

The Linnaean Correspondence

1739 GRONOVIVS

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L0313

Letters

Johan Frederik Gronovius [\[+\]](#) to Carl Linnaeus [\[+\]](#)

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Leiden, Netherlands, 7 December 1739 n.s. [\[Display apparatus in new window\]](#)

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Charissime Linnaee.

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Accepi Epistolas Vestras 12 Sept[embris] ex Stokholmia ad me datas, quae quicquid hactenus miseram, ad manus tuas venisse communicabant. Hae praesentes significant me cistulam tradidisse Dominis van de Velde[+][+] Mercatoribus Amstelodamensibus, quae continet fasciculum plantarum, quae hac aestate in hortulo meo floruerunt, nec non semina earundem; certo persuasus Te omnium Suecorum primum, qui tales viderit. Addidi quoque specimina plantarum, quae nuper ex Virginia accepi. Addiderat Claytonus[+] fasciculum seminum, quorum dimidiam partem Tibi destinavi; solummodo mihi in votis est ut haec omnia in tempora ad Te veniant. Efflagito ut ad reliquas plantas quae apud Te sunt, quantocyus responsum per Tabellarium publicum ad me mittas, sicut promisisti in ultima epistola Tua, in qua me egregie docuisti. Paro enim me ad editionem secundae partis Florae Virginicae. Seguerii[+] Bibliothecam botanicam ad te mittam quamprimum prodierit; tribus comprehendetur voluminibus.[1] Bibliopolae nostri[2] desiderant opus quoddam novum a Te conscriptum imprimere. Catesbejus[+] nonam partem voluminis secundi absolvit.[3] Misi quoque Catalogum praeparatorum chymicorum, coralliorum [?] quae servabantur in ambulacro horti, et insectorum D[omini] Boerhavi[+] .[4] Omnia marina 330 florenis sibi comparavit D[ominus] Roell[+] , reliqua mediocri divendita pretio.[5] Cramerus[+] mense Julio Angliam petiit; Londini eum fuisse novi, fama fuit quod Bristoliam peteret, sed brevi post quum ad aures meas istud propositum venisset rediit huc, ut dubitem an istam urbem, quae viam parat in Cornubiam, visitaverit. Ut facile conjicere potes, non multum me movet. Utinam quam primum has acceperis velles respondere quam primum >respondere< ad propositum meum de edendo Catalogo Musaei mei Lapidei[6] conscripti ad Methodum tuam in Systemate Naturae a Te traditam, observatis iisdem Legibus quas in Critica observandas praescripsisti. Verum in antecessum scire debes, Doctissime Linnaee, quod omnia ista specimina quae in isto catalogo propono, non credam esse veras distinctas species, sed plurimas esse varietates, quas ut[a] a veris speciebus distinguere queam, fatebor[b] ingenue in praefatione, me nimis tenuiter versatum, et edito catalogo me tuam implorare opem, ut me doctiorem in hac doctrina reddas. Vide quam familiariter tecum agere[c] volo, publice precaturus ut me corrigas, reprehendas, doceas, idem quod in Flora a Claytono[d] [collecta a] Te desideravi. Verum hoc non aggrediar, nisi me tam libere Tecum acturum literis Tuis concesseris. Nunc Tibi proponam methodum quem [sic] in Classibus & Ordinibus servandis ex Systemate hausi. An autem numeros arithmeticos proponendos censeas speciminibus singulis (nolo enim vocare species, quae merae sunt varietates, has vero bene distinguere, hoc Opus Laborque his solius est LINNAEI), sententiam tuam desidero. E[xempli] G[ratia]

CLASSIS PRIMA

de

PETRIS SIVE LAPIDIBUS SIMPLICIBUS.

ORDO PRIMUS

DE
APYRIS.

