

Frederik Stjernfelt

An Alchemist in Chains

Frederik Stjernfelt

An Alchemist in Chains



The Case Against the Mystic Johann Konrad Dippel
in Altona

DE GRUYTER
OLDENBOURG

Funding for the OA edition of the book has been granted by Aalborg University and the Carlsberg Foundation.

**CARLSBERG
FOUNDATION**



**AALBORG
UNIVERSITY**

ISBN 978-3-11-147972-9

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-148272-9

e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-148409-9

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111482729>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. For details go to <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to any content (such as graphs, figures, photos, excerpts, etc.) not original to the Open Access publication and further permission may be required from the rights holder. The obligation to research and clear permission lies solely with the party re-using the material.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024938475

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

This is a revised translation, by the author, of the Danish book “En alkymist i lænker. Sagen mod mystikeren Johann Konrad Dippel”, published by Gyldendal, 2023.

© 2024 the author(s), published by Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston
The book is published open access at www.degruyter.com.

Cover image: Johann Konrad Dippel, painting, unknown artist, 1704. Dr. Senckenbergische Stiftung.
Typesetting: Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.
Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

www.degruyter.com

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.

Thanks to Jesper Brandt Andersen, Charlotte Appel, Mary à Argjaboda, Peter Christensen, Paul Cogley, Rasmus H.C. Dreyer, Jan Eik, Juliane Engelhardt, Jens-Martin Eriksen, Vera Faßhauer, Don Favareau, Steen Bo Frandsen, Steve Fuller, Jens Glebe-Møller, Gabriele Gramelsberger, Knud Haakonssen, Kristine Hannak, Lars N. Henningsen, Finn Holbek, Jonathan Israel, Jesper Jakobsen, Mads Langballe Jensen, Alexander Kraft, Ulrik Langen, Martin Schwarz Lausten, Gunner Lind, Johannes Ljungberg, Martin Mulsow, Michael Agerbo Mørch, Markus Pantzar, Sune Christian Pedersen, Tine Reeh, Rigsarkivet (State Archives in Copenhagen), Jan C. Schmidt, Agnes Stjernfelt, Agnete Stjernfelt, Ditlev Tamm, Søren Ulrik Thomsen, Anders Toftgaard, Mikael Vetner, and Uffe Østergaard for discussions and assistance. Thanks also to the peer reviews for good advice.

Thanks to Aalborg University Copenhagen for good working conditions – as well as to the KHK international research center "Cultures of Research" at the RWTH Aachen, where I spent the year 2021–22 as a senior fellow.

Copenhagen, July 2024

Contents

Preface — V

Illustrations — IX

Introduction — 1

I An Intellectual Vagabond — 5

An Adventurous Life — 5

An Orthodox from Frankenstein — 6

Pietist from Strassburg to Giessen — 8

Gold in the Glass Hut — 19

Alchemist in Berlin — 27

Doctor in the Netherlands — 40

Goldmaker in Altona — 49

II The Case Against Dippel in Altona — 59

The Brief Version — 59

Act 1: Dippel and the Suppressed Fellow Human Beings — 60

Dippel's Letter to Frederik IV in 1717 — 60

Bandau v. Meyer — 64

Lieben v. Buÿser the Widow — 68

Dippel's Zeal for Justice — 71

A City Council in Arms — 74

Four Heinrichs on a Raid — 76

Attacking Incompetent Judges Is Not Libel — 80

Act 2: The Campaign Against Corruption — 83

March 1719 – The Case Explodes — 83

Two Portugalöser — 85

Reventlow's Shapeshifting — 88

Dippel Panicking — 92

A Cascade of Culprits — 101

A Middleman Caught in the Middle — 103

Act 3: Reventlow's Letter Storm and a New Commission — 110

Reventlow on the War Path — 110

Raising the Stakes: From Libel to Blasphemy — 117

The Threat of a Golden Gallows — 129

Two Trunks and a Speedy Commission — 134

What Goes on in That Commission? — 137

The Mystery of a Sealed Parcel — **144**
Dark Depths of Interrogations — **145**
A Punishment on the Edge of Summer — **149**
A Sentence Without Law? — **152**
Act 4: The Shaping of a Punishment — 156
 Machinations in Copenhagen — **156**
End Game with Burning Writings — **165**
A Mirror Separating the Sheep from the Goats — **172**
The Innocent Joys of Jail — **175**
You Cannot Order the Moon to Shine — **177**
A Political Theology of Altona — **181**

III Dippel on New Adventures — 192
 Prisoner for Life on Bornholm — **192**
 Tumult in Stockholm — **208**
 Copenhagen Without Chains — **212**
 The Holy Land of Berleburg — **218**

IV An Impartial Intellectual and the Taste of God — 230

Appendices

Timeline — 243

Register of the Dippel Case Files, State Archives Copenhagen — 249

Other Archivalia — 255

References — 257

Name Index — 267

Illustrations

- Figure 1** Burg Frankenstein bei Mühlthal, steel plate 1840, by Johann Poppel after Johann Friedrich Lange. © Photo: Antiquariat Clemens Paulusch, Berlin — **7**
- Figure 2** Johann Konrad Dippel, painting, unknown artist, 1704. © Dr. Senckenbergische Stiftung — **10**
- Figure 3** Map of the major phases of Dippel's life course. © Graphics: Agnes Stjernfelt — **18**
- Figure 4a-b** Prussian Blue. © Photo Saalebaer, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons; Oleum Animal. Foetid., pharmacy flask, © <https://www.selency.nl/p/6AVJ33WH/large-apothecary-bottle-oleum-animalfoetid-germany-1930> — **31**
- Figure 5** Pieter van der Werff: "Die Grablegung Christi", 1709. © Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg (SPSG)/ Photographer: Daniel Lindner — **42**
- Figure 6** Portrait of a man, thought to be Baruch de Spinoza; painting attributed to Barend Graat, 1666, © Wikimedia Commons — **45**
- Figure 7** Hamburg and Altona, map, Lith. W. Herz, 1833. © Photo: Christian Terstege — **50**
- Figure 8** The fire of Altona 1713, copper, P. Schenk, Amsterdam, © Wikimedia Commons — **52**
- Figure 9** Christian Detlef Graf von Reventlau, copper, © Wikimedia Commons — **54**
- Figure 10** Benedicte von Brockdorff, painting, no artist or year, © *Danmarks Adels Aarbog*, vol. 1893, 393 — **56**
- Figure 11** Letter from Dippel to Frederik IV, 21 December 1717, State Archives Copenhagen. © Photo: F. Stjernfelt — **61**
- Figure 12** Altona Panorama, copper, 1730, © kb-images.kb.dk, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen — **65**
- Figure 13** A Portugallöser, Hamburg 1665. © Photo: Spink and Son — **87**
- Figure 14a-b** Letters from C.D. Reventlow to C. Sehested, 12 May and 9 May 1719, State Archives Copenhagen, © Photo: F. Stjernfelt — **111**
- Figure 15** Christian Sehested, painting, reproduced in Edvard Holm *Danmarks Riges Historie* vol. V, © public domain — **114**
- Figure 16a-b** Title pages, *Hell-Polirter Seckten-Spiegel* (Dippel, 1719); and *Hell-Polirter Gecken-Spiegel* (Reventlow (?), 1719), States Archives Copenhagen, © Photo: F. Stjernfelt — **128**
- Figure 17** Execution of the Goldmaker Cajetani, 23 August 1709 in Küstrin, copper leaflet, 1709. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, © Public Domain Mark 1.0 — **132**
- Figure 18** Fridericus IV, copper, 1716, © kb-images.kb.dk, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen — **159**
- Figure 19** The City Hall of Altona, Georg Burmester; drawing from *Holstein meerumschlungen in Wort und Bild*, by Hippolyt Haas, Hermann Krumm, and Fritz Stoltenberg, Kiel 1896: Lipsius & Tischler. © Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons — **166**
- Figure 20** Title copper of Dippel's *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde*, Amsterdam (Hamburg), 1706 — **173**

- Figure 21** The Castle of Hammershus, Bornholm. © Photo: Charlotteshj, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons — **193**
- Figure 22** Dippel's letter to Frederik IV, 13 February 1724, State Archives Copenhagen, © Photo: F. Stjernfelt — **198**
- Figure 23** Bornholmian "gold men", copper from Dippel's *Christiani Democriti eröffnete Muhtmassungen* (1725); org. from Jacob Melle's "Commentatiuncula", same year — **201**
- Figure 24** Johannes Conradus Dippelius alias Christianus Democritus, copper, Stockholm 1734. © LWLMuseum für Kunst und Kultur, Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster/Porträtarchiv Diepenbroick — **211**
- Figure 25** Queen Anna Sophie of Denmark-Norway, painting. © The Picture Art Collection / Alamy Stock Photo — **215**
- Figure 26a-b** Count August von Wittgenstein, painting, no year or artist. © <http://www.Royaltyguide.nl/images-families/sayn/saynwittgensteinhohenstein1/1664%20August.JPG>; Count Casimir von Wittgenstein. © Wikimedia Commons — **220**
- Figure 27** J.C. Senckenberg, painting by Anton Wilhelm Tischbein, 1771. © Dr. Senckenbergische Stiftung — **224**
- Figure 28** Lasphe. Wittgenstein, copper, from Matthäus Merian, *Topographia Hassiae*, Franckfurt am Mayn 1655. © Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain — **228**

Introduction

Johann Konrad Dippel (1673–1734) is one of the most bizarre and fantastic characters of the Early Enlightenment. He was an early proponent of both freedom of faith and freedom of the press, but he was far from being only an Enlightener. He was a theologian on the most radical wing of the Pietist movement who wanted to dismantle the Lutheran church. He was an alchemist and stubbornly strove to make gold, but he also made genuine chemical contributions such as the discovery of the color pigment Berlin Blue or Prussian Blue. He was a medical doctor, composing elixirs like the stinky Dippel Oil and was, in a certain sense, a path-breaker for ideas about psychosomatic diseases.

Dippel was born at the Burg Frankenstein in the small Lutheran state of Hesse-Darmstadt in the Southwest of Germany and lived a wandering and eventful life in the Northwest of Europe – there are people searching for indices that Mary Shelley's famous novel *Frankenstein* might have taken Dippel as its inspiration: He experimented with dead animals and claimed to have invented a sort of funnel able to move the soul from one body to the next.¹ His strange international destiny passed through Scandinavia over a 14-year-long period at the peak of his career. In 1717, he was in Altona, at that time the second city of the Danish realm, twin city to Hamburg, when an abstruse and byzantine judicial action was initiated against him. The upshot was that he was banished for life to the Danish island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea. Now, God had his revenge over the blasphemer. He was set free again only seven years later after international pressure

¹ Indices comprise – apart from the name of “Frankenstein”, of course – Dippel's alchemy, his experiments with dead animals, and circulating rumors about also experimenting with human corpses, transferal of souls between bodies, etc. Add the fact that the Shelleys passed close by Burg Frankenstein on a hasty home journey down the Rhine from Switzerland in 1814 when she was 17. On the basis of existing documents, however, it can be neither confirmed nor rejected that her famous 1818 novel could, in some respects, have taken Dippel as an inspiration. That has not, however, prevented a growing industry of fantastic claims, taking for a given fact that Dippel was the Dr. Frankenstein of real life. Some such rumors are effectively put forward in popular books like Scheele (2015). They may refer to nonexistent documents marshaling fanciful claims, e.g., that Dippel came out of old nobility and, on a certain occasion, set fire to one of Frankenstein's towers by means of nitroglycerin. Dippel never had a lab at Frankenstein, and nitroglycerin did not exist at the time. The closest you come in real life is that he once caused a fire in a basement of the castle of Marienborn in Hesse, because he kept a furnace running for two consecutive days for the distillation of iron vitriol, so that a two-foot-thick floor under the oven began to glow and ignited the basement balks underneath (Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 385). We shall go no further into the discussion of such Dippelian fictions, which are effectively refuted, e.g., in a piece published by the Geschichtsverein Eberstadt/Frankenstein (anonymous no year).

on the court in Copenhagen. For it was a celebrity they had chained. Dippel was one of the most read and influential writers of early eighteenth-century Europe. Oftentimes, he was received by enthusiastic Dippelians wherever he made his way, as in Stockholm or Copenhagen.

Why are his extraordinary life, career, thought, and influence so little known? It is probably connected with his roaming around. He was a provocative figure who often suffered banishment. He wandered between different German states, spent a year and a half in French-occupied Strassburg, three years in Berlin, seven years in the Netherlands, five years in Danish Altona, seven years imprisoned on the castle of Hammershus, an eventful year and a half in Sweden, and half a year in Copenhagen, until he ended up in Berleburg in the middle of Germany with one of his noble protectors. This means that there is not really any country that adopted him as its intellectual property even if he was, at the time, an international intellectual star. He only appears in footnotes in German, Dutch, Danish, and Swedish history and culture. A similar fate holds for his thinking: his interests spread over wide parts of the academic map: theology, philosophy, medicine, biology, chemistry – he may appear in the footnotes of the history of these disciplines, but at the time, he was interdisciplinary *avant la lettre*. Finally, in the history of ideas of the period, his position falls between intellectual and social movements such as radical pietism, spiritualist hermeticism, and early Enlightenment, and oftentimes investigators of one of these movements chose to categorize him as belonging to one of the others.²

2 Investigators of the early radical Enlightenment mostly fail to include Dippel. Cassirer's (1932) and Gay's (1967–69) classic Enlightenment histories do not mention him, Jacob's (1981) and Israel's (2001) influential books on radical Enlightenment also do not; neither does Israel's subsequent history in many volumes of the radical Enlightenment tradition. Dippel does not appear in Ian Hunter's (2001) book on rival Enlightenments in early modern Germany, while Martin Mulsow explicitly relegates Dippel, Edelmann, and others of their ilk to the margins of his 2018 *Radikale Frühaufklärung in Deutschland 1680–1720*. He argues that despite the fact that the two of them do have manifold connections to the scene of freethinkers and authors of clandestina, they belong to a specific German, radical culture of "heterodoxen Paracelsismus und Spiritualismus" (vol. I, 20), constituting its own, autonomous field of research. In his 2012 *Prekäres Wissen: Eine andere Ideengeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, however, Mulsow claims that the alliance of radical criticism of religion and radical spiritualism, as in the two authors mentioned, calls for explanation (86) and cannot be understood as a variation of pantheism. Mogens Laerke, in his 2008 volume on Leibniz and Spinoza, mentions Dippel as a representative among several of combining Spinozism and Cabbalism (925). Winfried Schroeder, in his 1987 book on the reception of Spinoza, claims that Dippel has rightfully been left out in most recent investigations of the reception of Spinoza, despite the fact that he wrote quite a lot on the philosopher (21).

There are, however, some authors who include Dippel in the early German Enlightenment. One is his first biographer Bender (1882), who has his characterization of Dippel as a freethinker

Now, there are international initiatives to integrate these bits and pieces to give a more satisfying understanding of the transnational life that Dippel led.³ This book can be seen as a brick in that project, charting the complicated and curious case against Dippel evolving in Altona (1717–19) in close contact with authorities in Copenhagen. The case files are at the State Archives in Copenhagen,

in the origins of Enlightenment in his title, but a remarkable, earlier example is Martin von Geismar's (1963, orig. 1847) five volumes of German Enlighteners of the eighteenth century. Here, he consecrates most of the first volumes to Bahrdt but reprints, in his fifth volume, the text of Dippel's *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde* (177–210) and continues with a long section on Edelmann's inspiration from Dippel (212–247). A more recent voice is Klaus Deppermann: "In general, there is no great distance from belief in the 'inner light' to the cult of reason", referring to Dippel, Thomasius, and Edelmann as figures approaching Enlightenment from pietism (29). Paul S. Spalding adds to those names Theodor Ludwig Lau and Lorenz Schmidt as examples of "more radical Enlightenmenters than the Empire would normally tolerate" (174); both of them would hide during long periods in Altona. He also refers to later rationalist theologians like S.J. Baumgarten or J.F.W. Jerusalem as heirs to Dippel's and Edelmann's fusion of pietist and Enlightenment positions (273).

To some degree, a related fate affects Dippel in standard church histories authored by Lutheran theologians with an emphasis on dogma and institutions, who often take little interest in figures outside of organized confessions (e.g., Pedersen 1951). In their description of pietism, emphasis most often lies on Hallensian-inspired pietists working within established churches, while radical pietists and separatists like Dippel outside of churches are marginalized, even ridiculed (Lundbye 1903), if mentioned at all ("Pietism" in the Danish Encyclopedia, lex.dk). Lausten (2004), however, gives a bit more detailed presentation. Recent investigations by intellectual historians of pietism – and radical pietism in particular – offer a different picture. Goldschmidt's (2001) stands out as the authoritative account of the development of Dippel's early life and theology; Wallmann's (2005) pietism book includes the radicals, while Schneider's (2007) monograph on radical pietism sums up his considerable research in the field, effectively founding the field of radical pietism studies over decades. Here, Dippel figures prominently, with Arnold and the Petersens, as top bestsellers among radical pietists. In turn, Schneider inspires overviews such as Shantz (2013) on German pietism in general, including a whole chapter on radicals, highlighting J.W. Petersen, J.F. Rock, G.C. Beissel, and many more, in which Dippel plays an important role.

The movements of "heterodox paracelsism and spiritualism", outlined by Mulsow as a specific field of research centered around Dippel and Edelmann, give rise to considerably less research activity than the larger fields of Enlightenment and pietism. So also here, Dippel tends to fall between categories. Important results as to Dippel in this context are the recent works of Hannak (2008, 2012) and Faßhauer (2018, 2022). Finally, Dippel the chemist, also in a broader sense contributing to the Enlightenment, is covered by investigations in the history of science, such as Kraft (2019) and (2023), also including important new research as to Dippel's life and thought.

3 Cf. the conference "Ein transnationales Leben. Bausteine zur Biographie von Johann Konrad Dippel" in Gotha January 2023, where a first version of this book was presented: <https://www.uni-erfurt.de/en/universitaet/aktuelles/veranstaltungs-kalender/eventdetail/ein-transnationales-leben-bausteine-zur-biographie-von-johann-konrad-dippel>.

and even if not complete, existing files are so many and rich that they allow for the sketching of a surprising and detailed picture of the process that sent Dippel in chains to Bornholm, burned his writings at the stake, and shut his mouth when he was at the peak of his career. The case pitted a leading European intellectual in a battle, almost person to person, against the most powerful Count of Denmark-Norway, Christian Detlev von Reventlow, Chief President of Altona, and his no less mighty spouse, Countess Benedicte von Brockdorff.

The process gives a detailed picture of Dippel in Altona, but also, indirectly, of life in the busy port city and a surprising court case in the labyrinths of early absolutism struggling to implement the rule of law. Thus, the book is a case study, following step by step how the struggle between Dippel and the Reventlows developed. It is “contestative intellectual history”, investigating ideas in their development and effects in strife, arguments, struggles, and movements.⁴ But the special Danish case against Dippel must also be understood in the broader context of intellectual history: how Dippel thought and behaved like he did, and why it proved so controversial. So, I embed my central investigation of the *Case against Dippel* in a narrative, resuming what is known about his life before and after that decisive turning point.⁵

All in all, it is a weird and nerdy subject but, simultaneously, it throws new light on important issues in the intellectual history of the Enlightenment, yea, even the great questions about the roots of Modernity: How could a pious and Christian mystic spread free-thinking and radical Enlightenment ideas?

To grasp who Dippel was, and why he ended up in Altona in the first place, we must begin with Dippel’s colorful life as the entrance gate to the investigation of the *Case against Dippel*.

4 Contestative intellectual history, cf. Quentin Skinner and the “Cambridge school” (cf. Skinner 1969); in early Enlightenment studies, related ideas characterize the work of Jonathan Israel and Martin Mulsow.

5 Thus, the main contribution of original research in this book, based on primary sources, is Part II on the *Case against Dippel* in Altona. Parts I and III, presenting an outline of Dippel’s life before and after the case, rely more upon secondary literature, albeit dipping into primary sources now and again, like Dippel’s own writings, Senckenberg’s diaries, and Danish State Archives.

I An Intellectual Vagabond

An Adventurous Life

After his 14 tumultuous years in Scandinavia, in 1728–29 the older Dippel unsuccessfully attempted to find a place to settle in Germany. He only succeeds after roaming around for a year, as he arrives in November 1729 at Berleburg in central Germany where the pious Count Casimir von Wittgenstein, in his small principality, is gathering pietists, separatists, dissidents, and freethinkers of various stripes. The Count notes in his diary that in the week leading up to 13 November 1729 “... nothing particular has happened, other than that the world-famous Dippelius who, under name of Democritus, is known by the learned, has arrived here”.⁶ Dippel was world-famous, even after he had just been completely out of the game during his seven years of imprisonment on Bornholm.

Dippel's fame had several reasons. He was probably the loudest and most provocative among the challenging “radical pietists” who would dissolve not only the Lutheran churches, but church institutions as such. He claimed that true faith could be found in the heart of the believer and would only be distorted or persecuted by clerical institutions, and he produced such claims in provocative writings ranging from scholarly treatises in the vernacular to rude and satirical pamphlets. Anyone who took interest in actual debates in theology, philosophy, chemistry, or medicine in the first half of the eighteenth century would know about Dippel.

But already in his lifetime, he was a fabled figure also for other reasons – his personal life as an intellectual vagabond. Rumors flew. He experimented with dead animals – maybe also human corpses? He was able to make gold. This granted him access to smaller and bigger princely courts. He mixed with royals, counts, barons, bishops, but also industrialists, merchants, alchemists, theologians, mystics, doctors, and devoted disciples – not to speak about deceased spirits. He was banished from place to place, again and again. Clerical theologians despised him and saw him as a tool of the Devil; other believers cherished him and celebrated him as a new reformer, a saintly figure, a holy man. He escaped persecution from theological and political enemies as well as from creditors. His writings were burned at the stake; he himself was thrown in jail, if he did not succeed in fleeing. He had escaped an accusation for murder in Strassburg where he was, time and again, involved in dueling. He sinned lustfully during daytime and spent the night in prayers for forgiveness of debaucheries. He was pious and

⁶ Quoted from Goldschmidt (2001, 11n).

virtuous and claimed that real believers simply become parts of God himself. He had invented a sort of funnel able to transfer the soul from one body to the next. He invented remedies like Dippel Oil, wound balm, and a “sour elixir” against podagra and scurvy. He mixed an elixir for exorcism; another that granted eternal life. He chased the universal medicine, the one that may cure any disease, a no less splendid aim for alchemy than gold itself. He claimed the 1,000-year reign of the Millennium was imminent, with light and justice and social equality for all, eliminating princes and churches. He literally claimed that Christ was a doctor of the soul. He discovered Prussian Blue. He demanded that true believers imitate Christ – and his own identification with following Christ culminated when he died the night before Easter Sunday 1734 at the Schloss Wittgenstein. Hereafter, his blue ghost haunts the castle.

Far from all of such rumors were true, but it was not easy to distinguish what was what, for Dippel lived an adventurous life.

An Orthodox from Frankenstein

Dippel was born on 10 August 1673 at the Burg Frankenstein in Hesse, south of Darmstadt, on the edge of the large Odenwald forest, with a wide view of the Rhine Valley over to Worms, and sometimes his name is added the location of “Franckensteiniensis” – from Frankenstein (Fig. 1).⁷ His parents had fled up to the stronghold because of skirmishes between the Imperial and French troops down in the valley during the Franco-Dutch war (1672–78). Dippel was the son of a local vicar and of a family of Lutheran clericals all the way back to the Reformation. This gave the young Dippel – so he later claimed in a fit of self-criticism – an arrogant and boastful appearance: he himself wanted to become a theologian and found that his ancestry gave him a privileged point of departure. He was pregnant with doctorates in three subjects, theology, philosophy, and medicine, as he says, and after having attended school in the village of Nieder-Ramstadt not far from Frankenstein around 1678–86 he began, in 1691, the study of theology at the university in the small town of Giessen north of Frankfurt. Here, the strong pietist awakening of the period was gradually gaining ground at the Theological Faculty.

7 The overview over Dippel's youth in this section largely builds on Goldschmidt (2001) which charts Dippel's life and thought in detail, until around 1700. Other biographical accounts include the assumed publisher Canz's afterword in *Eröff III* from 1747, partially informed from conversations with Dippel himself, Buchner (1858), Bender (1882), Voss (1970), Schneider (2007), and Kraft (2019). Dippel's birth date of 10 August is according to the old Julian calendar then still in use in protestant areas; in the Gregorian calendar the date would be 20 August.

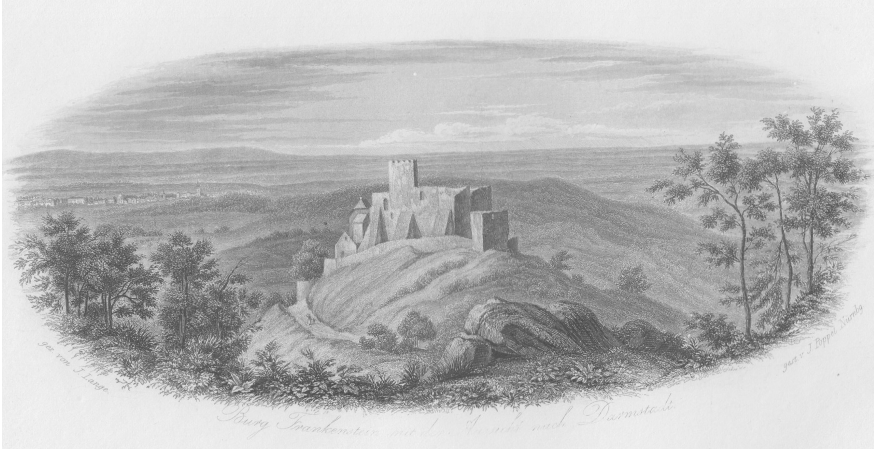


Figure 1: Dippel was born 10 August 1673 at the Burg Frankenstein in the low mountains on the edge of the large forest known as the Odenwald where his parents, the priestly couple of Johann Philipp Dippel and Anne Eleonora Münchmeyer, sought refuge from the French-Dutch war ravaging the Rhine valley below. The stronghold of Frankenstein sat in the small county of Hesse-Darmstadt, where Dippel spent most of his years of study. The depiction from 1840 is titled “Burg Frankenstein mit der Aussicht nach Darmstadt”, showing the ruins of the castle, seen from the south with a view of Darmstadt in the distance.

Pietism is normally dated to Philipp Jacob Spener’s *Pia desideria* of 1675, whose “pious wishes” claim that the existing Lutheran church has grown dry and dogmatic and is in need of a new, deep, and pious awakening led by persons whose faith does not consist in merely repeating some dogmatic sentences, but makes of them better human beings, performing concrete acts of love. Christendom must live among people, not only in churchly settings, and it must be disseminated by “conventicles”, meetings outside of the church, centered on Bible readings by lay-people. The eternal dogmatic strife among clergy, confessions, and churches, on the other hand, should cease. The young Dippel was not impressed by this sentimental program and felt compelled to defend the Lutheran orthodoxy which his family had been preaching for a century and a half. According to the orthodoxy, believers should not feel proud about their faith and particularly not about their good deeds. They should “sin bravely”, knowing that they would be saved if only they believed, for then the sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross, atoning for human sins, would grant their salvation. The young Dippel was exposed to pietism at the Faculty, also because he received a stipend that gave him a close relation to one of the pietist professors there, Johann Heinrich May. But nonetheless he authored, as his very first piece of writing, a harsh attack on the pietist fashion wave – a piece that is unfortunately not preserved. In 1693, he took an MA degree with a dissertation

about *nothing* – “De nihilo” – from which he would later argue that God could not have created the world out of nothing, but rather from parts of himself.⁸

Pietist from Strassburg to Giessen

Many have assumed that Dippel's conversion to pietism must be based on the arrival at the University of Giessen of the famous Gottfried Arnold in 1697. He was busy finishing his enormous treatise, *Impartial History of Churches and Heresies*, the first detailed church history charting heretics and dissenters of all sorts coolly, seriously, and without railing against them.⁹ Arnold himself drew radical implications from his work; he gradually concluded that heretics and mystics outside of the churches had, all through history, been the true believers, for they had really suffered tribulations for their faith and been subjected to persecution by clerical power hierarchies who remained fixated on externalities like ceremony, dogma, strife, and persecutions more than true and sincere faith. Arnold also took the personal consequence of leaving his new professorial position after just half a year, shocked by the dismissals of radical pietist preachers in the nearby Palatinate like J.H. Reitz and H. Horsch, disappointed with conditions in the academic “Babel”, and turned to developing his new Boehmean theory about the divine Sophia as a female symbol of wisdom.

Recent research, however, proves that Dippel was, already several years before the arrival of Arnold to the university, busy moving in pietist directions himself.¹⁰ Most probably, it was his reading of some marginal Church Fathers that took him in that direction: Makarios of Egypt and Gennadius of Marseille, maybe also Tertullian. Makarios put the emphasis on personal, sincere faith; he was skeptical of the church as an institution and also launched the theory that the soul had a material existence.¹¹ Gennadius was a persecutor of heretics, but he had himself been accused of the infamous heresy of “semi-Pelagianism”, yea, even pure Pelagianism – the dreadful deviation it is to claim that a believer is able to do something in order to be saved. That was not possible in orthodox protestantisms. Tertullian spoke about God's bodily being, an idea that Dippel may

⁸ Cf. his 1704 *Weg-Weiser*, Eröff I, 934.

⁹ *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie*, Arnold (1729) (org. 1698–1700).

¹⁰ Goldschmidt (2001, chs. 4–5), convincingly dates Dippel's pietism before the arrival of Arnold.

¹¹ Some argue that already Paul had, with Stoic inspirations, similar ideas, cf. Engberg-Pedersen (2010).

also have taken note of. Such things were adopted by the young Dippel moving in the pietist direction, but a decisive breakthrough seems to have occurred when he, after a year as house teacher 1694–95, went down to French-occupied Strassburg to continue his studies. Originally, he would have gone to the Lutheran stronghold of Wittenberg, far to the east in Saxony, but instead he came, in 1695, to the cosmopolitan city of Strassburg. Here, he assumed a high and excessive style of living – which may never have left him completely (Fig. 2). He dressed expensively, and it is here that rumors have him sinning studiously, maybe also with the intent of provoking and demonstrating his orthodoxy as against the moral doctrines of the emerging pietists. His Old Church inspirations had prepared the ground, however, and it seems it was actually his reading of Spenser that constituted his breakthrough to pietism. After a period of atheist broodings, he emerged as a pietist in Strassburg, where he had excelled in student life with alcohol, tobacco, dancing, and dueling; he himself claims, though, that he kept away from *Hurerey* – from whoring. His skills with the rapier made the French commandant of the city propose to him a military career.

In one of his last writings, *Abfertigung der absurden Prahlery* (A refusal of absurd bragging), he relates many years later a mystic experience which also seemed to have pushed him in the direction of pietism. He was in his early twenties, around 1695–96, and he was a guest at a castle when he saw, through the window, a beggar arriving in the courtyard. Dippel wondered why the watchdogs had not reacted and went down to him, but instead of begging for alms, the beggar proved to be an oracle. He told Dippel that he was a human being with a good mind and will, with a good understanding of God, but also presumptuous with his own knowledge. But before long, you will have quite different thoughts about yourself and of all things, he told Dippel, and the world will have much to do with you, and you with the world. It is God who wants this, the beggar concluded and left, without anyone but Dippel having seen him. This experience made Dippel doubt the sect into which he was born, as he says, and in hindsight, he presents this as a decisive event in his shift from Lutheran orthodoxy to pietism.¹² The end of his stay in Strassburg is obscure. A murder was committed in Dippel's student circle; he was one among several suspects and he had to hide with a student friend until he, in August 1696, could be smuggled out of the city concealed in the bottom of a wagon. This would not be his last escape.

12 Eröff III, 1747, 553f, cf. also Goldschmidt (2001, 108f).



Figure 2: Already in the middle of the 1690s, the young Dippel was sufficiently famous that portraits of him were published. He is described as a long, thin man – or tall and slender, if you are more positive. He had a longish, pox-marked face of a reddish, lively color, with rather big, dark, sparkling eyes. His shoulders were a bit bent forward; he appeared a bit outgrown. In personal relations, he was friendly and courteous, to people of formal piety, he would often be coarse and steep. He was unable to simulate as well as dissimulate and thus incapable of courtly behavior and intrigues – thus goes a description of him (Eröff III, 748f). The portrait of Dippel is painted by an unknown artist around 1704. It is the only existing painting of Dippel, who bequeathed it to Senckenberg in whose collection of portraits in Frankfurt it now resides. The 30-year-old Dippel is extravagantly dressed and gazes directly into the eyes of the observer. At the large humiliation ceremony in Altona 15 years later, Dippel would also wear red.

Back in Giessen, however, Dippel would soon grow much more radical than Spener, whose “middle road” he did not find amenable. In the meantime, pietism had grown and was taking over, as the first place in Germany, the Theological Faculty there. So, Dippel may also have sensed that Lutheran orthodoxy was busy be-

coming old-fashioned.¹³ Soon, he would be the most radical there. The decisive point now was the theological doctrine of justification. How is the sinner justified? To the Lutheran orthodox, this procedure presupposed that the human being in question believed in the whole set of correct dogma, and then God would, on the Day of Judgment, simply “impute” justice, earned by the efforts of Christ, into the sinner, opening the road to salvation. This procedure was made possible by the death of Christ on the cross, a vicarious sacrifice in order to atone the sins of all human beings. That doctrine Dippel now found increasingly strange and erroneous. It implied that orthodox Lutherans could just carry on sinning, as if nothing had happened. Their faith consisted in nothing but emptily parroting some theological doctrines. It had no consequences for their life. This made Dippel articulate an alternative theory of justification. God does not need to be reconciled with humans – on the contrary, humans need to reconcile with God. Justification is not a process postponed to a remote future via a substitute – it is a real process which is possible already in this life and in this world, here and now. If you open your heart to Jesus and allow him to transform your soul, you may, already now, be born again, cleansed of sin and become just.¹⁴ This is a version of “semi-Pelagianism”, for it implies that human beings are able to act to influence their own salvation.¹⁵ In the decisive moment of purification, of course, it is the Holy Ghost who actually performs the action, streaming through the pietist, cleansing away sin, Dippel admits. No human being could undertake this effort – but you can close off your soul against the activity of the Holy Spirit, or you can choose to open it up. This is a free choice for human beings, and for that reason predestination in its different protestant variants in Lutheranism and Calvinism must be rejected. The widespread idea

13 Characterizing Lutheranism as “the orthodoxy” was standard among pietists critical against that tradition, and Dippel uses the term all through his career. It is, of course, not without a polemical tone.

14 Dippel thus belongs to the long tradition of claiming that it is possible, by a certain personal spiritual effort in adult life, be it awakening or baptism or both, to become reborn and thus approach salvation more than ordinary believers not taking this step – an idea strong in the “left wing” of the Reformation, which, since then, appears in many versions, from “born again” evangelicalism to political “wokeness”. In the eighteenth century, Dippel’s alternative theory of justification seems to have been popular in the German Enlightenment – both Edelmann and Reimarus refer to Dippel’s idea that human beings are unable to offend God who, on his side, does not demand atonement and is unable to take revenge.

15 The peer reviewer of this book proposed this might also be influenced by “synergism”, referring to the collaboration of human beings with the deity about salvation, stemming from Melancthon’s strife with the “gnesio-Lutherans” after Luther’s death. Dippel does not refer often, however, to Melancthon who plays no role in Goldschmidt (2001)’s detailed analysis of the early development of Dippel’s theology.

that the destiny of believers is predetermined, Dippel would reject and later compare to the nascent scientific determinism he found in parts of the Early Enlightenment. Jesus himself underwent, through his life, a long process of approximation to God, and only when he was 30 years of age did his mission become clear. He was not born a godly human; that was rather the aim of a long and complicated process of self-rejection, which should serve as the role model for the spiritual rebirth of pietist believers and their return to God. So, Dippel changes focus from the dying Christ to the living Jesus. Animals have feelings, logic, as well as soul but, by contrast, human beings also have spirit (also called temperament or reason). We are created in the image of God, but due to the Fall, we have forgotten it, and Jesus is the doctor who will cure us by leading us in the life-long, painful struggle with ourselves in a deification process in order to turn back and become again part of GOD, whom Dippel often spells with two or even three capital letters.¹⁶

Such ideas Dippel began to publish in the closing years of the 1690s in writings like *Axioma Adami Veteris*, *Orcodoxia Orthodoxorum*, and *Papismus Protestantorum Vapulans*, the latter two in German, despite their Latin titles. They provoked harsh polemics from shocked orthodox theologians and violent attacks on Dippel's person, as well as ensuing cases with seizing of writings, house arrests, writing prohibitions, and threats of book burnings; even his own Lutheran father had to turn against him.¹⁷ The fact that his books were published in the vernacular, unlike standard academic treatises in Latin, potentially addressing ordinary readers, added to the outrage and was an explicit reason for theologians and authorities to persecute them. Dippel was one of the first-movers in changing from scholarly Latin to the German vernacular in theology. Count Ernst Ludwig of Hesse-Darmstadt, the local prince, and especially his consort Dorothea Charlotte, seem to have had much sympathy for radical pietism, and they hired Dippel, for a period, as a house teacher for one of their sons. Count Ernst, however, seems to have been pressured to admonish Dippel to stop publishing, with reference to the danger of bloodshed and threats of interventions from the *Kaiser* of the Holy Roman Empire.

For every new publication, Dippel's theory becomes more elaborated, detailed, and radical. The Old Adam must die; a new one should appear through the self-cleansing processes of the soul. The death of Christ on the cross was not at all a substitutive sacrifice for the sake of our sins – quite the contrary, it was a model for the true believer, a strong symbol for the process of self-denial and re-

¹⁶ Related ideas about the development of Jesus to Christ had already been rejected by Church Fathers in the first centuries AD under the headline of “ebionitism”.

¹⁷ The titles “Teachings of the old Adam”, “The hellish doctrine of the orthodox”, and “The whipped papacy of the protestants”. They are reprinted in Eröff I.

birth, which all true believers had to go through. This is why believers should imitate the sufferings of Christ, reject the joys and honors of this world – then you will be reborn as a new human being, as the new Adam, and achieve an intoxicating state of bliss already in this life. This went completely against the orthodox Lutherans, whose doctrines Dippel now saw as stemming directly from Hell: *Or-codoxia Orthodoxorum* means “the hellish teaching of the orthodox” (1697), the book in which he began assuming the pseudonym of *Christianus Democritus*. That is, the Christian Democritus – the actual, religious version of the radical Greek philosopher, known for his laughter and his unconditional search for truth.¹⁸ Dippel oftentimes proclaims that he searches for truth only, without any regard for institutions or tradition, for himself or for others.

But his rejection of the orthodoxy also implied that Dippel was led to refuse the very Articles of Confession – spearheaded by the *Confessio Augustana*, the basic Lutheran set of dogma of 1530, authored by Melancthon. Dippel observed that all the different churches and their various historical confessions claim to build on the Bible, but that they get completely different results out of the book. Articles of Confession, then, are mere human products, unfit for dictating faith. Actually, such writings directly correspond, in orthodox Lutheranism, to the role of the Pope in Catholicism, as Dippel now claimed: *Papismus Protestantium Vapulans* (1698) means the Flogging Papacy of the Protestants. They had merely erected a new papacy with dogma as the whip, a new papacy even worse than the Catholic one. Already Dippel’s early writings emerged in storms of polemic with theological opponents and enemies, like the vicar Johannes Lentzer in Weitershausen, and polemics and infights would become a continuous source of inspiration driving Dippel’s thought further, and all until his death almost 40 years later, he hungrily kept engaging in larger and lesser feuds, particularly with orthodox theologians.

Only now, in 1697, Dippel met Gottfried Arnold in Giessen and found a kindred spirit who drove his own radicalization even further. Dippel increasingly turned toward marginalized mystics and enthusiasts since the Reformation charted by Arnold: Kaspar Schwenkfeld, Johann Arndt, and Jakob Boehme, who might be inter-

¹⁸ Dippel explicitly identifies with the laughing Democritus and his free criticisms of the silliness of the world, after the classic dichotomy between Democritus and Heraclitus, the laughing and weeping philosopher. He does not, of course, identify with the atomism of Democritus, rather with his idea about a direct form of knowledge, stemming immediately from God rather than from the senses, cf. the myth that Democritus blinded himself in order to behold deeper things directly (Hannak 2012). The French Catholic theologian Pierre de Besse had used the pseudonym “Democritus Christianus” in his widespread writings in early seventeenth century, such as *Le démocrite chrestien, c’est-à-dire le Mespris et mocquerie des vanités du monde* (1615), attacking the vanity of the world, but it is unclear whether Dippel knew about him.

preted as inspirators or precursors to the actual pietist movement.¹⁹ In the *Papismus* book, which Dippel published at 25 years of age in 1698, most of his theology is already articulated. Churches have no legitimacy at all. They are just human fabrications, just like Articles of Faith. They are a Babylon to be destroyed.

This is why Dippel would also now refuse to take any oath on his orthodox faith such as it was a standard premise to assume a position in school, church, or university. A central chapter of *Papismus* goes against the very concept of a religious oath which just serves to stop the human process of knowledge and rebirth. So, all at once, Dippel was forced to give up his ambitious plans of an academic or clerical career. He demanded full tolerance for all deviations of faith and now claimed that true self-rejection and the opening of the heart to God might take place in individuals of all confessions, independent of what they themselves believed to believe. This was a radical consequence of the “impartial” position of Arnold – the very word “impartial”, *unpartheyisch*, became a characteristic of radical pietism, and it would reappear in the title of many Dippel writings. Confessions and churches were mere sects which had grown big – this is why radical pietists speak of established churches, Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinist, as “sects”. Church history is but one long history of decline, ever since the voluntary congregations of the first Christians, which is what should be reestablished. Ever since the Council of Nicaea in 325, churchly meetings and conventions have only striven to enshrine one correct dogma, which would then be used for the exercise of power and the persecution of heretics. But the real heretics are those who shame others as heretics, so Dippel.²⁰

This also has an acute, political background. In the Holy Roman Empire, only three confessions were allowed in its different parts, Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism – until Frederick the Great, in 1741, decreed freedom of faith in the Prussian lands of the realm. With the exception of certain freer cities such as Altona, it was a crime to hold other convictions than the three, and dissidents, deviants, and heretics of all sorts could simply be punished and banished from the realm. To Dippel, by contrast, faith is and ought to be completely individualized, and the only church-like structures Dippel would recognize are voluntary com-

¹⁹ To the root in Arndt of conceptions of self-denial and penance in Dippel and other pietists, cf. Faßhauer (2022) who also discusses Dippel’s analysis of melancholia as an effect of the turning away of the spirit from God which should be treated with pastoral care as well as medicine against constipation in the spleen.

²⁰ Hannak (2013, 413ff) points to the parallel argumentation against criminalization and persecution of heretics in Dippel and the Early Enlightenment philosopher Christian Thomasius, who published, in 1697, two writings also attacking Lutheran orthodoxy for constituting a new papacy. There is no indication, however, that the two already knew each other at this point.

munities of reborn. So, the “impartial” stance took him close to Enlightenment universalism; not only does it not count whether you are a Jew or a Greek, as Paul had declared, it is also indifferent to which church you may belong – what is decisive is the inner faith. This is consequent indifferentism: it does not influence one’s salvation to which organized confession one belongs, or what one thinks one believes. Even pagans, Jews, and Turks have access to Christ, also despite the fact that they may know as little about the Athanasian Confession of Faith as a cow, Dippel wrote, referring to the mythological prophet Hermes Trismegistos of Ancient Egypt as an early and pagan source of valid theology. Such claims gave rise to livid and fear-stricken counterattacks and contributed to establish his reputation as a blasphemer.²¹

But still worse: even the Bible itself cannot be regarded as the word of God, for it is also but a human fabrication, which is evident from the stylistic difference between its single books and the highly shifting degree of spiritual validity across them. One generation earlier, philosophers like Spinoza had begun reading the Bible as a human historical source from the past rather than as a special book given by revelation; here, Dippel seems to have known about actual Bible philologists like the Frenchman Richard Simon. Spinoza had taught that the role of the Bible was only to teach moral behavior; Dippel maintained that the task of the Book was to disseminate other persons’ testimony about their experience with God, and it may be useful, particularly for people who have not yet experienced the pietist awakening. For once you have God in your heart, do you really need the book? You should rather use your own reason and experience than letting yourself be forced by old writings – here, Dippel already sounds like an Enlightenment, and the abandonment of the idea that special, revealed texts exist becomes, to Dippel, the premise for seeing theology as an open process of research, on a par with other academic disciplines. Research must make use of both reason and empirical investigation – whose sources might also comprise personal revelation. For divine revelations are not finished in and with what is conveyed in the Bible; they continue to this day. Luther, for instance, was also a prophet, if delimited by his time, but now Dippel himself continues as a prophet and brings forth new revelations.

There is a characteristic mixture of extreme humility and rampant megalomania in Dippel’s theology, such as he articulated it as a young scholar in the last years of the 1690s. Soon, he would be in contact with other radical pietists in Frankfurt and Laubach outside of Giessen, such as the pietist couple Johann and Johanna Petersen who, inspired by Jane Leade and other “Philadelphian” English-

21 Eröff I, 428, cf. Hannak (2013, 411).

men, taught that already the year 1700 would herald the Millennial Kingdom, and it seems as if Dippel was carried off. He had rejected the idea that knowledge about the last days was possible, but now he wrote *Christenstatt Auff Erde* – A Christian State on Earth – which came out just before the year 1700, adding to his theology Old Church ideas such as *chiliasm* and *apokatastasis*. The former refers to the Millennial Kingdom which will realize heavenly principles on earth, inaugurate the end of times, lead to the Day of Judgment, and which true believers may work on realizing already now. Many pietists believed that a precondition of this event was the conversion of all human beings which is why they inaugurated a large variety of missionary initiatives. The latter refers to the idea that by the Day of Judgment, all things shall be fully restored, even infidels and evil persons will be saved and devils and hell simply cease to exist. It was a radical move, as seen from the viewpoint of more moderate pietists such as August Francke in Halle who did not embrace the idea that *restitutione omnium*, the restitution of all things, could comprise the damned. Dippel's utopia has been called a "Constitution for the Millennium" and was but one among a wave of radical pietist political utopias claiming the imminent realization of brotherly love in a new social structure. "Philadelphia" means exactly "brotherly love" and became a radical pietist slogan for the new society soon to come, also in germ-like instalments of brother-loving pietist communes. The breathless young pietists, of course, were disappointed when the year 1700 came and went without any major changes, but Dippel kept variants of these eschatological ideas in his theology.

Suddenly, he was appearing as one of the leading radical pietists in the growing current of awakening, piety, and anti-clericalism that engulfed Northwestern Europe in the decades to follow. The movement was already busy splitting up in several currents, and Dippel came to despise those pietists – like Francke in Halle – who attempted to reform existing churches from within. To him, that would be yielding to the enemy. Seen from the Hallensian point of view, caution was paramount in order to convince the orthodox establishment to embrace reform, and they increasingly attacked radical pietists like Dippel outside of the church. So already now, Dippel had a position in which he was loved by many, hated by even more. Pietism was busily emerging as an international network of the awakened, an imagined community in which one knew to have brothers in faith, spread far and wide. Pietism turned against established estates, institutions, and hierarchies, envisioning a society of self-organized, "brother-loving" communities across gender, confession, and social classes. Radicals, in particular, became busy experimenting with new social ways in self-organizing congregations. There was no formal membership, entrance ticket, or confession, but certain signs, such as exclaiming "Brother in spirit!" or "Sister in spirit!" – then one knew it was a more or less a radical pietist colleague one was facing. But such exclamations

might also lead to persecution from enraged orthodox Lutherans. The networks of “Philadelphian” pietists simultaneously could be a source of mutual help and assistance: one pietist supported the other and referred to the next. Obviously, this particularly applied to famous pietists and preachers like Dippel, of which many came to lead migrating and nomad lives, preaching, missioning, opportunity-seeking, fleeing, or suffering banishment (Fig. 3).²² Soon, Dippel was so famous that he would meet Dippelians wherever he went – this also meant that when he had to flee or was expelled from one place, oftentimes, a Dippelian offering support would appear in the next place.

Among radical pietists, however, Dippel is probably the one who most strongly sticks to a central demand in theological orthodoxy: that even if pietism should be

²² Cf. Eißner (2014) about pietism as an “imagined community”. Using the term “radical pietism” generally refers to pietists who turned against existing protestant state churches rather than attempting to reform them from within. At the time, they were often called “separatists” because they withdrew from the churches and the obligation to participate in services. This, of course, does not necessarily imply that they agreed among themselves on other points, and “radical pietism” thus refers to a mixture of rather different characters, groups, and theologies, which might even wage more or less public feuds against each other. Schneider makes the important observation that separatism and heterodoxy are independent variables in pietists (2007, 3). Differences include, e.g., how much one had to do to purify one’s soul of sin and how swift this could take place; or the attitude to baptism: Dippel is among those radicals who refuse all outward rituals, even baptism, while others preserve infant baptism and still others practice adult baptism. The term thus also refers to movements from which Dippel would distance himself, such as Conrad Broeske’s chiliasm, Eva von Buttlar’s “gang”, the Schwarzenau “Inspirationists”, Count Zinzendorf and his Herrnhutians, etc. There is also not always any sharp distinction between moderate and radical pietists, rather a continuum with different degrees of heterodoxy and attacks on church institutions, and oftentimes contacts and inspirations may cut across the continuum, such as Dippel’s meeting with Spener in Berlin in 1704. A good overview over German radical pietism is Schneider (2007); on the interface between German and Danish pietism, see Pedersen (1951), Schwarz Lausten (2004, 170–87), Engelhardt (2017). There are ongoing discussions whether the radicals formed a secondary deviation from Spener’s original doctrine, or whether the radicals, with their roots in Jakob Boehme, would rather predate the church pietists, who would then be a later, institutional compromise position. Shantz outlines seven points common to radical pietists (2013, 159): (1) they take inspiration from Boehme and Arndt; (2) they take a Philadelphian view of the pending arrival of Christ’s kingdom on earth with peace, love, and harmony; (3) they have a migratory and “homeless” lifestyle; (4) they are eclectics, mixing radical Reformation ideas with mysticism and alchemy; (5) they attack the heritage from the Reformation and downplay differences between existing confessions; (6) they may combine involvement in churches with attacks on them; (7) they allow for prominent roles of female preachers and members. Shantz also proposes a rough division between subtypes of radical pietism (156–57): (1) Spiritual-Alchemist; (2) Millenialist; (3) Conventicle; and (4) Sect Models, respectively – with Arnold/Dippel, the Petersens, J.J. Schuetz, and Alexander Mack as typical representatives of the four. Dippel clearly belongs to (1), even if his strict separatism approximates him also to (4).



Figure 3: The map shows some of the main stations on the trajectory of Dippel's wandering life. Straight lines indicate abstraction from the more precise traveling trajectory: we know, e.g., that Dippel sailed from Amsterdam to Hamburg in 1714 and from Copenhagen to Rønne in 1719; on both occasions, the ships suffered wreckage during storm and only barely arrived at their destinations. Conversely, we do not know the exact route from Altona to the Netherlands in 1707. Dippel's many shorter trips in and around Hesse-Darmstadt between Darmstadt, Giessen, Mühlthal, Frankfurt, etc. are not indicated.

oriented toward practice, toward life, the work of transforming the soul, accomplishing useful things in the here and now, it should still be based on a consistent, well-wrought theology, a philosophical doctrine. To many other radical pietists, it may have seemed obvious you just had to follow your purified heart. To Dippel, theory and practice should integrate in a grandiose, new world view. This, simultaneously, associated him to the emerging philosophies of Enlightenment.

For at the same time, Dippel's is an understanding of deity, world, and human beings which opens up to a series of new possibilities that were much less evident to an orthodox with a viewpoint in the established clerical hierarchies: scientific investigation of the world using experience and reason, critical interventions on behalf of the persecuted and suppressed, tough politicizing against unjust princes, advice and counseling of righteous princes, assistance and medical treatment of diseases, properly originating from impurities of the soul – all that which Dippel gradually, and with considerable energy, would add to his extreme pietism, also making him a part of the Early Enlightenment.

Gold in the Glass Hut

How did the radical pietist become an alchemist? When you gave up the narrow Lutheran dualisms, between body and soul, between law and gospel, between the fallen world and the world after the Day of Judgment, between the two regiments, the Sword and the Word – then much more traffic between the secular and the sacred realms became possible. It was a world view approaching a *monism*, in which there is one world only, and where secular and sacred become two aspects of one and the same world, rather than forming separate worlds with thin communication lines. In classic Protestantism, the connections between those worlds were narrow and few – there were the two sacraments, baptism and the eucharist, reaching out to the minority of true believers hidden among congregations, and there were princely authorities, reigning as the merciful and violent tools of God on earth. In Dippel's radical pietism, these connection lines between heaven and earth widened to a main road, potentially open to all believers to follow, already in this life. Sacraments as well as divine princes, by contrast, became marginal or religiously completely irrelevant. Baptism was but a human invention, confessional was an absurd theater, and the trinity in itself had no basis in the Bible.²³ It also implied a world view in which this world is not only a barren, fallen wasteland in temporary expectation of a better life in the beyond; instead,

23 Cf. Schäufele (2009).

there is a continuum between the material and the spiritual, accessible to investigations of both scientific and spiritual kinds, maybe simultaneously. The church father Makarios, with his claim about the materiality of the soul, inspired Dippel who, in turn, would attack Descartes' sharp distinction between extended things and thinking things, between matter and mind.

Already in Strassburg, Dippel achieved a reputation for palm-reading and the computing of horoscopes, and it seems that it was in Giessen that he became interested in hermetic authors, such as Ramón Llull, Paracelsus, and Johannes van Helmont, addressing alchemy. In a small text titled "Fata Chymica" – about his "chemical destiny" – Dippel relates how he embarked on the road of alchemy.²⁴ On a hike around 1698, he had visited an old student buddy from Darmstadt, now living in the vicinity of Giessen – the preacher Philipp Wilhelm Geilfuss. During their conversation, he showed Dippel two small booklets from his library. The first was the famous Renaissance mystic Guillaume Postel's *Revelation of Secrecies Concealed since the Beginnings of the World*,²⁵ addressing many deep theological issues; the second was an anthology of tracts by different "chymical" authors: "... containing Raymund Lulls *Experimenta*, the Italian Count Treviso's *Fata and Practica*, Alanus' *Dicta* [on the philosopher's stone], and the *Twelve Keys* by the so-called brothers Basilius Valentinus".²⁶ While Dippel enthusiastically grabbed the Postel piece, he put the alchemist volume back with a laugh, for even if he had taken interest in medicine ever since he was very young, he regarded alchemy as less than nothing. His friend pressed on, Dippel yielded, read the small book, and realized that gold-making was neither against nature nor elevated over it, as he says – that it was but an ordinary empirical science and that he, if he had the time and occasion, would soon be able to master it. He thought that God probably

24 "Lebens-Lauff", c. 1730, 34–48. The chapter on "Fata Chymica" originally formed part of the introduction to the second volume of Dippel's philosophy of nature of 1705, *Anderer Theil des Wegweisers* (Eröff I, 1747, 919), and was presumably written around the time when Dippel went to Berlin. Dippel's chemical career, see Kraft (2019) and (2023).

25 "Velamen apertum arcanorum a principio mundi reconditorum", 36; probably a variant of his well-known writing *Abconditorum clavis* (1547), the key to secret issues.

26 "Raymund Lull" refers to the really existing philosopher and theologian Ramón Llull from Mallorca in the thirteenth century, to whom also a number of later writings were ascribed; Bernardo of Treviso was a fictive Italian alchemist from the fifteenth century, who had been concocted in the sixteenth century, supposedly with inspiration from several real alchemists such as Eberhard I von der Marck-Arenberg, and who had been ascribed the authorship of a number of existing texts. Alanus is also known as Alain of Lille, a twelfth-century French theologian and poet ascribed the book *Dicta de lapide philosophica*. Basilius Valentinus is another fifteenth-century alchemist, by some placed in the Benedictine monastery of Erfurt, but supposedly also an invented pseudonym for one or several German alchemists from the sixteenth century.

had not let him find these writings in vain and that he, now that he was cut off from pursuing an academic career, going through them might be able to find an honest way of making a living. So, Dippel entered alchemy for simple economic reasons, but also because he hoped to find the “physical tincture” for use in the art of medicine. Ramón Llull’s *Experimenta* contained 34 descriptions of experiments, among which was the recipe for chymical gold, but Dippel got hold of another chymical manuscript showing the road to this tincture in a simpler way than Llull – maybe by the French alchemist Pierre-Jean Fabre.²⁷

He succeeded in completing the experiment, and even if he often had to move, he now carried his chemical equipment with him like a cat with her kittens, as he says. In the course of eight months, he now produced a tincture which could actually transmute 50 parts silver or quicksilver into gold, he claims, and he thought that he would now finally become able to withstand his theological persecutors trying to starve him in order to press him away from pietism. It was difficult for him, however, to keep these things secret and protect himself against robbery, so he decided to buy a glass hut, a glass factory, in which he could continue collaborating with a few select friends in order to make himself useful in chemistry as long as this would suit God. A glass hut would have furnaces able to reach high temperatures and would simultaneously supply his work with laboratory flasks, beakers, retorts, and other glassware. We do not know the exact location of this glass hut, maybe in Mühlthal not far from Frankenstein, where a string of industries had emerged during the seventeenth century. In the first years of the new century, Dippel worked here. This workshop Dippel acquired from a baron at the price of no less than 50,000 guilders, which he decided to pay off by intensifying his production of tincture. Carelessness, however, destroyed his glass crucible and immediately spoiled all of the tincture he had produced up to then. So, he was unable to pay the mortgage and had to seek credit elsewhere in order to pay the 4,500 guilders instalment to the baron.²⁸ Dippel tried to force the process – which you should never do, as he adds – burning his fingers in haste. Three years passed without success. Dippel was persecuted by creditors and he had to comply with being called a big fool as well as an arch impostor. As time went by, he was tempted to give up alchemy completely, but his debt in the hut pressed him to continue; what is more, he had discovered that a higher hand was governing the process, without which you would never achieve the goal, as he says. To learn to behold the ways of penetrable nature and, through many errors,

²⁷ Kraft (2019, 34).

²⁸ Who the baron in question was, is not known. Kraft (2019, 35) makes the guess that it might have been Count Friedrich of Hessen-Homburg, also known as the Prince of Homburg, whose son much later attempted to enforce the repayment of an old debt from Dippel.

to approach the grasping of impartial truth would finally be not only of common utility but also to the praise of the good Lord, Dippel argues.

This story sounds like beginner's luck: he actually once succeeded in producing the philosopher's stone, but then he wasted three years in vain trying to repeat the miracle after his glass beaker broke. Maybe for this reason, his small personal history of alchemy ends with a conjuration: gold-making must serve God. Dippel's ambition is not to strive for honor nor picking fights, but only, naively, to show the path on which "... the GOd-desiring soul, through the investigation of external nature and its forces as well as its fall with Adam as its road to reinstitution in Christ", and through that to approach the highest, unmovable blessings – otherwise, you will be caught up in pagan philosophy based on atheist principles. Dippel seems to fathom that the chymical science might also lead completely away from religion. His repeated, erroneous experiments appear to Dippel to be due to the will of God: he can only be brought to understand the "penetralia", the secrets of nature, via a road ripe with error. Gold-making is actually what Dippel considers the lowest part of alchemy, for it is a mere side product of the true "chymie". Finally, Dippel solemnly exclaims that there should be erected Christian schools, colleges, penitentiaries or what else is useful for both Christendom and the republic, and he now pledges that he, as a proof of secrecies, obliges to procure, to all courts and republics of Europe, so much finished tincture as to suffice for the treatment of many ill persons. The less radical Hallensian pietism, spearheaded by August Francke, was busy launching their package of edifying institutions, orphanages, schools, hospitals, pharmacies, and print shops – Dippel obviously thinks that successful alchemy may play into related projects of social amelioration. Maybe this proclamation would also be implicitly addressed to his new benefactor, the Prussian King: gold-making, of course, would be undertaken for his employer the King's sake, but Dippel's medical alchemy should be for the benefit of everyone. This is my good intention, but if nothing comes out of it, we shall all imagine that it was but a dream, he concludes, hopeful and modest. So, he is far from certain he will be able to repeat his success. This relative modesty was not typical for the alchemist wave of the time when many adepts craved high princely advances by promising speedy supplies of gold.

Dippel's text is a bit of a programmatic manifesto based on his initial alchemist experiences in the early years of the 1700s, after his theological breakthrough, probably written not long before his calling to Berlin in 1704 which is not mentioned. Maybe the small text also functioned as an advertisement for his skills and may have caught the eyes of the Berlin authorities, soon calling him

there.²⁹ So, alchemy could solve both Dippel's economic grievances, provide a civil career outside of institutions, illuminate the secrecies of nature, serve the general utility of citizens and states, and approach the true practicing alchemist to God and the eternal things.

All in all, he decided to take it as his task to make the decisive breakthrough in the eternal attempts to make gold out of poorer metals, which was taking a large upswing in the period and attracted even luminaries like Leibniz and Newton – but also to pursue the other big dream of alchemy, the universal medicine against all diseases which might be approached via the distillation of parts of dead animals, from which Dippel assumed it was possible to extract particularly strong elixirs.

But how *were* Dippel's more exact procedures for making "chymical gold"? For obvious reasons, Dippel did not publish on this subject, but certain sources dug out by Kraft (2023, 151ff) may give us an idea: a main ingredient was phosphorous (P), easily inflammable and often kept under water, which could be isolated from distillations of animal and human urine and feces. Kraft quotes Dippel from an undated letter copied by Senckenberg many years later:³⁰

Author J. C. Dippelio / You must know that I still have no other experience with the tincture than from *phosphoro* with which ☉ or ☽ is dissolved and also sublimated by appropriate manipulations, afterwards dissolved and abstracted in ∇ Rect. and you have an *Elixir tingens* within a few weeks. (Quoted from Kraft (2023, 152); ☉ is gold; ☽ is silver; ∇ Rect. is Spiritus Vini Rectificati, that is, distilled ethanol, alcohol)

Elixir tingens is the philosopher's stone. So Dippel used phosphorous as the starting point in his gold-making all through the years. A lot of details, of course, are here only discreetly hinted at. Kraft discusses a number of versions of more detailed recipes, which we shall not go through here, but an overall idea (as in the ms. "De Phosphoro" found with Dippel records in the Senckenberg collection) is to derive phosphorus from putrefied urine, in order to make "fiery water", probably phosphoric acid, H_3PO_4 . This should then be mixed with gold lime, obtained from dissolving gold refined with antimon, that is, very pure gold, in "aquafort", nitric acid, HNO_3 , to which salmiac, NH_4NO_3 , was added, and then make it react with copper vitriol, CuSO_4 . The result, a brown-red gold lime, would combine

²⁹ Such as argued by Kraft (2023), which is recommended for the many new facts and sources presented there, particularly regarding Dippel's chemical career.

³⁰ Johann Christian Senckenberg (1707–72) was a doctor, natural philosopher, and botanist in Frankfurt, inspired by Dippel. He kept a 40,000-pages diary with information of many events of the time – couched in a mixture of German, Latin, and abbreviations. Visiting him in Berleburg in 1732, he collected a lot of data from and about Dippel.

with the “fiery water” in a closed vial which, when heated, would progress through a series of colors until finally being fixed as a “red stone” – the philosopher’s stone.³¹ We know from other descriptions that very small amounts of such tincture were supposed to be able to transmute much larger amounts of metal.

What is evident from another gold-making description of Dippel’s lab work, much later in Berleburg, is the long-windedness of repetitions involved in his labor. Here, in order to extract gold directly from mercury and silver, Dippel mixed those metals with sulfuric acid, H_2SO_4 , in a closed crucible, to be heated for 14 days. When the flask was broken open, liquid should be distilled away, new sulfuric acid added, and then all over again ten or twelve times, that is, approaching half a year in total. Quite a considerable amount of Dippel’s adult life would be spent in the lab, much of it simply with keeping a constant fire burning over months, not the easiest task to reconcile with a migrating and tumultuous life. This process description also gives an idea of how Dippel tried to apply his elementary theory of fire and light as basic principles: he thought that in the course of such long experiments, the light and fire principles would somehow gradually purify and eventually enter through the vessel walls into the mixture and transform some of the silver into gold (Kraft 2023, 156).

Dippel, however, not only took interest in alchemy as a practical science, but also increasingly in its connection to the hermetic philosophical tradition since the Renaissance. It would form, in a certain sense, a bridge between his theology and his alchemy. Hermeticism referred to the idea of secret knowledge stemming from the ancient Egyptian prophet Hermes Trismegistos – the triple-wise Hermes or Mercurius – who was supposed to have lived at the same time as Moses and whose ideas had been collected in the legendary treatise *Corpus Hermeticum*, translated into Latin in Italy in the fifteenth century, and celebrated by many as a source of early Egyptian wisdom.³² It had been proven by the humanist scholar Isaac Casaubon already early in the seventeenth century, however, that Hermes Trismegistos was but a fictive name affixed to a late-Hellenistic corpus of texts stemming only from the first century AD. This did not, however, deter either Dippel or other radical pietists from taking inspiration from hermeticism for renaissance-like reasons: that there was one true theology behind the variety of different religions, which is why the pagan Hermes could be taken as an early source of true religion, also by Christian theologians. God had not only revealed himself to Christians, but also to heathens, and their sources should be put to use and reinterpreted by an open-

³¹ Kraft notes a chemical issue here: phosphoric acid does not dissolve gold (while *aqua regia*, royal water, the mix of hydrochloric and nitric acid, does).

³² Cf. the English translation in Copenhaver (1992).

minded theologian. Essentially true and reasonable knowledge, even if maybe abstrusely expressed, lay hidden in hermetic sources, which might enlighten Christian theology as well as present-day science.

It is such an idea that makes Dippel enumerate an impressive ancestral tree of more or less mystic inspirators, during a discussion addressing the material or “passive” aspect of God:

This passive ground, or suffering first principle of the deity – which is like the body of the eternal deity, which is why GOD in this respect is called a **fire** in the Writ, and it is said about him that he **lives in a light to which nobody has access** – is, according to the most ancient sages, **the eternal indestructible nature** and is also called the invisible store of semen from which particular created objects and visible, figuring bodies have emerged during the times from the most free and most-wisely acting GOD. This is why I bear witness that exactly this has, before me, been taught by *Zoroaster* among the Persians, *Mercurius Trimegistos* among Egyptians, the most ancient *Kabbalists* among the Jews, *Plato* among the Greeks, *Origen*, *Clement of Rome* and *Tertullian* among the first Christians, [. . .] but, among later Christians, *Robertus de Fluctibus* or *Fludd*, the wonder of his times among Englishmen, and *Theophrastus Paracelsus* among the Germans who surpasses anybody in thorough learning and true sincerity to GOD in his heart; and finally the crown and pinnacle of beauty among all the men mentioned, namely **our shoemaker and German philosopher Jacob Boehme**, whom the most learned men of our time, namely *Henrich Morus* and *Morhoff*, honor with special praise and cannot help but most supremely admire.³³

Other top pietists like Gottfried Arnold and Johann Samuel Carl also took interest in the hermetic tradition which they sought to graft onto aspects of the metaphysic assumptions of their pietism, and recent research places increasing emphasis on such non-Christian sources to pietism, which had earlier also been recruited by mystics like Sebastian Franck and others.³⁴ Along with Dippel’s indifference – that you may be saved irrespectively of which church you may belong to – his hermeticism takes him close to deism, the syncretist religion of nature cherished by many scientists and Enlightenment philosophers of the period: the idea that there was one true, rational religion behind all particular confessions. Dippel would always continue emphatically to conceive of himself as a Christian,

³³ This mystic lineage is presented by Dippel in his medical habilitation of 1711 (Eröff II, 336–37, bold and italics are from Dippel’s German version). The two contemporaries mentioned are Henry More, English philosopher among the Cambridge Platonists, and Daniel Georg Morhoff, German polymath and literary historian.

³⁴ Dippel’s reinterpretation of heretical theology and hermeticism, particularly in the first decade of the eighteenth century, cf. Hannak (2008, 2013, 363–69); Hanegraff et al. (ed.) (2006, 955–59). It was the first and thirteenth chapters of the *Corpus* from which Dippel, just like earlier enthusiasts, primarily took inspiration.

but the structure of his theology approached, with its indifferentism and hermetic admixtures, universalist deism.³⁵

What Dippel, in particular, would take from the hermetic tradition was the abovementioned idea that God has an active as well as a passive side and that the former appears as a sort of invisible effective force in visible matter. Dippel claimed, influenced by Boehme, a *double* Fall in the early history of the world: before Adam's desertion from God, there had been a "cosmological" fall in which God's original presence in the world had been broken. God was originally light and fire in one but in this arch-Fall, light and fire had been split by the apostasy of Lucifer and his angels, so that the fire part of God became locked up in the material world where it manifests itself as an insatiable urge to reunite with light, a desire palpable both in animals and humans. It is this burning hunger that drives human beings, but because of both Falls, they most often misinterpret this desire and erroneously believe it may be satisfied in the material world alone. Such satisfaction, however, can really only take place in light which is equal to the joy of life. But when human beings experience the hermetic-pietist initiation, light and fire are again reunited in their hearts, and they thus reinstate God's presence in the world which is already much clearer in the animal world, subject to the first Fall only. Non-human animals, then, are less misled than humans, spontaneously living in a more divine and reasonable way. From this hermetic viewpoint, God and the force of life are one and the same thing – and Dippel appears as a sort of early vitalist, claiming that what dwells beneath the material surface of things, accessible to mathematical science, is this divine force of life, which thus – as against Cartesianism – explains why it is that life may arise in the material world.³⁶ This divine depth is not accessible to mathematics, but it may be experienced in the heart – or through empirical investigations, which is why alchemists may often turn to hermeticism in order to understand their experiments discovering the workings of this deep force in matter. Dippel's vitalism is thus a sort of anticipation or version of "vitalist materialism" in later Enlightenment thinkers addressing biology, like Buffon or Diderot.

³⁵ Cf. Mansikka (2007).

³⁶ Hannak (2008, 65) says, regarding Dippel's philosophy of nature: life takes over "... präzise alle Eigenschaften, die in theologischem Kontext Gott bzw. dem göttlichen Wort zugesprochen werden. Mit dieser Definition des Lebens naturalisiert Dippel nicht nur das hermetisch-spiritualistische Bild der *Creatio continua* aus einem ewig überfließenden göttlichen Geist, er spiritualisiert auch die im Cartesianismus abgetrennt und tot gedachte Materie zu einer holistisch gefassten Biologie im wörtlichen Sinne: Zum ‚logos‘ vom ‚bios‘, wobei das Leben direkt dem Schöpfungswort entströmt und wiederum auf dieses zurück verweist". Hannak argues that vitalist hermeticism constitutes the kernel in the Christian shell of Dippel's theology.

Simultaneously, the hermetic insistence on repeated processes of distillation and purification in alchemy, aiming to reach and reunite the principles of fire and light, could be seen as parallel to or even a part of two similar processes: the ongoing cleansing and self-denial manoeuvres in order to expel sin from the soul, and the purification and healing of the sick by means of mixtures and elixirs influencing body and soul alike.³⁷ Hermeticism, then, would directly connect to Dippel's tendency toward monism and to why he, despite much scornful criticism of Spinoza, remains fascinated by the Spinozist doctrine about God as disseminated within or even identical to the world.

How Dippel escaped from the debt-ridden glass hut, we do not know. But now Berlin was calling.

Alchemist in Berlin

In the fall of 1704, Dippel was invited to Berlin on the initiative of Count August von Wittgenstein who served as a minister under King Friedrich I of Prussia in the so-called Three-Count Cabinet of 1702–10, the “Three Ws”, Wartenberg, Wartensleben, and Wittgenstein – in German pronounced like “Die drei Wehen”, the three evils.³⁸ The limping King, with the nickname of “Crooked Fritz”, not only invited many scholars to the city, but also many of the Huguenots who had escaped from France since the abolishment of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Around

37 The relation between Dippel's theology and medicine is currently being investigated by Rasmus H.C. Dreyer and Tine Reeh, among others, cf. Dreyer (in press) and Reeh & Hemmingsen (2023).

38 It is an interesting detail that Dippel also, in 1704, received two requests from even more radical pietists who had settled in Schwarzenau on Count Wittgenstein's home turf. Dippel, however, rejected them as dreamers subjected to dangerous illusions and compared them to the infamous Eva von Buttlar, who had added to radical pietism Boehmean ideas of androgynous arch-humans from before the Fall, chiliastic ideas that God was already now entering the flesh of radical pietists, making them free of sin, and who was rumored to have developed a libertine sect, with her followers practicing group sex and celebrating her as the “fiancé of the Holy Spirit”. The correctness of such rumors is debated, but Dippel distanced himself from her in the *Weg-Weiser* (1705), approximately at the same time as legal procedures against the “Buttlarian gang” were initiated. She would go on to settle, under the name of Brachfeld, in Altona where she had the son “Messias” in 1713 before she died in 1721, so she was in the city simultaneously with Dippel. But Dippel seems to have realized that his growing public reputation might suffer if he became associated with everything developing under radical pietist headlines, cf. Voss (1970, 44). To Dippel, such even more radical pietists nurtured a superstition that they had already reached perfection, and he compares them to Gnostics – also, 30 years later in Berleburg, he distanced himself from the “inspirationists”. The difference in doctrine seems to refer to whether perfection can be achieved in one swift revelation or whether it only appears as the result of a life-long struggle.

1700, almost a third of the inhabitants of Berlin were French-speaking Calvinists who also contributed to heightening the intellectual level of the city. In the year 1700, Friedrich was still only the Elector of Brandenburg when he founded the Prussian Academy of Science, with the philosopher Leibniz as its leader, also in order to support his declaration of Prussia as a kingdom and his own coronation as King of Prussia in Königsberg the next year. Fusing the imperial land of Brandenburg with Friedrich's extra-imperial Duchy of East Prussia into one state in 1701, he aspired to emerge as a new major power on the continent. Friedrich, in short, was busy striving to make Berlin a center of erudition and the capital of a kingdom.

His Comital minister August had known Dippel since 1701 and had become convinced about Dippel's alchemist talents. He would become a life-long benefactor and supporter who, time and time again, would interfere to save Dippel and help him escape emerging jams and conflicts.³⁹ August himself toyed with alchemy and had attempted distillations of human excrement, practiced by many to acquire phosphorous. Maybe he thought Dippel had larger talents. Now, Dippel was equipped with a lab in a city mansion in Berlin, which seems to have been at the peak of alchemist activities, much of it state-subsidized research. Here, alchemists of rather different degrees of seriousness and ambition worked, such as J.F. Boettger (who later contributed to the solution of the enigma of China porcelain in Saxony), Johann Kunckel, the colormaker J.J. Diesbach, the Italian Count Domenico Caetano, C.M. Spener – son of the pietist – Baron von Meder, and many others, until the “soldier King” Friedrich Wilhelm with other interests ascended the throne in 1713. In a certain sense, alchemy was the “big science” of the time – considerable state funding was invested in alchemists, many royal and noble houses threw themselves into the competition of being first with the expected scientific breakthrough, from the Emperor in Vienna to the Kings of Prussia and Denmark-Norway, the Electors of Bavaria and the Palatinate, and further on to numerous Counts, Barons, and lesser nobility, all of them hoping to emerge victorious from the scientific race for gold. If the victor proved able to keep the secret, eminent economic, political, and military power was awaiting.

³⁹ In the longer run, Dippel would have no less than two patrons from the noble Wittgenstein family, on two neighboring castles in the small old County of Wittgenstein to the northwest of Hesse. The family Sayn-Wittgenstein had split the small principality in two in 1506; Count August, Dippel's alchemist sponsor from the Berlin years and later, resided in the Schloß Wittgenstein outside of Laasphe, the residence of the line Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein, while Count Casimir, Dippel's pietist benefactor after his return to Germany in 1729, resided at the Schloß Berleburg, residence of the family branch Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg and at the time famous as a haven for dissidents, separatists, and freethinkers. The two Wittgensteins seem to have favored Dippel for rather different reasons: August supported his alchemist research, while Casimir seconded him as a radical pietist.

The Berlin sojourn would prove to be Dippel's most successful period as an alchemist, and he seems to have understood that self-presentation was not irrelevant in this context. He was rumored to dress extravagantly and appear in the company of a black servant boy in a fantastic costume.

Again, however, he failed to repeat his success with gold, despite intense attempts involving his radical pietist friend, the wandering preacher Johann Georg Rosenbach, who moved in with him. But he actually did make substantial progress on the medical front. The first was "Dippel's Oil", *oleum animale dippelii*, a foul-smelling liquid resulting from repeated, different distillations of matter from dead animals, such as horns, leather, hooves, blood, etc (Fig. 4a). Such a thing had often been produced before, but Dippel meticulously distilled the same matter again and again, with different additions of potash, burnt limestone, etc., gradually producing a light, transparent liquid consisting of hydrocarbons with a number of different organic nitrogen compounds, still emitting a disgusting stench. Probably, the smell would be interpreted as a sign of acute effect, for it did not prevent Dippel from having success in marketing it as the wished-for universal medicine and elixir of life, but also endowed with certain special effects, as a remedy against fever, epilepsy, typhus, and tapeworms. The product survived him and could be found in German pharmacies far into the twentieth century; yea, it can be purchased to this day with traders of alternative medicine but seems to remain relatively ineffective.⁴⁰

He also developed a wound balm which seems to have had better effect; here, you should use one pound freshly squeezed juice of the medical plants hedgenettle (*Stachys*), French parsley (*Anthriscus*), and wood sanicle (*Sanicula*). This extract is mixed with four pounds of wine vinegar and a pound of common salt, after which the blend is distilled over a water bath.⁴¹ The product was inspired by a recipe from an immigrant Huguenot doctor in Berlin and marketed under the name of "Tinctura Vulneraria". It was claimed to heal all wounds, even piercings directly

⁴⁰ You can still buy products under the name of Dippel's Oil on the market for alternative medicine, cf. <https://www.remmedia-homeopathy.com/shop/Oleum-animale-aethereum-Dippelii/a9023876>. None less than Diderot, in vol. XVII of D'Alembert's and his large *Encyclopedia*, proved a skeptic as to the effects of Dippel's Oil (1778) and called for control experiments: "Huile animale de Dippelius ... destinée à l'usage interieur, est une huile empyreumatique animale, rectifiée par quarante ou cinquante distillations successives, et vantée comme un spécifique éprouvé contre l'épilepsie. Si cette vertue est confirmée par des observations decisives, ces observations ne sont pas encore publiques" (quoted from Aynsley and Campbell 1962, 283, who also list the exact chemical ingredients of the drug).

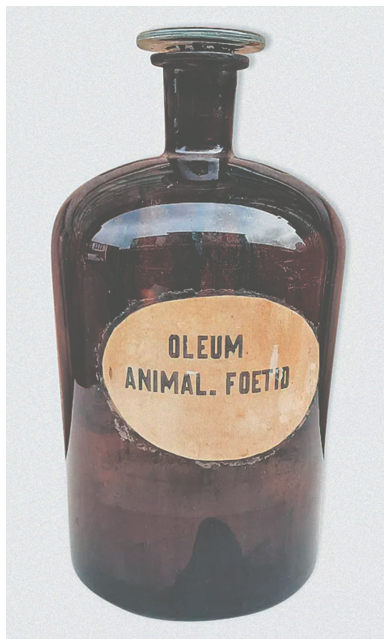
⁴¹ The recipe is reported in a letter from Dippel 27 July 1706 from Berlin to Baron von Geuder in Utrecht, Landesarchiv NRW Abteilung Westfalen, 6507, Msc. VII, Regierungsbezirk Arnsberg, Fürstentum Nassau-Siegen, 1705–1737; here quoted from Kraft (2019, 67–68), from where also the anecdote about the dog experiment. Kraft (2019) takes the history of Prussian or Berlin Blue as its main subject, but it also contains several new results about Dippel's life and career.

through the heart, if it could be applied there. When Dippel was paid a visit in Berlin by his radical pietist doctor colleague Johann Samuel Carl, he obtained a sample of the remedy, and in Halle Carl repeated, with a leading German doctor of the time, Friedrich Hoffmann, Dippel's macabre experiment to prove its efficiency. A dog had a nail hammered deeply into its brain and pulled out again, the balm was applied, and the dog survived and recovered. This prompted the top German doctor Georg Ernst Stahl to also repeat the experiment. Dippel also experimented with the remedy on patients seriously wounded and was able to report that the direct application on the wound proved more efficacious than giving the liquid to imbibe – but he kept recommending both.⁴²

Dippel's third commercial success was "Hirschhorn", hartshorne, which was produced by the distillation of antlers or blood of deer, consisting of ammonium carbonate and some other ammonium compounds, emitting an intense smell of salmiac. It had been produced before and was a commercial success by the addition of fragrant perfumes in the function as a smelling salt which, fast and shock-like, could arouse consciousness in fainting people. It was a fashion among swooning ladies to keep ready a small capsule with smelling salt. Dippel's success with medical remedies gradually began to eclipse his real results in the art of gold-making, a struggle that he never gave up. His orientation toward practical medicine may also make more understandable his surprising skepticism with regard to the many new anatomical discoveries of the time. Dippel pragmatically claimed the results obtained by the dissection of animals and human corpses should immediately serve the treatment of diseases and saw the charting of anatomical structures as but the surface of deeper, physiological processes which remained the proper task of treatments to influence.⁴³

⁴² Dippel's letter to von Geuder 27 July 1706, Briefe an den Baron von Geuder i Landesarchiv NRW. See also Kraft (2023).

