



# The Linnaean Correspondence

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### Linnaeus's seals

The seals used by Linnaeus are illustrated in the *Bref och skrivelser af och till Carl von Linné* (Stockholm 1907-1943), I, 2, p. VII-IX -- see [seals I-III](#), [seals IV-X](#) and [seals XI-XIII](#). An English translation of the notes on those pages follows.

“It has not been possible to ascertain the exact design of Linnaeus’s first seal. There is a fragment of one on a letter written on 23 June 1729, where it seems to read *tout pour vous* (possibly beneath some flowers, now missing), but this seal may have been borrowed by Linnaeus. This is also the case with another seal, representing a man’s head, on a letter written during his Lapland journey.

The number of seals used by Linnaeus was considerable, as is demonstrated by the list below. Their motifs will be clear from the illustrations without detailed descriptions.

I. Used, although rarely, from at least the beginning of 1734. He used it a few times later (still in the beginning of the 1750s). The object in the middle of the shield is an “anatomized” egg, revealing that, already as a student, Linnaeus was convinced that Harvey was right in his theory: *omne vivum ex ovo* (all life from an egg). Height 22, width 19 mm.

II. Only known in a few imprints, the oldest one on a letter from 1734, then some from the late 1730s, and one from 1770. The *Linnaea* depicted here, and also found on the picture of the title page of *Flora Lapponica*, is a copy, on a considerably reduced scale, from the illustration by Ol. Rudbeck *filis* in *Acta literaria* 1720. Heading: *considerate lilia* (behold the lilies). Height 17, width 15 mm.

III. Probably produced shortly after Linnaeus was elected a member of *Academia Leopoldino-Carolina Naturae curiosorum* in which his honorary title was *Dioscorides secundus*. This seal was in frequent use, especially in the 1740s and 1750s. On one page of the open book his motto reads: *numquam otiosus* (never idle). In the upper right-hand corner there are rays directed towards an object in the lower left-hand corner; the object has been

interpreted as a flower or a human eye. Height 13, width 12 mm.

IV. Was already in use in 1742 and frequently during 1745-1756, later occasionally, even as late as 1774. The *Linnaea*, almost identical with that of II, but turned in the opposite direction. Heading: *tantus amor florum* (such love of flowers). Height 19, width 12 mm. The original matrix is owned by Professor T. Tullberg.

V. Probably made shortly after he was appointed a knight of the Nordstjärneorden (April 1753), and often used up to 1763, after that only occasionally. Subscription: *famam extollere factis* (one's deeds extol one's fame). Height 18, width 16 mm. The matrix is owned by Mrs Linnaea Ödman *née* Tullberg.

VI. Very rarely used in the end of 1755 and in January 1756. Identical with V, only the vines missing at the sides of the upper part of the shield. Height 18, width 16 mm.

VII. Very rare. Only found on a few letters written 1756-1758. Height 24, width 20 mm.

VIII. The most frequently used after September 1763. The coat of arms with the North Star and the motto: *famam extendere factis* (one's deeds extend one's fame). Cf. Th. M. Fries, *Linné, lefnadsteckning* II bil. XXII. Height 25, width 23 mm. The original matrix is owned by Professor T. Tullberg.

IX. Has not been found on any letter. Perhaps it belonged to his son or to some other member of the family, and Linnaeus's motto is missing. Height 22, width 20 mm. The matrix belongs to Mrs Linnaea Ödman *née* Tullberg.

X. Identical with IX, only bigger (height 29, width 26 mm.) Has not been found on any letter. The matrix belongs to one of the descendants, Mr Curt Fougberg.

XI. Extremely rare and only recently discovered on two letters from 1762 and 1763. Height 20, width 18 mm.

XII. Has been seen on one single letter to the Academy of Sciences of 21 June 1765. The interconnected letters could be interpreted as CvL, although, in that case, L has a peculiar form. It may have belonged to somebody else (his son), or only accidentally borrowed. Height 19, width 16.

XIII. Not found on any letter but on one cover of a copy of Linnaeus's *Egenhändig anteckningar om sig sjelf*, owned by Mr N. Rosén, there are two imprints of it, and two of II. There is no doubt that it is Linnaean: this is proven, not only by the two intertwined letters CL facing each other but still more so by an identical monogram with vines of *Linnaea* leaves and a coronet on the pieces of a china service, inherited and kept in the family, now owned by the Linnaean descendant Professor T. Tullberg. Height 19, width 17 mm.”

