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Memory and Performance.
Classical Reception in Early Modern Festivals

Edited by Francesca Bortoletti, Giovanna Di Martino,
and Eugenio Refini

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info@skeneproject.it

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Special Section

Raf Van Rooy*

A Funeral and a Marriage at the Moretuses (1640s): Ceremonial Greek in the Early Modern Low Countries[1]

Abstract

As a side product of the Greek revival in the Renaissance, the Ancient Greek language became a language of performance next to Latin. The early modern staging of Ancient Greek is, however, grossly understudied. In my paper, I zoom in on a case study: how Greek was possibly performed at the Plantin-Moretus publishing house, and which functions it served at ceremonies. I argue that the performance of Greek created distinctions between the people participating in the ceremony: especially those with Greek, and those without. The former group covered not only scholars but also the patrons commissioning-and hence literally owning-the Greek, whereas the latter group typically contained the unsuspecting onlookers, who can be assumed to have been dumbfounded by the unusual linguistic medium. I will discuss two Greek poems, one mourning the death of Balthasar Moretus I (1641), the other celebrating the marriage of Balthasar Moretus II and Anna Goos (1645). I also edit the former poem by Martin Binnart, which has thus far remained in manuscript.

Keywords: New Ancient Greek; occasional poetry; Plantin-Moretus; early modern Low Countries

1. Introduction

In academic ceremonies today one often hears the odd Latin word or phrase, sometimes even a poem or a piece in prose, to accompany the ritual. In Oxford degree ceremonies, for instance, the procedure is still partly conducted in the old academic language (*Degree Ceremonies*). Such ceremonial uses of Latin would have been absurd in the early age of the university and, more broadly, in early modern high culture, since Latin served as the *lingua*

1 I thank the anonymous reviewer for valuable comments on an earlier draft of this article. I am also indebted to Maxime Maleux and Kristof Selleslach for sending me source materials and for clarifying certain points of detail. The article has also benefitted from discussion with students in the frame of the FWO Senior Research Project "From Hellas to Haarlem" (G040624N).

* KU Leuven - raf.vanrooy@kuleuven.be

franca of so many aspects in life, especially education, scholarship, religion, administration, and diplomacy (e.g. Leonhardt 2013, Chapter 3). The quasi omnipresence of the language in what Leonhardt (2013, 122) dubs "Europe's Latin Millennium" made it not exceptional enough to fulfil any saliant ceremonial roles. A language like Ancient Greek, on the other hand, was more apt for such purposes, as I argue in this paper by looking at a double case study from 1640s Antwerp. Through the Greek language, a group of people could demarcate themselves from others, as this tongue constituted a kind of socio-cultural shibboleth on different levels and served to display the group's wealth, both material and cultural. In this paper, I build on ideas regarding the performative dimensions of New Ancient Greek expressed in Van Rooy (2023, 120-31). Performance is understood here in a double sense. Through its being recited (performed), Greek helps shape social relationships (it performs a social role).

My paper aims to analyse how the Greek shibboleth worked in two poems produced for a funeral and a marriage in the Plantin-Moretus family of publishers in the 1640s. This study therefore joins in the recent upsurge of interest in Greek composition and its cultural contexts in Europe during the Renaissance and after, to which I refer as New Ancient Greek literature in parallel to Neo-Latin literature.[1] Contrary to most earlier studies, this article explicitly thematises the performative dimensions Greek composition could have, for instance when recited to enliven and solemnise events like funerals and marriages, where far from everybody would have been able to understand the text. This fact implies that not only the literal meaning of the text mattered but particularly its context of performance and the impression that a recited text, though unintelligible, left on its audience. Han Lamers (2023) provides an interesting analysis of this phenomenon drawing on the concept of "affordances" in his study of a young schoolboy's epic poem he recently rediscovered in manuscript at The Hague. Stressing the performative dimension, I opt for Catherine Bell's (2009) concept of "ritualisation" in this article. Greek composition and recitation can be understood, I argue, as a ritualised action creating and perpetuating social distinctions between groups of people who attend such an action, e.g. a funerary service or a marriage ceremony (for research into ritual, see the overview in Stephenson 2022).

To understand the socio-cultural and historical context, I first introduce the Plantin-Moretus family and their dealings with Greek very briefly (Section 2), before moving to the analysis of the two texts, possibly performed during

[1] See especially Pontani and Weise 2022, as well as e.g. Päll and Volt 2018; Kajava and Korhonen 2020; Korhonen 2022; Lamers and Van Rooy 2022b; Lamers 2023; Van Rooy 2023, with a definition of "New Ancient Greek" at 17.

funerary and marital ceremonies (Section 3), and venturing some thoughts on ceremonial Greek with the Moretuses in the conclusion (Section 4). The Appendix contains an edition and translation of the previously unedited funerary poem from 1641.