⁴³ There exists a much later printed sheet (c. 1730) listing six remedies recommended by Dippel to a friend, with detailed descriptions of which conditions they are supposed to improve. They are (1) *Elixir polychrestum* (against stone, podagra, spleen, piles, bleeding, menstruation pains, congestion of the flow of blood and other liquids, heartburn, fevers, kid's smallpox, coughing, – 15–20 drops to be taken in 3–4 spoonfuls of wine), (2) *Tinctura balsamica* (a stimulant, for old people, for encouragement and driving out stuff in all diseases, an antidote against poisons), (3) *Elixir balsamicum* (against the inner damage of lungs, liver, kidneys, against bowel diseases, colic, wind, pains, female problems in childbirth, problems of mothers, infertility, cold fevers), (4) *Sapo chymicus* (painkiller, against pains in limbs, dissolves old tumors, against cold limbs), (5) *Tinctura vulneraria* (cures all wounds not serious or lethal, is given to drink and applied directly in the wound, also against obdurate cold fevers), and (6) *Oleum antiepilepticum* (against epilepsy, used along with *Elixir polychrestum*). Dippel developed quite a taxonomy of diseases and their cures (Christian Democritus c. 1730). In his Berlin period, Dippel also seems to have produced a "vera auri solutio", a true gold solution, also known as "aurum potabile", drinkable gold, or "essentia dulcis", a sweet essence (cf. Petersen 1893, 75), a product sought by many adepts and rumored to have strong healing effects on many diseases.



(a)



(b)

Figure 4a and 4b: Dippel's most famous medical result bears his name: Dippel's Oil. He produced the clear, foul-smelling oil by repeated distillations of dead animals. For many years, the oil appeared among the standard inventory of European pharmacies and was regarded a universal medicine, but with special effect against fever and epilepsy. The pharmacy flask with Dippel's Oil here is German, from around 1930. The Oil is still marketed by certain producers and may be bought with traders of alternative medicine. Berlin Blue – or Prussian Blue – was discovered by accident in Dippel's Berlin lab in 1706 and would soon be used as a pigment and a dye with commercial success. In the first decades, the recipe remained secret, and we have reason to believe that Dippel, during his time in the Netherlands, lived from manufacturing various medical produce as well as Prussian Blue.

Dippel's fourth success was the famous pigment *Berlinerblau* – Prussian Blue – which saw daylight for the first time in Dippel's lab in 1706 and swiftly became a commercial success as a substitute for the far more expensive ultramarine, both as a pigment in paintings and for the dyeing of textiles (Fig. 4b). Ultramarine (“beyond the sea”) was a rare import from lapis lazuli-mines in present-day Afghanistan, and with Berlin Blue, a competitor emerged that could be produced locally by chemical means. It was the first artificial coloring agent and remained a profitable industrial secret until 1724, when the process was leaked to the Royal Society in London, after which prices plummeted.

The pigment seems to owe its discovery to a series of coincidences in Dippel's Berlin lab, where several other alchemists had access to work, among them being “the young Rösser” and the colormaker Johann Jakob Diesbach. In Dippel's production of hartshorne, he used a mixture of dried oxen blood and potash (potassium carbonate) which was glowed until a gas escaped to be caught by a cooling pipe and condensed to the wished-for “volatile salt”. Dippel interpreted this event as the soul which was set free, while the remaining slag was but a “caput mortuum”, a useless skull bereaved of soul. This slag, however, was diluted by Rösser, whereafter he reduced the result to obtain a white powder which he interpreted as common potash. He saved it in a jar, labeling it as such, “sal tartari”. What he did not know was that the powder contained a considerable amount of potassium cyanide from the protein-heavy ox blood. When now Diesbach appeared in the lab, intending to follow the standard procedure for producing the red pigment “Florentine lake”, on the base of dried cochennille-lice powder imported from the Canarian Islands, boiled with alum and vitriol, he began using Rösser's potash, little knowing that it was impure. He was surprised to see that, instead of red, the precipitation produced sediment of a beautiful, clear, and insolvable blue compound, both dense and transparent. He quickly realized its potential and began producing and selling the pigment to Berlin painters behind Dippel's back. But when Rösser's contaminated potash was spent, and Diesbach turned to normal potash, the blue result failed to materialize. He had to turn to Dippel who realized what had happened, reconstructing the procedure which now became ready for exploitation.

Shortly thereafter, production became industrialized and became an immense commercial success, in the hands of Diesbach and the enterprising philosopher of nature and language J.L. Frisch – but by then, Dippel had already been forced to flee the city for other reasons. Frisch and Diesbach effectively had a monopoly on the product and were able to sell it at 30 thaler per pound. Their systematic production was skillfully marketed and must have exceeded, by far, what Dippel himself was subsequently able to produce on his own in the Netherlands and Altona. After Dippel's banishment to Bornholm in 1719, the two were the only producers on the

market until an emerging German competitor was able to reconstruct the procedure and submit it for publication with the Royal Society in London. Hereafter, prices naturally dropped by around 80%.⁴⁴ On the basis of this industrial adventure, many assumed that Frisch was the discoverer of the pigment; only in 1731, the famous doctor Stahl made it known that Diesbach and Dippel had been the real discoverers. Dippel and others after him understood the process in terms of a certain “colored substance” inherent in ox blood, which was then transformed and isolated through a series of steps. The more precise chemistry behind the process long remained an enigma, and only much later it became clear that Berlin Blue was a mixture of iron cyanides stemming from the large concentration of protein containing nitrogen in the ox blood. Only recently, the double error in Dippel’s Berlin lab has been reconstructed.⁴⁵ Dippel, of course, never managed to produce gold in Berlin, but you may conclude that the King’s investment in him and his lab proved profitable in other, unforeseen ways. Prussian Blue became a strong commercial item for local industry and Dippel Oil grew to a stable standard article in German pharmacology for many generations.

As mentioned, Dippel was far from the only alchemist active in Berlin at the time; among others, there was the Italian Domenico Caetano, the self-declared “Count of Ruggiero”, working as a gold-maker from 1705. Caetano had obtained large advances for expected results, and Dippel came to witness – as a sort of peer reviewer invited by the Prussian King – an experiment in which Caetano actually, according to Dippel, succeeded in producing silver from quicksilver.⁴⁶ Dippel has given a detailed account of the event, one of the few successful transmutations he

⁴⁴ Cf. Kraft (2019, ch. 2.20).

⁴⁵ This is possible on the basis of Senckenberg’s diaries (vol. II, 406), cf. Kraft (2019, chs. 1.13–16), which this section resumes; cf. also Roth (2021). Prussian Blue consists of different iron cyanides after the formula $XFe^{III}[Fe^{II}(CN)_6]$, in which different metals or metalloid compounds may assume the X spot, typically potassium (K), but also sodium (Na) or ammonium (NH_4). The blue color is due to the fact that the compound absorbs red light, triggering an ongoing exchange of electrons between the two iron ions with different valencies, Fe^{III} and Fe^{II} . Kraft (2019) tracks the detailed chemical history of Prussian Blue, also with subsequent developments in the chemical industry.

⁴⁶ Dippel describes the visit to Caetano in Christianus Democritus (1733, 47f), see also Bender (1882, 86). In his (1733), Dippel looks back on his meetings with and knowledge about many other alchemists, such as his encounter with the legendary traveling Greek Archemandrit Lascaris whom Dippel – as against most other claimed alchemists – appreciated. Formal peer review was first introduced by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1731; in Denmark with the founding of the Royal Academy of Science and Letters in 1742, but already in 1705, the Prussian King several times utilized Dippel as peer reviewer of Caetano. It is obvious that the large royal investments in gold-making would have been a driving force behind the interest in making experienced chemists judge occurring claims, experiments, and results.

admitted. Dippel colorfully describes the meeting with Caetano. Dippel and his companions were taken into a room where three to four dozen of loaded guns were displayed on the walls. The Count himself quivered and trembled and behaved as little as a nobleman as a traveling Savoyard with his curiosity cabinet and his marmot, as Dippel says. As a barking impresario, he immediately spread a series of letters and recommendations on a table, documents from Emperor Leopold and his consort, the Elector of Bavaria, and other princes which he kept in a gold case. Patiently, they awaited the end of this charlatanry, and only an excessively flattering compliment from Dippel finally persuaded the Count to conduct an experiment. He sent for seven pounds of quicksilver and proceeded as follows:

This quicksilver he poured into a medium-size glass flask which he placed in the sand room of an oven which he kept ready under the fireplace. When the φ ius was hot, he discreetly brought forward his two tinctures, that for \mathfrak{D} as well as that for \odot , the one for \mathfrak{D} looked like a light-glistening salt, rather powdered, but also shimmering in a reddish, meatlike color, and must have weighed all in all one *kvintlein* [c. 3 gram]; that for \odot was a rather pale red powder, very little, hardly weighing a *skrupel* [a bit more than one gram]. As the φ rius began smoking, he took one *gran* of the white tincture and said, in order to excuse himself, that both tinctures were of the same power and that he for that reason chose the white tincture for the test, because he, as we saw, had more of that than of the red one. As this *gran*, or a sixtieth part of a *kvintlein*, fell into the flask, then seething and fizzling began, as is usual by the tincturing of quicksilver, and as it ceased after some minutes, he grabbed around the neck of the flask with his pincers and let it fall and break on the oven plate, so that it displayed a cake of fine silver which had formed after the inner concave rounding of the flask and, on the underside, was somewhat blackened, no doubt from the sediment of Hungarian wine which was here burned to carbon and had formed itself on the outside of the \mathfrak{D} ⁴⁷ (the alchemist symbols of \odot , \mathfrak{D} , and φ refer to gold, silver, and quicksilver, respectively).

The Count offered to subject the result to a further testing, but we knew well what color silver has and thanked him for his effort, Dippel concludes. Subsequently, however, he rejects that the recipe presented by the Count afterwards would be able to produce this effective tincture, and he declares in hindsight, almost 30 years later, that he is well satisfied with the subsequent execution of this charlatan and fool. So, Dippel was not impressed, but simultaneously he had to recognize the result of the transmutation anyway. But even if he approved of Caetano's experiment, Dippel held that Caetano was an impostor who had just received, bought, or stolen the decisive tincture giving rise to transmutation from some other and actually skillful alchemist, one he might even have murdered to obtain the powder.

47 Christianus Democritus (1733, 49).

Caetano continued not long after by showing an experiment for the whole Prussian political leadership spearheaded by King Friedrich, the “three W’s”, and Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm who had been highly skeptical, scrutinizing the instruments closely and insisted on participating in the experiment himself. Here, Caetano succeeded in convincing the spectators that he first transmuted quicksilver into a pound of gold, then quicksilver into a pound of silver, to conclude by “tingering” half of a bar of copper into gold. Hereafter, he is reported to have handed the King 15 *gran* of the white and 4 *gran* of the red tincture, but as Dippel received from the King a sample of the red tincture for gold production for a test, he found no result.⁴⁸ Caetano seems to have made grandiose vows about gold production against substantial advances, but several times he fled Berlin when deadlines approached, and every time he was caught and sent back to the lab. Alchemists in state service were often treated more like state prisoners rather than free employees, and eventually, the King lost patience with Caetano and had him imprisoned in the fortress of Küstrin with a sharp deadline. Finally, he had him executed there in August 1709 (cf. below) – so maybe it was Dippel’s luck that he had to flee, for completely different reasons, already in the spring of 1707.

Despite his intense lab work, Dippel’s authorship did not die away while in Berlin, nor did his pietism. Already shortly after his arrival to the city, he was invited to meet with his old inspirator, Spener himself. Dippel’s later account of their conversations portrays Spener as surprisingly well-intentioned toward Dippel’s work. Spener referred to his own timidity as the only reason why he did not himself act so incisively in public as did Dippel.⁴⁹ Dippel also did not cease publishing but put out the second volume of his enormous *Weg-Weiser Zum verlohrnen Licht und*

⁴⁸ Anonymous (1861, 342). Caetano was rumored to use tricks like hollow spoons for stirring in whose interior gold or silver lay ready encapsulated in wax which would melt in the hot quicksilver and thus secretly add the noble metals to the experiment. Other tricks might comprise using prepared quicksilver, already amalgamated with silver or gold which could then be extracted through the experiment, or importing the noble metal in the tincture itself which might be gold chloride, AuCl_3 (cf. Kraft 2019, ch. I.11.2). Such fraud, of course, would be able to “produce” small amounts of gold or silver only, but the alchemist would then maintain that he was yet in a preparatory phase and would soon be able to transmute larger amounts.

⁴⁹ Dippel, through Spener’s alchemist son, was invited to visit the old and sick Spener only months before he died in Berlin. Much later, around 1730, he several times refers to Spener’s support at this 1704 meeting in order to counterargue moderate pietists playing out Spener against himself in attacks on his *Vera demonstratio*, cf. his 1731 defense against the attacks from Erdmann Neumeister and Joachim Lange (Eröff II, 1092ff), and his 1732 response to Christophilus Wohlgemüth (Eröff III, 29f). Dippel had dreamt that the latter pen name would refer to the Tübingen theology professor Eberhardt Weißmann who publicly had to deny it; in reality, the author was J.U. Schwentzel.

Recht in 1705 (“Road map to the lost light and right”) in a polemic against the moderate Hallensian pietist Johann Michaëlis’s *Licht und Recht* from 1704. The second volume contains Dippel’s sketch of a philosophy of nature to serve as the foundation of the practice of medicine.⁵⁰ Nature, to Dippel, is a battlefield between the fallen, material world and the divine fire power, the Paracelsian *Archeus*, which still streams through matter. It is matter, in its many different *gestalts*, which is the cause of all diseases, while the force is what the awakened doctor must base his cures upon when he, among material objects, selects certain of them which may direct the force to impinge on certain others. Diseases, in general, are errors in the large cycle of nature emerging from God and terminating again in God. Thus, Dippel’s conception of nature remains firmly theological – but the material, fallen side of nature makes it, on the other hand, open to scientific investigation and medical intervention. Yet, anatomy with its focus upon visible nature, materialism, and mathematical investigation of nature goes astray, for it sees but the surface of things, not the invisible, deeper, effective, and divine force, Dippel holds. Thus, medicine and theology are intimately intertwined aspects of one and the same process: to Dippel, pietist conversion and medical cures both strive for reestablishing the power of the spirit over the body by restoring the eternal divine root of human creatures and reintegrating fallen matter in God.⁵¹

Such ideas give Dippel some interesting distinctions in his philosophy of science. Disciplines like economics, geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, statics, mechanics, optics, and the like are externally useful auxiliary disciplines, which must indeed be cultivated by many, but they remain necessarily superficial.⁵² Here, Dippel anticipates the schools in the philosophy of science wanting to reduce much of science to mere technical utility. The medical doctor, by contrast, cannot be satisfied with reason only, and he cannot act without prayer and supervision from the “divine light” which has all the honor of the potential healing of a patient. It is the animal life force itself, ultimately emanating from the deity, which the doctor must seek to influence. Doctors who do not realize this will degenerate to mere “prescription writers”. The sciences of judgment, such as medical science, physiognomy, astrology, and chiromantics, by contrast, teach us that the single individual soul is unique and not accessible to universal abstractions, a fact that the doctor must take into account in his treatment. With his distinction between external, universal, and useful sciences versus deep, particular, and interpretive sci-

⁵⁰ There are few analyses of Dippel’s philosophy of nature; most thorough is probably Hannak (2013, ch. 6.5).

⁵¹ The close relation between theology and medical cures in Dippel’s “pietist medicine”, cf. Dreyer (in press).

⁵² These issues, cf. vol. II of *Wegweiser*, Eröff II, 1747, 988ff. See also Kraft (2023, 141f).

ences, Dippel approaches an early version of the neo-Kantian distinction between nomothetic and idiographic knowledge; here on a theological basis. True *Chymie* also belongs to the latter, deep category of sciences, for it strives to acknowledge and reconstitute the divine, unified gestalt of light and fire which presently lies separated and concealed within dark, fallen matter. For this reason also, the alchemist tripartition between the three elements of salt, sulphur, and quicksilver must be given up, for there are at least four or six chemical principles, and all of them, in turn, are derivatives of the two elementary forces, light and fire. The noble and real art of chemistry is basically occupied with nothing but “drawing out the pure Gestalt of fire and light, from the curse of the dark and falsely degenerated Gestalts of fire and light, namely the dark soil and the grim matrix and bad-tasting water, or light turned stupid, and elevate them to permanence in fire”.⁵³ In the few hints we have of Dippel’s more specific alchemist procedures, he would often cast the processes in terms of his light-and-fire metaphysics.

All in all, Dippel bases himself, despite his strong efforts in empirical investigations, within the framework of an almost gnostic view of nature, with the foundation in his spiritualist theology.

In early 1706, he published one of his most popular achievements, the booklet *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde* (“A Shepherd and a Flock”, cf. below), calling for full freedom of faith and of expression, and for the prince not to prefer certain sects among his people to others – this was Dippel’s theology transformed to a proposal for a practical policy of religion which he might have hoped would inspire the Prussian King for whom he was working.

Not so. Now, Dippel got enmeshed in one of his recurring theological fights, this time with the Superintendent – the Bishop – of Greifswald in Swedish Pomerania, J.F. Mayer, addressing Lutheran Sweden’s persecution and banishment of pietists, also in its North German provinces. Mayer was agitating his congregations to take action against local pietists, and his campaigns had already succeeded in organizing persecutions of pietists in Hamburg where he held a position before coming to Pomerania.⁵⁴ But Dippel’s attack on Mayer proved to put him in serious trouble. Mayer met with his Swedish superior King Karl XII who had occupied Saxony and stood with his army outside of Leipzig to the south of Prussia, and he urged the

53 “Diese kurtze und gründliche Anatomie dem gantzen Systematis, oder Gebäues der äussern Natur, zeigt uns nun überhaupt in einem Anblick den gantzen Grund der wahrhaftigen Chymie, welche edle und richtige Kunst allein damit beschäftigt ist, daß die reine Feuer- und Lichts-Gestalt, aus dem Fluch der finstern, und falschen degenerirten Feuer- und Lichts-Gestalt, nemlich der finsternen Erde und grimmigen Matrice und dem ungeschmackten Wasser, oder dumm gewordenen Licht, heraus gezogen und zur Beständigkeit im Feuer erhöhet werde”, Eröff I, 1012.

54 Cf. Voss (1970, 46f).

warrior King to put pressure on King Friedrich in Berlin through his envoys there. So, Dippel was arrested on 7 February 1707, and when he escaped from prison a week later, thanks to the swift intervention of Count August, he had to flee the city because of new accusations against him, based on letters with harsh attacks against the Prussian court found in his home. According to rumors, he left on horseback, disguised in a Swedish uniform so that he could pass through Swedish-occupied Saxony in the direction of his native Hesse, bringing with him a small, wicked polemic against the Prussian King – more on these Berlin writings below. On his escape route from Berlin, he would seek shelter with fellow pietists like Count Heinrich XXIV in Köstritz. When he passed Jena on his way to Frankfurt, people are said to have taken him to be the tall Swedish King Karl XII.

Already on 1 March, Dippel was appointed Royal Danish Chancellery Councilor in Altona, after nomination by the ambitious Count Reventlow who had himself recently been appointed General and who had also protested the incarceration of Dippel in February. The fateful friendship between the two may have been inaugurated during one of Reventlow's many diplomatic missions for the Danish King on the continent, and the best guess is they met at the Prussian court in Berlin. The argument behind the royal title probably had to do with Dippel's reputation as a gold-maker, a project with which we know the Danish King Frederik IV was also obsessed at the time, but it could also be motivated in Dippel's strife with Swedish authorities in the North of Germany which indicated that he might serve as a tool for Denmark-Norway in the ongoing Northern War (1700–21). Such issues are not mentioned, however, in the general standard appointment letter regarding Dippel's title, emphasizing that Dippel now becomes a subject of the Danish sovereign and thus obliged to put his knowledge, intellect, and loyalty at the service of him and his realm.⁵⁵ With this appointment, Dippel moved to Danish Altona in the course of 1707.

⁵⁵ The appointment text surprisingly exists (RA: Tyske Kancelli, Indenrigske Afdeling, Patentten 1707, 42–44), and is aimed at “Christian Dippel”, a compromise between Dippel's name and his pseudonym. It is a worn piece of paper, which has been folded twice to form a letter and has later been inserted into the protocol booklet. The outside reads: “Copenhagen, 1st of March 1707. Appointment. For Christian Dippel in Altona as Chancellery Councilor”. In the appointment text itself, somebody has attempted to erase Dippel's name. The document could hardly be identical to the certificate that Dippel was forced to hand over when his title was canceled in 1719 and which the Copenhagen administration reported had been burned in October that year; it is rather the original draft that has been passed on to a scribe in Copenhagen or Altona in 1707. In all cases, the document deviates from the other documents of the protocol which is a booklet with copies continuously added in writing, into which the appointment letter has been inserted later. So, somebody has taken care to preserve the document and archived it. The document thus bears witness to an unknown tension regarding Dippel internally in the German Chancellery in

Why Dippel not only accepted the offer of a royal title, but also to settle in the city, should probably be seen in the context of his situation. He was wanted in Prussia, but the fact that he might also be in danger in other German states was suggested by the intricate destiny of his Berlin alchemist colleague Caetano. In March 1706, he had escaped from his gold-making appointment with the Prussian King, but in May he had been arrested in Hamburg by a militia operating outside of Prussian territory and brought back to Berlin.⁵⁶ So, Dippel might also be in danger, as long as he was within reach of the Prussian King. Altona, it is true, was close to Hamburg and also part of the Holy Roman Empire, but with a royal Danish title, Dippel would be untouchable there. Another motivation may have been that while back in Frankfurt and his native Hesse after his swift escape in the spring of 1707, he was met with demands for payments of an old debt, maybe for the glass hut, which may have made it less attractive for him to stay there.⁵⁷

We do not know exactly when Dippel arrived in Altona in 1707, probably during summer, but in any case he only stayed there for a short period. In the archives of the German Chancellery in Copenhagen there is a supplication from Dippel from the fall of 1707, asking King Frederik IV to grant him three conditions to settle more permanently in Altona: 1) he demands full freedom of religion and protection against being “molested”; 2) the right to practice alchemy without being forced neither directly nor indirectly, as well as full right to leave the territory; 3) freedom to publish a defense against what had happened to him in Berlin. These demands are granted to him by the Danish King in a letter of 15 October 1707, yet with considerable restrictions as to the third claim: he must express himself with full respect for the Prussian King and his officials and keep strictly to what historically happened.⁵⁸ The result of these publication plans may have been Dippel’s poem *Berlinische Arrest-Gedanken*, Berlin Prison Thoughts, which came out the same year; we do not know when or where. Dippel’s demand regarding alchemy is probably based on his knowledge about conditions in Berlin where Caetano, as mentioned, was squeezed by the King with deadlines for gold-making. Already the year before, he had attempted escape and was now in reality kept prisoner with the King impatiently awaiting results from his laboratory. So, Dippel wishes to be secure against such conditions in Altona, a wish the Danish

Copenhagen: somebody has preserved the document, while somebody else has attempted to make invisible to whom it was addressed. Hojer 1829 (1732), 209, claims that Dippel’s appointment only took place in October 1707.

⁵⁶ On Caetano’s various escape attempts, cf. anonymous (1790).

⁵⁷ Cf. Kraft (2019, 98).

⁵⁸ The supplication with the King’s reply is in RA: Tyske Kancelli, Indenrigske Afdeling, Patentent (1707, 193–94).

King admits him. This demand thus also seems to refer to some degree of existing understanding about Dippel's future alchemist activities in Altona, an appointment regarding which Dippel is now demanding guarantees, so that it would not become too restrictive. Conditions on the ground in Altona, however, do not seem to have been pleasant; the protection against being "molested" seems to refer to the fact that the pietist and his servants were suffering persecution in the city.⁵⁹

In all cases, Dippel did not remain in the Danish realm but preferred the Netherlands. At the time, the Netherlands and cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague were known for their relatively wide degree of freedom from which many controversial intellectuals had profited already in the seventeenth century, such as Descartes, Pierre Bayle, and John Locke. Since then, its reputation as a center of freethinking and a publication hub had only grown. It seems probable this would have been a contributing motivation for a Dippel on the run to settle in Amsterdam, to which he arrived already before the turn of the year 1707–08.

Doctor in the Netherlands

So, Dippel's tumultuous year of 1707 took him from Berlin via Frankfurt to Altona, and toward the end of the year he left for the Dutch republic where he would stay the next seven years until 1714. It is one of the lesser-known phases of his life.⁶⁰ Initially, he lived incognito with a doctor in Amsterdam and stayed most of the time until 1710 in the city where he continued with alchemy, medicine, and publications. Maybe a rich local merchant by the name of Christian Meschmann offered

⁵⁹ Cf. Rustmeier (1957, 92). Here, a no longer existing document from the Altona city archives is quoted, according to which Frederik IV should, in 1707, have intervened and, referring to the freedom of belief for sectarians in Altona had granted Dippel's security, also with reference to the fact that Dippel and his domestics had been assaulted in his Altona home by the common mob. We know nothing about who would have agitated which people in Altona to harass him and his servants, but the fact that Dippel, in his own supplication, mentioned the grant against molesting in connection to freedom of faith suggests that he was persecuted in Altona for religious reasons. In any case, it probably gives an idea of why Dippel did not, this time around, find it attractive to stay in the city.

⁶⁰ Parts of the information about Dippel in the Netherlands stem from letters to his friend, the pietist Baron von Geuder in Utrecht. Kraft (2019) (2.4; 2.10; 2.12; 2.13) presents an account on which the biographical information in this section is based. Cf. Briefe an den baron von Geuder, genannt Rabensteiner, Landesarchiv NRW Abteilung Westfalen, 6507m Msc. VII, Briefe von Johann Conrad Dippel (1706–15).

financial support to his alchemist activities.⁶¹ In October that year, he moved to the small town of Warmond on the outskirts of Leiden in order to enroll in the medical faculty at the famous university there. After his doctorate in April 1711, he returned to Amsterdam and then, around 1712, he settled in Maarssen, close to Utrecht, where he bought the stately mansion of Vredenhoef which still exists. He enjoyed increasing success as a doctor and was able to continue the production of remedies and also of Prussian Blue.⁶² The oldest known painting in which Berlin Blue is used as a pigment is the Dutch painter Pieter van der Werff's *Entombment of Christ* of 1709, painted in Rotterdam, and it is probable that he bought his powder from Dippel in Amsterdam (Fig. 5).⁶³

In Amsterdam he published, among other things, his major philosophical work *Fatum Fatuum* (Foolish Necessity) in 1708, a large diatribe against determinism in Early Enlightenment thinkers like Hobbes, Descartes, and in particular Spinoza, whose atheism is directly singled out by the subtitle as the ultimate consequence of attacking free will:

Obvious Proof that all who dispute, in theology and ethics, the freedom of the will of the reasonable creature, are led to, by evident consequences, to cancel freedom in the nature of God himself or decide for Spinoza's atheism. Whereby also the secrets of the Cartesian philosophy are discovered, and it is demonstrated how absurdly this trickery rejects itself, and which damages are thereby caused in society.⁶⁴

The book was probably triggered by Dippel's new residence, for as he says, this new atheist philosophy thrives nowhere as strongly as in Amsterdam. The materialism of Hobbes – this crooked snake from England with his devil's mask, as Dippel vividly paints him – is briefly presented as the premise of the whole movement. To Dippel, the problem is that the mathematical laws of movements in Hobbes include even God himself who for that reason becomes incapable of taking initiative. Dippel held, as indicated, that God possesses a material, passive side, without which he

61 Cf. Hojer (1829, vol. II, 209), speaking about 20,000 Guilders.

62 Cf. Kraft (2023, 147).

63 Cf. Bartoli (2008); already around the same time, Berlin Blue from von Frisch's production was used by painters around the Prussian Court from where the earliest surviving examples date from 1710.

64 "Fatum Fatuum, das ist Die thörige Nothwendigkeit/ oder Augenscheinlicher Beweis/ Daß alle/ die in der Gotts-Gelehrtheit/ und Sitten-Lehre der vernünftigen Creatur die Freyheit des Willens disputiren/ durch offenbahre Folgen gehalten sind/ die Freyheit in dem Wesen Gottes selbst aufzuheben/ oder des Spinosæ Atheismum fest zu setzen// Wobey zugleich die Geheimnisse der Cartesianischen Philosophie entdeckt/ und angewiesen/ wie absurd diese Gauckeley sich selbst vernichtige/ und was für Schaden dardurch im gemeinen Wesen gestiftet worden" (Eröff I, 1115). The year after, a Dutch version appeared.



Figure 5: The first known painting using Berlin or Prussian Blue as a pigment is by the Dutch painter Pieter van der Werff in his rendering of the *Entombment of Christ* from 1709. It is a biblical standard scene with Nicodemus, the holy Virgin, and Mary Magdalene, which had earlier been depicted by Michelangelo, Titian, and Caravaggio, among others. In van der Werff's version, the new blue color plays a central role, and the spectacular blue robe of Mary the Virgin connects her to the heavenly blue of the background. The painting was made in Rotterdam, and it is probable that van der Werff bought his blue pigment from Dippel in Amsterdam.

could not create material things or interact with them, and Hobbes and himself refer to some of the same church fathers, but Dippel did not find that the materiality of God would obey laws of mechanical movement. Descartes, then, is analyzed as a further attempt at improving what is wanting in Hobbes – the two had met and debated in Paris. Descartes realizes that pure materialism could not account for spirit or thought which is why he introduces his famous dualism of extended versus thinking substances. If that idea is followed all the way through, then ani-

mals and plants will be philosophers, Dippel poignantly argues, and it is in order to escape such a consequence that Descartes must make machines out of animals. In this, Dippel refuses to follow him – to him, animals have feelings, reason, and logic, and even to some degree freedom.⁶⁵

Spinoza, then, becomes the third step, combining the two by fusing Hobbes' laws of movement with Descartes' thinking substance into one overarching machine. All things now become local modifications of a determinist universe which has both a material and a spiritual aspect and which is one and the same thing as God. Even if all three of them are "stupid fools", and Dippel piles pejoratives upon Spinoza, he clearly remains most obsessed with Spinoza's system which he recognizes does solve some of the problems in the two other determinists and on which he spends his most thorough analysis (Fig. 6).⁶⁶ The problem, again, is the status of God. He is now both spiritual and material, which certainly appeals to Dippel, but he is also one and the same thing as the whole of the universe, and creation ceases to have happened at a certain point in time and is now continuously ongoing, never to cease. But what annoys Dippel the most is that all sorts of error and evil in the world would now immediately become parts or modifications of God himself. Dippel misses some sort of alleviation of Spinoza's tight-packed universe, so it becomes less solid: he would like to build into it the possibility of a Fall and of human freedom, so that God could not be made responsible for errors committed by human beings.

⁶⁵ Dippel is not completely clear here: sometimes he makes freedom that which distinguishes humans from animals; human beings may freely choose to direct their desire toward the material world or toward God (*Fatum fatuum*, Eröff II, 1747, 75), other times all creatures possess some degree of freedom (*Des thierischen Lebens*, Eröff II, 1747, 186), even if animals are more well-fitted to their life and in that sense more reasonable. On the other hand, this degree of similarity between humans and animals implies that sexuality is deprived of sin. Animals are not sinful, and as sex belongs to the animal life of humans, it cannot be sinful. Sin, by contrast, is the self-chosen turning away from God, toward oneself and this world (*Fatum fatuum*, Eröff II, 1747, 13).

⁶⁶ Lessing thus found, much later, that Dippel was the author with the deepest understanding of Spinoza. Lessing's friend Klose said: „Imgleichen wurde Spinozas Philosophie der Gegenstand seiner Untersuchungen. Er las diejenigen, welche ihn hatten widerlegen wollen, worunter Bayle nach seinem Urtheil derjenige war, welcher ihn am Wenigsten verstanden hatte. Dippel war ihm der, welcher in des Spinoza wahren Sinn am Tiefsten eingedrungen" (quoted from Hoops 1891, XVIII,14). Some later authors echo Lessing's assessment, such as Bell (1984): "despite his implacable hostility, he seems to have grasped the structure of his system better than many of his contemporaries" (10), even summarizing his metaphysics "with every appearance of accuracy" (172), while he still finds that Dippel's real understanding remains of "limited accuracy" (11); others are less generous, such as Freudenthal (1895) claiming that Dippel was a "harebrained" person simply misinterpreting Spinoza (51), or Schroeder (1987) judging that Dippel should simply be left out of the history of Spinoza receptions (21).

Another interesting thing is that Dippel realizes how the hypothesis that existing religions are mere results of deliberate deceit may result from Spinoza's doctrine. Spinoza's pantheist – or atheist – vision of God as equal to the universe makes all existing theologies false and this falsity now would be a result of selfish actors operating in this world. It is powerful persons, clerics, and regents of different sorts who have cynically invented religious doctrines as strong political tools of governance, fooling ordinary people. It sounds as if Dippel knew about the infamous, clandestine "Treatise on the three Impostors" which circulated in the Netherlands during these years, and which claimed exactly that the implication of Spinozism would be that Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad were nothing but political fraudsters.⁶⁷ In any case, Dippel mentions the impostor hypothesis only in order to refute it – but we shall later find how he approaches it after his Danish experiences in 1719. Finally, Dippel addresses the French philosopher Malebranche who is interpreted as an attempt to improve on Spinoza by pulling again God a bit out of the material world which regains a certain autonomy. Yet, every minimal event still requires the intervening activity of God – Malebranche's famous "occasionalism". Again, Dippel ironizes: if I drink a glass of wine, God must act in my act of drinking as well in that modification of matter which decides the taste of the wine.

On the positive side, Dippel spent the first part of the book on his theological argument that God must possess free will, appearing in his voluntary acts of creation in which he creates, among other things, free creatures in possession of free will. Toward the end of the book, Dippel adds the political argument that a well-ordered civil society would dissolve under a determinist doctrine: if people cannot voluntarily accept to take responsibilities, appear as parties of deals, contracts, and other relations of trust, then ordered societies will break up, and people without inhibitions will follow their every whim or desire. Atheists are described as animals who just want a doctrine to legitimize their obeying any impulse. It is a bit funny to find the radical Dippel here as a Hobbesian defender of regents and legislations of civil societies in order to prevent the wicked from flying at each other's throats as well as keeping them from assaulting the good. He does not address, however, Spinoza's ideas of freedom nor of the possible amendments of reasoning. We shall return to Dippel's unfinished business with Spinoza.

Dippel maintains that neither humans nor God can be understood without free will, and if you reject human free will, God's freedom would be next. By contrast, Dippel thinks that the increasing mathematical understanding of nature ad-

⁶⁷ Early versions of the treatise of the three impostors are believed to have originated in Spinozist circles in the 1680s; oftentimes, manuscripts of the treatise were titled "l'Esprit de Monsieur Benoît de Spinoza". Most often, it circulated in handwritings; the first known dated version is from 1709; the first printed version is from the Hague, 1719. Cf. Berti et al. (ed.) 1996.

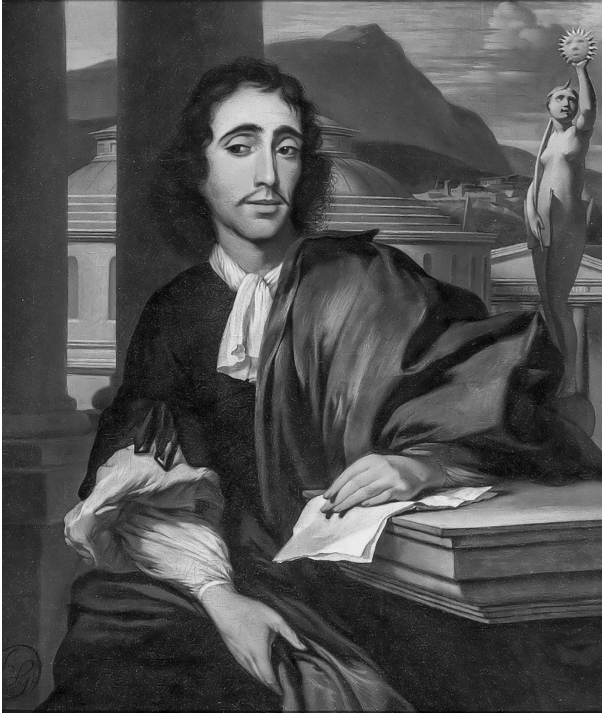


Figure 6: It was hardly an accident that it was during his stay in Amsterdam that Dippel felt the need to launch his great attack on determinism in early Enlightenment under the title of *Fatum Fatuum* – foolish necessity. Amsterdam was, as he said, a main seat for the new determinist materialism, and none was so harshly attacked in his book as the famous and infamous son of Amsterdam Baruch de Spinoza of the generation before. His name was already a feared pejorative for atheism, hereticism, and democracy, and Dippel became his first German critic. Simultaneously, however, none of the other determinists challenged and occupied Dippel himself to the same degree as did Spinoza. Barend Graat's *Portrait of a Man in Front of a Sculpture* (1766) is believed to depict Spinoza.

dresses the surface of things only. Of course, this is in a certain sense correct, but to Dippel this implies a severe shortcoming in the nascent natural sciences, and he demands a deeper insight into the essence of things which may be achieved by reason, investigation, as well as by pietist-hermetic spiritual rebirth. His broad notion of experience thus unites a spiritualist emphasis on revelation as experience with a scientific emphasis on experience as rational reflections on empirical investigations. The result is a curious combination of empiricism and spiritual metaphysics – which may find concrete example in his own alchemist investigations. Contrarily, his skepticism against the purely theoretical systems of existing

scholarly institutions, based on theological and philosophical tradition, is palpable – he compares the academic dependence on Aristotle with the belief in the Easter bunny.⁶⁸

Dippel was now so famous that it was possible for him to publish, in Amsterdam in 1709, a no less than 1,200 pages compilation of all his writings up to now, titled *Eröffneter Weg zum Frieden mit Gott und alle Creaturen* – The Road Opened to Peace with God and all Creatures – featuring exactly *Fatum Fatuum* as its crowning achievement. Not bad for a 35-year-old. The book would grow to three enormous chronological volumes with its republication in 1747 after his death, now exceeding 3,000 pages.

Also in the Netherlands, Dippel had success with his remedies developed during his Berlin years, and it was probably this fact that gave him the idea to become a doctor, also in a more formal, academic sense. So, at the already then highly-regarded University of Leiden, he signed up at the medical faculty and defended, in 1711, a Latin dissertation titled *Vitae animalis morbus et medicina* – that is, “The Disease and Cure of Animal Life”, including also the animal-spiritual aspect of human life.⁶⁹ Here, among many other things, he marshals his theory about Dippel’s Oil as a universal remedy: 30–40 drops of it would calm fever as well as cramps and induce a sweet and wholesome sleep. It did smell terribly but had a pleasant taste, Dippel claimed, and this small part of his dissertation became the basis of the increasing fame of Dippel’s Oil. The dissertation also continued his attack on the determinists, and it was soon translated into Dutch and German. The local medical faculty also provided an important sounding board; here, the famous doctor Herman Boerhaave was authoritative: he applied Cartesianism on medical science and presented strong arguments that the body is a purely material *res extensa* and should be medically treated as such. This was directly against Dippel’s more vitalist or psychosomatic ideas of the individual as consisting of the body, spirit, and soul alike, where the invisible parts may often be medically more relevant than the visual parts. Boerhaave had planned a strong opposition at Dippel’s doctoral defense, but after Dippel had explained to him his main points, Boerhaave withdrew, and Dippel praises the great doctor for being unprejudiced, unarrogant, and open to change his viewpoint faced with evidence – and that Dippel himself contributed to leading him away from purely mathematical proofs in the direction

⁶⁸ The common rejection of mechanicism in the three doctors Dippel, Johann Samuel Carl, and Carl’s teacher Georg Ernst Stahl, as well as the connections between the three of them, see Geyer-Kordesch (2010, chapter IV.3).

⁶⁹ The German translation appearing in 1713 speaks about “Animal-spiritual life” because Latin “animalis” means “animal” as well as “spiritual”.

of chemical experiments in medicine.⁷⁰ But he also introduces the dissertation with a strong declaration of free, enlightened, and independent research. For why is he now doctoring in medicine instead of theology? Well,

... medicine has, along with the natural sciences supporting it, in our time almost solely the happy destiny among the learned that it and it alone opens the road to something better and higher for all who make experiences in it and speak without pretense and express their reports without danger, without binding themselves to the rules and words of anybody, and may make use of this freedom, decently as a righteous human and an industrious investigator of truth and a disciple of true wisdom. (Eröff II, 1747, 128)

This was also an indirect attack on the lack of similar freedom at the theological faculties. Dippel argues against a purely mechanical medicine and argues psychosomatically with cases from his own practice that patients be treated not only as bodies but as bodily-spiritual wholes, which may hence be influenced both by drugs, diets, and virtuous living. On the other hand, theology is painted as unfree, prejudiced, and forcing its practitioners to live in danger, binding themselves to given rules, becoming hypocrites and unfree disciples of false wisdom.

Unsurprisingly, he would soon continue his classic attacks on protestant orthodoxy, now turned against Dutch Calvinism presently surrounding him, in a small piece from the same year. In the shape of a dialogue, it assaulted both Calvin's predestination doctrine and his infamous burning of Michael Servetus as a heretic in Geneva.⁷¹ The booklet *Alea belli musulmanici* (The Muslim Wargame, also 1711) compared Christian and Muslim orthodoxy and claimed among other things that Islam, a strong force in south-eastern Europe, was superior to protestant orthodoxy and would be able to dampen its arrogance. Satan as a murderer had even greater influence in Lutheran orthodoxy than among the Turks who, by comparison, were more worthy than others to influence the governments of orthodoxy.⁷² Dippel refers to the Swedish King Karl XII's actual attempts to forge an alliance with the Turks which he interprets as an eschatological event. He observes the expression of anti-orthodox religious toleration on both sides which might terminate with completely eradicating orthodoxy on all of the European continent and so trigger the advent of the last times. As a citizen of the world, who has traveled through many countries, Dippel says, he sees two major political problems of the time: the empty orthodoxy in the churches and the excesses

⁷⁰ Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 358.

⁷¹ Published under the pseudonym "Kleinmann", titled *Wahrhaffte Historie Von Johanne Calvinio, Wie er mit MICHAEL SERVETO und andren verfahren* – The True Story of John Calvin, How He treated Michael Servetus and Others (Eröff II, 489–510).

⁷² Voss (1970, 52).

and evil at the courts. But you cannot demand to get good publicity – so Dippel concludes his booklet addressing both parties, clerics and princes – if you act in a wicked manner and cheekily gag the mouths of people.

The pamphlet was republished in 1714; many argue that this provocation may have been responsible for Dippel's sudden exit from the Netherlands that year; another reason might be debt in his large Maarssen mansion, which he was unable to pay.⁷³ Dippel's high standards of virtue and piety may not always have included paying debts on time. He left Amsterdam in great haste on a ship destined for Hamburg, in all probability on 9 September 1714.⁷⁴ It turned out to be a dramatic voyage caught up in a storm, where the captain long kept the vessel on the inside of the Dutch Wadden Sea islands, but as they entered open sea, the ship was wrecked, mast and sail broke off, and the wreck only reached Hamburg after three and a half days' fragile journey. Now it proved lucky that the Chancellery Councilor title from seven years earlier lay ready for use. With Dippel in Hamburg, contacts with Reventlow in the twin city were resumed, but we do not know when or how exactly that took place, presumably in late 1714 or early 1715.

So, this was the character now arriving in Danish Altona. A reborn pietist, pious and virtuous at least in his own estimation, and famous for his radical, challenging writings, targeting Lutheran and other churches. A no less famous alchemist who might not yet have found a stable way to gold, but who had discovered and marketed a handful of other remedies that had proven commercially attractive, and from which he seems to have had a sizeable income after Berlin. A doctor sought by an increasing stream of patients of whom many seemed satisfied with

73 Still other reasons may be failed medical cures or lack of alchemist success. Cf. Buchner (1858, 278) and Kraft (2023, 149).

74 In a letter dated 9 September (but without year) to his benefactor von Geuder in Utrecht, Dippel mentions that he must abruptly leave for Hamburg the very same day and remain there for a considerable period. Von Geuder is instructed to keep secret his new residence. In the NRW archive *Briefe an den Baron von Geuder*, the letter is tentatively dated to 1710–11, but as Dippel mentions the liquidation of his duties in the house in Maarssen, his last Dutch resort – which he lays, to a large degree, on the shoulders of von Geuder – the letter rather stems from 1714. He keeps corresponding with von Geuder from Hamburg, far into 1715 – maybe because mail connections to Utrecht were better from there than from Altona. The main issue of this correspondence is the house in Maarssen and Dippel's debts to von Geuder in that connection. He does not at all mention either Altona or Reventlow here; on the contrary, he speaks now and then about returning to the Netherlands and even to spend the rest of his life there, and the house remained a property of von Geuder – yet hired out from 1719 – and only sold by von Geuder in 1723 when it seemed like Dippel would never escape prison. But why is Altona not at all mentioned in their 1715 correspondence? Would Dippel hide from his sponsor von Geuder that he now had a new sponsor in Altona? During his Altona period, Dippel seems to have spent considerable time in Hamburg, staying with the architect L.C. Sturm and also straying to other towns of North Germany (Wotschke 1931, 123).

what he was able to offer. And a frenetic author pouring out writings into the germinating international European public sphere — long, learned treatises on God, nature, philosophy, and medicine, but also brief, pointed, satirical pamphlets turned against anyone who came in his way, particularly in the theological field. A religious and political critic, a scientist, a cosmopolitan, and a polemical intellectual. This was a type of which the Enlightenment would soon see more examples – but there was not yet so many of them. Dippel was among the first of its kind. No wonder he was already famous and infamous across the borders of Northern Europe.

Goldmaker in Altona

The history leading up to Dippel's sojourn in Danish Altona goes back to his appointment as Danish "Kancelliraad", Chancellery Councilor, in March 1707, as mentioned probably motivated in his strife with the Swedish General superintendent – Bishop – J.F. Mayer in Greifswald in Swedish Pomerania on the south coast of the Baltic. Dippel was forced to flee Berlin in February 1707 and he now emerged as an enemy of Swedish rule and might for that reason have interested Denmark-Norway, embroiled in the Great Northern War (1700–21) in shifting alliances with Russia and North German states against Greater Sweden dominating the Baltic Sea.⁷⁵ There is a special irony in the fact that he who had nominated Dippel for the title was Count Reventlow whom he had probably met at the court in Berlin and who would later become his nemesis in Altona. Dippel's royal title was formal and did not imply actual political assignments, but this Danish connection was the prerequisite when Dippel was again called to Altona in late 1714.

Altona was part of the Duchies of Sleswick-Holstein, of which the Danish King served as a Duke, and with its 12,000 inhabitants Altona was the second city of the Danish realm, after Copenhagen, followed by Bergen in Norway.⁷⁶ The language of Altona was German and Low German, like in most of Holstein in general. It was the most important trade port of the Danish realm on the west face of the

⁷⁵ Two recent, detailed accounts of that war: Andersen (2021) and Christensen (2022).

⁷⁶ The Danish King shared the title of Duke with the Duke of Gottorp, at the time the young Karl Friedrich, and the two Duchies were subdivided into a mosaic of smaller territories, governed by one or the other of the two, while considerable parts were governed by the two in common. Altona sat in the County of Pinneberg, also under the Danish Holstein administration. At that time, relations between the two Dukes were inimical; Gottorp was allied with the Swedes in the ongoing Northern War. The southerly Duchy of Holstein – but not the more northerly Sleswick – simultaneously formed part of the Holy Roman Empire, so that the two competing Dukes of Holstein were German princes and so obliged by decisions made by Emperor Karl VI and his government in Vienna.

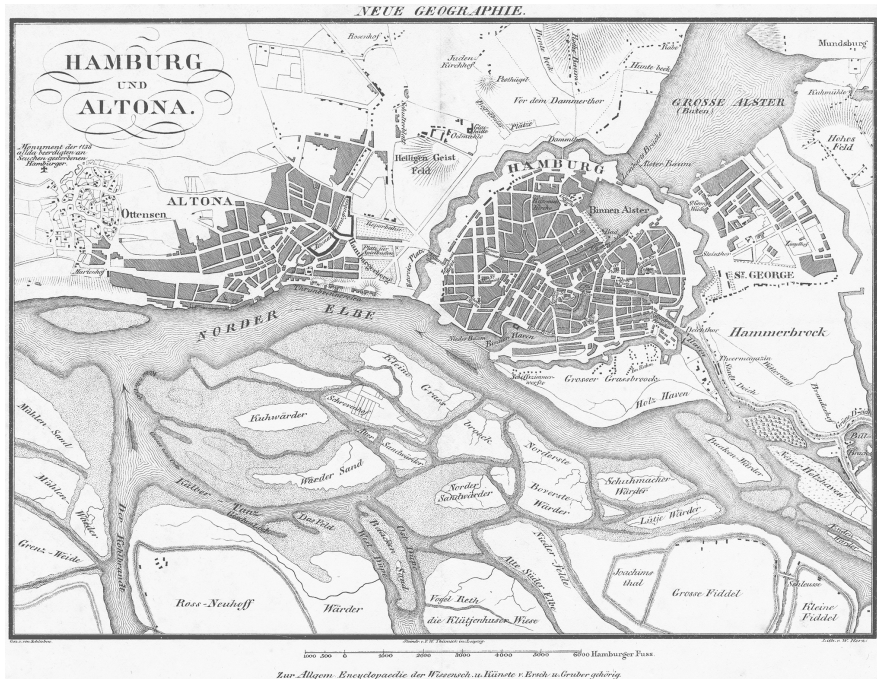


Figure 7: When the county of Pinneberg came under Danish rule in 1640 the city of Altona was part of the acquisition. Already then it was a flowering town, among other things because of the relatively wide freedom of faith enjoyed by Altonians. It had been granted in order to attract craftsmen and merchants with dissenter faiths to the city. In 1664, the city acquired Danish trading rights and became the first free port of Northern Europe, soon growing to the second city of the Danish realm, after Copenhagen. It became a thorn in the side of nearby Hamburg, and the two twin cities lived in double competition and symbiosis. Hamburg was the larger and stronger city, while Altona offered larger degrees of economic and religious liberty and enjoyed continuous support from the Danish power center of Copenhagen. This map shows the twin city in 1833, but the overall structure was present already in early eighteenth century.

Jewish peninsula and enjoyed a series of privileges, such as larger religious toleration than in other parts of the strictly Lutheran Denmark-Norway – or in nearby Hamburg. This is why the city attracted craftsmen with dissident faiths such as Jews, Catholics, Calvinists, and Mennonites, but for the same reason it also became a sort of safe haven for religious and philosophical dissidents and free-thinkers fleeing persecution, particularly from North-German states but also, e.g., from Denmark-Norway and Sweden. They might settle here and live relatively peacefully under pseudonyms, a practice that only continued to grow through the eighteenth century. The city was in competition with nearby Hamburg, and al-

ready then it was said the name of the city had its base in the fact that Hamburgers found it was “all zu nah” – all too near (Fig. 7).⁷⁷

Altona had suffered a disaster the year before, in 1713, when the city was burned down by the Swedish Field Marshal Magnus Stenbock. It happened on 8–9 January as an act of revenge for the Danish siege and shelling of the fortress city of Stade in the Swedish Duchy of Bremen-Verden on the south bank of the Elbe the year before. Swedish troops walked house to house and set fire to buildings with torches and pitch wreaths. Already at the time, it was seen by many as a war crime because Altona was an unfortified city, and estimations mention that around 70% of the city burned to the ground (Fig. 8). In March, King Frederik IV sent his new brother-in-law Count Reventlow and his wealthy consort Benedicte von Brockdorff to Altona in order to conduct reconstructions, physically as well as institutionally. The City Council of Altona had fled for the advancing Swedes and had to be reconstructed from the bottom up. The new “Overpræsident” – Chief President – Count Reventlow was an experienced officer and diplomat, one of the wealthiest and mightiest noblemen of the realm; his spouse, the Countess, may have been the richest noblewoman. They were Dippel’s peers, agewise around 40, on top of their game.

So, it was a particularly powerful married couple who now presided over the rebuilding of a city. Count Reventlow was the son of Grand Chancellor Conrad von Reventlow and, as such, born into the Danish political elite in 1671 (Fig. 9).⁷⁸ King Christian V was his godfather, and he had a good match ready for him: his own daughter Anna Christiane Gyldenløve who unfortunately died young. Reventlow became close to Crown Prince Frederik of the same age (from 1699, King Frederik IV), and after a Grand Tour to France and England with an emphasis on military and diplomacy he soon held top positions. At 19 years old, he became county governor in Haderslev, and before 30 he was the Master of the Royal Hunt with forestry of

⁷⁷ Whether the origin of the name Altona actually should be “all zu nah”, all too near, as seen from Hamburg, or whether it is rather “An den alten Aa”, by the old stream, remains contested. As compared to other similar toponyms, the latter appears most probable as seen from historical linguistics. But in that case, “all zu nah” is a joke or a folk etymology appearing at an early point, expressing the state of fact that many in Hamburg would have good reasons to regret the existence of a nearby, competing city undercutting Hamburg’s custom rates for commerce. The folk etymology was connected to more or less mythological stories such as that about the fisherman Joachim von Lohe who placed his tavern on the borderline brook of Hamburg, a place with dubious reputation where he served his home-brewn red beer, attracting craftsmen and fishermen, some of them settling and eventually forming a fishing village. The City Council of Hamburg found that this outlet was an unfair competitor to the privileged inns of the city and thus was “all zu nah” (<https://www.hamburg.de/sehenswertes-altona-altstadt/>).

⁷⁸ Portraits of the couple are sketched after *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, 1. and 3. edition.

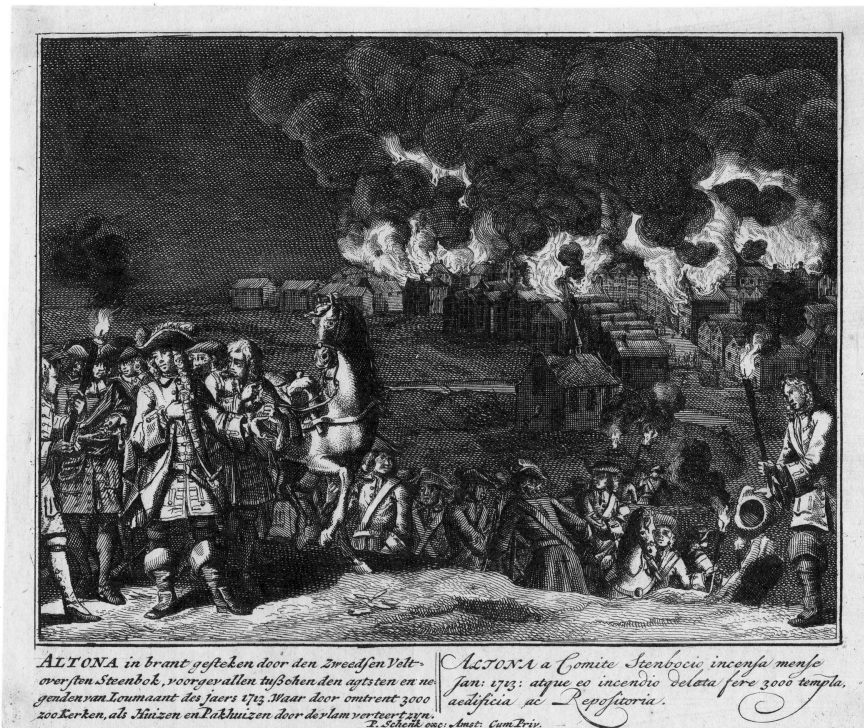


Figure 8: Important parts of the Great Northern War (1700–21) took place in the North of Germany and the Duchies of Sleswick-Holstein, partly because of the Swedish alliance with the Dukes of Gottorp, who ruled considerable parts of the two Duchies in a strained relation to the Danish King, also a Duke of the same double structure. The overall opposition of the war pitted an alliance of enemies against successful Greater Sweden, such as Denmark-Norway, Russia, and Saxony-Poland. These countries formed changing alliances to carve chunks out of Sweden, having made of the Baltic Sea almost a Swedish inland lake. The attacks on Sweden had the result that the young Swedish warrior King Karl XII embarked on a decades-long campaign in Eastern Europe, ending up in Turkey, until he went back and was finally killed in a battle against Denmark-Norway in 1718. During the war, Danish troops conquered the Swedish Duchy of Bremen-Verden on the south bank of the Elbe in 1712, laying siege to its capital, Stade. As a revenge, the year after, the Swedish army burnt down Danish Altona on the north side of the river. The Swedes demanded the payment of a fire tax from the city which it was unable to pay, and then Swedish troops walked into the city, igniting houses. As Altona was no fortified city, the allies against Sweden claimed it was unheard of among Christian nations to let an innocent, open city perish in ashes. When Dippel arrived there in late 1714, the city would most of all resemble something between a sooty ruin and a construction site.

the realm as his responsibility. As a top officer he was active, in the 1690s, both in the Danish-Norwegian military and in the Holy Roman Empire with frequent missions on the continent; as a diplomat, he participated in forging the alliance of Denmark-Norway with Saxony-Poland against Sweden. In periods, he served as second-in-command to the famous Austrian commander Prince Eugen, and in several important battles of the Spanish War of Succession the imperial army was commanded by Reventlow. In 1707, he was named General of the Infantry of the Danish army, he received, as Knight of the Elephant and Privy Councilor, the highest decoration and rank, and in 1709, he was appointed to lead what proved to be Denmark's last attempt to win back from Sweden the Eastern provinces of Scania, Halland, and Blekinge. He had to admit defeat, however, in March 1710 after the battle at Helsingborg, probably due to failing support from Frederik IV who sacked him the next month. That was a severe blow to Reventlow who would never again lead the army. In 1712, he participated in coordinating Danish-Russian military action against the Swedish army in the Duchies, and this engagement in the southern borderlands of the realm might have fed into his appointment to lead the reconstruction of burnt-out Altona in 1713. Rumors had it that it also supported his appointment that Frederik saw an opportunity to get him away from court, where Reventlow had been very critical of the fact that the King had, the year before, abducted Reventlow's much younger half-sister Anna Sophie from the castle of Clausholm after a masked ball at the castle of Koldinghus and taken her as his mistress. Reventlow did participate in "the great deliberation" of 1718 when the King consulted a circle of leading men about how to end the Great Northern War, and where Reventlow also produced sharp criticisms of the King.⁷⁹ Maybe for these reasons, he never reached the absolute top as a Grand Chancellor but he remained one of the richest and most influential men of the realm with his large estates in Sleswick, Holstein, Zealand, and Lolland. So, when Reventlow needed to exploit his contact to the King during the case against Dippel it was not immediately a connection without certain knots. In practice, he was the brother-in-law of the King, but still with an edgy prehistory that might raise issues. Probably, this was why his access to the King oftentimes went through Reventlow's friend Christian Sehested, leader of the German Chancellery in Copenhagen and thus foreign minister as well as member of the State Council.

Countess Reventlow, Benedicte von Brockdorff, was no less powerful than her husband (Fig. 10). Already at 13 years old, she was married to the wealthy landed proprietor Jørgen Skeel on the castle of Gammel Estrup on the Jutish peninsula of

⁷⁹ Cf. Holm (1895, 303).



Figure 9: Christian Detlev von Reventlow was already an experienced official, diplomat, and top officer when he was sent to Altona in 1713 by King Frederik IV in order to reconstruct the city after the “Swedish fire” the same year. He had come to know Dippel during his stay in Berlin in 1704-07, and when Dippel was jailed in early 1707 Reventlow was not only among those demanding his release, he swiftly extended his support to persuade Frederik IV to appoint Dippel a Danish Chancellery Councilor in Altona. In 1714, Reventlow again called him to Altona, presumably with the idea that he would make gold and thus contribute to the rebuilding of the city.

Djursland. Skeel died young in 1695, however, while she, 18 years old, was pregnant with their first child. This implied that she inherited not only the large Gammel Estrup but also a series of other estates which she fused into the independent manor estate of Gammel Estrup in a defiant gesture aimed against the new rank

nobility of absolutism whose estates should be fiefdoms granted by the King. By means of her marriage to Reventlow in the year 1700, then, two large Danish estate empires were brought together. At an early point, she acquired a reputation of being both avaricious and greedy in financial matters. This comes to the fore in the anecdote about the enormous baroque epitaph which she, as a widow of tender years, had constructed for her spouse Jørgen Skeel in the church of Auning. She hired a European-level sculptor, the Flemish-Danish Thomas Quellinus who – directly against the King’s orders of a modest grave monument – added a whole chapel wing with a huge and magnificent marble tableau. Here, the statue of Skeel rests in full periwig and armor on a heavy, red sarcophagus, surrounded by goddesses for justice, prudence, reputation, and moderation, while he waves his arm up toward the central figure of the whole epitaph, a depiction of none other than the young widow herself. Also in white marble is the ancestral tree of Skeel on the left side of the monument and Brockdorff’s own on the right. But in her ancestral table, the crowns have been chopped off, and the coats of arms remain empty. One explanation goes that this is because she herself never came to rest here, but a competing explanation claims that when Quellinus showed up on the castle to collect his salary she refused to pay him more than half, after which he went down to the church in anger, polished blank her coats of arms and cut off the crown signs of the shields. Later, circulating rumors claimed that she enriched herself on supplies to the army which her own husband was commanding in Scania during 1709–10, and in general there are few descriptions of her that do not mention her stinginess and covetousness. Even her grandson and prime minister of Denmark, C.D.F. von Reventlow, claimed that her greed was insatiable. But there is no doubt that she was also an impressive lady in more positive respects: her prudence and energy, her efficiency as an estate manager, and her affection for her husbands are also noted, and with the Count’s manifold extrovert occupancies, the administration of their vast empire of estates seems to have been in her hands. No matter to what degree the rumors about Brockdorff’s economical behavior are true, however, they would come to play a central role in the case against Dippel, for circulating legends about her rapacity and possessiveness were also heard in Altona, and the financial activities of the Countess would prove to be a main theme in the development of the case.

The Reventlows may have been the ultimate power couple of Denmark-Norway at the time. They were not only wealthy and powerful but also experienced and skillful administrators with large networks in the Danish realm as well as abroad. They exercised extremely wide authority in the reconstruction of Altona, also because of the flight of the magistrate by the arrival of the Swedes in 1713 – Reventlow resolutely sacked the remaining mayors for their “incompetence and drinking” the next year, and the Comital couple quickly proved able to speed up reconstruction with new stone houses sponsored by considerable tax exemp-



FRU BENEDICTE MARGRETHE BROCKDORFF
GREVINDE REVENTLOW,
f. 1678 † 1739.

Figure 10: Benedicte von Brockdorff was a skilled administrator and noble lady who had inherited, as a young widow by the age of 18, a large portfolio of estates in Eastern Jutland and Lolland as a result of the early death of her first husband Jørgen Skeel. In her marriage with Count Reventlow she governed their common, extensive estate empire. The extent to which circulating rumors about her stinginess and greed are correct is hard to determine but, in Altona, she and Reventlow formed a strong partnership as a presidential couple invested with vast powers. In the case against Dippel he believed that she, in particular, was the active force in his prosecution.

tions for those willing to build – even if their brusque activity level was also sure to generate local friction. Paving of the streets, street sweeping, and fire insurance were initiated, a penitentiary, an orphanage, and a poorhouse were established; a new harbor was constructed. The later splendid prospect of the city, the

Palmaille, was turned into a public avenue. The two of them led a vast, high profile household in their Altona residence with their 11 children and a large staff.⁸⁰

Soon, the Count decided to call Dippel to the city as an alchemist. He could produce gold to speed up reconstruction, and a lab was organized for him.⁸¹ The city to which he arrived in late 1714 must have resembled nothing more than a giant construction site. Initially, things seem to have gone well, and Dippel is reported to concur about religious matters with Frederik IV, the Danish King taking increasing interest in the growing pietist movement.

We do not know much about Dippel's early years in Altona. There is a letter to his brother of 19 September 1716, but it only addresses theological matters and brings no information about his life in the city. He published little in the period; in 1717, he interfered in a local Sleswick-Holsatian strife between the orthodox Lutheran Theodor Dassow in Rendsburg and the pietist court preacher Henrik Muhlius in Gottorp, with a pamphlet titled *Unpartheyische Gedanken* (Impartial Thoughts) under the pseudonym of Cordatus Libertinus (the Hearty Libertine). Here, he attacked Dassow and the orthodoxy, defended a radical version of Spener as well as

80 Where the Reventlows had their residence in Altona, also in periods housing Dippel, I have not been able to locate. Contemporary sources speak about it as a mansion. The Palmaille, originally a ball-playing lane, only later developed into the present representative avenue, but already at the time it comprised some large estates with gardens down toward the Elbe, so that might be a candidate. Another possibility is the Elbestraße along the river where the next Chief President von Schomburg took residence in the 1730s.

81 It is the standard assumption that a motivation of Reventlow and the Danish government for calling Dippel to Altona was gold-making but it is not evidenced by any documents by Danish authorities nor by Dippel or Reventlow themselves. In 1707, alchemy had been addressed in Dippel's supplication and the King's answer regarding his first stay in the city, cf. above, so the issue was in play already back then. But if the "Gecken-Spiegel" (Fool's Mirror, below) pamphlet against Dippel from May 1719 is actually the initiative of Reventlow, then it expresses the Count's deep disappointment with the absence of promised gold deliveries from Dippel. According to Hojer (1829) (org. 1732), vol. II, 209, Reventlow "as Chief President of Altona ordered him to administer such a task and soon let some secret but costly processes be elaborated under his direction". A May 1715 letter from the Hamburg mathematician and pedagogue Christoph Heinrich Dornemann to Dippel's old Pietist professor Johann Heinrich May in Giessen, is informing him that Dippel was now busy with laboratory work: "I suspect that he is searching for gold, although he found a medicine lately, and our gentlemen pastors are also looking for the same with him". (Wotschke 1931, 122–23; Kraft 2023, 149). Those gentlemen were the Hamburg clerics Johann Theodor Heinson, senior pastor of St. Peter's Church, and Johann Friedrich Winckler, senior pastor of St. Nikolai Church, who "did their utmost to find the lapidem". So, according to Kraft, Dippel collaborated in his Altona lab with top Lutheran clergy from Hamburg. Gold-making, in any case, much occupied Frederik IV and the Danish government in the period; in 1708, the Italian Grimaldi had been hired to work in a lab at Rosenborg Castle in central Copenhagen; he was later jailed for fraud. In 1723, another Italian, G.G. Maldini, resumed work there, cf. Fjelstrup (1906) and Fink-Jensen (2016).

the controversial Danish baptist Otto Strandiger in Flensburg, who had been banished from the realm in 1716 after many years of separatist activity. It concludes with a poem celebrating the death throes of Lutheran orthodoxy: “Hier lieg ich armer Wurm/ Orthodoxie genannt/ Das liebe **Sachsen** ist mein rechtes Vaterland/ Ich bin in **Wittenberg** gezogen und gebohren/ Doch habe den Credit fast überall verlohren” – I, the poor worm of orthodoxy in Saxonian Wittenberg, now lay dying and have lost credibility almost everywhere. Finally, Dippel shows his colors: It is *Democritus* who is now singing my death song and will bury me, the poor worm concludes.⁸² Dippel had not lost his poisonous pen.

Dippel lived in an apartment in the Reventlow residence, but in periods he seems to have moved out and into the city where he lived with the author and blue-dyer Jacob Denner who was also a preacher for the Mennonite sect of “Dümpeler” or “Dompelaer”, that is, dippers, because they practiced adult baptism with complete submersion under water.⁸³ Dippel, of course, was known for the discovery of Prussian Blue, which was already now in use as a pigment, so both radical religion and blue-dyeing would have been common interests of the two of them, and later Altonian pietist groups even assumed the name of “Blau-farber”, blue-dyers. Dippel published, in 1718, a satire over forced infant baptism, particularly of Dümpeler children, such as it was practiced by the orthodox Lutheran Dean Fleischer in Altona’s main church, the Trinity Cathedral – a pamphlet to which we shall return.⁸⁴

But during the almost three years of 1717–19, a case against Dippel developed in Altona, ending with a draconian sentence: banishment for life to the island of Bornholm. How on earth could this happen? Why should the pious gold-maker go to jail?

⁸² The 1716 letter to Dippel’s brother: Eröff III, 625ff. The quote from *Unpartheyische Gedancken*: Cordatus Libertinus (1717, 15). See also Rustmeier (1956).

⁸³ Winkle (1988, 23).

⁸⁴ It came out anonymously under the title *Glückwünschender Zuruff An die Würdige und andächtige Herren Gerichts-Diener der Stadt Altona* – Happy Wishes to the Worthy and Decent Servants of Justice in the City of Altona (1718). More about it below.

II The Case Against Dippel in Altona

Dippel said that he did not himself look up the Nordic revolution, but that a thread had pulled him all of the time and taken him there. (Senckenberg, 1732)⁸⁵

The Brief Version

This is how the standard version of the reason for Dippel's banishment from Altona goes: Dippel offended Altona's Chief President Reventlow in a letter to King Frederik IV, 21 December 1717. Here, he attacked the Reventlows for accepting bribes to influence the outcome of court cases. Then, a Commission was appointed to investigate this libel, and it sentenced him, in the fall of 1719, to lifelong banishment to Bornholm. All of these three claims, however, are erroneous.⁸⁶

This brief version covers a considerably more complicated process involving the Altona City Council, the government in Copenhagen, two successive commissions, and many other suspects and accused in Altona, all tied together by an extraordinarily determined effort on the part of the Reventlows. This can be established from the case files, now in the State Archives in Copenhagen, comprising Dippel's 1717 let-

⁸⁵ Senckenberg's diary: "CD dicebat er sey in der Nordischen revolution nicht gelauffen selbst, sondern alß an einem faden überall hingezogen v. geleitet worden" (vol. II, 376).

⁸⁶ These claims have roots already in the biographical sketch "Dippelii Personalia", probably by Canz, in *Eröff III* in 1747 (743–68), and may be found in Bender (1882, 108): "Er fand sich nämlich veranlasst auch auf das bürgerliche Gebiet überzugreifen und in einem vom 21. December 1717 datierten Schreiben nicht nur den Magistrat von Altena sondern auch seinen Gönner den Statthalter Grafen Reventlow und dessen Gemahlin beim Könige zu denunzieren", or by A. Jantzen in *Bricka* (1890), vol. IV, 273–75. A later example is Winkle (1988). I myself must plead guilty of having continued the dissemination of this myth in Mchangama and Stjernfelt (2016). The only scholar overcoming these misunderstandings, to my knowledge, is Rustmeier (1957) who has a more detailed presentation of the case, realizing that Reventlow was not attacked in Dippel's 1717 letter, and that the case developed considerably over several years. Yet, even Rustmeier is missing several decisive turning points of the case, such as Bandau's accusations against Dippel for bribery or the Commission's mild penalty proposal. Bender and Rustmeier are probably the only investigators having spent some effort with the case file collection, the former around 1880, the latter in the 1950s, and Rustmeier is probably responsible for the present partial ordering of the files. Even detailed accounts of Danish history of the period such as Holm (1891) have little to say about the Dippel case; here we hear that the reason for the case against Dippel should have been offense not of Reventlow but of the King (569). Holm's main source is a short section on Dippel by Andreas Hojer in his history of Frederik IV's reign (1829, ms. originally completed in 1732, vol. II, 208–211). Dippel is rumored to have authored a narrative presenting his version of events (cf. *Eröff III*, 744) which is unfortunately no longer extant.

ter triggering the whole process, witness interrogations, commission reports, correspondence between authorities in Copenhagen, Altona, and Glückstadt, personal letters and complaints, plus a series of other documents. All in all, the case comprises some 100 documents numbering around 450 handwritten pages, most of them in German with occasional Low German, some of Reventlow's personal letters in French. Whether these case files have, at some point, been organized by authorities at the time or by later archivists remains unknown, but they no longer appear in any clear order. At a certain point, they have been roughly sorted in folders by a German scholar, but that order is also not intact, so for all practical purposes the files appear as a pretty chaotic stack. The collection is also not complete. Several important documents referred to in other files are not there and are supposedly lost, if not deliberately destroyed.⁸⁷

The *Case against Dippel* would determine the next decade of his life and career. Now, we slow down our tempo in order to chart the complex trajectory of the case in the decisive years of 1717–19 which has never before been investigated in detail.

Act 1: Dippel and the Suppressed Fellow Human Beings

Dippel's Letter to Frederik IV in 1717

On 21 December 1717, Dippel shipped his inauspicious complaint letter to King Frederik IV in Copenhagen, indicating "Altena" as sender location (Fig. 11).

The letter is in two parts: first, a general appeal to the Danish King to consider certain issues in the judicial and political administration of the two Danish cities of Altona and Glückstadt by the Elbe (VIII.7). Altona was the older and larger city, but Danish-founded Glückstadt (1616) further down the Elbe was the administrative center of Danish rule in Holstein as well as the seat of the Appeal

⁸⁷ The collection can be found under the headline of "Arkivskaber: Tyske Kancelli, Slesvig-holsten-lauenburgske Kancelli; Arkivserie: Akter i sagen mod kancelliråd J. C. Dippel i Altona (1718–1719) Løbenummer: B141–B142" in Rigsarkivet, the Danish State Archives in Copenhagen. I have prepared an Index of the documents to be found in the back of this book, taking the existing sequence of documents as my point of departure. This means, of course, that, e.g., Reventlow's many letters are not registered chronologically. Footnotes and references refer to this Index. The collection of case files is probably the documents collected by the German Chancellery in Copenhagen. We know that all case files of the summer 1719 Commission were sent back to Copenhagen and destroyed already the same year, and Reventlow obviously sought to destroy at least those documents that he found offensive. The City Council in Altona would probably have archived relevant case files, but the Altona City Archives were completely destroyed during the English bombings of "Operation Gomorrah" in July 1943.

Court of the realm, which was simply identical with the Danish government chancellery there. A large appendix to Dippel's letter, headlined *Species Facti et Administratae Justitiae* – that is, a presentation of the case and of the judicial administration – again in two parts, goes into painstaking detail pertaining to two particular court cases in which Dippel finds that the losers of processes had been victims of maltreatment by local Danish authorities.

Altona d. 21 Dec. 1717.

Allerhochachtungster Hochmächtigster König,
 Allergrädigster König und Herr.

Eure Majestät wird also zuwieweil allainstänigst eingestanden sein auch ich in meinst
 Danksagung Worten an die yelangen Taten. Gott beweis mir in allzeit mit der ich
 so große Ehre und Eure Majestät, als mir in unterzeichneten Abkommen zugehen bin
 Vorstellen in Danksagung des Hoffens zu erachten, in solches zu danken, daß Euer Ma-
 jestät Ihn Landes Völkern gegen den nicht unterworfen werden, und zu dem unterzeichnet
 das Ihn, worin die Zeit kommt soll. Dergleichen Species factorum, werden
 also Clauben und Danksagung Taten zu zeigen wird die zu zeigen. Die
 sind nach der Majestät abgesetzt, und wird ich zeigen soll, als der auch Vorzeichen
 mein Teil zu der Majestät offenbart haben. Auf Foliation aller unterzeichneten. Es Euer
 Majestät nicht ein Recht zeigen dergleichen Vorzeichen den Hoffen mit der Majestät
 jedoch allein, in der Hoffnung dieser unterzeichneten Parteien aus den Taten der
 Langensten Richter, auch zu zeigen sein. Wenn Euer Majestät in der Special
 mandal der Euer Majestät dem Altonaer Gerichte, dergleichen die zu zeigen zu
 zeigen, von solch große Danksagung nicht, aber den allen Taten zu zeigen sein. Den
 Euer Majestät nicht den Taten mir in unterzeichneten wird gleich, dergleichen Taten
 an Euer Majestät in continuation der Taten materia, ist. Es soll Ihn mit der
 nicht nachgeben, weil ich gescheit, so mich soll dergleichen Taten der Euer
 Majestät zu unterzeichneten, indem ich die Taten nicht zeigen, die den Taten
 als ob die Taten nicht Ihn mit so abgesetzt, ist. Wenn aber Euer Majestät Ihn
 diese facta zeigen wird, so wird ich zeigen, daß die zu zeigen Majestät gescheit

Figure 11: There is agreement that Dippel's letter to Frederik IV of 21 December 1717 was the snowball that caused the avalanche to slide. But it is not correct that he used the letter to accuse the Reventlows of accepting bribes. Quite on the contrary, the letter demands *more* power for the Chief President so that he would step in against judicial injustices committed by the City Council of Altona.

The initial letter begins with Dippel's presumption that the King himself will receive and process his request in person, sounding a confidential note implying that Dippel appears as a sort of whistleblower speaking confidentially. Dippel claims it to be his duty to stand up for suppressed fellow human beings – "Neben-Menschen" – and appeals to the King's God-given duty to react against such malpractice after having cast his fatherly eye upon it. Surprisingly – given the letter's reputation for tarnishing Count Reventlow – Dippel immediately gives this advice:

I most submissively request Your Majesty, not about revenge on such treason against justice and normal conditions, but only about the liberation of some suppressed parties from the claws of unjust judges, and this may happen if Your Majesty could just authorize Mr. Count Reventlow with a special mandate to bring this case to an end, in general, he seeks the best but is prevented from all sides in doing so.⁸⁸

Thus, the local judiciary is painted as unjust suppressors, and Count Reventlow is invoked as the relevant local authority to correct them, if only the King is willing to grant the Count special powers. Dippel further refers to the divine threat inherent in the principle, much marshaled by Lutherans, that such evil conditions, if not restored, will trigger the revenge of God on the State as a whole and thus necessarily lead to the ruin of the land. Here, Dippel speaks tactically to Frederik the Lutheran, for he himself did not believe that God was capable of acts of revenge. In brackets, he adds that conditions in the neighboring Holsatian County of Pinneberg are even worse than in Altona and Glückstadt – an addition sure to annoy Count von Perckentin there.

Dippel also refers to a another Geheime Rath – a Privy Councilor – named Gabel, presently around in Altona, also taking part in the ongoing defense of those unjustly suppressed by legal authorities.⁸⁹ Dippel sketches a short presenta-

⁸⁸ "Ich solicitiere allerunterthänigst bey Eure Majestat nicht um Rache gegen dergleichen Verträge der Justiz und der Gemeinen Bestand, sondern allein, um die Befreyung dieser unterdruckten Parteyen aus dem Klauen der ungerechten Richter, welches geschehen kann, wann Eure Majestat nur durch ein Special mandat des Herrn Grafen von Reventlau Excellence auctorisiere, diese Sach zum Ende zu bringen, der sonst wohl allhin das beste suchet, aber von allen Ecken gehindert wird" (VIII.7, 1). Transcriptions and translations of case files are my own.

