

**J.G. Schottelius's *Ausführliche Arbeit  
von der Teutschen HaubtSprache*  
(1663) and its place in early modern  
European vernacular language study**

Nicola McLelland

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Nicola McLelland, Nottingham 2010

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AA</i>	Justus Georg Schottelius, <i>Ausführliche Arbeit der Teutschen HauptSprache</i> (1663)
<i>FG</i>	<i>Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft</i>
<i>FZG</i>	Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, <i>FrauenzimmerGesprächsspiele</i> (1644–49)
<i>SPG</i>	Georg Philipp Harsdörffer, <i>Specimen Philologiae Germanicae</i> (1646)

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE *AUSFÜHRLICHE ARBEIT VON DER TEUTSCHEN HAUBTSPRACHE* (1663) AND ITS PLACE IN EUROPEAN LINGUISTIC THOUGHT

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

This book pursues three aims. The first is to demonstrate the lasting contribution of the German scholar Justus Georg[ius] Schottelius (1612–1676) to European linguistic thought; the second, in the light of his importance for the history of linguistic ideas, is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Schottelius's *Ausführliche Arbeit von der Teutschen HaubtSprache* (1663, henceforth *AA*), located at the intersection of a number of different discourses about language; my third aim is to attempt an evaluation of Schottelius's contribution to the standardization of the German language.

The first of these aims may seem an assertion of the obvious, but in fact Schottelius's position in Europe has been rather misrepresented. Like Claude Lancelot (1616–1695) and Antoine Arnauld (1612–1694), the authors of the Port-Royal grammar (1660), Schottelius took a 'rationalist' view of language. That is, he stood in the same tradition of Latinate rationalism, expressed in the important grammars of J.C. Scaliger (1484–1558), Franciscus Sanctius (1523–1601) and Johann Gerhard Vossius (1577–1649) that also influenced the Port-Royal grammarians. But while the Port-Royal grammarians associated *ratio* with the universal processes of the human mind in formulating language and thought, Schottelius was merely interested in the *ratio* inherent in language as an organism in its own right (without much interest in its speakers). He believed (with the likes of Theodor Bibliander (1504–1564) in his programmatically titled 'commentary on the rational basis [*ratio*] [...] of all languages', 1548) that all languages shared a common *ratio*. For this reason Padley (1985: 224–31), in his study of European vernacular grammar, treated Schottelius as an early exponent of universal grammar, and in this narrative, Schottelius's *AA* amounts to a cul-de-sac in the history of linguistic reflection in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Robins, in his admittedly concise but nonetheless magisterial *Short History of Linguistics*

<sup>1</sup> Padley was also misled by Schottelius's parroting of Vossius's (1635) distinction between natural [i.e. universal] and artificial grammar (*AA* 180), a distinction which in fact had no effect on the details of his own grammar (cf. 5.3).

(Robins 1997), accordingly makes no mention of Schottelius at all; nor does the third volume, on Renaissance and Early Modern Linguistics, of Lepschy's *History of Linguistics* (Lepschy 1992, English transl. 1998). Seuren (1998: 46), who admittedly concentrates on the modern period, sums up the mid-seventeenth century onwards as 'Port-Royal and after', and, perhaps not surprisingly, the most recent survey of the history of linguistics in English (Allan 2007) does not deviate from the tradition of overlooking Schottelius.

Schottelius is certainly given due recognition in *German* linguistic historiography, where interest in him began in the modern era with Koldewey (1899), Jellinek (1913–14) and Gundolf (1930). He has been called one of the fathers of German studies (Berns 1976: 14), and a plaque on the house where he lived in Wolfenbüttel calls him the 'father of German grammar'. He is prominently discussed in key surveys, such as those by Gardt (1999), Kaltz (2005), Polenz (1994), and Jungen & Lohnstein (2007), and is a central figure in two important monographs on German linguistic awareness in the seventeenth century (Gardt 1994, Hundt 2000).<sup>2</sup> That his wider importance for the history of linguistics in Europe has not been so readily acknowledged is, I believe, symptomatic of a skewed reading of the history of linguistic ideas in Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Schottelius has been seen (since Bornemann 1976, Huber 1984) too much within the specific tradition of German cultural patriotism. It is symptomatic that when Cherubim (1996, 2009<sup>2</sup>) notes the legacy of Schottelius, he limits himself to the German context. Yet Schottelius participated in several—to some extent even competing—European discourse traditions, including those of practical German grammar and cultural patriotism, but also theoretical Latin grammar and legal discourse (cf. Seiffert 1990a) (and his debt to the doctrine of natural law offers an interesting comparison to discussions about customary law amongst the French *remarqueurs*; see 3.4). The way in which Schottelius combined ideas from these disparate discourse traditions in turn had a wider impact in Europe than just on German grammar and lexicography. I certainly do not wish to claim that Schottelius's *Ausführliche Arbeit* is more important than the Port-Royal grammar of 1660, but I will argue that it *is* important in its own right, and that it left its own important legacy in currents running through European grammatography and wider reflection on language: in the grammatographical traditions of separate languages, in lexicography, in debates on the origin of language, and in comparative linguistics. This is the substance of Chapter 7.