2. The Plantin-Moretus Family and Greek

The Plantin-Moretus printing dynasty was founded by the French-born Christophe Plantin (1520-1589), who started out as a bookbinder but made fame as a publisher of elegant and high-quality publications in both the classical and the vernacular languages, eventually obtaining the status of royal printer in service of the Catholic King of Spain Philip II (see e.g. Voet 1969-1972). One of the most famous products of the *Officina Plantiniana* was the Antwerp Polyglot Bible (1568-1573), giving the text of the Old Testament in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, and that of the New Testament in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Hebrew. Plantin moreover issued many Latin and Greek classics, following in the footsteps of earlier humanist printers in the Low Countries. These printers were themselves inspired by Aldo Manuzio's (ca. 1449/52-1515) publishing house of especially Greek classics in Venice around the turn of the sixteenth century, where active Greek speaking and writing was both intensely practiced and persistently promoted.[2]

Dirk Martens (c.1450-1534) was the first to publish work in the two classical languages in Antwerp and the university city of Leuven. After Martens' retirement in 1528, printers in the two languages were active in major cities like Ghent and Bruges but especially Antwerp and Leuven. Overall, the history of Greek printing in the Low Countries would benefit from a closer study, which holds *a fortiori* for the situation in Antwerp before Plantin.[3] It is clear in any case that several publishers had Greek fonts in Antwerp, printing Greek classics and occasionally also New Ancient Greek poems, usually as liminary materials in editions of Greek and Latin texts (see e.g. Van Kerchove 1974). There is hardly any denying, however, that with the *Officina Plantiniana*, after Plantin's death taken over by his son-in-law Jan Moretus I (1543-1610), the pace of Greek publishing and composition increased dramatically, partly in parallel with the short-lived *Officina Goltziana* in Bruges during the 1560s and 1570s (Lamers and Van Rooy 2022a). In fact, the great age of Greek composition in the Low Countries coincides with the humanist acme of the Plantin-Moretus press

[2] See e.g. the playful "law" of the *Neakademia* in Manutius (2016, 288-93).

[3] See e.g. Delsaerdt 2020 and the references there. Early Greek printers in Antwerp who deserve closer attention include Johannes Grapheus and Michael Hillen of Hoogstraten.

from the 1550s until around 1650 (Lamers and Van Rooy 2022b). The family surrounded itself with the most prominent classical scholars of the period and area, in their offices in Antwerp and Leiden, including luminaries like Justus Lipsius (1547-1606). The Plantin-Moretuses exploited the cultural capital of these scholars by having them compose poetry adorning their publications and classical text editions, usually in Latin and in more exclusive cases also in Greek. The typical goal was to praise the author or subject of their books, but from time to time also to honour members of the family's printing imperium.

In this contribution I highlight two Greek poems in dactylic hexameters that served to solemnise two milestone events in the Moretus family rather than to adorn their publications: the death of Plantin's grand-son Balthasar Moretus I (1574-1641) on 8 July 1641, and the marriage of Balthasar I's nephew and godson Balthasar Moretus II (1615-1674) with Anna Goos (1627-1691) on 23 July 1645. The dirge for Moretus' death was composed by Martin(us) Binnart (Binnaert and Binhart; ca. 1590-ca. 1653), who had worked as proofreader for the Moretuses from 24 March 1612 until 1637.[4] In this period, Balthasar I loaned Binnart a substantial sum of money enabling his employee to buy a house (Van Impe 2016, 291). Binnart started his own bookshop sometime after 1634, in the context of which he collaborated with the Moretuses (Voet 1967-1972, II, 492), and ran a printing shop from 1637 onwards. His printing press mainly published newspapers, next to a handful of booklets. At the Lutheran university of Jena, where Justus Lipsius also had taught, Binnart enjoyed a decent education (Van Impe 2016, 288-90) and probably learned both Latin and Greek. His learning is apparent from a Latin translation he made of a Spanish work at the request of the Antwerp Jesuit Andreas Schottus (Van Impe 2016, 294) as well as from a Dutch-Latin school dictionary he produced. This dictionary first appeared while he was corrector at the *Officina Plantiniana* and enjoyed some success. Binnart proudly boasted of his position at the *Officina* on the title page of the work.[5]

Presumably as a former employee and current business partner in selling books, Binnart honoured Balthasar Moretus I with a Greek poem.[6] Binnart may also have been the author of the marriage poem for Balthasar Moretus II and Anna Goos, as its language shows some infelicities not unlike those in the slightly earlier dirge and they have some shared parallels, as the two poems contain echoes of Homer, the Greek Anthology, Nonnus, and

[4] See especially Claes 1972a-b; Van Impe 2016.

[5] In the 1635 edition of his *Dictionarium Teutonico-Latinum*, the first of which a full copy seems to survive, the author is identified on the titlepage as "Martini Binhart in Officinâ Plantinianâ Correctoris" (Claes 1972b, 258). The dictionary was never published by Binnart's own press (Van Impe 2016, 295).

[6] See the edition in the Appendix and especially the Latin subscription of the poem.

Gregory of Nazianzen.[7] At the same time, the epithalamium is richer in textual references and shows greater skill in verse composition than the dirge, which seems to have been written with a grammar and a dictionary at hand.[8] As a lexicographer, Binnart of course knew such tools well. The option remains open, therefore, that the two texts have different authors, or perhaps that Binnart honed his skills as a Greek poet in the years between 1641 and 1645.

Balthasar I was certainly not the first member of the dynasty to be honored with a Greek poem. Christophe Plantin himself, too, was lamented in Greek poems currently kept in manuscript at Leiden University Library in the files of Lipsius and Vulcanius.[9] Yet, with Balthasar I, there is the possibility that the Greek dirge was part of a remembrance strategy his 25-year-old nephew and heir Balthasar II had planned, perhaps in dialogue with his dying uncle. Balthasar II commissioned two paintings, one depicting his late uncle in his deathbed (see Figure 1), the other showing him alive in typical portrait style. Both were produced by Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert (1613-1654), who received 96 florins for the job.[10] Balthasar I had always opposed the idea of having himself portrayed, "even by his good friend Rubens," as he suffered from an "inferiority complex derived from his physical infirmity" (Voet 1969-1972, 1.318).

