



Meaning of the Corporate Seal

Security

Throughout history, seals have taken many forms. Perhaps you have one around [your finger](#) right now.

Romans began applying them to business documents. You might be surprised to know that at first these seals, made of an impression molded into hot wax, were used primarily as physical adhesive, not unlike the glue inside postage envelopes. The original intention was just to close the document.

Seals only evolved into elaborate marks of identity once Roman society expanded. Newly integrated people demanded rights & privileges, such as the ability to lend money with interest and take loans themselves. This led to an increase in seal usage.

Simply, there were more people. And as the amount of people being governed increased, so too did the amount of documents needing to be verified. More people. More documents. More business to transact.

Identification

There were also a limited amount of names one could take as a Roman citizen. Seals developed pictorial representations in response to limited Roman naming conventions. Marius & Marius could have the same name, descend from different families, and maintain legal differentiation with a unique seal.

It should be made evident that companies were not formed in Rome along modern lines. A respected legal structure for limiting liability did not yet exist. Agreements were instead made between singular persons.

And interpersonal relationships in Roman society crystallized around a deep, hard code difficult for us to understand nowadays. Called *fides*, it is best understood as a mechanical guarantor of action.

Looking Out 🙄

Prior to the expansion of Roman society, *fides* equated to a permanent state of character, inextricable beyond individual presence. We take certain verbal forms of law from this lineage.

As Rome expanded, new types of citizens were integrated. Besides increasing population, the newly integrated citizenry came with previous alliances; or at least were perceived as such by long-standing Romans. A better, expedient tool became necessary to establish *fides*.

A seal confirmed the existence of a person of public character. One who enters into and backs up his or her agreements. Set, enforceable duties could be expected according to the acknowledged relation.

Trust 😊

The legal equivalent of the Latin Future Perfect Tense, which many ancient writers have a fondness for completing statements, a seal places agreements into definite, future terms.

A dynamic society brings with it the double-need to suit transactional volume and decreased trust among counterparties. The cause for this is both demographic increase and variant methods to establish a defined relation.

A seal means trust. You can expect something of the other. Identity is exposed, made unsecret.

Fides grows an extendable face; developing into [a deity worshipped by the Romans](#), whose Temple, adorned with bronze tables and law tablets, would sometimes be used as a meeting place for Senate activities.

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