⁸⁹ I have not been able to identify this Privy Councilor. It could hardly be the then famous naval officer C.C. Gabel who had recently been instrumental in Danish victories in the North German phases of the Great Northern war; in that case, Dippel would be trying to buttress his case by involving a contemporary military celebrity well-known to the King. This Gabel was a Chamberlain, as of 1717 war minister, and only ascended to the Privy Councilor title in 1731, but it is possible Dippel may have mistaken his title. Otherwise, it might be one Valdemar Gabel, Privy Councilor in 1707 without acquiring much fame for any effort. In any case Gabel the helping hand soon disappears from the acts.

tion of his two suppressed main victims to receive more detailed coverage in his attached report, before concluding his personal letter to the King:

I hope that Your Majesty will understand, most graciously and in the best way, my confidential expressions which have no other reason than the most submissive affection for Your Majesty and the devotion to the well-being of Your states.⁹⁰

In short, Dippel presents himself as a pious and confidential defender of local individuals offended by a malfunctioning judiciary – thus working to the best of the King’s rule and his states. The long, attached *Species Facti* document (“Presentation

Councilor titles referred to the recent Danish system of *ranks* introduced after absolutism was adopted in 1660. In this system, “Privy Councilor” was the uppermost non-royal title. It involved a detailed ranking list of positions, and it is relevant here to cite the rankings of councilors, as a number of central persons involved in the Dippel case held councilor titles, including Dippel himself (Chancellery Councilor), Reventlow (Privy Councilor), Sehested (State Councilor), von Hagen (Justice Councilor), Soehlenthal (State Councilor), and power relations between two ranked persons would be influenced by their respective relative rankings. The ranking list of 1671 comprises 55 rank classes, including the following Councilor titles (Danish “Raad”, German “Rath”):

Councilors in the 1671 ranking:

1. Royal titles

2.-9. Privy Councilors (Geheime-Raad)

(Subsequent ranks include Generals, Counts, Knights, Barons, other nobility, various top offices at court, etc.)

—

23. State Councilor (Etats-Raad)

24. Justice Councilor (Justits-Raad)

(Subsequent ranks include Treasurer, Admirals, Chamberlains, etc.)

—

33. War Councilor (Krigs-Raad)

34. Chancellery Councilor (Cancelie-Raad)

35. Chamber Councilor (Kammer-Raad)

36. Admiralty Councilor (Admiralitets-Raad)

37. Commerce Councilor (Commerce-Raad)

(Subsequent ranks include Superintendent (Bishop) of Zealand, President of Copenhagen, Colonels, County Governors, Chamber Valets, Supreme Court Justices, other Superintendents, etc.)

In early Danish absolutism, Councilor titles would often refer to real political assignments; soon, however, many Councilor titles would be given as a sign of appreciation and loyalty rather than involving any particular tasks.

90 “Ich hoffe Eure Majestät werde diese meine confidante expressiones allernädigst zum besten deuten, die keinen andern grund habe als das allerunterthänigste attachement zu Eure Majestät, und der devotion vor das wohl seine dero Staaten” (VIII.7, 2).

of facts”, VIII.8) would be the effective triggering point of the whole Dippel affair, so we should take a look at the complicated claims Dippel brings forward here.

Bandau v. Meyer

The first case presented by Dippel is the most complicated one and makes him relate a Byzantine story reaching many years back to before the Swedish 1713 devastation of the city. Dippel had studied some law during his time in Giessen and does not hesitate to clothe his narration and argument in Latin legal terminology, actually assuming the pose of a legal expert in a position to correct sloppy local jurisprudence. The following resumes the overall structure of the case, as Dippel conceived of it.

At some point, one Heinrich Nüchtern had decided to extend his Altona bleaching company by acquiring a nearby site for building another bleaching plant, borrowing 1,000 Rix-dollars from a Hamburger named Andreas Bandau for the acquisition. The stream Altenau or Pepermölenbek on the border between Altona and Hamburg had given rise to a whole series of bleaching companies along its course, and textile manufacturing was one of the main industries of the city of Altona (Fig. 12). Among those bleaching facilities, Nüchtern's was situated at the far northern outskirts of the city,⁹¹ and his new plant was connected to the same water supply from the stream as the existing one. This small bleaching empire, however, does not seem to have been successful, and after some years Nüchtern became insolvent. Bandau lost his loan along with the expected interest payments, and he also had to pay the costs of foreclosure in order to take over the plant as a compensation for the loan he had lent. The upstream plant, however, was later sold by forced auction to one Frantz Meyer from Altona having no debt in it. This difference between the two owners is important for Dippel's argument giving precedence to Bandau who had to receive satisfaction for his lost investment, while Meyer was just an ordinary investor. The two now began to struggle over the exact demarcation between the two premises, and it so happened that Meyer stopped the water supply to Bandau's downstream property, thus preventing its use for the water-consuming bleaching process. Bandau offered Meyer that he could buy the premises from him, but they were unable to agree on a price, Meyer seemingly thinking he could force down the price by keeping the water back. So, Bandau was forced to turn to legal means and sought the help of the Pres-

⁹¹ According to the map *Altona gegen Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts*. In the map *Altona im Jahre 1745*, the premises are indicated as belonging to Mejer.

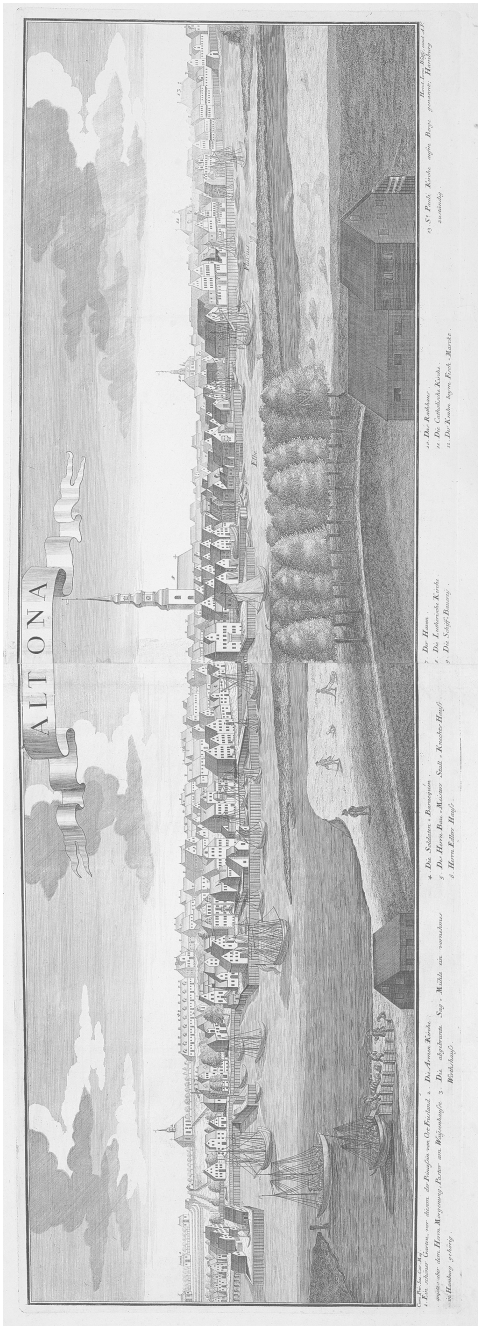


Figure 12: Altona sits on a slope on the northern bank of the Elbe west of Hamburg; here, it had taken its first beginning as a fisherman's hamlet. On the panorama of 1730, the spire of the Trinitatis Church is central, not far to the right the City Hall where the four Heinrichs resided, and to the left the Chapel of the Holy Spirit and the complex of penitentiary and orphanage founded by Reventlow. In the foreground, of course, the central activity of the city, its trade and fishing port. To the east, in the right side of the panorama, between Altona's Catholic Church and the Hamburg church of St. Pauli, the border stream between the two cities provided water to a series of bleaching plants.

ident of the City Council, one von Jessen, now deceased.⁹² The City Council had judicial tasks, functioning also as a first instance court. The case, however, proved to drag on, also because of the President's death and the reconfiguration of the City Council after the fire. It appears from later documents that Meyer at some point passed away, leaving his property – and the court case – to his widow.

So, two years before Dippel's report to the King, that is, around 1715, the case was finally considered by the present City Council. Instead of a compromise, however, the case went through all standard process phases, and it would have lasted years longer if a certain royal councilor had not been forced to intervene. Dippel does not name this councilor, but the reader soon gets the idea it is an indirect way of referring to Dippel himself. Bandau suspected that his opponent attempted to drag out the process to tire him out in order to let him have the plant at a reduced price – and that Meyer secretly worked to influence the judges to recommend that solution. Finally, a verdict was declared: Meyer should restore the water supply to Bandau, but it still left the road open for further processes. Meyer immediately appealed the sentence, and the judges accepted her appeal payment, even against royal decree, which did not allow appeal without any argument referring to precedence. After seven years, now, the Hamburger Bandau had to give up his Altona case and turn to the superior Appeal Court of Glückstadt where he was only told the time limit for further appeals was long since overdue. Bandau could but conclude the whole case had been one long masquerade to fool him. They even threatened to arrest him in Glückstadt and forced him to pay 1,000 Rix-dollars as a bail in order to accept his appeal. The Appeal Court only convened twice a year, and when the process finally approached his lawyer found it was not registered in the court schedule which made Bandau and his lawyer suspect the case was being pushed in order to be processed by the same judges once again; they even thought that Meyer had once more succeeded in secretly influencing the court. Bandau began to suspect he had gone out of the frying pan and into the fire – Dippel's expression literally means "from the rain into the river", more appropriate to the watery issues at stake. Finally, the case was up on 9 November (must be 1717), and now Reventlow as Chief President made his appearance, demanding that the case be settled, the water flow be reconstructed, and Meyer be punished, also in order not to deter other Hamburgers from investing in Altona. Again, the parties would be free to pursue further lawsuits such as Bandau for his lost interests and his expenses, Meyer to attack Bandau's rights to his acquisition.

92 Matthias von Jessen, President of Altona 1681–1712, cf. von Jessen (1937).

The Glückstadt appeal judges, however, did not follow these well-founded directives of the Count, instead putting the blame for the drawn-out case on Bandau's lawyer and the rules of appeal. Until now, thus, Reventlow has appeared in Dippel's narrative only as a higher authority who intervened in the case on a relatively late point, if in vain. This makes Dippel's plea to the King to further strengthen Reventlow's mandate understandable. Dippel's complicated account of the case, of which many details have here been left out, concludes as follows:

As presently Mr. Count requires a special order from Your Majesty to the Appeal Court in Glückstadt in which they are enjoined *auctoritate Regia* [with royal authority] not to accept other cases than are appellable according to Hamburg process-regulations, in the hope of thereby to reopen this case, then all of this was yet *surdis narrata fabula* [for deaf ears]. They do not let themselves be inhibited in the currents of bribes ...⁹³

Dippel adds that he himself has become the target of a lawsuit for libel, because he helped Bandau in writing a complaint during the case – a lawsuit about which Dippel has filed a complaint to the Appeal Court in Glückstadt but had no answer, and he pleads Reventlow also to intervene in this case. So, the presentation ends by Dippel himself being involved in legal trouble – which would later come to play an important role. But the most important in the quote is probably Dippel's talk about "... den Lauff ihrer accidentien", the currents of payments, that is, bribes, which he implies the Appeal Court is accepting. Reventlow's instruction from the King to allow the Glückstadt Appeal Court to accept only cases that fall within the legal restrictions of Hamburg process rules was not accepted by the Glückstadters – who thus appear as being in open insubordination to royal instructions.

The very last sentence relates that the Count himself has also received this complaint and thus is in a position to easily discover why nobody wants to speak about this case. This is the only place in this case where a vague criticism of Reventlow may be audible. Otherwise, the two appear as partners in the fight against a corrupt judiciary.

93 "Da während der Zeit der Herr Graff einen specialen Befehl von Ihrer Majestät, an das Glückstädtische Ober-Appellations-Gericht auswürckt, in welchen Ihnen *auctoritate Regia* injungiret wird, nichts dorth anzunehmen, als was vermöge der Hamburgischer Process-Ordnung appellabel seÿ, in Hoffnung dardurch noch diese Sach zu redressiren, so war es doch *surdis narrata fabula*. Sie lassen sich deswegen den Lauff Ihrer accidentien nicht hemmen" (ibid. 5).

Lieben v. Buÿser the Widow

The second case is only a bit less convoluted. Again, it is a Hamburger who is allegedly maltreated by local Danish authorities. It concerns a certain Michael Christian Lieben who has even fled Hamburg and sought the protection of the Danish King in Altona. He has become involved, however, in a quarrel over a cloth factory with a widow named Maria de Büser (or Buÿser) who had lost much of her property during the Swedish fire of 1713. She had a wool and silk production plant which was now in a bad shape but which Lieben, out of his good heart, resolved to restore in company with his son Christian Niclas Lieben and the widow, as part of the ongoing reconstructions in Altona. He made his Hamburg father-in-law invest on the condition that he would receive the interests of the property, while profits should be shared equally between the other two parties. The burnt-out premises were rebuilt for 1,000 Rix-dollars which were granted by the value of the building site, and Lieben even bought new materials and added some already-finished cloth to the stock. Dippel paints these activities as benevolent, merciful acts supporting a widow in distress.

She turned out to be quite a malignant character, however, by Dippel's account. She had remained tacit about certain loans she had taken on the property to pay her creditors but not only that: she began to steal ware from the factory and continued to mortgage whatever she was able to lay her hands on. Consequently, Lieben decides to withdraw from their common company. To save his investment he takes hold of cloth and materials there, partly added to the stock by the widow, partly bought by himself.

Now the widow makes a fuss and accuses Lieben of wishing to drive her out of her home and business and demands a verdict against him from the Altona City Council. They reach a conclusion, which Dippel finds completely against common sense as well as against existing legislation: Lieben must pay a mortgage as a bail, after which the company with the widow will be liquidated and split between the two, and only then he is entitled to get bailed out. Lieben contacts Count Reventlow who advises him not to act against a poor widow with full legal force, rather to treat her with equity and let her find a guarantor willing to pay so that the widow would not be forced out by foreclosure. Lieben now expected all to be liquidated and from the resulting sum to be able to pay back the guarantor and then receive the ware. But the widow, through evil lawyers, sought to secure the stock for herself and to pay for the liquidation with it. She also appeals the case to Glückstadt who confirms, however, the bad decision of the City Council. The case still pending, the widow even resorts to hiring some thugs to break into the premises and simply steal the ware. This finally makes the City Council recognize this as a theft and demand that she return the goods. She is thus forced

to recognize Lieben's ownership but now she claims to be no thief as the goods have been returned. In this state of confusion, a new sentence arrives from Glückstadt, confirming the City Council's first decision. This makes Lieben suspect foul play and corruption in the judges. In the middle of this, Count Reventlow learns about the case, wondering strongly about the position of the judges, demanding the complete restitution of Lieben and the return to standard procedure: liquidation of the premises, the caution paid from the liquidum, and then the restitution of the goods to Lieben under threat of forced auction of the widow's property. Now, she finally yields and accepts liquidation with the participation of four arbiters on the side of each party. But still, she appeals to Glückstadt for the payment requested of her and her guarantor. Again, Dippel's conclusion on this labyrinthine process involves the Count – but now also the Countess. The Count sent back the appeal case as it went against his own decision, but the widow and her evil advisors knew that Glückstadt would not reject this “disgusting appeal against all reason and right”. Dippel turns up the volume in his conclusion:

Who can feel safe against this Council of robbers, and who is not appalled by venturing his money at such a place where everybody, judges as well as citizens, go out to loot and encourage each other to robbery?⁹⁴

Dippel relates that the widow and her advisors now sent a plea to the Countess, Benedicte von Brockdorff, attempting to make her postpone the execution of her husband's decision – but no result of this request is reported. This was the first appearance of the Countess in the case files; certainly not the last. Again, Dippel's letter is far from implying any wrongdoing by the noble couple who is rather depicted as well-meaning but sadly unable to halt the judicial malady, particularly in Glückstadt – which was also beyond their formal jurisdiction of Altona. We should not imagine, however, any clear separation of lines of command here: the word of the royally installed Chief President and Privy Councilor, the King's own brother-in-law, with his mighty spouse, the richest noble couple of the realm, would surely have some weight also beyond formal borders of authority. If Dippel's missive might in any sense have been uncomfortable to the two of them, it would not be in implying nepotism or bribery on their part, rather because it painted them as well-intentioned but unable to intervene decisively when necessary. Dippel does not, however, present this as any fault on their part – they just do not wield sufficient royal powers.

⁹⁴ “Wer kann auf diese Rath von Räubern sicher bleiben, und wer sollte nicht sich entsetzen, an solchem Orth sein Geld zu hazardiren, da alle, so wohl Richter als Bürger auf Raub ausgehen, und einander den Raub zujagen?” (ibid., 8).

Dippel's account of the two court cases is extremely detailed, but his harsh conclusions, both regarding the Altona City Council and the Appeal Court of Glückstadt, are based on indications rather than evidence. Despite being stuffed with Latin judicial terminology, Dippel, while posing as a legal scholar, firmly acts as a part actor, siding with one party and not only disregards the others, Meyer and the widow, but ascribes to them decidedly evil intentions, such as clandestine influences and bribery of judges. It certainly might be the case that the two processes contained injustices against the two parties whom Dippel set out to support, Bandau and Lieben, but his ascription of evil intentions to judges not only seems quite beyond evidence but also without other explanation than they are mere robbers out to enrich themselves.

It is interesting that both cases share the structure of Hamburg investors having come to neighboring Altona only to become caught up in financial in-fights with Altona citizens who are then protected by several levels of Altona-Glückstadt legal procedure. The argument that such court cases may scare future Hamburgers from investing is central to Dippel – an important argument in a sooty ruin city crying out for investors. But Altona was the smaller of the two big twin cities and there had been numerous conflicts regarding commerce, customs, water supply, borders, and other political issues ever since Altona had been granted city rights by Frederik III in 1664. There were even rumors that Hamburg, through the Swedish General von Wellingk there, had clandestinely been supporting the Swedes in burning down the competing city. It is possible that local authorities would seek to protect local citizens against what might be perceived as intrusion from the stronger and richer neighboring city. It should also be noticed that Danish kings had never accepted Hamburg's full independence as a free city but still claimed to possess certain rights over it as part of the Duchy of Holstein, and as recently as 1712, Frederik IV had seized Hamburg merchant ships in Norway and, with his army camping not far from city ramparts, extorted a large sum from the city of Hamburg in order not to attack it for housing Count Wellingk.⁹⁵

In both of Dippel's cases, Count Reventlow seemingly steps in to the advantage of Dippel's tragic heroes, yet without decisive success. It should be remembered we are definitely in a pre-Montesquieu era where no clear tripartition of powers is relevant, so that, even if Reventlow is the Danish King's highest delegated authority in the city, it remains completely unclear how and to what degree his formal power would extend to the City Council in its judicial capacities, or to the superior Appeal Court in another city. Reventlow seems to have acted with much consequence against local sloppy administration upon his arrival, e.g., sack-

95 Paludan-Müller (1877–78, 6).

ing local mayors deemed incompetent without reinstating new mayors; and Reventlow was invested with considerable powers to reconstruct local rule. In contrast to this, Dippel's request to the King also implies that Reventlow did not or was not able to fully act on his reported intentions which is why Dippel requests from the King a stronger mandate to his highest Altona representative. This might, of course, also be a rhetorically indirect rebuke of Reventlow, implying that he lacked the personal will or power to act on his intentions, or even that these intentions may not at all have been as strong as they appeared. But the standard story that Dippel used his letter to the King to attack his noble benefactors for taking bribes is simply not true. The Reventlows were Dippel's patrons, and in his complaint to the King Dippel directly appears as one of Reventlow's henchmen, anxiously supporting his superior's effort to reinstate proper rule in Altona.

Further striking parallels between the two cases may be noted. Dippel firmly sides with two Hamburg industrialists against two Altona widows; when pondering why on earth he would become involved as a legal advisor at a late point in two protracted court cases from long before he arrived at the place, it may be of some relevance that both of them involved chemical industries – the bleaching and coloring of textile – potentially requiring assistance or inspiration from an experienced alchemist like himself. Was Dippel's involvement with Bandau and Lieben also motivated by chemistry, his official reason for settling in Altona?

In any case, this letter was the very document that triggered the whole ensuing development culminating in Dippel's banishment almost two years later. But its effects were quite different from the standard story.

Dippel's Zeal for Justice

Actually, Dippel's letter was only one leg of a pincer movement. The very same day as Dippel's letter to the King in Copenhagen one of his two protégés, the young Lieben, wrote a long letter to Chief President Reventlow in Altona, pleading his case (VIII.4). Lieben protested the different moves of his opponent and begged of Reventlow to make the King intervene and stop the widow Büyser from further protracting the case, which was now threatening the welfare not only of this young merchant, but also of his household, his parents, grandparents, and siblings. The widow's guarantor Mrs. Holsten should be forced by royal decree to pay the disputed 1,656 Rix-dollars to Lieben.

And a mere three days after Dippel's letter, on Christmas Eve, the widow Maria de Buÿser herself also submitted a supplication to the King (VIII.3). The administration could not yet have processed Dippel's letter which would have reached Copenhagen at the earliest on the same day as de Buÿser sent hers. She would have heard

rumors, however, that such a letter had been shipped, for she sends her “uttermost-humble and highly-respectful plea” to the King “most-graciously to let communicate to her the wrong presentation which has most-humbly been sent by my opponent” so that she can answer it appropriately. She portrays herself as a “completely innocent, persecuted, and suppressed widow”. Her version of events: she had lost much property during the Swedish fire, including 24,000 Rix-dollars and a factory employing 200 Altonians, yet had already rebuilt three houses with firewalls and intended to reconstruct another two. In the process of rebuilding her factory, however, her ownership of the ware was unjustly challenged by Lieben by means of cheeky harassment. She had received the Council’s support that the ware would be returned to her, but he had succeeded in obtaining the President’s support in making a 21 November claim for her guarantor Ms. Holsten to pay him the 1,656 Rix-dollars. This is why she went to appeal to Glückstadt in which she was successful – only to be surprised to learn that her opponent has taken to deny her case in letters to the King and the Royal Chief President, thus trying to sneak through a counterjudgment. No mention about any investment on the part of Lieben who here appears as but a mean swindler who resorts to putting pressure on high officials trying to overrule standard court decisions. There is no Copenhagen answer to this letter among the files. But it is safe to say that both of the parties in the case were playing out victim strategies, painting themselves on the brink of bankruptcy.

Formal reactions ensued in January. The first of many official and unofficial letters from Reventlow addressing the case is sent to the King 20 January 1718 (VIII.6). He has obviously received Dippel’s letter with its *Species Facti* appendix – maybe directly from the King, as Reventlow’s sender address is indicated as Copenhagen. The letter is calm and not at all offended by Dippel’s request to the King.⁹⁶ Quite on the contrary, Reventlow recognizes Dippel’s “... zeal for justice and for some suppressed parties”. It acknowledges that cases such as those presented by Dippel are processes which are but designed to protract to great expenses for both parties. The King has instructed him that such cases must no longer be appealed to Glückstadt for the reasons cited by Dippel. So, Reventlow has demanded that appeal cases are now presented to him before they are accepted, so that unilaterally presented appeal cases are no longer admitted. In short, he has “... the sole intention of helping the parties in dispute to their rights without unnecessary prolongation and without futile costs, by which Your Majesty would only get ruined citizens”. So, Reventlow basically accepts Dippel’s criti-

⁹⁶ An important point regards Dippel’s fleeting reference, in the first *Species Facti*, to the current libel case against himself, The Count writes that he attaches to his letter a document filed by Dippel to Glückstadt regarding this libel case; this might be a version of VIII.9 (below).

cism as supporting the King's and his own efforts to correct errors of messy Altona administration. The bulk of the letter then goes into conditions in Pinneberg which Dippel had addressed in passing only to return to Dippel in the conclusion. Reventlow now sends back Dippel's letter to the King, urging him to act appropriately on the points raised therein. Dippel simply appears here as a local informant and supporter in the Count's ongoing reorganization of lackadaisical Altonian rule. So, no offense taken. It was simply not Dippel's December letter that so offended Reventlow.

There is even a short draft one-pager (VIII.2), undated but seemingly authored by Reventlow, informally addressing the King directly and requesting to let himself, after Dippel's advice, take over the authority to decide the Bandau and Lieben cases. The King is urged to immediately ship a decree about this to the Appeal Court in Glückstadt. Simultaneously, Reventlow directly evaluates the Lieben case, claiming the Court's decision should be withdrawn and Lieben "in integrum zu restituieren"; in short, to intervene just like Dippel was demanding in his letter to the King. If this draft was actually attached to Reventlow's January letter to the King or, more probably, had been submitted to him even earlier in 1717, before Reventlow's unsuccessful attempts to intervene, it would not be the last time we find Reventlow directly giving instructions to his Majesty, short-circuiting the usual most-subservient chancellery style.

A month later, the King would also have handed Maria de Buÿser's letter to Reventlow for comment, for on 17 February 1718, still in Copenhagen, he answers the King commenting upon her claims. He says he is not aware of the claimed falsity of her counterpart's assertions and that such falsity has also not reached the King in Dippel's letter, and he defends his own restitution of Lieben as following process rules.⁹⁷ He fails to see why the widow's reference to her earlier efforts with Altona reconstruction is relevant for the case, and he judges her letter to be motivated by the fact that she cannot pay her debts, she therefore "... seeks all possible evasions and expedients with her guarantor to her own and her factory's ruin, in the belief that she has won and time will vindicate this". In short, Reventlow advises the King not to bow to the widow's supplication. Again, Reventlow in the main supports Dippel's claims about the case, and the two simply appear as a patron and his client acting in concert for justice.

It could be that Dippel was also occupied elsewhere at the time. An unconfirmed rumor has it that Dippel, on 3 April 1718, became a father, when Jacob Dip-

⁹⁷ For further elucidation, he refers to two attached documents, an *Extractum Protoc. Præsid.* and a *Memorial*. The two documents are VIII.4–5, the 21 Dec. letter from Lieben to Reventlow containing an attached sheet with different copies of document excerpts, and a 6 Dec. letter from a curator named Weber addressing the Buÿser case.

pel was born to an unnamed woman in Altona. As a young man, Dippel had proposed to a woman twice but had been rejected both times and he says this had made him give up all plans of marrying. If Dippel actually fathered a boy in Altona, that would be his only known offspring.⁹⁸ In all cases, Dippel would soon have other issues to worry about.

A City Council in Arms

Now, who would it be that *actually* began questioning Dippel's account during the spring of 1718? This would not be the Reventlows, but rather the two parties directly attacked in his December letter, namely Count Perckentin of Pinneberg and the Altona City Council.⁹⁹ Perckentin wrote a furious 24 May letter to the King, protesting Dippel's radical but vague claims about terrible conditions in Pinneberg which need not occupy us here as it hardly concerns the case against Dippel and had no further consequences. The one who had been really offended by Dippel's letter to the King was not Reventlow but the Altona Magistrat, the City Council. It was they who had served as judicial first instance in the cases that Dippel had attacked for being drawn-out, erroneous, and corrupt. The very same date as Perckentin's letter, the Council began its long, critical digestion of Dippel's claims. Signed by four members, curiously all of them with variants of the name

⁹⁸ The rumor is referred by Kraft (2019, 137f) who refers, in turn, to the ancestry homepage *My-Heritage* where the Danish Dippel family traces their origin to the gold-maker. Jacob Dippel is supposed to have lived from 1718 to 1786 and continued the family line in the North of Zealand. Kraft has sought, without success, documentation of the existence of Jacob in baptism archives in Altona, but as he himself says it is hardly probable that Dippel would let his child baptize in a Lutheran church, if at all. There is little information, more generally, about Dippel's sex life. His first biographer Canz claimed he had never anything to do with women, because he was fit for nothing less than caressing (Eröff III, 750). Dippel remembers how he, at his second proposal, had suggested as a joke the contemporary custom of accidentally opening the Bible; he had put his thumb into the book, and to the shock of everybody the Book of Jeremiah read: "... du solt dir kein weib nehmen noch Kinder zeugen", you shall take no wife nor beget any children (Jeremiah 16.1; Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 426). In the same source, Dippel says that "... alte patres ecclesiae primae, wären zuweilen in hurenhäuser gegangen ut non apparerent sancti. Er gehe oft in wirths häuser pp sonderlich den eingebildeten heiligen zu trutz, ne videatur pius. Et ita occultare se suam pietatem" (354), that is, the oldest church fathers used to go to whorehouses in order to conceal their holiness, and that he himself often goes to taverns in order to hide his piety to the conceited-pious. If he would actually frequent brothels as well he would hardly reveal it to his young admirer.

⁹⁹ The leadership of the Altona city authorities are referred to as "Rath" as well as "Magistrat" where the latter also comprises the administration lead by the former. I translate both of them as the "City Council".

“Heinrich” – Jo. Henr. Joenssen, Joh. Henr. Archenholtz, Heinrich Neuhaus, and Hinrich Behn – the short letter (VII.1) was sent to a high authority in Copenhagen. The four of them had been appointed to the new City Council when the old one was dismissed after the Swedish Fire.¹⁰⁰ Their letter is basically a plea for prolongation of the deadline for their report on Dippel which they had been requested to deliver by a top authority in Copenhagen on 30 April. The tenor of the letter, however, leaves little doubt about the position of the council. It aims at

... revealing the secrecy of the Dippelian evil, how he abuses his ascendance achieved out of luck to distort all laws and regulations with made-up sophistries, and to fool, slander, blacken, and mock all those who refuse to subject themselves to his presumptuous dictatorship and also could not do so due to their assumed obligations ...¹⁰¹

Their intention now is meticulously to refute Dippel’s libelous writings point by point – but they need just a bit more time to accomplish this obligation. The conclusion, thus, is presented before the investigation. The letter is addressed in a tone extremely subservient even for the time, to an unnamed high-standing authority in Copenhagen titled Secret Councilor, Chief Secretary, and County Governor. This could be none other than Christian Sehested, Foreign Minister and Chief Secretary of the German Chancellery in Copenhagen. So, now an alternative communication line between Copenhagen and Altona authorities opens up. Sehested’s April requisition to the Council is not among the case files, but we must assume the King has turned to his German Chancellery and asked Sehested to hear the Altona Council’s response to the complaints presented by Dippel.¹⁰² That report would follow in June 1718.

It seems that Dippel had not predicted which kind of forces he was about to wake in the Altona City Council. Even if its present members were appointees of Reventlow, it was an institution that may not have been satisfied with being subjected to a new Chief President with wide-ranging powers who had sacked the mayors. Now, they saw a possibility to strike back against one of Reventlow’s henchmen. The four Heinrichs were simply mad with fury, and they did not pull any punches.

100 Schmid (1747, 79).

101 “... das Geheimnis der Dippelischen Bosheit zu entdecken, wie er sein durchs Glück zugeschobenes ascendant dahin gemäßbrauche, das er alle Gesetze und Ordnungen mit geschminkten Sophistereyen zu verdrehen, und alle diejenige welche sich seiner angemaßten dictatur nicht unterwerffen wollen, noch ihren obliegenden Pflichten nach, können, und fingiren, verlästern, anschwärzen und verläumbden ...”.

102 That letter would probably have been filed by the City Council, but Altona City Hall with all of its archives was destroyed during the English bombings in July 1943, so what the Council may have archived from the Dippel case has vanished.

Four Heinrichs on a Raid

On 28 June, the four Heinrichs of the City Council finally returned to Sehested with a voluminous report. They introduce it in a brief accompanying letter (VII.3) anticipating their conclusion on the "... Dippelian written slander and the inventions and mockeries used therein"¹⁰³ which they set out to refute word for word. They also anticipate, however, that their criticism may be found to use some of the very same means as their opponent: "... should there, from time to time, prompted by him, have floated a somewhat hard echo or a few all too free expressions into the text, then You High and Well-Born Excell. with your inherent high giftedness will graciously and powerfully excuse it in the very best and harmless way ..."¹⁰⁴ Apart from demonstrating their versatility in the demanding "Chancellery" rhetoric, the Heinrichs realize that Dippel's insidious style may have caused themselves to echo his cheeky tricks, but they trust the high intelligence of Sehested to be able to see through this. The same day, the Council directly addresses the King himself (VII.2), alerting him about Dippel's offense of themselves, and they urge him to secure Dippel's body for punishment.

The report is indeed a mouthful. Running to 16 pages titled "Oath- and Dutiful Report on the speciebus factorum et administratæ justitiæ delivered by Mr. Chancellery Councilor Dippelio Counterargued, And firstly in the case of Andreas Bandau contra Frantz Meyer's Heir"¹⁰⁵ (VII.4), it focuses particularly on the Bandau-Meyer case and goes deeply into its 1711 preconditions all the way back to the involvement of the former owners of the relevant properties. Their main argument, however, is that when Bandau appears with a complaint in April 1716 against the widow of Meyer in order to reopen the water flow, the deadline of objections is long overdue (we now learn that Meyer has died, and the case has been inherited by his widow). Still, the case was reopened, and details of the process of 1716 are related until the City Council decision of 11 January 1717 to demand the reopening of the water within six weeks. This decision is immediately appealed by the widow to Glückstadt while Bandau, a whole month later, again against all procedure, brings up the case again in Altona with the City Council where Count Reventlow's proxy officers in the mean-

103 "... Dippelschen Schrifts-Schände und dabey gebrauchten Erdicht- und Verläumbdungen."

104 "... Sollte bißweilen auff seiner Veranlaßung, ein etwas hartes Echo sich ergeben, oder einige allzu freye expressiones mit eingeflossen seyn; so wollen Euren Hoch- und Wohlgebohrne Excell. dero beýwohnenden hohen Begabnißen nach, ein solches gnädig und hochvermögend auff das allerbeste und unschädlichste entschuldigen ..."

105 "Eid- und Pflichtmässiger Bericht So den Von H. Cantzley-Raht Dippelio übergebenen speciebus factorum et administratæ justitiæ entgegen gesetzt Und zwar erstlich In Sachen Andreas Bandauen ctra Frantz Meyers Erben."

time preside, demanding with lots of invectives and pejoratives that the appeal be canceled, and the first instance sentence of the case, supporting Bandau, be brought to execution.¹⁰⁶ Who these “proxy officers” may be – other than Dippel, of course – is not clear, but the expression indicates an internal struggle in the city administration about which we know little else.

The Council obviously rebels against being put under administration by Reventlow’s proxies, and they even find themselves victims of libel in Bandau’s complaint to the Council. That claim simultaneously gives an impressive example of the Council’s juicy and convoluted version of Chancellery writing style:

Through this [...] writing, completely congested with so many honor-reducing intimations, libel and shameless allegations, among which the alleged crime, committed in a unheard-of godless way by the judges is not the least, the City council finds, to the unavoidable salvation of its so harshly offended honor and the maintenance of respect of their authority, that had been completely exposed for everybody’s eyes, itself forced to arrest Bandau on decree, so that he either remains in prison or is sentenced to the payment of long-lasting caution, until he proves his criminal claims and injurious expressions or gives a judicially motivated satisfaction for their emergence.¹⁰⁷

In brief, Bandau had been arrested and faced with an ultimatum: prove the claims of your complaint, or you will be punished. Until you do so, you will remain imprisoned or pay daily fines. This is the key point of the long-winded report. For faced with this threat, Bandau had been forced to admit in interrogation, after much beating around the bush, that the author of his defamatory complaint was none other than – Dippel.

This had happened already on 22 March 1717, more than a year before and immediately after the submission of Bandau’s complaint, ghostwritten by Dippel, of 17 March. This throws a completely new light upon Dippel’s December letter to the King. For at that point, Dippel had already been in infight with the City Council for nine months, and they were suing him for libel. So, his motivation was not only to stand up for suppressed fellow human beings, but also simply to up the ante by denouncing the Council to their superiors in Copenhagen.

106 An attached “Extractus protocolli” dated the day before (VII.6) reports how an attempt to convince Meyer to pay 3,000 Rix-dollars for the property — Bandau’s minimum requirement — fails as Bandau does not want to conclude the case anyway.

107 “Durch diese Sub Lit: A angelegte und mit so vielen Ehrenverkleinerliche Anzüglichkeiten, injurien und impudenten calumnien, worunter das auf eine unerhörte Gott-lose Ahrt à Judice sulphurice crimen prævaricationes nicht das geringste ist, durch und durch angefüllte Schrifft findet Magistratus zu unumbgänglicher Rettung ihrer so calumniose gekränkten Ehre und Beybehaltung des hirbey gänzlich aus den Augen gesetzten Obrigkeitl. respects sich äuserst genöthigt per Decretum Bandauen dahin anzuhalten, daß er entweder in Arrest verbleibe, oder zu längliche Caution bestellen solle, biß er seine criminelle imputationes und injuricase expressiones wahr gemacht, oder in Entstehung deßen alle deßhalb Rechtl. gebührende Satisfaction gegeben” (7).

But what had Bandau and Dippel said in their complaint which so enraged the Council? Luckily, we can see that, for in order to substantiate their claims the Council attaches a copy of the original complaint letter of 17 March 1717 as an appendix. Most of the complaint is actually kept in a cool, legalist tone arguing against the widow's possibility of appeal, urging the Council to take up again Bandau's case, referring to the authority of the King of Denmark and his local representative, Reventlow. Towards the end, however, the tone subtly shifts. Referring to what the letter conceives of as an illegal appeal by the widow, supported by the Council, the letter alleges some sort of understanding between them – that is, nepotism or corruption: “From this confusing and illegal procedure I must necessarily conclude that you, in the quasi-enforced *sententia definitiva* [definitive sentence] not so much sought to help me to my right, but only, covered by a nicer surface to make the case even more long-winded, where it is not even to be feared that you lived in understanding with my opponent and gave him access to this invalid and illegal appeal, for only *pro forma* to serve to suspend the completion of the sentence ...”¹⁰⁸

These very words decisively triggered the whole Dippel affair, nine months before it is commonly dated. The City Council's apology to Sehested for their free language seems understated: even the polemical Dippel keeps a level of pejoratives far below what the four Heinrichs are able to achieve. A bribe is only indirectly insinuated (“in understanding with”). But the bottom line is that the verdict of the Council on the water supply, seemingly supporting Bandau, had just been given in order to adorn the case with an air of reasonableness, to cover the immediate continuation of the case into an indefinite appeal, all in mutual understanding with Bandau's opponent the widow. A bribe is not explicitly mentioned but may be implied. So, this complaint about the Altona Council of March 1717 was what had made them arrest Bandau, force him to confess, and sue Dippel for libel. This is really the very first phase of the case in which legal action against Dippel is implied, already in the spring of 1717, two and a half years before the final judgment in 1719.

The Council's report continues at length detailing the Bandau-Meyer case, arguing that the appeal followed the very same pattern as other recent cases and that the widow could not be made responsible for her deceased husband's deeds

¹⁰⁸ “Auß welchem confusen und illegalen Verfahren, ich dann Nohtwendig schließen muß, daß man in der quasi erzwungenen *sententia definitiva* nur nicht so wohl gesucht, zu meinem Recht zu verhelffen, als nur intra einen besseren Schein die Sache noch weitläufftiger zu machen, wo im übrigen nicht gar zu befürchten, daß man mit meiner Gegen Parthey selbst in Verständnis gelebet, und ihn diese nichtiger und illegale Appellation an die Handt gegeben, um nur *pro forma* zu dienen, die execution der sentence zu suspendiren ...” (15, underlining in the original copy).

or crimes. A shorter account is given for the Lieben-Buÿser case which now seems to stand between Lieben's demand of the payment of 1,656 Rix-dollars from the widow or her guarantor, faced with the widow's counter-demand of the return of the seized ware of which much seems to have been perishable goods such as wool. The Council wishes to avoid a dragged-out new case addressing these demands, also because the widow would be barred from manufactory and income as long as it lasts, facing ruin. Their proposed solution is a compromise in which Lieben accepts immediate recompensation instead of some ever more rotting wool, and the Council expresses its puzzlement why he is not willing to accept this compromise. Are they alleging Dippel's hand behind Lieben's hesitation? Dippel's only explicit involvement here concerns that Lieben has proposed him as a sort of expert witness in the case, which is rejected by the Council.

To the City Council, Dippel was simply an "arch-offending quibbler", caught by a "... zeal for being right, out of yellow-green bile", who is contaminating the truth. These invectives and many more they amass in a further case file, the enormous "Ohnvergreiffliche Anmerkungen" (VII.5) – infallible remarks – with its 30 pages by far the single longest document among the case files, addressing at length the two court cases. It refers to itself as a "counter-report" against Dippel's letter to the King, setting out to disprove every single proposition of Dippel's piece, citing that document in underlined quotes with ensuing, long-winding comments. The document has no indicated author, sender, addressee, place, nor date, but it is obviously also authored by the four Heinrichs of the Altona City Council which it sets out to defend. It is the most thorough attack on Dippel in the whole set of case files, with an impressive congestion of colorful invectives against him, so to speak the Council's own June 1718 report raised to the second power. Dippel is not only an "arch-offending quibbler", he is but a carnival figure, masquerading as "a man in a long robe" (a law scholar), he is a "perfect master of the art of sophistry", and so on. The radical pietist is likened to islamic fanaticism: "How does it go with the success of his new prophesies? Here Mr. Dippel wants to mohammedize". The large text is an extravagant rhetorical masterpiece but remains strangely isolated in the set of case files, no other documents explicitly referring to it. It seems, however, to be the document indirectly foretold in the Council's May and June letters to Sehested, about how they will set out to disprove Dippel "point for point", "word for word". So, either it was simply appended as an extra attachment to the 28 June letter,¹⁰⁹ or it may have served as a sort of draft investigation preceding the more concise "oath-

109 Rustmeier (1957) assumes, without further notice, that the document served as an additional attachment to the Council's 28 June letter, even if it might seem a bit strange to attach two competing reports with essentially the same conclusion.

and dutiful report”. As the long “Ohnvergreiffliche” document is indeed ripe with burgeoning pejorative, the Council may have judged it too colorful for use as a proper document to submit, cf. their excuse to Sehested for their “free” style. In any case, the document would probably have been composed by the four Heinrichs through the late spring of 1718. It ends abruptly, though, in the middle of commenting upon underlined Dippel quotes, the very last one going:

Alles sowol Rechten als Bürger: et Sequ

Nullum applausum haberet fabula, nisi ridicula finiretur epanorthosi.

Their Latin-Greek comment means: *the story would have no applause if it did not end in a mocking retribution*. This was a looming conclusion, demanding some sort of satisfaction on the part of the Council. They would indeed prove fit to fight to achieve this aim.

Attacking Incompetent Judges Is Not Libel

Dippel authored a reply to the 1717 lawsuit of the Council against him (VIII.9). In the extant copy there is neither date nor recipient, but the conclusion indicates it would be intended as a supplication to the King. A small intro by another author shows that the letter is a copy, indicating Dippel as the author; in the text itself, he only refers to himself as “the concipient” or “I”. The main aim of the letter, heavy in legal Latin and indirect references to Roman Law, is to disprove the City Council’s allegation of libel committed by Dippel in the Bandau case. Titled “Answer to the specification given of the alleged libel”, it presents five numbered points. The first argues that the Altona City Council has somehow overstepped the royal decree regulating them; they pretend to have a much more “stately character” than royal regulations ascribe to them.

The next point claims that the City Council has done Bandau wrong, not only by going against standard judicial style but also in that it is unheard of that an elected body like the Council could proceed “in causa spoliū und turbatæ”, in cases dealing with the disturbance of possessions, and thus decide compensation for expenses – which is what allowed for their frivolous appeal in the case, against explicit royal decree. The argument seems to be based on the idea that an elected body represents vested interests which may decide to serve their own aims – in contradistinction to a proper court.

The third and fourth points say that the Council has acted “confusé et illegaliter”, confused in its treatment and sentence of Bandau, and illegally because forced auctions should serve *Utilitas Publica*, the public good – but in this case it has only served to scare Hamburg investors away from needy Altona.

Fifth, the concipient wonders why the Council as “law scholars” do not know that high tribunalia should not prosecute critical presumptions about themselves as libel, also because of the fact that those allegations have until now been made *in fora civile* only – that is, in civil legal context, not in publications. Does a “Lædirte Kläger”, a damaged plaintiff, commit libel when he files a complaint against his process? This is really Dippel’s central argument: those who would answer yes to this question would have in mind to establish a terrible tyranny in the world. Why is that? Here, Dippel goes deeply into Roman Law, and this really forms the crux of his argument: if a judge is incompetent or corrupt, or both, then such a damaged source of decisions will result in further damage if he is able to conduct his case with the force of law; but if he can be called to the court without libel, he can also be warned without libel which is much less than to be accused.¹¹⁰ So, corrections of a court could not be counted as libel, and the City Council of Altona have no right to complain about libel if a person, mistreated by them, is filing a complaint that they have done him wrong. A further premise lurks in the background: if a complaint is *true*, it cannot constitute libel.

At the end of the document Dippel considers a counterstrike, demanding public retraction of the libel against *himself*, committed by the Council, but remains with proposing to the King that he should just “... des Altonaische Magistrats zu frott ...” Here the extant paper ends – zu frotzeln? To ridicule or tease them?

So, the letter ends as a sort of complaint or supplication addressing the King. When is it written? Could be anytime between the spring of 1717 and the summer of 1718. But was it ever submitted to the King? The fact that it is there, among the case files, suggests that it was sent. At the time, Dippel’s access to the King would yet be open. Alternatively, it may be identical to Dippel’s 1717 complaint to the Appeal Court in Glückstadt, mentioned in his December letter to the King and appended in copy by Reventlow in his January letter to the King.

Dippel still seems confident he could turn higher authorities against the Council. President Reventlow is only mentioned in passing, not by name, but as “the President and Secretary himself, who did nothing but a virtuous and good work”. It was authored at a time when Dippel had no reason to believe that Reventlow would not continue to support him against the City Council.

So, by the summer of 1718, a new flank had opened in the case, opposing Dippel and the Altona City Council. Strangely, the case now seems to have ground to a halt. There is no answer to the angry report from the City Council, as if Sehested

¹¹⁰ “Nam si Judex imperité vel corrupté vel utroqvé modo judicons vigore legum litem suam facit, si porti læsæ ad damnum et interesse tenetur, si hino sine injurica in jus vocari potest, poterit etiam sine iniurica commonefieri, quod multo minus est quam accuseri”. I have been unable to trace the quote.

in Copenhagen has just archived the letter from Altona assuming things would calm down or in any case were in no need of further processing. No further documents from the whole second half of that year are found among the case files, and an outside observer in the fall of 1718 might simply conclude that all had been said and done. Still not a single bad word has been heard between Reventlow and his protégé Dippel.

In August-September, however, an event not appearing among the case files placed Dippel in a yet another conflict with the establishment in Altona, namely its superior clerical authority, Dean Fleischer of the Trinity Church. It was Dippel's pamphlet, printed in Hamburg, against the initiative of the Dean with forced baptism of kidnapped babies of dissenters. This prompted Dippel to ridicule the Dean and ironically propose that the executioner might be of assistance in order to force even more people to the church. The actual role of the hangman, however, turned out to be the burning of Dippel's provocative piece, but there is no indication that Dippel suffered any immediate retribution for publishing it, and Reventlow even turned against the activism of the cleric, cf. below. But the Dean is not the only target of Dippel's ridicule which also took aim at the court servants who had been commanded to seize the children from their home. Those servants came from the office of Vice President Land-Reuther. So, it is far from unthinkable that Reventlow was beginning to feel uneasy with Dippel's diatribe embroiling his own second-in-command. But the case is strangely absent among the case files.

A document exists, however – not among the case files – showing that Dippel was himself increasingly becoming nervous. On 5 November, the King issued a letter of protection, a “*Salvus Conductus*”, as his response to a supplication, not extant, submitted to him from Dippel in Altona. Here, the King confirms, yet again, that Dippel has the right to free passage in and out of the realm, that he “... should not be molested, disputed, nor offended”, and that “Our superior and inferior, civil and military servants must observe this”.¹¹¹ It is not indicated who else – apart from Dippel himself – would be notified about this royal grant, but it is evident that Dippel already in the fall of 1718 was worried about being assaulted, persecuted, or arrested. Probably, this anxiety reflects that Dippel was learning about the continued obsession of the Council with his case.

So, this was the first act of the Dippel Case, 1717–18. From Dippel as the energetic supporter to unjustly convicted persons in 1717, to his beginning strife with

¹¹¹ “... weder an Persohn noch Güthern molestiret, angefochten, oder beleidiget worden solle. Dernach Unsern Obere und Niedere Civil und Militair Bediente [...] zu achten”, Danish State Archives: “Tyske Kancelli, Indenrigske Afdeling B II Registranter med Koncepter og Indlæg, Patenten (1670–1770), Kopibog over åbne breve, VA VII”, here 1718–1719, 83: a “*Salvus Conductus*” from Frederik IV to Dippel, dated 5 November 1718.

the Council in Altona and his complaints about them to the King in Copenhagen already the same year – followed by the grimly determined effort of the Council to turn the case against Dippel himself. Dippel directed his complaints to the King, the Council theirs to foreign minister Sehested. But there the story stalled.

Now, the case with the City Council was fermenting in darkness all the way through the winter of 1718–19. Only in the spring of 1719, it would finally explode.

Act 2: The Campaign Against Corruption

March 1719 – The Case Explodes

Suddenly, all hell breaks loose. There are around 20 case files from the last days of March alone, some of them in several copies. Most of them seem to have been presented and discussed at committee meetings and have been copied for this purpose. So, now there is suddenly a committee working on the case, with participation of the two most active of the four Heinrichs, Joenssen and Archenholtz, who had been working on the report on Dippel the summer before.¹¹²

Some of the documents are numbered as process files, and there is an overview document by Reventlow himself, listing 10 of them as attachments, to which we shall return (IV.6). A committee meeting of 28 March is intensely addressing the Dippel case, but an important change has taken place. Now, the aim has been radically extended to nepotism and bribery more broadly. Most importantly, Reventlow is now spearheading the agenda as a sort of general purge of corrupt institutions and practices in Altona – and he himself and his office are among those under attack for receiving bribes. So, the broad purge also targets persons in or close to his own household – if not the noble couple themselves. A major incentive of his is simply to clear himself. When he arrived in the city five years earlier he had dismissed the city mayors, and the tension between him and the City Council which was palpable in the summer of 1718 has now all but vanished. Now, the two of them appear to collaborate smoothly in a novel, broader crusade to cleanse the city administration of corruption. Finally, two full years after the Council's first charge against Dippel, they have convinced Reventlow to go public on their side. It is not evident how long the two parties have been collaborating, but it seems this has been going on at least for some time, probably months,

¹¹² This committee is referred to in different ways; I call it “the committee” with lowercase “c”, in order to distinguish it from the official Commission with a capital C which was appointed later in spring.

maybe all the way back to the fall. Have they kept a low profile in order not to alert suspects? Dippel was already sufficiently nervous to have sounded the alarm to the King in November. It is also not evident how the searchlight has now been turned towards the President's own office – apart from the fact that Dippel might have attracted interest in that direction as he was the President's invention, his invitee, his collaborator, and even to some extent staying in the greater Reventlow household now under suspicion.

In this process, Dippel's role has been completely reversed. In 1718, he appeared as Reventlow's ally or even deputy vis-à-vis a malfunctioning City Council; now he is among those suspected, while the City Council takes Reventlow's orders. Dippel used to be part of the solution; now he is part of the problem – yea, even growing into the towering symbol of that problem. How did that happen? The almost nine-month hiatus of documents since the summer events gives us little information, and the March documents are not generous with information about events predating March. When and how the new, active anti-corruption committee was assembled, uniting the former opponents Reventlow and the City Council, is not clear, nor how long they had already been collaborating. How has the reconciliation between Reventlow and the Council been negotiated and how have they articulated their common agenda? Maybe the City Council has been successful in broadening its attack against Dippel to incriminate other parts of the Reventlow household, thereby forcing the Count to take action and side with them in order not to be pulled down with the expanding circle of persons facing charges. In any case, the much broader task of the committee implies that a host of new names, both of accused, witnesses, informants, and other characters now fill the case files, and it is far from always obvious to what degree, if at all, they relate to the original Dippel case.

Thus, the earliest 1719 documents are copies of ultrashort missives by members of the wealthy Hamburg financial family, the Ottes, dated 21 February 1719 (IV.11).¹¹³ These two letters are signed obligation documents granting that Johan Berend Otte, alone or with David Otte Sr., declares to be willing to pay some large

¹¹³ The Ottes were not unfamiliar with protracted financial court cases. They were, at this point, involved in a long and complicated financial court case in Hamburg in which they had filed a complaint against one Magdalena Negenborn and her Jewish financial advisor Elias Salomon for having illegitimately extracted a large gift from David Otte Jr., implying that they had taken advantage of the abnormal state of mind of this "schwachsinnige" family member. Another protracted court case, the Otte lawsuit is indicated as spanning the period of 1707–22 (Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 211-2_O 13; Alt-/Vorsignatur: O 1488).

amount of money. In one letter, the name of the recipient of 2,000 Rix-dollars has dramatically been cut out leaving a hole in the paper; in the other, the receiver is indicated as the “Vice/Präsidenten Stelle zu Altona” – the seat of the (vice) president of Altona. “Vice” is added in small over the line – by a later hand, wishing to exonerate the President? Obviously, these two documents appear as evidence that the Ottes have attempted to bribe the Altona presidency, potentially incriminating President Reventlow himself. Thus, they are evidence that the Reventlows’ presidency itself may have involved in corruption. The two documents are virtual bombs ticking under the Reventlows. Did these two documents trigger the whole new anti-corruption movement? In any case, Reventlow threw himself vigorously into the campaign and singled out Dippel as an accomplice if not the leader of a campaign against himself.

Two other brief Otte letters, a month later (20 March, IV.12), by contrast, are sworn affidavits that the Ottes have *not* been involved in bribes, and that Reventlow himself in particular is beyond suspicion: “... I assure hereby under oath that [...] Your High-Comital Excellence Mr. Count receives no money at all or should have anything with it to do.”¹¹⁴ So, in the month between these two dates, a more or less formal accusation has been brought against the Ottes, forcing them to declare the innocence of both Reventlow and themselves. This would soon imply that focus was instead directed towards two middlemen in the planned transaction between the Reventlows and the Ottes – Johan Vincelius and Caspar Dionis de Caseres – about whom we shall soon hear more. The Otte letters testify to the fact that the committee had been extending their campaign against corruption far beyond Dippel already in the early spring of 1719 – without any explicit relation between the Dippel and the Otte cases. The case would soon develop, however, and Dippel would comment upon it in new “Memorials” entering the case during spring, but not found among the case files.

Two Portugalöser

But what was the reason behind Dippel’s sudden fall from Comital grace? All points to the fact that the immediate reason was not at all an attack, on his part, on Reventlow and his wife for taking bribes. Rather, it was because Dippel was now *himself* accused of being involved in bribery. This is evident from a striking

¹¹⁴ “... versichere hirmit an Eÿdes statt, wie mir denn auch expresse vorhero verbohten worden gegen die Persohn von dem Gelde nichts zu gedencken, indehm Ihro Hochgräffl Excellence dH: Graff gar kein Geld nehme noch etwas davon haben solte” (IV.12).

document containing a testimony given by his old protégé Andreas Bandau collected by the committee, dated 29 March 1719. The committee was now making investigations calling Dippel's old partners as witnesses. Lieben Sr. would be interrogated in April (VII.12) and a handful of his friends already on 31 March (VII.13), soon to be followed by Caseres. The Bandau interrogation exists in two copies (IV.10 and VI.10).

Bandau came walking in from Hamburg, now 67 years of age, seemingly solicited by the committee. It is not clear what made him give testimony, as he was not a citizen of Altona. Maybe the committee would once again have been in a position to threaten him with dire legal consequences like the Council had done in the spring of 1717 when they extorted his confession about Dippel the ghostwriter. Bandau is here received by Joenssen and Archenholtz of the new committee. Now, Bandau relates the following story: He had originally met Dippel through a common broker friend named Stallbohm. As Bandau had been complaining about his drawn-out Altona process, Stallbohm had offered a piece of advice – if Bandau's case was just, as he cautiously added. He would present Bandau to a certain man with good connections to the Count. So, a couple of days later, he had introduced him to none other than – Dippel. He advised Bandau to produce a couple of *Portugalöser*, that is, heavy gold coins (Fig. 13).¹¹⁵ They would make his case turn out right, as "... these Portugalöser should be one for Mr. Count and the other for Mrs. Countess".¹¹⁶ One gold coin for each of the noble couple, and Bandau's legal problems would disappear into thin air. Bandau, however, hesitated to leave the coins with Dippel and wished to hand them over in person. Dippel agreed to this, "... as he said, these are exactly the right justice pennies with which one can bend the court or remain bound by it".¹¹⁷ This testimony obviously implicates Dippel as a middleman to bribery, and, by extension, would compromise the presidential couple as Dippel had implied to Bandau that they were receptive to suborning; yea, that Dippel even functioned as a bribe collector on their behalf.

We know that the Count had indeed intervened on Bandau's side at a late point in his court case in 1717 – did this happen as a result of these two gold coins? Or did the coins ever reach the Reventlows? Or was all of this a fabrication in order to incriminate Dippel?

115 One Portugalöser corresponds to 10 Ducats, of c. 3½ gram gold each, that is, all in all 35 grams of gold per coin. One Ducat, in turn, would correspond to 2 Rix-dollars, so that one Portugalöser = 20 Rix-dollars = 120 Mark.

116 "... alß welche Portugalöser einer vor den Hr. Graffen und der andern vor die Frau Gräffin seÿn solte".

117 "... dabey sagend, dies sind eben die rechten Justitz Pfennige, womit man das Recht beugen kann, oder sich lencken läßet".



Figure 13: Decisive in the case against Dippel were two *Portugalöser*, that is, two heavy gold coins, which he was claimed to have extracted as a bribe on the part of the Reventlows. They denied this and accused him of libel as well as bribery. *Portugalöser* with a weight around 35 grams were first minted in Portugal around 1500 – hence the name – and they became a widespread currency also in the north of Europe where many were coined at the mint of Hamburg beginning from 1553, at a value of 10 Ducats.

Here a Hamburg *Portugalöser* of 1665 – the front side shows the port of Hamburg under the text of *SUB UMBRA ALARUM TUARUM*, the protection formula of “Under the shadow of thy wings”. The flip side displays the coats of arms of four bank cities under the motto *BANCHORUM IN EUROPA BONO CUM DEO ERECTORUM MEMORIA* – “To the memory of the banks of Europe erected for the good by God”. The four cities are Venice, Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Nuremberg. In Hamburg’s coat of arms, at the top, the city gate is visible with its port closed; in Altona’s corresponding coat of arms, the gate is open.

On top of the bribery accusation, Bandau adds further incrimination of Dippel. When taking his case to the Glückstadt Appeal Court using his complaint text authored by Dippel, Bandau had contracted with a lawyer, one Dr. Münchhausen, to represent him there for a payment of 20 Rix-dollars. Here, Dippel immediately demanded half of the sum for himself, as a payment for his efforts in the libel case which had been opened in 1717 against Bandau and himself because of the criticism of the Council in their common complaint text, thus keeping Bandau free from consequences. So, Bandau had actually paid Dippel 10 Rix-dollars. The document concludes with the formal declaration that the text has twice been read aloud to Bandau, who signs it with his initials as a sworn affidavit.

After all the assistance Dippel appears to have given Bandau, this is a surprising turn of events. This affidavit was obviously a severe blow to Dippel and in fact seems to have constituted the first decisive step in his fall. Dippel’s famous claim that the Reventlows were corrupt, then, was not an act of criticism; it was not made publicly or in writing. Rather, it was an implication of he himself acting as a broker, presupposing that the Presidential couple were receptive to con-

cealed payments for certain services. Would we have reasons to doubt Bandau's severe accusation? Two years earlier, the Council had, fuming with anger over Dippel's allegations in Bandau's ghostwritten complaint text, threatened Bandau with jail or fines in order to force him to withdraw those statements. Is it possible that they would now have been able to extort false testimony from him under such continuous pressure, making him turn against his benefactor? We are really in no position to know the truth of these allegations, nor – if they are true – whether Dippel actually knew that the Reventlows were willing to accept bribes or even collaborated with them in doing so. But it is evident from the further, swift development of the case that Bandau's turn against Dippel played a central role in late March meetings of the new committee.

Reventlow's Shapeshifting

We can see from several copied documents that they were “product. in Commis-sione, 28te Mart” 1719”, that is, presented in the committee that date. What would have happened at such a meeting? It so happens that one document, seemingly authored by Reventlow himself in early April, functions as a summary of committee meeting activity around that time, systematically commenting upon all of 10 numbered appendages submitted with it (IV.6). It is a pretty informal three-page text with no headline, dating, or signature, but it evaluates the implication of all 10 documents mentioned, point by point, and so may constitute a sort of precis or conclusion of committee meetings. It is written in the first person and addresses, in the text, “Your Majesty” and thus appears to be a sort of draft by Reventlow of a report to the King in Copenhagen.

The text appears as if torn out of a larger context, beginning abruptly with “Demnach ...” (hence) and immediately addressing the issue of Dippel's *Species Facti*, now deemed to be “filled with highly improper expressions and insinuations, as well as many untruths”, and asking the King to communicate to him before any answer to Dippel. This could hardly refer to Dippel's original document of the same title which the King would already have seen 15 months earlier and which had long since been processed. It would rather refer to a new Dippel text with the same title (meaning only “state of the art” or “presentation of facts”) and to which several other documents refer but is not found among the case files. In any case, in this report to the King, Reventlow strongly expresses a wish to reject circulating rumors that he himself and the Countess have been receiving bribes: “So that no-one should be prejudiced by this, I have found it suitable to show how all sorts of rumors have been spreading, as if everything could be obtained from

us by gifts and presents".¹¹⁸ Hearsay about the Reventlows seems to be spreading in the twin city of Hamburg-Altona, probably also reported in Dippel's new *Species Facti*. Here, Reventlow refers to the Otte case – to which he also returns later – and to the Altona scribe Michael Christian Lieben spreading similar rumors, whom we know from the 1717 case in which he was involved with his son. Such hearsay is the reason why Reventlow has decided to interrogate a number of people. Here, his run-through of appendices begins. No. 1 consists of the statements of those interrogated; No. 2, based on these statements, an arrest order he has issued on scribe Lieben, and No. 3, a document to be published by the Chancellery. None of these documents are present, and a later but contemporaneous note in the margins also complains that they are not appended with the text.¹¹⁹ This absence leaves a bit in the dark why Lieben – the father of the merchant Dippel defended in his first *Species Facti* – has now come under the spotlight. He seems to have been a frequent guest with the Reventlows but was arrested already in March and remained imprisoned at the time of his interrogation on 29 April.

By contrast, all of the attachments numbers 4–10 of Reventlow's report are among the case files. No. 4 is the Bandau interrogation, of which Reventlow paraphrases the central allegation. This is the moment when Reventlow decisively disowns Dippel:

No. 4 claims that he hands over two Portugalöser, one for Mr. Count and the other for Mrs. Countess, to him, which he also willingly received, saying that these are the right justice pennies, with which you can bend the court or let oneself be suppressed by it, with the addition that he had given Mr. Dippelio further 10 Rix-dollars. How now a female person has given him information about this, such as the writing **No. 5** proves, he has himself, according to his writing sent 30 March to the Vicar Hirschfeldt, **No. 6**, not been able to deny this, from which it is easy to conclude that he in doing so has been acting in a highly-punishable way, not only has he received gifts in a prohibited way, but also and in particular abused my and my wife's name, which does not at all fit with his professed piety.¹²⁰

118 "Damit iedennoch niemand dadurch préveniret werde, habe ich für nöhtig ermeßen an zu zeigen, wie bißshero allerhand Spargements ausgestreuet, als wann mit Geschencken und Gaben man alhie alles erhalten könnte".

119 The margin note, hard to read: "diese 3 beýlagen haben wegen abgang der post nicht sogelante abgeschriben werde können, sollen mit ersten folgen." It is a strange fact that these documents have disappeared, particularly the first one with early committee interrogations, presumably of Lieben, Caseres, etc. Was there information here which the Count did not want to go public?

120 "**No 4** deponiret, daß er zwey Portugalöser, einen vor den Herren Grafen und den andern vor die Frau Gräfin demselben überreichet, welche er auch willig angenommen, dabey sagend, dieß sind eben die rechte Justits pfennige, womit man das recht beügen kann, oder sich lencken läßet, mit dem beýfügen, er hätte dem H. Dippelio noch 10 Rtr: gegeben. Wie nun hirvon durch

So, the pietist is not so pious.¹²¹ The Bandau interrogation proves to Reventlow that Dippel has implied the Presidential couple are corrupt as well as proving Dippel willing to accept bribes himself. Nos. 5 and 6 are a warning letter to Dippel and a protest letter from him, respectively, to which we return below, and Reventlow takes them as further evidence of his guilt with the somewhat fragile argument that he does not deny, in the latter, to have committed this action. So, Dippel has acted so as to make himself “Höchststraffbahr” – supremely punishable – a foreboding expression which Reventlow would not cease to repeat.

Reventlow proceeds into the Otte case. As the Ottes’ signed affidavits seem to cleanse themselves as well as the Reventlows from bribery, spotlights now turn to the middlemen connecting the two elite families. Reventlow brings the heavy revelation that the first person incriminated here is really an important character in his own household, Vincelius, who has accepted bribes for issuing “protecto-riums” to certain persons. This was a standard of the free city of Altona ever since King Christian IV in 1641 had offered general protection in Altona to Jews expelled from nearby Hamburg, but practice was not that such protection documents required a payment. These bribes were not small (14 Ducats) but nothing as compared to what Vincelius, through a Jewish middleman named Caspar Dio-

eine Frauens person demselben nachricht gegeben, wie das Schreiben sub No. 5 darthut, hat dieselbe, beysage seines am 30ten Martÿ a.c. an den herren Pastoren Hirschfeld abgelaßenen Schreibens sub No. 6. beÿde nicht abläugnen können, woraus dann leichtlich zu judiciren, daß er hirunter Höchststraffbahr gehandelt, indem er nicht allein verbotenerweise Geschenke genommen, besondern auch sogar meines und meiner Gemahlin Nahmen darunter fälschlich gebrauchet, welches iedoch mit seiner vorgegebenen Pietet gar nicht übereinkombt”.

121 Dippel may also have tested the patience of the Reventlows in other ways. According to an anonymous voice in the *Fürstlich Wittgensteinisches Archiv Bad Laasphe*, D49, probably one of Count August’s court officials, Dippel’s departure from the Reventlow household happened for the following reason: “Es wohnte *Dippelius* in *Altona* bey dem Graffen *Repenklau* [sic!] etliche Jahr in seinem Haus und hat daselbst so viel gemerket und abgehöret, daß der Graff, seine Gemahl und die übrigen alda sich befindlichen Beamten *present* nemmen den ungerechten zu helfen den gerechten aber und armen dagegen zu untertruken. Weil nun *Dippelius* sehr gemeinsam mit dem Graff und deßen Gemahlin gewesen, so hat *Dippelius* sich öftters gegen den Graff und seine Gemahlin als ein scharffer Hausprediger aufgeführt, wodurch der Graff und deßen Gemahlin die sehr gelt-geitzig sein soll endlich so scharff aneinander gekommen daß sich *Dippelius* darauf aus dem Haus nach Hamburg zu wohnen hat begeben müßen”. Dippel spent much time, for several years, with Count Repenklau [sic!] and his consort and remarked that they and their staff helped the unrighteous and suppressed the righteous. So, Dippel began to act as a sharp house preacher to the Count and Countess – who should be very greedy for money, as it is noted in passing – and finally, they had become so mad with each other that Dippel had had to move to Hamburg. This could have been a version Dippel later told his friend Count August. Maybe it was not always easy to house a pious prophet.

nis de Caseres, had encouraged Johan Berend Otte to pay.¹²² The motivation of the 2,000 Rix-dollars and 200 Ducats promised in the Otte February letters above – Reventlow's Nos. 7–8 – is now revealed. They were really intended as payments for the vacant office of Vice President of Altona to be taken over by Otte. Nos. 9 and 10, the Ottes' affidavits and a Dutch letter presented by Vincelius trying to exonerate himself, further bear witness to this illicit transaction, adding among other things that Vincelius had accepted gifts from Caseres in order to facilitate Otte's acquisition of the high office. Vincelius could be none other than Johan Vincelius who had been quartermaster with the Reventlows for many years and had also functioned as the teacher and servant of Benedicte von Brockdorff's son from her first marriage, Christen Skeel.¹²³

It is a new Reventlow we meet here, for the first time: challenged, threatened in his position, livid, self-righteous, and aggressive. The report on the committee meetings concludes with Reventlow simply kicking out these two corrupt members from his own household: "As I under such circumstances could no longer tolerate the mentioned Dippelium and Vincelium in my house, I have let them understand my will, after which they have retired to Hamburg, and in case this has not yet happened they will submit to your Royal Majt. a most-submissive memorial".¹²⁴ So, Dippel has already now learnt about Reventlow's disclosures when he was relegated from his house where he may still have had his lab. He has now fled to Hamburg along with his fellow bribe suspect Vincelius. Reventlow predicts that the two would now file a complaint with the King in Copenhagen, and he terminates the letter by admonishing the King to send himself copies, so that he himself can undertake the task of answering the two of them. Reventlow will make sure that no supplication from the two of them should be considered by the

¹²² The name is spelled differently in the files, Cassere, Casere, Caseres, etc. We use the latter version.

¹²³ Not much is known about Johan Vincelius. He might have been related to the Livonian Vicar Berend Vincelius, for at some point he is presented with the byname "Curlandus", both toponyms referring to the Eastern Baltic area. In 1712, he had accompanied the young Skeel to his studies in Leiden where it is documented that the two of them donated to the Lutheran congregation there (Helk 2002, 327). In 1699, he had been present at a ceremony at the Academy in Sorø, Denmark, which Reventlow had been presiding. He is mentioned three times as a student in Sorø, every time as the quartermaster of a new noble family (Wad 1886, 205; 213), so he seems to have made a career quartermastering.

¹²⁴ "Wann nun bey so bewandten umständen ich vorbemeldten Dippelium und Vincelium nicht länger in meinem Hause dulden können, habe ich ihnen meinen willen zu verstehen gegeben, welche auch darauf nach Hamburg sich retiriret, und dem vernehmen nach fallß es noch nicht geschehen, bey Ihrer Königl. Mayts. mit einem allerunterthänigsten memoriali einkommen werden".

King without his knowledge. The Copenhagen connection is increasingly imminent in the background.

The report refers to the long interrogation of the middleman Caseres which took place on 4 April, incriminating Vincelius, and thus it must be later than that date; probably the document sums up the results from a couple of consecutive committee meetings in late March–early April. In any case, this document provides the best window into the workings of the new committee: focusing on corruption issues, spearheaded by the Reventlows, conducting witness interrogations, going through numbered series of evidence, arresting suspects such as Lieben and Caseres, kicking out others like Dippel and Vincelius, and reporting all of it to the King in Copenhagen. Dippel appears as the main culprit, but now he seems but the tip of an iceberg of Altona corruption to be weeded out.

Simultaneously, Bandau's two-Portugalöser story signaled a decisive turn in Dippel's fate. Now, there would be no way back.

Dippel Panicking

We have no explicit mention of when Dippel fled to Hamburg. If we conclude from Reventlow's report on his eviction, it would be triggered by the Bandau interrogation which took place on 29 March. The next day, 30 March, he would be in Hamburg, for that day he sent two panicking letters from there. So, he probably left on 29 March, taking with him all of his chemical equipment in two large trunks. Many reports on the Dippel case date his exit to Hamburg far earlier, even before his 1717 letter to the King, but I see no documents pointing in that direction. It is important to remember that it was no big thing to go to Hamburg; the distance between the two cities was about five km, less than a one-hour walk. Most probably, Dippel would often have been there, also during the first months of 1719, e.g., to make arrangements for the reissue of a writing by the seventeenth-century mystic Lorenz Grammendorf, including a long theological introduction by himself with a Hamburg book printer, to which we return later. The two cities lived in close metabolism with one another; only if you were wanted or persecuted in one of the two jurisdictions, you would remain in one of them.

The two mentioned letters from Dippel must have been intercepted so as to appear as evidence with the committee, and the same holds for a small handful of other letters to and from Dippel among the case files in copies, most of them undated, but seemingly belonging to the same period. There is little chance that Dippel himself would voluntarily have ceded his mail correspondence to the committee, less certain whether receivers of Dippel letters may have been willing to do so, e.g., the Lutheran vicar Hirschfeldt whom he addressed several times in

early spring. Reventlow and the committee have probably been able to monitor Altona mail service, and it is far from certain that these letters ever reached their intended addressees before appearing as evidence before the committee.¹²⁵ These letters prove central, however, both for understanding Dippel and his predicament at the time, but also because they served, to the committee, no less than two purposes. They would be scrutinized for hints to other suspects of corruption, and they were evidence that Dippel was committing further acts of libel and calumny against the Reventlows which would be added to his growing rap sheet.

The two letters No. 5–6 which Reventlow cited as evidence in his report seem to be antedated by less fearful letters by Dippel earlier in spring which are also found among case files. Document IV.10 contains, along with the central Bandau testimony, excerpts from two letters by Dippel to the mentioned pastor Hirschfeldt, “Minister de la Parole de Dieu, Altona”. This refers to one Michael Hirschfeld who had recently, as of 1718, assumed his position at the small Heiligengeist Kirche – Church of the Holy Spirit – in Altona. The two of them may seem surprising bedfellows; Dippel had made his public name as a radical pietist from lambasting Lutherans and Lutheran churches ever since the 1690s. Hirschfeldt, of course, may have been a Lutheran leaning towards more moderate pietism. But Dippel is obviously friendly with the pastor whom he also attempts to bring into play as a communication link to the Reventlows through whom he may originally have met him. In the first small letter extract Dippel refers to an attachment:

... You may give this report to Mrs. Countess, and if it is the wish of her consort to send it to the King in Copenhagen today, she will not issue orders to His Majesty and not report any lies to him. I also send a copy of it to the priest through whom I recently sent my supplication to the King. God be with us, in whom I remain ...¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Of course, it is possible that such letters could have been opened, copied, and sealed again, so they could be forwarded to the addressees such as not to arouse suspicion – we do not know. Shipment of mail was not anonymous, so it was not difficult to monitor letters. Pedersen (2020) resumes that the possibilities for surveillance were numerous in the mail service at the time. All letters should be delivered in person at the mail office and registered, and the sack of mail was shipped with a list, a so-called “post-card”, over receivers. This list was tacked on the wall of the receiving post office, and recipients would collect their mail there. Christian Erlund, later chief of mail in Copenhagen, had perfected post espionage by the opening, copying, and re-sealing of letters in Hamburg, beginning in 1704, later extended also to the Danish realm. Cf. Pedersen (2008; 2020).

¹²⁶ “Siegt es mit Lieben; diesen Bericht können Sie der Frau Gräffin geben, umb so es Ihre Gemahl beliebet, denselbe Heute nach Coppenhagen an dem König zu schicken, so werden Sie Sn. Majestät nicht instruiren und keine Lügen dahin berichten. Ich schicke gleichfelß Copiam davon an diejenigen Minister, durch welchen ich neulich meine Supplic an den König geschickt. Gott seÿ mitt Uns, in welchem ich verharre”.

The report attached might be the new *Species Facti*, Dippel hoping it may reach the Countess. The reference that if she forwards it to the King she will not lie nor give him orders seems to be an ironic way of implying that this is exactly what she is otherwise busy doing. Copies of the same report Dippel has already sent to yet another unnamed cleric who has recently been willing to submit a supplication from him to the King. Could it be one of his gold-making friends among the Hamburg clergy? Dippel is obviously struggling to get in contact with the King to explain his version of events, but still no panic.

The next letter to Hirschfeldt (also in IV.10) seems copied in toto, maybe from around medio March. Here, Dippel goes into a more detailed complaint over the injustices of the committee. He relates how a Council member, one Mr. Stackenholtz (probably Archenholtz), would have loudly declared in the wine cellar under the Altona City Hall that Vincelius and himself would be extradited from Reventlow's mansion, "... because we are both implied in the affair with the Jew and wished to receive part of the agreed-upon sum, and that Mr. Count himself had said this in the court to all members of the Council".¹²⁷ So, Dippel only indirectly learns what is going on against him in the committee where Reventlow claims that Dippel is involved in the Caseres-Otte case in which he would also receive bribes. Dippel, of course, appears shocked with this accusation, so he asks Hirschfeldt to inform the Count that he will now request the King's assistance, not only for his own cause but on behalf of other innocent persons involved as well. He urges Hirschfeldt to fetch a copy of his new *Species facti* from a certain Mr. Maas the following Monday, and he asks him to communicate it to the King so that the Comital couple may see that he does not at all refrain from having light thrown upon his activities. In this letter, panic is becoming palpable underneath the cool rhetoric. Dippel is obviously anxious to reach the King, he is now realizing that direct letters from him may be seized and that his first attempt to use another cleric as a middleman may have failed. He does not hesitate to try to make Hirschfeldt threaten Reventlow with the King, maybe in order to hide from Reventlow his problems with getting into contact with him.

As Reventlow had learned in his report (No. 5), there might be people out there wanting to warn Dippel about the imminent dangers now facing him. IV.11 contains a small, touching missive from an anonymous woman. We have no idea who she may have been. Signing herself "Your willing handmaiden", the author does not even know Dippel's exact name, addressing him as "Herr Canzeleÿ Rath

127 "... weile wir beyde in der affaire mit dem Juden impliciret und die stipulirte Summe hätten participiren wollen und daß der Herr Graff solches selbst in dem Gerichte zu allen Raths verwandtes gesaget".

Tiempel” – or is this an attempt to conceal the recipient? The short note goes directly to the matter, referring a rumor from the day before that three witnesses will now testify under oath about the two Portugalöser to the noble couple and the 10 Rix-dollars to Bandau; that they intend to go to the King in order to “paint my Lord black” and revoke his royal protection in order to put him in prison. Who the other two witnesses on the Portugalöser story might be, in addition to Bandau, we do not know, maybe the broker Stallbohm might be one. She writes in order to make Dippel cautious, for there are further investigations coming up into whether he has received money from someone in order to prove that “... he is a godless man and no pietist or pious quaker, I am happy if he is out of the case and safe, for the Countess is very embittered. I am his old faithful friend”.¹²⁸ So, the Countess in particular is on the war path. The letter is sent from Altona one Thursday morning – could be Thursday 16 or 23 March – to “Drimpel oder Dippel”. Strangely, his willing servant vacillates with regard to his name. In any case, the note was sent earlier than Reventlow’s report on late March committee activity in which it appears as evidence, and earlier than Dippel’s 30 March letter referring to it.

Exactly 30 March is the day when Dippel would have realized with full force that the committee was seriously out to get him, for on that date two agitated letters went off from him in Hamburg to where he had probably arrived the day before: a final missive to pastor Hirschfeldt, the other to Privy Councilor Count U.A. von Holstein in Copenhagen, with whom Dippel was obviously on friendly terms.

The former is a long, panic-stricken letter again to pastor Hirschfeldt (in IV.11, with parallel extract copies in VI.11 and VII.11), containing what is probably Dippel’s reaction to the anonymous female warning sign. It is probably the best window into Dippel’s increasingly desperate situation and also takes him to express new libelous attacks. It addresses the “venerable Pastor, highly valued friend”. It mentions a strange letter attached, which Dippel suspects is organized by the Countess – supposedly the warning note from the anonymous woman. In any case, Dippel’s reading of the letter in question is not really as a warning but as an indirect attempt organized by the Countess to scare him. Dippel doubts that she would really have been able to find rogues in Altona willing to testify under oath such things – the Portugalöser story – which is why Dippel now blows his top and goes into a fit of rage. The Countess must have made these persons commit perjury: “... so I ask you to say to her and her husband with all due respect

128 “... daß er ein Gottloser Mann sey und kein Pietist oder frommer Quäker, ich welte daß er aus der Sache wäre und sicher, weil die Gräffin sehr erboßt ist. Ich bin seine alte getreue Freundin”.

that I not only declare these witnesses to be forswearing criminals, but also declare the investigators themselves to be colluding with such subordinate criminals, and they will learn it from me if they do not know yet what it means to instigate such an inquisition against an honest man, to be the judge of one's own case, and this also directed against a person not recognizing this Altonian forum where you hear witnesses under oath without the other party being present".¹²⁹

Dippel's desperation with the ongoing process is palpable. He has no access to cross-examine the witnesses whom he regards as scoundrels committing perjury, really conspiring with the inquisitors – the committee. The Reventlows – positioned in the city to reintroduce proper city rule – do not adhere to elementary judicial principles. The Count acts as a judge in a case in which he is himself a part, the main accused in the case must learn about the process from accidental winehouse rumors, witnesses are questioned under oath with the other part – Dippel – not present and without any ability to conduct a defense. But Dippel has not finished; his rhetorically masterful fit of anger mounts over a whole page. The whole machine is driven by one "Erboßtes Weib", one furious woman, and the gentlemen of the Council in whom the Count now places so much trust are drawn through the cesspool by her. It would hardly have helped Dippel's position with the committee that it got access to this letter.

