

Preface

I first became interested in Johann Konrad Dippel when Jacob Mchangama and I wrote the Danish book *BUT: The History of Free Speech in Denmark* in 2016. Dippel's banishment to Bornholm and the burning of his writings in the town square of Altona in 1719 form a spectacular event in the changing limits to free speech in Denmark.

In 2022, I visited the intellectual historian Martin Mulsow in Erfurt, Germany, and among many subjects we touched upon Dippel. He invited me to participate in the conference "A Transnational Life" in Gotha in January 2023, where the idea was to gather investigators from the different countries in which Dippel had lived, and he asked me to contribute on the case against Dippel in Altona. I accepted the invitation, and when I began to look at the case files at the States Archives in Copenhagen I realized how rich they were and how much more complicated the case was than revealed by standard accounts of it. When I presented my results in Gotha, my paper had already grown considerably, and now it is a book that appeared in a Danish version celebrating Dippel's 350th anniversary, 10 August 2023. I translated the English version myself and took the occasion to expand a bit in some directions and correct some errors in the Danish version.

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