- 1 ASBESTUS ponderosus fibrosus scissilis flexilis. Ex Pensilvania.
- 1 AMIANTUS fibris capillaceis, flexibilibus, fragilibus niveis.
- 2 .. idem lanuginosus, ex Principatu Blankenburgensi.
- 3 .. fibris angulosis rigidis, ex Fahluna.
- 4 .. fibris angulosis rigidis niveis, ochra martiali tectus.
- 5 .. fibris angulosis rigidis purpurascensibus, ex Novaboraco.

- 1 OLLARIS fibris acerosis friabilibus incarnatus. Soapy-rock Cornubiensibus.
- 2 .. fibris acerosis friabilibus subdiaphanus.
- 3 .. fibris acerosis rigidis sparsis in saxo spatoso.
- 4 .. fibris e centro radiatis niveis in saxo nigricante, particulis spatosis oblongis rubris referto.

- 1 TALCUM Durum fibris rectis planis.
- 2 .. friabile molliusculum album opacum.
- 3 .. fissile cinereum durum. Ex Bingen fluvio.

- 1 MICA particulis squamosis auricoloribus in saxo rufescente.
- 2 .. eadem in saxo spatoso.
- 3 .. particulis squamosis et membranaceis mixtis.
- 4 .. membranacea, particulis squamosis mixta particulis saxosis. Ex Sinu Davidis</u>.
- 5 .. particulis membranaceis fissilibus nigris ex Groenlandia.
- 6 .. membranacea alba, in quartzo & spato albo.

ORDO SECUNDUS

De

CALCARIIS.

- 1 SCHISTUS cinereus fragilis. Fissilis Lapis, seu ardesia cinerei coloris, friabilis. Scheuchz.[+] Alp. 111, p. 155 et sic porro.[7]

Ut autem Malevolorum me subtraham dicteris qui me Superbiae Crimine et Ostentationis prosequi non desinent, scire debes, mihi propositum esse non ultra 200 exemplaria imprimendi (ex quibus tot Tibi comparabis quot desideraveris), quippe inserviens mihi soli, satis superque contentus, quod Subjecta ad hoc pertinentia studium, aequae ac Tu praestitisti in plantis, et Artedius[+] in piscibus, [8] Methodo systematica juxta suas classes et ordines proponi queant. Utinam nunc, Vir Optime, precibus meis satisfacere non dedigneris & quam primum sententiam tuam ad omnes quaestiones communicare. Statim enim tunc opus aggrediar, et impressionem accelerabo.

Amstelodami Idem bibliopola qui Burmanni[+] decades impressit,[9] Iter Amici Tui Schavij[+] Oxoniensis lingua nostra vernacula translatum imprimet.[10] Rumor etiam est quod Rumphij[+] opus Amboinicum de Conchiliis ibidem imprimatur.[11] Collinsonus[+] mihi in mandatis dedit ut Tibi significem, se facetas tuas accepisse literas, pro quibus Tibi multas agit grates, teque valde salutatur, et omnia fausta precatur. D[ominus] Van Swieten[+] idem Tibi praestolatur, in edendo collegio practico Boerhavii valde occupatus.[12] A Dillenio [+] non vidi literas postquam Floram Virginicam ad eum miserim; forte praefatio ipsi displicebit quod nimis modeste & succincte scripserim, in reliquis tuas sequens in Critica datas regulas. Dolerem tamen valdopere, si inimicitiam ejus in me contraxissem.[13]

Restat solummodo ut unicam Tibi praescribam regulam, quam observari a Te vehementer cupio, ne scilicet nimis temerarius sis in evertenda terra, licet semina

intra tres annos non prodeant. Experientia enim docui [sic] et doceor adhuc ea provenire quinto anno, locumque ea desiderare madidum, qui non facile a radiis Solis exsiccat. Hoc Tibi offero tanquam Arcanum, si tale detur in natura monstrum. Prodeunt iterum ex seminibus quae elapsis quinque annis terrae commisi[e] novae plantae, sed quae vel quales sint, proxima demum cognoscamus aestate. Doctor Douglas[+] Londini occupatur in descriptione Rhinocerotis, quem vivum Londini alunt.[14] Dom[inus] Van Royen[+] ad Te misit Tournefortij[+] institutiones III. vol. 4°.; Boerhavij indicem alterum II. volum., Gorteri[+] Medicinae compendii Pars 2a in 4°; Schultensij[+] oratio in Obitum Boerhav[ij] in 4°; Crameri docimasiam II. vol. in 8°; Van Royen Florae Leydensis prodromum in 8°; De Gorter exercitationes medicae IV. in quarto;[f] itidem et semina. Quae omnia in cistula mea inclusa reperies.[15]