Slowly cooling down, Dippel tries to present a short version of what he would say in his defense if he had the committee's ear. What had really happened is that Dippel offered to help Bandau finally to speak out in his protracted seven-years court case. In the presence of broker Stallbohm and a certain Rosenbach, probably his old friend the radical pietist and spurmaker Johann Georg Rosenbach now living in Altona, Bandau had gratefully offered him the two Portugalöser "... für meine Gutheit und Mühe", for his goodness and effort. The modest Dippel had hesitated to accept the offer, but Bandau had forced the coins upon him already the very first time they met, supposedly sometime in 1716. The 10 Rix-dollars, by contrast, Bandau had only given him half a year later, as a payment for his effort in the libel case against Bandau – such as any proper judge would have found in his investigation, Dippel adds. In the case of Lieben, he had blabbered so much about his grand plans and industries that Dippel thought he was wealthy and would borrow a large sum from him, but he would offer him 50 Mark only. Those

129 "... so bitte ich Ihr und Ihren Herrn anzusagen nebenst meinem gebührenden respect, daß ich nicht nur diese Zeugen vor Meineydige Schelmen declarire, sondern auch die Inquisitores selbst vor collusores zu subordinatores solcher Schelmen, und Sie sollen von mir erfahren, wenn Sie es noch nicht wissen, was es auff sich habe, gegen einen ehrlichen Mann einen solche inquisition anzustellen, Richter in seiner eigenen Sache zu seyn, und dieses auch gegen Jemand, der Altonaische forum nicht agnosciret, Zeugen eydlich abzuhören *non praesente parte altera*".

he refused to be paid back, probably because of all of the food and drink and ink and paper that Dippel had spent on him, he adds. Dippel must have heard of charges against himself of accepting bribes from Lieben: he insists the small sum was no gift, just a loan never paid back. The copy of the letter abruptly stops here, and Dippel's defense in the Lieben case appears less than satisfactory.

This letter rightly pointed out the lack of legal standards of the building committee case and also gave Dippel's version of the fateful Bandau case. It is probably a short version of the defense that would have been in the new, no longer extant *Species Facti*. But expressing his rage against the Reventlows and the Countess in particular was no wise move. Would Dippel have been completely unaware that such a letter might end up in the hands of the committee?

The very same day, he penned yet another cry for help to Count U.A. von Holstein in Copenhagen, another top nobleman, Privy Councilor, and a member of the King's inner circle who would, a few years later, rise to Great Chancellor (VI.7). Holstein was also a brother-in-law of Reventlow, who hated him "souverainement" which may have been a reason Dippel addressed exactly him.¹³⁰ That letter may have reached its destination, for among the files is also a letter, which could be Holstein's brief answer. To Holstein, Dippel's tone is more reverential, and the letter goes directly to his central request: "Your Excellency has received a most-submissive memorial to His Majesty in the latest Tuesday mail along with

130 Bricka (1890, vol. XIV, 30). Actually, the addressee of the letter is not unambiguous. The letter is addressed to "Privy Councilor, Knight of the Dannebrog Order, Holstein", but these epithets actually hold for two different noblemen: the Counts J.G. von Holstein and U.A. von Holstein, so strictly speaking we cannot see who among the two was the addressee. Both were Mecklenburg Counts with high standing and positions in the Copenhagen government; the former a State Council member from 1712, the latter a member of "the great deliberation" in 1718, State Council member from 1719, and Great Chancellor from 1721. Our assumption that the addressee was U.A. Holstein is but a qualified guess, building partly on his opposition to Reventlow, partly on the fact that Dippel associated with him in Copenhagen nine years later in 1728. There exists a one-page note by Frederik IV to a secretary Muniken, dated 17 April, no year. The note refers to a writing with "Gottlose Reden" which shall be presented and discussed with both of the two Holsteins in order to establish "wer solches geschmiedet und Auttor darfon sein möge" – who could be the author. A hole has been torn in the paper where a name might have been. If, as seems probable, the note addresses Dippel's letter to Holstein, it would not be difficult to identify the author as the letter is signed by Dippel, but the King may have wondered if the letter was really from his Chancellery Councilor or whether it was a forgery in order to blacken him. In any case, the King could also not tell which Holstein was the intended receiver. The note, then, would refer to the government's processing of Dippel's panic letter to von Holstein which would have been seized in the mail. Due to the royal meeting, the letter would have reached both of the Holsteins, and either of the two could have tried to warn Dippel subsequently (Ny kongl. Saml. Fol. 1299e. Kongehuset Frederik IV 202, 1698–1730 Egenhændige optegnelser m.m. ME 211–1).

the attached *Specie Facti* in the submissive confidence in Your dexterity, in which I request the appointment of a commission against the cruel and enormous actions developing in Altena with a cheekiness and impertinence as if they was no God in heaven and no longer a King in Dennemarck”.¹³¹ Again, Dippel reaches out to the King through a possible middleman whom he already recently sent his new *Specie Facti* – not in the case files – and asks for the appointment of a new commission to take action against the terrible Altona events. Now, he adds that Jews but also other honest people are incarcerated without reason, one of them a Portuguese Jew now close to dying from maltreatment. This would probably refer to Lieben and Caseres, so they would already have been imprisoned for some time by 30 March. Prisoners are questioned in the manner of the Spanish inquisition, Dippel continues, and witnesses are instructed on what to say in testimonies. So, torture and perjury are the methods of the committee. The whole process is driven by the Count and his wife as prosecutors and judges in their own case:

The Count, but even more his consort, are prosecutors and judges in their own case, the City Councilors serve them as torturers and executioners in order to suppress and scare honest and completely innocent persons who, against better judgment and conscience, must confess facts about me and other honest people which none of us have dreamed about ...¹³²

If these allegations are correct, the case is really spiraling out of bounds. Dippel's reasonable suspicion that letters from him may be prevented from reaching the King now makes him request of Holstein to take the present letter, wrap it in a different envelope and submit it as a supplication to the King, as "... they are now very busy to prevent me from all access to His Majesty". Dippel may have been naive in his supposition that supplications went directly to the King; they were rather typically processed by his administration, maybe only for a brief accept of a response from the King.¹³³ We have no idea whether Holstein actually forwarded the letter in a new envelope, but much points to the fact the letter did in fact reach the King who summoned both of the two Counts von Holstein to discuss it. For it was not evident from the address whether the recipient was U.A. or

¹³¹ "Den Euer Excellence habe in nechstverwichener Dienstags-Post ein allerunterthänigst Memorial an Sn. Majestat nebst beýgelagte *Specie Facti* in unterthäniger confidence auf dero dextérité übersandt, in welchem ich um eine commission solicitiret gegen die grausame und enorme proceduren, welche jetzt in Altena im Schwang gehen mitt solcher Rasereý und impudence, als ob kein Gott im Himmel und kein König mehr in Dennemarck wäre".

¹³² "Der Graff, aber vielmehr desen Gemahlin, sind Ankläger und Richter in Ihrer eigenem Sach, die Raths-Herren dienen Ihne als Peiniger und Nachrichten zur Unterdruckung und Erschreckung ehrlicher und gantz unschuldiger Leuthe, die wider Ihr besser wissen und gewissen auf mich und andren ehrliche Leuthe facta bekennen sollen, wovon keinem unter uns geträumet".

¹³³ Cf. Bregnsbo (1997).

rather J.G. von Holstein, which is probably why the King wished to discuss it with both of them. It is possible that one of the Holsteins subsequently acted to warn Dippel, for there is a brief letter, jotted down in great haste and hard to decipher, which may be an indirect answer to Dippel through a Hamburg intermediate.

In any case, it is an urgent note of alarm informed by high circles in Copenhagen (VI.8): "... I sense from a reliable source, that my High-standing Lord's case in Copenhagen is beginning to look very evil".¹³⁴ Authorities in Copenhagen aim at seizing Dippel without hesitation through the "hiesige Magistrat", the local City Council.¹³⁵ So, the warning letter seems to have been mailed from a Dippel friend in Hamburg. The author urges Dippel "... if it would not be most cautious as the first thing to move away from Hamburg and get out of the way of a brewing storm, as he would then be better suited to warn and help the rest".¹³⁶ The signature is (deliberately?) unreadable; in any case it is an informant with direct or indirect sources in Copenhagen with knowledge about plans being finalized in the German Chancellery about Dippel's arrest by the Hamburg City Council. Could the letter have been sent from a person in Hagedorn's local Danish representation in Hamburg to which Holstein had connections, or just acted on his own behalf? The letter, hard to read, refers to its source as a certain "Mhochst. H" or even "Hln" with a well-meaning intention to warn Dippel. In any case, Dippel should simply get out of Hamburg as soon as possible. We do not know from when this acute warning note stems – probably late April 1719 when Dippel's arrest was imminent – nor whether it ever reached him, but we do know Dippel did not make it out of Hamburg before it was too late.¹³⁷ His correspondence frenzy – of which we may know the tip of the iceberg only – was to no avail.

134 "... von sicherer Hand vernehme, daß meines Hochst. Herrn Sachen in Copenhagen sehr übel zu sehen beginnen".

135 Rustmeier (1957) thinks this letter stems from some Dippel friend in Altona, but "hiesige Magistrat" would rather refer to Hamburg as we have no indication the Altona City Council was involved in Dippel's arrest in Hamburg. The address on the flip side of the letter goes: "A Monsieur/ Mons. Dippelius/ a / Hamburg", with an addition in small: "Bey H. Percent abzugeben." and "Franco", meaning postage had been paid. Did Dippel stay with a Mr. Percent in Hamburg? Or was it the name of a servant of his?

136 "... ob es nicht am rahtsamsten seyn würde Sich vors erste von Hamburg zu entfernen und ein drohenden Ungewitter etwas aus dem wege zu gehen, da denn hernach etwa dem übrigen desto beqvemer zu achten so zu helffen seyn möchte".

137 Dippel also tried to reach out in French (VI.6) with a brief letter to a certain "Monseigneur", attaching his "pièces bien sanglantes" which he has also been forced to send to the King, as he says, maybe the new *Species Facti* again. This "Excellence" seems to have been another person close to the King to whom Dippel meticulously pledges allegiance.

Dippel was not in the wrong when detecting a moral panic in the Altona leadership. The last day of March, Reventlow decided to go public with a general warning against corruption. In a period before regular newspapers, the main communication channel to people at large, the subjects of absolutist rule, would be the state church and other temples.¹³⁸ So, Reventlow had a notice composed which was dispatched to the Altona clergy with an order to read it aloud for congregations in all churches, probably at services taking place on Palm Sunday, 2 April. It warned Altonians against giving or taking bribes. The Count has been informed that there are persons, who

... not only demands gifts, perquisites, or presents from people here which is unjust and strictly forbidden in the royal decree of the year 1708, and whom they extort with all sorts of pretexts. But they have even abused the name of me and mine in a calumnious manner.¹³⁹

Certain officials have requested gifts and bribes from people on all kinds of pretexts and even misused the Reventlows' good name in doing so. These were the rumors about Dippel, Vincelius, Lieben, and Caseres generalized. Now, Reventlow declares that anyone who are or have been requested any such kind of gifts should meet at city secretary Esmarck's office and report the name of who had made the demands and also of who collected the payment. It is certainly understandable or even admirable if Reventlow wished to purge his city administration of corruption. This would happen with tough tools: the reference to the 1708 legislation is an indirect threat of death penalty to those guilty of bribery. But given the legal standards of his actual prosecution of potential offenders, his public admonition might just as well have called forth a wave of denunciations of persons people just did not like. Maybe Reventlow's public campaign was more aimed at purifying his own house from the rumors circulating? Regardless, now the case against corruption went public. This fed directly into the next issue looming on the horizon: what to do about the now discredited Dippel, a public name in wide circles of Europe?

¹³⁸ IV.9); variants in IV.8); VII.14); VI.1).

¹³⁹ "... nicht allein ungutäßige und durch der Königl. Constitution de A.o 1708 hart verbohtene, Geschenke, Sportuln und accidentien von den Leüten alhier gefordert, und unter allerhand erfindungen erpreßet, sondern wohl gar mein und der meinigen Namens Calumniose gemißbrauchet". The royal decree of 4 September 1708 for all the King's lands and counties deals with bribery and is a sharpening of Christian V's decree of 20 March 1676. It shall prohibit and abrogate that clerical, civil, and military persons receive gifts in exchange for favors within these fields. Persons in such offices who violate this decree will be punished "without mercy on their life, honor, and property", that is, with death penalty (Eggers, E.A.F. (1788), 369ff). The church proclamation is the only case file referring to any legal basis; this is absent in commission reports as well as in the final sentence and punishment decisions.

A Cascade of Culprits

The more or less improvised investigations and interrogations undertaken by Reventlow and his committee from March into April testify to the fact that what began with one target in the shape of Dippel was now spreading to an increasing series of other suspects. We already heard about the Bandau interrogation of 29 March; three days later, it was three friends of Lieben named Jorge Jenckel, Christian Philip Schroeter, and Michael Dencke (IV.13), while a written testimony about “dem Juden Casserer” appeared from the Hamburger merchant Joh. Hend. Sentrup, also on 31 March. Caseres himself along with two friends, Claus Eickhoff and Isaac Israel, were interrogated on 4 April in what proved to be a long and fateful interview. Only on 29 April, a signed document has Lieben Sr. answering 16 detailed questions. These interrogations seem semi-structured at best; unlike the work of the later, more systematic May Commission, they do not follow a common scheme. Also, 31 March seems to be the date when the investigation committee selected among City Council members acquired a bit more formalized status.¹⁴⁰

Bandau seems to have escaped further prosecution by framing Dippel even if he had to sustain one briefer interview under the next Commission in May, but other suspects such as Lieben and Caseres remained imprisoned at the Altona City Hall and faced incisive interrogations, maybe even, if Dippel was right, torture. Both of the Liebens, of course, had been drawn into the case by Dippel already in 1717, but now the father, the city scribe Michael Christian Lieben was a suspect and had, in some way, implicated some of his friends – Jorge Jenckel, Christian Philip Schroeter, and Michael Dencke with whom he had been discussing the Countess and her practice of receiving bribes. From where the committee and interrogator Archenholtz would have collected information about this private and delicate conversation between friends, we do not know, but they had obviously learned that the four of them had met on Saturday 10 December 1718 at Dencke’s home, informally discussing this and that at a small get-together before Christmas (VII.13). The three are a merchant, a theology student, and a shopkeeper, respectively, – Lieben himself a chamber scribe, that is, a financial official keeping budgets, so he would have known the Reventlows from his position with the city administration.

Their common friend Lieben had told the three witnesses, maybe even boasted a bit, about how he enjoyed free access to the Countess; Jenckel remembers how he

¹⁴⁰ The interrogation of Caseres and his friends (IV.13) begins by presenting the questioning team, Joensen, Archenholtz, and secretary Esmarck as the special committee appointed by Count Reventlow 31 March.

was even having an appointment with her the very same Saturday evening. In this context Lieben had related how he would bring her many “Sportuln”, that is, perquisites. The other tradesman, Dencke, confirms this while the theologian claims he does not remember, for he was focused on his sermon for the next morning. Was it true that Lieben told them the Count and Countess had asked him what they would do with such gifts? The two tradesmen: yes – even if one of them does not remember the Count mentioned here, only the Countess. Lieben had answered the noble couple’s question that the Countess should take the gifts and “in die blaue brockstecken” – hide the presents in the blue net. This was an idiom which the Countess obviously didn’t know, so she asked, and Lieben explained that this was a local expression in Hamburg and Altona: if you get your hands on something you hide it in your blue net.¹⁴¹ Their gracious lordship had laughed heartily at this explanation. This small piece of intimate discussion at the Reventlows’ is extracted from the two tradesmen by the interrogator. The theologian, by contrast, remembers nothing. But was this because he actually realized the imminent danger and tried to keep their common friend Lieben out of trouble by feigning ignorance? This is the only interrogation in which clear and detailed testimony – if second-hand – refers to the Countess taking bribes. We do not know exactly when Lieben had been arrested but this interrogation, in any case, would not help him in jail. So, Dippel was not the only informant implying a bribery accusation against the Countess.

It is harder to judge the exact connections of Dippel to the whole Otte-Caseres-Vincelius complex of cases, in which the wine cellar rumor would implicate him. While Bandau and the Liebens had come under the spotlight because of Dippel’s original letter, it does not seem evident it was he who formed the link to the Otte case, and there are no indications in the documents relating how Reventlow and the committee got a whiff of that whole complex in the first place. Seemingly, the Ottes’ affidavits got them off the hook – was it also because they were a rich and prominent family in Hamburg, beyond Altona jurisdiction? In any case, this move swiftly focused the searchlight on their middlemen, Vincelius, Caseres, Israel, and their complicity in the vice presidency affair.

¹⁴¹ Maybe the expression refers to Low German “Brooken”, a saying from the port of Hamburg about the nets used for the offloading of goods, cf. https://www.ndr.de/kultur/norddeutsche_sprache/plattdeutsch/woerterbuch101_abc-B.html#alphabetnav.

A Middleman Caught in the Middle

Caseres and his contact Isaac Israel in Hamburg had been implicated by the Otte affair, and they seem to have been interrogated several times in late March, but the results are not preserved. Caseres seems to have been jailed in order to put pressure on him to give more satisfactory testimony.¹⁴² The long interrogation of Caseres with two friends on 4 April would cause considerable controversy through the spring investigations (IV.13). It is indeed the document containing most details pertaining to bribe practices involving the Reventlows' quartermaster Vincelius – and potentially the Comital couple themselves. It must have caused some concern in the interviewer Archenholtz and his fellow Heinrichs to hear allegations going dangerously near the household of their new partner and overlord in the ongoing public struggle against Altonian corruption.

The first 13 questions, out of 63, address how the witness Claus Eickhoff tried to pay 14 ducats as a present (two to Vincelius, 12 for the Countess) for a protection document to one Heinrich Hoffstedt, – the coins for the Countess were refused, however, but also the others. Eickhoff did not receive the protection from Vincelius directly; Hoffstedt fetched it himself from somebody else. So, no decisive result comes out of Eickhoff's interrogation, effectively doing what he can to deny bribery. But why would he himself have gotten the idea to pay bribes for a protectorium, in the first place?

This would be different in Israel's and particularly Caseres' testimony in the remainder of the long session. First, the issue of the 2,000 Rix-dollars obligation. Caseres himself had asked Vincelius whether the vice presidency was vacant, and Vincelius had answered: "Ja, aber es müste Geld dabej seyn ein paar tausend Rthl" – yes, but it costs a couple of thousand Rix-dollars. Israel had then given Caseres the obligation from the Ottes, "... in order to give security for the money which Mr. Otto should pay for the Presidency".¹⁴³ So, there seems to have been

¹⁴² The final 5 May report from the committee (VII.8), cf. below, mentions interrogations of the two on 25, 27, and 31 March. They were probably recorded in the interrogation appendix no. 1 missing from Reventlow's report. Did he ditch them because they contained stuff he wished to hide, and which might be left out in a repeated interview after incarceration? The committee report claims, with reference to the long interrogation of both of them from 4 April, that neither Caseres nor Israel "deviated a jota" from what they had already said about the "main circumstances around the alleged service-brokering" (that is, the bargain about the vice presidency). But we only have the committee's word for it. So, whether incarceration did in fact force Caseres to change his first explanation, we do not know. Later, however, he would withdraw all that he had said.

¹⁴³ "Um die Securität wegen des Geldes zu geben welches Mons. Otto für die Präsidentschaft zahlen solle".

several links in a chain connecting the Reventlows and the Ottes: *Vincelius-Caseres-Israel*. Then the second obligation from the Ottes on 200 Ducats – what was that one for? Caseres outspokenly explains: half of it was to the witness (Caseres) for his effort; the other half Israel would keep for himself. So, the two middlemen would be paid well for the transaction. There were also a few *Portugalöser* around, however. Caseres claims that the Ottes paid four gold coins to Israel of which he passed on three to Caseres and he, in turn, one of them to Vincelius. So, the whole of the contact chain was greased by extra gold coins on top of their more explicit salary granted by the obligation. Caseres even testifies to the fact that the Ottes had told Hagedorn about the transaction, the Danish representative to Hamburg – this indicating that buying such a position might be far from abnormal.

But how does Dippel enter the picture? Caseres had told Vincelius that he had better tell the Count about the deal with the Ottes as it would be better than if somebody else did it. When coming to meet with Vincelius again four days later, Caseres had instead met Dippel there, and he had told Caseres that “... if Mr. Count knew about the 2,000 Rix-dollars obligation, he would regard you as an evil human being”.¹⁴⁴ Vincelius had said that the Count did not know about it. Now, Dippel had become angry, leaving. But did you not tell Vincelius secretly that he did know it well, the interrogator continues. Caseres: “Yes, the witness had told him in his ear that he knows it well.”¹⁴⁵ Caseres had whispered in Vincelius’ ear that the Count *did* know about it. Then Dippel had opened the door again and slammed it shut in anger. So, he would have been eavesdropping from outside and heard Caseres despite whispering: The Count knew. This is the only testimony in the case files that directly implies Count Reventlow himself in corruption, claiming that he knew very well about the 2,000 Rix-dollar payment for the position as his second-in-command. Simultaneously, it is a testimony about an angry Dippel distancing himself from this big bribe case – or was Dippel rather becoming angry because he thought Vincelius tried to cheat the Count, keeping all of the bribe for himself?

The interrogator Archenholtz continues: “Whether the witness after that had accused Mr. Vincelio, that if he did not tell the Count about the case, then he had acted evil?”¹⁴⁶ Caseres answers: yes. So, Caseres actually implies that the Count would normally know about such things, claiming that he chastised Vincelius for

144 “... wenn der H. Graf wuste von der Obligation von 2000 Rth. so wurde er euch für ein quaden Menschen ansehen”.

145 “Ja, Zeüge habe ihm in die Ohren gesagt das weiß er ja wohl”.

146 “Ob nicht zeuge dem H. Vincelio abermahl vorgehalten wann er die Sache dem H. Grafen nicht gemeldet, hatte er übel getahn?”.

not telling him. This might imply that Vincelius had been trying to hide the transaction from the Count but unsuccessfully; somebody had informed the Count, maybe Caseres himself? It is a pretty complicated network of who-knows-what about who-knows-what appearing here.

This exchange had obviously been a turning point for all parties, for the next issue is that Vincelius had now presented Caseres with a Dutch declaration to sign (in two copies among the files, IV.12 and IV.14). The declaration is allegedly written by yet another, presumably Dutch, contact person between Vincelius and some Hamburg friends, stating that he had been offered a sum by these friends for the vice presidency which Vincelius had then rejected on behalf of the city, while still accepting to receive the sum of 10,000 Rix-dollars for his personal assistance. Strange, if he would get a reward this huge for a deal which came to nothing. Was this in order to explain a large amount of cash in his possession? This Dutch letter is dated 26 March, that is, after the Ottes had signed their affidavits but before the Bandau and Caseres interrogations. Seemingly, Vincelius was now feeling the heat of the situation and tried to get Caseres to exculpate him in the vice presidency case. In the interrogation, Caseres claims that Vincelius had been begging him for an hour to sign it before he finally gave in. None of the two copies of the Dutch document has a signature.

Unlike this document, Caseres in the interrogation indeed strongly incriminates Vincelius very directly – maybe in order to try to save his own skin? As clear as he is in denying any wrongdoing on the part of the Countess when asked directly, Caseres does not hesitate to frame her caretaker Vincelius who, in his account, appears routinely to accept bribery, even with an impressively detailed list of what he had to pay him. As question no. 47, Caseres is asked what he paid the Count to receive a protection for a Jew. Nothing, he answers. And to the Countess? Nothing. But Vincelius? “Six bowls of china, two sugar plates, one Pistol, 1½ Crusados and then four quarter Ducats”.¹⁴⁷ Caseres willingly goes into further details; the Crusados was the standard payment to Vincelius himself for a protection while the other valuables in this particular case were extra gifts for Vincelius’ sick wife. So, Caseres had added extra grease; it seems as if Vincelius was an important man to be in favor with. The Caseres interrogation proved extremely controversial. Contrary to what the questioners may have wished to

147 “Sechs Kummern von Porcellain, 2 St. zucker Pletten, eine Pistole, einem Ducaten und 1½ Crusados, sodann Vier quart Ducat, dafür habe H. Vinceli alle Memorialen und alle depeches für zeugen gemacht”. Pistols are Spanish gold coins about 7 grams or a corresponding gold coin of the same value; the Crusado is a large Portuguese gold or silver coin. If the 1½ Crusado is the standard bribe for a protection letter which we have heard could also cost 13 or 14 Ducats, then it is probably a gold Crusado, approaching a Portugalöser in size.

hear, he incriminated the Reventlows' quartermaster Vincelius in great detail but also, more indirectly, intimidated the noble couple as possible accomplices or in the know.

Three weeks later, on 27 April, however, Caseres all of a sudden signed a separate French document (VI.5, an extract in VII.10) addressed to a certain "Monsieur". Reventlow would later claim the letter was addressed to himself and was sent to him. In the letter, Caseres claims that he had been forced to lie to the committee, forced to make statements which Dippel also had the audacity to send to the King in Copenhagen, he now states. He does not say explicitly what those exact claims would be, and he also does not say who forced him but is almost implying that Dippel did it. Caseres appears to be regretting having been too ambiguous, in the interrogation, as to whether he had ever heard anybody claim that the Countess would receive bribes; now he claims, for the record, that he has never said that and that she has never done so.¹⁴⁸ The most important name does not at all appear in the text: Vincelius. For an important effect of the document was to invalidate not only Caseres' own pronouncements about the Countess, but the whole of the long, detailed 4 April interrogation framing Vincelius for corruption. In any case, that is how both Reventlow and his committee would interpret Caseres' retraction letter.

Thus, the issue of this "reverse" document, maybe written by the Hamburg merchant Sentrup to be signed by Caseres, will appear again and again later. Reventlow, of course, will refer to it in order to prove the innocence of his household – on the other hand, questions in the Commission hearings in May-June will ask Caseres if he had been maltreated in jail and threatened with torture in order to make him sign this retraction document.¹⁴⁹ Another question there refers to a

148 The beginning of Caseres' letter: "J'apprens avec etonnement des mensonges, qu'on veut me faire dire et que Mons. Dippelius a eu la Temerité d'ecrire Sa Majeste. A Savoir que je me dois avoir plains, qu'en m'examinant devant le Magistrat, on m'a obligé de dire des mensonges, et de les confirmer par un faux serment, de quoi Dieu me gardera, et m'a gardé toute ma vie. 1) Que j'avois avoué de n'avoir jamais endendu, que Madame la Comtesse prenoit ou avoit pris des presens, ce que pourtant j'avois entendu des plussieur et savois même le contraire par experience. Je declare: encor à Vottre Excellence et confirme que je n'ai jamais entendu que Madame La Comtesse prend des presens: ni scai le contraire par experience, ce qui n'est jamais sorti de ma Bouche, n'u le pourra avec verité". So, Caseres claims that he has been forced to say that even if he has never experienced her taking bribes, he has heard this claim about her from several others. Now, he retracts that and says that he has never even said that. The letter addresses a certain "Monseigneur"; according to Reventlow it was aimed at and sent to him.

149 According to a question in the Commission interrogation of Caseres' son (I.16), the questioner (maybe Dippel) also claims to know that Dr. Koltemann had looked up Caseres on behalf of the Count and put pressure on him with promises and threats (*ibid.*). According to the same

source like Caseres' Jewish friend Steffens for claiming he heard Caseres say that he was forced to lie in this retraction but would tell the truth, once it becomes possible.¹⁵⁰ In those later interrogations, Caseres generally refuses to answer or says that he does not remember, or briefly says what he seems to expect the Commission would like to hear (I.5). Now he may have learned the hard way how to keep his mouth shut. Similarly, his wife and son are questioned in detail in May-June but generally refuse knowing anything (I.15–16). All of the Caseres family now knew how keep silent.

From this and several other documents we can see that Dippel at this point had been making detailed allegations against certain deals and tradings between the Countess and Caseres in three “Memorials” of which at least one actually got through the firewall and reached the King in Copenhagen, but those documents are not found among the files.¹⁵¹ Probably, one of them had been his new *Species Facti*. We can see, however, that Dippel here claimed, e.g., that the Countess had forced Caseres to accept less in payment for some parties of luxury goods than what he originally paid himself in the Netherlands e.g., china, silk curtains, silver coffee pots, dolls' dresses – a sort of indirect and less visible bribe as a payment for other services (cf. letters from Reventlow to the King like VI.12). Dippel thus appears to have been informed, to some degree, about Caseres' ongoing trade activities with the Reventlows; from whom we do not know.

As to the relation between Vincelius and Dippel, both had accommodation with the Reventlows and probably would know a bit of each other from there; they were reportedly relegated together, probably on 29 March, and may have fled to Hamburg together, but their more precise relation is hard to determine. While other middlemen had now become suspect due to their connection to Caseres, such as Israel and Eickhoff, it is less evident what the connection was to a young Jewish girl in Altona, allegedly subjected to torture with thumb screws and/or beating by the City Council for theft, also reported to have been mentioned by Dippel in those “Memorials”. The indirect picture we get about those no longer extant writings by Dippel is that he attempted, during the spring months, a counterattack, actually fleshing out in detail such accusations as he was earlier himself

questioner, Caseres should have been complaining that in he Netherlands, they would never proceed like this: first squeezing all sorts of propositions forth by means of “Marter und übele Tractement” (torture and evil treatment), and then require the taking of an oath that what was said during torture is true.

150 According to a question in the interrogation of Caseres' wife, I.15.

151 In September, a furious Reventlow reminds Sehested and the King that Dippel succeeded, both on 23 March and 11 April, to submit letters to the King, in which he had threatened to go public with the case (III.11). These letters have not been localized.

accused of, e.g., by proving in detail that the Countess was guilty of extorting Caseres. Such claims would of course be interpreted as libel and added to the list of his crimes, as it would later become clear, cf. Reventlow's summing up of the charges against Dippel in June (below).

Most of the witnesses in these early interrogations are asked, of course, whether the Reventlows, particularly the Countess, would accept bribes, and in all cases but the few mentioned, they consistently deny this. When you reflect about the conditions of these interrogations, however, this almost clean sheet of the Countess might not be so strange. Everybody would know that the Count was spearheading investigations, interrogations took place in their home, and in some cases the Countess herself might even appear in the background during interviews, urging witnesses to tell the truth.¹⁵² Despite the whole case revolving around the two of them being accused for bribery, she or her husband were never themselves interrogated, being – as wrote Dippel – judges in a case in which they were parts, and interrogations were made without the presence or the information of all parties. Under such conditions, it is hardly surprising if the noble couple would appear very virtuous in most witness accounts.

The case file collection does not reveal what would further happen to new central suspects like Lieben, Caseres, or Vincelius. The latter escaped to Hamburg where the next Commission proved unable to trace him; the former two were jailed in March and Dippel implied that Caseres was maltreated there, but it does not seem that any formal prosecution would ever pass a verdict pertaining to their assumed crimes, and we do not know when exactly they were released. With regard to Caseres, the report of the committee (5 May, below) claims that he had been arrested in late March to squeeze him to testify truthfully after some unsatisfactory early interviews but to have been released soon again, no dates given. In the Commission's later interrogation of the committee, 5–6 or 8–9 days of arrest are mentioned.

Lieben was still under arrest when he was interrogated on 29 April, so he has been incarcerated a month or more. His interrogation (VII.12) was considerably later than the other suspects – was he a tougher nut to crack? His testimony circles around two issues: had Dippel paid a bribe in order for Lieben to get his

¹⁵² In the later Commission interrogation of Lieben on 25 May, he said that the committee interrogation of him took place at the Reventlows' house, not presided by the Countess, "... sondern Sie wäre zweymahl mit inhrem ältesten H. Sohn ab- und zugegangen, und habe Ihm zugeredet" (I.6), she had twice come in with her eldest son and spoken to him during interrogation. According to the Commission's interrogation of the committee on May 24, she had only come in after the interrogation, asking why Lieben did what he did and admonishing him to tell the truth, but that one Oberförster Ritter and the young Count Frederik did go in and out. In any case, the conditions of the March-April committee interrogations had been pretty special.

position as a chamber scribe? This Lieben rejects. And: did members of the City Council enrich themselves personally from the surplus of means dedicated to street-sweeping, such as Dippel in some non-extant writing claimed he had heard from the responsible street-sweeper von Fielden, the collector of means for street-sweeping Johann Janssen, and Lieben himself?¹⁵³ Also this, Lieben refuses to know anything about. He thus consistently avoids incriminating Dippel further to the committee who now seems to be on the hunt for more that could burden Dippel. Despite his long-winded incarceration Lieben refuses to say anything disadvantageous about Dippel. Dippel also seems to have claimed that Lieben's son attempted, on Easter Saturday, 8 April, to ransom Lieben from jail for the enormous sum of 20,000 Rix-dollars – which in that case would be an attempt at bribing the City Council who indignantly rejects this rumor a couple of days later, on 1 May (VII.9). In the Commission's later interrogation of Lieben's son, he says that he had offered, to the Countess, a bail of a size after the judgment of the Count (I.7). He had not received any answer to this request, but soon after his father had been moved to a harder arrest in the City Hall jail. The final report of the committee simply concludes that Lieben has been paid by Dippel for taking his side in interrogations and even predicts a court case and punishment of Lieben for that reason (VII.8, cf. below). It may seem as if Caseres, by withdrawing his statements, may have ransomed himself from prison while Lieben, refusing to incriminate Dippel, did not get out so easily.

To sum up, the second act of the case during March-April 1719 saw Dippel suddenly being incriminated as corrupt by his old fellow Bandau, and Reventlow's own household came under crossfire attack for corruption, partly from Dippel, partly because of documents from the Hamburg tycoons the Ottes who tried to buy the vice presidency. As a response, Reventlow appointed a committee of two of the four Heinrichs, starting an investigation which, apart from Dippel, particularly focused upon the middlemen of the Otte affair: the Jews Caseres and Israel plus Vincelius from the Reventlow household. This prompted Reventlow to jail Caseres and chamber scribe Lieben, who had also incriminated the Reventlows, and kick out Vincelius and Dippel from his mansion to go to Hamburg. Dippel protested and accused the Countess of bribery in a handful of documents not among the case files and probably lost but which only served to increase the libel charges against himself. Reventlow reacted partly by generalizing the campaign against corruption with a speech to Altonians in all churches, partly by forcing Caseres to withdraw his evidence against Vincelius and his own household.

¹⁵³ In the Commission's interrogation of Miss Schlemann, whom von Fielden owed some money, she says that he claimed to have to give back 100 Rix-dollars of his wage, but we do not get an indication to whom this kickback would go (I.10).

So, the broadening of the case to a grand crusade against corruption at large seems to have exploded in the face of the Reventlows and the Heinrichs themselves with the interrogations of Lieben's friends and Caseres far from exonerating the Reventlows, quite on the contrary. In late April, the committee seemed to have regained control with Caseres retracting his claims. Still, with the increasing circle of persons implicated through spring, as suspects, witnesses, or both, Dippel clearly remained the main culprit. Soon, however, the ambitious campaign against corruption would lose importance and shrink into the background.

Act 3: Reventlow's Letter Storm and a New Commission

Reventlow on the War Path

Now the third act of the case began with focus returning to what should happen to Dippel. From late April through early May, Reventlow really took the reins. The first thing he seems to have realized was that it might have been a really bad idea to scare Dippel away to Hamburg. With Dippel out of Altona, he would be free to continue his attacks against the noble couple, maybe even in the public sphere, as he may have threatened to do in the lost documents.¹⁵⁴ Reventlow now realized he would need stronger forces than those of his improvised City Council committee in order to apprehend Dippel and have him convicted.

So, now he embarked on an intense letter campaign to authorities in Copenhagen, virtually bombarding the King and his top officials with requests, formal documents drawn up by a scribe in his position as Chief President of the city, but also informally, in his own hasty handwriting in French or German, particularly mas-saging Foreign Minister and head of the German Chancellery in Copenhagen, Christian Sehested who would be on the receiving end of both types of letters, formal and personal (Fig. 14a-b). Mail between Altona and Copenhagen was regular and at least biweekly, Tuesdays and Fridays, and appears to have taken three–four days in each direction, so that a request might receive an answer within little more than a week, sometimes less. The core transport of letters between the capital and the cities by the Elbe was scheduled to take 51 hours based on the principle that a letter should always be on the move.

It is evident from this letter storm that even if his March campaign may have sounded idealist notes of fighting Altona corruption on a broader front, Reventlow

¹⁵⁴ That Dippel had threatened to go public with the case is also claimed by the anonymous source in *Fürstlich Wittgensteinisches Archiv Bad Laasphe, D49*.

had now become increasingly focused on one very precise target: Dippel. He seems to have continually fed his anger with further documents such as the Dippel letters seized, but also with other, new documents like the mentioned “Memorials”, among them probably royal supplications and a new “Novi Facti” account of the whole case – neither of which are found among case files but which are mentioned in other documents. Some of these no-longer-extant documents seem to have reached Copenhagen from Dippel, others only as appended evidence from Reventlow, some not at all. Maybe the letter storm from Reventlow also had a tactical dimension: by focusing all energy on Dippel and staging a public process against him, all interest and indignation may be brought to focus on him – thereby letting the charges against Vincelius and the Reventlow household itself vanish in the dark.

In hindsight, you may get the impression that already by the end of March, Dippel's fate had been sealed. What remained for Reventlow was first to rebut the storm of allegations against his own household, then to create a legitimization, find a legal procedure, settle upon a punishment, demand a satisfaction – and,

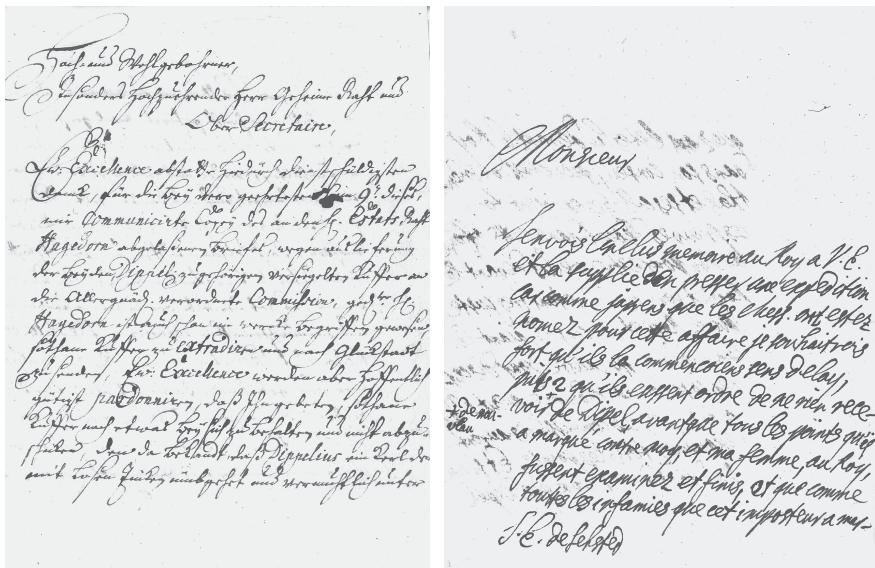


Figure 14a and b: Reventlow's impressive letter campaign of April–May 1719 bombarded Copenhagen authorities with public and private writing promising a harsh punishment for Dippel. Here, a formal letter to foreign secretary Sehested printed by Reventlow's scribe, with full titles: “Hoch- und Wohlgebohrener, Insonders Hochzuehrender Herr Geheimer Rath und Ober-Secretaire”, that is, High- and Well-Born, particularly Honorable Mr. Privy Councilor and Supreme Secretary, dated 12 May 1719. To the right, a private letter in French to the very same recipient, foreign minister Sehested, jotted down in Reventlow's own hand three days earlier – here, the addressee is titled “Monsieur”, Mister.

not least, to negotiate all of it with Copenhagen. This was no small feat and required massive ingenuity, administration, communication, and paperwork, fascinating to follow in every nook and cranny and requiring a large amount of the Count's not inconsiderable energy, intelligence, dexterity, and network. But it no longer seemed a real possibility that Dippel might get off the hook.

The very first issue was to get hold of Dippel. A long personal letter in French from Reventlow to Sehested dated 25 April (III.3) is the first of a protracted series of such letters by Reventlow appealing to his friend in the old Chancellery building in Copenhagen with a request to put pressure on the King (Fig. 15). Such pleas would routinely be accompanied by insistent complaints about the terrible "calumnies" he has been subjected to by Dippel spiced with a current of invectives about this arch-offender, this "gottlose Bösewicht", this godless scoundrel. It is temptingly easy for a modern view to be somewhat dismissive about the richest couple in Denmark-Norway suffering deep humiliation because a traveling chemist has made some sour comments, mostly in private letters, none of which ever reached the public, neither in print nor quoted by others. But Reventlow's endless rantings leave no doubt that he is really deeply affected, also on behalf of his wife whom he rarely forgets to mention. His honor is suffering severe damage, not only here and now, but potentially in the eyes of the whole world and for posterity, and oftentimes he expresses fears that it is only a matter of time before the well-known provocateur Dippel will take the next step to go public with his defamations of the noble couple.

In his 25 April personal letter to Sehested, the first of many to his foreign minister friend whom he addresses directly and without formalia, we find Reventlow writing in a speedy, associative style with few periods.¹⁵⁵ He begins complaining

¹⁵⁵ Reventlow would, time and time again, put pressure on Sehested in official as well as personal letters, in order to make him influence the King's decisions. To understand the structure and possibilities of such influence, it might be helpful to resume Sehested's tasks as head of the German Chancellery (Tyske Kancelli). The field covered by this Chancellery was the Duchies Sleswick-Holstein, including Altona, and the County of Oldenburg, but also general foreign policy outside of the Danish-Norwegian realm. This office and its parallel, the Danish Chancellery, basically functioned as the two secretariats of the King's Council which was the central forum for the presentation and discussion of cases in the King's presence, to his final decision. So, the Chancelleries would process incoming mail and other issues and present them in a shape ready for the Council to discuss, potentially with proposals for decision. Thus, there was an instruction "... for the Chief Secretary of the German Chancellery Christian Sehestedt who had succeeded Thomas Balthasar von Jessen in this office. He should prepare cases, read aloud the resulting conceptions in the presence of the Council and countersign the fair copy transcriptions, before they were presented to the King for his signature. For the King's information, he should write a list of expedition covering all that was expedited in the German Chancellery and make a brief but clear extraction of these expeditions of the Chancellery which should, at the end of each month, be delivered by him to the King's own chamber" (Hassø et al. 1962, 9, my translation). Thus, Sehested

that he has already sent case documents to Gabel – probably War Secretary C.C. Gabel in the government – but he has not passed them on to the King's Council, so he includes copies here once more and now asks Sehested to do the job. Then he goes into the first among several developments about noble honors. We quote in French to give an idea about the style:

... le plu joly de laffaire est, qu'il denonce ces infamies, sens sengager de les prouver, jespere pourtant que le Roy/ et tout son conseil trouvera, qu'il est juste, at den som vil tage ære han maa ære voge, car sens cela, les calomniateurs se trouverois les en abundance, et les honestes gens seroient trop malheureux, car je pretends, que de tout ce qu'il avance de moy, et de ma femme, quand cela viendra a lexamen, qu'il nen prouvera pas un seul point, et alors jespere, que S.M. aura assez de grace, qu'elle songera aussy a me faire avoir une satisfaction eclatante ...¹⁵⁶

Dippel does not prove his allegations, which is why Reventlow demands from the King and his Council the offer of “brilliant satisfaction”, for an honest man must protect “loneur”, his honor, as he says with a proverb in Danish (the only Danish expression in the whole case file corpus): “den som vil tage ære han maa ære voge” – he who strives for honor, he must risk honor. An “honest man” means a man of honor, an honorable man, and he is forced to risk his honor and take up the fight when faced with a challenge. So, this compact theory of noble honor is the premise for the central demand of the letter, the extradition of Dippel from Hamburg:

... but the worst is that he is a vagabond, and when he has a sufficient amount of defamations, he will escape, so if H.M. would permit me to have him extradited from the town of Hamburg, so that he can prove the denunciations given, and if he did not have the title from the King, the town of Hamburg would let me have him extradited ...¹⁵⁷

prepared cases for the Council of which he was also himself a member, and thus had a considerable influence of how cases were presented, processed, and concluded there.

156 “... the most striking in the whole affair is that he expresses his offenses without engaging in proving them, I hope, therefore, that the King/ and all of his Council will find it just that *he who strives for honor he must risk honor*, for without this, the offenders will exist in abundance, and honest men will be much too unhappy, for I expect, that among all what he has said against me and my wife, when examined, he will be unable to prove a single point, and this is why I hope that H.M. will have the sufficient mercy to dream about also letting me have a brilliant satisfaction ...” The passage in italics appears as a proverb in Danish.

157 “... mais le pis est que cest un vagabond, et quand il aura assez de difamies, il seschaperera, ainsy si S. M. vouloit permettre que je me le fisse extrader de la ville de Hamburg, pour qu'il peut prouver sa denonciation lon le tiendrait, et sil avoit pas le caracter du Roy, la ville de Hamburg me lauroit extradé”.

Reventlow is presently unable to have Dippel expelled from Hamburg because he is protected by his royal title of Chancellery Councilor, so that he needs royal assistance (and potentially the renunciation of Dippel's royal title, a subject to which he will not hesitate to return). In any case, the letter's central pragmatic



Figure 15: Reventlow's most essential lifeline to Copenhagen was Foreign Secretary and leader of the German Chancellery in Copenhagen, Christian Sehested, who received an ongoing stream of pleas from him during 1719. Unfortunately, fewer of the answers in the opposite direction are preserved, particularly in their private correspondence. There is no doubt that Sehested, as the supreme Secretary of the German Chancellery and simultaneously a member of the State Council was indispensable in persuading the King to support Reventlow's initiatives against Dippel. You may speculate, however, what Sehested himself may have thought about the case. It could be significant that Sehested let the German Chancellery preserve copies of the case files there, despite Reventlow's repeated demands that all case files be handed over to him – or, at least, were affixed with a disclaimer that every single one of Dippel's claims was false.

purpose is to make Sehested exert pressure on His Majesty to take formal steps to have Dippel sent back to Altona.

Speaking about risking one's honor, the letter ends on a strangely disappointing note: "... if I, or my wife, would be found guilty on a single point, we would not wish this to be presented so that he could prove his denunciation, and I hope that Y.E. as well as all men of honor will work to grant that such accusations cannot shamelessly pass".¹⁵⁸ Not much risk-seeking here now, is there?

In a typical pincer movement, Reventlow sent no less than two letters three days later, on 28 April, a long letter directly to the King and again a short note to Sehested (VI.12; III.4). The letter to the King is a much longer, more formal document with reference to four attached pieces of evidence, and Reventlow spends much space on refuting allegations made by Dippel concerning the transactions of the Countess with Caseres.¹⁵⁹ This is the first time Reventlow really bleeds his heart to his brother-in-law the King. The letter goes directly to the central matter. The King has sent Reventlow a copy of a recent supplication by Dippel to himself in Copenhagen containing further "Calumnien" regarding Caseres. This document is also not extant, but as indicated above we have a good idea of what would have been in it: Caseres was forced by the Countess to sell underpriced goods to her. Of course, Reventlow takes care to quote the recent Caseres declaration that he has been forced to lie, and he goes into a lot of detail trying to disprove that there could be anything suspicious in his wife's dealings with the tradesman. Reventlow pedagogically takes the King through all the central issues, the competing versions of the Bandau story with the two Portugalöser, Lieben who is also a calumniator, and Dippel's recent attacks on himself and his wife in the letters to Hirschfeldt. Now, the King must be updated. Then follows the conclusion: punishment.

But because I and my consort through these rude accusations are attacked in a highly-defamatory way and moreover are libeled with many offenses in an infamous manner, all of which is so much more sensitive as this takes place in writing, and therefore is spread all over to our increasing degradation in a supremely-punishable way, and the threat is also added that such calumnies will be made known to the whole world in a published writing.¹⁶⁰

158 "... si moy, ou ma femme trouvions coupables, dun seul point, nous ne souhaitrions pas, qu'on leur present afin qu'il puisse prouver la denonciation et jespere que V.E. de mesme que tous les gens doneur travailleront a cela que de telles accusations ne se passent impudiquement".

159 The four attachments seem to have been (1) Caseres' "reverse" letter; (2) Dippel's letter to Hirschfeldt 30 March; (3) the affidavit signed by Bandau; and (4) a document supposed to prove that Lieben Sr. has, in his office, abused public funds for his own purposes; the latter is not found among case files.

160 "Weilen aber durch diese Grobe beschuldigungen ich und meine Gemahlin höchst-ehrenrühriger weise angegriffen, und dabeneben mit vielen Lästungen schändlicher weise injuriert werden, welches alles umb so viel empfindlicher, da solches in Schrifften geschehen, und selbige allenthalben zu unser desto mehrer verunglimpfung höchststraffbarer weise divulgirt, auch die

There are many indications that Dippel, in those no longer extant writings, explicitly threatened to publish his allegations. In any case, Dippel's actions are "supremely punishable", also because of the implicit threat of making them accessible to nothing less than the whole world in future published writings. This is why he pleads to the King that he must "mich deßen Person zu versichern", secure Dippel's person, and start a formal judicial process in order to give the calumniator his well-deserved punishment. How that process should more precisely be constructed, he does leave to His Majesty to decide.

So, this important letter initiates the process by making Copenhagen authorities work on the project. All the points are reviewed: the facts of the case, the extradition of Dippel, a severe punishment, Reventlow's satisfaction, proceeding with great haste, and, finally, considering the legal means to obtain these goals. The short letter to Sehested the very same day relates that Reventlow has already himself sent a demand to the Hamburg City Council that they extradite Dippel at their next meeting and that he counts on His Majesty's support here – so couldn't Sehested, in the next ordinary mail, send him a formal royal order to proceed with extradition?

Reventlow's crossfire pressure on the King and Sehested proved effective. Already April 29, an arrest order was sent from the King to the Danish representative in Hamburg, von Hagedorn. He was instructed to approach the local magistrate of the King's "hereditary-subordinate" city of Hamburg. They should be ordered to seize Dippel in a way so that he would not be warned beforehand to flee and subsequently extradite him to Altona. On 2 May in the evening, Dippel was arrested in Hamburg, and on 4 May, he was transported from Hamburg to Altona.¹⁶¹ Given the panicking letters of 30 March from Dippel in Hamburg more than a month before, however, it remains a strange fact that he was still there. Why did he not escape from Hamburg beyond the reach of the Danish Crown through April? Didn't he realize the danger, was it a personal choice to stay and put up a fight, did he think God would protect him or had a plan for events, was he in the lack of a new refuge to go to, might he have been monitored there, from some point, by Hamburg authorities? Hamburg, unlike Altona, was no open city but had guarded gates. In any case, from now on he would remain under arrest in Altona until his final transport to Bornholm in September.

In the first instance, however, it was no humiliating arrest. Cells in the City Hall were occupied – supposedly by Lieben, Caseres, and others – so Dippel was

Bedrohung annoch hin zugefüget, daß man sothaner calumnien gleichsahm der gantzen Welt in einer publiquen Schrifft bekandt machen wollen".

¹⁶¹ Cf. Letter from the King to Hagedorn 29 April 1719 (Cf. State Archives: von Hagedorns gesandtskabsarkiv. Løbenummer: 18–109; III.1) Letter from Reventlow to the King 2 May 1719; IV.3) Letter from Reventlow to Sehested 5 May 1719).

lodged, strictly guarded, on the second floor in a bourgeois house in the Elbestraße, not a bad address (IV.1, cf. below). These costs, however, Reventlow would be sure to get covered later. On 27 April, Joenssen of the committee had sent a detailed invoice to Lieben requiring him to pay for his own arrest (VI.9).

One thing in Reventlow's eagerness to catch Dippel is striking. There are no signs at all that he did anything similar in order to get hold of his old quartermaster Vincelius who had been relegated together with Dippel and now also sat in Hamburg. Did Reventlow think that by making a big thing out of Dippel's crimes, he could simultaneously let Vincelius' offenses vanish in the haze, now that Caseres had been forced to annul his testimony with the many detailed claims about him? Dippel was primarily framed for libel, while Vincelius had fared much worse in the interrogations of the committee after which much seemed to indicate he might be deeply involved in bribery. Why should he not be extradited and brought to trial? Would he know too much about how conditions were at the Reventlows? Was it a tactical move to attack the accuser and discreetly let the real criminal escape?

Raising the Stakes: From Libel to Blasphemy

Reventlow did not waste his time. Already on the day of Dippel's arrest, 2 May, his next letter drive introduced no less than two new subjects. A short note to Sehested (III.6) thanks him for his support in the extradition case and seems also to have contained a thanksgiving note to be forwarded to the King. Immediately, a new detailed demand is added: could Sehested convince the King to appoint two or three judges in Glückstadt to examine all the defamations against himself and to investigate Dippel's person, "... a man difficult to observe"? It seems that Reventlow now realizes that judicial expertise must enter the picture, that a case terminating in a proper punishment could no longer be run by himself and his improvised City Council committee, and that the King is too slow on the uptake to get things up and running. So, this would be the root of a proper investigative Commission soon to arrive, taking their seat in the Danish administration center of Glückstadt, 60 km down the Elbe.

It was not uncommon in Danish jurisprudence that prominent court cases were dealt with by specially appointed commissions – recently, there had been a large case against one War Councilor Möller for passing false information to the King; not much later, a commission was appointed against the civil servant Povel Juel who was executed for high treason because he secretly tried to hand over Greenland to Sweden, and in 1725, the King would appoint a special commission to investigate rumors about Copenhagen top officials such as Frederik Rostgaard accepting

bribes.¹⁶² Commissions were appointed directly by decree from the absolutist king, and they were a way to take a case out of normal, slow, public administration and process it swiftly under deepest secrecy. During absolutism, it was often used in cases against officials who had abused their power, in one way or another, and thus constituted a danger against absolutist reign itself. So, it was also a protection of the system to be able to process such cases in the closure of a commission. In the *Danish Law* (1683) counts and barons enjoyed the privilege of being prosecuted only by commissions appointed by the Supreme Court, the king's personal court; Christian V had recommended Crown Prince Frederik to let all larger cases be treated by commissions, and it was increasingly standard that all cases against higher persons of rank would take place in commissions.¹⁶³ Here, the Dippel case was atypical: Dippel did have his Chancellery Councilor title, but he did not function as an official and the case hardly constituted any danger for the absolutist government itself and was only triggered by Reventlow's pressure on the King and his government. You could also ask how "big" the case was; it is evident that to the Reventlows it was enormous but, seen from Copenhagen? If it constituted a danger, it would only be for the Reventlow's local government – which could be protected if the case was sealed within a commission. Another motivation for a commission might be that the accused was a person of rank whose judicial status was difficult to decide, a fact that does hold for Dippel: he was a German from Hesse with a Danish title, now under Danish protection in Altona, invited by the Chief President. Commissions could be granted after application, or they could be ordered by the government. In Dippel's case, the commission was granted to Reventlow after a number of letters from Altona to Copenhagen. It was a classic criticism of commissions that they might favor the party who had applied for them – this, e.g., would be the argument of Christian VI for restricting their use in the 1730s.

¹⁶² In 1725, a "Privy Investigation Commission" was appointed in Copenhagen, spearheaded by Bishop Deichman and State Councilor and Finance Deputy Møinichen, investigating circulating rumors that high officials in the administration would accept bribes with reference to Queen Anna Sophie. The commission investigated officials like Chief Secretary Frederik Rostgaard and War Minister C.C. Gabel for taking bribes (both were later sacked), as well as innkeepers and others claiming to have leverage with high connections, and the commission is reported to have caused a panicky atmosphere among state officials in Copenhagen (Holm 1891, 317–44). There is no indication, however, of any direct connection from the Dippel case six years before to the appointment of this commission, but you can say both of those cases demonstrate an increasing political sensibility to rumors and accusations pertaining to nepotism and corruption among absolutist officials.

¹⁶³ On the use of commissions during absolutism, see Pedersen (2002), which is resumed in this section.

So, why did Reventlow decide to push for a commission? The standard step would be a normal case in Altona. If it should address libel of the particularly severe kind, publicly attacking the victim for being criminal, it would be a criminal procedure which, in the special case of Altona, would be decided by a summoned jury of citizens in the City Hall after they had heard an investigation judge and a defensor proceed.¹⁶⁴ This might turn out to be a long-winded affair with the possibility of appeal, impossible to keep secret, and Reventlow could not at all be sure what would be the outcome of such a process. A commission appointed by Copenhagen authorities, of course, would also be out of his hands, but here, he would be capable of continuously influencing the procedure through his Copenhagen network.

Another important letter the same day (III.1) introduces a completely different issue. Now that Reventlow has begun lecturing his friends in Copenhagen about noble honor and sharing his feelings of offense, he may have realized that a broadening of the case away from his own personal passions might prove wholesome. So, he introduces the idea of a more extensive legal attack on Dippel's overall career and character, also apart from his personal hurt feelings. In a letter to a certain anonymous Councilor of Justice, most probably seated in the German Chancellery in Copenhagen, he puts it as follows. I quote the whole of the letter:

By His Royal Majt.s most-graciously order to Mr. State Councilor Hagedorn, the well-known honor-offender and arch-calumniant Dippelius has been arrested in Hamburg this evening and will be extradited early tomorrow. As I should now like to see that the Council as well as the Theological Faculty there could to some extent see, which kind of a godless evil man and whose spiritual child he is, I hereby send 1. a copper from a writing he published some years ago, "A Shepherd and a Flock", from which it can be seen how he, in the title copper, imagines the holy supper, 2. the pamphlet, produced by him and burned by the executioner, against Mr. Dean Fleischer, and 3. some verses against the King of Prussia who had, some years ago, this knave arrested for them, to which is also added 4. a writing, in which he has added a four-sheet accompanying preface, if you just turn up those passages which are under-

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Schmid (1747, 140; 168). In "peinliche", that is, criminal cases proper, Karl V's "Carolina" from 1532 was the relevant legislation, and here "... wird die Bürgerschaft in einem Ausschusse aufs Rathhaus berufen". This selection of citizens watch, led by the city clerk, how a fiscal, an investigation judge, proceed orally as against a defender, also responding orally, "... und nachdem die Bürgerschaft in einem Zimmer mit einander sich berathschlaget, wird die von ihnen gefundene Urteil publiciret ..." – the citizens convene behind closed doors, after which the announce their verdict. On the next level, both the fiscal and the defender may appeal to the City Council, in which case the procedure will again take place in open doors. Reventlow would have no possibility of keeping things secret during such a procedure. Another reason might be that a royally appointed commission would be independent of the whole of the local judiciary and its obligations toward local legislation and precedent.

lined, & you will find how hope- and godlessly he treats the Holy Writ and the achievements of Christ, the holy preachers in Hamburg has, for this reason, put him at public scrutiny at the pulpit and warned the audience against publicly mentioning his name. I request of my honored Mr. Justice Councilor to formally make the Council and the Theological Faculty aware of these pieces, so that they may be informed and see to that this arch-scoundrel can get the deserved award for his deeds. Time prohibits me from reporting more to him this time, so I must break off here ...¹⁶⁵

Now, the Theological Faculty of the University of Copenhagen is required to step in, in order to investigate whose spiritual child this godless scoundrel really is – that is, the devil's spawn. This is a novel route of attack, insisting that the arch-scoundrel is really none other than the Devil's offspring. But the decisive step is the expansion of the zone of struggle. The first item indicted is the title copper of Dippel's *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde* ("A Shepherd and a Flock", cf. below), originally published in 1706 in Hamburg, an early classic calling for full freedom of religion and full freedom of expression – guided by the idea that without these liberties, true religion and unity in faith could never be found. This book had appeared not long before Reventlow had recommended Dippel for his Danish title in 1707, so he may have known it and had it on his bookshelf from back then.

The second is the just published 1718 pamphlet attacking the recently appointed Dean Fleischer for his activity with forced infant baptism of sectarian babies in the central Trinity Church, a piece that had already been condemned and burned at the stake by the henchman the year before. The third is the abovementioned

165 "Auf Ihr Königl. Maytt. Allergnäd. Ordre an H Estats Raht Hagedorn ist der bekannte Ehrenschränder und Ertz-Calumniant Dippelius diesen abendt in Hamburg arretiret worden, und wirdt morgen frühe außgeliefert. Weile ich nun gerne sehen möchte daß sowohl das Conseil, als auch die dortige Theologische Facultet einigermaßen sehen möge, waß er für ein Gottloser Bösewicht und weißen Geistes Kindt er seÿ, So über sende hirbey 1. ein Kupferblatt von einem Schrifft so er vor einige Jahren ausgegeben, und Ein Hirte und eine Heerde genandt, aus welchen zu ersehen, was Er auf dem Kupferplate vorstellet von dem H. Nachtmahl, 2en die von Ihn gemachte und durch den Scharff Richter verbrannte Schmähe Schrifft wider den H. Probst Fleischer und 3ten einige Verse wider den König von Preussen, der dieselbe diesen Bubes vor etlichen Jahren arrestiren laßen, deme auch 4ten beÿgefüget ist, eine schrifft vor welcher derselbe eine in 4 Bogen beistehende Vorrede gemacht, wen nur der passages nachgesehen werden, welchen unterstrichen sindt, & wirdt man finden, wie Heyl und Gottlos derselbe die Hl. Schrifft, und das Verdienst Christi tractiret, die Hll. Prediger in Ham/ burg haben Ihn auch schon desfalls öffentlich auf den Cautzeln durchgezogen und die Zuhörer dafür gewarnet, mithin seinen nahmen öffentlich genandt. Meinem hochgeehrten Herrn Justiz-Raht dienstl. ersuchend, von der gute zu seÿn solche Pieces so wohl bey dem Conseil als auch der Theologische Facultet bekandt zu machen, damit Sie daraus informiret werden und sehen, daß dieser Ertz-Bösewicht meritire für seine Thaten der verdienten Lohn zu empfangent. Die Zeit verbietet mich diesmal ein mehrten vor Ihn zumelden, weshalb damit abbrechen muß, unterdeßen verbleibe stets ...".

tioned song, titled *Berlinische Arrest-Gedancken*, ridiculing the King of Prussia in 1707 when Dippel was jailed in Berlin for attacking the Superintendent of Swedish Pomerania in Greifswald.¹⁶⁶ The fourth is a brand new publication from the month before, a reprint of the seventeenth-century mystic Laurentius Grammen-dorf to which Dippel had contributed a long introduction, all of it titled *Hell-Polirter Secten-Spiegel* (“A Blank-Polished Sect-Mirror”), and allegedly extremely blasphemous.¹⁶⁷ Reventlow’s hard verdict of this piece in particular may also have the motivation that it contained an easily decodable, anonymous portrait of the Count himself. We shall return to these writings below.

It is a curious handful of Dippel writings selected by Reventlow; Dippel had published many more well-known writings with explosive theological contents ever since the late 1690s, even collected them in his enormous big-hit edition in 1709. Maybe the four pieces were just what Reventlow would have had at hand as evidence, and he might have had the idea that proper theological expertise would be able to more thoroughly scrutinize Dippel’s overall career, character, and enormous authorship.¹⁶⁸ So, Reventlow’s general idea was to portray Dippel as not only a libeler, but also as a blasphemer. We have no indication that Reventlow was otherwise a particularly pious person, preoccupied with defending God, church, or clergy against offense. But this was an important broadening of the case and may also have had the motivation that blasphemy was a considerably more serious offense than libel. The latter offended a person, but the former offended God himself. In the recent *Danish Law* of 1683, blasphemy was one of the most serious offenses, punished by execution preceded by torture in the shape of

¹⁶⁶ None of the four attachments are found among case files.

¹⁶⁷ “Mirrors” was a widespread text genre all the way back to Antiquity, expressing a normative presentation of some subject in which institutions and persons might mirror themselves in the norms of how to behave. There were many “prince mirrors” teaching how kings were supposed to act and in the religious field “mirrors of faith” expanding on how true believers ought to think and act. Among pietists, e.g., Francke had published the pseudonymous Philalethes’ mirror of faith with a preface in 1699; in Denmark, the state pietist Erik Pontoppidan gave out his mirror of faith in 1732.

¹⁶⁸ It does not seem that Reventlow’s request to the theologians had any result. There is no theological analysis of these Dippeliana among the case files. According to Rasmus H.C. Dreyer, there is also no sign indicating theological processing of Dippel in the annals of the Faculty. In the years 1718–19, Dippel is mentioned only in the context of the case with Dean Fleischer. Reventlow writes on 9 September 1718 to the Faculty on that case – and Faculty professors answer that Fleischer should have a sharp rebuke for his actions, just like they approve that “... the writing earlier submitted has been burned by the executioner” (Dreyer, personal comm.). Only 17 years later, the theologian Peder Holm – Petrus Holmius – wrote his doctoral dissertation with The Theological Faculty in Copenhagen refuting Dippel under the title *Errores Dippelianos*, Dippelian Errors (1736).

cutting off the tongue or hand of the blasphemer. *Danish Law* was not the law of the land in the Duchies, but judges there would be trained in the Danish system and might be prejudiced by it. In any case, this new idea was strongly upping the ante and may later have fed into the final ceremony at the City Hall square before Dippel's banishment.

An interesting detail mentions that the Hamburg City Council had made a public scene out of the arrest of Dippel the same day, before delivering him into the hands of Reventlow. He had been put on public display in one of the Hamburg churches with a warning to the audience against mentioning his very name – in a certain sense a contradictory initiative. You make public an action in order to prevent publicity of it. It is a classic dilemma in press freedom cases: by publishing a prohibition against the utterances of a person, you may create curiosity around the case and de facto function as a promotion for that which you attempt to silence. Reventlow himself would face the same dilemma. The recipient of Reventlow's blasphemy charge has probably been Sehested's official in the German Chancellery, the experienced lawyer and Justice Councilor Franz von Hagen.¹⁶⁹

In the middle of these machinations about punishments and having a proper legal Commission look into things, Reventlow's initial, more homemade committee of the Heinrichs from the City Council finished its final report (5 May 1719; VII.8). It is a long text, mockingly choosing the very same title as Dippel's original, scandalous document: *Species Facti*. It is a strange piece. Even if it refers to attached evidence in the shape of interrogations by the committee, it is evident it is not authored by trained or experienced lawyers.¹⁷⁰ Again, it is ripe with pejoratives, exaggerations, even irony, mocking suspects such as Caseres, Lieben, and, of course, Dippel. The report presents the committee itself as originally appointed in order to investigate the affair of the vice presidency, which is why Caseres occupies most of its first main part. Lieben Sr. is also discussed, his stubborn rejection to incriminate Dippel is interpreted as an indication that he has been bribed by Dippel to lie, and the committee claims to know that Reventlow's public announcement

169 There is one letter from Sehested to von Hagen among the case files (V.8) – an instruction from August 1719 to prepare a letter to the Commission to open the sealed package (below) – so von Hagen was involved in processing the Dippel case in Copenhagen. He had been in the Chancellery many years and took over, from 1721, the position as Chief Secretary after Sehested.

170 Six attachments are appended, of which we may identify five of them: (A) Caseres' "reverse" letter (VI.5 – but not the original interrogation which he renounced); (B) Dippel's letter to Hirschfeldt of 30 March (IV.11); (C) the interrogation of Lieben (VII.12); (D) the interrogation of Lieben's three friends (VII.13); (E) Reventlow's letter to the churches (IV.9); and (F) a document signed by Lieben Jr., rejecting Dippel's rumor about the 20,000 Rix-dollars caution; could be VI.9. Earlier interrogations of Caseres, Israel, and Lieben than those we know are also mentioned. Strangely, evidence such as the Bandau affidavit is missing.

in the churches prompted citizens to report Lieben's corrupt activities which he even admitted himself (none of this is found in other case files) – which is why the committee predicts both a case and punishment of Lieben. We have no indication that this was in fact executed. Again, the third suspect Vincelius is mentioned only in passing and disappears completely because Caseres' testimony about him as the "main God" of the case is invalidated by his "reverse". So, an explicit effect of Caseres' reverse declaration was to get Vincelius off the hook, and this maneuver is finalized by the report of the Heinrichs, in so far as Vincelius now disappears from the case.

In the latter part of the report, the Caseres and Lieben cases are mostly used for establishing what lies about the two Dippel is guilty of. So, the text slowly turns in the direction of Dippel, even if the vice presidency affair was its main subject. And while Reventlow was busy upping the ante by raising accusations from libel to blasphemy, his committee follows him in introducing the issue of torture: "... he may not yet have realized that a judge has the power to punish a contradictory accused giving changing claims not only with jail, but after circumstances also with torture, without thereby committing any horribility against the Dippelian doctrine of right"¹⁷¹ Dippel should be subjected to torture as he had obviously "... gone against all divine and human laws" – a rather extravagant verdict. The report's conclusion is only preoccupied with Dippel; the vice presidency is now completely forgotten. As to his sentence, the report only concludes by mockingly stating that Dippel's final reward will not be paid in the currency of his beloved *Portugalöser*. An incoherent tirade of taunt rather than a standard legal document, it proved to be the last major effort in the case from the Altona City Council which had been caught by sublime rage with Dippel's initial letter for Bandau more than two years before, triggering the whole case. The committee does not mention the new Commission about to step up. Now, they would soon slide into the background along with the whole list of characters of Caseres, Lieben, Vincelius, etc. while the more professional Commission was assuming its position in Glückstadt.

Simultaneously, the four Heinrichs of the committee ventured to directly address the King in a shorter letter, submitting their report to Copenhagen authorities (VII.7). Already in their report, Dippel's offenses of the Reventlows had come second; now, in this letter, the noble couple all but disappears completely, and the committee only addresses Dippel's defamations not of the Reventlows – but of themselves, the Altona City Council. The central issue is "... the successive

171 "... ihm aus den Rechten annoch nicht bekand seyn, daß ein Richter wol befugt einen contumacirenden und in der Aussage variirenden Deponenten nich allein mit Gefängnis sondern nach befintlichen Umständen gar mit der tortur zu belegen ohne gegen die Dippelsche Rechts Gelahrtheit eine horribilitæt zu begehen".

and calumnious accusations produced against the Council here". The committee also requires satisfaction, but for themselves. Reventlow and his City Council henchmen, closely collaborating through months, are now parting ways. They had really, each of them, been fighting for their own reputation exclusively. The proud principles of campaigning against bribes and corruption on a larger scale now definitively evaporate. The City Council had been seminal in instigating the whole case against Dippel the year before, but now they discreetly disappear from events with this embarrassing report which later case files do not refer to.

The very same day, 5 May, Reventlow continues his campaign with yet another double letter. His new request to the King is an astonishing document (IV.1). You would not believe his anger had yet another higher gear but now Reventlow virtually explodes. Was he not convinced that his first letter had really touched the King? An enormous fit of rage covers several pages, serving as the premise to his demand for the appointment of a special Commission of Judges to sentence Dippel, so as to prevent him from roaming around to disseminate his calumny. Here an excerpt from his long rant about how Dippel "... will, in all ways possible, seek to make himself invisible and escape, only to get the possibility to use his damaging, blasphemous tongue and his abusive, poisonous feather against honest, decent people and, if unchecked, will furthermore make use of his shameful and offensive writings which he has not only sent to Your royal Majesty but also spread them in Hamburg and other places, and where he has attacked me and my wife with all the most inimical and rude libel and in a wicked way attacked ...".¹⁷² And so on and so forth. This fit of rage acts as the premise to Reventlow's pressing on about a new Commission with members selected in Copenhagen or among the judges of the Appeal Court in Glückstadt. As he is finally about to cool down in a more arguing mode in the middle of dictating the letter, the ordinary mail arrives, presenting Reventlow with a letter from Sehested containing the copy of a new piece by Dippel having reached Copenhagen, his third calumny of him. This makes Reventlow resume his frenzy on an even higher level. Now, this miscreant is accommodated in Altona at my expense! It takes eight gendarmes to guard him, four on the street, two at the door, two in the room! You can almost feel Reventlow trembling with fury: while attacking me and my wife, this villain lives in "... the decent house owned by Mayorin Knittel in the Elbestraße on

172 "... auf alle vor ersinlige Ahrt und Weise dahin trachten werde, sich unsichtbahr zumachen un wegzulauffen, umb nur gelgenheit zu haben, seine Lästernnd verleumbdersche Zunge und schmähsuchtige gifftige Feder, über ehrliche redliche Leüte noch ferner ohngescheuet zugebrauche, seine Schand- und Schniche Schriften aber, die derselbe nicht allein für Eu: Königl. Maytt: zubringen, sich nicht gescheuet, sondern auch hin und wider in Hamburg und andre Ohrten außgestreuet, und worin er mir und meine Gemahlin mit aller eins feindtligster herbes-ten njurien angegreiffen und boßhafftiger weise verleumbdet".

the second floor in a nice lodging, where he has a good clean bed, table, chairs, and other necessities, and two times daily he gets good food and drink on a tavern on my account, so that he does not suffer the least lack of necessary alimentation...”¹⁷³ As it is a formal letter not in his own hand, Reventlow would have been dictating the text to his scribe; it is almost cinematic to imagine Reventlow’s erratic behavior through the composition of this document. This is probably as close a window as you could possibly get to the depths of his Dippelian passion.

Whether the King felt entertained by this double seizure or whether he was beginning to tire out, we do not know. Reventlow’s brief note to Sehested the same day (IV.3) pales by comparison; here he announces the submission of the report from the City Council committee and Dippel’s arrest, but he has not completely recovered: “... briefly, I doubt that if Lucifer and his dear Proserpina [the Queen of the Underworld, FS] ascended from hell, they would be as malicious, evil, and mendacious as this rapsallion ...”¹⁷⁴ Maybe Reventlow’s rage culminates in such an eloquent mode because he is able to simultaneously triumphantly report Dippel’s extradition to Altona the day before, now turned over to his mercy.

Four days would expire, now, until Reventlow was ready for the next mail dispatch, now a three-pronged thrust with letters to the King, Sehested, and Justice Councilor von Hagen, on 9 May. A Commission has already been appointed; Reventlow must have learned this from the appointment letter, not among the documents, of 5 May from the King to the new commissioners with copies to relevant authorities – a Commission consisting of three top dignitaries from the Danish rank system: Councilor of State Freiherr von Soehlenthal, Justice Councilor Wolff, and Chancellery Councilor G. Schroeder.¹⁷⁵ The fact that the appointment letter to the Commission is missing also implies that we do not have the initial commissorium outlining its tasks which would have been part of this letter. But it appears

173 “... honnetten und zwar der Bürgermeisterin Knittels in der Elbestraße belegenen Hause, in dem andern stockwerck auf einem gute logement, vorunter ein guht rein Bette, Tisch und Stühle auch ander nohtwendigkeiten hat, und täglich 2 mahl ans einem Wirtshause auf meine Kosten mit guthen Eßen und trincken vor sehen wirdt, so daß er an benöthigter alimentation gar der geringste mangel nicht leydet”.

174 “... bref je doute, que si lucifer et sa schere proserpine sortioiens des enfers, qu’ils puissent estre aussy malicieuse, meschants et menteurs, comme ce coquin lest” Proserpina was Lucifer’s spouse, a goddess originally kidnapped by him, now the Queen of the Underworld.

175 Chairman of the Commission Baron von Soehlenthal signs himself FUSöhlenthal, so he must be Friedrich Ulrich von Soehlenthal, and not one of the two more famous brothers von Soehlenthal, Heinrich Friedrich and Georg Wilhelm. The former was busy as a Danish envoy in London, the latter was but 20 years, busy becoming a pietist under Zinzendorf’s wings and not yet State Councilor. Schroeder and Wolff must have been members of the Chancellery government in Glückstadt, simultaneously functioning as Appeal Court.

from ensuing correspondence that the task of the Commission is to investigate Dippel's crimes and pass a sentence – that is, not to continue to the broader investigation of Altonian corruption in general. Hereby, an important flank to Reventlow had been closed: the wider accusations against his own household.

Reventlow thanks the King (IV.4) for this nomination and immediately jumps to his next demand: this Commission must expressly be ordered to act swiftly to avoid that “... this pointed head will make all sorts of inventions and play them out in the broad field and thereby avoid his fully-deserved punishment”.¹⁷⁶ Extreme speed of the Commission is important to prevent Dippel from spreading his accusations “in the broad field” – this danger would repeatedly be mentioned in subsequent discussions: Dippel going public. Furthermore, an urgent plea is added to the King to make sure the Commission will submit, as its very first task and before it does anything else, a separate report clearing him and his wife of Dippel's accusations. In a 13 May answer (I.1), the King grants Reventlow's requests: that the Commission operate in haste “so that Dippelius does not play the case out in the broad field and gets the possibility to avoid punishment”, echoing Reventlow's words and agreeing that addressing Dippel's attacks will indeed be the very first task of the Commission. The very same day, a letter from the German Chancellery to the Commission gives the same instruction, again referring to the danger of Dippel “playing into the broad field” (V.7), that is, going public. That is the danger upon which authorities now focus.

The parallel, personal letter to Sehested (IV.2) continues with the urgency of the new Commission to begin working immediately and not to receive anything about Dippel before they have examined his claims about the Reventlows and had all of those claims read aloud in the State Council in the presence of the King himself. Obviously, Reventlow is anxious whether his letters to the King have really reached his person, and he is concerned that his version of events will reach the Council to the same extent as that of his opponent. He even admits the possibility that if on a single point Dippel might turn out to be correct the King would have to denounce himself, but otherwise he wishes to proceed at great speed. This admission may be for rhetorical reasons – he realizes that the new Commission will have to hear both sides – but it also testifies to the fact that Reventlow could neither be certain of the King's support nor whether his letters to him actually reached him or were rather processed by his administration. This adds another dimension to Reventlow's letter storm: the large number of letters not only adds still further points for Copenhagen to consider but also forms a barrage in-

176 “... dieser spitzige Kopf allerhand inventiones machen werde sothane Sachen in das weite feld zu spielen und dadurch der vollwerdienten Straffe zu entgehen”.

tending to force its way through the administration maze at Slotsholmen in Copenhagen to the gaze of his brother-in-law. It also demonstrates, however, that Reventlow is actually not completely certain there could not be any critical or even criminal aspects of the financial behavior of his own household. Is this the ghost of Vincelius, or does he even doubt his own wife, the Countess?

Finally, the third 9 May letter continues with the new blasphemy issue. The anonymous Justice Councilor – probably von Hagen – has obviously answered in a 6 May letter that he is passing on Reventlow's selection of suspect Dippel writings to the King's Council. As to the "Blank-Polished Sect-Mirror" preface in particular, Reventlow proceeds into his own theological analysis:

... therein can be found the most defamatory ways of speaking and blasphemies; for there he says and argues in an ungodly way that it should be an absurdity to trust the achievements of Christ, etc. and calls the Holy Writ the so-called Bible, other blasphemous expressions about God, which can be found in the copy submitted, to a large extent underlined.¹⁷⁷

Reventlow tries to force the hands of the theologians and presses on in order to make von Hagen alert the Theological Faculty. And for the same reason, he orders copies of these pieces to be shipped to the new Commission in Glückstadt for their investigation. In general, Reventlow would like to monitor the new Commission and instructs the Councilor to communicate to him a copy of their Commissorium. He obviously does not trust Copenhagen and wants to check himself how the Commission is instructed (asking von Hagen but not Sehested about this). Not least, the Commission should prioritize the rebuttal of Dippel's claims, and Reventlow orders the Councilor to grant that the Commissorium is articulated in "real expressive words". Here, we find Reventlow in a commanding mode to a lower-rank councilor, very different from the more reverential or friendly tone most often used in addressing Sehested or the King. In a P.S., he refers to his attachment of a new pamphlet titled *Hell-Polirten Geckenspiegel* (Blank-Polished Fool's Mirror), a brand-new parodic response to Dippel's recent *Sect Mirror* (Fig. 16a-b). Reventlow refers to it as "a portrait of Dippel".

