

Abstract: This paper proposes a novel approach to the study of *artes dictandi* and form letters from a perspective of gender history. As didactic sources comprising both pedagogical theory and their practical application, gender classifications occur in theoretical instructions as well as in model letters. Accordingly, the paper first maps the innovative aspects of the research field. It then examines some edited and unedited handbooks from the point of view of the theory of letter writing: the *Aurea Gemma Gallica* (12th cent.); the *Candelabrum* (13th cent.); the 14th cent. *Viaticus dictandi* (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. 5194), the 15th cent. *Rethorica est Scientia* (Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. 884). These four examples all provide theoretical letter writing instructions that put an emphasis on gender as a crucial category of social distinction. The manuscripts selected represent dictaminal texts connected to Austrian history. They draw attention to an area of the genre's diffusion which is less well explored as compared to other areas such as Italy and France and, thus, deserves more attention.

Keywords: *artes dictandi*, gender, Austrian history

Schlagworte: Artes dictandi; Gender; österreichische Geschichte