At the same time, Balthasar I's family saw to it that his last days and hours were spent comfortably, and that he was honored with a proper funerary service, for which an ode was commissioned for 12 florins (Voet 1969-1972, 1.211). It is not inconceivable that the funerary ode is to be identified with the Greek dirge (θρῆνος) for Balthasar Moretus I by former staff member Martin Binnart, today preserved in the Plantin-Moretus archives and, like the paintings, probably also commissioned by his nephew Balthasar II. Indeed, the latter noted in his journal with personal expenses that he had paid 12 florins on 19 July 1645 "for the poems external persons composed on

[7] See Lamers and Van Rooy (2022c, 261-4) for the Greek text of the marriage poem, an English prose translation, and further context, and the Appendix here for the sources of the dirge.

[8] The hyper-epic-Ionic diction in forms like ἠϊδίων and φθοῦνος seems to corroborate this argument. In addition, rare words may have been drawn from a dictionary rather than from an actual reading of ancient texts. I owe this suggestion to the anonymous reviewer.

[9] E.g. Leiden, University Library, LIP 3 (24), unnumbered item at the back (after folio 75); VUL 103, 12*r*. The authorship is unclear at the moment, and the poems require further study. Lipsius can probably be excluded as author, but Vulcanius is an obvious candidate for many of the compositions.

[10] Voet (1969-1972, I, 318). The painting is currently on display at Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, MPM V IV 004.

my late uncle's death".[11] Writing commissioned poems may well have been one of Binnart's various sources of extra income (see Van Impe 2016, 298-9).

Fig. 1: *Balthasar Moretus I on His Deathbed* (Museum Plantin-Moretus)

Greek also made a dramatic appearance when 29-year-old Balthasar II married the 18-year-old Anna Goos on 23 July 1645, nota bene the birthday of his late uncle Balthasar I. The marriage with its symbolic date was solemnised by a multilingual poetical publication titled *Acroamata nuptialia*, "Wedding Recitals," offered to Balthasar and his wife by a group of unnamed "learned men" (*viri docti*) but certainly coordinated by the Jesuit Jacob de Cater (1593-1657).[12] In this publication, Greek features prominently at the heart of the publication (8-11) as one of the learned house languages next to Hebrew and Latin, followed by pieces in Spanish, Italian, French, Dutch, and again Latin. Dirk Sacré (1998-1899, 158) discovered that the Latin and Dutch poems were by de Cater, whereas the suggestion that Martin Binnart may have been the author of the Greek poem and its Latin translation goes back to Lamers and Van Rooy (2022c, 261-4). The short poems in the vernacular

[11] See Antwerp, *Museum Plantin-Moretus*, Arch. 169, 2: "Item betaelt voor de dichten door vreemde persoonen op Oom salighers doot gemaeckt".

[12] For context and book-historical details (with reproduction), see de Schepper (1996), For details on the main editor of the volume and Balthasar II's references to the *viri docti*, see Sacré (1998-1999); for the *viri docti*, see 156-7 in particular. De Schepper (1996, 381) translates *acroamata* among other things as "showpieces", whereas Sacré (1998-1999, 155) renders the term of Greek extraction as "concert". My account in this paragraph and the next draws on their excellent contributions.

languages are currently still unattributed, whereas the Hebrew is an excerpt from Psalm 127 (or 128 in the current numbering), accompanied by a poetical paraphrasis of the entire psalm in Latin. The Greek poem in the *Acroamata* is original in that it is not a rehashing of an ancient text or motive, as is often the case with early modern epithalamia (Greene 2015).

The marriage was considered of crucial importance for the future of the *Officina Plantiniana*, as Balthasar Moretus II was the sole heir of the business, succeeding his childless uncle Balthasar I. Hence, it was celebrated exuberantly, with a publication for the occasion reflecting the original humanist interests of the press, which were, however, slowly waning in favour of liturgical publications. Marcus de Schepper calls the epithalamia in the *Acroamata nuptialia* ". . . een uiterst zeldzaam [en vroeg] voorbeeld van een gelegenheidsbundeltje uit de 'boekenwereld'" (1996, 378; "an extremely rare [and early] example of an occasional collection from the 'world of books'"). Dirk Sacré asserts that "[t]ijdens het huwelijksfeest [zo mogen we misschien veronderstellen] zijn die poëtische stukken effectief voorgelezen in aanwezigheid van de schare uitgelezen gasten" (1998-1999, 155; "during the wedding [we may perhaps assume] those poetic pieces were actually read out loud in the presence of the select club of guests"). The wedding took place in the house of Balthasar II's father-in-law Jacobus Goos, hosting ninety guests, who feasted for three consecutive days.[13] In other words: there was plenty of time for reciting poems, even if the personified presses would have to speak in absence of their physical embodiments. The rhythmic movements of the presses that the *Acroamata* may evoke according to Sacré (1998-1999, 155) must therefore have remained a poetical fiction.

In sum, Greek was strategically used to solemnise two key moments in the life of the Moretuses in the 1640s. The dirge for Balthasar I was most likely commissioned by his nephew Balthasar II, whereas the *Acroamata* were offered to Balthasar II and his spouse by learned associates. In the case of the wedding, Greek featured prominently among the other major languages of the Plantin-Moretus family business. In both cases, the use of Greek served to display cultural capital and the humanist tradition of the famous press, as I argue detail in the next section.