Reventlow's intense three-week letter campaign culminates with a 12 May letter to Sehested, now in German and in full formal "most-submissively" communication mode. Now no longer addressing "Monsieur", but "Hoch- und Wohlgebohrer, Insonders Hochzuehrende Herr Geheime Rath und Ober-Secretaire", high- and well-

177 "... darin aber finden sich die Aller Lächerlichsten Redens arten und blasphemien enthalten; maßen er darin anführhet und es Gottlosen weise vorgibt, daß es eine absurdität seÿ, sich auf die Verdienste Christi zu verlassen etc. und die H. Schrift die so genannnte Bibel nennet, anderer Gottes Lächerlichen Sätze, die in dem einen gesandten exemplar sich guten theils unterstrichen befinden ...".

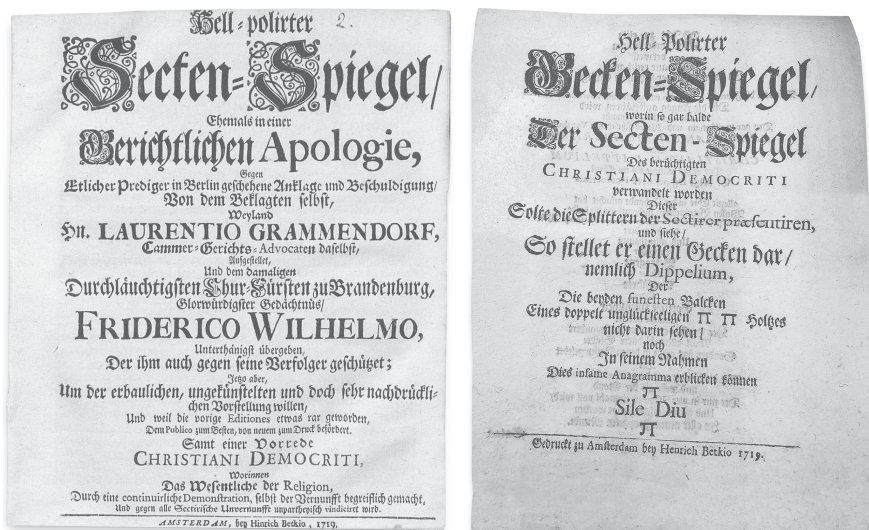


Figure 16: (a) and (b) Two opposed publications played an important role in the Case against Dippel in the spring of 1719. The former was that one among Dippel's writings that triggered the worst fit of rage in Reventlow, *Hell-Polirter Secten-Spiegel*, published by Dippel in Hamburg in the spring of 1719 while the struggle between the parties was already in full bloom: "The Blank-polished Sect-Mirror". The author's name is given as the old seventeenth-century mystic Lorenz Grammendorf, of whom the booklet reprints a piece, but the really controversial text is but mentioned in small writing towards the bottom: the preface by Christianus Democritus with the title: "In which the essential of religion is made understandable even for reason with a continuous proof and unpartially defended against all sectarian unreason." It was an example of Dippel's enlightenment strategy to base himself on the concept of reason in ongoing debates against unreasonable churches. Here, he presents an updated version of his theology with the emphasis on its political implications – and with an easily decodable frontal attack on the Reventlows themselves. It came out around Easter, allegedly printed in Amsterdam, but in fact in nearby Hamburg.

Already the next month, Reventlow or some of his kinsmen kicked back with the almost eponymous *Hell-Polirten Geckenspiegel*, "The Blank-polished Fool's Mirror", parodying Dippel's title. It was a pasquil directly attacking Dippel the fool, particularly ridiculing his alchemy which is attacked not only for its failure to deliver any gold, but also for being both fraud and satanic disbelief. The enigmatic subtitle contains a threat: the pamphlet presents a "fool, namely Dippelium, who does not see therein the two somber girders of the doubly unfortunate wooden □□, nor is able to see, in his name, this infamous anagram:

□
Sile Diu
□"

The figure anagrammatizes the name of Dippelius. "Sile Diu" is Latin for "Silent for a long time", and the two upper-case *rs* form the profiles of wooden gallows. The piece directly markets the idea that a proper punishment for Dippel would be to silence him by hanging him in a golden gallows, just like his Berlin colleague Caetano had been in 1709. Reventlow sent the pamphlet to the German Chancellery in Copenhagen, but we have no information, however, regarding whether he may, in fact, have more directly attempted to persuade the King to go for capital punishment.

born, especially most honored Mr. Privy Councilor and Chief Secretary. The issue behind this stylistic change is that in a recent letter from Sehested, he had attached a copy of an official letter to Hagedorn, the Danish representative in Hamburg sent 9 May (Hagedorns gesandtskabsarkiv, 1719, Løbenummer: 18–109). Here, Hagedorn was instructed to collect Dippel's papers, letters, and other belongings in sealed suitcases to be shipped to the new Commission in Glückstadt. Reventlow will have nothing of this. He aggressively insists on interfering in the handling of those two valises potentially containing evidence. So, he requests Sehested to stop the shipment ordered and issue a counter-order to Hagedorn, for Reventlow demands to be present when those suitcases are opened. This can easily be organized after 22 May when the Commission is supposed to gather, he adds. He immediately grants that he will not, of course, remove or purloin anything from them, but he insists that he must ensure that things are not done one-sidedly and that everything is handled properly; also if something is found there would be evidence of further steps that Dippel may have taken against himself in Hamburg. You can hear from these assurances about not stealing evidence that Reventlow himself realizes he is now on thin ice. Reventlow excuses this long and complicated demand to his old friend whom he is now addressing in his formal office as head of the German Chancellery – probably because Reventlow realizes that a demand of an official counter-order to Hagedorn would annul an existing, filed document and so could not proceed through their more intimate channel with the French letters only. This demand, however, would also prove to be the end of Reventlow's successful spring campaign to alert Copenhagen authorities of the Dippel case.¹⁷⁸

The Threat of a Golden Gallows

Reventlow, then, had got his hands on a new pamphlet about the “Blank-Polished Fool's Mirror” mocking Dippel and shipped it to Copenhagen – if he had not authored the anonymous pasquil himself. It is a piece remarkably well-oriented about the life and activities of Dippel all the way up to the most recent events only the week before, and it also contains a number of Reventlow's favorite pejoratives. In this new Fool's Mirror – playing both on Dippel's recent Sect-Mirror and his old copper with the telltale mirror – the famous and infamous Christianus Democri-

¹⁷⁸ It is probable, however, that Reventlow made the same request in an informal French letter to Sehested not among the case files, for there exists a single sheet in his hand with a P.S. in French (III.7): “P. S: I ask Y.E. if you would have the goodness to send my, by first ordinary mail, a letter to Mr. de Hagedorn, not to deliver the valises to these gentlemen, until they arrive here, which will be 22. this month, and that they open them in my presence ...”.

tus is revealed to be, in fact, nothing more than Dippel, a fop, a fool. The eight-page pamphlet is uncut, in one sheet, as if it comes directly from the printshop, which is given as Henrich Betkuis, Amsterdam, just like with Dippel's booklet. In Dippel's case this indication was false, as it was in fact printed not far away, with Hertel in Hamburg.¹⁷⁹ Maybe the counter-piece against Dippel could be printed the same place?

The text is one long smear poem without meter or rhyme, set up with centered lines, calling upon a wanderer passing by whose eyes will become enlightened when he sees that Christianus Democritus and Dippel are actually one and the same person. For this vagabond has, on his way, given rise to deceived, seduced, and godless people only. The Devil and Dippel have closely related names: "Diabolus und Dippelius" – one of them has been grinding and the other polishing Dippel's Sect – Mirror, in which "The very largest pranks/ The most subtle forgeries/ The most magical blindings/ The most poisonous destructions/ The strongest seductions/ and/ The most shameful offenses/ of the honor of the divine name/ of the truth of his words/ of the sacredness of his heavenly teaching/ and the beatific faith/ comes shining through with more than the fire of Hell". The definite article "Die" ("The") is spelled with a capital I through this list, in order to emphasize the devilish character of it all.

But the Devil is but a mere child against this candidate from Hell. As a "chymist" he has, all of the time, searched for darkness, so it is no wonder that decency and truth in him becomes quicksilver which has never delivered him anything but the sulfur of Hell. As an alchemist, he has polished his mirror with rust from Hell whose spirit has ignited the burning desire in him for gold, burning most actively among the greedy. Thus, the circulating accusation of greed against the Countess is shot back in Dippel's face. He will use violence to become the strongest of the strong, Victoria among the victors, in the rich Amsterdam, and he will procure Hungarian vitriol from the richest merchants in the gold bourse. It seems like Dippel has spent considerable funds from Reventlow when equipping his Altona lab, with no result. The pamphlet continues: but if he even did succeed in procuring *Victriolum* and *Antimonium Hungaricum* – that is, stibnite from the Carpathians, a treasured and expensive mineral among alchemists chasing the "materia prima" – then he only managed to transform dirt to dirt, never to light. He "spoke philosophically enough/ after nature/ nature rejoices over nature/ nature helps nature" – this sounds like parodies of Dippel's philosophy of nature – but, quite on the contrary, he sophistically polished his mirror against nature and achieved nothing but transmuting a riding servant into a pedestrian beggar, stone into nothing, gold to shit,

179 Cf. Weller (1864, 69).

hope to water, and this in a completely natural way and without any sophistry. The pedestrian pauper, then, is the poor fugitive on his way to Hamburg, into whom Dippel has now transmuted himself. The text is well-oriented in alchemist lingo and the ideas about transmutation which are mockingly kept at arm's length.

If Reventlow is actually the author or the initiator behind this writing, then his regret over the missing gold from Dippel's Altona lab is coming to the surface here. Dippel's original task in Altona and Reventlow's alleged motivation for inviting him in the first place, gold-making, plays no role in the case files, but a deeper reason for Reventlow's grandiose fits of fury over Dippel could also be huge investments lost during five years of impatient waiting for gold, all in vain. He is an alchemist grey wolf with many exits, the verse continues, a polished arch-impostor who, with his decoy call flute, is drawing unholy men to himself as his disciples who, in turn, keep blowing their tune to naïve gold-greedy persons, whom they fool into believing that Dippel alone knows how to make the tincture to produce the hermetic bird or the world spirit *Spiritus Mundi*.

Here, the mock verse insinuates that Dippel has been capable of gathering a group of younger disciples around himself in Altona. But it was a mockingbird who sat in the thorny bush, he sang so alluringly like such black birds always learn to do: "*Cras Cras*" could be heard from Hamburg to Altona, the seductive sound whereby he "all zu nah", almost, repeated his earlier, chemical fate in Berlin when he also fled and, during his escape, wrote a lese-majesty song – the verse from his Berlin arrest which Reventlow had also appended to von Hagen. But in this mirror – the precedent with the arrest in Berlin – this self-obsessed Narcissus did not reflect himself; on the contrary, he "sought presents in which he was used/ to mirror himself". So, also the accusation of bribery against the Reventlows is turned around and shot back at the alchemist. But in the pamphlet's parallel to Dippel's adventure in Berlin where he left and published his mock verse against the King may also lie the fear that he, despite the successful arrest, might do the same thing here in Altona. If Reventlow is the author, then the pamphlet is a preemptive strike: better mock first than wait to be attacked.

But all of this mockery on the part of Dippel, the verse goes on, only lasted until a high, crowned head like the sun in the sky darkened the smaller lights and thus took away from this false, deceptive, and bronze-shining gold its very shine: a crowned head who "... through the desired extradition [...] with one stroke took away from this mirror its shining layer". It is the extradition decree of Frederik IV to the City Council in Hamburg little more than a week before, exposing the fool's gold and depriving Dippel's mirror of its mirroring capacity. So, fool's gold now becomes the overarching symbol for the whole of Dippel's career.

Whether the slag from Dippel's lab will now prove to contain as much fool's gold "... as Jürgen Hanawer in Sturckard would give to a coat/ and/ Cajetani in

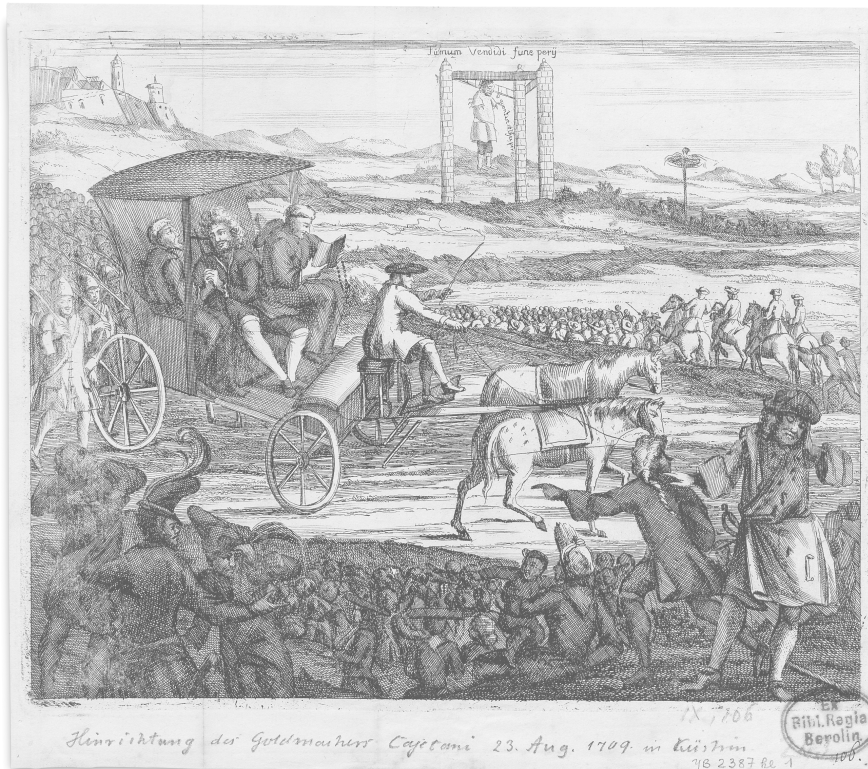


Figure 17: In the “Blank-Polished Fool’s Mirror” by Reventlow or some of his henchmen, Dippel is threatened with the same destiny as the gold-makers Jürgen Honauer and Count Caetano – namely, to be strung up in a gilded gallows, dressed in a golden gown. Here, a leaflet from 1709 with the execution in Küstrin of Count Caetano whom Dippel knew from Berlin. In the wagon, the Count prays for his life, to no avail.

Berlin would finally yield/ to a singlet/ the future will soon show”. As we heard, Dippel had met the Italian Count and fraudster Caetano in his Berlin years when he worked for the Prussian King as a gold-maker and had impressed Dippel with an experiment that seemed to transmute quicksilver into silver. In 1709, however, Caetano had been revealed as an impostor and hanged in Küstrin in a gallows coated with fool’s gold, so it was a threatening parallel to invoke (Fig. 17). Georg or Jürgen Honauer was an earlier example of such a destiny: he was executed by Duke Friedrich I of Württemberg in Stuttgart in 1597, also because of an unfulfilled promise of gold-making from which he attempted escape. He was hanged in a golden coat in an enormous scaffold gilded with fool’s gold and constructed from no less than 36 centners of iron – the exact amounts of ore which he had

promised to transmute. Thus, the poem's talk about coat and singlet refers to those pieces of golden clothing in which the two unfortunate gold-makers were strung up – the only gold they ever achieved. Thus, the reference to the two hanged gold-makers is but a thinly veiled threat about a gilded gallows for Dippel in Altona. The Prussian King Friedrich had been ashamed to have been fooled in several instalments by Caetano and had published warnings against similar golden impostors.¹⁸⁰ Maybe Reventlow, for his part, was embarrassed that he had not heeded the King's warnings, for apart from this anonymous mock verse he does not mention, in his manifold and long-winded complaints over Dippel, his disappointment with his failure as a producer of gold. But with the reference to the two deceitful alchemists hanged, the question about the relevant punishment was out in the open.

If the reader beholds this blank-polished Dippel mirror, the poem continues, he will see that if Dippel loses the case, it will not hurt anybody but the following sects: gold-makers, alchemists, epicureans, indifferentists, blasphemers, seducers, calumniators, offenders, lambasters of religion, of sacraments, of sabbats, of Bible and Church – and, and, and. But the two champions of these sects, the Devil and his mirror polisher Dippel, are bound to lose, and the whole world will be shocked by realizing the stupidities revealed by the mirror. The pamphlet is well-oriented in Dippel's use of "sect" as an invective which is here thrown back in his face.

Concluding, the reader is encouraged, above all, to realize that a GOD exists who is now in the process of acting and aims to expel the fraudulent "solve & coagula" – that is, the alchemist motto "dissolve and reduce" – and to strike Dippel with blindness. It is a GOD who will let him suffer whipping for his own whip to the papism of the Lutherans (the title of Dippel's concerted attack on them of 1698) and give him what he deserves.

But pray for him, goes the final pious advice, pray for GOD to convert him, that GOD will bestow upon his poisoned victims a better doctor, that GOD will, through a good shepherd, again convert his misled flock (another Dippel title), and finally pray for the dear authorities to break the rusty magic mirror rather than letting the sword of their authority rust. This is the final appeal of the verse: to the action of authorities. The agitated fantasies of revenge of the pamphlet, with blinding, whipping, swords, and gilded gallows do not leave the reader in doubt that Dippel may expect a severe punishment.

It is a fantastic small pasquil which, with its local orientation, its insight in recent events all up to the extradition from Hamburg the week before and its

¹⁸⁰ Cf. anonymous (1709).

prophecy about Dippel's defeat in the upcoming case, could not originate from any other place than the current city administration of Altona. No one else knew a case was under preparation. Dippel had been handed over from Hamburg on 4 May, and already on 12 May, Reventlow was able to ship the printed version of the *Fool's Mirror* to von Hagen in Copenhagen. The pamphlet must have been both completed and printed in the week between these dates, and it is impossible that it could have gone back and forth to a printshop in Amsterdam. It has been produced by a local printer, in Altona-Hamburg, and Reventlow has intercepted the printed sheet with wet ink directly from print before cutting and binding, so that it could be hurried to Copenhagen by the Friday mail. Whether Reventlow himself was the writer or whether he had a talented author at his disposition, maybe one of the wordy and eloquent Heinrichs, to write on his behalf, is difficult to decide. The result, however, is a colorful, zestful, and wicked mocking verse. It did not seem to have occurred to Reventlow, however, whether it would be honorable to publicly mock a man whom you have just put in prison.

We must assume that the pamphlet was for sale in Altona-Hamburg. But the pamphlet obviously also had another intended reader: the government in Copenhagen.¹⁸¹ Reventlow was speedy getting it to the German Chancellery and it contained a proposal, if indirect and anonymous, that the relevant punishment was – death.

Two Trunks and a Speedy Commission

Reventlow's campaign had been a remarkable success. In a little more than two weeks, Dippel had been extradited; a speed Commission of top officials had been appointed to assemble already on 22 May in Glückstadt, instructed to refute Dippel's claims before going into further investigation of him; Dippel's blasphemous writings had reached the King's Council with copies ordered to the Commission, a severe punishment was discussed, even a death penalty had been aired. All of Reventlow's demands had been met, one by one. But unlike the case with his own March committee, he would now realize that he had overplayed his hand and would not be able to control the workings of the new royal Commission.

This already became apparent when the German Chancellery in Copenhagen, on 16 May, embarked on a virtual countercampaign with three official letters. One from the King and Sehested to Reventlow (V.4), one from Sehested to Hage-

¹⁸¹ Maybe the circulation of the pamphlet was not very ambitious; I have been unable to find a single copy of the piece in any library.

dorn (V.5), and one from the King to the new Commission (V.6), all of them addressing the issue of the two sealed Dippel trunks. Reventlow should *not* decide how to proceed with them. Reventlow is bluntly instructed that His Majesty has decided that Dippel should *also* be present at the opening of suitcases and the examination of their contents; that this should take place at the Commission in Glückstadt, not in Altona; that Dippel should be escorted there by the Councilor of War commanding at Glückstadt; and that Reventlow himself is requested to make his way to Glückstadt so that both parties can be present when the seals are broken. Similarly, Hagedorn in Hamburg is instructed to wait for the arrival of von Soehleenthal in Hamburg and have him bring the suitcases by a special boat directly from Hamburg to Glückstadt, that is, bypassing Altona completely. Finally, the Commission is explicitly instructed to open the suitcases only in the presence of both Reventlow and Dippel, "... also to monitor that not the least of the letters contained therein are destroyed", and that all the letters therein are examined by this occasion. Most importantly, they are instructed "... that if one or the other party needs something therein for their information or defense, they should only be handed copies from the suitcases, no *originalia* ...".

Somebody in the German Chancellery or the Council in Copenhagen must have realized that after the appointment of an expert Commission, Reventlow could no longer continue to act as a prosecutor and judge in his own case, no matter how angry letters he sent. Now, at least to some degree, he is relegated to a mere part in the case, on a par with Dippel, and both of them may need material from the suitcases for their defense and should be subject to the same rules for document access. Nothing in that direction is voiced explicitly, but you almost get the impression that Reventlow is under suspicion for wanting to tamper with evidence.

Reventlow must have taken a severe blow reading this letter. All of a sudden, some degree of rule of law would be applied by Copenhagen authorities. The message was crystal clear. Reventlow would not be allowed to continue as a city king beyond the law, intruding in a case in which he was a part. If Reventlow was shocked, however, he did his best not to show it. In his private answer in French to Sehested on 19 May (III.8), he does not address the suitcase issue at all, but rather two different issues: as he has put Dippel into custody, he must be strictly guarded on a transport to Glückstadt so as not to escape, and Reventlow refuses to hand him over until the case has been examined. Another issue – in which Reventlow would of course prove correct – is that it would be impossible, in fact, for the Commission to conduct their investigations from Glückstadt. As he said, they will learn more during 24 hours in Altona than several weeks in Glückstadt because all victims, witnesses, and suspects are in Altona. So, Reventlow appeals to Sehested to allow the examination to take place in Altona – maybe also with the tacit implica-

tion that he would then avoid turning over Dippel to Glückstadt. In practice, that would also be what happened.

The Commission began working already three days later, on 22 May, and they did indeed proceed with great speed. In the course of three days, 23–25 May, they conducted nine interrogations of, all in all, 11 witnesses. This took place in Altona, like Reventlow had predicted. It seems like all parties, Dippel as well as the Reventlows, were present during interrogations, but it is not evident from the otherwise meticulously prepared interrogation records who is asking which questions, Commission members or one of the two parties. On 26 May, a different type of document relates an interaction in the shape of a back-and-forth discussion between Dippel and Dr. Koltemann, a representative of the Commission, recorded by the latter.

Already on 30 May, after a week's work, the Commission submitted their initial report to the King. This was a professional investigation. After a break and some further communication with the King, the Commission resumed interrogations three weeks later, adding another seven interrogations of seven witnesses during 20–22 June, only to submit final reports to Copenhagen on 23 and 26 June. In little more than a month, the Commission had done an impressive piece of work, collecting close to 100 pages of testimony.

The sequence of interrogations was as follows:

May

23 May: Caseres

24 May: Lieben Jr.; Joenssen, Archenholtz etc.; Bandau; Dehncke

25 May: Lieben; von Fielden; Janssen; Miss Schleman

(26 May: Dippel)

June

20 June: Esmarck; the Jewess de Caseres

21 June: de Caseres Jr.; Lieben Sr.; Lieben Jr.; Kühn

22 June: Janssen

Lieben Sr. and Jr. as well as Janssen are interrogated twice. The interrogations are conducted using the same overall form, distinguishing (1) initial and identical, general, introductory questions: the age and occupation of the witness, his or her piety (when did you last take the Eucharist?), impartiality, etc., and (2) special questions regarding the case. The latter all take the shape “Wahr, daß ...?” followed by some state-of-affairs with a question mark: “Is it true, that ...?” This means the witness is free just to say *yes* or *no* or *don't know* – or to enter into more detailed explanations. Both parties would be present and participate with

questions, approaching interrogations to the conditions of a proper court case. As mentioned, it is not recorded from whom the single special questions stem.

All of the main actors now involved in the case are subjected to this procedure – except for Dippel himself who appears otherwise; nor indeed the Reventlows who are again not interrogated at all. An important feature here is that the members and secretary of the March committee are also interrogated, not as expert witnesses, but rather as parties in the case. It would have surprised the honorable City Council members now to be critically scrutinized, even openly suspected of foul play and deletion of testimony during their spring process a few months earlier. Particularly in critical questions to the witnesses, many assumptions of corruption and bribery appear – maybe this has been a way for Dippel as a questioner to signal his hypotheses on the case now that he was not himself interrogated.

Obviously, there was a big step from the homemade wild justice in March-April and to this seriously working expert Commission with a certain judicial level in May-June. When that is said, even the latter is ripe with oddities as viewed from our time and current norms of a legal process. But even central participants already wondered what was going on – if in quite different ways.

What Goes on in That Commission?

The day after the first three days' round of witness interrogations where both opposing parties were present, each of them would express very different accounts of the state of the case. None of them was satisfied with the experience.

Dippel protested in a special document emerging from the Commission's work, a conversation between Dippel and Dr. Johann Koltemann, officially a representative of the Commission but referred to by Dippel as his opponent's lawyer (I.22).¹⁸² It does not take the standardized shape of the other interrogations, and Koltemann's interventions are counterarguments to Dippel's procedure complaints rather than questions. Dippel's arguments are related by Koltemann's summary, so that Dippel speaks about himself in the third person. Unlike the witness interrogations it also does not seem to have been appended with the Commission's 30 May report, so its status in the case is far from evident.

It is interesting, however, because it is the last extant case file document providing a window into Dippel's reflections on the case, and it is indeed the only

¹⁸² Dr. Koltemann, probably referred to Dr. Johann Koltemann, county auditor and lawyer in Itzehoe, not far from Glückstadt.

extant document where Dippel finds a possibility to express a protest to an official of any kind.

Dippel is the first voice heard in the document. He has been asked by the Commission to produce evidence for his claims about the Reventlows, he says, but he is unable to produce such evidence because he was not allowed himself to call witnesses and to question them about his own initial evidence. His opponent – Reventlow – has been invited to interrogations without having seen Dippel's evidence, and the witnesses have also not seen it, so they could not be asked about it. He has also been prevented from submitting a supplication to the King protesting this process, and he now calls for the King's intervention and protection.

Dr. Koltemann's answer is brief: the very fact that Dippel is now protesting goes against the Commissorium of the Commission and it is, for that reason, in itself punishable. This is no ordinary process, such as Dippel's legal requirements presuppose, but an investigation of his terrible crimes. So, guilt seems to be a premise rather than a conclusion.

Dippel gets the word again and inquires how producing evidence should be possible for an arrested person without access to pen and ink and without the ability to call witnesses. Even so, he has managed to deliver some writings both to the Commission and to the King, but they have been rejected on the pretext that they contain *Facta Nova*, new facts, which is not the case. The only new facts in these texts pertain to his protests about the violent conditions of his arrest to which the King could not possibly have given permission, and about which he is now not allowed to inform him even if he has submitted such documents to the Commission. It sounds as if the arrest in Hamburg has been no smooth transaction.

Dr. Koltemann's answer is to refer to the fact that the King's intention with the Commission is also to prevent Dippel from spreading his defamations "ins weite Feld" and to investigate them speedily "ohne einige Zeit verlust". The broad field and high speed again. As Dippel has already submitted three supplications (none of which is among the case files), it is easy to predict that a new one will look like the preceding ones and contain a lot of new truths and false accusations, so the Commission is not authorized to receive it. Dippel has actually produced witnesses as late as the day before, Koltemann says, referring to Lieben Sr., Fiel-den, Schlemann, and Janssen, and his arrest is necessitated to keep him from fleeing and from publishing his new "Species Facti" such as he has been demanding of the Commission to do.

Dippel retorts that even the King as a king could not prohibit a defendant from producing a defense and that Koltemann makes a radicalizing interpretation of his Commissorium. Dippel's central argument, then, is that "What is further produced in order to suppress, if possible, the supplications and documents in his own hand submitted by himself, is of such a kind that his counterpart behaves as if they detest the

investigation of truth, that even the authority of the King himself would become prejudiced if one of the King's subjects, he be as big as he will, would prevent that the complaint of a subject could reach the King ...".¹⁸³ Preventing documents from reaching the King corrupts the King's possibility of judging and is tantamount to preventing discovery of the truth. Finally, Dippel seeks to bolster this legal argument with a pietist and natural law underpinning: his supplications to the King do not really belong to the case itself, rather they have been submitted to the Commission.

... only to persuade it, as righteous and Christian hearts, to let arrive to the King what is absolutely necessary in the present conditions that the King knows, and which cannot be kept away from him without offending the authority of the King himself; I request most fervently to do about this what Christian obligation, the law of nature, and the King's interest itself demand, and consequently to send all what I have submitted to His Majt. ...¹⁸⁴

Dippel's argument implicitly refers to what everybody knows: that in absolutism, the King is the highest judge, and his sovereignty implies that he ultimately decides punishment on a scale from relaxing punishment to full pardon and, at the other end, to sharpen it to the law's highest punishment, execution with torture. So, it is not surprising that Dippel is desperate that the final judge is prevented from hearing his version.

But the parties again and again talk past each other. The Commission and Koltemann only wants documents pertaining to the truth of Dippel's allegedly criminal claims of which they never provide a list, while Dippel resorts to protesting against the very nature of the process and appeals for access to the King.

Koltemann's final rebuke only repeats that the Commission is mandated to decide upon a punishment, and further protests will not be heard, for as the plaintiff has no lack of "fictions and inventions" the case would otherwise protract endlessly.

It is striking that Dippel is missing a defendant lawyer to represent him; and why he has not got one is not at all clear. The bottom line seems to be that Dippel measures the case on the standard of a "processus ordinarius" with two symmet-

183 "Was ferner vorgebracht wird, und ihn eingehändigte Supliquen und Documenta wo es möglich wäre, zu unterdrücken, ist so beschaffen, daß die gegenseitige Parthie selbst Graviret, alß ob die Untersuchung der Warheit scheue, daß auch der authoritat des Königs selbst præjudiciren würde, wan einer von des Königs Unterthanen, Er sey so groß als er wolle, verhindern wolte, daß die Klage eines Unterdrückten nicht solte vor den König kommen ...".

184 "... nur dieselbe alß equitables und Christl.e Hertzen zu bewegen, daß an Ihr: Maytt: kommen zu laßen, was in gegenwartigen Zustande absolute nöthig ist, daß der Konig weiß, und welches ihm nicht ohne des Konigs Authorität selbst zu Kräncken ihm nicht kan hinterhalt werden; bittet also inständigst, darinnen zu thun was die Christl: Pflicht, das Natürliche Recht, und des Konigs interesse Selbst erfordert, und folglich alles, was übergeben an Sr: Maytt: einzuschicken ...".

rical parties and an independent judiciary, while the King's instruction letters to the Commission make of it a mere investigation court of a crime whose existence is long since established.

The strangely patchy layout of the constituent elements of the crime by the Commission, however, is provided by Reventlow himself in yet another long letter to the King the very same day. Obviously, he is not convinced by the three-day interrogation session that the Commission is up to its task, for the overarching purpose of the letter is to make the King grant that the Commission will reach a severe sentence. So, even if there is some semblance of equity between the parties, one party has direct access to the highest judge, the other emphatically not, and it is uncertain whether the Commission knew that Reventlow was able to exploit his direct royal connection. The letter is arguably the most pathetic and whining among all of Reventlow's many diatribes, referring to the *Species Facti* and three no-longer-existing *Memorials* by Dippel, complaining how Dippel is prejudiced in his conviction about the Countess' malice and the central role money plays in their household. But Reventlow obviously suspects that neither King nor Commission has achieved a real grasp of what is at stake. So, to substantiate his claims, Reventlow meticulously lists the facts of the case, Dippel's libel, as he now envisages them:

1. My wife has bought, from the Jew Caseres, some silk for 20 Sh. per ell for which he paid 24 Sh. in Holland, and a quantity of china for 50 Rix-dollars which cost him 300 Rix-dollars in Holland, and has robbed him, as he calls it, for what he owned.
2. that the Countess herself urged her justice broker to ask for gifts from the parties.
3. that the Countess, both in the case of Caseres and in the case of Lieben, has represented the position of Chief President.
4. that the City Council keeps and shares 300–400 Rix-dollars of the money that is collected every year for street-cleaning, which would be a heavy responsibility for me if I had part in it.
5. It is erroneously claimed that the son of Lieben should, Saturday before Easter, have offered 20,000 Rix-dollars as a bail for his father.
6. That an infamous Jewess, who is convicted for theft and handling stolen goods, has bought herself free from caning with money and *consilio abeundi* [that is, accepting banishment].
7. that evil has grown so far that one subjects to a certain man, by whom is meant Andreas Bandau, and lets him falsely declare that he had received two Portugalöser from him, one to the Countess and the other to the Count, and that one adorns oneself with such dreadful lies, which have thus soon shown to be lies and slander.¹⁸⁵

185 1. Es habe meine Frau von dem Juden Caseres einiges Seiden Zeüg die Elle von 20 ß, wovor er doch in Holland 24ß gegeben und eine Parthey Porcellain für 50 Rthr: welches ihm voll 300 Rthr: in Holland gekostet abgekauft und ihm, wie er solches nennet, das seinige abgeraubet.

So, this is the precise extent of Dippel's crime, according to the alleged victim, and he makes it very clear he thinks the Commission should also know it. This is important for two reasons.

First, this claim is the only extant clear statement of the assumed extent of Dippel's crimes against the Reventlows. None of these claims, however, are present in the original "Species Facti", so, apart from the last one stemming from Bandau, it must be claims appearing in those later "Memorials" by Dippel, or his supplications sent to the King during spring. We have watched Reventlow seized by an attack of anger when discovering such a copy attached in a letter from Copenhagen. So, there were a number of further documents written by Dippel during the spring of 1719 in which the accusations mentioned appeared. We do not know the exact number of these central documents, roughly a handful, but their disappearance has a natural explanation – namely that Reventlow collected them and later used them to fuel the public autodafé at his satisfaction ceremony in September, and that copies in the files of the Commission were destroyed in Copenhagen after the case. It remains striking that in the rich set of case files most central evidence for Dippel's libel is lacking.¹⁸⁶ It is also interesting, now that the alleged victim himself enumerates his complaints, that the list does not

2. daß Sie selbst durch ihre justitz Mäcklers bey denen Partheyen umb gabe sollicitiren laßen.

3. daß die Gräfin sowol bey der Sache wieder Caseres als wieder Lieben des Ober-Präsidenten stelle vertreten.

4. daß der Magistrat von denen Geldern, welche wegen reinigung der Straßen iärlich gesamlet werden, alle Jahr 300 bis 400 Rthr: behalten und unter sich getheilet, welche mir zu einer Schweren verantwortung gereichen würde wenn ich darunter conniviret haben solte.

5. Ist fälschlich vorgegeben, ob solte des Lieben Sohn am Sonnabend vor dem Fest auf 20000 Rthl: caution für seinen Vater offeriret

6. Daß eine infamen und, von diebes und diebes hehlerey überzeugte Judin den Staupenschlag mit Geld und einem consilio abeundi abgekauft

7. daß die Boßheit so ferne gesteigen, daß man einem Gewißen Mann, worunter Andreas Bandau verstanden wird, subordiniret und derselben fälschlich außsagen laßen, als ob er von ihm 2 portugalöser, einen vor der Gräfin den andern for den Grafen empfangen, und daß man sich mit solchen horrenden Lügen schmücke, welche er also bald erwiesen habe, Lügen und calumnien zu seyn.

186 Several times, we have referred to these documents, of which we know that some of the supplications reached the King in Copenhagen. I have sought, without success, to identify them both in the supplication protocols of the Danish Chancellery and various similar oversights over incoming mail and processed cases in the archives of German Chancellery in the State Archives. Dippel's earlier supplications (October 1707 and November 1718) are there, but none from 1719. If they or copies of them were rather archived in the King's Cabinet Archive, they would have perished with the Christiansborg fire of 1794; cf. Bregnsbo (1997). Reventlow's copies of them probably disappeared with the autodafé ceremony in Altona. So, it seems like Reventlow was in fact

seem complete. Dippel's claims about the process in his letters to Holstein and Hirschfeldt (submitted by Reventlow as evidence to the King in April), e.g., are absent; his alleged connection to the Otte case is not there, several of his claims about the Countess' pressure on Caseres, and, most conspicuously, Dippel's accusations of torture and forced perjury are absent. Would that be an indication that those claims were not false?

Second, you can indeed share Reventlow's puzzlement whether the Commission had any overview at all of the defendant's alleged crimes. They are not listed in the King's letters to the Commission, nor in their letters and particularly not in their reports. Relevant documents may be missing, of course, but it is strange to see a high-level speed investigation by a specially appointed Commission of top officials giving no clear indication of the exact extent of the events they are supposed to investigate.

Reventlow thus finds himself in the position of teaching law to the King and his Commission, for he ventures into a strange exercise of Roman Law, relating how slanderers in antiquity were branded with a K [for "Kalumniator"] on their forehead, and goes into referring four Roman legislations which he finds relevant for the final judgment of the case. He concludes by expressing his trust in the King to grant him "... that it will be expressed, in the investigation undertaken, that the slanderer is unable to prove such harsh accusations, that the same will punish him severely with the full-deserved punishment and as a disgusting example for others of his kind ..."¹⁸⁷ Obviously, after his experience with the interrogations, Reventlow does not extend that trust to the Commission. So the bottom line is simple: to have the King put pressure upon the Commission.

Now, on 30 May, the Commission itself submitted its initial report from Glückstadt to the King (I.3). It is a strange document, with its six pages not very long and almost without reference to the wealth of attached interrogation documents collected the week before.

After all the negotiations between Reventlow and Copenhagen earlier in May, you might expect this to be the report on the character and possible truth of Dippel's statements against the Reventlows. The report contains no such thing and rather assumes the character of a halfway account of how work is progressing. They had begun working the week before, on 23 May in Altona after the royal decrees of the 5, 13, and 16 earlier the same month. They had asked Dippel to pro-

successful in this part of his effort to eradicate any trace of what he saw as Dippel's libel. There is an irony in the fact that we now know their more precise extent only from Reventlow himself.

¹⁸⁷ "... daß bey vorgenommenen unter suchung sich werde geäußert haben, daß der Diffamant solche grobe Beschuldigungen zu erweisen nicht capable sey, denselben ihm zur vollgedienten Straffe und andere seines Gleichen zum abscheülichen exempel der Schärffe nach zu bestraffen ...".

duce something to verify his hard accusations against the Count and Countess; he had not been able to do so, instead he had handed the Commission a sealed, thick document which he claimed contained yet more facts. But as the Commission was instructed by the King to accept no new material and only investigate existing accusations they could not inquire these “noch gantz unbekante facta” without further delay, so the Commission simply refrained from opening this parcel. Instead, they had interrogated all the persons mentioned in Dippel’s *Species Facti* and his other Memorials, and all of those reports had been written up in clear articles. These interrogations had begun with a strict admonition by the Count against perjury while Dippel had also been present, and the Commission refers in some detail Dippel’s behavior during these three days of interrogations, 23–25 May: he was patient, he answered without contradictions, did not misbehave even if other testimony went against him. The Commission is actually ready now to submit a report, but they hesitate, vacillating between two considerations: to proceed in great haste, such as they have been instructed by the King – or to wait and see whether Dippel is capable of producing information which to some extent serves his defense, so that he will not be able to claim afterwards that he was convicted without being heard and without a defense. Even if Dippel himself has appointed some witnesses and participated in interrogations, he remains dissatisfied with the short interrogation period of three days and had expressed, by the end of interrogations, that he would demand an ordinary court case.

So, this leads back again to the new, sealed parcel of documents. The Commission does not know what to do about it, so they ask the King if they should ship it to him in Copenhagen, or whether they should rather break it open and admit the contents to be investigated in the case. As to the much-discussed two sealed suitcases from Hamburg, the Commission reports that they were indeed opened in the presence of Dippel, the Count, and the Countess. They primarily contained chemical equipment and treatises plus an additional 15 letters. The noble couple seized all of the chemical stuff and sealed it, claiming to ship it to the King in Copenhagen. What happened to the letters is not reported; maybe they entered the Commission’s files.

The report does not refer at all to the more detailed contents of many interrogations at the Altona City Hall which they had completed in Dippel’s presence during the preceding week. So, they leave the decision of their further proceeding to the King.

All in all, the behavior of the Commission moves closer to principles of Rule of Law than the wilder, local process in spring. Dippel is now present and active during witness interrogations, and he is free to come up with proofs of his allegations. Other types of defense or protests against the layout of the process, however, are not accessible to him just like he is cut off from the King who, in principle, would receive supplications from any subject of his realm. The appear-

ance of a new mystical, sealed object, potentially containing material which might exonerate Dippel of course blackens this more equitable picture, and it is evident that the Commission finds itself torn between their speed order on the one hand and their regard for a fair process on the other.

The Mystery of a Sealed Parcel

The King answered in two steps, in letters of 7 and 16 June, respectively. In the former short missive (I.23; drafts in I.2 and V.3), he instructs the Commission to present Dippel with an eight-day deadline to produce new material, so as to potentially exculpate him. After that, the Commission should proceed “... without the least further delay and most-submissively to initiate Your judgement and *ratione poenæ in casum non factæ probationis*”¹⁸⁸ – to determine the punishment in case of the lack of evidence, that is, Dippel’s lack of proof of his allegations.

After only a week, the King, seemingly impatiently when having heard nothing new from the Commission, pushes on (I.24, draft in V.2). Now, the King and the Copenhagen administration seem to be all but tiring out. They wish a swift end to the story, and so they put pressure upon the Commission to quickly conclude the case when Dippel predictably fails to meet the eight-day limit of the former royal decree. Of real news is only that the German chancellery in Copenhagen now seems to have bought into Reventlow’s idea that you should not accept considering any old defense from Dippel. Not all kinds of documents should be admitted in the eight-day window offered, for in that case Dippel would only exploit further utterances to commit new libel and to drag the case on indefinitely, calling further witness interrogations. In a certain sense, the King all but jumps to passing an unprecise verdict of guilt while interrogations are still only halfway. This is also evident from the conclusion that they should, already in their pending report, begin to consider the relevant punishment. So, the investigation Commission is quickly about to grow into a penal court. The King does not at all consider Dippel’s procedural objections in his discussion with Koltemann – if he has seen them at all. Stranger, he does not, in those two letters, answer the Commission’s plea to decide the issue of the sealed package.

Another actor growing impatient now was, unsurprisingly, Reventlow. The day after, on 17 June, he sends a letter in the other direction, pushing on Sehested to squeeze the King (III.9). The letter is not sent from Altona but from “Clash”, the Re-

188 “... ohne den geringsten weitern Verzug, Eure Sentiment und Rechtliches Bedencken *ratione poenæ in casum non factæ probationis* allerunterthänigst zu eröffnen”.

ventflows' castle of Clausholm in Jutland. So, Reventlow has left Altona for Denmark, probably for summer; he would not hesitate to use this trip to exert his influence with Copenhagen authorities more directly. Now, Reventlow complains that the Commission will only begin working again as late as 20 June, and he predicts that Dippel will not only exploit the eight-day limit to demand further interrogations of certain new witnesses but will also demand this to take place in Hamburg which could only be done with the collaboration of the Hamburg City Council. And they have a six-week deadline and admit for three cancelings for witnesses before finally showing up. Was Reventlow nervous with the danger of Vincelius showing up there, actually beginning to sing? To shortcut such dire prospects, Reventlow urges Sehested to urge to His Majesty to send a decree to the Commission, simply instructing them to immediately proceed to punishment. The King is on the verge of entering upon a large Norwegian journey, and the case must be concluded before that happens. The King as the supreme judge is necessary for concluding the case, so an end cannot be reached if he is up in the mountains. Reventlow is unable to govern the Commission, but he may attempt to make Sehested make the King do it.

The Commission might pull in the direction of a fairer process for Dippel, but did they know that his opponent was in continuous contact with their superior, their instructor, the supreme judge of the realm?

Dark Depths of Interrogations

Now, the next round of witness examinations was completed during 20–22 June (I.14–21). It is a strange fact that in neither of the two Commission reports of 30 May and 26 June, the many detailed witness interrogations now running up to a hundred pages play any important role. They are indeed appended with the two reports as attachments, but weightings, discussions, and estimations of contrasting testimony are not found, findings from them are not quoted in the reports, and claims or results from there do not appear as premises to the reports' conclusions. Their relation, if any, to the Commission's decisions, seems just to be a sort of general grant that a thorough investigation had been pursued; that the report has a certain weight. But even if their actual legal importance may be minuscule, the witness reports contain an avalanche of interesting information, explicit or implicit, true or false, as claims or allegations, in questions or answers, on the very matter of fact of the Dippel case, some of it highly surprising.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ For the same reason we shall not discuss the interrogations in detail. But we may quote an example, such as the long 21 June interrogation (I.20) of the lawyer Johan Christian Kühn, whom

Actually, it is possible to sketch a sort of worst-case fiction based on allegations or premises found in the interrogations: what if most or all of the information surfacing and circulating here, in questions as well as answers, were true? This, of course, implies bracketing witnesses denying presented claims or keeping tacit when faced with questioning – just synthesizing which assumptions emerge from the sum total of interrogations. At a distance of 300 years, we have little possibility of ascertaining the real facts behind any single claim – but by considering the so to speak worst-case scenario, we get a sort of three-dimensional estimate of the possibility space imagined by the implied actors of what had happened or might happen.

In such a possible world, almost all parties would be engrossed in bribery. Dippel himself would not only have been channeling the infamous two *Portugalöser* in the direction of the Reventlows and extorted payments from Bandau, he would also have bribed the Reventlows to hire Lieben Sr. as a scribe, he would have been involved in the attempt, along with Vincelius, Dencke, and others, to bribe the Hamburger Prehn out of jail, and he would, in some way, be complicit in Vincelius' and Caseres' many-sided businesses with the Ottes and others. The Countess would be a regular collector of bribes and gifts of many sorts, including squeezing tradesmen to accept underprices for her substantial import of luxury

Lieben Sr. had picked as his representative when he was jailed in the early spring. It brings to light a whole new cast of persons, relations, and accusations, not otherwise appearing in the case files. Another of Kühn's clients, one Hamburger named Prehn, had been imprisoned in Altona, and shortly before Christmas 1718, Prehn's sisters, a certain Krüger, and Lieben's friend Dencke (here: Dänicke) went to the Reventlows to get him out. Krüger and Dencke appear to be the sisters' middlemen or brokers in their relation to the Reventlows. When they left the Reventlow mansion, however, Kühn overheard a crucial conversation between the Prehns, Dencke, and Krüger, in their wagons in the street outside, addressing the payment of 50 gold Ducats – corresponding to five *Portugalöser* – to the Countess, but tempered with the consideration of not offending such a grande Dame by presenting her in bad light. The following inquisition of Kühn reveals the attempt evolving through spring, involving both Kühn, Vincelius, and Dippel in discussing how to proceed in order to ransom Prehn out of jail. The scheme seems to have involved Dencke as a contact to the Countess, but he ended up being dismissed by the others, suspected for keeping some of the bribe sum for himself. Here, a whole new network of middlemen – all the characters mentioned, including Dippel – appears between Prehn's sisters and the Countess. The whole interrogation of Kühn is highly complicated and we cannot go further in that direction here, also because of the lack of other extant sources, but it is safe to say that this interrogation demonstrates that discussions of how to process bribes via structures of middlemen to the Countess would not have appeared exotic at the time. One would like to hear more detail about Dippel's relations to these other brokers. Whether she ever accepted those 50 Ducats and if Prehn managed to escape from prison remains obscure. But one does understand, though, why the Commission was eager to arrange an interrogation of Vincelius.

goods. In exchange for such presents, she would be able to offer services based on her husband's and her own high positions and networks, giving privileged access to documents, permissions, protections, positions, and assignments of many sorts. Protection documents, release of prisoners, influencing the outcome of court cases, sale of high offices, much could be negotiated. Vincelius, of course, already appears as the most suspect candidate for a bribesman in the case files, but in the worst-case scenario he would be closely collaborating on a daily basis with his distinguished mistress, the Countess, in collecting them, and even Count Reventlow himself, the public, virtuous crusader against Altonian malpractice, would have been in on receiving a large sum from the Ottes for the vacant Vice-President position. Caseres would be a spider at the center of the web – or caught between a rock and a hard place, depending on luck, situation, and perspective. He would, with his many connections to Dutch tradesmen, Jewish congregations in several cities, and affluent circles in Hamburg, be able to negotiate many streams of goods, gold, and cash, and would be certain to use some of those streams to extract services from officials, ranging from the everyday protecto-riums for Jews and others to larger catches like the vice presidency. In the local Altona setting, he would be the link between the node of Vincelius and the Reventlows on the one hand and the node of Isaac Israel with his Hamburg contacts on the other. Simultaneously, he would become a victim in the spring of 1719 when the anti-corruption campaign exploded in the face of the instigators themselves, suddenly imprisoned and interrogated, threatened, pressured, and tortured, with his partners in trade fleeing in all directions. The pious and self-righteous Altona City Council would be diverting funds from street-cleaning to spend upon themselves, they would accept bribes to decide court cases – the original complaint by Dippel which triggered the whole calamity – they would artificially prolong court cases to enrich lawyers who would be sure to offer kickbacks, they would take payments for granting access to the Appeal Court in Glückstadt which, in turn, would accept payments for certain decisions. The interrogations by said City Council committee would be rogue – not only would they spare their friends from interrogation while jailing their enemy witnesses in order to influence testimony, but committee interviewers would also fight between each other over which information to put in the reports, and if necessary they would report their own version of events rather than that of the witnesses.

Channeling bribes back and forth in such networks, it would often happen that at a particular node, some informal tax could be deduced from amounts passing through. The next receiver might not know how much the original briber would have paid, so at all points of the network, values might be seeping out to disappear, disseminating suspicion among networkers. The network, however, would have strict means to prevent participants from snitching. Caseres would be

forced to sign false statements against his own testimony, not only by Vincelius trying to exonerate himself, but also by the Hamburg merchant Sentrup and by the City Council committee themselves, finding that Caseres went much too far in revealing bribe practices during the 4 April interrogations and squeezing him in order to protect themselves. He would be maltreated and subjected to torture in the Altona City Hall in order to make him retract his explanations on 27 April, and in the next Commission he sits tacit, having learnt his lesson. A young Jewish girl suspected of being a petty thief would be imprisoned and subjected to thumb-screw torture while she managed to escape caning by bribes and who knows what else.

Was this fiction the truth beneath the Altona surface? Could it be that Dippel's original, tiny pinprick with the Bandau and Lieben cases was but the butterfly triggering a tsunami that would bring parts of these sleazy networks out into the open? There is no reason to doubt the unadulterated character of Reventlow's anger, but what was really the reason he was so angry? Was it facing offensive rumors blackening his reputation and honor as a nobleman – the official version – or was it rather seeing his own household caught red-handed as central players in this putrid network? And, in the latter case: was he angry that his greedy wife's rumored grey-area practices were suddenly brought to light – and if so, was he secretly fuming at her while struggling to protect her name in public? Or had he known all about the shady dealings all along, even participating himself and now mad with rage because Dippel, inadvertently, had come to expose him to Bandau? Was he now sacking Vincelius and prosecuting Dippel, two of his protégés, minions, and network nodes, not because of their misdemeanors, but rather as regrettable, necessary sacrifices he had to make in order to protect himself? Did he fear that Dippel's supplications to Copenhagen would expose him and his wife and that they might face retributions or even worse actions from above if he did not take action? The acceptance of bribes was punishable on life, honor, and property, according to the King's 1708 decree. And did he now throw himself into the prosecution of Dippel not only because he was furious with his old chemist, but also to point out a scapegoat so that all of the scandal could be canalized away onto one person who could then be sacrificed and driven out at a flashy and spectacular event? Was the grand ceremony with public burning of documents not only needed to restore his own tattered reputation but also a way of demonstrating that bribe and slander were finally driven out of a city now again pure?

Altona was an exceptional place at the time. It was basically one large grimy construction site drawing craftsmen and investors from near and wide, particularly from Hamburg, as showcased by Dippel's two selected processes with the Hamburgers Bandau and Lieben. It was Hamburg's Wild West, attracting not only

money, initiative, and talent of many kinds but also fortune hunters of no fewer kinds, bankrupt debtors, innkeepers, prostitutes, petty thieves, smugglers, fraudsters, criminal gangs, all the way up to grey-zone big financiers like the Ottes. Thanks to the relative freedom of faith, there was a rare zoo there of different churches, confessions, and sects able to escape persecution, especially if they kept a low profile, each of them constituting its own secluded microcosm, networks with long-range contacts to fellow believers near and far. It was a free port and open city housing an ever-changing flux of goods, money, sailors, merchants, dissidents, refugees, shady figures from Hamburg taking time off or hiding in the liberty of the neighboring city *all-too-near*, some of them donning pseudonyms. The capital Copenhagen with central authorities was far away. Only in 1754, a formal office of Chief Constable was introduced in Altona.¹⁹⁰ Much was possible there. It would not seem improbable if bribery, nepotism, and corruption saw opportunities in such an environment. We have no possibility of deciding upon the truth of each and every one of the many small and big allegations kicked around in the Dippel case files – and in the Commission interrogation reports in particular. But it would not seem *prima facie* strange if at least some of them were correct. It had been Reventlow and his rogue spring committee of Heinrichs who had opened this bag of fleas, all but exploding back in the face of themselves and the Reventlows.

The new formal Commission, however, chose to ignore all that, even if it may be found in its own interrogations. But it was also not a part of their royal Commissorium.

A Punishment on the Edge of Summer

The Commission's immediate 23 June report would hardly satisfy Reventlow or the King (VI.3). The letter is basically a plea for extension of the deadline of the final Commission report which seems to have been set one month after work began. Still, it contains a few interesting details. The overall subtext is that the Commission hesitates to accept Copenhagen's increasing pressure. This appears from a detail such as when they relate the Commission's communication to Dippel of the eight-day deadline to prove his pronouncements, they refer to their own letter to him as "... ein weitläufftiges Scriptum" – a long-winded piece of

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Ljungberg and Jakobsen (2023). Even when this office was introduced one generation later, Altona seems to have been considered an unruly place; an argument marshaled for the creation of the office was "the Altonian disease" (*ibid.*).

writing. This cannot be but irony. The King's recent, impatient letters to the Commission had warned several times against allowing Dippel to submit "weitzläufige" counterarguments. It seems to be an indirect way of saying that in legal matters, long and detailed documents could hardly be avoided, thus discreetly claiming some degree of Rule-of-Law principle as against Copenhagen's breathless demands for swift justice. Furthermore, the letter is interesting in that it refers to the fact that witness interrogations are not yet finished, arguing that Dippel's co-defendant Vincelius has escaped to Hamburg and the problems of the Commission trying to locate and interrogate him there have caused delay. They also refer to the fact that Dippel, all of sudden, has willingly appeared for the Commission with a defense; this, however, is not a document found among the case files. They promise their final report by the next ordinary mail – and it would actually be shipped only three days later.

This, then, is finally the Commission's much-awaited conclusive report on the Dippel case (26 June, VI.4). The first half of the long report again apologizes for the delay which seems to be caused by the inability of the Commission to approach a number of witnesses: Vincelius who had fled, but also the local Dutch reformed preacher (Jacob Denner?) who has reported sick, and the Jew Steffens. Another batch of witnesses have been proposed, probably by Dippel, but are now in Hamburg, refusing to appear in Altona but proposing they might be questioned by the Hamburg City Council: the broker Stallbohm, the pietist Rosenbach, Prehn and his sisters – all of them potentially good witnesses from Dippel's point-of-view, the first two of them were present during the conversation on the fateful two Portugalöser. The Commission states they have not gone further with these interrogations in order not to protract the case, but they make sure to ask the King if they should rather proceed. These would probably be the witnesses which Dippel complained that he was not allowed to call. The Commission mentions the recently conducted seven further interrogations attached to the report but does not refer to their results in what follows.

The decisive part of the report relates how Dippel has now actually handed in a written defense (not among the case files), but while his imputation against the Reventlows as it appears in this defense depends on mere hearsay, the Commission jumps to the following conclusion:

"... as his submitted articles show that he has based and founded the whole of his accusation on mere hearsay, and consequently hereby has done too close and too much to His High-Countl. Excellence zu Reventlau and his Mrs. Consort: And then the law decides that such a slanderer should not pass unpunished, but must be punished justly for it, so that others will

be deterred by it, and not so easily are moved to *temerarias denunciations* – to reckless denunciations.¹⁹¹

Dippel's defense is not appended along with the other attachments, and it is also not resumed in the report, so we do not know what was in it. But it is dismissed by the Commission as mere "hörsagen", hearsay. Even if this characterization is summary, it is simultaneously very mild, when you think of the judgments of Reventlow and his committee. It is hard not to see this lenient characterization of Dippel's crime as an indirect way of saying that the claims about the Reventlows' corruption were not at all Dippel's invention but just repetitions of rumors that were circulating in the city. So, Dippel should be punished after the law for promoting rumors, also in order to deter others from doing the same thing. No particular legal paragraph nor article is mentioned, nor is the blasphemy charge.

On this basis the Commission finishes by proposing, after mature consideration, the following argument for punishment:

After the case and all its circumstance have been carefully considered by us, our most-submissive and humble meaning is that Chancellery Councilor Dippelius, because of such outpoured and unproven special accusations, is liable to give to His High-Countl. Excellence zu Reventlau a public Christian excuse in the local City Hall, and the same to Mrs. Countess in her home, and then, because of his in no way justified behavior, to stay another four weeks after the publication of the verdict in the arrest kept until now, at his own expense ...¹⁹²

He should not be released, however, before he has signed a declaration under oath to abstain from any further offense to the noble couple in the future. The commission meticulously weighs the length of the arrest penalty with considerations pertaining to that it might well have been longer, but that Dippel on the other hand also has to pay for the work of the Commission, and it should also be balanced by the fact that he has already been under arrest for a period under

191 "... indem seine übergebene articuli sattsahm darthun, daß er seine gantze defension auf bloßen hörsagen gesetzt und fundiret, folglich Ihrer Hochgräffl: Excellence zu Reventlau und deßen Fr: Gemahlin zu nahr und zu viel hierinnen gethan: Und dan die Rechte verordnet, daß einem solchem Denuncianten es nicht ungeahndet hingehen müßte, sondern billig desfalls zu bestraffen seyn, damit andere dadurch abgescheldet, und *ad temerarias denunciations* sich nicht so leichte bewegen laßen".

192 "... nachdem die Sache mit allen ihren Umständen von Uns reiflich erwogen, Unserer aller-unterthänigste unmaßgäbliche Meinung dahin, daß der Cantzeley-Raht Dippelius wegen solcher ausgegoßenen, und nicht erwiesenen speciale Beschuldigungen Ihrer Hochgräffl:en Excellence zu Reventlau eine öffentliche Christliche Abbitte auf hiesigen Rahthauße, wie auch der Frau Gräffin in Dero Behaußung zu thun schuldig, sodan seiner in alle Wege nicht zu justificirenden Betragen halber nach publicirung der Urtheil annoch auf Vier Wochen in dem bishero gehaltenen arrest auf seine eigene Kosten zu continuiren ...".

conditions where much in his incarceration has been not a little unpleasant and disrespectful.¹⁹³ It is a surprisingly cool deliberation, taking into account both the motivation for punishing and the fact that the convict has already been imprisoned for months. The Commission clearly signals that this be their final say, for they simultaneously return to Copenhagen writings shipped to them as evidence, just like they inquire again what they should finally do with the still-sealed parcel of papers handed to them by Dippel.

The punishment for spreading gossip, then: a public apology, four more weeks under arrest, and payment of the legal expenses. That decision would hardly satisfy Reventlow who now had to realize that he could not, despite his direct line to the King, control the Commission. So, back to scratch.

A Sentence Without Law?

It may appear as a surprise that the Commission does not at all refer to any legal motivation for their sentence. But we are in a time before any consequent application of the principle of “Nulla poene sine lege”, *no punishment without law*. Sentences could be passed per analogy to existing legislation, or they could be passed based on a more diffuse conviction that an action committed evidently had to be punishable.

To this, it must be added that the Duchy of Holstein was a complicated political puzzle which is mirrored in the many different, often overlapping jurisdictions in the different parts of the Duchy. Legal tradition in Holstein in general was the medieval *Sachsenspiegel*, modified by Imperial Law as practiced by the Holy Roman Empire, but in Holstein’s cities such as Kiel, Rendsburg, Seheberg, and Oldesloe, Lübeckian Law ruled; in Danish-founded Glückstadt supplied by Hamburg Law. But Altona was a special case where Lübeckian Law was explicitly not relevant, because it was part of the old county of Stormarn where the *Sachsenspiegel* had never been introduced, and where there was a special “Gräfliches Holstein-Schauenburgische Hof-Gerichts-Ordnung” – a Comital Holstein-Schauenburgian Courtly Legislation. In Altona, this was the Law, along with Imperial Law, such as expressed by the decrees of Frederik III for Altona in 1665 – while adding that the “long-winded” Schauenburgian process ought to be abbreviated in Altona (Schmid 1747, 148ff).

¹⁹³ Reventlow thought that he paid to keep Dippel locked up under luxury conditions; the Commission rather that his arrest was unpleasant and derogatory. This could be dependent on viewpoint, but it might also be that Dippel had been moved to the less convenient City Hall custody when more space became vacant with the release of Lieben and Caseres. The case files do not report whether Dippel changed arrest during his almost five months of imprisonment in Altona.

A comprehensive Holstein history of law with reprinted versions of different Holstein legislations in five volumes (Cronhelm 1750, explicitly bracketing the special case of Altona) presents Schauenburg Law, which has no maximum penalty for libel and blasphemy, unlike neighboring Ditmarschen, which had a distinction, in libel, between mere invective and invective claimed, without success, to be proven; the former is punished with considerably smaller fines than the latter (Cronhelm 1750, vol. V, 99). Libel is addressed in a number of imperial decrees in the seventeenth century, appended to Sleswick-Holstein legislation, always as part of a group of offenses under some *de minimis* threshold given by the size of the expected fine, offenses which may not be appealed, reduced, nor involved in supplications (Cronhelm 1750, vol. III, 95, 112, 117). This is repeated in a decree of Schauenburg law enacted in Glückstadt 1694 where the *de minimis* threshold is 50 Rix-dollars (valid also for Altona; Cronhelm 1750, vol. IV; 115). It is interesting that after Reventlow had taken over the Altona city government 20 years later he decreed, on 5 February 1714, a related rule comprising libel:

... in the future I shall, in your city Altona, in order to avoid and abbreviate unnecessary long-windedness and processes, appoint one of the City Council members every year who, with a citizen treasurer and under participation of the local city steward, will judge cases not exceeding 10 Rix-dollars. Therefore, in accordance with this most-gracious decree in such court cases under which small libel, invective, and slander cases also belong, but where penal cases remain under the city court, [...] the council member shall have the first, the steward the second, and the present treasurer the third votum in the case.¹⁹⁴

So, this addresses the appointment of an “under-court” speedily deciding the outcome of simple complaints under a 10 Rix-dollar limit. The first City Council member appointed in 1714 was one of the four Heinrichs, Joenssen. It is even added that these judges are obliged to do all they can in order to reconcile the conflicting parties in a reasonable way, so that the case may be settled and closed without any sentence (158). Both in Schauenburg law and in Reventlow’s own city rule, then, the tendency is that libel is taxed as a trifle which would typically trigger a smaller fine and which can ideally be solved by a negotiated reconciliation

194 “... daß hinfüro in Dero Stadt Altona, zu Vermeidung und Abkürzung unnöthiger Weitläufigkeiten, und Processe, Ich einen von denen Rathsverwandten, und einen Kämmerreiberger jährlich zu benennen habe, welche mit Zuziehung des allhiesigen Stadtvoigts in Sachen, so nicht über 10. Rthlr. betragen, ohne Appellation erkennen sollen. Demnach nun in Conformité sothanner allergnädigsten Verordnung zu solchen Gerichtssachen, worunter auch die kleinen Injurien, Schelt- und Schmähssachen zwar mit gehören, die Bruchdingung aber dem Stadtgerichte vorbehalten bleibt [...], und der Rathsverwandte das erste, der Stadtvoigt das zweite, und der p.t. Kämmerreiberger das dritte Votum soll zu führen haben” (Schmid 1747, 156).

between parties, an out-of-court settlement. Reventlow, however, would not see things this way when he found himself the target of libel.

Proper penal cases, covered by Emperor Karl V's "Carolina" or "Peinliche Halsgerichtordnung" of 1532 would, by contrast, be processed in Altona publicly by citizens gathering under open sky, Frederik III had decreed in 1665; later it was specified to a sort of selected jury of citizens gathering in the City Hall (Schmid 1747, 148, 168). Here belongs libel in the more severe meaning of the word: the untrue, public claim that named persons should have committed a crime. About this, Karl's law, article 110, had the following.

The penalty for written, unrightful, penal **slander**

Who unrightfully ascribes an innocent person vices and crimes in slanderous writings, in Latin called *Libell famosus*, which he disseminates and does not, after the decree of the law, sign with his given name and family name, which truthfully has been established, may the perpetrator be punished on life, body, or honor: the same wicked offender must, after the discovery of such a misdeed, as the law states, be punished with the punishment, which he himself has attempted to impose on the offended innocent person by his evil, untrue, slanderous writing; And even if the alleged infamous act actually proves to be true, the disseminator of such an offense must still be punished after the law and the evaluation of the judge.¹⁹⁵

It is interesting that the punishing of the offender with the same penalty that he tried to impose upon the innocent should *also* be executed in case the offense actually proves to have been true. This must refer to criminalizing anonymity in such claims: if you want to publicly claim that somebody has done something criminal, you must do it openly, under your own name. Thus, this rule would imply that Dippel should be punished with the punishment relevant for the Reventlows if they actually did receive bribes – that is, life, honor, and property (cf. Eggers 1788, 369ff). Dippel, however, had not presented his claims publicly nor anonymously, so his crime would not fall under this decree. Reventlow, moreover, would hardly venture to subject such a decision to a selected jury of Altona

195 "Straff schriftlicher vnrechtlicher peinlicher **schmähung**.

Jtem wellicher jemant durch schmachschriften, zu latein Libell famosus genant, die er außbreittet vnnd sich nach ordnung der Recht mit seinem Rechtenn tauff- vnnd zunamen nitt vnnderschreibet, vnrechtlicher vnschuldiger weise laster vnnd vbell zumysst, Wa die mit Warheit erfundenn wurden, Das der geschmecht an seinem leip, lebenn oder eeren peinlich gestrafft werden möchte: Derselbig bosshafftig lesterer soll nach erfindung sollicher vbellthat, alls die Recht sagenn, mit der pene, jnn welliche Er den vnschuldigen geschmechten durch sein böse vnwarhafftige lasterschrift hat pringen wollen, gestrafft werdenn; Vnnd ob sich auch gleich wol die vffgelegte schmach der zugemessenen that jnn der warheit erfindt, soll dannoch der aussrufer sollicher schmach nach vermog der Recht vnnd ermessung des Richters gestrafft werden" (Karl V 1900, 51).

citizens whose ruling would be unpredictable. And, what is worse, the whole case would be public, only serving to spread the circulating claims about the Reventlows even further. So, it is easy understand why he preferred a secret commission.

As mentioned, it is probable that the Commission, in the back of their heads, would also have had the recent, comprehensive *Danish Law* (1683), the large legal accomplishment of early Danish absolutism. It was not the law of the land in the Duchies, but it had considerably more explicit provisions regarding libel than did Schauenburg law. In *Danish Law*, libel is addressed in Book 6, Chapter 21 “On Cases of Honor”.¹⁹⁶ The articles 6-21-1 to 6-21-7 deal with different kinds of offense. Article 6-21-1 addresses gossip: “If one man accuses somebody else in an inn, mill, smith or elsewhere in a like assembly, then he who has been accused may sue the other for such talk and claims. If he will not maintain it and it cannot be proven, or he says he knows no reason for it, other than what he has loosely heard people say, then the steward should send him home unpunished”. So, if an oral gossipier publicly retracts, he will be released. This might be an inspiration for the mild verdict of the Commission. Article 6-21-2 covers the more serious case in which a person claims that another is, e.g., a liar, thief, or a similar criminal predicate without being able to prove it; in that case the offended suffers damage of his reputation, and the offender is sentenced a liar and should pay a fine of three Mark. Article 6-21-3 generalizes this to cases where the offended is not himself present. The level of punishment, however, is still far from the level of the Dippel case. Article 6-21-5 refers to cases in which an already convicted “three Mark man” repeats his crime, in which case he should be banished from the city. Article 6-21-7 covers libel against a secular or clerical authority or other “honest” people (which seems to refer to noblemen or persons in the rank system), in which case three times 40 units of silver must be added to the three-Mark fine, and if the felon is unable to pay, public whipping at the stake followed by the punishment of “carrying stones out of town” will be the penalty, that is, banishment effected by tying two heavy stones around the neck of the convict who must haul them until being banished at the city gates. Article 6-21-8 covers the most serious cases, to write or publish slanderous pieces or pasquils against honest persons, an act which is punished by the loss of honor and penal labor for life. Reventlow was obviously a secular authority and an “honest man” who found himself under attack for having committed a criminal act, so he would look in the direction of the heavier end of 6-21, while the Commission may have thought about the considerably milder 6-21-1 and -2, maybe because Dippel’s claims were never published. Blasphemy, the offense of God, in turn, was a much more serious crime

196 *Danish Law*: <http://bjoerna.dk/DL-1683-internet.pdf>.

than offending people; in *Danish Law* it was punishable by execution preceded by torture (6-1-7).

As mentioned, references to any legal basis are missing completely in the Dippel case, in the considerations of the spring committee, in the reports of the Commission in Reventlow's repeated arguments for conviction and punishment, as well as in the King's final decision of punishment later in fall. Once, there is a reference to the King's decree against bribes as of 1708 (in Reventlow's church campaign), but not to libel law. But this was not at all because such legal foundations were missing in Altona. The bottom line seems to be that by handing over the decision to a Commission, legal frameworks lost importance. In absolutist Commission practice in general – and in particular when royal interests were involved – it was not uncommon that there was a rather free relation to legislation.¹⁹⁷ In the present case actually approaching not considering it at all. Such flexibility would probably have added to Reventlow's preference for a Commission. But that turned out not to help him to the desired punishment of Dippel, anyway.

So, the third act of the case had begun with Reventlow's intense letter campaign of April-May, massaging Copenhagen authorities: the King, Sehested, and Franz von Hagen. Reventlow succeeded in pressuring the King to appoint a fast-moving Commission in Glückstadt to investigate and convict Dippel, just like he amped up accusations from libel also to involve blasphemy. The Commission did work rapidly but despite the Reventlows' continuous pressure on His Majesty the Commission, with its mild and weighted conclusion, did not reach a result he would in any way accept.

Act 4: The Shaping of a Punishment

Machinations in Copenhagen

Summer break. Now the case enters a new stalemate. No further documents in the whole of July 1719. The Commission's verdict might appear to be the last word. If Dippel was informed about it, he could sigh with relief. A mild sentence has been put forward, soon Dippel might be at large again, his reputation a bit corroded from yet another clash with authorities, at the cheap price of never again attacking his noble counterparts, so that he might continue his lofty mix of alchemy, radical religion, and enlightenment elsewhere. Peace might descend

¹⁹⁷ Cf. the Danish legal historian Ditlev Tamm (personal comm.)

upon Altona and the Reventlows go back to their comprehensive reconstruction task with all the dealings, negotiations, and activities involved, with or without bribes.

Not so. Early August, things slowly begin moving again. The Commission, seemingly remaining in Glückstadt on the sunny side of the Elbe over summer, received a letter of 1 August not preserved among case files. This letter seems to have been signed by both the royal cabinet in Copenhagen and the Reventlows vacationing in Denmark during summer. This can be seen from the fact that the Commission response of 8 August addresses both of those two sets of dignitaries (V.9). So, now the Reventlows directly collaborated in giving royal orders to the Commission. The main issue remains the unopened, sealed parcel whose destiny the Commission had been repeatedly inquiring about in June. Obviously, the 1 August letter must have criticized the Commission for not having taken the step to break open this batch of writings and taken them into consideration in their June report. Maybe the Reventlows and the King now had the suspicion that the parcel might contain further evidence providing arguments for a harder punishment?

The Commission's answer is understandably irritated now, going into great detail about how the June orders from the King, again and again, had instructed the Commission exactly to consider *no* further facts or writings from Dippel except for what he was expected to deliver by the eight-day deadline in June. The Commission mock-virtuously emphasizes how they would never dream of breaking such a royal decree: introducing further evidence would just have protracted the process into "Weitläufigkeit" – long-windedness, the warning word of the royal decrees speeding up the process in June. No mention here at all, however, of the punishment proposed by the Commission in June – would that issue have been addressed in the 1 August rebuke of the Commission's work? In any case, early August did not bring any decisive conclusion to the case after the summer break.

Again, Reventlow takes action, now back in Altona. On 15 August he is back on high alert with a handwritten note to Sehested (III.10), swiftly jotted down in German with lots of abbreviations and inkspots making it hard to decipher. Reventlow is mad with rage, now that he has learnt about the Commission's 8 August response about the sealed papers. The last third of the letter is concerned with important intelligence about troop and navy movements of Russian, Swedish, and English forces in the decisive phase of the Great Northern war, but Reventlow's own case takes precedence. It is a challenging read, but so much is clear that he strongly protests that the Commission has not broken the seal, that it has still done nothing at all to refute Dippel's rumors against himself and his wife, and he intensely urges his foreign minister friend to conclude the case immediately. Again, the contentious issue of the punishment is not addressed at all, but Reventlow is exasperated.

The week after, Copenhagen authorities begin to awaken after summer and finally answer the Commission's ironic letter from two weeks earlier. The letter only survives in unfinished draft versions (22 August, both versions in V.1). In any case, the Commission is now explicitly ordered to finally break open and process the sealed package, the second of two drafts stating that this should take place in the presence of Reventlow – but this demand has been crossed out again and thus did not reach the final letter. Maybe he now had reasons to prefer Copenhagen to Altona.

Again, the Commission answers the King with a report, on 29 August (VI.16). The Commission has received the royal instruction of 22 August and once again taken action at great speed. The much-discussed sealed parcel has finally been opened, only to reveal two supplications from Dippel aimed at the King, dating back from early and late May, supplications never reaching their royal destination. No further accusations against the Reventlows were found there but also no proofs of Dippel's original defamations. The former supplication addresses the issues of Lieben and Caseres, and the Commission asks, ironically, if it would not be too "weitläufftig" to go further in that direction. The two have long since disappeared from the story. The latter supplication is, in itself, a "weitläufftig" piece of writing, an appeal to the King addressing the following four points:

1. *relaxationem arresti*. (2) That Your royal Majesty sends out a public proclamation so that one can be granted a final security against Mr. Count and the City Council, and simultaneously be urged with commitment to tell the truth; (3) That what He calls the infamous pasquil is burned; (4) That the Countess is ordered to hand back again the stolen calendar.¹⁹⁸

Dippel wants out of his arrest; the King should publicly grant his security as against the Count and Council and urge the truth to be told about the case; one of Dippel's own writings may be burned; and the Countess should return a stolen calendar, maybe one of the contentious objects of the Caseres deals or one of the objects seized from Dippel's two suitcases – in any case, a final stab at her supposed greed. The reference to the truth of the case would include Dippel's right to publish his version of events. The "infamous pasquil" to be burned would probably refer to the "Secten-Spiegel" with Dippel's aggressive intro, the publication particularly under attack by Reventlow for blasphemy. All in all, a sort of compromise proposal from Dippel where both parties yield something under a royal

198 "1. *Relaxationem arresti*. 2. Daß von Eur: Königl.n Maytt: ein publiques proclama machen möge, damit Inderen man von Schluß und Sicherheit gegen den H.n Graffen, und den Magistrat assecuriret, und zugleich mit Commination angehalten werde die Warheit außzusagen; (3) Daß die von Ihm so genandte infame pasquil verbrant werden möge, (4) der Fr. Graffin zu Reventlau zu befehlen, daß dieselbe den entwändten Calender wiederum auß liefern".

grant for a future cool peace between them. The Reventlows are addressed less than courteously, indeed, but in conclusion the Commission finds nothing substantially new in the legendary sealed parcel and concludes by maintaining its report of 26 June, now more than two months before. The ever-growing mammoth in the room, the pending issue of punishment, remains unaddressed.



Figure 18: King Frederik IV of Denmark-Norway, Reventlow's brother-in-law, was the target of both direct and indirect pressure during Reventlow's letter storm to the government in Copenhagen. The King ultimately decided upon Dippel's penalty in early September 1719, even if he was subsequently pushed by Reventlow to strengthen the punishment.

This would abruptly be decided, however, by the King four days later, communicated in an official 2 September letter from Sehested to Reventlow, of which V.10 is a draft (Fig. 18). The King had received the Commission report the day before and, on that basis, he has now decided Dippel's punishment:

Thus, His Most-Exalted Majesty has most-graciously resolved that Your High-Comit. Excellence would send the mentioned Chancellery Councilor Dippelium, on Your own expense, [from Altona via Lübeck to the sea] directly hereto after your own judgment well-guarded, Then the same Mr. will immediately be transported together with War Councilor Möller, for the time being an inmate in the Citadel, to the island Bornholm and will let both of them be held captive there; which I consequently have hereby communicated to the information of your Your High-Comit. Excellence, and at the same time I would like to report that your honored letter of the twenty-ninth of last August was sent to me.¹⁹⁹

There is no surviving letter from Reventlow to Sehested or the King with that date in the files, but it does not seem improbable that Reventlow, in his excited state of mind, would have continued squeezing the government, maybe also insisting the punishment should be increased. It is also striking that the very first letter addressing the punishment decision goes to Reventlow – rather than to the Commission. He was indeed the supreme authority of Altona and should be informed as such, but he was also part in the case, and it is hard not to get the idea that the King now also wished to put an end to the stream of angry letters from his brother-in-law – cf. also his insistence that Reventlow himself pay the cost for the transport of the prisoner to Copenhagen from where Dippel would continue on an already planned prisoner transport. The King wished to have no government expenses from what appears to be Reventlow's own private campaign.

So, this letter finally sealed Dippel's fate. He should be taken to Lübeck and from there sailed to Copenhagen (or another direct route after Reventlow's judgment) in order to be shipped further to incarceration in Bornholm along with another prisoner, War Councilor Möller, who had been convicted the year before after an extensive Commission investigation for having attempted to extract fa-

¹⁹⁹ "So haben Allerhöchstged: Ihr: Königl: May:t allernädigst resolviret, daß, wann Eur: Hoch Gräffl: Excellenz* besagten Cantzeley-Raht Dippelium auff Ihre eignen Umkosten von Altona uber Lübeck zu Waßer anhero [difficult to see whether crossed out or underlined, FS] gerades Weges nach Ihrem eignen guthfinden wohlverwahret senden ~~xxx~~ wolten, dieselbe Hhn ~~xxx~~ zugleich mit dem eine Zeithero in der hiesigen Citadelle geseßenen Kriegs-Raht Möller, nach der Insul Bornholm transportiren und ~~zeit haben~~ Sie beyde daselbst gefänglich halten laßen wollen; welches ich demnach Eur: Hoch-Gräffl. Excellenz zu dero Nachricht hiemit habe vermelden und anbey zugleich berathen wollen, das deroselben an mich abgelaßenes geehrtes Schreibens vom 29. vorigen Monats Augusti gestern wohl erhalten" Another version of the letter essentially repeats the wording quoted here (VI.14).

vors from the King by presenting false claims.²⁰⁰ It seems there was already a planned prisoner transport in the pipeline, so the King took the practical decision of simply adding Dippel to that shipment. A note added in the margin, but then again crossed out, read that it should not be prevented that the Commission's sentence could be published.²⁰¹ So, it was considered that the Commission's June report should be made public, but this was given up again. That may have been because it was hardly desirable to flash the Commission's lenient proposal in public, but maybe also because it might question the royal letter's claim that Dippel's punishment was motivated by the Commission's 29 August letter finding no further ridicule in the unsealed parcel, so that their 26 June report was still the valid "sentiment" upon which the King's decision would rest. Might be difficult to publicly explain the harsh punishment just for spreading gossip.