Given the importance of Schottelius for European linguistic historiography, my second aim in this book is to provide a comprehensive reading of Schottelius's *magnum opus* as a coherent work, by situating it at the

<sup>2</sup> Aspects of Schottelius's work have also received detailed examination in several dissertations, including Plattner (1967), Gützlaff (1989a, b), Barbarić (1981), Neuhaus (1991), and Schneider (1995). See 1.3.

intersection of several discourses about language. Such a comprehensive reading will enable readers to recognize the overlaps and differences compared to the discourses of other European linguistic traditions: in such matters as the choices of grammatical categories, the typical metaphorical fields of linguistic purism, the recourse to legal notions of customary and natural law like that of the French *remarqueurs* to conceptualize correctness, the organic conception of language, the importance of the *ars combinatoria* (cf. universal language schemes), the importance of amassing and collating data about the language, and the close relationship between grammatical codification and the codification of poetry. That is the concern of the earlier chapters. For readers' convenience, all citations from primary literature are given both in the original and in English translation; secondary literature is cited in English translation only.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, historical sociolinguists have recently begun to investigate to what extent grammars influence the actual language of speech communities. Evaluating the relationship between Schottelius's grammar and language practice is, therefore, the task of Chapter 8, although, as will become clear there, that relationship is by no means straightforward to assess.

The present chapter provides an introduction to the life and work of Schottelius (1612–1676) and his social and intellectual context (1.2), as well as a first introduction to the *Ausführliche Arbeit* (1.3); an interpretation of the iconography and emblematics of the frontispiece and other visual material in the *AA* will reveal the pious, cultural-patriotic ideology which infuses the work (1.4). Chapter 2 outlines Schottelius's theory of language. The points raised in that chapter are re-visited in later chapters, but it serves as a first introduction. Chapter 3 identifies six distinct discourse traditions in linguistic thought that Schottelius drew on and combined in the *AA*. Identifying these streams of influence helps both to assess Schottelius's contribution to linguistic theory and to clarify his position in the European intellectual context, as well as to explain some of the complexities and contradictions in the *AA*. The next three chapters present, in essence, a *transtextual* close reading of the work (in the sense of Genette 1982).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The availability of a facsimile reprint (ed. Hecht 1967, rpt. 1995) does not change the fact that Schottelius's *AA* is long, dense, and complex, and that its highly rhetorical style makes it hard for non-experts to read. Blume (1983) calculated that Schottelius's average sentence-length was 74.48 words, which he contrasted with an average of 34.76 for the near-contemporary Swede Olaf Rudbeck (1630–1702) in his *Atlantica* (1679), whose writing was also less complex syntactically.

<sup>4</sup> My inspiration for the transtextual approach is the application of the framework to a similarly voluminous and complex (albeit literary) work, the late medieval Prose Lancelot (Merveldt 2007). To aficionados of Genette's notion of transtextuality, it may seem odd to apply it to an academic text like Schottelius's *AA*, but after all, the *AA* is highly rhetorical, indeed actually literary in aspiration in places. Furthermore, Schottelius's *AA* is the very model of a complex network of relations, both within the text and with other texts. Beginning with the orations of Book I, reading it 'plunges us into a network of textual relations', to cite Allen's text-book definition of intertextuality (Allen 2000: 1).