[13] Antwerp, *Museum Plantin-Moretus*, Arch. 213, 13*v*, cited in Sacré 1998-1999, 156, who also notes that there was an informal festive meal, with some forty guests (mostly friends), at the Plantin-Moretuses in early August, lasting for two days.

3. Ceremonial Greek: a Funeral and a Marriage in 1640s Antwerp

Looking at the poems' materiality, one immediately notices that the two Greek texts have been carefully executed. The manuscript dirge for Balthasar Moretus I has been elegantly written on the middle of a very large sheet of paper, carrying a title in meticulously crafted capital letters, somewhat atypically provided with accents and spirituses. Not only could the sheet be easily held for solemn recital, but perhaps it was also put on display for some time during or after the funeral (see Figure 2). The *Acroamata* publication, on the other hand, was produced in quarto by the Plantin-Moretus presses, including a carefully printed emblem of Plantin's symbol, The Golden Compasses (de Schepper 1996, 381n8). The format and the high-quality execution would have allowed convenient recital in this case, too. Although there is no hard proof that recitals actually took place, the occasional character of the poems and the close connection to two events that typically go accompanied by various rituals are sufficient to at least put forward the hypothesis that they were indeed recited. In what follows, I analyse how such a ceremonial use of Greek may be interpreted as a ritual performance in Bell's (2009) sense, arguing that the medium of Greek helped shape social relationships, especially around the figure of Balthasar II.

The ceremonial use of Greek gains further significance once one looks at the meaning of the texts, which would have been inaccessible for most bystanders. That is a first relevant conclusion to draw: the Moretuses and their environs, especially Martin Binnart in this case, used Greek to mark the exceptionally wide range of their business, the European-wide fame of which is made explicit in the opening lines of the dirge for Balthasar I (1-13). This ceremonial Greek produced different effects among the people attending the funeral. Those with Greek felt an association with the major publisher of European fame because they shared the same cultural background of humanism, immediately appreciating that Binnart had Hellenised Plantin's well-known motto *Labore et constantia* ("Through labour and perseverance") on line 25 as Καρτερίας τε Πόνου τε, albeit in reverse order. Those without Greek will have felt and expressed amazement at a Greek recital, either because they only had Latin as a learned language or they were used to hearing Latin even though they did not understand it. Greek, in other words, realised two things for the Moretuses on these occasions: making ties with the select few Greek experts closer, and gathering the admiration of the many without Greek, including friends and business associates. In the case of the *Acroamata*, the admiration would have been increased by the multilingualism of the publication in general, especially the additional presence of a portion of Biblical Hebrew next to that of the various vernacular languages.

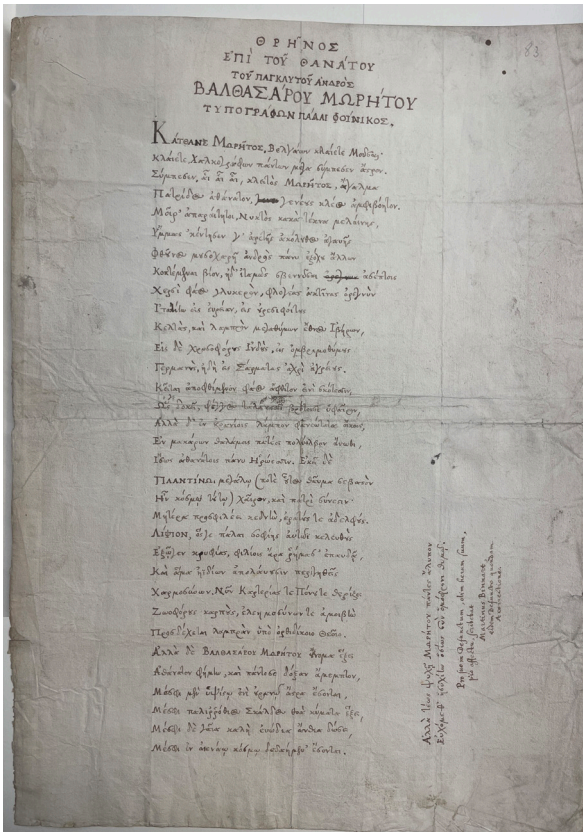
ΘΡΗΝΟΣ
ΕΠΙ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
ΤΟΥ ΠΑΓΚΑΥΤΟΥ ΑΝΔΡΟΣ
ΒΑΛΘΑΣΑΡΟΥ ΜΩΡΗΤΟΥ
ΤΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΩΝ ΠΑΛΑΙ ΦΟΙΝΙΚΟΣ.

Fig. 2: Dirge for Balthasar Moretus I (Museum Plantin-Moretus)[14]

The effect must have been all the greater as, by the early 1640s, knowledge of Greek had become something of a rarity in the Southern Low Countries (according to the first impressions of Lamers and Van Rooy 2022b-c). The numerous linguistic infelicities in Binnart's poetry further corroborate this impression (see Appendix; Lamers and Van Rooy 2022c, 264). The rarity and exclusive nature of Greek perhaps also encouraged its use as a language of intimate ideas and emotions, not unapt for a funeral and a marriage. This intimate use of Greek corresponds to a broader trend in early modern uses of Greek (see Van Rooy 2023, 116-20). The dirge, for instance, contains an endearing passage on Balthasar I's arrival in heaven (14-27) and particularly on the persons he meets and greets there:

[14] For the details on the source, see the Appendix.