You guessed it: Reventlow was still not satisfied. In a long answer to Sehested of September 9 (III.11), again in German and sent from Copenhagen, he rehashes his eternal complaints about Dippel the "gottlose Bösewicht", as if Sehested had not heard similar in abundant variations since April. Reventlow now knows about the Bornholm plan, but that does not satisfy him at all. He presses on: wouldn't Norway be a better place to banish Dippel? Reventlow's most important issues now are two: his own final satisfaction, which he thinks he can achieve only with a public ceremony in Altona in which Dippel's writings are burned at the stake in the presence of their author himself: "... that all his submitted calumnies against me are publicly burned by the executioner in Altona in his presence, and all documents created about it are delivered to me, and it is notified, in the records of the Royal Council, that everything was found false by the investigation ..."²⁰² The latter was not factually correct, of course, the Commission had never drawn that conclusion. The letter was, simultaneously, an acquittal of himself to the King whose suspicion he still seems to fear: Reventlow claims that there were no Altona citizens who responded to his March encouragement in the churches to report corruption cases to secretary Esmarck, interpreted as a proof that Dippel's accusations are

200 The extensive case against Möller from 1713 to 1718 numbers some 1,500 pages of German Chancellery case files (State Archives, TyK, Indenrigske Afdeling, B. XI, "Kommissioner"). The case has not been investigated in detail.

201 "... nicht diemit solten zu hindern seyn, daß die von gel: Hhl: Commisarien abgelaßete Urtheil ~~zur~~ publiciret und zur execution gebracht ..." (V.10).

202 "... das alle seine gegen mich eingegebenen schandschriften in Altona öffentlich in seiner presentz durch den Büttel werden verbrandt worden, und alle drüber gehaltene protocollen zuweisen, und mich eingeliefert worden, und in dem protocol vom Königl. conseil notirt werden, das alles bey der inquisition sey unwahr befunden worden ...".

false.²⁰³ In order to strengthen his argument for the burning ceremony, Reventlow adds references to recent satisfaction rituals in which the executioner has burned offensive writings, such as a case about libel against privy councilor Ditlev Wibe, against the City Council of Odense, against a certain Bachmann and Bentzen in Haderslev, and against Christian Erlund in Copenhagen – the post official who had developed the technique of seizing and secretly copying mail in Hamburg.²⁰⁴ So, the satisfaction ceremony is so urgent to Reventlow that he equips Sehested with this small handful of precedents, as arguments that he may present to the State Council if they would not already be convinced. Reventlow must have remembered these previous cases as rituals which did in fact involve some sort of purifying effect for the offended and their public reputation, for obviously the bonfire in the square is now his top priority.

Reventlow's second demand was a grant that the much-publishing Dippel will not, in any possible future, be able to go public and print his attacks on Reventlow – which is why he wants a guarantee that the promised banishment and imprisonment on Bornholm should be: *for life*. The letter concludes by emphasizing this demand by once again going into Dippel's "Sect-Mirror" pamphlet as the decisive proof that he does not offend honest people only but also God and his Holy Writ – as a decisive argument for lifelong incarceration. As usual, he exploits his personal connection to Sehested to put pressure upon the King.

But better go directly to the head. On 12 September, Reventlow simply gate-crashes a meeting at the Royal Council. He claims they have demanded to hear him about Dippel and that he proved able to convince the gathering dignitaries there to accept his demands – most importantly, the public autodafé planned in Altona but also the further step that Dippel's title as Chancellery Councilor finally be cancelled. We know that the Council was well-informed and had received copies of the Dippel publications deemed blasphemous by Reventlow. The Council accepts every single one of Reventlow's demands. Actually, it is an incredible scene: you may imagine Reventlow bursting in, full periwig, breathlessly excusing to the dumbfound assembly of dignitaries that he is there, then swiftly falling into his classic rant about the godless scoundrel. Or was he rather escorted cautiously into the meeting by Sehested, triggering only the raising of a couple of powdered eyebrows?

Naturally, he knew that the support of the Council would have no effect without royal backup. So, the next day Reventlow continues to write a personal letter

²⁰³ This claim is contradicted by the claim from the committee's May report that there had been several complaints against Lieben.

²⁰⁴ The latter three precedents are repeated in the letter to the King a few days later. I have been unable to identify Bachmann and Bentzen.

to the King, sent from Frederiksborg Castle in the North of Zealand (IV.15). It is from this letter we know he has been in the Council the day before. Here Reventlow, skipping all formalities, writes in his own hand directly to his brother-in-law, just calling him “Sire”, no longer any “Most-Luminous Excellency”, writing in hasty, informal French. This is Reventlow’s final move, the crowning of his half-year campaign to frame Dippel. Now, he fears the case will be only slowly processed by the Council and brusquely admonishes his brother-in-law to give the relevant instructions to the Council at great speed before the next mail delivery, so that he himself can execute Dippel’s extradition from Altona. These September 1719 letters show how Reventlow proved finally able to organize, at the top of the Danish power hierarchy in Copenhagen and even short-circuiting the King, Dippel’s final destiny in minutest detail. Dictator for a day.

Two days later, Reventlow’s final personal letter in the case files goes to his brother-in-arms, foreign minister Sehested, in French (III.12). New issues here include the scary possibility that some of Dippel’s *comrades* might continue the defamations of Reventlow after the principle of “calumniare audacter semper aliquid haret”, that you should be cheeky in accusations, for something will always stick – which is also why Reventlow insists again that when archiving the papers of the case it should be explicitly marked by the Council that all accusations against himself are wrong. We can see from the very existence of the file collection on which this book is built that this was one demand in which he did not succeed, nor to have all case files delivered to himself. They remained in the German Chancellery which is why they are now in the State Archives. The most spectacular new idea, however, is that Dippel should, during his transport from Altona to Bornholm, not only be strictly guarded but also be kept in chains on both arms and legs. The argument for this is to avoid escape and further defamations on his part; it is not difficult also to see it as a sort of extra humiliation, icing on the cake for the vengeful Reventlow discovering that while in Copenhagen he has been able to play the authorities as his own instrument.

So, yielding to Reventlow’s relentless machinations in the capital, the King sends his final letter to the Commission on 16 September (V.11), detailing punishment instructions and ordering the Commission to communicate them to Dippel in person. Unfortunately, it is but a draft, and the final letter is not among the case files. But this is the official declaration of punishments, then, in four points:

- 1) Dippel shall lose his title of Chancellery Councilor.
- 2) His writings shall be burned by the executioner in Altona in his own presence.
- 3) The case files shall be submitted to the Chancellery.
- 4) Dippel shall be banished to lifelong imprisonment on Bornholm.

The fourth point should be communicated by the Commission to the Reventlows – as if they did not already know all about it – they must ship Dippel, chained and in secure custody, to Copenhagen, from where he will be transferred to Bornholm for life. The royal decree mentions the Commission report from 26 June as the legal basis of the sentence; the Commission would be in no position to know about all the intermediate machinations of Reventlow in Copenhagen working his old-boys network, triggering the final punishment decisions. But they must have wondered what had happened, in the meantime, to their mild proposal of a four-weeks arrest sentence. There was little in their June report meriting the radical September punishment decision.

Two weeks later, the Commission's final, short reply clocked in at court, sent on 29 September (II.2). They briefly report to have complied with orders. The day before, they annulled Dippel's royal title and sent his old appointment document back to the German Chancellery by mail. They let Dippel's writings against the Reventlows be burned by the Altona executioner in Dippel's own presence. And they had appointed Chamberlain Christian Scheel – the young son of the Countess herself from the Reventlow household – to guard Dippel on the way to Copenhagen, "geschlossen und wohlverwahrlich", chained and secured, in order to be taken further to Bornholm. Already the day before, the Commission reports, Dippel was shipped out of Altona. Mission completed.

The Commission finally expresses their hope that "... We have hereby satisfied Your Royal Majesty's to Us submitted decree and will".²⁰⁵ They did an effective job. No mention of penal disagreements; it would not be the task of the Commission to argue with their royal superior, the supreme judge of the realm, and they had already gone to considerable length in ironizing royal decrees during the lengthy process.

The very last document among the case files is a laconic receipt of 14 October 14 1719 (II.3) from the Council Room at the Castle of Copenhagen, acknowledging the reception of the case files from the Commission. The receipt states that all of these acts, documents, and letters, including the original investiture document of Dippel's title, have now been burnt and discarded.²⁰⁶ So, it seems that one part of the royal punishment scheme was never fulfilled: the handing over of all such files to Count Reventlow's mercy. This would explain why there are no surviving copies of many of the documents from Dippel's side of the case, the three Memorials, his supplications, his defense, and the letters from the sealed trunks. What

²⁰⁵ "... wir Eur: Königl: Maytt an Unß ergangenen Allernädigßten Befehl und Willen in diesen Fall ein Genügen gethan".

²⁰⁶ As mentioned earlier, a draft of the document has survived from the German Chancellery; here, somebody has attempted to erase Dippel's name.

did survive as the present set of case files in the State Archives, then, would be the acts from the archives of the German Chancellery. Sehested was in charge there and did not burn them, but he also did not – as required by the final punishment – hand them over to Reventlow. Did he wish to signal to posterity how Reventlow had forced his hand?

In all cases, this was the fourth and last act of the Case against Dippel. Reventlow succeeded in putting pressure on both Sehested and the King, so that a very harsh punishment was added to the mild sentence of the Commission: that Dippel had been spreading gossip. Much points to the fact that the wet dream of the Reventlows was really seeing him strung up in a gilded gallows, but banishment for life was probably as high as he was able to reach. His last effort also staged the satisfaction ceremony he had dreamt of: the burning of Dippel's writings in Dippel's own presence as his very last appearance in Altona.

End Game with Burning Writings

For only the realm of darkness and lies is in need of violence to make valid the alleged truth – or deceit ... (Dippel 1731)²⁰⁷

The Commission had, all the way through, acted with an impressive speed. This extended to its final task, executing their part of punishment. The royal decree had been sent to them on 19 September; they would have received it three or four days later, that is, 22–23 September, and less than a week later all had been accomplished, on Thursday 28 September. The case files contain no further description of the execution of the punishment – nor of the long transportation via Copenhagen to Bornholm.

There is, however, a contemporaneous account of the event in the Altona City Hall Square (Fig. 18), related by anonymous eyewitnesses in a leading theological journal – they style themselves as “some servants of the divine word”.²⁰⁸ Here we learn that the Commission showed up in charge of Dippel; he was handsomely

²⁰⁷ *Vera demonstratio evangelica*, 1729, 52.

²⁰⁸ The reportage can be found in the first theological journal of Germany, initiated in 1701 and based in the stronghold of Lutheran orthodoxy in Wittenberg, the *Unschuldige Nachrichten von Alten und Neuen Theologischen Sachen*, the “Innocent Information about Old and New Theological Subjects”. Titled “Nachricht von denen Straffen/ welche auf Sr. Königl. Majest. zu Dennemarck allergnädigsten Befehl, and dem, unter dem Nahmen Christiani Democriti bekannten Dippelio am 28. Sept. 1719 zu Altona vollzogen worden”, it was authored under the pseudonym “Einige Diener des Göttlichen Wortes”, some servants of the divine word; Leipzig: Verlags Johann Friedrich Braun, 879–885, quoted at length by Rustmeier (1957, 112–13).

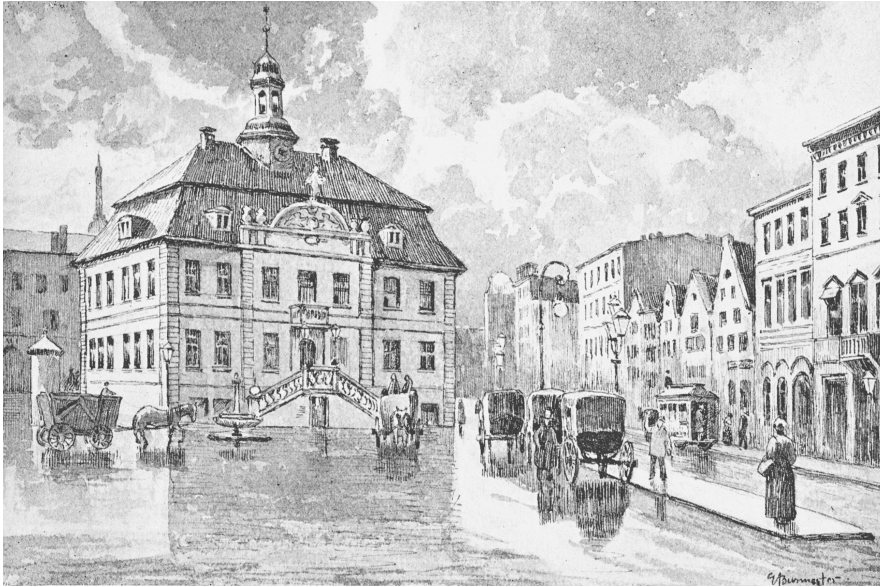


Figure 19: The construction of a new City Hall of Altona had been initiated by Reventlow's architect Claus Stallknecht in 1714, and the building was still being finished in September 1719 when the satisfaction ceremony of the Reventlows took place in the City Hall Square. It is here we should imagine the henchman constructing his pyre, threatening to punch Dippel on the mouth to keep him compliant, and throwing his writings, one by one, on the fire, attended by the city elite and a crowding mass of Altonians. The building, here depicted in a late nineteenth-century drawing, was lost during the British bombardments of 1943.

dressed in a scarlet robe during the ceremony and he behaved proudly and without fear. The first point of the ritual was that he should hand over the 1707 allotment document of his Councilor title, which he did only after many tergiversations. This took place inside the City Hall. Thus, he was stripped of his title; the document would later be burned in Copenhagen. The next point was the burning of five writings, outside on the square close to the pillory.²⁰⁹ As this was announced and the executioner undertook his preparations, Dippel remained silent; the executioner was ordered to beat him in the mouth to stop him if he took the word. Then the pyre was built and lit, Dippel's writings were thrown on the fire one by one. After the fire, when taken by the guards back into the City Hall, Dippel would shout out:

²⁰⁹ The number five here may seem a bit puzzling; Reventlow's blasphemy charge spoke about four printed works, while the libel charge included a number of brief handwritten documents. Maybe some writings were bundled into fewer items.

“Darinnen haben sie ja nunmehr ihren Willen auch gehabt” – *In there they have now also had their will!* –, obviously referring to the Heinrichs of the Altona City Council who had triggered the whole process more than two years earlier. Now, the Commission turned Dippel over to the responsibility of the young Chamberlain von Skeel. Dippel had been permitted to bring one suitcase for his clothes, but as he asked for his rapier this was refused with reference to his upcoming incarceration where no weapons would be allowed for the prisoner. Now, Skeel bade the Commission farewell and led Dippel into an antechamber where a servant would chain him, each arm to the opposing leg. Now, his proud appearance waned, he lost his face color and paled. When he was taken out from the City Hall to the waiting two-horse wagon he would pull together his scarlet mantle, attempting to hide the chains from the onlookers.²¹⁰ In the wagon, he was guarded by an officer beside him and two soldiers with loaded guns sitting behind. This would be followed by a further wagon with Skeel and three more armed men. At 1:00 pm, the small procession left Altona in the direction of Rendsburg to the north.²¹¹

There was no prescribed structure of satisfaction rituals; it seems as if Reventlow and the Commission had been improvising on the base of the precedents mentioned by the Count. But is clear that the ceremony was not only about the extinction of offensive documents – it also marked the dishonor of Dippel as the entrance to his punishment. The noble couple regains its honor, while Dippel loses his, symbolized both by his loss of title, his forced attention to the autodafé, and his final, humiliating chaining. The reportage does not mention which authorities would be present. Most probably there would have been clergy such as Dean Fleischer, the top clerical authority of the City whom Dippel had recently ridiculed in a pamphlet which had already been burned once and now may have nourished the flames once again. The Dean would be able to appreciate the red robe which Dippel was wearing, for that was a more or less direct Bible quote: before crucifixion, the soldiers guarding Jesus dressed him up in a crown of thorns and a scarlet gown, mockingly celebrating him with the call “Hail, King of the Jews!”²¹² Maybe Dippel, with Jesus in his heart, would also have appreciated the reference.

²¹⁰ Senckenberg reports that Dippel, during his escape from Berlin, had predicted that he would one day end up in chains (Senckenberg’s diaries, vol. III, 70).

²¹¹ The King’s verdict had spoken of Lübeck as a transit city, but maybe Reventlow had become nervous with letting the procession leave the Danish realm. Dippel was most probably transported from Rendsburg via Funen and Zealand to Copenhagen, sailing from Sleswick to Funen from Aaröund to Assens (Lars N. Henningsen, personal comm.). This is also supported by the fact that he later reported how he, as a free man on his way from Copenhagen, would pass through the same locations that he had been forced through nine years earlier.

²¹² Matth. 27.27–31.

Naturally, the Reventlows would have been at the ceremony for their satisfaction, presiding over the whole process, with a surrounding crowd of curious Altonians watching the scenery. The four Heinrichs of the City Council triggering the whole affair years before may have watched the scenery from inside their City Hall.

The case files do not contain any final decree listing the writings burned there. Copies of the *Species Facti* and the Dippel letters confiscated by the spring committee would have been there, those letters in which Dippel called the Countess an “erboßtes Weib”, a wicked woman, along with *Memorials* not found among the case files, maybe with the addition of some of the letters from the two contested trunks and the sealed package finally broken open by the Commission. The worst thing, the affair with the two Portugalöser, was oral and could not be destroyed by fire. This handful of handwritten documents, however, would hardly suffice to make the ceremonial fire flare for more than seconds. So, the purifying flames would probably also have devoured copies of the published Dippel writings attacked by Reventlow for blasphemy in his letters to the Justice Councilor von Hagen in May, and most lately raged about only a few weeks earlier to the King. They were in print, and if they were for sale in Altona-Hamburg or indeed in Copenhagen where Reventlow spent his summer, copies of them may have been among the five burned objects.²¹³ Whether the authorities present would declare aloud the title of each single object thrown into the fire, we do not know.

213 In a review of the Danish version of this book, Olden-Jørgensen (2023) takes as his headline point that my claim that the burning ceremony would probably have included those Dippel publications claimed blasphemous by Reventlow cannot be maintained. He bases this criticism on the correct observation that there is no evidence of what material was burned during the ceremony. This is true, but that also holds for the unpublished libelous handwritings which Olden-Jørgensen claims would have been the only ones burned there. I still, however, find it is most probable that all or some of the published writings claimed blasphemous in Reventlow's May letters to Copenhagen were also burned in Altona in September.

Four reasons: (1) Reventlow addressed Dippel's blasphemy as late as a few weeks before, on 9 September, in the long letter to the King in which he demands that Dippel's incarceration should be for life (III.11). It is true that Reventlow's immediate demand in this letter speaks about “das alle seine gegen mich eingegebenen schandschriften in Altona öffentlich/ in seiner presentz durch d Büttel werd verbrandt worden”, that libelous writings against Reventlow should be burned – plus that all case files should be handed over to himself and the verdict be published (the latter two demands were never fulfilled, though). Later in the long letter, Reventlow would return to which “godlessnesses” Dippel is capable of publishing, picking the example of one published earlier the same year – that is, the the “Sect-Mirror”: “wan er mich auch nicht beleidiget hätte so bin doch schuldig vorzustellen, das wo dieser böse mensch jemahlen wieder in freiheit kommen solte, würde er solche gottlosigkeiten wowerhren die nicht zu erdenken wehren, ja vielleicht selbst das königs hohe persohn nicht menagiren und wovon man auch consideriren wil was er dieses letzte oster fest, in Hamburg geschrieben, als eine vorrede eines buchs secten spigel

It is an interesting fact that none of those documents, which triggered the case and the libel charge in the first place, were public. Despite Dippel's reputa-

genandt, so wird man sehen, das er sich unterstehet, selbst gegen Gott und sein geheiliges worth zu schreiben, und davon/ ein gespot und zweifel zu machen, lesen diese schrift allein, die er doch geschrieven hat, weile er den caracter vom Könige hat, meritirt und erfordert das er in einem solchem stande gesetzt werde, und nichts lästerliches mehr gegen Gott und sein worth, wie auch andern Ehrliche Leüte ausgeben zu können, Euer Exc. pardonne das ich Sie so weiltläufftig antworten mus". Dippel's blasphemies are presented as the decisive argument for his punishment for life, and I find it probable that the ceremony symbolically inaugurating that punishment would also burn those blasphemies.

(2) It would seem obvious that a public ceremony would carry more appeal to the assembled public audience if including public writings rather than private letters and secret case files only. The eye-for-an-eye tendency in jurisprudence of the time would make it probable that a public ceremony would involve the retribution for public criminal activity (thanks to Charlotte Appel for pointing out this). Reventlow had shipped the four alleged blasphemies to the Council in Copenhagen, required copies to be shipped to the Commission in Glückstadt, and addressed them in several letters. Reventlow himself was ultimate responsible for the event and he would have the final decision of what was burned there.

(3) The report on the event, already quoted, by theologians in the audience, interprets the case as the divine revenge, long overdue, against a blasphemer and a mocker against the Evangelical Church, and they frame their report by quoting Solomon's biblical advice against blasphemers (German "Spötter"). Their only, indirect, reference to Reventlow in the long piece is that those who were Dippel's protectors were forced to bring him to punishment because he also offended them. They remark that the writings burned must no doubt have been "sehr injurieux" (883); this would apply to their offense of God, humans, or both. They conclude their report of the whole ceremony saying "Und das ist der Ausgang, welchen es mit diesem Spötter für der Welt genommen" (885), that is, the outcome that it took with this blasphemer for the world. How would these observers get such a religious impression from watching the ceremony? Did the authorities there explicitly announce the title or character of each piece of writing as it was thrown into the fire? In that case, the reporters' theological interpretation of the event might indicate the burning of material announced to be blasphemous.

(4) The severity of the penalty. The Commission's mild punishment proposal as well as the general level of punishment of libel lie far from the actual decision by the State Council and the King, under pressure from Reventlow and his blasphemy argument. We saw that Reventlow referred to Dippel's published "godlessnesses" as his central argument for extending Dippel's banishment to life; Rustmeier (1957) remarks that Reventlow, in doing so, cleverly played on Dippel's infamous international reputation as a blasphemer, thereby making a much more severe punishment possible.

Intermediary possibilities comprise that *some* and not all of the four blasphemous publications were included in the burning ceremony. A particular candidate would be the *Secten-Spiegel*: this piece, with which Reventlow dwells in the quote above, was not only repeatedly deemed blasphemous by the Count, but also contained an anonymized attack on the Reventlows themselves; it had been published recently in nearby Hamburg and would thus have been for sale in the area – all of this indicating that this publication, in particular, would be among those Reventlow would wish to see burned. So, regarding this publication in particular, I consider it very probable that it was in-

tion – and practice – as a vile pamphleteer, he never went public with his misgivings about Altona jurisprudence nor of the Reventlows. The hearsay libel for which he was sentenced took place in two kinds of non-public writings. One was official documents, such as Dippel's original letter to the King in December 1717 against the City Council, his and Bandau's judicial complaint earlier that year, or his later royal supplications in the case, no longer extant. They were supplemented by private letters and never-sent supplications, such as his pleas to Hirschfeldt and Holstein for help, including further attacks on the Reventlows. Of these, the former would have been the most toxic, for they spread those rumors in top government circles, at the time probably not much less serious than published writings. Some of them are interesting for the additional reason that they show that once a case is up and running, documents submitted by an accused party commenting upon the case may very easily become part of the very crime they are discussing. Dippel's correct claim that the improvised spring 1719 committee prosecution did not live up to elementary judicial standards of the time was immediately added to the stock of libel for which he was arrested – a condition deserving the misused adjective "Kafkaesque".²¹⁴ The latter kind is interesting for another reason: at the time, private letters were not private in the sense that claims made there would be inconsequential. There was, strictly speaking, no proper private sphere.²¹⁵ Individuals were not citizens with privacy granted by certain rights but rather absolutist subjects, and it was in the immediate, legitimate interest of authorities how their subjects behaved and spoke, also in private letters and conversations. So, Dippel's case was basically a hearsay libel case

cluded in the ceremony. An additional candidate might be Dippel's pamphlet against Dean Fleischer in which he ridiculed not only the cleric but also those civil servants instrumental in kidnapping children for forced baptism – that is officials from Reventlow's city administration. Reventlow may have been uncomfortable with these attacks on the city administration which he spearheaded, and that pamphlet had already been burned in public once, in September 1718.

In any case, it remains true there is no definitive evidence of what was burned at the town square of Altona in Dippel's presence 28 September 1719. All in all, I remain convinced it is probable that the autodafé also involved published writings by Dippel, deemed blasphemous by his opponent, the practical responsible of the ceremony.

214 It would take a long time before this condition changed in the Danish realm; in the Michael Brabrand cases of the 1790s, analyzed in depth by Langen (2012), the main reason for Brabrand's final banishment was claims made in legal documents in which he protested his initial arrest.

215 The development of a private sphere in Altona, cf. Jakobsen (2022) and Ljungberg and Jakobsen (2023).

which only later grew into a blasphemy case involving published writings, also in order to increase punishment.²¹⁶

The bonfire had two different purposes apart from Reventlow's satisfaction and Dippel's dishonor. As to the non-public handwritings, the purpose was simply: to extinguish them. The Reventlows were focused upon removing every single trace of Dippel's incriminating claims about them, and the result is that most of them have not survived. As for published writings, the purpose would be different. Such burnings would sometimes be accompanied by seizing and destruction of remaining stocks of copies, as well as prohibition against owning or selling the books. Reventlow, however, was unable to take such steps, as none of the writings had appeared within Danish jurisdiction. But even given such attempts at containing the circulation of publications, it was clear that it was impossible to trace every single copy of a printed piece or book and remove it from the surface of the earth. The burning of publications, then, rather had a representative, symbolic character: one or a few copies of a book would be burned, symbolizing and communicating the intention of criminalizing and fighting the thoughts and claims appearing in them, warning others from reading, owning, or publishing those books or similar stuff.

How was the punishment conceived of at the time? The innocent reporters in the "Unschuldige Nachrichten" made their reportage the content of a sandwich of religious condemnation both first and last in their article. The Lutheran observers conceive of the whole case as the righteous revenge by God on a "Spötter", a blasphemer, and even ascribes to Dippel a particularly "high rank" among such offenders, because he attacks not only single clerics or religious teachers but the whole of the evangelical church as an institution, its constitution, its cherished dogma, and its means of grace. But now, God's punishment has finally caught up with him. After the description of events on the square, the report concludes with a dire warning to fellow detractors of religion, expressing the hope that Dippel, after a suitable period of atonement, will turn to publishing retractions instead, embrace the evangelical faith, and become a righteous church member. Libel or bribes are hardly mentioned by these observers – the whole case is interpreted

²¹⁶ Dippel much later insisted that neither the Altona nor the Stockholm case against him had anything at all to do with religious affairs (Rustmeier 1957, 113) a claim echoed by Canz (Eröff III, 750). Of course, he was correct in the sense that the Altona case developed from issues of bribery, libel, jurisprudence, and local politics. Rustmeier reasonably rejects Dippel's claim with reference to the fact that Dippel at that point, searching for a haven in Germany 10 years later in 1729, would have a strong interest in downplaying his religious radicality. Rustmeier adds the point that the blasphemy charge was necessary for a hard sentence and to communicate it more widely: Scoring a hit on the libeler, you also struck the much more dangerous heretic.

as the predictable, divine retribution against a heretic. So, even if the local core of the case would have been libel, bribes, and honor, its larger, metaphysical meaning and international, public echo was religious. An infamous heretic and blasphemer met his long-awaited divine revenge.

But what *were* the claims of those offensive writings which may have made Dippel's fall so much dramatic?

A Mirror Separating the Sheep from the Goats

One was the title copper of Dippel's 1706 *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde* – A Shepherd and a Flock (Fig. 20). Reventlow had provided a small image analysis in his 2 May letter: "... from which it can be seen how he, in the copper, imagines the Holy Supper". The scene, however, is not a version of the Eucharist, nor indeed of a meal. It shows two figures watching themselves in a mirror under the protection of the Trinitarian symbol of the triangle with God's all-seeing eye. This divine mirror shows them for what they are. The crowned lion to the left is busy destroying a large orb, the symbol of worldly power. The lion is one of many symbols of Christ: he is the real king to come. The person to the right, by contrast, is a representative exactly of the earthly powers of state and church: holding a small orb, a cross, and a chalice with a host – hence Reventlow's reference to the Eucharist. But these symbols of princely and clerical powers are carried by a small fool, riding a pig. Only in the eternal, divine mirror, do these characters realize who they are and who is who. Secular and sacred power institutions, for an eternal, divine gaze, are but foolish and swinish while the proper crown and power belong to those fighting these institutions. So, take a look in that mirror and you will discover who you are. You can understand why Reventlow might not have liked to see the system to whose very top he belonged portrayed in this way. His ally and brother-in-law Frederik IV – King, Duke, head of the Danish-Norwegian church – would be the local character ridiculed as the clownish pig rider of the copper and he himself was the representative of the orb in Altona.

This depiction in the copper is supplemented by four chunks of text on each side, adding further theological explanation.

At the bottom, you find a direct instruction of how to read the picture: "Es zeigt wie ers findt der Spiegel dein Gesicht/ Die Tugend sieht sich selbst du Narr erzörn dich nicht!": *It shows how the mirror finds your face/ Virtue recognizes itself, you fool, do not become angry*. Worldly powers should not become piqued when revealed for what they are while really virtuous actors will recognize themselves when checking their appearance in God's mirror. Reventlow would not have been amused by this analysis of the rage of powerful fools.



Figure 20: The title copper of Dippel's *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde* – “A Shepherd and a Herd”. The book claimed to present an infallible method to bring together all sects and religions in one truth church and faith and unite them without any syncretism, that is, without any fusion or compromise of dogma. The book was published in Hamburg in 1706, falsely indicating Amsterdam as the place of printing, under Dippel's usual pseudonym of Christianus Democritus.

On the top, a Latin saying: “Nec laudans poscit munus, nec tela furoris/ Horrescit vitrum, dum scandala dira retorqvet”, meaning roughly “He does not ask for praise, nor the weapons of fury/ The glass shakes, while mirroring terrible scandals”.²¹⁷ This directly refers to the mirror revealing outrages, while God himself remains elevated over earthly scandals: he does not require praise, nor does he exert angry revenge over his creatures. A small summary of Dippel’s theology, according to which God is love, could never be angry, and is not interested in devotion. God does not punish these scandals; he merely offers the opportunity of understanding whether you are part of them or not – for before God, good and evil cannot hide themselves, as an accompanying poem in the booklet explains.

On the left-hand side, then: “Alles was aus Gott gebohren ist überwindet die Welt und unser Glaube ist der Sieg, der die Welt überwunden hat”. *All which is born by God overcomes the world, and our faith is that very victory over the world.* In Dippel’s radical pietism, personal and pious faith is what would turn believers away from earthly pleasures and concerns in order to aim instead for the highest good.

Finally, to the right: a bible quote: “Matth XV.13 Alle pflantzen die mein himmlischer vater nicht pflantzet, die werden ausgerrüet” referring to the Day of Judgment: all plants not planted by the heavenly father will be rooted out – including, in the picture, all worldly powers, clerical or secular.

The book itself, *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde*, has the subtitle of “... or, infallible method to bring all sects and religion to the one true church and religion”.²¹⁸ So, Dippel would present an infallible way of ecumenically uniting all faiths into one true religion. This is possible only by the state giving up the idea of forcing the beliefs of subjects – an idea so prevalent in the protestant state churches Dippel was struggling against. Unity could never be reached by dictating dogma or liturgy. On the contrary, princes should refrain completely from commanding religious principles, and they should cease to prefer some of their faithful subjects over others. In brief, they should introduce freedom of faith and freedom of the press. They should be shepherds for all of their flock. Among Jews, pagans, Turks, and Christians you may find the correct, earnest rejection of earthly concerns and the turn towards the eternal. It is not at all in dogma or theology that princes should lead their subjects, but in their way of life. The book is an early, radical

²¹⁷ Olden-Jørgensen, in his 2023 review, makes some corrections of my transcriptions of the copper, for which I thank him. When he claims the first sentence means that the mirror does not ask for praise nor use weapons, however, these would be strange activities to ascribe to a mirror. I take it to refer to God, represented in the picture by the heavenly eye surveilling the scene over his mirror.

²¹⁸ “... oder Unfehlbare Methode, alle Secten und Religionen zur einigen wahren Kirch und Religion zu bringen”.

call for full freedom of belief and expression, placing Dippel in the company of contemporaneous characters like Bayle and the British Deists and, on this point, a descendant of Spinozist liberty.

The Innocent Joys of Jail

Further, Reventlow had pointed out a small four-page pamphlet from the year after, written while Dippel was jailed in Berlin in 1707, titled *Berlinische Arrest-Gedanken* – Berlin Prison Thoughts. It has its background in the infight between Dippel and the Superintendent J.F. Mayer of Greifswald in Swedish Pomerania. On his long-lasting military campaign in the East of Europe, the Swedish King Karl XII actually stood with his army in Saxony not far to the south of Berlin, and the warrior King received Mayer in his camp outside of Leipzig. The King supported Mayer's anti-pietist campaign through many years and in 1706, the bishop published a report of his efforts in *Eines schwedischen Theologi kurzer Bericht von Pietisten* – a small report by a Swedish Theologian on pietists. Here, Mayer defended the harsh Swedish policies against pietists whom he shamed as “impostors and murderers of souls” and encouraged his congregations to fight them. In particular, he attacked the Hal-lensian pietists, Christian Thomasius, as well as Dippel – and concluded the booklet with translations of King Karl's anti-pietist decrees and letters into German. That piece gave rise to controversy and was attacked by both Francke in Halle, the radical pietist Petersen couple, and by Dippel. Francke and Dippel simultaneously seized the occasion to ambush each other in each their rebuke of Mayer.

Mayer had already earlier been attacking writings by Dippel and now Dippel went on the counterattack in his *Christiani Democriti unpartheyische Gedanken über eines sogenannten Schwed. Theologi kurzen Bericht von Pietisten, etc. Nebst einer kurzen Digression von der Brutalität und Illegalität des Religions-Zwangs* the same year – that is, “Christianus Democritus' Impartial Thoughts about a so-called Swedish Theologian's short Report on Pietists, etc., with a brief Digression on the Brutality and Illegality of Forcing Religion”. Here, he attacked the orthodox for fighting for their own belly only and for making heretics out of innocent people. This offense made the local Swedish representative in Berlin furious, and he reported it to King Karl XII who took his time between battles to approach the Prussian King Friedrich with a demand that he subject Dippel to the most severe punishment. So, Dippel was jailed in the Hausvogtei, an old tower close to the Berlin Castle, in February 1707, and his pamphlet against Mayer was confiscated, subjected to theological scrutiny, and burned in public, just like his bookprinter was fined with 500 Thaler. Dippel's steady supporter in government, Count Wittgenstein, quickly offered a caution of 2,000 Thaler to set him free. By the arrest,

however, Dippel's private papers had been seized, and among them was a letter in Latin, never sent, from 1705 and addressed to exactly Karl XII. Here, Dippel offered his services as an alchemist to the Swedish King, accompanied by very critical pronouncements about the court in Berlin as his background for preferring Swedish employment. This letter now became known, which was not fortunate in a situation when the Swedes hoped to convince the Prussians to enter the war on their side.²¹⁹ This prompted the Swedish representative to tutor the Prussian King in the dangers for state and church inherent in Dippel's teachings, and Friedrich reacted again, issuing a new arrest order. In the meantime, however, Dippel had fled the city. Berlin city commandants were chasing him, and in all public squares of Berlin it was announced, accompanied by drummers, that anyone giving support to the refugee would be liable to the same punishment as him. During his eight days in prison, however, Dippel wrote a small satirical verse, which would also function as a farewell to Berlin. His intensely alchemist period there, discovering Berlin Blue, inventing Dippel Oil, thus came to an abrupt end as he escaped through Swedish-occupied Saxony in the direction of his home turf in Hesse.

The small four-page prison pamphlet was published later in 1707. It does not count among Dippel's major efforts, but Reventlow may have been alarmed by its title that Dippel, now again under arrest in Altona, might continue attacking his arresters in public. Ten ten-line verses, in a strong bisyllabic meter with end-rhyme, the song begins by ironically invoking foolishness itself and its idols to spare no effort in order to chase away a true believer, small and sick as he is – Dippel himself. Next, it calls upon atheists, those wanting most of all to live like animals, to consider whether their fraud does not help to chain innocent believers – like himself. Dippel seems to have experienced the atheist allegation being used against himself but now returning the charge with the hope that atheists will be convinced by the “hot glow of the cross”, as he says. Finally, he invokes authorities, ruling without law and justice, suppressing the righteous and giving in to rude utilitarianism: “For State reason asks not for right/ It has but one rule only, slight:/ **Allowed is what is useful**” – the last line in larger typescript.²²⁰ Authorities, of course, would be the complex of absolutist princes with their orthodox state churches. Now, after ironically addressing these three evil forces, foolishness, atheists, and lawless authorities, he turns to warning them: There is an avenger coming, and he will bring the three of them and their sins to justice in a dark night of misfortune. And even already before that, in their crazy rage, their

²¹⁹ These details about Dippel's escape from Berlin have been charted by Kraft (2019) who has the most thorough account of this phase of Dippel's life (83–90).

²²⁰ “Dann Staats-Vernunft fragt nicht was Recht/ Sie braucht nur eine Regel schlecht:/ Es ist Erlaubt was nützet.”

intentions will fail like the blind sinners of Sodoma. You better leave in peace your critics, you better listen to this song – for this avenger may want to govern your state in a quite different way. So, Dippel is envisioning a political revolution of the state. If a free spirit is not guided by any god he will be free like the three of you to ridicule, to wallow in gluttony and in ladies' dresses – but even such things are also in the hands of God. Dippel is really, in this poem, *identifying* the three powers ironically invoked: the foolish atheists are really those in power, indolently languishing in luxury. But you three should know that he whom you suppress, feels a much greater joy suffering, chained in the dungeon, than he would feel with a thousand years of your pleasures. For you have no access to the flood of mercy and the kiss of Sophie – that is, wisdom. The final verse turns into a veritable string of threats: all your strivings are in vain and even your whores cannot conquer innocence. The time has already been decided when this Babylonian strife will reach its turning point – then it will be you who are subjected to taunt and ridicule: actually, you're already half destroyed.

No names are given in this attack, but it is evident it would read as a rebuke to King Friedrich who had given in to the Swedish demands to arrest Dippel. His incarceration is interpreted in the pietist scheme of the Day of Judgment to be imminent, arriving anytime soon. Ironically, this breathless expectation is also what seems to have granted this song a longer life as a sort of radical pietist psalm. We find it, e.g., in the fifth volume of a large pietist songbook in 1744.²²¹ Those radical pietists must have been singing with all their hearts. Thirteen years later, however, no pietist hymns would be heard at the Altona ceremony where Dippel's writings vanished in the fire.

You Cannot Order the Moon to Shine

The last two of the writings submitted by Reventlow to political and theological scrutiny in Copenhagen, however, were pretty recent Altona products. Thus, they also open a window into other aspects of Dippel's preoccupations during the period of the case. The first is the small pamphlet prompted by the local event mentioned above: Dean Fleischer's forced infant baptism of sectarian babies in the

²²¹ *Geistlicher Würtz-, Kräuter- und Blumen-Garten oder Universal-Gesangbuch Des Geistlichen Würtz-, Kräuter- und Blumen-Gartens oder Universal -Gesangbuchs erster Theil: bestehend in e. Ausw. von 1000 sowohl alten als neuen geistl. Liebl. Liedern*, Homburg 1744: Helweg. Dippel's most famous hymn, however, remains the penitential psalm, "O Jesu, sieh darein und hilf mir Armen siegen" – O Jesus, look inside and help poor me to victory –, which would appear in German hymnals far into the nineteenth century.

central Trinity Church of Altona in August 1718 – giving a bit less rosy impression of the famed religious toleration of Altona. The enormous title page of the seven-page pamphlet gives a compact summary of its mission:

Congratulatory Call To the Worthy and Devout Court Servants of the City of Altona/ After They Recently/ in the Elapsed Excessively Warm Dog-Days of this 1718th year/ by the Present Holy Dean/ and Former Vice-Praesident of Above-Mentioned City/ Mr. Land-Reuther/ have been Ordinarily Installed to Assist in the Holy Sacraments, and have Helped to Perform the First Baptismal Act, August 16, on two Children who had been Forcibly Taken from their Parents. In Full Hope/ Also Soon To Be Admitted among the Sacrament Servants/ Distributed and Sung by the Executioner of the City Mentioned [anonymous, no printer indicated]

Actually, this summary resumes the first pages of the seven-page pamphlet, ironically presenting the executioner's singing celebration of the City Court servants for participating in abducting babies for forced baptism. The overall composition of the pamphlet really combines three genres. After this satirical intro song, another one and a half pages follow with serious theological and clerical arguments against forced baptism, in small print rich with references; and finally, another two pages conclude the pamphlet with a "Species Facti", a more journalistic reportage of how events actually unfolded.

The notion of a "Glückwünschender Zuruff" was a standard sub-genre of congratulations at the time, and in the executioner's song, in Alexandrine meter, Dippel celebrates the glorious effort of the Court servants in the event. It takes place in self-revelatory irony, as the rude introduction shows:

Here I come, your friend, to honor you exalted/
And show my goodly happiness to those/
Who grows their state and rank plus perquisites/
And squeeze the altar for their bribe themselves.²²²

The singing executioner honors, with great joy, the Court Servants for elevating their city, their rank – as well as their bribes, extorting their salary from the Church. Thus, this pamphlet would have been playing directly into Dippel's recent feud with the City Council about bribes the same summer. The pamphlet claims the Court servants were commanded to participate in the baptisms from the Vice President's office, and as the City Council functioned as first instance court, this would also be a strike back at the Council. The insult was aggravated by the fact

222 "Hie komm ich fast entzuckt/ ihr Freunde euch zu ehren/
und meine grosse Freud denen zu legen dar/
Die ihren Staat und Grad, samt Sporteln jetzt vermehren/
Und selbst den Stecken-Lohn erpressen vom Altar."

that the hymn celebrating the servants is sung by none other than the executioner who was then probably the person with the lowest status in a town. He was “dishonest” not in the sense of untruthful, but without honor. His work was seen as lowly, dirty, sinful, and despicable, if necessary, and the hangman himself a person few would like to be associated with. Dishonesty was infectious.²²³ But now – this is the satirical trick of the song – the executioner offers to the Dean his excellent services for extending forced belief even further. It is a godly office indeed! he exclaims. When you grab the kids, it could be no sin, for you force the unknowing to the salvation of their souls. I hope I shall soon join your efforts, the hangman sings, but you must extend it also to the old and dying who are in lack of baptism and supper, thereby losing their God. They too must be driven to the sheep-stall. But here, you will be in need of my help, for you cannot bind the hand and feet of heretics or break up their maw. That is the office of nobody but me and my assistant, so that they can be forced to ingest the Holy Supper for the sake of their poisoned souls. Only one thing offends the executioner: that the number forced to believe is much too small. Also, the *Schwärmer* – that is, enthusiasts, mystics – confidently await our bludgeon. So, I must become a preacher!

Dippel effectively pours scorn on the highest clerical authority of Altona, Dean Fleischer, comparing his recent efforts to the lowliest of the low, the executioner. To those who would be in need of further theological underpinnings, the executioner concludes with a Luther reference, and the whole pamphlet began with Luther quoting Matth. 10/11, claiming that the soul is beyond the control of human hands and stands under God’s reign alone. For is he not crazy who would order the Moon to shine when he wanted? That is: humans can do nothing to achieve salvation, for themselves or for others. This is doubly ironic: the Dean is the very head of the Lutheran church of Altona, Dippel is known as a leading international *Schwärmer* and detractor of Lutheranism – and now he employs Luther against the Lutherans. Long scholarly quotes from Luther serve to emphasize three theological teachings: That no one in the New Testament is bound to sacraments by God. That even the church or the priesthood could not force anyone to sacraments. And that it is but unreasonably and gross idolatry to believe that sacraments in and of themselves would contribute to salvation or make people better. So, the anti-Lutheran Dippel plays out Luther himself in the face of Lutheran orthodoxy.

From satire over theology to journalism: the “Species Facti” finally resumes what had really taken place, adding a further twist to the tale. Dean Fleischer had appeared at the home of the glassmaker Gerhard Grevenburg asking why he would not let his children be baptized. The Dean threw around foolish fantasies and in-

223 Cf. Krogh (1994) and Harrington (2013).

sults and commanded the Court servants recruited from the Vice President's office, two midwives, plus the gravedigger into Grevenburg's home in order to grab his kids by force. The eldest was a toddler of two years now, but the younger infant was only three days old and lay being breastfed by Grevenburg's wife. The intruders tried to convince her that her husband had ordered them to seize the kids – unsuccessfully. So, the children were forcibly abducted, taken up to the church and baptized, the gravedigger serving as their godfather. In the meantime, their father was kept back in the Dean's house being scolded by the Dean's sister. The eldest child suffered a horrible shock by the strange event, Dippel claims, and may – reason at that age still being weak – come to fear such ceremonies in the future, just like the mother was scared about the well-being of her children but finding no God protecting her. Two days later, on 18 August, the father was called to appear before the Consistorium – the clerical court – and when he, in the presence of the Vice President, took out his own copy of the New Testament it was quickly confiscated by the Dean – as if it would be better for him to convert without possessing the Writ, as Dippel says. Or did the Dean seize the book as his salary for baptism? The glassmaker was ordered to leave the city within four weeks if he did not return to church to receive instruction by the young pastors there. As Grevenburg was on his way home, the gravedigger came up to him and demanded a salary for serving as a godfather. What further happens, only time will tell, Dippel concludes.

Dippel's recruitment of three very different genres combines into an effective pamphlet, heaping scorn on the heads of the Court servants, the clergy, and the other participants in this strange event, adding theological argument and finally provided a factsheet. Little wonder that the Dean felt offended, nor that the pamphlet would be burned at the stake – by the real-life executioner. There are no documents among the Dippel case files pertaining to this small event, only scattered references like in Reventlow's anti-blasphemy letter in May.

The event took place by late summer 1718 while Reventlow was not in Altona, but he seems to have adopted a neutral stance in the case. Other pamphlets had appeared attacking how the newly hired vigilant Dean went against Altona privileges and liberties, and Reventlow himself sent a missive to the King in which he advised him to "... point out the limits of his office so that he will not again do anything against the city's privileges, but in this and similar cases which have to do with *jura Majestatis* and *forum Civile* [sovereign rights and civil legislation, as opposed to clerical law], in my presence as well as absence, must have my accept before he acts".²²⁴ So, the Dean received a reprimand from his secular superiors.

²²⁴ Jakubowski-Tiessen (1983, 134ff). The King followed Reventlow's advice and, supported by the Theological Faculty in Copenhagen, on 8 October he gave Reventlow the authority to summon

Simultaneously, Dippel's pamphlet was publicly burned. But still it may not be improbable that this pamphlet, appearing around September 1718, also played into the germinating estrangement between Reventlow and Dippel. After all, the Court servants ridiculed in the pamphlet came from the Vice President's office, that is, directly under the command of Reventlow himself. Now, Dippel's mocking had arrived at an office near him. Was this the point where Reventlow began to hedge his bets, considering that the City Council might be, after all, better partners in his reconstruction of city administration than his unpredictable alchemist?

A Political Theology of Altona

The final document attacked by Reventlow for blasphemy seems to have appeared around Easter in the tumultuous spring of 1719 when Reventlow and the City Council were busy waging their anti-corruption campaign and Bandau launched the two *Portugalöser*. So, it might offer a window into Dippel's considerations at the time when he would have written it, presumably during February–March 1719 (III.11). It is a considerably longer text, a 35-pages theological treatise in small typescript, appearing as the introduction to a reprint of another *Schwärmer*, the mid-seventeenth-century Berlin minister and official Lorenz Grammendorff's *Apologia* of around 60 learned pages, ripe with Bible quotes, all of it under the title *Hell-Polirte Seckten-Spiegel* – Blank-Polished Sect-Mirror. In Reventlow's May letters, this is really the Dippel text that makes him most livid, speaking about utterly offensive expressions and blasphemies presented in a godless way, pretending it is an absurdity to rely upon the efforts of Christ, calling the Holy Writ the so-called Bible – Reventlow had even cared to underline the worst passages to guide critics. It was also the booklet that prompted a parodic revenge in the shape of the *Gecken-Spiegel* which Reventlow also submitted to the Council in Copenhagen.

Dippel's text is indeed a small theological treatise in and of itself rather than an intro to Grammendorff, and it would later be reprinted as such.²²⁵ He speaks a bit – “after a long silence” – like a *guru* that has, for some time, been starving his

the Dean and instruct him to avoid repeating his action. The King also ordered him to let the executioner burn several pamphlets against the Dean, among them Dippel's. Fleischer filed a protest to the King and asked for more precise information about the liberties granted for Altonians, but existing regulations remained unaltered.

²²⁵ In the *Vera demonstratio evangelica* (1729), the text was renamed and in a certain sense elevated under the ambitious title of *Christ. Democriti Grundriß zu einem Systemate Theologico* – Christianus Democritus' Foundations of a Theological System. In the 1747 version of Dippel's col-

fans. Indeed, it was quite a while ago now that he had established his theological credentials, summing up his efforts in the field in the 1,200-page big-hit volume *Eröffneter Wegen zum Frieden mit Gott und alle Creaturen* coming out in 1709 collecting all of his publications from the previous decade, a volume also testifying to a considerable readership.²²⁶ Since then, he had stayed in the Netherlands until 1714, becoming a medical doctor and publishing his dissertation in Leiden in 1711. Now, finally he is back in his home playing field. It presents a sort of easy-read version of Dippelian theology but also featuring certain novelties. That theology, however, was never just a pietist specializing on the most sacred issues, rather, Dippel's theology is the entrance gate also to his general metaphysical understanding of the world, including the political issue of how it ought to be organized and the medical issue of how its inhabitants should be nudged in the healthiest direction to inhabit that world. From the point of view of our days when theology, politics, law, and medicine appear as different and distinct academic subjects pertaining to independent social institutions, it requires some effort to understand the overall interdisciplinary view of world and humanity that Dippel is presenting.

Just like in the Berlin song, he will attack “atheist defamers” as well as “the confused Babel of childish obsessions”, that is, disbelievers and superstitious believers alike. He will show to them the firm ground which he has himself found only after much roaming around. The basic idea is that true believers become a part of the inexhaustible GOD himself by driving out all darkness from themselves, a process which is at one and the same time an issue of theology, of politics, and of medicine.

In order to understand this, some misconceptions must be cleared away, e.g., about holy writings. They are testimonies about God, indeed, but they are authored by human beings. That was the idea that had so enraged Reventlow, and it was a heretical viewpoint at a time in which the Bible, to most people, was still directly seen as God's revealed word. Holy writings have been written in order to teach others about experiences of God, not by means of speculative truths or philosophical notions but by showing the acquaintance of earlier initiates with “den Sachen selbst”, the things themselves. But to take them as canonical books and the only gateway to GOD is an error because GOD has never ceased and never will cease to live in the hearts of humans. This, not the book, constitutes the primary channel between the deity and his creatures. This fact has only become alien to

lected works, it was furthermore equipped with a detailed content overview to establish its systematic character (Eröff II, 573–97).

²²⁶ The later three-volume version of the book in 1747 was even considered a project which would save the book printer Haug from pending bankruptcy. The Pietism scholar Hans Schneider speaks about Dippel as one of the top bestsellers of the eighteenth century (cf. also Hannak 2008).

us because of the Fall, but GOD still remains the same old GOD, so we can be just as virtuous chalices of him today as were the very first believers. So, Dippel goes directly against protestantist scripturalism.

This leads Dippel to reinterpret GOD's four elementary qualities: he is *infinite* because all creatures emerge from him; he is *omniscient* because he knows his own infinite essence, and none of his creatures can be concealed to him, he is *omnipotent* because he is the highest good which is also why he could never use force or violence to communicate his intentions. The fourth of GOD's perfections is the most important to Dippel: *love*. From eternity to eternity, that is really what GOD is, so he could never become mad, vengeful, righteous, or insistent if you do not follow his will. The Holy Writ itself unfortunately has been accommodated and changed by people who falsely believe that God gives laws for his own sake, requiring obedience, that he has created humans in order for himself to be honored or feared by them as if he were some sort of great monarch. This is also why people may be deceived to obey all sorts of middlemen using masks who treat people as cows or children to be led: the clergy. Such is the blindness of the teachers of sects – among which Dippel counts the established churches of his time. Thus, it is no wonder if clever people now suck the principles of atheism directly out of such misunderstood religion itself. So, Dippel really sees atheism and Protestantism as variants of the same thing – underpinned by the belief in determinism and the lack of human free will in both of them.

All living creatures have senses and are dependent upon things outside of themselves – if not, what God created would just have been further independent Gods. Life is thus always, by its very nature, hungry and guided by desire, but our fundamental error is to believe that this desire could be satisfied in the material world only. Life and spirit are one and the same thing which is indestructible; it is rather matter which is temporary, fragile, and perishable. But people must lift their gaze from this world: “... for the enjoyment of all the pleasures of this world/ the lust of the eyes/ the lust of the flesh/ greed and arrogance/ never satisfy the hunger/ it is always *plus ultra*” – that is, a demand for more.²²⁷ The desire for this world can never be satisfied, and the more you get the more you want. In such passages, attacking the insatiable lust and pleasures of this world, its stinginess and arrogance, Dippel sounds as if speaking directly to the wealthy Reventlows. The slash signs are Dippel's own standard punctuation, instead of commas and periods, creating a rant-like text flow without clear beginnings and ends, a style that he began developing already in his early writings. GOD has created us

227 “... denn der Genuß aller Lüsten dieser Welt/ der Augen-Lust/ Fleisches-Wollust/ Geitzes und Hochmuths/ stellen seinen Hunger nimmer in Zufriedenheit/ es heisset immer *plus ultra*”.

insatiable, indeed, but we should learn to direct this desire to God himself and the eternal things.

And why is it that we do not know this? This is really because God has decided to pull a trick on us: he has temporarily drawn himself away from us during some time in order to test us, in order to reveal our own lack to us only to lead us so much firmer back to eternity. Humans are individuals with each their individual desire who must be so addressed, and this is why the Spinozist solution does not work: "... for if it was not so/ but rather just ways or modifications and theatrical imaginations of one single being/ and there was only one single active principle in nature", then creatures would be superficial shadows without real existence.²²⁸ But if you are not willing to ascribe to creation its own works and properties like its own special well-being and pain, blessed or unblessed, then there would be no drive nor freedom in creatures. If God had constructed the active principle in creation in the way which the foolish Spinoza or the stupid-clever Malebranche and the other "pre-determinants" are busy trying to prove, then he would also have spread the receptive principle of all passions and unpleasant feelings out in all of nature: creation would become a monster, composed from all sorts of joy and pain, "immer selig, immer unselig" – in one word, a GOd whom Dippel would be completely against. Indirectly, Dippel is here addressing the burning issue of Early Enlightenment, the Theodicee: how could an omniscient and benevolent God have created a world ripe with evil? Dippel's solution is twofold: humans possess free will, so they are at liberty to introduce evils of all sorts in God's creation, to the extent they strive to satisfy their needs in the material world only. Furthermore, God himself has – during the test period mentioned – partly pulled out of his own creation as a sort of shock therapy to nudge humans to choose differently. This is also why Dippel is particularly furious with determinism rejecting freedom of the will, in Luther, in Spinoza, in Malebranche, because liberty is essential to the spirit, and humans need liberty so as to be able to make a choice against sin. To an orthodox protestant onlooker, Dippel's position here would be committing the terrible heresy of "semi-Pelagianism", the idea that individuals themselves may voluntarily contribute to their own salvation, if not by deeds then by choosing their faith and work on their own spiritual transformation.

But sin is not merely a privative and negative effect of things not achieved; it has a decidedly *positive* existence which is the active seeking of joy in deceptive and unreachable things – so there would be sins even if there were no laws

228 "... denn wenn dieses nicht so wäre/ so wäre es viel vernünftiger/ mit Spinoza zu sagen/ daß die Geschöpfe kein Wesen/ sondern nur Weisen oder modificationes und theatralische Vorstellungen eines einigen Wesens wären/ und nur ein inziges Principium activum in der Natur sey".

against them.²²⁹ Good laws, by contrast, are there for the sake of medication, they work as a sort of “*consilium medicum*”, medical advice. All the major evils in the world, hunger, illness, war, poverty, fires, floods, storms, even death, are not re-venge inflicted by an angry God, rather they are benefactions instigated by God’s love in order to lead us back onto the right path, away from the world and on to something higher – tough love, as they say.

So, to Dippel, the proper punishment for sin is not at all something intended by God; on the contrary, it is already inherent in sin itself. Punishment is really nothing else but the very lack of satisfaction of the elementary drive of the life spirit, not an evil inflicted by any devil or hell. It is our basic lack which makes us fight one another like dogs, making societies into nests of miseries and punishment. This is all our own fault and we could do better.

So, God is no sovereign demanding obeisance. He brings his laws to our understanding in four ways: (1) immediately, by radiation from GOD himself to our understanding and inner sense – everybody receives this internal message, as no one can hide from GOD; (2) mediately, through the service of holy and good spirits, communicating them through ideas of understanding or in stories, figures, and pictures which humans may pick up when awake or asleep; (3) even closer, it may happen through such persons themselves obeying faith, fighting the world and its desires through “*Wercke und Worte*”, deeds and words; and (4) finally, it may take place through writings and dead examples left behind by those people who were once themselves parts of the highest good. The four message types are listed in order of decreasing efficiency, so the latter is the least effective way, functioning only if supported by the first one.

Desire for earthly things must be given up and renounced, but the problem remains that “... the road to life is so difficult/ and the decision to seek the eternal/ so weak/ even if the spirit has sufficient conviction ...”²³⁰ It is not at all easy, and fallen humans are also in our time called to order and happiness through carnal and crude laws or rules to live by, but such legislation is unable to discover and attack depravity in its very root but may only, secondarily, contain it in its fruits and its cruder outbreaks. Then, in order to attack the root cause, GOD assumed a wholly alien shape masking and transforming himself into an earthly Regent and Sovereign, appearing as a state or a republic as the highest good for a people. Dippel is not quite clear whether this is a part of God’s ploy to leave the world for a while in order to wake up believers, or whether it is a power technique of Princes

²²⁹ Here, Dippel implicitly argues against Paul’s legalist conception: “Sin Is not Imputed Where There Is No Law”, Romans 5:13.

²³⁰ “... der Weg zum Leben so schwer/ und die Resolution, das Ewige zu suchen/ so schwach/ obschon der Geist Überzeugung genug hat”.

to pretend to be deities. Probably both. In any case, in the present situation Princes rule the people only

... because they were among all other peoples the most stubborn/ most timid and most ruthless/ and thus most in need of the conduit of such a perfect sovereign; just as even to this day they may rightly be called of all the peoples in the world/ although they have been beaten and bred for so long/ the most inexperienced/ the most sordid and vicious people/ among whom the few good ones distinguish themselves.²³¹

Among these stupid people, the ruler of our time lives in darkness and governs only through primitive animal affects, promoting his laws with thunder and lightning, with revenge and punishments until the third and fourth generations. Dippel does not make explicit who are these stupidest people of all, but the implied reference is obviously contemporary Europeans succumbing to and even celebrating princely rule. This is Western self-criticism. Here, Dippel goes into a somber analysis of current court life and the exercise of princely powers with which he had, after all, some firsthand experience. In such societies, GOD no longer appears as the highest good but merely as a worldly regent. Instead of finding GOD people would find, in the space between themselves and the prince, a court which only now and then displays the prince in the dark and foggy corners of a residence palace, surrounded by a swarm of courtiers, priests, and Levites who must be paid by the people to function as house servants of the sovereign. Among them a few top figures, ministers, and Privy Councilors sometimes converse with the earthly, alien deity and communicate his will to the people, produced by prophets and priests of the temple adorning it all with mystical light and right.²³² Such a regent will also wage war against other people to extend his territory and ruin them with sword and fire. Dippel's times are painted black in this picture of contemporary European politics.

Now, which images would a people governed in this way form about their GOD? Dippel finds that such fallacious identification of God with a worldly ruler was already prompted by erroneous biblical imagery. People who read the Bible literally and form their conceptions from there err violently and are, in fact, even more stupid than people back then when they would have been more able to look through the pictures.²³³ Here, Dippel – like others among the more or less radical

231 "... weil es vor allen andern Völkern das hartnäckigste/ tummeste und boßhaftigste/ und also der Conduite eines so vollkommenen Souverainen am allermeisten benöthiget war: gleichwie es noch auf den heutigen Tag vor allen Völkern in der Welt/ ohngeachtet sie so lange geschlagen und gezüchtigt sind/ das allerungeschickteste/ sordideste und lasterhafteste Volck mit Recht kan genennet werden/ die wenige Gute under ihnen ausgesondert", P. 26 [unpag.]

232 P. 25–27 [unpag.]

233 P. 27–28 [unpag.]

pietists – really draws acutely political implications from his theology. All of the reigning princely power structure of Europe is attacked. The contemporary investment of the more or less absolutist princes with divine qualities as power grants is analyzed by Dippel as the fundamental error of the time. It has contributed to the actual confusion that not only is God somehow seen as an earthly prince, making laws for his own sake and pressing them upon his subjects with anger and violence – but, mirror-wise, real-life princes acting the same way become invested with divine qualities, effectively acting as if God's representatives in this world.

Dippel's theology and world view evinces a remarkable constancy over the years. But here, an important development is palpable as compared to the *Fatum Fatuum* of 1708 where we saw him rejecting the Spinozist idea that religion is but a fraudulent political instrument of the powerful while Dippel rather celebrated Princes and their necessary legislation with a Hobbesian argument. Now, Dippel actually takes over the idea of organized religion as deceit – not as a general theory valid for all times, but valid for Europe in its present state where God has withdrawn and the princes of the continent rule as impostors through fraudulent religion.

It is this whole construction of political theology, in its many different versions over the European map of his time, which Dippel aims to reconstruct with his doctrine of GOD's love and the denial of his anger. Dippel claims that a new, strict separation between GOD and the princes is necessary. Simultaneously, however, Dippel is not marshaling a strict two-world dualist metaphysical system locating the highest good in the beyond only; rather, he thinks this highest good may already be realized in this world, not through regents or sacraments but through pious believers and their ongoing spreading of self-denial in smaller ideal networks and grouplets able to recreate the earthly world. This reads as a call for sedition. It approaches a sort of hippie-like small-group anarchism for the awakened, and radical pietist groups of this stripe were indeed already in the process of establishing themselves in isolated safe havens like the Berleburg of Count Wittgenstein, with all the enthusiasm, passions, and intellectual fertility of such communities, but also with all of the emerging rivalry, schisms, informal power struggles, and self-established pocket dictators of sectarian social structures. Dippel himself would end up joining such communities in Berleburg 10 years later after his long Scandinavian detour.

Dippel concludes his treatise with sketches of his own Christology and interpretation of the Day of Judgment. Both differ considerably from orthodox Lutheranism. Christ is a mediator between GOD and human beings, a doctor curing us with true beatitude, he is GOD's wisdom dressed up as a human person. We shall be saved, not through good works, however, but through indispensable medicines

delivered to us by Christ. Dippel does not speak metaphorically here; he thinks that medicine and theology are truly intimately connected. So, Christ is a doctor for the soul – not at all a pretext for never-ending disputations over his nature, debates that may gradually change him into a devil by claiming his standards are so high that nobody could ever obey them, or developing eldritch theories such as the idea that he has been suffering God's wrath in our place. So, he is really a medical assistant for our spiritual change in this life, a sort of role model on the path of self-denial.

In the next life, by contrast, we will not change at all. We shall remain exactly the same persons as we have already developed and settled to become in this life, suffering from the very same deficiencies and sins, but then finally, by Judgment Day, the godless will be locked up with those whom they have been tormenting in this world. It is these very victims who now appear as their devils, making their tormentors discover the deep reason of their misery and finally force them to turn to eternal blessedness. Justice at Judgment Day will not be an affair between God and his creatures, but an internal affair between humans – Christ will be there and serve as judge but only in his capacity as a human being. Then, finally, the pack of godless will become ever more ashamed and convinced of their own misery:

... and the ungodly are to be reprimanded for their neglected duty towards him and his members, but the good are to be rewarded for their obedience which is of no use to themselves, in the exercise of love towards him and his members. And all of this to the end that the swarm of the wicked may become all the more ashamed and convinced of their misery and through the painful feeling in the fiery lake will bow all the sooner to GOD and His love, until finally all evil is dismissed by judgment and justice, death itself is swallowed up in victory, and GOD, as the supreme good, will be all in all.²³⁴

So, in the end, Dippel's Last Judgment is a sort of final, complicated spiritual purge – and all will be saved. *Restitutio omnium*. Here, Dippel would join ranks with more rosy characters among Enlightenment philosophical anthropologists of the Rousseauist rather than the Voltairean stripe: all humans really prove to be noble deep down, when all is said and done. This is a radical departure from the large protestant denominations, according to which only a tiny percentage of humans would be saved, a tenth or maybe a thousandth – this fraction has already

234 "... und den Gottlosen ihre unterlassene Pflicht gegen ihn und seine Glieder verweisen, den Guten aber ihren, ohnedem ihnen selbst nützlichen, Gehorsam, in Ausübung der Liebe gegen ihn und seine Glieder noch à part belohnen. Und dieses allein zu dem Ende, daß der Schwarm der Gottlosen desto mehr möge beschämet und ihres Elendes convinciret werden, und sich durch das schmerzhaftte Gefühl in dem feurigen Pfuhl desto eher unter Gott und seine Liebe beugen, bis endlich alles Böse durch Gericht und Gerechtigkeit abgethan, der Tod selbst in dem Sieg verschlungen, und GOTT, als das höchste Guth, alles, und dieses in allen sey" (p. 36 [unpag.]).

been beforehand determined while the large, lost majority can do nothing at all to reach salvation. Here, Dippel offers a more optimistic view.

What else will happen at Judgment Day with the resurrection of the flesh, the renovation of the world by fire, and so on, Dippel is in no position to say; only time will show, not any of our preconceived ideas, as he says. He does know, however, that Judgment Day will also cover other similar globes in the universe, a doctrine to which he will return later to prove mathematically – so he promises. Dippel generally insisted that there is life and spiritual beings of many different sorts both on the suns and planets of the universe and they also fall under the jurisdiction of Judgment Day.

So, in one grandiose movement, Dippel introduces love as God's essence, the human goal in the beyond, Christ the medical doctor and Judgment Day as a purely human court – all of it oriented towards contemporary political implications. But in the middle of this crash course on Dippelian political theology, Dippel authored a whole passage which may have made Reventlow take note. Dippel intends to give an example of the tendency that human desire makes humans behave as devils to one another when they fight like mad dogs over a bone, when they become envious and furious against one another, behave like animals to each other, making human societies but nests of misery and punishment. For this tendency of one becoming a devil to the other is only increasing. Then the example follows:

A miser/ who among all vicious monsters is the very most deplorable and cruel/ who as a person of authority/ has had the possibility to satisfy his evil desire/ and to rob many/ through beating and suppression of his underlings/ awakes through these acts wrath and revenge in all those/ whom he so offends/ If now such a raptor dies in this miserable condition of spirit/ then his desire and pleasure with his riches remains after death/ then he will always strive to keep it/ to collect and scrape together more/ and will therefore/ among the consorts of the damned look up/ grocers and Jews/ or clients/ from whom he can make some profit/ then he will discover such a madness in those/ whom he has offended/ defrauded/ robbed and oppressed/ and who in their accumulated anger and thirst for revenge against him also made themselves unfortunate/ and built their own hell/ then they will attack this great stingy devil, whom they feared in the world, quite ungraciously/ because he is now their equal/ and has no more executioner servants to his help; every one of them will demand what is his with fury and violence/ the poor servants will demand their withheld wages and the deprived food and drink/ tailor/ shoemaker/ mason/ smith/ carpenter/ merchant/ Jew/ Christian/ and all/ those whom such a type has gagged and robbed by extorted agreements or refusal of the agreed sum/ will conspire together against him/ and inflict on him all sensible insult and distress.²³⁵

235 "Zum Eksempel: ein Geitziger/ welcher unter allen lasterhaftesten Monstris das allerabscheulichste und grausamste ist/ der hier dabey Gelegenheit gehabt/ als eine Obrichkeitliche Person/ durch Concussionen und Unterdrückung der Untergebenen seine böse Begierde zu pous-

Here, you find the worst version of the Altona suppression and bribery network painted in detail, analyzed from the top down, with all the involved middlemen caught in the net. The poor servant Vincelius and the Jew merchant Caseres are elevated into general characters here. The example begins with the very pejorative oftentimes aimed at the Countess: “Geitzige”, greedy, stingy, a miser. It would not be strange if Reventlow would here find a portrait of himself and his wife as wealthy misers and suppressors. It might not only be because of Dippel’s radical dissenter theology that Reventlow reacted so allergically against exactly this recent piece of Altona writing – but also because he suddenly might have realized the political dangers in Dippelianism that he had not seen before. I do not mean to imply that such political developments were novel to the Altona version of Dippel’s theology, but it was probably no coincidence that they figured so prominently exactly in his spring 1719 version.

Now, Dippel’s offensive handwritings and, most probably, these four toxic published writings had been burned, the Reventlows receiving their satisfaction in the final scene involving all of the three main protagonists. Whether the Reventlows actually felt satisfied and cleansed when the wagon with chained alchemist slowly rattled northwards we do not know. We shall leave them here, in the City Hall Square of Altona, maybe adding a small speculation. Would the three meet again in Copenhagen in the spring of 1728, eight years later, after Dippel’s dark years on Bornholm and his Swedish adventure, when he was called to the Danish court for his medical assistance? In any case, he would have met the old Frederik IV in the flesh for the first time, the King who had signed his harsh punishment eight years earlier. Much points to the fact that the King hardly had any personal reservations about Dippel – maybe he had just signed the punishment decree in

siren/ und viele zu berauben/ erwecket durch dieses Verfahren in allen denen/ so er beleidiget/ Grimm und Rache; stirbt nu ein solcher Raub-Vogel in solchem elenden Zustand seines Geistes/ so bleiben doch nach dem Tode seine Begierde und sein Vergnügen bey seinem Schatz/ er wird immer denselben noch bewahren/ mehr schachern und zusammen scharren wollen/ und deswegen& unter dem Consortio der Verdammten/ Krämer und Juden/ oder Clienten auffsuchen/ an welchen er einigen Profit könne machen/ kommen ihm dann in solcher Raserey die vors Gesicht/ so er beleidiget/ betrogen/ beraubt und geschunden/ und die in ihrem gefaßten Zorn und Rachgier gegen ihn ebenfalls sich unselig gemacht/ und ihre Hölle gebauet/ so werden sie den in der Welt gefürchteten grossen Geitz-Teufel gar ungnädig anfallen/ wein er nunmehr ihnen gleich ist/ und keine Henckers-Knechte mehr zu seinen Gehülffen hat; ein jeder wird das Seine mit Schelten und Ungestüm fordern(das arme Gesinde den vorenthaltenen Lohn und das entzogene gebührende Essen und Trincken/ Schneider/ Schuster/ Mäurer/ Schmidt/ Zimmermann/ Kramer/ Jude/ Christ/ und alle/ die ein solcher durch extorquirte Accorde, oder Weigerung der veraccordirten Summa beknebelt und beraubt hat/ werden zusammen gegen ihn conspiriren/ und demselben allen ersinnlichen Schimpf und Plage widerum anthun” (P. 21 [unpag.]).

order to stop the unending stream of demands from his unruly brother-in-law. The development of Dippel's stay on Bornholm may seem to indicate that.

The process had now taken Dippel through a dramatic series of phases in his five-year Altona sojourn. Solicited there as a renowned chemist, arriving as a dissenter refugee, soon rising to the role of royal pietist spiritual advisor, proceeding into reconstruction of Altona city rule, assuming the role of legal consultant, catapulted into a court case, jailed and convicted as a libeler, and now finally sentenced, chained and banished as a blasphemer. He would now really need what he had told the Prussian King in 1707: how much he enjoyed chains and prison on the base of a good conscience.

III Dippel on New Adventures

Prisoner for Life on Bornholm

Dippel was now transported in a wagon to Rendsburg and from there presumably over Funen and Zealand to Copenhagen. Then, it was common to cross the Little Belt from Aarö Sund in Sleswick to Assens on Funen. From Copenhagen, the prisoner transport left for Bornholm but was hit by a storm when the frigate pulled out of the Sound and came out in the rippled waves of the Baltic Sea. The ship was close to capsizing, and Dippel naturally hoped that a Swedish man-of-war would appear to seize the wrecked vessel and set him free, but unfortunately the wreck finally reached Bornholm's main town of Rønne despite many hindrances.²³⁶

Dippel was placed on the fifth story of the central Mantel Tower of the ruinous castle complex Hammershus, now used as a prison for certain difficult prisoners (Fig. 21). Conditions there were initially pretty harsh. His cell, according to Count August, was seven feet, without windows and with no other light than what might seep in from above. He was denied pen and paper as well as visitors. Still, he seems to have accepted his new destiny with a strangely calm, even gay mindset. It is reported how he was “heartily delighted”²³⁷ with his fate, and as time went by, he became known on the island for his peace of mind and his helpfulness.

Gradually, the severe conditions were loosened to a “noble arrest”, particularly after Commandant Ambtschoff was dismissed in 1722–23, because Dippel's fellow inmate War Councilor Möller managed to escape. Möller is believed to have urged Dippel to join him on the run – which he rejected because he wished to be set free in an honorable way.²³⁸ In any case, Niels Westh now assumed the position as Commandant of the island, and he relaxed conditions for his famous prisoner, allowing him to receive visitors on the condition that the visit be monitored by two officers.²³⁹ An increasing number of guests would take advantage of this. For many years, Bornholm had had no doctor, and a growing line of sick Bornholmers now came up to Dippel who was granted the possibility to see and treat patients on the castle. Likewise, he was allowed to roam, under supervision, the environment to collect medical herbs.²⁴⁰ In the more spacious neighboring hall over the castle church, where the convicted state traitor Corfitz Ulfeldt and his spouse Leonora

²³⁶ Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 416.

²³⁷ Pagencopen in his preface to Dippel's pamphlet on archeological gold findings (1725).

²³⁸ Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 415.

²³⁹ Buchner (1858, 288).

²⁴⁰ Cf. Zahrtmann (1935, 103).



Figure 21: The vast castle complex of Hammershus on the northwestern tip of Bornholm dates to the thirteenth century under the Danish Valdemarian kings and had a contested history in the Hanseatic struggles between the Danes and the Lübeckers until the castle finally came back to the Danish crown after the Reformation. The castle deteriorated through the seventeenth century when the use of it for especially dangerous prisoners began. Dippel was incarcerated in a cell on the fifth floor of the central tower. The neighboring hall where the convicted state traitor Corfitz Ulfeldt and Leonora Christine once sat, Dippels was at some point permitted to use as a multipurpose kitchen, clinic, and primitive laboratory.

Christine had earlier sat, Dippel could now prepare meals after his own diet, produce elixirs, and receive patients from whom he could probably supply the meager handout he received from the Danish state to sustain his existence. In the very same chamber he received, at some point, permission to resume alchemist experiments, even if he was able to build a very simple oven only. Gradually, he became a local celebrity, and he presents himself as a present-day Francis of Assisi with wild birds coming to rest on his shoulders.²⁴¹ He did not lose his satirical bent, however; he claims to have painted a Danish preacher in full robe on the cell wall and

²⁴¹ Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 356.

written “black cannot be drawn better with coal”.²⁴² How Dippel continued to attract, almost as a magnet, myths and hearsay to himself, can be illustrated by the fact that he was rumored to somehow have appeared in the Swedish city of Gothenburg and spread his heresies there in a struggle against good Swedish Lutherans in the year 1722 – a rumor that was still taken seriously in the nineteenth century.²⁴³

There is also a more well-established example that Dippel would exchange personal letters with the learned in Denmark: the young historian and law scholar Andreas Hojer in Copenhagen. Hojer had referred to Dippel in his 1717 medical dissertation, rejecting the efficiency of his potable gold solution. Now, he shipped to Dippel his “Diagramma” from 1718 about marriage legislation accompanied by a handwritten apology, long before he became a professor of law and a leading member of the pietist-dominated Church Inspection College in the 1730s. We only have Dippel’s undated answer in Latin, but the letter exchange probably took place early during Dippel’s stay in Hammershus, related to the tumult and pending case against Hojer and his piece in Copenhagen around 1720. His “Diagramma” was published in Latin in Germany, a natural law investigation inspired by Christian Thomasius, and it addressed the existing legal prohibitions against incestuous marriages. In short, Hojer rejected that such legislation had any basis in the Bible or in natural law, while it might have a certain motivation in civil morality.²⁴⁴ Incestuous marriages were immoral because of their potential social effects, but they were neither ungodly nor unnatural. This gave rise to livid and furious protests from Copenhagen clergy who were shaken by Hojer’s general implication that positive law had its basis in the state rather than in religion, as well as by the particular subject in

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ The source is claimed to be the Swedish vicar Erland Lidholm, and the event is described as follows by Joh. W. Warholm in his 1871 overview of the history of the Diocese of Skara: “Lidholm was highly celebrated by Bishop Svedberg [Jesper Svedberg, the father of Swedenborg, FS], and when the famous Johan Konrad Dippel around 1722 spread his fallacies in Gothenburg, and the consistorium of the city requested that a skilled man should be sent there to give him resistance, the bishop sent Lidholm with this task, along with a writing saying, among other things: ‘here is sent, against Dippel, the most invisible man of the whole Diocese’. After several of the most intense disputations, Dippel had been completely counteracted and disproved, so that he had no more to say than offensive remarks about the large hump which Lidholm had on his back. ‘If, he said, ‘it ruptured, then even the Devil himself had been unable to resist him’. This information is based by vicar L’s own report” (Warholm 1871, 345). So, Dippel is reported to have been outmaneuvered by the learned Swede in Gothenburg and saw no other recourse than mocking his humpback. Lidholm died in 1726 before Dippel escaped from Bornholm, so it cannot be a lapse of memory from Dippel’s stay in Sweden 1726–28.

²⁴⁴ *De nuptiis propinquorum jure divino non prohibitis diagramma* – A diagram over marriage between relatives not prohibited by divine law.

which they saw marriage and with it social order as such beginning to crumble.²⁴⁵ Ludvig Holberg, a few years later a famous playwright, had recently made anonymous attacks on Hojer in response to a plagiarism charge against his historical writings, and he saw in Hojer's booklet an underlying libertinism and even encouragement to immorality. Even if Hojer's piece was not for sale in Denmark, Hojer was threatened with public book burnings and banishment and might, for that reason, have felt an affinity with Dippel, and Hojer's characterization of the attack of the theologians as "papism" has a Dippelian ring to it. Unlike Dippel, Hojer managed to weather the storm, and he sent his publication and apology to him for commentary, but we do not know what his more precise purpose with the contact may have been.

Dippel answered by way of short letter in Latin, presenting his own system of natural law which, maybe surprisingly, can be construed as a religiously based Eudaimonism, a doctrine of happiness: both moral and judicial norms and rules serve the well-being and happiness of the persons they address. Dippel's text, knotty in places, remains on a general level and does not go into Hojer's particular and controversial issue of incest.²⁴⁶ Dippel's argument bases positive law in the deeper concept of justice and this, in turn, in the happy or blessed life of the law-abiding person covered by legislation.²⁴⁷ Humans have no innate conceptions of justice, but they may receive divine revelation or be instructed by knowledgeable and experienced persons (divine and natural law, respectively). Whether humans are conceived of as social citizens, as individuals with interests, or as creatures equipped with potentially eternal life, anything that may make humans happy or blessed is the relevant natural measure. All social laws therefore are based on the principle of natural law that *Whatever you wish to be done to you, urge others to do the same* – Dippel's version of the classic "golden rule" which to him is valid for positive law and for individual morality alike: "For a healthy and peaceful mind in a healthy body is no less important than a good citizen in a peaceful republic, and the same certainly holds for happiness, desires, and vices: that he had freed himself from the yoke of his feelings, and that he was free from the suppression and tyr-

245 Cf. Jensen (2020) who also addresses Hojer's Thomasian argument for *libertas philosophandi*, the academic freedom to discussion without theological intervention as well as for the necessity of distinguishing the competences of different academic faculties, in the actual case law vs. theology. Hojer's conception of natural law, cf. also Haakonssen (2017).

