscribere statuisti, primo augustiorem et tanta maiestate haud indignam formam meditabor, deinde minorem et quae magis studiosis inserviat” (MPM Arch. 144, *Copie de Lettres 1628-1633*, p. 187; letter to the author from 2 May 1631). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “… ut typi augustiores augustissimum regnum exornent” (MPM Arch. 144, *Copie de Lettres 1628-1633*, p. 206, letter from 10 July 1631). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 301-302; a letter to Petrus Ursinus in Lisbon from 5 June 1637. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 331; letter to Philippe Chifflet from 13 January 1638. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Letter to Antoine de Winghe from 11 September 1631 “Quaeso R.V. mihi in arte mea haud diffidat” (MPM Arch. 144, *Copie de Lettres 1628-1633*, p. 218-219). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Letter from 21 December 1629: “… formâ et charactere grandiusculis, quae Sermae Principi arrideant et senescentibus magis inserviant” (MPM Arch. 144, *Copie de Lettres 1628-1633*, p. 74). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For the letter from Moretus, see MPM Arch. 136, *Copie de Lettres, 1615-1620*, p. 51; for the letter from Bosius, see MPM Arch. 77, *Recueils de lettres Gillis Beys-Bylandt*, p. 533: “Impressionis operis nostri de triumphanti cruce abs te transmissum specimen, laetissimis oculis inspexi”. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. L’image de baume est trop grande pour la place du tiltre; ie feray icy tailler une plus petite, aussi le peintre a faict non pas un arbrisseau, mais un arbre contre la description des historiens des plantes. Aussi ie ne trouve la figure en aulcun aucteur: mais ie la feray faire selon la description de Bellon” (MPM Arch. 142, *Copie de Lettres 1625-1635*, p. 245). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. “Quod ad imaginem quam incisam et Coronae Rosarum insertam velis, ea nimis magna quam ut eidem commode inseratur” (MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 420, letter from 31 August 1639). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. “Tituli delineationem iamnunc recipio, et remitto, una cum lamina in qua incidatur. Sed paullo maior est delineatio, redigenda ad formam lineis rubris in charta adiuncta designatam …” (MPM Arch. 138, *Copie de Lettres 1620-1628*, p. 243). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. MPM Arch. 138, *Copie de Lettres 1620-1628*, pp. 213-214, letter to De Marselaer from 13 September 1625. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. MPM Arch. 138, p. 235-236, letter to Bernardus Gualteri from 1 December 1625. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 72; letter to the author from 22 April 1634. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. MPM Arch. 166, *Dépenses spéciales 1620-1636*, fol. 177v-178r. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. For more information about the relationship between Balthasar Moretus and Rubens, refer to the relevant box. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. “Habes hic Musam sive Poesim cum Minerva seu Virtute forma Hermatenis coniunctam nam musam pro Mercurio apposui quod pluribus exemplis licet, nescio an tibi meum commentum placebit ego certe mihi hoc invento valde placeo ne dicam gratulor” (MPM drawing 389). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 326 Carolus Neapolis 28 November 1637: “At pro imagine tituli Rubenius mecum adhuc haeret quid argumenti seligat. Te quaeso, Ill. Domine, quid potissimum ipse malis, praescribas”. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 338-339 Carolus Neapolis 8 March 1638: “Ignosce Ill.me Domine, haud recte de meo vel Rubenii ingenio censes, quod fallendo tempori tuum de libri imagine iudicium requiri existimes. Libentes enim auctoris ipsius sententiam intelligimus, ut nostram deinde vel firmemus, vel mutemus. Placent quae suggeris eaque Rubenii penicillum magis illustrabit.” [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. MPM Arch. 144, *Copie de Lettres 1628-1633*, p. 24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. MPM Arch. 144, *Copie de Lettres 1628-1633*, p. 218-219. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. MPM Arch. 144, *Copie de Lettres 1628-1633*, p. 124-125, letter to Balthasar Corderius from 13 September 1630. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. MPM Arch. 134, *Grand livre 1624-1655*, fol. 222 right. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. MPM Arch. 166, *Dépenses spéciales 1620-1636*, fol. 125v. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. MPM Arch. 166, *Dépenses spéciales 1620-1636*, 123v. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. See e.g. MPM Arch. 167, *Dépenses spéciales 1637-1678*, fol. 13r: “Adi 9e [maart 1638] aen Erasmus Quellinus voor teeckeninghe … voor den titel du Siege de Dole fl 15” and fol. 14r: “Adi 4e ditto [mei 1638] Erasmo Quelllino voor de teeckeninghe vanden titel van Carolus Neapolis in Fastos Ovidii fl 24”. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. “Titulum incidi a Corn. Gallaeo, cuius scilicet manu Rubenius delineationes suas sculpi in primis desiderat” (MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 111-112, letter to Bedenictus Van Haeften from 28 August 1634). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See the relevant info box about the Theodore Galle workshop. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. MPM Arch. 147, *Copie de Lettres 1635-1642*, p. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Karen L. Bowen en Dirk Imhof: “Exchanges between friends and relatives, artists and their patron: the correspondence between Cornelis Galle I and II and Balthasar Moretus I”, in: *In monte artium. Journal of the Royal Library of Belgium*, 3 (2010), p. 89-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 92-93, a letter from 11 July 1634: “Scio aliter in Schola cordis observatum, sed in eo absurditas est, quod deficiente subinde materia paginae aliquot, quas dextras vocamus, vacent. Si vero laeva in parte imagines reponi malit, tum supplementa singulorum capitum quae figurae subsequuntur, mihi mitti necesse sit, ne eadem quae in Schola cordis deformitas committatur. R.P. Biverus pariter nobis supplementa misit, addenda vel omittenda prout uniformis imaginum situs postulat: imo eumdem in finem quaedam etiam e textu suo tollendi licentiam concessit”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. For an example, see e.g. MPM cat. nr. A 3945. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. “J’envoye avec ceste la premiere feuille de vostre Consolation: en laquelle la douziesme page est vuide pour commencer le livre en une page droicte. V.R. pourra ordonner quelque sentence pour remplir ceste page, ou on pourra mettre l’image de David aucteur du Pseaume” (MPM Arch. 142, *Copie de Lettres 1625-1635*, p. 245; letter from 23 March 1632). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. See e.g. MPM Arch. 1440, *Documents signed by P.P. Rubens and Erasmus Quellin*, doc. nr. 4: “18 april [1639] … item acht letteren 1 E 1 A 2 H 2 I 2 L: fl. 9 – 12; 5 meij ses letteren 2 B 2 C 1 G 1 N: [gl.] 7 – 4” or MPM Arch. 1440, *Documents signed by P.P. Rubens and Erasmus Quellin*, doc. nr. 3: “Ick hebbe geteijckent voor Sr Moreto a° 1639 23 iulii … item 2 letteren op hout a 24 24 st. [gl.] 2 – 8; 50 letterkens op hout a 12 st. [gl.] 30”. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Victorii editionem laudari scio, at malim re ipsa probari, emi, et legi. At peccatum in titulo, qui materiam in opere delitescentem haud indicat” (I know that the edition of Victorius deserves praise, but I wish the book would be approved, bought and read for its content. But this is not in keeping with the title, which does not at all represent the subject hidden in the work (MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 35, a letter from 22 December 1633). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. He wrote to Petrus Franciscus Chifflet in February 1636: “Bucherii Victorius si in nudam chartam convertatur, mihi utilis esse possit quia a paucissimis emitur” (MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 229). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. “At vero titulus Prodromus mathematicus, haud placet; quasi nihil aut parum eo opere continetur; clarus ac brevis hic, De disciplinis mathematicis libri duodecim, bona R.V. venia a me substituetur” (MPM Arch. 146, *Copie de Lettres, 1633-1640*, p. 78-79, letter from 23 May 1634). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See the letters to the Parisian booksellers Eustache Foucault and Michel II Sonnius from 11 April 1630 (MPM Arch. 142, *Copie de Lettres 1625-1635*, p. 117 and 118). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See, inter alia, the shipment on 23 March 1630 of 50 copies of the *Diurnale* in 32° to Eustache Foucault (MPM Arch. 238, *Journal 1630*, fol. 34r). The shipment of 50 titles of the book was recorded on 12 July 1630 (MPM Arch. 238, *Journal 1630*, fol. 89v). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. “The printed pages which could be used for nothing more than wrapping paper” (letter to François Vivien from 11 May 1634; MPM Arch. 142, *Copie de Lettres 1625-1635*, p. 398). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)