. . . Ἐκεῖ δὲ
Πλαντίνῳ μεγάλῳ (ποτὲ οὗτος θαῦμα σεβαστὸν
ἦν κόσμῳ τούτῳ) χαῖρον, καὶ πατρὶ σύνεστιν·
μητέρα προσφιλέει κεδνήν, ἐρατούς τε ἀδελφούς.
Λίψιον, ὅς γε πάλαι σοφίης αὐτῶϊ κελευθοὺς
ἐξῷγεν κρυφίας, φιλίοις ἄρα ῥήμασ' ἐπαυδᾷ,
καὶ ἅμα ἠϊδίων ἀπολαύουσιν περιγηθεῖς
χαρμοσύνων . . .
(19-25)

[And there / he greeted the great Plantin (who once was the venerable marvel / in this world), and joins his father; / he approaches his dear mother for a kiss and his beloved siblings. / He addresses Lipsius, who long ago disclosed to him the / hidden paths to wisdom, no doubt with friendly words, / and together they are ecstatically enjoying eternal / delights.]

In Greek, we meet the inner circles of Balthasar I: Plantin, his grandfather and founder of the printing dynasty; his father Jan Moretus I and mother Martina Plantin (1550-1616), and his ten siblings (see Voet 1969-1972, 1, 200), to end with the great humanist Justus Lipsius, his childhood tutor. The encounters increase in intensity following the rhetorical strategy of amplification: from greeting through kissing to a conversation with wise Lipsius that leads them to "eternal delights".

Binnart consoled the living members of the Moretus family with the idea that Balthasar I was now reunited with his loved ones – in Greek, although most members of the family would not have understood this language. At the same time, their family's business literally owned Greek in the form of fonts and employed correctors competent in that language, including Binnart himself. Balthasar II may have been the most notable exception, as his well-educated uncle Balthasar I had encouraged him to take up humanist studies at the local Jesuit college and in Tournai, which certainly included Latin and French (Voet 1969-1972, 1.217). It is not inconceivable that his programme also had room for at least some Greek. Hence, Binnart possibly tailored his text to the tastes and worldview of Balthasar II in particular. This hypothesis gains even more credit when one considers that Balthasar II to some extent "had an urge to play the *grand seigneur* and ape the nobility" (Voet 1969-1972, 1.217, who at the same time nuances this picture). The fondness of ceremonial Greek may have been part of this seigneurial persona, as nobility and royalty were more often celebrated in Greek than publishers. This observation adds another, very personal layer to the picture of ceremonial Greek, next to the two other distinctions alluded to before: Greek distinguishes not only (1) those having it from those without it and (2) the Moretuses with their great cultural capital from outsiders, but also

(3) the personal tastes of one particular Moretus from the rest. One may surmise that the new manager Balthasar II wanted to profile himself as a cultivated leader promoting the humanist publishing share of the company, taking the commemoration of his uncle Balthasar I as a showcase. Binnart's dirge in any case pictured Balthasar Moretus as a new and unforgettable culmination in the almost century-long history of the humanist printing dynasty (see lines 28-33). As this passage mentions in general the fame of the name "Balthasar Moretus", one may be tempted to argue that Binnart was alluding to both the deceased uncle and the young nephew attending the funerary ceremony. Such indirect praise was in any case not an uncommon strategy in classical and early modern literature, especially at courts (e.g. Gattavari 2020, 112; Harrison 2024, 82).

One final performative aspect of the dirge can be found in the bilingual subscription of the text, written vertically on the sheet of paper and consisting of two Greek hexameters and a prose Latin subscription. The Greek lines urge everyone to pray for Balthasar I's soul, thus evoking a ceremonial context of a funerary service, where the usual praying would have occurred in Latin. This brief vertical addition perhaps serves to suggest that Balthasar I's exceptional soul deserves prayers in the original language of the New Testament.

From his late teens, Balthasar II was initiated into the family business by his uncle and godfather, Balthasar I, who saw his nephew as the *unica spes Typographiae Plantinianae*, "the sole hope of the Plantin press" (Voet 1969-1972, 1, 216). Balthasar II, in other words, felt pressure to work hard in the business as well as to produce offspring to ensure the future of the publishing house. The Greek wedding recital of 1645 describes how he was so eagerly doing the former that he almost forgot about the latter. Fortunately Eros had found him with his arrows to secure the direly needed offspring, one of the central themes in the *Acroamata*. Whereas the dirge for Balthasar I's demise was mostly past-oriented due to the nature of the occasion, this Greek epithalamium looked forward, painting Balthasar II's future as a combination of hard work at the office and numerous children at home:

> Νῦν ἔγνως τὸν Ἔρωτα βαρὺν σφόδρ' ὅστις ἑαυτοῦ
> κήδεσί σου δυνατὸς μελέτας ἐστ' ἐκπολεμίζειν.
> Ἀλλὰ δέχου νόμιμον τὸν Ἔρωτα, ποθῶν τὸ καθῆκον,
> ὄφρα ἔπειτα πονήσῃς ἔμπαλιν, ὅττεό σε χρή.
> Ἐκ δὲ γάμων παλίνορσον γὰρ μάλα πολλὰ δοκοῦσιν
> ἔργα σοφῶν. Γλυκερός σε μὲν αἱρεῖ μηρὸς Ἔρωτος,
> βέλτιον ἀλλὰ μέρος ταῖς Μούσαις σεῖο φύλαττε.
>
> [Now you have come to know exceedingly powerful Eros, / who is capable of making your concerns conflict with his own priorities. / But accept