246 Its knottiness may also be due to the fact that we have Dippel's text in a copy only (at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, "Personalthistorien vedkommende, Johan Ludvig Holstein", Æske 1: 1–7, D-E, 130025244363, reprinted in Rørdam 1893, 355–59). Résumé and translations are my own. As to the case around Hojer's *Diagramma*, see Jørgensen (1961) and Jensen (2020).

247 The relevant terms in Dippel's letter are "beatutido" (happiness, bliss) and "beatus" (happy, blessed).

anny from an arbitrary government” (8). Here, it is evident that Dippel’s conception of happiness or bliss cannot be derived from immediate subjective passions, which are a yoke to be thrown off; he rather thinks of the blessed condition after pietist awakening and rebirth. Dippel sees both religion and natural law as congruent in these aims which unite the Christian and the philosopher in rejecting actions against virtue on the individual level and against the public order on the social level. Dippel adds an argument against the Stoics who are ascribed the viewpoint that the good must be chosen for its own sake – this is not the case, for the good itself is based, in turn, in the capacity of that good to lead to bliss, conceived of from a civil as well as a Christian viewpoint. Laws not aiming for this purpose, by contrast, are unjust, and regents introducing them fail their obligations. Dippel does not define more precisely happiness or bliss, but it may be noted that Dippel, also on this point, approaches central discussions of the Enlightenment where the preferences, experiences, and happinesses of individuals are taken more seriously than in the main Christian tradition, as sources of moral value. Dippel concludes: “You have here in a synopsis, the foundation for all legislation and obligation, both natural and civil, in theology as in moral philosophy and jurisprudence, and if these systems were introduced you would rest in peace from the endless bickering and petty issues tiring out the learned of our times and keeping them occupied”.²⁴⁸ Dippel adds that Hojer will also here be able to see in which the two of them may disagree. He does not make this more explicit, but it seems probable that this may regard Hojer’s distinction between natural law and religion on the one hand and civil morality on the other – where Dippel argues that both or all three of these issues have the very same blessed root. In addition to giving Dippel the opportunity

248 Dippel had earlier been discussing natural law, e.g., in his 1704 polemic against Michaëlis’ “Licht und Recht”, in which he, in the anonymous pamphlet *Unschuld und Nothwendigkeit des Rechts der Natur*, was the first to use the term “aufgeklärt” in German, “enlightened”. This takes place in his conclusive salvo, which, typically Dippelian, shoots against enlighteners both pro and contra the Bible: both of them are just launching ideologies with the aim of gaining political power, actually a variant of the Impostor hypothesis: “Finally you can ask/ what would it mean to look away from those writings that have been refuted until now/ and other such writings? Somebody would ensure me that here, a special, state maxim was hidden: namely that the enlightened and informed spirits [aufgeklärte und erleuchtete Gemüther] sought to banish natural law through the Bible/ and if this outright assault had succeeded, they would strive for similarly to banish/ the Bible/ through their enlightenment activities/ so that/ when such means were forced out of the hands of humans/ they could assume to be so much more secure to have power over them. Another, however, meant/ that/ just like such a conspiracy could not be completed/ given that the present humans are not so stupid and let themselves anaesthetize so easily/ one should not ascribe to enlightened spirits such a long-term plan/ but rather take its origin to be a weakness of understanding/ and therefore would be more to mourn/ than to fear/ which I all leave to the judgment of others.”

for giving a quick account of the compatibility of pietism and natural law, the correspondence shows that it has been known in learned circles of Copenhagen that the famous radical pietist scholar now sat imprisoned on Danish territory. Hojer would later sum up what he knew about Dippel in a three-page section of his history of Frederik IV's reign (1829, vol. II).

Maybe Hojer's abovementioned arch-opponent in Copenhagen intellectual circles, the famous author and playwright Ludvig Holberg, also referred to Dippel in a comedy, albeit indirectly. Holberg authored several pieces ridiculing superstition and in 1724 he produced a play addressing gold-makers, *Det arabiske Pulver* ("The Arabian Powder") in which the charming main character Oldfux (old fox) has an international career as a doctor, prophet, politician, gambler, astronomer, fencing teacher, and saint. Back in Copenhagen, he deceitfully sells a gold recipe to the naïve would-be alchemist Polidor, fooling him and his entourage.²⁴⁹

Holberg's comedy premiered in Copenhagen on 2 May 1724, a few months after King Frederik IV had contacted Dippel on alchemist issues. Dippel's relation to the Danish King surprisingly did not seem damaged by the fact that a Reventlow and a punishment had come between them. Dippel's resumption of laboratory work probably has a role here, and the relaxation of his arrest conditions may have happened with the King's approval, for we know that Frederik IV sent, around the turn of the year 1723–24 and via Commandant Westh, a request to Dippel in his cell, asking in a pretty detailed way for a report on the economic possibilities in gold-making – a letter that is not preserved. Dippel's answer, by contrast, from 13 February of that year, still exists (Fig. 22).²⁵⁰ The King considers an investment in the field, and Dippel meticulously answers the King's four questions one by one. (1) *How much gold may be delivered?* This cannot be determined beforehand, Dippel says, adding that he would like, in case, to deliver the gold

²⁴⁹ Werlauff (1858) lists a number of alchemists known in Copenhagen who may have been indirect targets of Holberg's piece, including Grimaldi, Maldini, and several more. About Dippel, Werlauff says: "Thus, the well-known, neither untalented nor ignorant, fanatic, and alchemist Johan Conrad Dippel would then have been in fresh memory, as he had a few years earlier, after disagreeing with his benefactor, the Chief President of Altona Count Reventlow, for whom he secretly was working to make gold [. . .] been convicted as a libeler [. . .] and transported to Hammershus on Bornholm, where he was imprisoned all to the year of 1726" (170). So, Werlauff indicates that Dippel would have been so renowned in Copenhagen at the time as to serve as an implicit reference in a comedy.

²⁵⁰ The letter is in the collections of the Royal Library in Copenhagen, "Samlinger til Bornholms Beskrivelse", 130023929059, and is reprinted in Kofod (1964) who also gives a good overview over Dippel's stay on Bornholm. The correspondence took place at the same time as the King employed the gold maker Maldini on Rosenborg Castle 1723–25; he was dismissed, however, in the spring of 1725, the year after the negotiation between Dippel and the King.

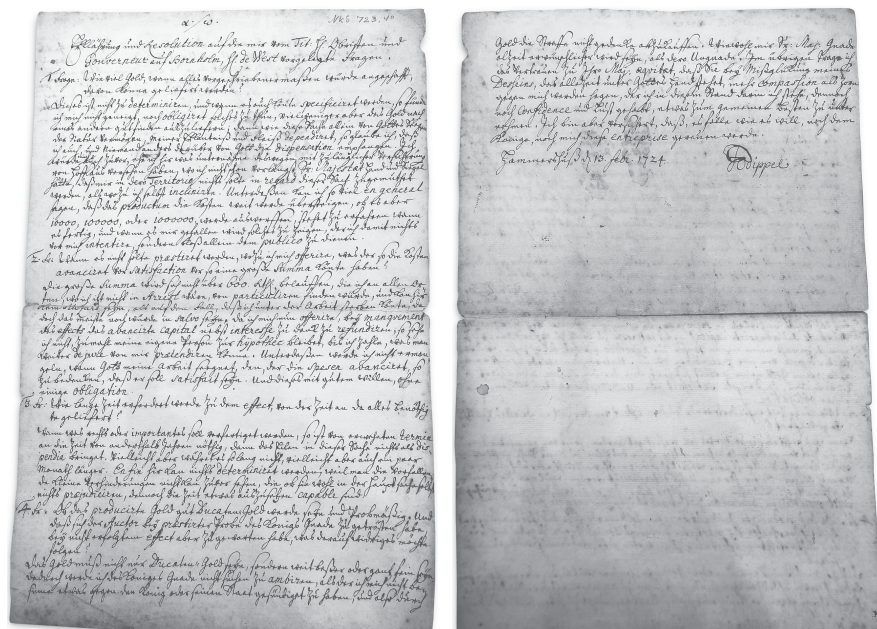


Figure 22: In 1742, Dippel meticulously answered a request from King Frederik IV about a new gold-making project. There is a businesslike tone in Dippel's letter, a sort of contract negotiation between the King and his prisoner. The letter, however, does not divulge any of Dippel's purported alchemical secrets. Experiments should be repeatable and describable in the shape of short recipes, but such procedures were kept secret and we have few preserved recipes of Dippel's and no protocols reporting his results. The system of patents was still in its infancy and Dippel did not publish his procedures – the scientific publication of the recipe for Prussian Blue in the proceedings of the Royal Society in London was not Dippel's initiative. Gold-making, in particular, was subject to extreme secrecy.

after the judgment of another person, that is, a sort of neutral assessor intermediary between the court and himself. He also wishes to have a grant in advance that the court will expect nothing more of him than what he is himself willing to accept. But in general, he estimates that profits will vastly exceed investments, whether with a factor of 10,000, 100,000, or a million he is unable to predict, but he emphasizes that he will not assume the task out of his own interest, only to serve the common good. (2) *If he should not succeed, what could he provide as security of investment?* Dippel answers that the investment needed will not much exceed 600 Rix-dollars which he would easily be able to raise if he was not under arrest, and he pledges to return investments in case of failure. But if God blesses my work, he adds a bit acidly, he will not fail to think that he who pays the expenses should be satisfied and do so with good intentions, without any obligations. (3) *How long does it require before results appear?* Dippel's judgment is

surprisingly precise: a year and a half, give or take a couple of months. But he warns against rushing, which brings nothing but disappointment in such cases. Dippel indeed had experiences with rushing and disappointing results, and he concludes this answer with a small piece of fallibilist philosophy of science: you can never predict the small obstacles that might occur in the process of research. (4) *Finally, the King wishes to know whether the resulting gold will be Ducat gold able to stand a test – and if it cannot, is Dippel willing to subject himself to the King's mercy?* The gold is even better than Ducat gold, Dippel answers. But he will not assume the task in order to improve his position in the eyes of the King, for he is not aware that he should have sinned against the King nor his state, which is why he also does not believe he can pay off his punishment with gold. Dippel concludes his answer with an appeal to trust:

The favor of His Majesty, in any case, will be more desirable for me than His disfavor. By the way, I request to have the trust of His Majesty's justice so that in case my plan fails, which is always in the hand of God, it will imply compassion rather than anger with me who, in the condition I now find myself, still have the trust and desire to undertake things for the common best; but I am certain that neither the King nor myself, whatever happens, will regret this enterprise.²⁵¹

It is an amazing document, in fact a contract negotiation between King and gold-maker. We have no corresponding document addressing mutual clarification of the golden expectations between Reventlow and Dippel 10 years earlier. We have no indication, however, that Frederik IV actually went further in these investment plans; maybe he put his money on the Italian Maldini who, at the same time, strove to produce gold at the Rosenborg Castle in Copenhagen. But the letter testifies to a not unfriendly, yet business-like relation between the King and the prisoner. It also bears witness to a certain cautiousness in Dippel who knew about the execution of his old Berlin colleague Caetano in Küstrin in 1709 because of gold-making promises to the Prussian King he was unable to keep. Dippel is anxious not to promise too much; he will not make profits for himself from the project, and he predicts there is no certainty he will succeed – he goes some way to avoid appearing as one of the more doubtful adepts circulating in the period

²⁵¹ "Wiewohl mir Sr: Maj: Gnade alzeit erwünschlicher wird seyn, als dero Ungnade. Im übrigen frage ich das vertrauen zu Ihro Maj: æqvitet, daß die bey Mißglückung meines Desseins, das alzeit unter Gottes Hand stehet, mehr compassion als Zorn gegen mich werden sagen, der ich in diesen Stand darin ich stehe, dennoch noch confidence und Lust gehabt, etwas zum gemeine Besten zu unternehmen, Ich bin aber vorsichert, daß, es falle wie es will, noch dem Konige, noch mich, diese enterprise gereuen werde".

with grandiose golden promises, from whom he oftentimes strove to distance himself.

At Hammershus Dippel also seems, to some degree, to have acquired access to local libraries or book collections; in any case, he later remembers how he learned about the works of the Danish natural philosopher and linguist Ole Borch during his sojourn on Bornholm, and how he celebrates Borch's theory of the connections between languages, just like he cherishes him as a chemist.²⁵²

Gradually, Dippel also got possibilities for writing himself even if he had to use a pencil in the absence of pen and ink, and even if he had no library with him and was cut off from ongoing debates. This gave, a bit surprisingly, rise to two early papers on Danish archeology, authored in the spring of 1725. On Bornholm, an archeological finding already at the time was a number of tiny gold figurines, cut out of thin gold sheet and then shaped with a stamp, so-called "guldgubber" – "gold men" or "gold gaffers" – each figure weighing but 0.2 gram. The German polymath and vicar Jacob von Melle from Lübeck had received 20 such figurines as a gift during a stay on the island, and he attempted, in a booklet, to interpret them as small Nordic domestic deities for kitchen and chamber use, dating from the pre-Christian era, as a sort of supplement to the Old Norse pantheon of gods. Dippel had gradually assumed the status of a local sage or authority, for Bornholmers from Rønne, led by a certain Mr. Craaz, got the permission of the Commandant to bring Dippel a copy of Melle's piece of writing for closer analysis. Dippel then authored a small counterargument. The tiny figures could not be house deities, for they are so small and light as to be blown away by the wind or stolen by mice, he argued: even a house deity must sit stably on its small podium. So, he produced an alternative hypothesis: the gold men had an Egyptian origin. He was inspired by the finding of Arab silver coins on Bornholm, and he even had the King send him a specimen of that find from the royal collection in Copenhagen for analysis. Here, Dippel could see that the coin reproduced the Saracen – that is, Muslim – confession of faith and thus must be Arab. They probably stemmed from Arabian Egypt, Dippel argued and inferred that the gold figurines could have the same origin – but dating from pre-Muslim times. In Melle's copper of his figurines (Fig. 23), Dippel thought to identify depictions of priests (nos. 1–3, 9) and priestesses for Isis and Osiris (nos. 6–8), some of them dancing in the nude or with exposed breasts (nos. 4–5, 10–15), of

252 "Borrichii reisebeschreibung, die er selbst zu s notice aufgesetzt, hat CD auf Bornholm gesehen, ist trefflich von seinen observationibus, aber nur die chymische processe so er gesehen, v. experimentirt hat er alß ein trefflicher Linguist, mit eigener hand, alle die Sprachen so er versteht ein ander gehängt, bald auß diser, bald auß jener ein wort. Borrichii buch de ortu & progressu chemiae hält CD sehr hoch", Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 394–95. The latter refers to Borch's *De ortu et progressu chemiae* (1668).

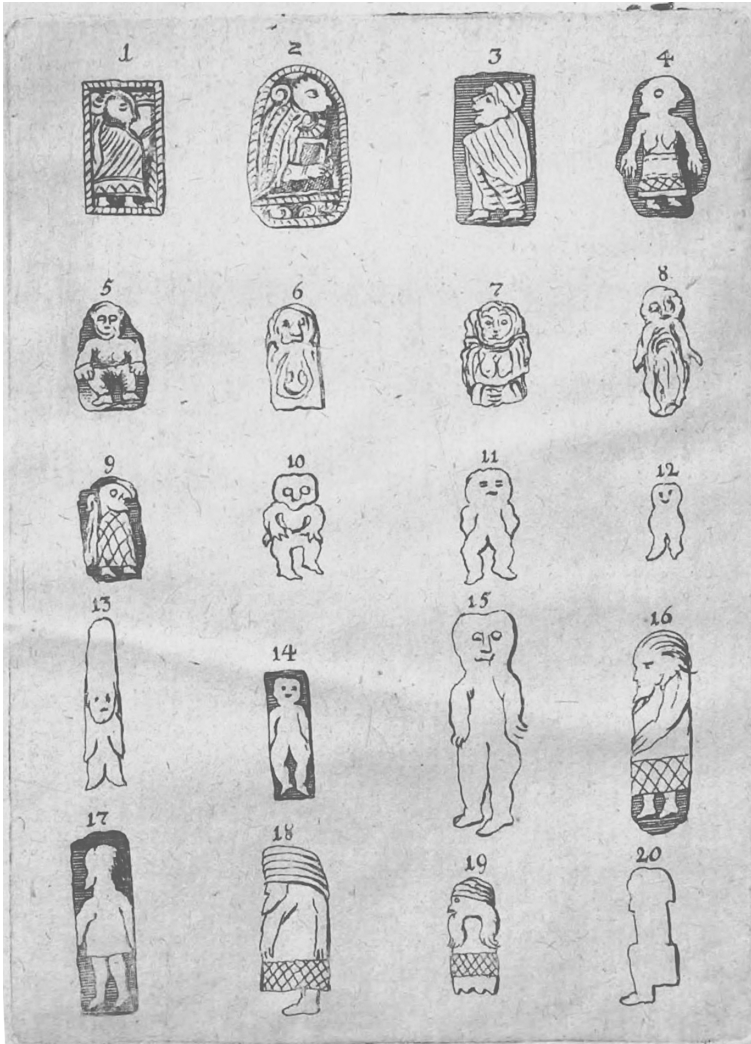


Figure 23: The Lübeck vicar Jacob von Melle had attempted to interpret the tiny Bornholmian “Guldgubber” figurines (literally “gold fellows”) as some kind of small house deities from Old Norse kitchens and homes, but Dippel opted for a more extravagant Egyptian hypothesis. Here, the selection of gold figures depicted by von Melle in his interpretation pamphlet, later reprinted by Dippel in his counterpamphlet.

Egyptian Kings and holy philosophers, even of Hermes Trismegistos himself, the inventor of alchemy and author of 30,000 books, in his three functions as a priest, philosopher-chemist and king, respectively (nos. 16–18). Dippel refers to Dutch and English researchers as well as ancient sources but excuses himself, of course, for not being able to give precise references. The gold figures have their origin after the introduction of Christianity in Egypt and its suppression of the old pagan religions whose congregations then attempted to preserve their old faith in secrecy, with these micro-figures as a sort of clandestine catechism. Dippel outlines wide-ranging theories about how the figures could have ended up on Bornholm via Viking raids to Normandy: when these Vikings were christened and went to Jerusalem as pilgrims some of them settled in Puglia and received Sicily as a fiefdom from the Pope against driving out the Saracens from the area. To achieve this, they summoned a lot of Viking brethren from Denmark and Sweden and then acquired the figurines in their battles against the Saracens of North Africa who had, in turn, intercepted them in Egypt in their fight against polytheism. Dippel seems to realize the fragility of this long-winded explanation, for he also considers a simpler alternative: there might have been a Nordic expedition of Bornholmer knights directly to Egypt where they stole the figures in Memphis; in any case, something of a heist story.

Another small text was Dippel's interpretation of the figures on the first of the two large golden horns found in Gallehus in Sleswick in 1639 (the second horn was found only in 1734), deposited in the King's art chamber. Dippel had access to inspect Ole Worm's copper reproduction of the horn.²⁵³ Of course, he found that he had something to add to Worm's interpretation of it as a war bassoon dating from the times of the ancient Danish King Frode the Peaceful, illustrated with edifying moral and political figures. To Dippel, this would be to ascribe to ancient Danes much too high an intellectual level: they had rather been the most barbaric and unruly of European peoples. To Dippel, the item was an Egyptian ceremonial horn for the presentation of drinking sacrifices, produced from alchemist gold, maybe a holy drinking horn for wealthy families. Alchemy was widely known among ancient Egyptians, Dippel argues, a skill later inherited by the emirs of Happy Arabia, only to be eradicated by the Romans. The figures of the horn Dippel interprets as hieroglyphs, in wonderful detail describing the production of the "lapis philosophorum", the philosopher's stone, step-by-step from beginning to end. Conquering Nordic knights stealing the horn would then have cut off the pointed end to make of it an impressive swilling horn for their ceremony in

253 From Worm's 1641 treatise *De aureo cornu*. The horns, found at Gallehus in Sleswick, are supposed to date from the Iron Age, around the fifth century AD.

which one knight put the horn to his mouth, and another filled it with drink from above, now the horn should be emptied without a single drop spilled.

Both gold findings had later been interred, Dippel concludes, during times of war and distress; the horn during the attack of the Holsatians against Denmark during Reformation times, and the gold gaffers during the Hanseatic wars against Denmark. This is Dippel's most probable conjecture, he concludes, but he encourages others with more knowledge to join the discussion.²⁵⁴

As Dippel had a visit in his cell by a pietist friend named Christian von Pagen-copen, he handed the visitor the two texts in April 1725, and he arranged that they were published together in Hamburg in June 1725 along with a German translation of Melle's Latin piece, his copper of the figures, as well as an introduction by von Pagen-copen himself bringing information on Dippel's prison life.²⁵⁵ Thus, Dippel came to play into an early phase of Nordic Archeology, even probably without great effect. To the same Mr. Craaz he delivered, the same year, another piece written with pencil, addressing the issue whether persons born deaf-mutes are able to reach knowledge about Christ (they can) – prompted by the existence of a local character in Rønne subject to such conditions but still able to paint beautiful paintings.²⁵⁶ Dippel probably also began speculating over issues on which he would publish in Stockholm not long after his release, such as the provocative *Der von den Nebeln des Reichs der Verwirrung gesäuberte Helle Glantz des Evangelii Jesu Christi* – “The light shining from Jesu Christi gospel, cleansed of the fogs emanating from the realm of confusion,” from July 1727. He notes, in a small piece with epigrams also published in Stockholm 1727, that it had been “produced in his Bornholmian arrest”.²⁵⁷ In the larger perspective, however, the long period Dippel spent on Ham-mershus obviously implied a weakening of his continuous stream of publications.

254 The gold figurines are now understood to be produced from Roman gold coins in a period from late Nordic iron age to early Viking age, that is, around 4–800 AD. Maybe they served as a sort of temple money or objects to be sacrificed during rituals. They are typically found in concentrated amounts where temples or holy sites are assumed to have been. The largest finding site is Sorte Muld on Bornholm, but many are also found on Funen as well as in Scania and Blekinge in the south of Sweden.

255 Dippel (1725) *Chrsitiani Democriti Eröffnete Muhtmassungen und Merckwürdige Gedancken über Herrn Jacobs von Melle [...] Commentatiunculam de simulacris Aureis &c. oder dessen kurtze Beschreibung von den Göl denen Bilderggen welche auf der/ in der Ost-See liegenden/ Insul Bornholm [...] gefunden worden [...]. Denen noch beygefüget ein Antworts-Schreiben ad Amicum Bornhol-miens. darinnen Er seine wahrscheinliche Meynung von dem in Jütland gefundenen Göl denen Horn, [...] entdeckt*, Hamburg: Piscator, reprinted in Eröff III 1747.

256 Dippel (1725, 30n); cf. <https://dibiki.ub.uni-kiel.de/viewer/fulltext/PPN1752043138/89/>.

257 “in seinem Bornholmischen Arrest verfertigt”, *Irenæi Pfaffiomastigis*, Stockholm 1727a; *Helle Glantz*, Stockholm 1727b.

Another strange event in the spring of 1725 is related in detail by Dippel himself: how Peter the Great of Russia suddenly appeared to him after his death in February. Dippel knew nothing about the death of the Czar – but suddenly, Peter was standing there on Hammershus, vividly alive. It was around spring equinox, Dippel had prepared his meal in one cell and went into the other to fetch a beer. There stood a man whom Dippel initially took for a thief, but as he got a closer look at the tall, pale figure, he recognized him as Peter the Great. All took place in the middle of the day, Dippel was fully awake and in full command of his faculties, as he himself says. Scared, he asked who he was, and Peter said: but can't you see I am Peter the Great, the greatest on earth in my time. Don't you have more respect for me than that? The Czar wore a long black coat of damask with similar shoes and a long captain's cap. The two conversed at length in Dutch, and the Czar told Dippel things about future events which he has never passed on and never will. Then he left Dippel who later inferred that the Czar must have thought much about Dippel in his moment of death and sought his help. The Czar returned to Dippel on St. John's Day, 24 June, three months later, same time and place. Now, he looked miserable in a long grey robe. He carried a globe in his hands which he threw at Dippel's feet so that it smashed into a thousand pieces – all was so realistic that Dippel later searched for the shards, with no luck. Now, the Czar prostrated at Dippel's feet weeping and complaining about his own abysmal condition, how he now as dead was subjected to those who he had himself tormented in life and who now punched his hat off his head. Dippel concludes his story with an anecdote addressing exactly Peter's cruelty: during his visit to the Netherlands a valet had stolen a brocade, and when he confessed, Peter immediately and without any ceremony cut off his head with his *hirschfänger*, his cutlass, so that his blood splashed all over those present. So, Peter's visit seems to have confirmed Dippel in his theory about life after death: here, you confront those whom you have pestered in your life: they have now become devils taking revenge. Like his disciple Swedenborg, Dippel seems to have had contacts with the dead but, in contrast to him, he did not develop it into an integrated doctrine of his theology.²⁵⁸ Nevertheless, it seems as if deceased persons, according to Dippel, possessed the

258 There are only few parallels in Dippel's life of his experience with Peter the Great. As a seven-eight years' old, he saw himself kneeling before Christ in heaven and understood that he should become a superintendent (a bishop), as he relates, with a touch of irony, in one of his last writings, *Abfertigung der absurden Prahlerey* (Eröff III, 552f, cf. also Goldschmidt 2001, 41f). In the same piece, he recounts his memory of the oracle in the courtyard in his early twenties (Eröff III, 553f, cf. also Goldschmidt 2001, 108f). The number of such mystical experiences related by Dippel is limited – unlike the older Swedenborg, who often stayed long in the world of spirits and had ongoing communications with many of them, including Dippel's spirit.

capacity of appearing in this world and of foretelling the future. Dippel adds in a parenthesis that he was only later informed that the Czar should have been an enthusiastic reader of his writings and had wished to employ him at the Russian court but had been rejected by Copenhagen. Then, Peter had sent out a fleet of twelve ships which lay ready to embark on Bornholm in order to liberate Dippel, but they had been blown back due to an adverse change in the wind.²⁵⁹

Dippel himself seems to have done nothing at all in order to bring his captivity to an end, neither supplications nor escape attempts. According to Senckenberg, he should even have said that if only he, in Altona or on Bornholm, had made an apology for having sinned against the Reventlows he would have been released immediately, but that he neither would nor could do so. The officers on duty with whom Dippel became friendly wondered why he had not just made these amends – to which Dippel had answered that in that case, he would never have had the pleasure of getting to know them.²⁶⁰ But if he himself did nothing, international forces soon went into action. Already on 8 June 1721, a certain baptist pietist named Nicolay de Traytorant or Treytorans had written to Count Wittgenstein and told him that he participated in a fundraising in Rotterdam, spearheaded by one Baron von Gulder who, with a thousand Rix-dollars, hoped to ransom Dippel or let him escape through bribery, and Traytorant alleges that he has the impression that the Count is willing to pay what still remains of the sum.²⁶¹ Even if 556 Dutch Guilders had already been collected, this initiative came to nothing; but on 16 August 1724 the Count himself took action. He wrote to none other than Reventlow: "... please do not take it badly that I make a heartily intercession for a poor sinner who has went much too far and has also sinned against Your Excellency and My Lord, the poor Dippelius sitting on Bornholm, partly because his relatives and good friends are asking me much about it, partly because

259 Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 275–76. I know of no other sources of the Czar's enthusiasm about Dippel nor his liberation attempt.

260 "Narrabat er hätte in ~~schwe~~ altona da er gefangen genommen worden, v. in bornholm nur sagen können, daß er gegen die Reventlauische Familie peccirt v. sich übereilt so er aber nicht gewollt noch gekonnt, so wäre er gleich loßgewesen, habe aber lieber extrema abwarten wollen, biß man ihn unter dem Vorgeben daß die Königin selbst vor ihn gebethen, endlich von selbst dimittirt hätte, da er vorher schon echappiren können, wie er gewollt cum aliis. Der officier so ihn in Altona bewachte, sagte, so dieses ungestraft bliebe, wisse er nicht ob ein Gott im himmel sey. CD aber war alzeit ruhig im Gemüthe v. lustig. Auf bornholm sahen es die officiers vor eine grose pertinaciam an, daß er nicht sagen wolle es [er] habe gefehlt, das aber ihm so leicht nicht war alß ihnen, v. sagte er zu ihnen, so ich das gewollt, hätte ich euch herrn alhier nicht kennen lernen", Senckenberg bd. II, 356.

261 Buchner (1858, 293). It is probably Baron von Geuder in Utrecht, with whom Dippel was in contact for many years.

I have known him for many years and hold him high which is why it would be for me an infinite pleasure if Your Excellency and My Lord, out of your high powers, would show me the great friendship and the poor arrestant the great mercy to provide for his liberation".²⁶² No answer from Reventlow is known, maybe he ignored the request or an answer may have perished.

Wittgenstein sent a reminder more than half a year later on 25 April 1725, and when Reventlow answered at last, four more months had passed. Now, he had been handed the letter directly from von Pagencopen who seems to have acted as a middleman in the attempts at freeing Dippel, and he only answered Wittgenstein on 21 August 1725. Reventlow piously professes that neither he nor his wife "... bear the slightest grudge or hatred in our hearts against the mentioned Dippelium", quite on the contrary, they have "... long since completely forgiven and excused all his unrightfully presented offenses ...". But as the Commission sentenced him to prison for life and the King most gracefully has subsequently confirmed this, Reventlow is long since completely out of the case with which he has now nothing to do. One remarks the greyish lie that lifelong imprisonment should have been the invention of the Commission. If divine providence should elicit that the prisoner with time again got freed, Reventlow continues, then he would be well satisfied with it. But for the reasons given he cannot assume the task to work for it, so much more as you can expect nothing better from Dippel's mindset than he has already shown in his infamous actions in Holland, Berlin, and elsewhere, wherever he has appeared. Reventlow will not even indirectly participate in provoking that "... other honest people will be exposed to being offended by this man who is so in love with his own perfection".²⁶³ Reventlow strives to pose as forgiving and understanding and having put 1719 far behind himself but, gradually, as he remembers the case, he indulges in one of his classic, eloquent fits of rage. So, Wittgenstein had no luck with his inquiry with his Comital colleague. But he continued with attempting to mollify the top of the Danish government with letters to "Chancellery Director Strand" (could it be Niels Slange?) and Count U.A. Holstein who was now Grand Chancellor.²⁶⁴

It must have been in the last phase of Dippel's imprisonment in the spring of 1726 that Dippel relates a visit by both Danish and English naval officers from the navies in action against Czarina Katharina I's military build-up in the Baltic Sea – they wished to liberate him, yet without success, as the Commandant had not yet received the relevant order.²⁶⁵ So, even naval officers at high sea would know

²⁶² Quoted from Buchner (1858, 294).

²⁶³ Quoted from Buchner (1858, 295–96).

²⁶⁴ Voss (1970, 56).

²⁶⁵ "Endlich da die dänische v. Englische flotte contra Russicam in der ostsee stund, besuchten ihn die officiers von beyden auf bornholm, v. verständigten ihn daß man beschlossen ihn zu di-

about Dippel and his Bornholmian fate and maybe even have heard about his pending release.

For as time went by, international pressure softened the court in Copenhagen. Von Pagencopen reports in a letter from Hamburg to Count August on 5 September 1725 that he is soon again on his way to Dippel on Bornholm and he also attempts to influence Frederik IV whom he was supposed to look up in Copenhagen with a new letter from Wittgenstein dated 23 February 1726. But before this letter reached the royal court, Frederik suddenly let Dippel go in June 1726 – after intercession by the Queen and an unnamed Prince, according to a letter from the King to Wittgenstein in July. The Queen was no lesser woman than Anna Sophie von Reventlow, the younger sister of Count Reventlow who, so Pagencopen claims, now even wished to hire Dippel as her personal doctor. So, Dippel was jailed by one Reventlow and freed by another. Maybe, he was, in a certain sense, a pawn, bounced back and forth between the two powerful siblings. The Count had never accepted that his half-sister became King Frederik's morganatic wife in 1712 after he dramatically abducted the 18-year-old beauty following a masked ball, and Reventlow had taken the side of Queen Louise against his own sister. Even if sibling relations had now softened after Anna Sophie had been properly crowned after Louise's death in 1721, it is far from unthinkable that she now wished to demonstrate her power vis-à-vis her skeptical big brother. This, of course, would not exclude that she may also have had more benign, charitable, religious, or humane intentions with the liberation of Dippel – and that the Danish government as a whole may have wished finally to put an end to this endless case, imposed on them by Reventlow and now again giving rise to international friction and a bad reputation for the court in intellectual Europe. Other sources mention the intercession of the Crown Princess, that is, the later Christian VI's consort Sophie Magdalene. The two of them were known for their even more passionate pietism than that of Frederik IV. An intercession by one party, of course, does not exclude one by the other.

In any case, the King had now become sufficiently convinced to ship the following decree to the Commandant on Hammershus:

To Oberst West, Friderichsberg, 11 June 1726.

As we, with consideration to the redemption promised by God to our dearly beloved consort, her Majt. the Queen, and to the intercession made by her Majt. to release the arrestant Dippelius sitting in Hammershus, yet so that he must leave our lands and realms and never,

mittiren, wozu aber noch nicht dem commandanten zu bornholm befehl zugefertigt worden war", Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 356.

under hard punishment, comes back, then Our most gracious will and order is hereby that the mentioned Dippelius, when he has, in writing, addressed you about it, is let loose.²⁶⁶

When Dippel departed Hammershus on 30 June 1726, he left in his cell a note with the following text: “Claudianus: Tranquil force accomplishes what violence does not. Cicero: He, who as suffering is not capable of helping himself, he is wise in vain”.²⁶⁷ If Dippel had actually been able to live after such stoic wisdom it would, without doubt, have been of help to him during his seven years of hardship on Bornholm.

Tumult in Stockholm

Now, Dippel was free to do whatever he wanted – and that was to go back to Germany. But there was no passage by ship from Bornholm.²⁶⁸ He hired a boat to Simrishamn on the east coast of Scania and from there to Ystad, from where it should be possible to board the post boat to Stralsund in Swedish Pomerania. Dippel did not succeed. He had no passport that could get him on board; on his next attempt a month later, the weather changed, and departures were canceled but luckily, as so often, a local Dippelian proved ready to help. The wealthy merchant Johan Hoffmeister from Kristianstad several times invited Dippel to stay with him, and he ended up lodging in Kristianstad in the East of Scania the whole fall of 1726. On their second trip from Ystad to Kristianstad, the two friends passed the city of Lund where Dippel did not like the old cathedral but did some browsing in a local bookstore to check if there were any good heretical writings for sale. His host Hoffmeister secured a couple of volumes after his taste.

From here, the large and eventful chain of events developed with Dippel's calling to the court in Stockholm as a doctor for the diseases of King Fredrik.

²⁶⁶ “Til Oberst West, Friderichsberg, d. 11. Juni 1726.

Som vi i Consideration til den af Gud Vores høyjtelskede kiære Gemahl hendes Mayt. Dronningen forleente forløsning og den af hendes Mayt. gjorte intercession den på Hammershus sidende Arrestant Dippelius af sin Arrest haver lösgivet, dog saaledes, at hand skal römme vore Lande og Riiger og sig ingen tiid under haard straf lader indfinde, så er hermed Vores allernaadigste Villie og Befaling, at den bemeldte Dippelius, naar hand sig derom til dig skriftlig haver reserveret på fri foed stille lader”. (Protokol over udgående Sager ved Krigskancelliet fra primo Juni Anno 1726. Sag nr. 556 (II. Juni) Rigsarkivet, København, cf. Kofod 1964, 39).

²⁶⁷ “Claudianus Peragit tranquilla potestas Quod violenta nequit. Cicero in Epist. ad Trebatium ex Eurip: Med: Qui Sibi patiens prodesse nequit, nequicquam Sapit. J.C. Dippel 7. et quod excurrit annorum captivus, Ao 1726. 30. Jun.”, quoted from Hannak 2013, 352. Dippel had changed the Cicero quotation from “He who as wise” to “He who as suffering.”

²⁶⁸ Dippel's Swedish journey is described by himself in the long intro to *Vera demonstratio evangelica* which we resume in the following.

Dippel later told Senckenberg that the King had sinned so much with wine and women that he could not be cured but would soon expire – yet he lived another 25 years.²⁶⁹ The Swedish capital at the time was in a state of pandemonium because parliament had begun as of September 1726. All the estates, all top nobility, all bishops, county chiefs, and other dignitaries gathered in the city, and the invitation to Dippel by the King became a strange ferment in the situation. The clerical estate immediately protested and demanded that the King instantly banish Dippel from the realm but was stopped, in turn, by the noble estate, which was offended by the priests acting alone and demanded that Dippel be present in the city in order to be able to respond to the priestly attack. Also, the burgher and peasant estates requested to have further information about him before they would decide their position. Dippel was continuously informed, down in Kristianstad, about how top clergy such as Jakob Benzelius presented abbreviated and distorted versions of his writings in the capital, and he decided to hibernate in Kristianstad where, as he says, he received invitations from Stockholm nobility every day – all while the local Dean, after orders from Stockholm, raged against him from the pulpit.

Over Christmas, Parliament paused, two noblemen took the trip down from Stockholm in order to persuade Dippel, and in the middle of January he finally yielded and made off toward the north. In order to confuse the Dean they initially went southward, as if on their way to Germany; only after half an hour they turned around the sleigh toward Småland and took a westerly detour over Västergötland in order to avoid assault attempts from the clerical estate. In Stockholm, Dippel was welcomed by the experienced pietist Elias von Walcker with whom he lodged and who promoted Dippel so vigorously that half of the town became anxious to meet him.²⁷⁰ He says that in order not to provoke, he refrained from preaching and only answered briefly – if in unorthodox fashion – to questions from people. Still, he is claimed to have met 500 visitors, during his first four weeks there alone, pietists, officers, politicians, and patients. Dippel himself says that he never arrived at a city so desirous for his learning and his writings were copied, translated into Swedish and sold in the streets where admirers flocked around him wherever he showed up. He tells how his room was thus “... daily full of people of all ranks and qualities who came partly out of curiosity, of love and passion, but also for personal reasons in order to consult me as a doctor ...”.²⁷¹ Even ordinary vicars began to look him up with medical pretexts, some all the way from Finland where pietism had early been introduced by Lars Ulstadius to whom Dippel himself had been refer-

²⁶⁹ Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 357.

²⁷⁰ *Vera demonstratio*, 1729, 29; cf. also Henning (1881, 28).

²⁷¹ Eröff II, 1747, 645.

ring. The old Ulstadius was long since incarcerated in Stockholm, and Dippel strove to meet him in the prison of Smedjegården.

Dippel's surprising popularity now made the top clergy react with fear and silence; the bishops refrained from persecution, only taunting him as the "Messias of the nobles" while the nobility called him "the dread of bishops" and many forces began to seek a position for him so that he could stay in town. Contemporary rumors that the King offered him the seat of Arch Bishop in Uppsala seem unrealistic, but this sudden turn of the mood of the city made Dippel pen the following observation: "So easily the judgments of humans follow the wind of the common mood, and it always follows the majority, in criticism as in praise even when, in such a mob, there are people whose reputation and authority give their judgment weight".²⁷² Dippel's fluid and ever-changing destiny had, over time, made him suspicious against popular changes of opinion even when they went with him rather than against him. Simultaneously, the good reception made him consider staying in the city; maybe he could, as a chemist, assume the vacant position as leader of the mining college – under the clerical condition that he would then cease to comment upon theological issues. The battling political factions now appealing to him, however, seem to have made him change his mind. The priesthood spread the rumor that he was really an agent in service of the Russians, and the church had not given up working for his banishment at the same time as he was the celebrity everybody wished to meet.

His brief visit became a watershed in the history of Swedish pietism (Fig. 24) – Dippel argued against the conventicle practice of the moderate pietists and their exercises in piety, their loud praying and singing, which he found was but gushing showing off and "emptied of God". You could just as well pray while you were smoking a pipe of tobacco, Dippel maintained. Pietism in Sweden now split into a moderate, state pietist and a radical Dippelian current, and soon Dippelians such as the Baltic nobleman C.M. von Strokirch and the young Sven Rosén were spreading the message further. The local preacher Erik Tollstadius had long been a convinced Dippelian and now proved able to quickly convert a growing movement of Swedish Dippelians.²⁷³ Large amounts of case files remain about the activities of the dangerous, newly awakened Swedish Dippelians and the state persecution of them for many years thereafter.²⁷⁴ The younger Swedenborg became fascinated by Dippel, and his own strange cocktail of science, rationalism,

272 *Vera demonstratio*, 1729, 35.

273 Tollstadius may even have been involved in the subsequent clandestine spreading of Dippelian alchemy in Sweden, cf. Mansikka (2007). On Tollstadius and his fate, see Ljungberg (2017).

274 There is much more to say about the effects of Dippel's dramatic 1727 stay in Stockholm; these activities are currently being investigated by Johannes Ljungberg, cf. Ljungberg (in preparation).



Figure 24: The only known portrait of Dippel as elderly is Swedish – a copper from Stockholm 1734, when memories of his tumultuous visit there in 1727 were still fresh and a strong movement of newly-awoken Dippelians was raging in the city, spearheaded by the nobleman von Strokirch and the young Sven Rosén. The issue of Dippelianism caused controversies at the Parliament sessions of 1734 and Bishop Kalsenius estimated the same year that less than a tenth of Stockholm houses were free of Dippelian contamination (Levin 1896, 253).

Here, we see the learned Dippel depicted in the library with heavy volumes and velvet curtains while he keeps the reference, with his slender hand, to a page in the book on the table. One of the volumes sitting on the shelf has the title “Weg zum Friede”, the road to peace, a short version of his large theological compilation *Eröffnete Wege zum Frieden* from 1709.

spiritualism, and his aim to found a completely new Christianity from the 1740s onwards has its first roots in Dippel’s Stockholm sojourn of 1727. Never afraid of a provocation, Dippel immediately published his new challenging booklet, the already mentioned large pamphlet about the “Shining Light of the Gospel” with 153 questions directly addressed to the top of the Swedish church in which he went

on a counterattack and declared Lutherans to be the true heretics and also not sparing the performance religion of the conservative pietists. Dippel seems gradually to have developed a sharp bullshit detector in respect of people praising themselves for morality, also among his own pietist brethren. With its brief, pointed questions, the “Shining Light” is among Dippel’s most efficacious and provocative arguments for his theology and immediately called forth livid counterarguments. It was soon copied and disseminated in Swedish and the clergy was enthusiastic, as Dippel says, for now they could say: just look here, see what we said all of the time! The radicalism of his new publication again triggered an urban swing of mood and handed the enraged orthodox Lutherans a new weapon against their opponents, the Dippelians in the nobility. At the same time, the moderate pietist Herman Schroeder launched a spectacular counterattack against Dippel – maybe also in order to curry favor with orthodox top clergy – a writing to which Dippel would give a verbose response.²⁷⁵ By the end of Parliament in August, many of the Dippelian noblemen left the city and went back to their estates for harvest, and the Lutherans managed, in the last moment, to wiggle through a decision of Parliament to banish Dippel from Stockholm. On 5 December 1727, he left the city. Half a year later, Dippel’s writings were banned, by royal decree, in Sweden, and the next year, an investigation commission was appointed to investigate and contain the spread of Dippelianism in the country.

Copenhagen Without Chains

Back in the former Danish province of Scania in the South of Sweden, Dippel spent three months hibernating with Hoffmeister and other friends. He does not seem to have been relaxing much, however. Now, he was busy spreading radical pietist and separatist ideas to Lund students such as Thomas Leopold and Johannes Stendahl. Other separatists of the area with whom he would likely be in contact include the wood bailiff Olle Normann in Andrarum and Count Frölich at the mansion of Wollsjö, a veteran from King Karl’s Russian campaign, who even seems to have been spreading Dippelian ideas in further circles and picked up gold-making from Dippel.²⁷⁶ Scanian Dippelians, however, would soon face harsh destinies. Lutheran authorities in Lund took action, Leopold and Stendahl were jailed and prosecuted already in 1728–29 and convicted to incarceration as “out of their minds”; Stendahl was finally banished from Sweden in 1741 to an unknown

²⁷⁵ Also in *Vera demonstratio*.

²⁷⁶ Senckenberg’s diaries, vol. II, 385.

fate, while Leopold remained incarcerated for 42 years until his death in the fortress of Bohus in 1771. Normann and Count Frölich were prosecuted in 1733; Normann was sent from one prison to the next and ended his days as an inmate of the Sjalö Hospital in Finland, while Count Frölich was incarcerated at the fortification of Kalmar and was finally banished from the realm in 1744.²⁷⁷ At the Parliament of 1740–41, Dippel's old friend Hoffmeister from Kristianstad filed a petition arguing for milder treatment of these Scanian Dippelians, in vain.

In March 1728, Dippel returned to Denmark via Malmö – now to a Copenhagen which he only knew from his brief transit in chains in October 1719. He had been granted a travel passport from Frederik IV, so the restriction of his release document never again to enter the country had been relaxed. He arrived in March 1728 and stayed at an inn in the city, we do not know where. We do not know much, in general, about his visit, but a letter from him exists with brief notes about his stay.²⁷⁸ It is after requests from many friends that Dippel now reports the cause of his long sojourn in the city, he says 28 June 1728, after three months in Copenhagen. His intention was really only to transit on his way back to German lands, and that was also what the King had issued a passport for, but through Mr. C. – the pietist German court priest G.J. Conradi, who was ill and made use of Dippel's remedies – he was not only kept around and given permission to sojourn but also introduced to some of the “Great” in the city, that is, influential and powerful characters who would like to make use of his services as a doctor.²⁷⁹ They encouraged him to stay longer in the city, and he was also called to court by the King and Queen, seeking

²⁷⁷ Dippel and Dippelians in Scania, cf. Levin (1896, 250f).

²⁷⁸ “Extract Schreibens von Dippelio aus Coppenhagen, den 25. Junii 1728”, *Eröff* 1747 vol. III, 630–31.

²⁷⁹ Shortly before Dippel left Copenhagen, Conradi was appointed General superintendent (Archbishop) of Sleswick-Holstein in August 1728. Unfortunately, Dippel does not list who those “Greats” were to whom Conradi introduced him. An anecdote passed on by Senckenberg mentions that the Chancellor took Dippel on a trip to Sorgenfri (“Free from Sorrows”), a summer castle to the north of the city and when they passed a beggar in his shack Dippel had said: “Here, Your Excellency is free from sorrows, but over there it stinks”. Then, the Chancellor had shed a tear (Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 365). This must refer to Dippel's old contact Count U.A. von Holstein who had, in the meantime, risen to Grand Chancellor. Among other “Greats” that he met were the competing factions at the royal court, cf. below. Among the learned, Ludvig Holberg, Christian Reitzler, Frederik Rostgaard, Hans Gram, and Caspar Bartholin may have been around. Did Dippel meet any of them? Or Andreas Hojer with whom he had corresponded on Bornholm? Anti-pietist theologians in the top of the church, such as Hans Bartholin or Morten Reenberg, he would hardly have met with, but what about pietists like Johannes Bluhme or Erik Pontoppidan? There were also the more radical pietists like Enevold Ewald, Marie Wulf, and Peter Nicolai Holst with whom it seems probable that Dippel may have consorted, but they would hardly count as “Great”. A few years later, Dippel would publish a piece by Ewald in Carl's and his journal *Fama*.

medical advice for “the young prince”.²⁸⁰ As this case went well, more and more asked him to settle in the country.²⁸¹ It must have been the first time that Dippel met King Frederik IV who had blessed him with the Chancellery Councilor title in 1707 and canceled it again in 1719 – both on the inducement of Reventlow. Now we do not hear there should be bad blood between the two of them.

According to the diary of J.C. Senckenberg, Dippel was now courted by both of the competing factions in the top of Danish politics.²⁸² One was the “Reventlowian” party around Queen Anna Sophie who did much to flatter Dippel and excuse what have happened, also publicly, in the presence of the whole court (Fig. 25). Her Chancellor U.A. Holstein took Dippel sightseeing in the vicinity. The other was the circle around the strongly pietist Crown Prince couple Christian and Sophie Magdalene who were disappointed that their fellow believer Dippel accepted invitations from the first party. They had been praying intensely for him during captivity, they had shipped him wine at Hammershus, and they would like to have him on their side in their upcoming showdown with the first party after the expected death of the aging King, after which Christian planned a purge against his stepmother, Queen Anna Sophie, to introduce a harder pietism than that of his father. Dippel, who tried to keep out of this brewing tension, rejected an invitation from the eager Crown Prince and his consort who yet succeeded to organize a visit by him via their personal doctor.

But to both of his Copenhagen benefactors and the King himself, Dippel had to honestly report what was delicate to him and stood in the way of any longer sojourn in the city, namely two things: “1) my clash with the Countess and the resulting fatality for me. For even if all has been forgiven on my side, and I wish to delete everything from memory, there would, on the other side, always remain

²⁸⁰ Could be the five-year-old Crown Prince, the later Frederik V; according to Hojer (1829, vol. II, 210), it would have been the baby prince Karl, Frederik IV and Queen Anna Sophie’s weak son born on 16 February 1728 who died the year after.

²⁸¹ Again, according to Hojer, it was a real possibility Dippel could have settled in Copenhagen. He avoided provoking the clergy, did not seek to establish a following, and if he had been willing to attach himself to Countess Reventlow or receive an office from the King, he may have been able to stay, cf. Hojer (1829, vol. II, 211).

²⁸² Senckenberg’s diaries, vol. II, 364. In the same context, he relates that Dippel had dreamt, in advance, most of the events of his life so that he typically knew what would happen next and left the remainder to God. Once he had dreamt that he was attacked by ferocious animals from all sides, and when he fled, he found himself on a lakeside. He saw there was a narrow wall under the surface on which he could not balance without danger to his life. He then heard a voice: close your eyes, in a moment you’ll be on the other side. He stopped speculating and did in fact get over – this taught him to trust in God in dark times. In the context, the dream also illustrates Dippel’s balancing between the two struggling royal parties in Copenhagen.



Figure 25: Dippel's liberator from his Bornholm captivity was the Danish Queen, Anna Sophie Reventlow – the younger sister of Count Reventlow, his nemesis in Altona. The two half-siblings had strained relations; the Count had protested when Frederik IV, in 1712, took the young beauty as his mistress. Maybe their relation had improved after the death of Queen Louise in 1721 and Anna Sophie being crowned as a proper Queen, but it is hard not to see her action also as a demonstration contrasting with her big brother's animosity against Dippel. In 1728, when meeting Dippel in Copenhagen, she even is reported to have proposed to him to stay as her personal doctor. Only two years later, however, her consort Frederik IV passed away and she was banished by her stepson King Christian VI to the Reventlow castle of Clausholm in Jutland.

an eternal jealousy, after the proverb: *Oderunt, quem læderunt* [You hate whom you hurt]. 2) The well-known enmity in the very royal house, where I would be unable to support anybody without becoming hated by the others, etc.”²⁸³ Dippel obviously had learned the hard way how the top of power in princely states was a dangerous place where every step might create new fatal enemies, and he al-

283 “... nemlich (1.) die gehabte Collision mit der Gräfin, und die daher über mich gekommene Fatalität. Dann obschon auf meiner Seiten alles vergeben, und ich wünschte selbst, alles auch aus dem Gedächtnis zu bannen, so würde doch auf der andern Seiten eine ewige Jalousie gegründet bleiben, nach dem Sprichwort: *Oderunt, quem læderunt*. (2.) Die bekannte Simultät in dem Königlichen Hause selbst, da ich keinem würde anhangen können, ohne dem andern verhaßt zu werden etc.” (Eröff III, 630–31).

ready found himself caught between the two competing parties of the Copenhagen elite. Dippel did declare that he would in fact like to settle in Copenhagen on certain conditions which he announced in a letter to the King, but as he received no answer and the King left the country the next day he thought that he would skip the plan and leave, the sooner the better. As he relates, he would have been able to earn well on his cures in Copenhagen, not only because he had presented many medicaments and produced them for the public good, but also because he, as a doctor, had freed many, great and small, from long-lasting diseases. The sick of the town, Dippel adds acidly, have consumed many pounds of Dr. Stahl's pills and powders, but as people here will rather receive than give and he himself does not like to be demanding, he does not envisage an economical adventure on the level of Stahl's. As to possible medical contacts during his visit, the Danish doctor Andreas Agerbech was Queen Anna Sophie's personal medic at Clausholm, later inspired by Stahl and Dippel.²⁸⁴

The priesthood of Copenhagen has not turned against him, he writes, as if a little surprised after his recent experiences in Stockholm: most priests here "hide behind the late Doctor Spener", that is, they are pietists, yet of a more moderate stripe. Dippel finds himself well-received in the city, theologically speaking, and he remarks that "... what I wrote in Sweden is also pretty well-known here through copies, and those who have read it don't have much against it, even among the clerics themselves – yet they think that their article about justification could have been preserved as a prerequisite" (*ibid.*). This must refer to his piece about "The Shining Light" from the year before which by that time seems to have been widely known about in Copenhagen circles.²⁸⁵ Dippel suggests that Copenhagen priests would like to entertain several ways to justification, that is, both the traditional, orthodox one with justification by faith and the Dippelian one by conversion and spiritual rebirth. But all in all, it was a rather different experience from Stockholm where Dippel had catalyzed both a surge of awakenings and burgeoning infights with an aggressive priesthood.

Copenhagen and Christiania in Norway had seen several outbursts of more or less radical pietism during the 1700s, particularly among German-speaking inhabitants. Frederik IV had supported pietist ideas about mission and, in 1704 he had founded the Danish Hallensian mission with missionaries shipped to the Danish trade stations in India, one of the first protestant mission initiatives. On the other hand, however, he was on guard against more radical pietists, separatists

²⁸⁴ Agerbech's inspiration from Dippel, cf. Dreyer (in press).

²⁸⁵ The Royal Library in Copenhagen has a handwritten copy of Dippel's 1727 booklet, omitting the printing place of Stockholm in the title page. It could be one of those Copenhagen 1728 copies to which Dippel refers (*Christianus Democritus 1727b*).

against the church and, in 1706, he had published the first regulation against “conventicles”, prohibiting lay Bible-reading meetings outside of the Church, while radically awakened, like Christoffer Eberhard and Otto Strandiger, had been banished or forced out of Copenhagen.²⁸⁶ Nothing indicates, however, that such political pressure was able to contain the presence or spreading of radical pietism in the capital. Dippel does not mention any contact with such more radical circles during his Copenhagen visit – which does not imply they may not have taken place. Now, Dippel had experience with Danish mail control and would hardly venture to write openly about such issues in a letter to be posted. Only a few years after Dippel’s visit, in the years around 1730, the younger German radical pietist Zinzendorf became a celebrated figure in the city and at court, participating in the crowning of Christian VI In 1731, until his star faded some years later. Even the stronger pietism of the young King would have to distance itself from more activist local radical pietists, like Enevold Ewald, Marie Wulf, Ole Hersleb, and Peter Nicolai Holst, against whom a commission was appointed in 1734.²⁸⁷ In 1728, when Ewald had just been appointed vicar at the Orphanage Church, causing a stir in the city with his preaching, it seems likely that Dippel would have been in contact with such germinating pietist circles of Copenhagen and maybe even contributed to their further radicalization, like he had done in Stockholm and Scania not long before. In any case, it seems like he refrained from public proselytizing in any of the two capitals. All in all, Dippel appears satisfied with his Copenhagen stay in 1728 where he enjoyed success both as a doctor and as a theologian, and atoned any tensions that might remain between the King and himself.

Did the Reventlows frequent the court during 1728 when Dippel arrived from Scania? – He does not directly mention anything of the sort, but he does say that the Countess is part of his reason not to remain in town. If the old enemies would actually bump into each other at court, it would have been some challenge to

²⁸⁶ Cf. Nielsen (1892, 129ff).

²⁸⁷ Cf. Heiberg (1905–07), Rørdam (1907–09a-b), Engelhardt (2017, 290f). When state pietists like Erik Pontoppidan attempted, in the 1730s, to dissuade Danish pietists from separatism, we know he might inquire about their influence from “the infamous Dippel’s or Democriti deviations” on justification (Rørdam 1905–07, 118). A Copenhagen anecdote, which unexpectedly unites several of the themes of this book, refers to Marie Wulf, the wife of the entrepreneur Matthias Wulf who, in 1723, assumed the task of renovating the “Grand Chancellor Mansion” in Købmagergade by Kronprinsessegade in central Copenhagen, owned by the Reventlow couple. As the work was finished after two years, the Reventlows refused to pay; Wulf went bankrupt and died a few years later – after which his widow Marie had to sue the Reventlows. As a widow, she was inspired by her son-in-law the Orphanage vicar Enevold Ewald to organize her famous, radical pietist conventicles in the house “The Golden Ox” on Gammeltorv in the 1730s, cf. Søttrup (1995, 24f).

courtly etiquette when planning the seating arrangements. Dippel left Copenhagen again in late September 1728, not long before the city was devastated by a large fire in October which once again prompted the King to assign Reventlow to the task of reconstructing a burnt-down city. This time, he would know not to hire an alchemist. Two burnt-down Danish cities thus form the bookends of Dippel's 14 dramatic years in Scandinavia, to where he would never again return.

Some years later, he would sum up his Scandinavian experience. Given his very different destinies in Denmark and Sweden, it comes as little surprise that Dippel concluded as follows: "Danes are false, Swedes more honest. They are much fighting each other. Danish historians write that the Danes do descend from the Swedes, but the latter had turned into pure villains; this is why they had left them; so against them, the Danes write that they cut off themselves from the evil Swedes. Thus, there is also hatred among historians". A special phenomenon that makes Dippel wonder about Denmark is that "All Danes now regard academic degrees as nothing, as a mockery, and [the anatomist Caspar Bartholin] had set himself up to defend them, but he had only been ridiculed when he claimed to be the only doctor in town, a species with one member only".²⁸⁸ So, hatred against the learned is seen as a Danish specialty—which Dippel might also have seen as an ingredient in his own Danish destiny.

The Holy Land of Berleburg

Now, Dippel left Denmark, passing as a free man through the same locations which he had been forced through as a captive nine years earlier, as he says – probably the towns of Zealand and Funen, down through Sleswick-Holstein. Maybe he first wanted to go to Kiel along with a Danish doctor friend in order to pursue gold-making there, financed by the friend's father-in-law, but it came to nothing.²⁸⁹ Back in Hamburg, he published his mature major work *Vera demon-*

288 "Dani sind falsch, Sueci ehrlicher. Sind einander sehr contrair. die Historici Dani Sueci schreiben, die Dani seyen zwar von Sueci herkommen, seyen aber lauter lumpen gesind gewesen so von ihnen aufgegangen, contra Dani scribunt sie haben sich von den bösen schweden abgesondert. Et sic odium quoque est in Historiographis"; "Es halten nun alle Dani nichts von den gradibus academicis, alß einer Narrheit, diser hat sich dann vor den Riß gestellt v. sie defendiren wollen aber sehr prostituirt, sagt er sey allein Doctor in Copenhagen v. eine species monadica", Senckenbergs diaries, vol. II, 414; 394–95. Dippel is also not mad about Caspar Bartholin whom he depicts as an arch-orthodox Lutheran, often seen in whorehouses, getting drunk and shaming his famous scientific family.

289 The source is the 1742 novel *Mendoza* by the Danish top state pietist Erik Pontoppidan, cf. Dreyer (in press).

stratio evangelica – the true proof of the Gospel. This volume collected his writings from Stockholm, reprinted his brief Altona theology of 1719, and introduced it all with a narrative on the strange events in Sweden; the latter probably authored in Copenhagen. The book was immediately prohibited and seized by local authorities but made quite an impact and went on to become the most widespread of his mature works. It also granted a wider circulation of his political Altona theology with its anonymized attack on the Reventlows. The book not only attracted enthusiastic followers but also called forth a swarm of criticism, to which Dippel naturally took the occasion to respond.²⁹⁰ While in the neighborhood, Dippel may have paid a last visit to Altona.²⁹¹

Now, Dippel roamed about between North Germans cities and towns like Hamburg, Lauenburg, Lüneburg, Celle, Braunschweig, and Liebenburg, but he seems to have been unable to settle anywhere. Late in 1729, he was banished from Liebenburg by the local Superintendent – Bishop – Mayenberg in Clausthal who referred to Dippel's religious banishments from Denmark and Sweden as a sort of precedent. Dippel attempted, in vain, to defend himself by saying that he only wished to continue his chemical experiments in solitude in the town, and that his earlier banishments had not been religiously motivated.

In November 1729, after a year of wandering around, Dippel finally arrived to what proved to be his last permanent dwelling place, the small County of Berleburg in the middle of Germany where Count Casimir von Wittgenstein received him with open arms and noted that the famous Dippel was a "... good, humane, learned, and well-behaved human being".²⁹² Both of the two neighboring Counties of Wittgenstein had enjoyed freedom of faith since the year 1700, and why Dippel did not chose his old alchemist comrade-in-arms and life-long sponsor Count August (Fig. 26a) twenty-some kilometers farther to the south is not clear. Dippel did spend the first months of 1730 with Count August only to return to settle in Berleburg by April. According to Senckenberg's diary, Dippel had found that Count August tormented his own children as well as his subjects,²⁹³ and he was rumored to pursue harsh policies against dissenters of his small statelet. Probably such religious reasons were important, for contrary to his Wittgenstein namesake, the pious and ascetic Count Casimir (Fig. 26b) and his mother Countess Hedwig Sophie had, since the 1700s, built a sort of sanctuary housing a luxuriant crowd of radical pietists, separatists, mystics, dissidents, and freethinkers. Here, alchemy

²⁹⁰ On the reception of *Vera demonstratio*, cf. Stoeffler (1973, 182–91).

²⁹¹ The brief portrait in the Altonian Ludolf Schmid (1747, 236) adds, after covering Dippel's banishment: "Er kam bald wieder los, und ist noch nachhero hieselbst gewesen".

²⁹² Quoted from Buchner (1858, 318).

²⁹³ Cf. Senckenberg's diary, vol. II, 349.



Figure 26: (a) and (b). It is a curious fact that Dippel cultivated strong connections with no less than two Counts from the small county of Wittgenstein. It was a remote place in the low, infertile mountains in the middle of Germany and, in 1605, it had been split between two lineages: Wittgenstein-Hohenstein in the southern half of the territory and Wittgenstein-Berleburg to the north. One Count was August, celebrating Dippel for his alchemy, and the other was Casimir, revering him for his pietism.

The first of the two to befriend Dippel was Count August who was, in the 1700s, member of the Three-Count Cabinet in Berlin – the Counts Wartenberg, Wartensleben, and Wittgenstein, going under the name of “The Three Ws”, in German also meaning “Die drei Wehen”, the three evils. Count August called Dippel to Berlin in 1704 and also participated in his escape from the city again in 1707, just like he spearheaded the attempts to free Dippel from Bornholm. When Dippel, after his Scandinavian adventures, sought a lasting refuge in Germany he chose, however, the other Wittgenstein, Count Casimir. In the meantime, Casimir had made Schloss Berleburg and his small principality a safe haven for separatists, pietists, freethinkers, and radicals of many sorts, and Dippel spent his last years in this colorful company. He did maintain contacts, however, with Count August behind the ridge to the south who kept an ambitious laboratory.

might be resumed, just like the stream of books, pamphlets, and periodicals. And here, Dippel reconnected with his old acquaintance Johann Samuel Carl of the same age who had become the personal doctor of the Count the year before – also an experienced and well-known actor in radical pietist circles. Dippel moved in with the Carls, and the two of them initiated the publication of an ambitious radical pietist periodical titled *Geistliche Fama* (Spiritual Report) which also

spread to the Philadelphian congregations in the British colony in America.²⁹⁴ Carl would go on, a few years later, to become the personal doctor of King Christian VI in Copenhagen, until his pietism became so politically radical that even the pious and stern Christian had to dismiss and banish him.²⁹⁵ Dippel, however, was not always comfortable with the conventicle pietism and celebration of piety at Berleburg which appeared to him external and artificial; it probably also did not help that the locals took offense to his intense enjoyment of tobacco – his sacrament, as he ironically called it.²⁹⁶

Also, the young and newly awakened pietist Count Zinzendorf who had, in the 1720s, founded a pietist “Herrnhuter” congregation on his estate of Bethelsdorff in Saxony with invited believers fleeing from Bohemia-Moravia in Austria, now made his appearance in Berleburg in September 1730. He hoped to integrate the colorful flock of believers there into his new movement. Initially, things developed smoothly; both Carl and Dippel had expatiated about pietist communities of love; and Dippel signed Zinzendorf’s declaration of 23 bullet points about gathering the true brethren who should every day free themselves still more of sin, forming a “Liebesvereini-

294 It is interesting that the very first, anonymous contribution to volume 1 of the *Fama* contains a hard criticism of the behavior of colonizers in America, based on interviews with Pennsylvania pietists. Here, it is claimed that the dawn of faith is not about to appear in America nor in its central core of Pennsylvania, “... die genauere Zeitungen versichern hier, wie in Ost-Indien also in America, davon man diese Stunde noch Zeugnisse höret, daß die Europäische Namen-Christen mehr Finsterniß hineingebracht, und das wenige Natur- und Tugend-Licht der armen Wilden untergedrückt” (14). So, Europeans, Christians in name only, have brought more darkness than that prevailed there beforehand; they rather suppress the scarce natural and virtuous light of “the wild”. The moderate Halle pietism thought that colonialism and slavery was legitimized with reference to divine providence (Koch 2015), but it seems as if at least certain radical pietists held deviating viewpoints also in this regard. Slavery is not discussed in the *Fama*, but this was two generations before the first slave ships would leave Altona in 1780 (the main port of Danish “triangular trade” earlier in the eighteenth century was Copenhagen). The first volume of the *Fama* also contains a long report by Enevold Ewald about infantile awakenings in the Orphanage of Copenhagen, as well as an anonymous radical pietist analysis of a hot topic of the time: the many vampires in the southern parts of the Habsburg lands. The author – it could be Dippel or Carl – holds that vampires are roaming, angry spirits of suddenly deceased persons who have not had the time to atone for their sins and are thus caught in the desire they had in the moment of death: envy, hatred, etc. They are “ideal bodies” hunting people in order to suck their blood (that is, spirit) and they may be fought only by destroying the ideal bodies which they inhabit. If Dippel is not only the editor but also the author of this analysis, this would add new layers to his metaphysics. *Geistliche Fama* was later taken over by Edelmann when he arrived in Berleburg in 1736 after Carl’s departure and Dippel’s death.

295 Carl in Copenhagen, cf. Petersen (1893, 197ff).

296 On Dippel’s time in Berleburg, Eröff III, Senckenberg’s diaries vol. II; Goebel (1860), zweites Buch, Bender (1882, 122ff), and Voss (1970, 60ff).

gung unter einigen frommen Seelen”, a loving society of pious souls. Zinzendorf liberally showered the Berleburgers present with formal titles and grandiosely appointed Carl, Dippel, and himself to be prophets of the new church, under the title of *Weissager*, truth tellers. Dippel was moved to tears. Zinzendorf, however, held that the new church about to be constituted must be founded on order and discipline, an idea that might not have appealed to Carl, Dippel, and others among the more formless and anarchic separatists in Berleburg.

The two top pietists Dippel and Zinzendorf had been corresponding, but now they clashed theologically over an old Dippelian subject: the theory of redemption. Here, Zinzendorf stood on the orthodox position which Dippel called the “ransom theory” – Christ redeeming human sins from the wrath of God. Zinzendorf had continuously kissed Dippel on hand and mouth, Dippel recalls with repulsion, and under the brother-loving surface their theological disagreements but grew. They also disagreed stylistically: Zinzendorf, the nobleman, found that Dippel, the burgher, with his coarse and satirical expressions was detrimental to religion. It not only ended by Zinzendorf calling Dippel a pagan, while Dippel portrayed Zinzendorf as a spiritual machine babbling about God day and night on end, but also the new brother-loving society more generally was struck by infight. The preacher Christoph Seebach, another radical pietist veteran there, found it was impossible to be loving brothers without dogmatic agreement, and he began to tutor the others with his theological principles which were, in turn, attacked by Count Casimir for Arianism.²⁹⁷ Dippel kept a remarkably low profile in these dogmatic fights, but soon the loving community of brothers in Berleburg was falling apart.²⁹⁸

Simultaneously, the relation between the two old top pietists Dippel and Carl was also cooling, after a far less radical pietist in 1730 had arrived to Berleburg as a court preacher on Zinzendorf’s recommendation: Adam Struensee. A few years later, he would become the father of the man behind the Danish Free Speech period 1770–73, Johann Friedrich Struensee, after he took a shine to Carl’s daughter Maria Dorothea. This relation seems to have heralded the end of the Dippel-Carl companionship. Struensee and Dippel had repeated clashes nurtured both by their irreconcilable tempers and by theology; they argued like madmen over justification,²⁹⁹ and Struensee would continue attacking Dippel long after his death. Carl now became Adam Struensee’s father-in-law – and a bit later, the grandfather of

²⁹⁷ Reimann (2019, 266–80). Arianism: the heresy that Christ was a human with no divine attributes.

²⁹⁸ Dippel on Zinzendorf: Eröff III, 641.

²⁹⁹ Goebel (1860, 98).

J.F. Struensee – and he moved with the Struensees to the moderate pietist capital of Halle when Adam received a vocation there in late 1732. Dippel had already moved from the Carls and up into the Berleburg castle itself, and when Casimir began demolishing that wing of the building to construct the actual main castle structure, Dippel moved down into his own little house in the hilly castle area. The year after, Carl published a sarcastic book about chemical swindle under the title “Bearing Witness to Chemical Fraud” in which he said: “Many doctors and pharmacists are also led to machiavelliate, even charlatanate, when you pay so much money for so few small drops, they will go into it to get the advantage of becoming a *Democritus*”. This was his only explicit reference to Dippel, but Carl also attacked the “shit pharmacy” and the production of “stercorische Arzney”, excrement remedies – probably referring to the foul-smelling Dippel Oil.³⁰⁰ Dippel immediately wrote an harsh counterattack, which he never got around to publish. Not all was bliss in the earthly pietist paradise of Berleburg.

This also held for Dippel’s relation to the new, emerging rationalist theology, influenced by moderate Enlighteners such as Leibniz and Christian Wolff – as it found expression in an unfinished polemic between Dippel and the Superintendent Peter Hanssen in Sleswick-Holstein. He celebrated a rationalist combination of reason and Bible but ended up using rationalism as a defense for a pretty orthodox Lutheran theology which he opposed to Dippel’s enthusiastic “Hochmut”, his arrogance. This also prompted Dippel to answer with one of his last writings on “Die absurde Prahlerey”, the absurd boasting, in which he took up the accusation of arrogance, looked ironically back and admitted that he – at least as a young man – had actually been very arrogant.³⁰¹ In many respects, much ado around Dippel continued: wicked theological polemic as well as offers about new princely gold-making deals, such as from Dippel’s old sovereign and supporter Count Ernst Ludwig in Hesse who now appointed him Court Councilor. Dippel met with him and tried to bargain: maybe he could take over Burg Frankenstein as a fiefdom, in return for the recipe of a particularly potent elixir?

New friends clocked in as guests in Berleburg, such as the young Frankfurt medical doctor J.C. Senckenberg (Fig. 27), who arrived around Easter 1732 and returned for a more intense three-week stay in August, taking Dippel as his idol. His enormous diary contains a wealth of information about Dippel. He describes him and his behavior in manifold details and offers the most intimate portrait we

³⁰⁰ *Zeugnuß Chymischer Storgerey*, 1733, 52; 86.

³⁰¹ Eröff III, 467–569.



Figure 27: It is hard to imagine a more devoted fan of Dippel than Senckenberg. When the young pietist and medical doctor Johann Christian Senckenberg visits “the holy land” of Berleburg in 1732, he is breathlessly reading Dippel’s lips and memorizing everything he says, means, thinks, owns, and does. The 40,000 pages of Senckenberg’s diary are currently being transcribed and contain a wealth of information about the older Dippel – along with his recollections about many dramatic events of his life. Senckenberg himself would later acquire fame as doctor, collector, and natural historian, founding the Senckenberg-Stiftung for the sick and poor, as well as the Frankfurt Bürger-Hospital.

have of Dippel as a person.³⁰² They wander together in the undulating area, they take coffee, have a glass of “alant wine”, sweetened and spiced with medical herbs, they dine – but only once a day, at noon, for Dippel eats nothing in the evening.

³⁰² Senckenberg had spent the Easter time of 1732 in “the holy land” of Berleburg, and his focus on Dippel can be found, most concentrated, in volume II of his diaries. It covers his visit to Berleburg during a couple of weeks in mid-August 1732 in which he walks around with all antennae out, meeting the many curious figures gathered there, Carl and his wife, the book printer Haug, other pietists like the preacher Seebach, the “inspirationists” in the neighboring village Schwar-

Sometimes, they hang out at the book printer Haug's, a central place for radical pietist publications, often indicating "Philadelphia" as a place of print, the theological nickname of Berleburg. Haug also serves beer and displays a splendid selection of new publications, pietism, and mysticism, of course, but also actual Enlightenment literature like Jean-Frédéric Bernard's *Reflexions morales, satiriques et comiques* – Moral, Satirical, and Comical Reflections – or the recent translation of the British deist, Anthony Collins' *A Discourse of Free-Thinking*. They discuss new books such as Marie Huber's *Le monde fou* – Crazy World – which Dippel finds outstanding, and they deliver to Haug Dippel's most recent piece of polemic for print, in a planned circulation of 2,000.³⁰³ Zinzendorf had mentioned that after the Bible, what he most liked to read was Bayle's large *Dictionnaire* – an early Enlightenment monument – in this, Dippel did not agree, and he mocked Zinzendorf when speaking to Senckenberg.

After a couple of days in Berleburg, Senckenberg exclaims: "Because of all the foreign characters here, my mind is a bit scared, on the other hand, Mr. CD obliges me as a larger genius to subject myself to him; his outlook reaches far wider than mine or that of others".³⁰⁴ All of the known Dippel portraits show him in a wig after the fashion of the time, even if he would never adopt coiffures as gorgeous as those styled by Reventlow – but we should probably rather imagine the older Dippel in Berleburg as a sort of skinhead. According to Senckenberg, he let his head be shaved every eighth day so that sweat might escape, and he walked around with bald head in all weather, rain and snow. He has large, brown eyes, he was short-sighted already as a kid, he has a big nose and mouth, his face red and pockmarked and his forehead is flat, Senckenberg notes. He

zenau, Count Casimir and his family and staff, etc. He also notes how they slander each other, all while taking care to note the least itch, spasm, sweat drop, tension, fart, and pain in his own body. But most of all, he gets acquainted with Dippel and takes him as his great role model. His constant inquiring about Dippel spread the rumor among the others that he may be a spy sent out to extract information about the Berleburgers. On the relation between Dippel and Senckenberg and the latter's "imitatio Dippelii", see Faßhauer (2018). Only later during his visit, does Senckenberg utter a cautious bit of source criticism: "Omnes narrationes Dippelii gehen dahin mirabilia von sich zu erzählen v. sich gros zu machen" (396) – all that Dippel narrates is reporting wonderful things about himself in order to appear great.

303 Haug was in the midst of the long process of a grand pietist project from 1725 to 1742: the publication of the "Berleburger Bible" in eight volumes: a new translation, including the apocryphic books and a vast apparatus of commentary interpreting the mystical meanings of the text, almost a pietist encyclopaedia.

304 "Wegen allerlei frembden bildern so hier sind, ist mein Gemüthe etwas allarmiert, dagegen auch Herr CD alß ein größerer Genie obligirt mich sich ihm zu unterwerffen, er sieht weit über mich v. andere hin auß", Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 350.

often hawks, coughing up slime. He has soft hands; his limbs are delicate and well-proportioned. He is a bit deaf and often has to pull close in order to hear what you say, but he is still moving swiftly for a 59-year-old. But his eyes are turning still paler from staring into the fire and the shining silver and gold in his crucibles. He is scornful at the haughty, but humble to the poor. Many take offense because of his frequent laughter, but he is free, affecting nothing. In his house, Senckenberg reports the interiors: there are bottles, a set of knife, fork, and spoon of gold with a traveling case, a large mirror, writing desk, scissors, feather pen, and three–four costumes hanging on the wall. His dressing gown is brown with dark stripes, his cloak is velvet with a gold lining at the top, and a green coat. Socks are from silk and blue or maybe black. He speaks with a light Dutch accent, does not take much sugar in his tea, drinks a lot of water, but wine is above all else with him, and he often enjoys a pipe of tobacco with a beer³⁰⁵ – it does not sound as if Dippel's famous turning away from this world implies asceticism to any severe degree. In awe, Senckenberg jots down the minutest details about Dippel who obviously enjoys the admiration of his young disciple and responds with memories, recipes, chemical rules of thumb, advice on medicaments and medical herbs, and all sorts of fairytales.

Dippel also tries to calm down the breathless Senckenberg and tells him that many pietists indulge in wild fantasies which they attempt to impose on others, but which do not stem from God at all. Actually, Dippel goes as far as to question the whole pietist movement in which the conversion of one person inspires and triggers the next: “CD said that taking examples in the spiritual field is good, but only regarding universal governance regarding everybody, while as to the particular, everybody should be governed by God in complete surrender, without side glances to others. The pietist conversations now in fashion are good for nothing, the heart is not in it. The mystics copied each other in all ways and strove for experiencing in themselves what was prescribed, and they failed completely”.³⁰⁶

305 “Inveni bey Dippel etliche bouteilles, item ein Gesteck Messer v. Gabel v. Löffel von Gold uti videtur. Dann ein zur Reise geschicktes besteck, ziemlich gros von Spiegel, schreibtafel, scheere, federmesser pp 3 à 4erlei kleider an der wand. Sudabam war warm CDs schlafrock ist braun v. dunckel gestreift, sammete Kappe, mit einer goldenen tresse oben besetzt am aufschlag. CD hat auch einen grünen rock. Tibialia fere caerulea, item nigra, serica”, Senckenbergs dagbøger bd. II, 367. “CD hat braune grose Augen, grose Nase v. groses Maul. platte stirne. Roth im Gesicht, dick darinnen”, 408.

306 “Loquebatur CD die exempla im Geistlichen seyen zwar gut, aber nur die Universal-Führung betreffend, so alle angehe, quoad specialia müsse sich jeder von Gott, durch eine völlige übergaabe, ohne auf andere zu sehen, leiten lassen. Die Pietistische conversationen so sie zur mode werden, taugen nichts, das hertz sey nicht dabey. Die Mystici machten einander allerlei nach, v. suchten das Vorgescriebene alle zu erfahren in sich, v. irreten weit”, Senckenberg's Diaries, vol. II,

Dippel's dark experiences with mass movements reach a new extreme in his advice to Senckenberg: conversion is a completely individual process, you should not imitate others, and you cannot mimic the faith of others; that only leads to superficiality, pretense-piety, and emptiness. Dippel refers to the Mexican mystic Gregor Lopez from the sixteenth century who ceased completely to participate in any outer service and even rejected a taper at his own funeral: he proves that perfection is actually an individual possibility in this life. Is it his intercourse with the other contentious top pietists in Berleburg that has taken the older Dippel to this extreme individualization of faith? Dippel also gives advice to his young novice in less problematic fields, particularly that of medicine. A couple of examples of Dippel's insider tips: "CD said later that as against the scurvy and bladder stone of Seebach, nothing is better than his sour elixir. It does not heat the kidneys, just leads away sand and rubble without you noticing it. It is the best remedy against kidney stone. He [Seebach] should just have continued with that and not let himself go astray. He had begun with it, but the effect only comes later". Or what about this one: "Young shots of spruce and juniper used as malt give a very good beer".³⁰⁷ Swedish acorn coffee, given the moniker "swine coffee" by Dippel, is also recommended. Dippel is clearly encouraged by his young fan and keeps pouring out his knowledge and judgment about this as well as that.

In parallel to such encouragements, Dippel still enjoyed support from the other and more alchemist branch of the Wittgensteins in the town of Laasphe, only twenty-something kilometers to the south whom he continued to pay visits (Fig. 28). Lab conditions were better there where his old alchemist brother-in-arms now conducted experiments with fulminating gold and compounds such as the extremely inflammable explosive AuN_4 . It may detonate just by touching, which cost the Count lesions and severe damage to one eye in a large explosion on the Schloss Wittgenstein.