Chapters 4 and 5 offer a comprehensive reading of the entire *AA*, reading all of its many text-types against the ‘architexts’ of their respective discourse traditions. Chapter 6, together with the Appendix, provides the first detailed account of the sources on which Schottelius drew. Chapter 7 considers the important legacy of the *AA*, not just in Germany, but elsewhere in Europe, including the Netherlands, Sweden and Russia. Chapter 8, finally, assesses the extent of Schottelius’s influence on the subsequent development of German and on its standardization.

## 1.2. SCHOTTELIUS IN THE SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

The axiom that historians of linguistics, like any historians, need ‘a grasp of the main historical and cultural developments in the period under study’ (Law 2003: 4) is never more true than when studying seventeenth-century Germany, with its pious and war-torn society and with beliefs about language—whether on matters of style or on the assumed ‘facts’ of history—that can seem very alien today. This section therefore provides some first points of orientation, beginning with a brief biographical sketch, followed by an outline of what was going on in Germany—politically, culturally and intellectually—during Schottelius’s lifetime, as well as of the key developments in linguistic ideas in other countries of Europe around the same time.

### 1.2.1 *Schottelius’s life and works*

Schottelius’s biography is in essence that of an intelligent, pious, and ambitious man with sufficient determination to overcome some difficult circumstances in his early life, and so to enjoy a successful academic career.<sup>5</sup> Schottelius was born in 1612 in Einbeck, in today’s Lower Saxony, a Low German speaking area. In sixteenth-century Germany, it had been common under the influence of Humanism to adopt a Latin form of one’s surname, and it appears that one of Schottelius’s ancestors did just this—*Schottelius* comes from the Low German surname *Schotteler* (i.e. the Low German equivalent of *Schüßler* ‘maker of bowls’, Berns 1974: 7). It is still common to hear German scholars use the name *Schottel*, but Schottelius himself never used any other form than *Schottelius*. He also always used the hyphenated form of his first name in the title pages of his works, *Justus-Georgius* (Seiffert 1990a: 257 n.1). However, both Kaspar von Stieler

<sup>5</sup> The following account is based on Berns (1974, 1976, 1984); cf. also Waldberg (1891) and Hundt (2007). A brief and very readable survey of the importance of Schottelius’s life and work is given by Cherubim (2001).

(1632–1707), who based his dictionary, *Der Teutschen Sprache Stammbaum und Fortwachs* (1691), on principles outlined by Schottelius, and Daniel Morhof (1639–1691) already used the form *Schottel* (Stieler 1691, vol.1: *Vorrede* [p.15]; Morhof 1682: 457), within a few years of Schottelius's death, and in the nineteenth century the form *Schottel* became more widely used.

Schottelius grew up as the son of a Protestant pastor, while his mother came from a family of merchants. As the son of a pastor, he belonged to a class with access to education and with aspirations to higher education, but without the certainty of wealth and noble title to back him. He was in this regard typical of many of the more active members of the German language societies in the seventeenth century (Berns 1974: 8). He attended the local town-school, of which his father had earlier been assistant director (Berns 1974: 10). In 1625, the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) reached Einbeck. Einbeck itself was not taken, but the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside took refuge within its walls, and plague broke out in the cramped conditions. Schottelius's father died of the plague in 1626, when Schottelius was fourteen. Schottelius left school and began an apprenticeship, but soon abandoned it and left home to pursue his education. From 1627 to 1630, he attended the *Gymnasium* in nearby Hildesheim, paying his way by private tutoring. Aged eighteen, he moved to Hamburg and, again financing himself by tutoring, he attended from 1631 to 1634 the so-called Academic Gymnasium, which provided education up to the standard of first or second year university. The principal of the school, Joachim Jungius (1587–1657), who had known both the philologist Christoph Helwig (1581–1617) and the educational reformer Wolfgang Ratke (Ratichius, 1571–1635) in Gießen, may be partly responsible for awakening Schottelius's interest in the German language, and for shaping his view of language as both natural and divinely inspired (Berns 1974: 13; Padley 1985: 313). Also a pupil at the school was the later poet, pastor, *Pfalzgraf*, and linguistic purist Johann Rist (1607–1667), with whom Schottelius remained friends all his life. Schottelius, like many of his compatriots, then went to the Netherlands to study at university proper. After a brief stint in Groningen, he enrolled in 1635 at Leiden University, which, founded in 1575, was the most important university in seventeenth-century northern Europe. Amongst the scholars who had been drawn to Leiden were several whom Schottelius later cited in his own work. They include Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), whose glossed edition of the psalms Schottelius would later cite; Vossius, on whose *De Arte Grammatica* (1635) Schottelius drew for his notion of analogy in language; and Daniel Heinsius (1580–1655), whose pioneering poetry in the vernacular Martin Opitz (1597–1639) had already begun to translate into German in 1619 (cf. 3.4, 6.2).