> legitimate Love, while longing for your duty, / so that you will work hard again on whatever befits you. / And very many works of wise men indeed expect you to return / from your marriage affairs. The sweet thigh of Eros seizes you, / but preserve your better half for the Muses. (Text and translation from Lamers and Van Rooy 2022c, 262-3)]

The context of the publication is, of course, congratulatory, but the content of this Greek piece does not strike one as unambiguous, especially since there is only one unnamed reference to the bride Anna Goos at the end of the poem. The Greek text reads in the first place as a warning for Balthasar II not to start neglecting the business after marriage, since wise Greek men require his constant attention on the presses. The piece does end, not atypically for an epithalamium, with a wish for many children, who are expected to continue the work ethic of their father – that is at least implied in the phrase πατρώζοντα τέκνα (25-6):

> Οὕτω πατρώζοντά τε σοι τέξει παράκοιτις
> τέκνα, Ὀλυμπιάδων Μουσάων ἔκγονα Φοίβου.
> Τοῦτο δέ μοι χαρίεν, μητρός τε καὶ Ἑλλάδος εὐχὴ
> ἑπτὰ Σοφῶν, σοι τοῦτο ἐπεύχει Παλλὰς Ἀθηνᾶ.
>
> [Thus your wife will give birth for you to children who take after / their father, grandchildren of Phoebus' Olympian Muses. / And this pleases me, this is the wish of Greece, mother of / the seven Sages; this is what Pallas Athena wishes for you. (Text and translation from Lamers and Van Rooy 2022c, 262-3)]

In general, the multilingual collection, summarised by the Dutch poem of de Cater, serves as a kind of mirror for princes but then for a publisher. The various presses and their languages not only congratulate and praise the young manager and groom but in the first place remind him of his duties in the grand scheme of things: successfully running the family business and ensuring the future of the Plantin-Moretus dynasty. The various pieces encourage Balthasar II to work hard, behave well, and produce offspring, with the Greek doing so most outspokenly. If the groom could not have gathered this hardly subtle message from the Greek text, he surely could have from the Latin verse translation that accompanied the poem on the facing pages. The learned Greek poem, then, would not only have solemnised the wedding of Balthasar II and Anna as part of a larger multilingual poetic collection, but served to perpetuate social relations as they were, in dialogue with the other pieces. Balthasar II should continue his good work in the tradition of his predecessors and produce worthy successors, a role he played with verve, as he and his wife had no less than twelve children together, including his successor Balthasar III (Voet 1969-1972, 1.227).

4. Conclusion

There is no hard evidence that the two remarkable New Ancient Greek poems that I have briefly analysed in this paper were actually performed. Yet, there are unmistakable clues in the materiality and context of the sources that both texts served to solemnise two key events in the Moretus household of the early 1640s, either commissioned by the family – in particular the new manager Balthasar Moretus II – or offered to them by learned associates. The texts likely show a desire on behalf of Balthasar II to continue the humanist publishing line of his predecessors, including in particular his late uncle Balthasar I, himself educated by Lipsius and an eager supporter of his nephew's humanist training. The language par excellence symbolising that humanist capital was Greek, and hence an apt medium to mark important life events within the family and at the same time consolidating their leading role in that market by showing who owns the Greek. I have tried to make the case that this use of Greek centred on Balthasar II, the new leader of the imperium as of 1641 who wanted to self-present him as such, emphatically claiming the Greek for his family and all those associated with it – both as a learned and as an intimate medium – and generating amazement and respect among those outside the family. At the same time, the active use of Greek at the Moretuses in the 1640s was much more limited than had been the case at Aldo Manuzio's publishing house in Venice more than a century earlier, where speaking and writing Greek were literally daily business.

Various questions still remain unresolved, also with regard to the Greek poet Martin Binnart: where did he learn his Greek? Why was he the go-to candidate for the Moretuses? May there be other specimens of ceremonial Greek in Antwerp from this period, the tail end of a strong tradition of Greek versification in the Southern Low Countries? They can reasonably be expected to be limited to the early period of Balthasar II's management, since this Moretus increasingly moved towards liturgical publications as his directorship progressed and "the Antwerp humanists . . . completely faded away" (Voet 1969-1972, 1.218).

Appendix

The Funerary Poem (Shortly After 8 July 1641), Text and Translation

I have resolved ligatures and adapted accentuation and spiritus marking to modern philological standards, though retaining mistakes and adding explanatory notes where I deemed it appropriate. I have regularised capitalisation, also removing (small) capitals in the title and in personal names throughout the text as it is not easy to render (small) capitals with spirituses and accents in Unicode in a way that is aesthetically as pleasing as in the original manuscript.

The text seems to be a clean copy of an earlier draft, as a copying mistake confirms: on line 8, the final word of line 9 was accidentally inserted (ὀρεγνυν, without the accent) and immediately struck out to be followed by the word intended for line 8: ἀσέπτοις. There are various ink drops and blots and one other correction on line 4 (γενει into γενέους), but the manuscript is otherwise very clean and may lead one to suspect that it was used for some form of display. On the other hand, there are also clear signs of folding, suggesting that the document was at least for some time not preserved on display but locked away in a folder or the like.

