

LETTER-WRITING MANUALS AND INSTRUCTION FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT

Historical and Bibliographic Studies

Edited by Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell

Once nearly as ubiquitous as dictionaries are today, letter-writing manuals served to instruct individuals not only in letter composition but also, in effect, on personal conduct. The study of letter-writing theory, which bridges rhetorical theory and grammatical studies, represents an emerging discipline in need of definition. In this volume eleven experts sketch the contours of epistolary theory and collect the historic and bibliographic materials that form the basis for its study.

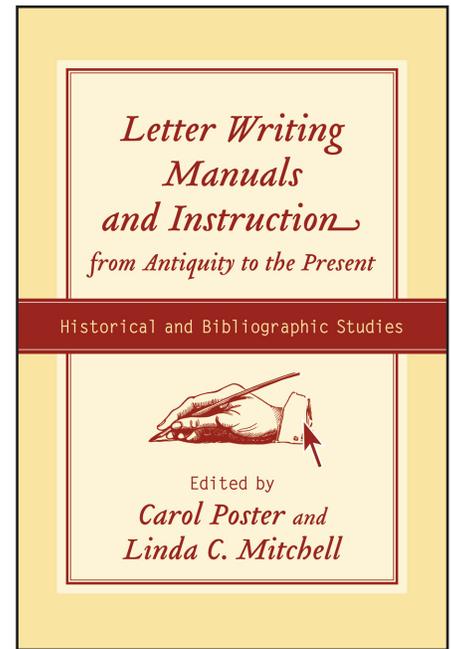
Robert G. Sullivan pushes back the origin of the genre to Isocrates' classical epistolary theory and letters, and Carol Poster summarizes Greek and Latin works to discover the epistolary theory that permeated ancient schooling. Malcolm Richardson surveys medieval dictamen, and Martin Carmago places letter-writing manuals in their educational context of fifteenth-century Oxford.

Moving into the largely uncharted territory of Renaissance epistolary theory, Gideon Burton examines philology and letter-writing theory in relation to medieval precursors. Lawrence D. Green discusses editions of letter-writing treatises in England; W. Webster Newbold explores the relationship between epistolarity and rise of vernacular English literacy; and Judith Rice Henderson investigates the uses of Erasmus's *Opus de conscribendi epistolis* in sixteenth-century schools.

Drawing attention to the broadening of the Renaissance model, Mitchell traces modern letter-writing instruction through eloquence handbooks and grammar books. John T. Gage surveys the patterns of inclusion and exclusion from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composition textbooks, and Joyce R. Walker considers how the electronic medium is reviving a long-neglected form of the epistolary tradition. A substantial collection of bibliographies close the volume, offering a compendium of sources for this burgeoning field.

Studies in Rhetoric/Communication • Thomas W. Benson, series editor

July 2007, 344 pages, 9 illus.



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