Returning to Germany in 1636, Schottelius rapidly abandoned an attempt to settle back into Einbeck, and went instead to Leipzig, and then—when Leipzig proved too expensive—to Wittenberg to continue his

studies, where he seems also to have achieved the rank of a junior university teacher (Berns 1974: 18). However, the Thirty Years' War once again caught up with him. Wittenberg University closed in 1638, as Swedish troops had taken Meissen and were threatening Wittenberg. Schottelius headed for home, but was offered a private tutorship on the way, and soon afterwards became tutor to Prince Anton Ulrich (1633–1714), son of Duke August the Younger (1579–1666) of Braunschweig (still sometimes called in English Brunswick) and Lüneburg. In 1644, Schottelius moved with the Duke's family back to their residence in Wolfenbüttel, which the family (allied with the Protestant side against the Emperor and the Catholic League) had been forced to yield to the Emperor in 1627. Here Schottelius had access to the Duke's library, the largest library in Europe (Berns 1976: 9). In 1646, he obtained a doctorate in laws from the University of Helmstedt, and also married.

Schottelius made his first foray into print in 1640 with an allegorical poem *LAMENTATIO Germaniae exspirantis. Der numehr hinsterbenden Nymphen GERMANIAE elendeste Todesklage* ('lamentation of Germania dying', 1640), in which he already gave vent to cultural patriotic concerns. The poem portrayed Germany as a queen reduced to beggary as the result of war. In 1643, he published his *Der Teutschen Sprach Einleitung* 'introduction of the German language', a verse work which canvassed many cultural-patriotic arguments in defence of German. Schottelius's first theoretical work was his German grammar titled *Teutsche Sprachkunst*, published in 1641, when he was 29. Berns (1974: 19) argues that Schottelius must have already been working on it before he joined the Duke's service. Upon its publication, the Duke saw to it that Schottelius became a member of the most important language society of the time, the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* (founded in 1617, henceforth FG). Schottelius had already contributed to the society's discussions with a scathing review of the German grammar prepared by Christian Gueintz (1592–1650) (also published in 1641). Gueintz's grammar was admittedly pretty poor (cf. 5.2), but Gueintz was nevertheless the protégé of none other than the founder of the society himself, Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Köthen (1579–1650). Clearly Schottelius did not lack confidence.

One of Schottelius's duties as household tutor from 1638 to the mid-1640s was to write and produce plays to be performed by his young charges; six plays survive (Berns 1984). Performing plays had been a plank of Protestant education ideals ever since Luther had advocated it, but Schottelius's plays were also representational theatre, to be performed at court (Smart 1989). Schottelius also published occasional verse—a collection with the title *Fruchtbringender Lustgarte* ('fruitful pleasure-garden') appeared in 1647. His poetics—first printed in 1645, but re-printed in 1656 and again as part of his *Ausführliche Arbeit* of 1663—was dedicated to the wife of his employer, Sophie Elisabeth, Duchess of Braunschweig.

In 1651, Schottelius's *Teutsche Sprachkunst* was re-printed, with some revisions and with the addition of a tenth oration missing from the first, 1641 edition. In 1663, the *Teutsche Sprachkunst* was published (again with revisions) as books I to III of the *AA*, along with the poetics of 1645, and a number of other works. The *AA* thus marked the culmination of Schottelius's work as a champion of the German language. It was followed in 1673 by Schottelius's 'grammatical war' (*Horrendum Bellum Grammaticale. Der schreckliche Sprachkrieg*), a sort of dramatization of how the elements of the German language interact, which sought to popularize the ideas of the *AA* by providing many page references to it at relevant points (Schottelius 1673a; cf. Czucka 1997; Hundt 2000: 329–35, 2006: 121–33; Fonsén 2006, 2007). Finally, in the year of Schottelius's death, 1676, an extract from Schottelius's grammar was published for use in schools under the title *Brevis & fundamentalis Manuductio ad ORTHOGRAPHIAM & ETYMOLOGIAM in Lingua Germanica. Kurtze und gründliche Anleitung Zu der RechtSchreibung Und zu der WortForschung In der Teutschen Sprache. Für die Jugend in den Schulen / und sonst überall nützlich und dienlich* 'A short and thorough introduction to the spelling and etymology of the German language. Useful and helpful for young people in schools, and everywhere else'. Otherwise, the publications of Schottelius's later years are largely devotional,<sup>6</sup> besides a German ethics, published in 1669 but of no influence (cf. Berns 1980). Another late work bears testimony to Schottelius's expertise in law, his *Kurtzer Tractat Von Unterschiedlichen Rechten in Teutschland* or 'short treatise on various laws in Germany' (1671). An overview of Schottelius's works can be found in Berns (1984: 429–32), and Neuhaus (1991: 235–41), besides in Dünnhaupt's comprehensive bibliography (Dünnhaupt 1990–93); see also Cherubim (1996, 2009<sup>2</sup>).