Text

a: Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Arch. 1150a. misc., item 83,
paper and ink dimensions: 397/402x296mm
(The length on the left-hand side is a little shorter than on the right-hand side, making the large sheet of paper a slightly imperfect rectangle)

[*horizontally*]

Θρῆνος ἐπὶ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ παγκλυτοῦ ἀνδρὸς
Βαλθασάρου Μωρήτου τυπογράφων πάλαι φοίνικος.

Κάτθανε Μωρῆτος, Βελγάων κλαίετε Μοῦσαι·
κλαίετε, χαλκογράφων πάντων μέγα σύμπεσεν ἄστρον.
Σύμπεσεν, αἶ αἶ, κλειτὸς Μωρῆτος, ἄγαλμα
πατρίδος ἀθάνατον, γενέους κλέος ἀμφιβόητον.
Μοῖρ' ἀπαραίτητοι, Νυκτὸς κακὰ τέκνα μελαίνης,
ὕμμας 'κέντησεν γ' ἀρετῆς ἀκόλουθος ἀγαυῆς
φθοῦνος μουσοχαρῆ ἀνδρὸς πάνυ ἐξόχου ἄλλων
κοπτέμεναι βίον, ἠδ' ἰταμῶς σβεννῦσαι ἀσέπτοις
χερσὶ φάος γλυκερόν, φλογέας ἀκτῖνας ὀρεγνὺν

Ἰταλίην εἰς εὐρείαν, εἰς οὐρεσιφοίτους
Κελτάς, καὶ λαμπρὸν μεγαθύμων ἔθνος Ἰβήρων,
εἰς δὲ χρυσοφόρους Ἰνδούς, εἰς ὀμβριμοθύμους
Γερμανούς, ἠδὴ εἰς Σάρματας ἀχρὶ ἀγρείους.
Κεῖται ἀποφθίμενον φάος ἄφθιτον εἰνὶ σκότεσσιν,
ὥς γε δοκεῖ, φέγγος ταλάνεσσι βρότοισι ὑφαῖρον,
ἀλλὰ δ' ἐν οὐρανίοις λάμπον φανεώτατα οἴκοις,
ἐν μακάρων θαλάμοις πατέει πολύολβον ἄνωθι,
ἴσως ἀθανάτοις πάνυ Ἡρώεσσιν. Ἐκεῖ δὲ
Πλαντίνῳ μεγάλῳ (ποτὲ οὗτος θαῦμα σεβαστὸν
ἦν κόσμῳ τούτῳ) χαῖρον, καὶ πατρὶ σύνεστιν·
μητέρα προσφιλέει κεδνήν, ἐρατούς τε ἀδελφούς.
Λίψιον, ὅς γε πάλαι σοφίης αὐτῶϊ κελευθοὺς
ἐξῷγεν κρυφίας, φιλίοις ἄρα ῥήμασ' ἐπαυδᾷ,
καὶ ἅμα ἠϊδίων ἀπολαύουσιν περιγηθεῖς
χαρμοσύνων. Νῦν Καρτερίας τε Πόνου τε θερίζει
ζωοφόρους καρπούς, ἐλεημοσύνων τε ἀμοιβὴν
προσδέχεται λαμπρὰν ὑπὸ ὀρθιδίκοιο Θεοῖο.
Ἀλλὰ δὲ Βαλθασάρου Μωρήτου οὔνομα ἔξει
ἀθάνατον φήμην, καὶ πάντοσε δόξαν ἄμεμπτον,
μέσφι μὲν ὑψίστῳ ἐνὶ οὐρανῷ ἄστρα ἔσονται,
μέσφι παλιρρόθιος Σκάλδος θοὰ κύματα ἕξει,
μέσφι δὲ γαῖα καλὴ εὐώδεα ἄνθεα δώσει,
μέσφι ἐν αἰενάῳ κόσμῳ δεδαήμεν' ἔσονται.

[*vertically*]

Ἀλλὰ τέως ψυχῇ Μωρήτου πάντες ἄλυπον V1
εὐχόμεθ' ἡσυχίην ὁσίως σὺν ὁμόφρονι θυμῷ.

Pro suo in defunctum, olim herum suum, pio affectu, scribebat
Martinus Binnart, eidem defuncto quondam
a correctione.

Not. crit.: titulus the original has capitals of varying size || **1** Κάτθανε Μωρῆτος] the original has small capitals || **3** αἶ αἶ αἶ] more common is αἰ αἰ αἴ or αἰαῖ | Μωρῆτος] the original has small capitals || **4** γενέους] *corr. ex* γενει || **7** φθοῦνος] unattested, hyper-Ionicised variant of φθόνος | μουσοχαρῆ] one would expect μουσοχαροῦς, from μουσοχαρής, -ές, attested only once in *AG* 9.411.2 || **8** σβεννῦσαι] faulty aorist infinitive of σβέννυμι | ἀσέπτοις] *corr. ex* ὀρεγνυν || **13** ἀχρὶ] *sic pro* ἄχρι || **15** γε] *add. supra lineam* | ταλάνεσσι] seemingly corrected out of τάλανεσσι | ὑφαῖρον