Vale cum dilectissima Uxore, quam Uxor filiaque mecum salutant et valere jubent.

Lugd[uni] Bat[avorum], 7 Decemb[ris] 1739.

[address] To D[octo]r Carolus Linnaeus / at / Stockholm.

SUMMARY

Johan Frederik Gronovius has received Linnaeus's letter of 12 September. He has delivered a new box to the Amsterdam merchants van de Velde containing a number of plants that have bloomed in his garden this summer, as well as the seeds thereof. Gronovius is quite convinced that Linnaeus will be the very first Swede to see such marvellous plants. Furthermore, Gronovius has added some specimens of plants which he recently received from Virginia as well as half of the seeds that were sent to him by John Clayton. He urgently asks Linnaeus to keep his promise and send him back a description of the plants he has given him earlier, as he is about to publish the second part of his *Flora Virginica*. Gronovius promises to send Linnaeus a copy of Jean François Séguier's *Bibliotheca botanica* as soon as it has appeared. The Leiden booksellers Wishoff want to print a new work composed by Linnaeus. Mark Catesby has finished the ninth part of the second volume of his *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*. Gronovius has sent his friend the catalogue of Herman Boerhaave's chemical preparations, corals and insects. Boerhaave's collection of aquatic plants were purchased by Wilhelm Röell at 330 florins, whereas his other collections were sold at a more moderate price. Johann Andreas Kramer went to London in July. Gronovius doubts, however, whether he reached Bristol, which is the gateway to Cornwall.

Gronovius kindly asks Linnaeus to send him an immediate reply to his proposal to have a catalogue of his own mineral museum published. While drawing up this catalogue, Gronovius has followed the rules established by Linnaeus in his *Systema naturae* as well as in his *Critica botanica*. However, he wants him to know that the specimens proposed in the catalogue are not species in the proper sense of the word but rather varieties. He will need Linnaeus's help in order to distinguish them from real species, and will duly acknowledge the latter's assistance in the preface that is to be added to the work. Enclosed Gronovius gives an example of the method he has followed in drawing up his catalogue and he kindly asks Linnaeus for his opinion. He will not proceed with the work unless Linnaeus has granted him permission to discuss the matter with him candidly. Furthermore, he adds that he wishes no more than 200 copies to be printed as the book is merely destined for personal purposes.

The same Amsterdam bookseller who has printed Johannes Burman's *Thesaurus Zeylanicus* will print a Dutch translation of the itinerary composed by Linnaeus's friend from Oxford, Thomas Shaw. Rumor has it that the man will also print Georg Eberhard Rumpf's *Herbarium Amboinense*. Peter Collinson wants Linnaeus to

know that he has received his letter and sends his kind regards. So does Gerhard van Swieten who is extremely busy preparing an edition of Boerhaave's lectures on practical medicine. Gronovius has not received any letter from Johann Jacob Dillenius anymore after having sent him a copy of his *Flora Virginica*. He is afraid Dillenius may have been displeased with the all too modest and succinct preface to the work and with the outspokenly 'Linnaean' approach adopted by the author. Gronovius would deeply regret if the book were to cause Dillenius to bear ill-will against him.

To conclude with, Gronovius gives Linnaeus a secret advice as to the seeds he has sent him. Experience has taught him that seeds that have been resting in the soil for three years will nonetheless germinate after four years. These seeds require a humid soil that is not easily dried out by sunshine. Furthermore, he wants Linnaeus to know that James Douglas is busy describing the rhinoceros that is being kept alive in London. Finally, Gronovius enumerates the books Adriaan van Royen sends him and which Gronovius has enclosed in his own box.