We know from Schottelius's surviving letters (Berns 1978) that his correspondents included Georg Philipp Harsdörffer (1607–1658), who was a close friend and ally within the FG, as well as two other poets of the Nuremberg circle, Johann Klaj (1616–1656) and Sigmund von Birken (1626–1681), his former school-companion Johann Rist, another purist and writer Philipp von Zesen (1619–1689), the unfortunate grammarian Gueintz, the Helmstedt professor Hermann Conring (1606–1681), whose model for structuring a text Schottelius explicitly followed in the first oration of the *AA* (cf. 1.5.2), the theologian Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654), and the satirist Johann Michael Moscherosch (1606–1669). However, the records of Schottelius's correspondence are too incomplete to allow a full reconstruction of his network of contacts. Some of Schottelius's

<sup>6</sup> They include a depiction of the last judgement (Schottelius 1668); a depiction of eternal life and a treatise on the art of dying (Schottelius 1673b); a depiction of the state of the body and soul before, during and after death (Schottelius 1674); a verse gospel harmony (Schottelius 1675); and a depiction of hell (Schottelius 1676b); see also Schottelius (1666) and (1676c).



correspondence within the FG is published in Krause (1873 [1955]). A project led by Klaus Conermann in Wolfenbüttel to publish all the correspondence of the FG may bring more to light (Conermann 1992–2006).

### 1.2.2 *The social, political and intellectual context in Germany*

Schottelius was a pious man—most of his works after 1663 are devotional – and, in tune with mainstream Protestant thought of the period he was a believer in witches (Berns 1984: 423). After all, Schottelius lived in the same century in which Galilei Galileo (1564–1642) was judged guilty of heresy for advocating the Copernican claim that the earth revolved around the sun. Yet Schottelius's career also ran contemporary with the foundation of the Royal Society in Britain, founded in 1660 to promote experimental science, building on less formal meetings since the 1640s. In short, Europe was on the cusp of a new way of thinking about the world, but was in many ways still rooted in the Middle Ages. Schottelius himself occupies a similar borderline zone in the area of linguistic thought. The belief – shared by all his contemporaries – that the languages of his day had their beginnings in the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel, as related in the Bible, was still essentially unchanged from the medieval era. Despite this, the structure Schottelius imposed on the German language and his periodization of it laid the foundations for establishing German as a subject for serious academic study from the eighteenth century onwards—and provided a model for similar progress in other languages too.

Since Saussure, it is usual to say that language is a system made up of arbitrary signs. But Schottelius lived in a society that believed that *all* signs in the world (and not just signs in language) carried, or at least could carry, a meaning which pointed to the purpose of God in the world. As an extreme example, Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) believed he had been granted enlightenment to interpret the traces of the original God-inspired language, the *Natursprache*, preserved in German, where the very manner of articulation of sounds expressed metaphysical truths about God's creation (cf. Gardt 1994). A more mainstream manifestation of the fascination with reading signs was the genre of emblem-books. The genre combined an image with mottoes and/or verses to yield a meaning, and was a veritable craze that developed throughout Europe of the Renaissance and flourished into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That pansemiotic, emblematic view of the world suffuses Schottelius's work.

The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) marks a low point in German history. Its devastation accompanied Schottelius's early life, and had a lasting effect on him and on the society in which he lived. The symbolism of the title page of the *AA* and the 'Acclamation for Peace' at the end, which jointly bracket the whole of the *AA* (see 1.4 below), and the allegorical