] unattested form of ὑφαιρέω, probably the active present participle was intended, i.e. ὑφαιροῦν or ὑφαιρέον, which would have been metrically possible || **16** φανεώτατα] *sic pro* φανερώτατα? || **19** Πλαντίνῳ] the original has small capitals || **22** Λίψιον] the original has small capitals | κελευθοὺς] *sic pro* κελεύθους || **23** ἄρα] the inferential particle is used rather oddly here || **24** ἠϊδίων] *sic pro* ἀϊδίων (hyper-Ionic form) || **25** χαρμοσύνων] *sic pro* χαρμοσυνῶν || **26** ἐλεημοσύνων] *sic pro* ἐλεημοσυνῶν || **27** ὀρθιδίκοιο] *sic pro* ὀρθοδίκοιο || **28** Βαλθασάρου Μωρήτου] the original has small capitals || **33** δεδαήμεν'] *sic pro* δεδαημέν' || **V1** Μωρήτου] the original has small capitals

Sim.:[15] **3–4** Eur. *Hel.* 206 (ἄγαλμα πατρίδος) || **4** (pseudo-?)Apollinaris, *Metaphrasis psalmorum* 2.7.14, 2.31.28, 2.66.8 & 2.66.12 (κλέος ἀμφιβόητον) || **5** Orph. *H.* 59.1 (Μοῖραι ἀπειρέσιοι, Νυκτὸς φίλα τέκνα μελαίνης) || **7** *AG* 9.411.2 (μουσοχαρεῖ = *hapax legomenon*) || **9** see e.g. Hom. *Od.* 16.23 & 17.41 (γλυκερὸν φάος) || **10** Ἰταλίην εἰς εὐρείαν] *AG* 16.5.2 (καὶ Τίτος εὐρείας ἄγαγ' ἀπ' Ἰταλίας) | οὐρεσιφοίτους] saepe in Nonn. *D.* et bis in *AG* || **12** saepe in Orph. *H.* et ter in *Oracula Sibyllina* (ὀβριμόθυμος in Hes. *Th.* 140, *h.Hom.* 8.2) || **14** φάος ἄφθιτον] ter in *AG* || **17** cf. *AG* 16.21.5-6 || **21** μητέρα… κεδνὴν] cf. e.g. Hom. *Od.* 10.8, Hes. *Th.* 169 || **22–23** κελευθοὺς… κρυφίας] *AG* 16.269.1 (Οὗτος ἀκεστορίης κρυφίας ὤιξε κελεύθους), de Hippocrate || **25** Καρτερίας τε Πόνου τε] cf. dictum Plantinianum *Labore et constantia* || **27** Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Carmina de se ipso*, p. 1244, l. 8 (Θεοῦ… ὀρθοδίκοιο) || **29** Orph. *H.* 15.11 (δόξαν ἄμεμπτον) || **31** Opp. *C.* 2.387 (…θοὰ κύματα τέμνων) || **33** cf. Nonn. *D.* 9.220–221 (ἀενάου δὲ / ἡ ταμίη κόσμοιο), 13.40 (Πύρριχος ἀενάοιο διέδραμεν ἕδρανα κόσμου)

Prose Translation

Dirge for the death of the man famous among all:
Balthasar Moretus, once the phoenix of printers

Moretus has passed away, weep Muses of the Belgians: / weep, the great star of all publishers has fallen. / The famous Moretus – oh oh oh – has fallen, immortal / ornament of our fatherland, far-famed glory of our stock.

[15] References are to the editions used by the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, as of 30 January 2024. Frequency indications are also based on searches conducted that day. As the reviewer rightly points out, not all parallels necessarily indicate direct inspiration from these passages, as the poet may have worked with a dictionary at hand. Yet, the parallels remain instructive as indications of the register and genre associations of certain words and phrases.

/ [5] Inexorable Fate Goddesses, evil children of the black Night, / envy that pursues brilliant virtue has encouraged you / to take the life of a man delighting in the Muses far more / than the others, and to eagerly extinguish with your unholy / hands a sweet light, which directs its fire-bright rays / [10] towards extensive Italy, towards the mountain-roaming / Celts,[16] and the illustrious nation of great-hearted Iberians,[17] / and towards the gold-wearing Indians, towards the strong-spirited / Germans, and towards the utterly boorish Sarmatians.[18] / Perished lies the imperishable light in the darkness, / [15] seemingly removing light from the wretched mortals, / but shining very brightly in its celestial dwellings. / Very fortunate it treads in the chambers of the blessed above, / in a manner very similar to immortal Heroes. And there / he greeted the great Plantin (who once was the venerable marvel / [20] in this world), and joins his father; / he approaches his dear mother for a kiss and his beloved siblings. / He addresses Lipsius, who long ago disclosed to him the / hidden paths to wisdom, no doubt with friendly words, / and together they are ecstatically enjoying eternal / [25] delights. Now he is harvesting the life-giving fruits / of Perseverance as well as Labour, and he is receiving a bright / compensation for his alms from the justice-upholding God. / Yet the name Balthasar Moretus will have / an immortal fame, and in all directions a blameless reputation, / [30] as long as there will be stars at the top of the sky, / as long as the ebbing Scheldt will have swift waves, / as long as the beautiful earth will produce sweet-smelling flowers, / as long as there will be learned men in the everlasting world.

[*vertical*]

But for now we all pray that Moretus' soul may have / a painless peace — in piety, with our spirits united.

As an expression of his pious sentiment towards the deceased, formerly his master, Martin Binnart wrote this, once corrector for the late man.

[16] The French are meant.
[17] The Spanish and Portuguese.
[18] The Slavs.

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