MANUSCRIPTS

a. original holograph (LS, V, 446-447). -

TEXTUAL NOTES

- a. <imp> [ut supra lineam add. Gronovius]
- b. <imp> [praefa ante fatebor del. Gronovius]
- c. <imp> [-re supra lineam add. Gronovius]
- d. <imp> [Claytono supra lineam add. Gronovius]
- e. <imp> [terrae commisi supra lineam add. Gronovius]
- f. <imp> [quarto post Octavo cancellatum scripsit Gronovius]

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. A reference to Séguier, *Bibliotheca botanica*[+].
2. In all likelihood Gronovius has first and foremost the Leiden booksellers Conrad[+] and Georg Jacob Wishoff[+] in mind.
3. A reference to Catesby, *The Natural history of Carolina*[+].
4. The catalogue was drawn up by Hieronymus David Gaub[+], as can be inferred from Gronovius's letter to Linnaeus of 4 September 1739 n.s.[+].
5. In a letter sent to Richard Richardson[+] on the very same day (7 December 1739), Gronovius gives a more detailed and slightly different account: "The chymical preparations are sold not dear; the insects very dear; and the corals, so as they were in your time, with the chests, are sold for three hundred and thirty gilders. And so there is an end of Boerhaave's things." Quoted from Turner, *Extracts*[+], 381.
6. Gronovius is referring to his Gronovius, *Index*[+].
7. A reference to Scheuchzer, *Itinera*[+].
8. A reference to Artedi, *Ichthyologia sive opera omnia de piscibus*[+], which was posthumously edited by Linnaeus and issued by Conrad Wishoff at Leiden in 1738.
9. Burman's *Thesaurus Zeylanicus*[+] was published at Amsterdam in 1737 by the booksellers Janssonio-Waesbergh {bio-Janssonio-Waesbergh} and

Salomon Schouten[+].

10. Shaw's *Travels*[+] was printed at Oxford in 1738. A French and German translation was published in 1743 and 1765, respectively. See Pritzel, *Thesaurus*[+], no. 9607. Pritzel does not mention any Dutch translation.
11. Rumpf's *Herbarium Amboinense*[+]. The work was to be published by the booksellers who had previously published Burman's *Thesaurus Zeylanicus* [+]. See n. 9.
12. Swieten was to publish his *Commentaria*[+] at Leiden in 1741-1742. Gronovius announced the news already in his letters of 17 March 1739 n.s. [+] and 12 July 1739 n.s.[+].
13. Gronovius's fears proved unjustified. As early as the beginning of 1740, Dillenius had reestablished contacts with Gronovius and sent him some letters. However, Gronovius regretted that Dillenius never mentioned his *Flora Virginica*[+] in any of his letters. See Gronovius's letter to Linnaeus of 10 February 1740 n.s.[+].
14. On 1 June 1739, an Indian rhinoceros arrived in London. The physician and naturalist James Douglas became interested in the animal and ordered his assistant James Parsons[+] to make some drawings of it. Moreover, Douglas lectured about his observations on the rhinoceros in meetings of the Royal Society of London on 21 and 28 June 1739. On the possible connections between Douglas's and Linnaeus's preoccupations with the rhinoceros, see further Rookmaker, "The Sources[+]", 76-78.
15. Adriaan van Royen sent Linnaeus the following books:
 - Tournefort, *Institutiones rei herbariae*[+] (Frankfurt 1715);
 - Boerhaave, *Index alter plantarum*[+]. (Leiden 1720);
 - Gorter, *Compendium*[+].
 - Schultens, *Oratio*[+].
 - Kramer, *Elementa*[+].
 - Royen, *Flora Leydenensis prodromus*[+].
 - Gorter, *Exercitationes*[+].