In April 1734, Dippel suddenly died, just as he was making a visit to Schloss Wittgenstein. For a man with an ambition to follow Christ, the time of death was well chosen: the night before Easter Sunday. The report in the Wittgenstein ar-

391. With "conversationsen", Dippel refers to pietist conventicles with common discussions of the Bible.

307 "CD postea dixit ad scorbutum v. Gravelle des Seebachs sey nichts bessers alß diß saure Elixir. erhitzte nicht die renes sondern führe insensiblement den Sandoder steinlein ab. Esse optimum lithontripticum. Hätte sollen fortfahren, v. sich nicht irren lassen. Es thats anfangs aber der Nutzen kommt noch"; "Turiones abietis & juniperi incoquunt cerevisiae wie das Maltz gibt sehr gut bier", "Dippel machte in schweden einen Spass, da er sie lehrte auß schönen zeitigen Eicheln einen Coffée brennen, der öhlich, v. sehr diuretisch. Nannte ihn per jocum Coffée del Porco ..." Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 366; 376; 354. Christoph Seebach was another top pietist at Berleburg.

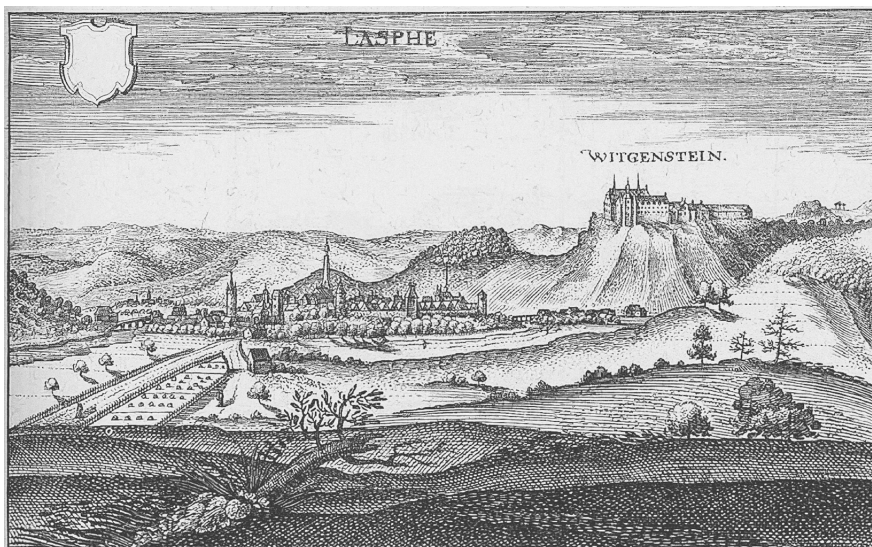


Figure 28: Schloß Wittgenstein was the residency of Count August, where he – like many noblemen – invested considerable time and resources in alchemist experiments. Dippel had settled in Berleburg, a bit farther to the north, but during a visit to the castle of his old protector and chemical colleague, he was suddenly found dead in his bed, Easter morning of 1734.

A sumptuous burial ceremony was conducted in the evangelical church of Laasphe beneath the castle, probably organized and paid for by Count August. Maybe it was also he who coined Dippel's epitaph, "*Video Taceo*" – I see, I keep silent. In no way, had Dippel kept silent about his theology, philosophy, politics, and much else, but he did publish considerably less about his alchemy – maybe the epitaph should imply that he had taken his alchemical secrets to his grave.

chives is lapidary: "25 April 1734 Dippel was found dead in his bed on Wittgenstein. He was cold and stiff and with a large foam around his mouth. On his left side he was partially but on his right side totally blue, from which a stroke was inferred."³⁰⁸ Dippel was buried in a magnificent ceremony in the evangelical church of the town Laasphe beneath the castle, under the somewhat surprising epitaph of *Video taceo* – I see, I keep quiet. A quiet observer was not exactly what he had been. New levels of rumor soon added to his already legendary character. Had he been poisoned? Had the Devil finally taken him – maybe even torn him to pieces? Or had he rather withdrawn all his heresies on his deathbed? Did he die from imbibing one of his life-enhancing elixirs? He was found dead and blue at the castle – could it be Prussian Blue that he had ingested? Is his blue ghost now haunting the hallways of Schloss Wittgenstein? Would he resurrect? Commenting

³⁰⁸ Voss (1970, 65).

upon a false rumor of his own death, he had joked that all claims of the death of Christianus Democritus before 1808 would be lies – this made disciples doubt it could have happened at all: did he live on under some other shape or form after having buried a substitute in his place? Myths added to legend added to gossip, and soon fights broke out over who would now be the true heir to Dippel and his doctrine. Several competing books with *Democritus redivivus* on the title page began to appear: the resurrected Democritus, and his collected works in three enormous volumes by the book printer Haug were soon in the pipeline.³⁰⁹

But you may imagine the sigh of relief that would be heard when the news reached the estate empire of the Reventlows in Denmark. The Count lived four more years to 1738, while the Countess saved her last sigh for the year after.

309 Rumors about Dippel's death, cf. Hannak (2013, 497f). Prussian Blue is not poisonous, so it could not have been the cause of his death. Two *Redivivus*'es already appeared the next year: Schueler (1735) and anonymous (1735). The former was the preacher Johann Heinrich Schueler's friendly but critical comments about Dippel, published by a friend. The latter was assumedly published by the wandering adventurer Johann Friedrich Bachstrom. It came out in Altona and, among other things, consisted of a version of Dippel's political theology from the Grammendorf book of 1719, now with the introduction and afterword by the anonymous publisher – the writing which had enraged Count Reventlow so much. So, Dippel was resurrected in writing in Altona after Reventlow was forced to leave his Chief Presidency in 1732 under the new rule of King Christian VI purging the "Reventlowian party". The subtitle is scrupulous in identifying Dippel for the reading audience in Altona as the "royal Danish Chancellery Councilor". The indefatigable Bachstrom identified with the resurrected Dippel to the degree that he kept on publishing several volumes under the pseudonym "Christianus Democritus Redivivus" in the years to come.

The three volumes of the *Eröffneter Weg* appeared in 1747, meticulously edited with a pedagogical introduction and afterword, and all of Dippel's Latin and French expressions fastidiously translated into German in parentheses; the original title pages or the information therefrom are not reproduced, however, and some of the writings have been given new titles. A few of Dippel's smaller publications are not included. All in all, a people's edition, rather than a research edition.

IV An Impartial Intellectual and the Taste of God

... I am certain that I have been acting in a Christian and reasonable way when I have avoided public office; not out of love of idleness nor convenience; rather because I could then, so much more unhindered or so to speak so much more publicly, be told the truth, from the father of light, from the history of former times, and from living experience, and pass them on to the whole world ... (The introduction to Dippel's medical dissertation, 1711; Eröff II, 1747, 126)

There is a strange tension in Dippel. On a series of points, he emerges as a classic representative of central ideas of the Enlightenment – even an early and seminal such representative.

He was a consequent supporter of liberty, full religious toleration and freedom of the press.³¹⁰ He was a scientific optimist: you can understand the world by the use of experience and reason. He insisted on a fallibilist epistemology: the empirical world is so complex that research will commit errors which can only gradually be contained. He was a consequent critic of clerical institutions and their political role. He rejected the idea that revealed books or texts exist and may function as direct sources of truth; such books are always human constructions. He was a skeptic against metaphysical dualisms, between this world and a beyond, between body and soul, extension and thinking. He was an activist intellectual eager to reveal political error and support the repressed. He was a publicist who – in contradistinction to his idols among mystics – insisted on an ongoing presence in the public sphere, as a researcher, a philosopher, and a polemicist. He was an author using the vernacular insisting that theology, philosophy, and medicine be discussed openly and critically, often using humor and satire. He was a critic of political governments by absolutist princes who should be replaced by a self-organized movement of awakened individuals oriented to-

310 Late in life, Dippel seems to have discovered Locke's famous *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689). In yet another polemic – now against the vicars Wollgemüth (believed to be J.U. Schwentzel) and Neumeister, who had attacked *Vera demonstratio* – he recommends, in 1731, a writing, “nemlich von dem berühmten Engelländer *Johannes Lock* von der Religions-Toleranz. In diesem unvergleichlichen Scripto werden sie gewißlich mehr Religion und Christenthum, mehr Weisheit und Vernunft, mehr Staats-Klugheit und Erkänntuß des gemeinen Bestens, antreffen, als bey dergleichen Secten-Meistern, die nur ihr eigen Kalb wollen angebethet wissen, und die unter dem Namen GÖttes, ihr Eigenes suchen, ja allezeit suchen müssen” (Eröff III 27). So, Dippel even adds that the wise English Queen ought to erect a statue of Locke besides “Neuton und Clarque” for their eternal memory. Otherwise, we have primarily seen Dippel referring to Hobbes, but now he praises not only English toleration but also English physics. If determinism is the large stumbling block to Dippel in early enlighteners, then religious tolerance, a critical stance against churches and support for press freedom, by contrast, are issues in which Dippel forms part of Early Enlightenment.

wards a better world. Dippel almost appears as an Enlightenment philosopher of the first water. This aspect of him comes through clearly when he, late in life, looks back and describes himself: In my attacks against foolishness, he says, "... I have no respect for any sect, yea, not even for any single human being, but I write the pure truth even if it would, from time to time, hit myself, as I am not always as humble with respect to essential truth as I ought to be ..." ³¹¹

But at the very same time, he is radically religious; you seldom read many lines of a Dippel text without the Christian GOD being invoked, often in capital letters, and personal revelation, to him, is as valid a source of knowledge as historical and scientific investigation. The author of the first book on Dippel's life, Wilhelm Bender, summarized this doubleness in his title of 1882: *The Freethinker of Pietism: A Contribution to the Origin of the Enlightenment*. ³¹² But a standard picture of the Enlightenment is that many of the central enlighteners were not religious at all; they were agnostics or atheists and, if indeed they were religious, they would typically be deists and celebrate some version of a rational, natural religion opposing established Christian confessions and churches. Enlightenment did not have many roots in the large Christian confessions, Catholicism, Lutheranism, or Calvinism which most often ignored or even fought science and went actively against tendencies in the direction of freedom of faith, political liberalization, and democracy. But Dippel's example shows that "enthusiastic" traditions on the margins of Protestantism, outside of established churches, at an early point might contribute to the Enlightenment with an anti-authoritarian and tolerant spirit of freethinking and pursuit of truth, such as can also be found in the next generation with Edelmann who was radicalized in the same spiritualist tradition – plus of course by Dippel.

If you look closer, Dippel is even a representative of many of the ideas which recent intellectual history characterizes as *radical enlightenment*. Research in the field is realizing, to a larger degree than earlier, that the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contained a much broader range of variants than earlier assumed. Margaret Jacob introduced the notion in her 1981/2006 book *The Radical Enlightenment*; Jonathan Israel (2001; 2006) is known for his ideal-typical tripartition of the main positions of the period: *radical enlightenment*, *moderate enlightenment*, and *counter-enlightenment*. He defines these positions metaphysically as well as politically. Radical enlightenment is metaphysically *monist*: there is only one world, and dualisms like sacred/secular, this world/the next

³¹¹ Eröff III, 640.

³¹² *Der Freigeist aus dem Pietismus. Ein Beitrag Zur Entstehungsgeschichte Der Aufklärung*, Bender (1882).

world, body/soul, matter/thought, and so on must be relativized or given up completely. On the political level, it is democratic, liberal, or republican in different combinations and versions. The political power of princes and churches should be given up completely and give way for new political structures based on the freedom and participation of common human beings. Counter-enlightenment, by contrast, strives to sustain and preserve both the metaphysical dualisms and princely-clerical power, such as they dominated Europe far into the eighteenth, even the nineteenth century. The intermediary position of moderate enlightenment, then, is interested in developing political, religious, and scientific reform, but insists that this should take place with respect for the established dualisms and in various compromises with princes and churches. Individual enlighteners, of course, may be radical on some points and moderate on others – but Israel's observation is that most of the great, "classical" Enlightenment philosophers in intellectual history are predominantly moderate: Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Newton, Thomasius, Voltaire, Hume, Montesquieu, Kant. But this picture has emerged also because more radical voices of the period often had to keep a low profile in order to avoid persecution and Israel's enormous work is devoted to excavating many of these radicals from oblivion. Israel's main line of radical enlightenment comprises, among numerous others, characters like Franciscus van der Enden, Spinoza, Pierre Bayle, the British deists, Diderot, d'Holbach, Condorcet, Tom Paine. Dippel plays no great role in Israel's detailed charting of a radical panorama of hundreds of contributors. The German parallel to Israel is Martin Mulsow who charts the many early German Enlighteners already in the decades around 1700 and points to how many freethinkers may be religious dissidents, mystics, alchemists, magicians, historians of philosophy, book printers, journalists, pranksters, scholars, scientists, artists, and much more. He sums up such characters by means of an alternative distinction: they are members of a "precariat", characterized by risking acute political problems if they express what they really mean – in contrast to writers constituting a "bourgeoisie of knowledge" because they have positions and ideas that give them unproblematic access to the public sphere. Dippel is an obvious example of a "precarious" writer.

Both Israel's and Mulsow's efforts are strong contributions to understanding the detailed role of Enlightenment in the origin of the modern world, and the intellectual history categories of the former may coexist with the social conceptions of the latter, because of throwing light upon different aspects of Enlightenment. Dippel was, indeed, both *radical* and *precarious*.

But what is radical enlightenment in the case of Dippel? As we saw in his criticism of early determinist enlighteners, he is a monist, in the sense that there is one world only – which involves holy and secular aspects, to be sure. The soul has a material aspect, even God has a material basis – actually, all things have

material as well as spiritual aspects. Already in this world, the awakened pietist may purify the soul of sin, and then he or she simply becomes part of the deity. Dippel's metaphysics is religious, but it is a monism rather than a dualism. Also, politically, Dippel is radical. Churches should be abolished and disappear and, increasingly, he finds that princes abuse their power and should, in fact, also disappear. This may take place already in the Millennial Kingdom which is imminent and may take its beginning any day and most definitively by the Day of Judgment which Dippel interprets as a final showdown among human beings, where God remains in the background. Dippel is obsessed with freedom of the press and of expression, not only for deviant religious doctrines like his own, but also in general, as when he tells Senckenberg that "... the Dutch French newspapers are continuously translated from Belgium where they are initially authored. They no longer reason as freely as they used to, for they are monitored and now they are strongly integrated into alliances with different courts".³¹³ Dippel refers to free media in French printed in the Netherlands which was busy becoming a European hub of press freedom at the time and which he obviously tracked. Dippel is not a democrat in the sense that he develops detailed procedures for free, controlled elections – that proved a task for later Enlighteners – but he insists that in the Millennial Kingdom coming any day now, all human beings will be equal and, after the Final Judgment, even the wicked and the infidel will be converted and saved.

Both metaphysically and politically, Dippel is thus much more radical than Voltaire in the next generation who would eloquently attack the Catholic Church but did not think that ordinary people were capable of Enlightenment, and that absolutist princes just needed proper guidance from philosophers like himself.

But what the *Case against Dippel* in Altona may add to the picture of Dippel as an enlightener is exactly his character of being *intellectual*. It is in the eighteenth century that the concept of the intellectual was developed and sophisticated – "philosophe" in French which was not a professional or academic philosopher but one who, without necessarily having office, intervened in many issues with an informed voice – exactly Voltaire, one generation later, came to typify the intellectual as a new public social role. It is not a particular philosophical doctrine, rather a

313 "... die holländische französische Zeitungen werden alzeit ex belgico übersetzt darinnen sie erstlich geschrieben werden. Sie raisonniren aber nicht mehr so frey wie sonst, denn man gibt ihnen auf die finger acht, v. sie sind jetzt starck verkoppelt mit vielen höffen in alliancen", Senckenberg's diaries, vol. II, 394. During and after the Danish Press Freedom period of 1770–73 more than a generation later, the Danish court made strong efforts to put pressure on the leading francophone papers in Holland to make them write about Danish matters in a way conforming to the viewpoints of the Danish government, cf. Langen and Stjernfelt (2022).

certain social practice and a new possibility to understand and act using one's intelligence in social and political matters, also facilitated by freer conditions of publication, of postal communication, and of traveling. The intellectual, as Sartre much later quipped, is one who interferes in things that are none of his business. It is a free person, not acting out of office at a court, in a church, or a university, but who publishes and acts without being obliged to by an appointed position. This was what Dippel did all through this 40 years career. If we take Steve Fuller's criteria of an intellectual:³¹⁴ (1) the observation of things from several sides, but with regard to passing judgment and participating actively; (2) the capacity to communicate in many different media; (3) a sense of grey zones; (4) an effort that counterbalances given powers; (5) a willingness to bow to facts – then Dippel lives up to all of them, maybe a bit weaker, though, on bullet (3).

In Altona, this came to a peak, for it was exactly his activity as an intellectual that he was accused and convicted of. It was activities outside the view of the public, as a self-appointed judicial advisor for persons he saw as suppressed by a dysfunctional or corrupt judiciary. It was also activities within the system, such as the writing letters of complaint and supplications to relevant authorities. And it was his function as a public intellectual, in publications with an explicit target, such as the satirical piece against Dean Fleischer, and with more implicit address, such as the long political theology preface to the Grammendorf book in which the attack against the Reventlows unfolds without mentioning their names. It was all this activity which so offended both the City Council and the powerful Reventlows and which led to the case, sentence, and punishment of Dippel. The Reventlows thought that they had hired a pious gold-maker only to realize that they had also gotten a heretic, a philosopher, an intellectual.

So, Dippel belongs, to a large degree, to radical enlightenment, I would say. Not only because of the metaphysical and political ideas he develops – but also because of his specific, public, and political behavior. He is a traveling cosmopolitan citizen of the world – he uses that word about himself – who had the special luck that the *zeitgeist* allowed him to behave like a fish in the water among the many pietists and sympathizers all over the European map who were ready to offer him company, accommodation, money, political support, publicity, and assistance of many kinds. Wherever he appears, he attempts to intervene in local problems and discussions, political, clerical, or medical, with pinprick actions like letters, supplications, pamphlets, and pasquils. It takes place with the core word of radical pietism: “impartially”, he is acting critically, but not on behalf of any given “sect” or predefined or established identity group that he sides with beforehand. It is the activity of a

314 Cf. Fuller (2005).

free intellectual, and it connects the impartiality of radical pietism to the universalism of the Enlightenment. It is far from granted, of course, that Dippel was actually always capable of acting impartially, maybe he could be led astray and favor fellow believers, not to speak about himself. But he articulates the impartial ideal and strives to realize it, and skepticism regarding real motives even the most determined universalist must live with.

All of it takes place in a sharp and provocative language, often with striking word play and images. I do not claim he approaches the brilliant wit of Voltaire here, the undisputed master of the one-liner – but Dippel often brings into play a witty play of words, even in Latin: substitute one letter, then the orthodoxy of the orthodox becomes the hellish teachings of the orthodox: *OrCodoxia Orthodoxorum*, or add a single *u* to make fate mutate into foolishness: *Fatum Fatuum*. It was rare to unite higher theological and philosophical ambitions with bold language – this was probably the main teaching Dippel took from Luther, even if he did not inherit the reformer's enthusiasm with fecal expressions.

Dippel's activities as an intellectual develop in parallel with his chemical investigations, his medical practice, and his authoring large metaphysical and theological treatises. My argument, therefore, is not that Dippel was *primarily* an intellectual – he continuously bases his intellectual interventions and exclamations on his ambitious theological-metaphysical world view that he feels obliged to continuously correct, market, and develop. My argument is rather that the activist side of his radical enlightenment has been overlooked but comes out especially clearly in the *Case against Dippel* in Altona, focusing directly on his intellectual efforts to defend persecuted *Neben-Menschen*, fellow human beings, extremely provocative as seen from the viewpoint of the Altona City Hall and eventually also from the Chief President couple.

It can also be added that the *Case against Dippel* illustrates, better than many arguments, how despotic, arbitrary, and cruel exercise of power could still be in the absolutist states of the time in which germinating intellectuals had to navigate. The skilled, ambitious, and furious Reventlows proved able to machinate both the judiciary and government of Denmark and push through their very own punishment of their intellectual critic – against ever so insisting attempts of the government in Copenhagen to stick to certain principles of rule of law. The *Case against Dippel* in Altona shows better than anything the need for intellectual criticism of uninhibited, corrupt exercise of power. In the perspective of Dippel's life, you can add that the many theologically motivated persecutions that he suffered did nothing but confirm his image of the “whipping papacy” of Lutheranism rather than the truth of its dogma – just like his treatment under several absolutist princes invalidated the idea that they should harbor a special authority invested with divine powers, not to speak about being guarantees of rule of law.

But which features in Dippel's radical view of the world would it be that favored his activity as an intellectual? The doctrine from his criticism of the determinists in *Fatum Fatuum* may throw a bit of light on this. Dippel has his own version of empiricism in his epistemology: the living conviction about objects received in perception is handed over to reasoning imagination forming pictures which may, again, be investigated by means of inferences. Such reasoning may never, however, yield a completely evident result without fear of error because the particularities of sense experience are almost inexhaustible and do not constitute a simple axiom or universal rule which does not admit exceptions in the course of increasing experience. This sounds like fallibilism, as in Peirce or Popper in later times – but it also calls for curiosity in the investigator, for new insights are needed to improve the errors committed. Even in theology, this holds for Dippel: divine truths are impossible to grasp without danger of errors, so even theology is a sort of empirical discipline, just like the deity is part of the empirical world. So, pure rationalists, by contrast, are mere conjurors with no use in the real world. Such ideas take Dippel in the direction of engagement with issues and problems of this world.

But most decisive is probably Dippel's insistence on *freedom*. His crucial disagreement with early enlighteners remained focused upon determinism which he found not only in the protestant reformers but also in the already mentioned line from Hobbes over Descartes and Spinoza to Malebranche – later continued with attacks on Leibniz and Wolff. All of them are “dumme Gäuckler”, stupid tricksters, in Dippel's rude expression, and it is obvious that Dippel finds a decisive tension in Early Enlightenment between scientifically inspired determinism on the one hand and the emphasis on religious, scientific, and political liberty on the other.

This tension remains contentious to this day – there is still no general agreement how to solve it: some claim that determinism is true and that this fact both can and must make all actual institutions built on ideas about personal freedom and responsibility into dangerous illusions to be dismantled, while others find that some sort of compatibility can be developed between determinism and personal freedom, and still others think that the existence of personal freedom makes necessary a relativization or even a falsification of determinism. It is a deep and principal discussion of modernity which Dippel helped to found with his general attack on determinism. Even in this attack, however, it became clear that he has a special axe to grind with Spinoza, maybe also because of the Dutch Jew's early political insistence on freedom of religion, on democracy, and on freedom of thought, and on skepticism vis-à-vis churches and organized religion, all of them political ideas not far from Dippel's own. It is indeed correct, as Grunwald (1898) says, that Dippel did not fight anyone as hard as Spinoza; on the other

hand, this intensity may go to prove that he was also more challenged and obsessed with him than the other determinists he was struggling with. We can see from Dippel's references that he knew about both the political Spinoza of the *Tractatus* (1670) and the metaphysical Spinoza from the *Ethica* (1677). Like many others, Dippel mocks him as a "thornbush" (Latin "spina" meaning thorn), when he attacks his version of God as the first moving cause:

This thornbush or Spinoza has immediately claimed that it could be the same to make creatures that have no movement of their own and are only subjected to the fatal government of the first moving cause, and to declare the first moving cause itself to be the essence of all creatures created in this way, so that nothing is seen or exists but the very GOD and his essence such as it is modified or appears on the scene in various ways. For if this does not go against the essence of GOD, that is, to be an origin of this confusion through the first movement, then it was clear that all could be ascribed to the essence of God without any fear of ungodliness.³¹⁵

This is Dippel's version of a central argument in Spinoza's determinist metaphysics. It is certainly correct, with Bell (1984, 11), that Dippel "failed to see how in Spinoza's system necessity is reconciled with a higher kind of freedom, on which a coherent moral system is constructed". Dippel does see, however, that Spinoza could not completely take away freedom from God; he had to admit to God a freedom which he was able to communicate to certain creatures who, on their side, possess the possibility of apostasy – which did not fit into the "atheist clockwork". This was why he had to assume that God, with both of the Cartesian qualities of thinking and extension contained in his essence, had to continuously modify himself from eternity, as well as in the present now and in all eternity so that all is created in an *Actum transeuntem*, an ever-ongoing activity – so that essential parts of both thinking and extension are merely external dispositions and figures on the surface of the always freely changing divine being. This is Dippel's version of the *natura naturans*/*natura naturata* distinction. God is the cause of all things indeed, but no longer as a first, effective cause, rather as a constant, immanent cause. This implies that different parts of the divine being that have erroneously

315 "Diese Dorn-Busch oder Spinosa, habe alsbald, daß es gleichviel gesagt würde seyn, Creaturen zu machen, die keine eigene Bewegung haben; und nur leidende unter der fatalen Direction der ersten bewegenden Urtsach stünde; und die erste bewegende Ursach selbst, als das Wesen aller so gemachten Creaturen anzugeben; so daß nichts zu sehen und zu finden wäre, als GOTT und dessen Wesen selbst, wie es sich auf unterschiedene Weise modificiret, oder auff dem Theatro zum Anschauen stellet: Dann wann das andere dem Wesen Gottes nicht entgegen lauffet, nemlich ein Uhrheber aber solchen Confusion zu seyn, durch die erste Bewegung, so war es klar genug, daß dem Wesen Gottes selbst alles konte ohn einige Furcht der impietät heimgeschrieben werden ..." (144).

been taken to be substances, now must be thought of as created, because the act of creation takes place in all eternity and has never begun or will cease. This is why false religion can be fantasies and the fraud of regents – and why even the apostles and other divine witnesses may have been sincere but still were themselves deceived.³¹⁶

The decisive problem in Spinoza's doctrine, then, is that "... the stupid Spinoza made the bindings of his fatal machine so tight that there could no longer be found a corner in it which was not full of God and his essence – even if there is still room for deceit and error – which means that *God himself is deceit and error*."³¹⁷

Spinoza's system remains, according to Dippel, both the most sincere and the most straightforward even if it places both theology and moral in a completely new situation. For he alone has had the honesty of sincerely presenting what he believes may be inferred by those who doubt there exists any "second cause", that is, causes secondary to God's initiating cause, functioning in the world and in humans themselves.

So, Dippel thinks that if Spinoza had improved his system and shown how something in it may be in a mode which was not simultaneously thought or experienced in the being itself, or that the divine essence, constantly modifying itself, could not always know itself rightly and gets lost in the ideas of understanding, then it might be possible that one with a sound reason who has tasted nothing of real divine objects, could be persuaded by that system.³¹⁸ Dippel considers that Spinoza's system might function if it allowed for certain free lacunae in the overall structure, making possible human error and apostasy – but of course, Dippel ends by preferring "the taste of God" such as it emerges directly and perspicuously in revealed knowledge to the radical pietist. Here, of course, is also the limit of Dippel's participation in radical enlightenment which would never acknowledge revelation as a valid source of knowledge.

You couldn't say that Dippel solves the issue of which place freedom – which Spinoza himself defined as the possibility of a thing to act on the basis of its own essence, that is, as the lack of hindrance to exert its potential – could have in a determinist system, and why Spinoza might identify freedom with the rational pursuit of self-interest. But Dippel clearly realizes the character of the problem and then emphatically decides to make of freedom a metaphysical foundation of his own system: God has the freedom to create beings who are free to fall from

³¹⁶ Christianus Democritus (1709, 143).

³¹⁷ Christianus Democritus (1709, 144).

³¹⁸ Christianus Democritus (1709, 149).

God, to sin, and to commit errors, but who also preserve the freedom to return to God. This is the theological expression of Dippelian freedom, but that would also translate into liberties of the political field, resulting to Dippel in a demand for full freedom of faith and expression without which his fallen human being cannot work on achieving understanding, of scientific, medical, political, divine, or other subjects.

The deepest reason that Dippel's radical religion may foster radical enlightenment and intellectual activism is that he shares Spinoza's ambition to become radically *monist*. There is only one world, and freedom and necessity, sacredness and apostasy, god and creation, body and soul, life and death, sin and atonement, must be understood as parts or aspects or modifications of this one world. Already in this world, the large battle between good and evil takes place, and God is not at a remote distance of his creation but rather forms a proper part of it; even in a direct proportion to the number of true pietists who manage to cleanse their souls, for when they do so they simply become parts of the deity. This, then, is why political and intellectual activism are constantly relevant to Dippel: they are roads to realize, already here and now, the highest good that should not just passively await the Day of Judgment.

There is no doubt that Dippel's insistence on seeing this highest good in the process of realization every day in his own as well as other peoples' actions also opens the gate to a galloping moralism which probably contributed to the fact that many otherwise sympathetic persons might run afoul in their dealings with Dippel, even ending up as his sworn enemies. That intellectuals no less than others may commit errors, that they are not necessarily paragons of truth in each single case, that they may often spread their activity far beyond their knowledge and competences and that they may conceal, more or less unaware, their own agendas under their idealism, is no secret.³¹⁹ That Dippel himself gradually discovered such dangers himself the hard way is testified by his mature irony of his own youthful arrogance.

But without such hubris, we would probably be left without the radical and impartial showdown with sects of all stripes.

319 As argued, e.g., by Sowell (2012).

Appendices

Timeline

- 10 August 1673** Johann Konrad Dippel is born at the Burg Frankenstein, Hesse.
- 1675** J.P. Spener publishes *Pia desideria*.
- 1677** Spinoza's *Opera Posthuma* is published.
- C. 1678–86** Dippel attends school in Nieder-Ramstadt.
- C. 1686–91** Dippel at the Pädagogium in Darmstadt.
- 9 May 1691** Dippel is matriculated at the University of Giessen.
- 22 July 1693** Master's degree with the treatise *De nihilo*, "About Nothing".
- 7 December 1693** Master's promotion, then study of theology.
- Fall of 1694** Dippel is a house teacher in Odenwald.
- 1694–95** Dippel authors an anti-pietist writing; later lost.
- 1695** Benedicte von Brockdorff becomes a widow, at 18 years old.
- 1695–96** Dippel studies theology in Strassburg; becomes a pietist through reading Spener.
- August 1696** Dippel escapes from Strassburg, suspected of murder.
- Fall of 1696–spring of 1697** Dippel lives with his parents in Nieder-Ramstadt.
- 1696–97** Dippel writes *Axioma Adami veteris* (Teaching of the old Adam).
- Spring of 1697** Dippel moves to Giessen and becomes a house teacher for a son of Count Ernst of Hesse.
- 8 July 1697** Dippel defends his doctoral dissertation *Circa facultates mentis humanae* (On the Faculties of the Human Mind).
- July–August 1697** Dippel writes *Orcodoxia Orthodoxorum* (The Hellish Teaching of the Orthodox).
- Ultimo August 1697** Gottfried Arnold arrives in Giessen.
- Primo 1698** Dippel writes *Papismus Protestantium Vapulans* (The Whipped Papacy of the Protestants).
- March 1698** Arnold writes the preface to his large history of churches and heretics and leaves Giessen.
- 1698** Dippel becomes interested in alchemy and hermeticism after a visit to his friend P.W. Geilfuss.
- Fall of 1698** Dippel publishes *Wein und Oel in die Wunden des gestauten Papstthums der Protestierenden* (Wine and Oil in the Wounds of the Whipped Papacy of the Protesters).
- 1699** Dippel sojourns in Frankfurt or Laubach, despite being interrogated by a clerical court in Darmstadt and sentenced to house arrest.
- Fall of 1699** Dippel writes *Christenstatt auff Erden*, appearing in early 1700.
- 25 August 1699** Frederik IV is crowned King of Denmark-Norway.
- 1700** Count von Reventlow and Benedicte von Brockdorff marry.
- Around 1701** Dippel believes he has succeeded in producing the philosopher's stone.
- C. 1701–04** Dippel buys a glass hut for alchemy, maybe in Mühlthal; is unable to repeat gold making, becomes debt-ridden.
- November 1704** Dippel is called to Berlin as an alchemist by August von Wittgenstein, minister of King Friedrich. He has no success with gold-making; more luck with medical remedies, wound balm, and Dippel's Oil.
- 1704** Dippel meets with Spener in Berlin and learns about doctor Stahl and his doctrine.
- 1704–05** Dippel publishes his large philosophy of nature *Weg-Weiser Zum verlohrenen Licht und Recht* in two parts.
- 1705** Dippel appears as peer reviewer at Count Caetano's experiment with silver-making.
- 1706** Dippel publishes *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde*, claiming that Princes should not force the faith of their subjects.

- 1706** Diesbach and Dippel accidentally discover Prussian Blue in Dippel's Berlin lab.
- 1706** Dippel publishes an attack on an anti-pietist pamphlet by Bishop Mayer in Swedish Pomerania.
- 8 February 1707** Dippel is imprisoned at the Hausvogtei in Berlin for his criticism of Mayer; his pamphlet is burned at the stake and the book printer is fined. In prison, he writes *Berlinische Arrest-Gedanken*.
- 14 February 1707** Dippel is released after intercession by Counts Wittgenstein and Reventlow.
- Ultimo February** Dippel's unsent letter to Karl XII from 1705, in which he slanders the Prussian court, is discovered and a new arrest order is issued. Dippel flees Berlin.
- 1 March 1707** Dippel is appointed Danish Chancellery Councillor.
- Spring of 1707** Dippel escapes through Saxony via Köstritz and Jena to Frankfurt and Darmstadt.
- 1707** Dippel publishes his *Berlinische Arrest-Gedancken*.
- Late summer 1707** Dippel settles in Altona, where he becomes a target of persecution.
- 1707** Diesbach and von Frisch initiate the production of Prussian Blue.
- 15 October 1707** Frederik IV grants Dippel security, the freedom to carry out alchemical research, and the right to leave Altona.
- Ultimo 1707** Dippel leaves Altona for Amsterdam where he is based until 1710.
- 1708** Dippel publishes his large treatise against determinism, *Fatum Fatuum* (Foolish Necessity).
- 1709** Dippel publishes his collected writings in the 1200-page volume *Eröffnete Wege*.
- 23 August 1709** The Prussian King has the alchemist Caetano hanged in gilded gallows in Küstrin.
- October 1710** Dippel settles in Warmond near Leiden.
- 1 April 1711** Dippel enrolls at the faculty of medicine at the University of Leiden.
- 17 April 1711** Dippel defends his dissertation *Vitae animalis morbus et medicina* (On diseases and cures of animal life).
- 1711** Dippel publishes his pamphlet against Calvin plus his *Alea belli musulmanici* (The Muslim War Game).
- C. 1712** Dippel buys the mansion of Vredenhoeft near Utrecht.
- 8–9 January 1713** Altona is burnt down by the Swedish army.
- March 1713** The Reventlow couple is dispatched to Altona in order to preside over the reconstruction of the city.
- 9 September 1714** Dippel suddenly leaves the Netherlands by ship from Amsterdam to Hamburg, maybe because of debt.
- Ultimo 1714** Dippel returns to Altona as a protégé of Reventlow.
- 1716–17** Dippel involves himself in the court cases of Andreas Bandau and C.N. Lieben.
- 17 March 1717** Bandau submits a complaint, authored by Dippel, to the Altona City Council.
- 22 March 1717** Bandau is arrested by the City Council and is threatened to admit that Dippel authored his complaint; a libel case is opened against the two of them.
- 21 December 1717** Dippel sends a complaint to Frederik IV over the legal treatment of Bandau and Lieben, demanding more royal authority to Reventlow.
- January–February 1718** Reventlow supports Dippel's complaints.
- 28 June 1718** Altona City Council submits a report on and against Dippel to Sehested in Copenhagen.
- 16 August 1718** Dean Fleischer undertakes forced baptism of Mennonite babies in the Trinitatis Church of Altona.
- September 1718** Dippel publishes an anonymous pamphlet in Hamburg, ridiculing Dean Fleischer. Fleischer is rebuked by the King for undermining Altona freedoms; Dippel's pamphlet is burned at the stake.
- 5 November 1718** Frederik IV sends Dippel a protection letter as the response to a supplication.

- Winter 1718–19** Reventlow and the City Council collaborate against corruption in general, Dippel in particular.
- 21 February 1719** The rich Otte family of Hamburg signs two obligations to buy the office of Vice President in Altona.
- 20 March 1719** The Ottes declare that neither the Reventlows nor themselves have been involved in bribery.
- Mid-Ultimo March 1719** A warning letter to Dippel from an unknown woman. Arrest of M.C. Lieben and C.D. Caseres in Altona; suspected of bribes and libel.
- 29 March 1719** Andreas Bandau signs a declaration about Dippel's proposal of bribing the Comital couple with two Portugalöser. Reventlow throws Dippel and Vincelius out of his household; they flee to Hamburg.
- 30 March 1719** Dippel sends two panic letters, seeking help from Count von Holstein and the vicar Hirschfeldt.
- 31 March 1719** Reventlow announces a general warning against bribes in all Altona churches. Three friends of Lieben are interrogated; two of them claim Lieben has told them about the Countess taking bribes.
- Ultimo March–primo April 1719** Meetings between Reventlow and his new committee against corruption, involving the two City Councilors Joenssen and Archenholtz, discussing evidence of libel and bribes.
- March–April 1719** Dippel writes documents, no longer existing, attacking the Reventlows for taking bribes and attempts to send those documents to the King in Copenhagen.
Dippel publishes the booklet *Hell-Polierte Secten-Spiegel* in Hamburg, with a substantial theological preface by himself, indirectly attacking the Reventlows.
- 4 April 1719** Interrogation of Caseres, in which he points to Vincelius as a receiver of bribes for protection documents and implies that Reventlow knew about the bargain with the Vice Presidency.
- 23 March and 11 April** Dippel succeeds in sending letters to the King (not preserved), according to Reventlow.
- 25 April 1719** Personal letter from Reventlow to Sehested, relating Dippel's offense of his honor, demanding his extradition from Hamburg.
- 27 April 1719** A letter in French is signed by Caseres, in which he withdraws his testimony in the 4 April interrogation.
- 28 April 1719** A letter from Reventlow to the King, going through the case, demanding extradition of Dippel to Altona.
- 29 April 1719** Interrogation of Lieben who declines to incriminate Dippel.
- 2 May 1719** Dippel is seized in Hamburg and put on display in a pulpit as a public warning; Reventlow proposes to Sehested the appointment of a Commission to judge Dippel and proposes to Justice Councilor von Hagen to extend the accusation from libel to blasphemy.
- 4 May 1719** Dippel is extradited to Altona.
- 5 May 1719** The City Council committee submits its report to the King, demanding satisfaction for Dippel's offenses of themselves, proposing he be subjected to torture. The King appoints the Commission in Glückstadt, led by Baron F.U. von Soehlenthal.
- 9 May 1719** Reventlow demands of the King and Sehested that the new Commission must act at great speed and prioritize the rejection of Dippel's accusations against himself.
- 12 May 1719** In a letter to von Hagen, Reventlow attaches the newly printed pamphlet "Hell-Polirter Geckenspiegel", mocking Dippel, suggesting the hanging of him in a gilded gallows. In a letter

- to Sehested, he demands to be present at the opening of two of Dippel's trunks seized during his arrest in Hamburg.
- 16 May 1719** In letters to both Reventlow, Hagedorn, and the Commission, the German Chancellery rejects Reventlow's demands about the two trunks.
- 22 May 1719** The three members of the Commission begin working.
- 23–25 May 1719** The Commission completes nine interrogations of eleven witnesses in the presence of Dippel and the Reventlows.
- 26 May 1719** Dippel attempts, unsuccessfully, to file a complaint over procedure to the King; Reventlow complains to the King about the Commission, listing Dippel's crimes against himself, demanding a severe penalty.
- 30 May 1719** The Commission submits its halfway report to the King, not mentioning the attached interrogations; they mention a sealed parcel with new documents from Dippel which they refuse to open.
- Primo June 1719** The King repeatedly urges the Commission to speed up, not mentioning the sealed package.
- 20–22 June 1719** The Commission completes its second round of interrogations.
- 26 June 1719** The Commission submits its final report. Based on a new defense from Dippel, they sentence him for gossiping about the Reventlows. They propose a penalty: four more weeks of arrest, a public apology to the Reventlows and the payment of legal expenses.
- 1 August 1719** The Commission receives a letter from the King and the Reventlows in concert, demanding the opening of the sealed parcel with Dippel manuscripts.
- 8 August 1719** The Commission answers that the parcel has not been opened because of the speed demand.
- 15 August 1719** Letter from Reventlow to Sehested, demanding the breaking of the seal and the conclusion of the case.
- 22 August 1719** The King orders the Commission to break open the parcel.
- 29 August 1719** The Commission answers that they have broken the seal and found a compromise proposal from Dippel but no other news; they stick to their 26 June report.
- 2 September 1719** The King decides Dippel's punishment: banishment to Bornholm.
- 9 September 1719** Reventlow demands the sharpening of punishment in a personal letter to Sehested. There should be 1) a satisfaction ceremony for himself in Altona, with the burning of Dippel's writings in his own presence, and 2) the banishment to Bornholm must be for life.
- 12 September 1719** Reventlow shows up at a meeting in the State Council, persuading it to support the penalty.
- 13 September 1719** Reventlow instructs the King, in a personal letter, to order the Council to implement punishments.
- 15 September 1719** Reventlow demands in a letter to Sehested that Dippel be chained on the transport from Altona.
- 16 September 1719** The King ships his decree about the punishment to the Commission in Glückstadt. On top of the burning ceremony and prison for life, the instruction requires that Dippel lose his Councilor title, and the case files of the Commission be sent to Copenhagen.
- 28 September 1719** The punishment is completed: Dippel is stripped of his title, his writings are burned in the City Hall Square of Altona, and he is placed in chains on a guarded wagon to Copenhagen.
- October 1719** Dippel arrives at his cell in the castle ruin of Hammershus on Bornholm.
- 14 October 1719** The case files of the Commission and Dippel's royal appointment letter are burned in Copenhagen.

- C. 1720** Dippel corresponds with the law scholar Andreas Hojer in Copenhagen.
- 8 June 1721** Traytorant contacts Wittgenstein regarding a Rotterdam fundraising for Dippel's release.
- 1722–23** Niels Westh replaces Commandant Ambschoff on Bornholm, relaxing Dippel's conditions.
- 13 February 1724** Dippel answers a request from Frederik IV about gold-making.
- 26 August 1724** Count Wittgenstein writes to Reventlow about Dippel's release.
- March 1725** Dippel encounters the ghost of Czar Peter the Great on Hammershus.
- Spring of 1725** Dippel writes articles on gold figurines from Bornholm and the gold horn from Sleswick.
- 25 April 1725** Wittgenstein again writes to Reventlow about Dippel's release.
- June 1725** Dippel's archeological papers are published in Hamburg.
- 21 August 1725** Reventlow answers Wittgenstein, rejecting any support to Dippel's release.
- Spring of 1726** Dippel is visited by Danish and English naval officers.
- 11 June 1726** Frederik IV orders the release of Dippel after an initiative by Queen Anna Sophie.
- 30 June 1726** Dippel leaves Bornholm for Scania.
- September 1726–January 1727** Dippel stays with merchant Hoffmeister in Kristianstad.
- September 1726** Parliament begins in Stockholm.
- Ultimo January 1727** Dippel arrives in Stockholm with the pietist von Walcker and is celebrated by local Dippelians.
- July 1727** Dippel publishes *Helle Glantz des Evangelii Jesu Christi* with 153 questions targeting the Swedish clergy.
- August 1727** The clerical estate convinces the Parliament to banish Dippel from Sweden.
- 5 December 1727** Dippel leaves Stockholm.
- December 1727–March 1728** Dippel stays with friends in Scania, spreading pietism and separatism.
- March 1728** Dippel arrives in Copenhagen from Malmö.
- 28 June 1728** Dippel reports in a letter about his sojourn in Copenhagen; he is wooed by two competing parties at court, the group around Queen Anna Sophie and the group around her stepson, Crown Prince Christian.
- Late September 1728** Dippel leaves Copenhagen for Hamburg.
- 20–23 October 1728** The fire of Copenhagen.
- Primo 1729** Dippel publishes *Vera demonstratio evangelica* (True proof of the Gospel) in Hamburg, including the *Helle Glantz* writing from Stockholm, his political theology from Altona, and his report about his sojourn in Sweden.
- 1729** Dippel roams around in the North of Germany, from Hamburg, Lauenburg, Lüneburg, Celle, and Braunschweig and to Liebenburg, from where he is banished.
- November 1729** Dippel arrives with Count Casimir von Wittgenstein in Berleburg, a haven for separatists and pietists. Dippel moves in with Johann Samuel Carl and his family.
- Early 1730** Dippel stays with Count August von Wittgenstein in Laasphe.
- 1730** Johann Samuel Carl and Dippel launch the periodical *Geistliche Fama* in Berleburg.
- 1730** The moderate pietist Adam Struensee arrives to serve as a court preacher in Berleburg.
- September 1730** Count Zinzendorf appears in Berleburg to persuade the flock there to join his new Herrnhuter sect.
- 12 October 1730** King Frederik IV dies in Odense.
- 1731** Dippel is involved in a polemic with rationalist theologian Peter Hanssen.
- 6 June 1731** King Christian VI is anointed at Frederiksborg Castle, Hillerød.
- August 1732** The young Frankfurt doctor J.F. Senckenberg visits Berleburg, idolizing Dippel.

Ultimo 1732 Carl moves to Halle with his daughter and son-in-law Adam Struensee; later both of them attack Dippel.

1733 Dippel is appointed Court Councilor by Count Ernst of Hesse-Darmstadt and negotiates with him to take over Frankenstein as a fief against the recipe of an elixir.

April 1734 Dippel visits Schloß Wittgenstein, waiting for his old friend Count August to return.

25 April 1734 Dippel dies from a stroke at Schloß Wittgenstein.

1 October 1738 Count Christian Ditlev von Reventlow dies at the castle of Tølløsegaard.

1 June 1739 Countess Benedicte von Brockdorff dies at the castle of Tølløsegaard.

7 January 1743 Queen Anna Sophie dies at the castle of Clausholm.

1747 The popular edition of Dippel's collected works appears in three volumes, more than 3,000 pages.

Register of the Dippel Case Files, State Archives Copenhagen

Case files can be found under this headline:

“Arkivskaber: Tyske Kancelli, Slesvig-holsten-lauenburgske Kancelli

Arkivserie: Akter i sagen mod kancelliråd J. C. Dippel i Altona (1718–1719) Løbenummer: B141–B142”

The Register follows the existing sequence of documents in the Archives, partially sorted in folders by a German scholar, probably Rustmeier

Language and size are noted; author, recipient, date and place if indicated or implied

“F4” is Frederik IV; “R” is Reventlow; “S” is Sehested

I Folder: “König an die Kommission u. Antwortschreiben der Ko”

- I.1) From F4 to the Commission, German, dat. Copenhagen den 13te Mäy 1719, 3 pp.
- I.2) Copies of F4 letters of 13 May and 7 June 1719, 4 pp.
- I.3) From the Commission to F4, German, sign. F. von Söhlenthal, Wolff, G. Schröder, dat. “Glückstadt den 30te Mäy Anno 1719”, 6 pp.
- I.4) “Formular”, German, unsigned, no date, folded as an envelope; on the flip side: “allerunterthänigste Relation. Mit Beßlagen No. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. Sign: Cum” (must belong to the letter VI.4 of June 26, the attachments mentioned are docs. I.14-I.20), 2 pp.
- I.5) “Examen testis des Judes Casseres”, German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 14 special questions, “Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona auf dem Rahthaus den 23te Mäy 1719”. Mrk. “Lit: A.”, 7 pp.
- I.6) “Examen testis Michel Christian Lieben, senioris”, German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 12 special questions, “Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona auf dem Rahthaus den 25te Mäy 1719”. Mrk. “Lit: B.”, 5 pp.
- I.7) “Examen testis Michel Christian Lieben, junior:”, German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 5 special questions, “Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona den 24te Mäy 1719”. Mrk. “Lit: C.”, 3 pp.
- I.8) “Examen testis des Pachters der Straßes Reinigung, Hinrich Jost v Fielden”, German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 5 special questions, “Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona den 25te Mäy 1719”. Mrk. “Lit: D.”, 4 pp.
- I.9) “Examen testis der Collecteur Johann Janssen”, German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 7 special questions, “Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona den 25te Mäy 1719”. Mrk. “Lit: E.”, 3 pp.
- I.10) “Examen testis, der Jfr. Schlemans”, German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 6 special questions, “Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona der 25te Mäy 1719”. Mrk. “Lit: F.”, 3 pp.
- I.11) “Examen testium Jochim Hinrich Jönsen, Johan Hinrich Archenholtz, Johan Marquard Esmarck”, German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 19 special questions. “Testes

- imposito silentio dimissi. Actum Altona auf dem Rahthaus den 24te May 1719". Mrk. "Lit: G.", 11 pp.
- I.12) "Examen Testis Andreas Bandau", German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 14 special questions, "Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona auf dem Rahthaus den 24te May 1719". Mrk. "Lit: H.", 5 pp.
- I.13) "Examen Testis, Michael Dehncke", German (two columns with questions left and answers right)), 5 special questions, "Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona auf dem Rahthaus den 24te May 1719". Mrk. "Lit: I", 3 pp.
- I.14) "Examen Testis H: Secretaire Esmarcken", German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 10 special questions, "Actum Altona den 20te Juny 1719" Mrk. "No. 1", 5 pp.
- I.15) "Examen testis der Jüdin de Casseres", German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 26 special questions, "Actum Altona den 20te Juny 1719. Testis imposito silentio dismisso". Mrk. "No. 2", 7 pp.
- I.16) "Examen testis der Juden de Casseres jun", German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 26 special questions, "Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona den 21te Juny 1719". Mrk. "No. 3", 5 pp.
- I.17) "Examen testis Michel Christian Lieben der ältere", German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 18 special questions, "Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona den 21te Juny 1719". Mrk. "No. 4", 6 pp.
- I.18) "Examen testis Christian Niclas Lieben, junior", German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 4 special questions, "Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona den 21te Juny 1719". Mrk. "No. 5", 2 pp.
- I.19) "Examen Testis des Collecteurs Johan Jansen", German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 16 special questions, "Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona den 22te. Juny 1719". Mrk. "No. 6", 6 pp.
- I.20) "Examen Testis Advocati Kühn", German (two columns with questions left and answers right), 37 special questions, "Testis imposito silentio dimissus. Actum Altona den 21te Juny 1719". Mrk. "No. 6", 16 pp.
- I.21) "P.S." on a parcel with documents, probably containing I.14-1.20, undated, unsigned, 1 p.
- I.22) "Extractus Protocolli welches gehalten in Altona den 26te May 1719", German, exchange between H.C.R. Dippelius and H.Doct. Koltemann, mrk. "O", 6 pp.
- I.23) Letter from F4 to the Commission, German, "7te Juny 1719", "... an den zur Untersuchung der Dippelischen Sache Verordnete Commissarien" mrk. "Lit B", 2 pp.
- I.24) Letter from F4 to the Commission, German, "den 16ten Juny 1719" "... an den zur Untersuchung der Dippelischen Sache Verordnete Commissarien" mrk. "Lit C", 2 pp.

II Loose sheets

- II.1) "Indkommen den 13. Aug: 1719", Danish, a onepager with 8 short messages regarding military movements around Christianstad (must be a military document from the Great Northern War, misplaced among the Dippel case files), 1 p.
- II.2) Letter to F4 from the Commission, German, signed Söhlenthal, Wolff and G. Schröder, "Altona den 29 Septbr Anno 1719", with address and seal, 2 pp.
- II.3) "Extract Protocolli", German, "Copenhagen, den 14 octobr: 1719", 1 p.

III A folder marked “Graf Reventl. an Geh. Rat Sehested wie an die Kommissarien”

- III.1) From R to “Herr Justitz-Raht”, German, Altona 2te May 1719, 3 pp.
- III.2) From R to “Herr Justitz-Raht”, German, Altona 9te May 1719, 4 pp.
- III.3) From R to S, French, Altona 25 davr (April) 1719, 5 pp.
- III.4) From R to S, French, Altona, 28 avril 1719 3 pp
- III.5) From R to “Herr Geheim Raht und Ober Secretaire” (S), German, Altona 12te Mäy 1719, 4 pp.
- III.6) From R to S, French, Altona 2 May 1719, 3 pp
- III.7) Loose sheet, a French PS to a letter from R to S in the middle of May 1719, maybe III.8; it refers to “le 22. de ce moys” as being in the near future, 1 p.
- III.8) From R to S, French, Altona 19 May 1719, 4 pp.
- III.9) R to “Monsieur” (S), French, Clash. [most probably Clausholm], 17 juin 1719, 4 pp.
- III.10) R to “hr. geh. rath” (S), German, Altona, 15. August 1719, 4 pp.
- III.11) R to S, German, Copenhagen, 9. September 1719, 9 pp.
- III.12) R to “Monsieur” (S), French, Cophag. 15. sept. 1719, 2 pp.

IV A folder marked “Graf Rev. an den König” (the folder now torn in two)

- IV.1) Letter from R to F4, German, “Altona den 5te Mäy 1719”, 6 pp
- IV.2) Letter from R to S, French, “Altona le 9 de May 1719”, 4 pp.
- IV.3) Letter from R to S, French, “Altona le 5. de May 1719”, 4 pp.
- IV.4) Letter from R to F4, German, “Altona den 9te Mäy Anno 1719”, 3 pp.
- IV.5) Letter from R to F4, German, “Altona den 26te Mäy”, 5 pp.
- IV.6) Loose sheet, 3 s., undated, unsigned but probably by R to F4 early April 1719, German, goes through 10 numbered references, of which nos. 4–10 are docs. IV.7)–14), 3 pp.
- IV.7) Unaddressed document signed Joh. Hend. Sentrup, German, Hamburg 31 Martÿ 1719, about “dem Juden Casserer”, Mrk. “Lit. D” and “O”, 3 pp.
- IV.8) Loose sheet signed R, German, variant of IV.9 “Altona 31 Martÿ 1719”, 1 p.
- IV.9) One-page doc with a later addition on the top indicating this was what R had read aloud in Altona’s churches, German, dated “Altona 31 Martÿ 1719”, 1 pp.
- IV.10) Doc. marked “Copia” “No. 4”, containing copies of three different documents: (4 pp.)
 - a) Unaddressed declaration signed Andreas Bandau, German, variant of VI.10, “29te Martÿ 1719”, 2 pp.
 - b) Letter from Dippel to Hirschfeldt “Ministre de la Parole de Dieu, Altona”, German, undated, 1 p.
 - c) Dito, German, undated, 2 pp.
- IV.11) Document containing copies of 4 documents (all in all 5 pp.):
 - a) “No. 5”, A letter to Chancellery Councilor “Tiempel” (Dippel), from “Ihren willigen dienerin”, German, sent Altona one Thursday morning, 1 pp.
 - b) “No.6” letter to “Pastor” (from Dippel to Hirschfeldt), German, Hamburg 30te Martÿ 1719, unfinished, variant of VI.11, 4 pp.

- c) “No.7”, unaddressed letter from Johann Berend Otte, German, Hamburg d 21 Febr: 1719, 1 p.
- d) “No. 8”, note by David Otte, German, Hamburg d 21sten Febr: 1719, 1 p.
- IV.12) Document containing 5 documents (all in all 7 pp.)
- a–b) “No. 7 Lit. A”, “No. 8 Lit. B”, German – variants of IV.11), Nos. 7–8, 1 p.
- c–d) “9)” Two further documents signed D. Otte, German, Hamburg d 20 Martÿ; 2 pp.
- e) “Lit. C. No. 10”, unaddressed, unsigned declaration letter, Dutch, “Altona d 16 Martÿ. product. in Commissione 28 Martÿ 1719”,
- IV.13) “No. 9”, interrogation report signed J.M. Archenholtz, with testimony from Claus Eickhoff, Caspar Dionis de Casserer, and Isaac Israel, German, 63 special questions, Altona d 4. April 1719
- IV.14) “No. 10”, variant of IV.12), Dutch, “product. in Commissione, d 28sten Martÿ 1719”, 3 pp.
- IV.15) Letter from R to F4, French, “Fridrichsburg le 13 de Septbr. 1719”, 3 pp.

V A folder marked “König an die Kommission” (mostly drafts from the German Chancellery in Copenhagen)

- V.1) Draft of letter from F4 to the Commission, German, d 22te Augusti 1719, 3 pp.
- V.2) Draft of letter from F4 to the Commission, German, den 16. Junii 1719, 4 pp.
- V.3) Draft of letter from F4 to the Commission, German, Coldingen den 7. Junii 1719, 3 pp.
- V.4) Draft of letter from F4/S to R, German, 16 Maji 1719, 4 pp.
- V.5) Draft of letter from S to Hagedorn i Hamburg, German, d 16. Maji 1719, 3 pp.
- V.6) Draft of letter from F4 to Soehlenthal, Wolff and Schroeder, the Commission in Glückstadt, German, 16. Maji 1719, 3 pp.
- V.7) Draft of letter from F4 to Soehlenthal, Wolff and Schroeder, the Commission in Glückstadt, German, d 13 Maji, 4 pp.
- V.8) Letter from S to Conseiller de Justice von Hagen, French, no date, 4 pp.
- V.9) Letter from Soehlenthal, Wolff, Schroeder, the Commission to F4 and R. Glückstadt d 8te Augusti 1719, 6 pp.
- V.10) Draft of letter from S to R, German, d. 2. Septembr. 1719, 4 pp.
- V.11) Draft of letter from F4 to the Commission, German, d 16 Sept. 1719, 4 pp.
- V.12) Draft of letter from F4 to the Commission, German, no date (draft of I.23, 7. June 1719), 2 pp.

VI Loose sheets

- VI.1) One-sheet note signed R, German, variant of IV.9), 31 Martÿ 1719, 1 p.
- VI.2) Uncut anonymous pamphlet aimed against Christianus Democritus, titled “Hell-Polirter Gecken-Spiegel worin so gar balde der Secten-Spiegel”, German, Amsterdam 1719, lying in a contemporaneous folder [probably authored or commissioned by Reventlow and printed in Altona-Hamburg], 8 pp.
- VI.3) Letter from the Commission to F4, German, Altona 23. Junii 1719, 2 pp.
- VI.4) Letter from the Commission to F4, German, Altona 26. Junii 1719, 4 pp.
- VI.5) Sealed letter from Caspar Dionis Casserer to “Monseigneur!”, French, “Altona 27 avril 1719”, mrk. “no. 1”, 1 p.

- VI.6) Letter from Dippel to “Monseigneur”, French, with a seal mark hard to decipher, undated, 1 p.
- VI.7) Letter from Dippel to “Monsieur de Holstein, Conseilleur Prive pour M. R. Danoise”, German, Hamburg 30 März 1719, 3 pp.
- VI.8) Letter to Dippel in Hamburg (from Holstein?), German, with a warning, mrk. “Lit. D”, difficult to read, no date, sealed, 1 p.
- VI.9) An invoice to C.M. Lieben from J. Jönsen, German, Altona 27 april 1719, Mrk. “No. 4”
- VI.10) Copy of a letter signed A. Baudan (prepared by J. Jönsen and Archenholtz), German, “Altona 29 Martii 1719”, German, variant of IV.10.a, Mrk. “No. 3”, 2 pp.
- VI.11) “No.2 Extract aus der H. Dippelii Schreiben” from 30. Martij to Hirschfeldt, German, variant of IV.11.b, 2 pp.
- VI.12) Letter from R to F4, German, “Altona 28ten April 1719”, 8 pp.
- VI.13) Loose sheet signed B.B., German, later dated “Altona d 8. April 1717”, 1 p.
- VI.14) Copy of letter from S to R, German, 2 September 1719, 2 pp.
- VI.15) Empty envelope dated 29 May 1719, maybe with VI.13, 1 p.
- VI.16) Letter from the Commission to F4, German, “Glückstadt 29 Aug. 1719”, signed Söhlenthal, Wolff, G. Schröder, 3 pp.
- VI.17) Letter from C.H. von Perckentin in Pinneberg to F4, German, “Pinneberg 24te Maj 1718”, 6 pp.

VII Folder marked “Rat von Altona am Kö mit Unterlagen”

- VII.1) Letter to Geheimbter-Raht, Ober-Secretaire und Amtmann (S), German, “Altona den 24ten Maj 1718”, signed Jo.Henr.Jönsen, Joh.Henr.Archenholtz, Heinrich Neuhaus, Hinrich Behn, 2 pp.
- VII.2) Letter to F4, German, “Altona 28ten Jun. 1718”, signed Jo.Henr.Jönsen, Joh.Henz.Archenholtz, Heinrich Neuhaus, Hinrich Behn, 3 pp.
- VII.3) Letter to Geheimbter-Raht, Ober-Secretaire und Amtmann (S), German, Altona 28ten Jun. 1718, sign. Jo.Henr.Jönsen, Joh.Henz.Archenholtz, Heinrich Neuhaus, Hinrich Behn, 2 pp.
- VII.4) “Eid- und Pflichtmässiger Bericht So den Von H. Cantzley-Rath Dippelio übergebenen speciebus factorum et administratæ justitiæ entgegen gesetzet Und zwar erstlich In Sachen Andreas Bandauen ctra Frantz Meyers Erbe”, German, the Altona City Council’s report “In Sache contra Frantz Meyer prod. in Senat Alten; den 25ten Febr: 1717”, later dated “28. Juni 1718”, 16 pp.
- VII.5) “Ohnvergreiffliche Anmerckungen”, German, report on Dippel’s “Species factorum”, addressing the cases Bandau v. Meyer and Christian Nicolas Lieben v. Isaac de Buisers Wittwe, probably by the Altona City Council, unaddressed, undated, unsigned, 31 pp.
- VII.6) “Extractus protocolli Judicialis”, German, copy by Esmarck, 23 May 1718, 1 p.
- VII.7) Letter from the City Council to F4, German, “Altona d 5 May 1719”, signed Jo.Henr.Jönsen, Joh. Henr.Archenholtz, Heinrich Neuhaus, Hinrich Behn, 2 pp.
- VII.8) “Species facti”, German, “Altona 5ten Maj 1719”, the City Council committee’s report, signed Jo. Henr.Jönsen, Joh.Henr.Archenholtz, Heinrich Neuhaus, Hinrich Behn, 8 pp.
- VII.9) Loose sheet dated “Anno 1719 d. 1 May”, German, on C.N. Lieben, signed Jönsen and Archenholtz, 1 p.
- VII.10) “Extract” on Caseres 27 april 1719, French, extract from VI.5, 1 p.
- VII.11) “Extract” from Dippel’s letter to Hirschfeldt, German, Hamburg 30 martz 1719, variant of VI.11, 1 p.
- VII.12) Interrogation sheet by Jönsen, Archenholtz and secretary Esmarck, German, den 29 april 1719, 16 questions to Michael Christian Lieben, 3 pp.

- VII.13) Interrogation by Archenholtz and secretary Esmarck, German, 8 special questions to Jorge Jenckel, Christian Philip Schroeter and Michael Dencke, "1719 d 31 Martÿ", 5 pp.
 VII.14) One sheet signed R, German, variant of IV.9), 31 March 1719, 1 p.

VIII Loose sheets

- VIII.1) Letter from R to F4 on Lieben, German, Copenhagen d 17 Febr. 1718, 3 pp.
 VIII.2) "Pro memoria", draft of letter to F4, probably by R, German, undated, unsigned, 1 p.
 VIII.3) Letter from Maria de Buÿser to F4, Altona d 24 Decemb. 1717, 4 pp.
 VIII.4) Letter from Christian Nicholas Lieben to R, German, Altona d 21 Decb 1717 (5 pp.), plus five attachments (A-E) (5 pp.) Marked with "O", all in all 11 pp.
 VIII.5) Letter from curator Friedrich Weber on behalf of Büyser's guarantor Fr. Holsten (who signs with a cross as she is unable to write), German, Altona d. 6 Novembr. 1717, 10 pp.
 VIII.6) Letter from R to F4, German, Copenhagen d 20 Januarij 1718, 5 pp.
 VIII.7) Letter from Dippel to F4, German, "Altena d 21 Dec. 1717", 3 pp.
 VIII.8) "Species facti et administratæ Justitiæ" 1–2, German, undated, unsigned; Dippel's attachment to VIII.7), 8 pp.
 VIII.9) "PP", copy of document authored by Dippel against the Altona City Council, German, introduced by an unknown, undated, unsigned, 4 pp.

Other Archivalia

Fürstlich Wittgensteinisches Archiv, Bad Laasphe, D49

Royal Library (Det kongelige Bibliotek), Copenhagen, Personalthistorien vedkommende, Johan Ludvig Holstein, Æske 1: 1–7, D-E, 130025244363

Royal Library (Det kongelige Bibliotek), Copenhagen, Samlinger til Bornholms beskrivelse, 130023929059

Landesarchiv NRW Abteilung Westfalen, Briefe an den Baron von Geuder, genannt Rabensteiner, 6507m Msc. VII, Briefe von Johann Conrad Dippel, 1706–15

State Archives (Rigsarkivet), Copenhagen: Kongehuset Frederik 4. 202 1698–1730 Egenhændige optegnelser m.m., ME 211–1

State Archives (Rigsarkivet), Copenhagen: Patenten, Tyske Kancelli, Indenrigske Afdeling

State Archives (Rigsarkivet), Copenhagen: Protokol over udgående Sager ved Krigskancelliet fra primo Juni Anno 1726. Sag nr. 556 (11. juni) State Archives (Rigsarkivet), Copenhagen: Hamburg: Hans Statius von Hagedorns gesandtskabsarkiv: 1719. Løbenummer: 18–109. Tyske Kancelli Udenrigske Afdeling 301

Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 211–2, O 13; Alt-/Vorsignatur: O 1488

Universitätsbibliothek J.C. Senckenberg, Frankfurt: Senckenberg, Johann Christian: Tagebücher. Vol., 2: Observationes in me ipso factae (August–Dezember 1732), bearbejdet af Vera Faßhauer, Na 31,2; https://www.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/senckenberg/senckenberg_band_02.xml.

Universitätsbibliothek J.C. Senckenberg, Frankfurt: Senckenberg, Johann Christian: Tagebücher. Vol., 3: Observationes in me ipso factae (Januar–April 1733), bearbejdet af Vera Fa.hauer, Na 31,3; https://www.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/senckenberg/senckenberg_band_03.xml.

A special thanks to Vera Faßhauer, Universität Erfurt, for references to her transcriptions of Senckenberg's Diaries and Fürst Wittgenstein Archiv

References

In references to works by Dippel not in this list, the 1747 version of Dippel's collected works is used, referred to as Eröff I–III

- Altona gegen Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts* (map, no year, no author), Altona: Verlag der Schlüter'schen Buchhandlung; https://www.christian-terstegge.de/hamburg/karten_altona/files/1700_altona_450dpi.jpeg
- Altona im Jahre 1745* (map, no year, no author), Altona: Verlag der Schlüter'schen Buchhandlung; https://www.christian-terstegge.de/hamburg/karten_altona/files/1745_altona_450dpi.jpeg
- Andersen, Dan H. (2021) *Store Nordiske Krig*, I–II, København: Politikens Forlag
- Andreas, Holger (1993) “Zur Chemie von Johann Conrad Dippel”, in *Mitteilungen, Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker / Fachgruppe Geschichte der Chemie* Bd 9 (1993), Frankfurt/Main, 11–18
- anonymous [ascribed to Dippel, J.K.] (1704) *Unschuld und Nothwendigkeit des Rechts der Natur und dessen Lehrwider das ungegründete Vorgehen des AUTHORIS des Licht- und Rechts / dargethan von einem Liebhaber der Wahrheit. Leipzig / In Verlegung Friedrich Lanckischens seel. Erben / 1704.*
- anonymous (1704–05) (Michaelis, J.H. (first vol.); Stryck, J.S. (vol. 2–4)) *Licht und Recht, 1 bis 4te Entdeckung*, vol. I–IV, 1704–05, no printer and place indicated
- anonymous [King Friedrich I of Prussia] (1709) *Der nach Urtheil und Recht gestraffte Goldmacher Cajetani*, single sheet print, no printer and place indicated
- anonymous [Dippel, J.K.] (1718) *Glückwünschender Zuruff An die Würdige und andächtige Herren Gerichts-Diener der Stadt Altona/ Nachdem dieselbe ohnlängst/ in denen passirten excessiv-heissen Hunds-Tagen dieses 1718. Jahres/ Vom jetzigen Hn. Probsten/ und dann dem gewesenen Vice-Praesidenten erwehnter Stadt/ Hn. Land-Reuther/ Ordentlich zu Mit-Gehülffen an den heiligen Sacramenten sind installiret worden, Und Den Ersten Tauff-Actum, Den 16. Augusti, An zweyen den Eltern mit Gewalt entzogenen Kindern executive verrichten helffen. In voller Hoffnung/ Auch bald unter die Sacraments-Diener mit auffgenommen zu werden/ Ausgeschüttet und gesungen Von Dem Scharff-Richter erwehnter Stadt. O.O.O.J. [1718]*
- anonymous [probably Reventlow, C.D.] (1719) “Hell-Polirten Geckenspiegel”, Amsterdam: Betkio [probably Altona or Hamburg]
- anonymous (1735) *CHRISTIANUS DEMOCRITUS REDIVIVUS. Das ist: Der zwar gestorbene, aber in seinen Schriften noch lebende und nimmer sterbende Königl. Dänische Cantzeley-Rath DIPPEL, in Einem summarischen Auszuge seiner ehemaligen und letztern Theologischen Schriften, Denen Liebhabern der unpartheyischen Wahrheit mitgetheilet von einem ungenannten Freunde derselben*, Altona, no printer indicated [probably by J.F. Bachstrom]
- anonymous (1790) *Historische Nachricht von dem betrügerischen Leben und unrühmlichen Ende des angeblichen Grafen Don Dominiko Emanuel Caetano Conte de Ruggiero, eines falschen Goldmachers, welcher den 29sten August 1709, zu Cüstrin gehängt worden. Aus den peinlichen Untersuchungsakten gezogen*, Berlin und Frankfurt a.d. Oder: Johann Andreas Kunze
- anonymous (1861) “Der königlich preußische Generalmajor Don Dominico Manuel Caetano, Graf von Ruggiero, ein Goldmacher. (Berlin – Küstrin). 1705–1709”, in: Julius E. Hitzig, Willibald Häring (W. Alexis), udg.: *Der neue Pitaval. Eine Sammlung der interessantesten Criminalgeschichten aller Länder aus älterer und neuerer Zeit*. Theil 29 = Folge 3, Theil 5. Brockhaus, Leipzig 1861, 337–352
- anonymous (1889) *Den danske civile Centraladministrations Embedsetat*, København: Bianco Lunos Kgl. Hof-Bogtrykkeri

- anonymous (no year) *Behauptungen und Irrtümer zum Frankenstein und was Historiker dazu sagen*, Darmstadt-Eberstadt: Geschichtsverein Eberstadt/Frankenstein
- Arnold, Gottfried (1729) *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie: vom Anfang des Neuen Testaments biss auf das Jahr Christi 1688*, Frankfurt am Mayn: Thomas Fritschens sel. Erben (first 1698–1700)
- Aynsley, E.E. and W.A. Campbell (1962) “JOHANN KONRAD DIPPEL, 1673–1734”, in *Med Hist* 1962 Jul; 6(3), 281–86
- Bartholdy, Nils G. (1977) “Adelsbegrebet under den ældre enevælde. Sammenhængen med privilegier og rang i tiden 1660–1730”, *Historisk Tidsskrift*, Bind 12. række, 5 (1971), 577–650
- Bartoli, Jens (2008) “The Early Use of Prussian Blue in Paintings”, 9th International Conference on NDT of Art, Jerusalem Israel, 25–30 May 2008; <https://www.ndt.net/article/art2008/papers/029bartoll.pdf>
- Beck, Svend Cedergreen (red., 1979–84) *Dansk biografisk Leksikon*, third edition, updated 2014–16, lex. dk: <https://biografiskleksikon.lex.dk>
- Bell, David (1984) *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the age of Goethe*, London: Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London
- Bender, Wilhelm (1882) *Johann Konrad Dippel, der Freigeist aus dem Pietismus. Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Aufklärung*, Bonn: Eduard Weber
- Berti, Silvia, Françoise Charles-Daubert and Richard H. Popkin (eds.) (1996) *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Free Thought in Early Eighteenth-Century Europe. Studies on the Traité des trois imposteurs*, Dordrecht: Kluwer
- Bregnsbo, Michael (1997) *Folk skriver til kongen: supplikkerne og deres funktion i den dansk-norske enevælde i 1700-tallet: en kildestudie i Danske Kancellis supplikprotokoller*, København: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til Dansk Historie
- Bricka, C.F. (ed. 1890) *Dansk Biografisk Lexikon*, first edition, Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag (F. Hegel & Søn); <http://runeberg.org/dbl/>
- Buchner, Karl (1858) “Johann Konrad Dippel”, in *Historisches Taschenbuch*, Dritte Folge, Neunte Jahrgang (ed. F. von Rauther), Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 207–356
- Carl, Johann Samuel (1733) *Zeugnuß chymischer Storgerey*, Franckfurt und Leipzig: Johann Christoph Göpner
- Cassirer, Ernst (1932) *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung*, Tübingen: J.C.E. Mohr
- Christensen, Lars (2022) *Den danske drøm om revanche. Store Nordiske Krig 1700–1721*, København: Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1705) *Weg-Weiser Zum verlohrrnen Licht und Recht. Oder Entdecktes Geheimnü., Beydes der Gottseligkeit und der Boßheit*, vol. I–II, no printer or place indicated; also in Eröff I, 779–918 ; 919–1037
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1706) *Ein Hirt und eine Heerde, oder ohnfehlbare Methode, alle Sekten und Religionen zur einigen wahren Kirche und Religion zu bringen*. (Amsterdam is given as print location on the title page; it was really published in Hamburg: Liebezeit)
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1707) *Berlinische Arrest-Gedanken. Gedruckt im Jahr 1707. Melod: An Wasser-Flussens Babylons*, no place or printer indicated
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1709) *Eröffneter Weg zum Frieden mit Gott und allen Creaturen Durch die publication aller bis hieher edirter Schrifften Christiani Democriti: Nebst einer kurzen allgemeinen Vorrede des Auctoris*, Amsterdam: Bey Henrich Betkii Erben
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1719) “Vorrede”, in Grammendorf (1719), also in Eröff II, 573–97 under the title *Christ. Democriti Grundriß zu einem Systemate Theologico*
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1725) *Christiani Democriti Eröffnete Muhtmassungen und Merckwürdige Gedancken über Herrn Jacobs von Melle [...] Commentatiunculam de simulacris Aureis*

- &c. oder dessen kurtze Beschreibung von den Göl denen Bildergen welche auf der/ in der Ost-See liegenden/ Insul Bornholm [...] gefunden worden [...]. Denen noch beygefüget ein Antworts-Schreiben ad Amicum Bornholmiens. darinnen Er seine wahrschrinliche Meynung von dem in Jütland gefundenen Göl denen Horn, [...] entdeckt, Hamburg: Piscator; also in Eröff II, 598–632
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1727a) *Irenæi Pfaffiomagistis, oder Friedlieb Pfaffenstäupers Teutsche Uebersetzung obstehenden Epigrammatis ...*. Stockholm, no printer indicated
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1727b) *Der von den Nebeln des Reichs der Verwirrung gesäuberte Helle Glantz des Evangelii Jesu Christi, oder Schrift- und Wahrheit-mässiger Entwurf der Heyls-Ordnung*, in 153. *Fragen aus einander gelegt [...]* Stockholm Anno 1727. im Monath Julio. Stockholm, no printer indicated; also in *Vera demonstratio* og Eröff II 657–709 under the title *Schrift- und Wahrheit-Mässiger Entwurf*.
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1727b) hand-written copy of Christianus Democritus 1727a, Royal Library Copenhagen, Thotts Sml., Nr. 214, 4to.
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1729) *Vera demonstratio evangelica*, Franckfurt und Leipzig, no printer indicated; also in Eröff II, 573–97; 633–838, here cut up in its parts in a different sequence leaving out a Latin version of one part
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1730) *FATVM FATVVM Das ist Die thörige Nohtwendigkeit*, Altona 1730, “auf Kosten eines Freundes”, no printer indicated (first version 1708), also in Eröff II, 1–123
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (c. 1730) *Kurtzes Verzeichnüß vom Gebrauch einiger bewährten Artzeneyen: derselben bey vorfallender Noth zu brauchen, auch andern damit zu dienen / Welche Christianus Democritus Einem seiner nahen Anverwandten mitgetheilt*, incomplete, no place or printer indicated, <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/urn:urn:nbn:de:hebis:30:2-46497>
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1733) *Ein Aufrichtiger Protestant gegen ein in verwichener Leipziger Jubilate-Messe ihm fälschlich zugeschriebenes Scriptum*, no printer or place indicated, also in Eröff III, 399–467
- Christianus Democritus [Dippel, J.K.] (1747) *Eröffneter Weg zum Frieden mit Gott und allen Creaturen: Durch die Publication der sämtlichen Schrifften Christiani Democriti; In Drey Bänden, Welche Er selbst nach und nach bis an seinen Tod dem Druck hat übergeben ...* vol. I–III, Berleburg: Johann Jacob Haug – here referred to as Eröff I–III
- Copenhaver, Brian P. (1992) *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English translation, with notes and introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP
- Cordatus Libertinus [Dippel, J.K.] (1717) *Unpartheyische Gedanken über Theodori Dassovii Letzte Wuth und Raserey ...* Hamburg: Liebezeit; https://dfg-viewer.de/show?tx_dlf%5Bdouble%5D=0&tx_dlf%5Bid%5D=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.zvdd.de%2Fdms%2Fmetsresolver%2F%3FPPN%3DPPN684929821&tx_dlf%5Bpage%5D=16&cHash=324758954d8a38da2901d2a2e347ecf4
- Cronhelm, F.D.C. von (1750) *Corpus statutorum provincialium Holsatiae*, Bind I–V, Altona: Gebr. Burmester
- Danske Lov* [Danish Law] (1683), <http://bjoerna.dk/DL-1683-internet.pdf>
- Deppermann, Klaus (1961) *Der Hallesche Pietismus und der preußische Staat unter Friedrich III*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht
- Dreyer, Rasmus H.C. (in press) “Johann Conrad Dippel in Danish Radical Pietist Separatism and Medicine”, in Soboth, Christian (ed.) *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht
- Eggers, E.A.F. (1788) *Versuch über die peinliche Rechts- und Gerichts-Verfassung in Holstein*, Theil 1, Altona: Eckhardt
- Ehlen, Hanns Johann (1999) “Neue Funde zur Geschichte des Wortes “aufgeklärt”“, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100522204238/http://www.stjuergen-kiel.de/Aufklaerung.html>

- Einige Diener des Göttlichen Wortes (1719) "Nachricht von denen Straffen/ welche auf Sr. Königl. Majest. zu Dennemarck allergnädigsten Befehl, and dem, unter dem Nahmen Christiani Democriti bekannten Dippelio am 28. Sept. 1719 zu Altona vollzogen worden", in *Unschuldige Nachrichten von Alten und Neuen Theologischen Sachen*, Leipzig: Verlags Johann Friedrich Braun, 879–885; (a long quotation of the text is in Rustmeier 1957, 112–13)
- Eißner, Daniel (2014) "Der Pietismus. Eine *imagined community* im Untergrund?", in Mulsow and Multhammer (eds.) 2014, 81–98
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels (2010) *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul. The Material Spirit*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Engelhardt, Juliane (2017) "Pietisme og krise. Den halleske og radikale pietisme i den danske helstat under Christian 6", *Historisk Tidsskrift*, Vol. 116, No. Hæfte 2, 2017, 281–308
- Faßhauer, Vera (2018) "Selbsterkenntnis – Naturerfahrung – Gottesoffenbarung: Religiöses und ärztliches Virtuosentum bei Johann Christian Senckenberg und Johann Konrad Dippel", in Christine Aka, Dagmar Hänel (eds.)
- Prediger, Charismatiker, Berufene. Rolle und Einfluss religiöser Virtuosens*, Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 49–73
- Faßhauer, Vera (2022) "*Morbus, non pietas* – Medico-theologische Konzepte von Bußtrauer und Melancholie bei Christian Friedrich Richter, Johann Konrad Dippel und Johann Christian Senckenberg", in *Regionale Medizingeschichte Konzepte – Ergebnisse – Perspektiven*, in Gerhard Aumüller, Andreas Hedwig (eds.), Marburg: Historische Kommission für Hessen, 83–114
- Fink-Jensen, Morten (2016) "Alchemy in Denmark", in *Western Esotericism in Scandinavia* (ed. H. Bogdan and O. Hammer), Leiden/Boston: Brill, 11–17
- Fjelstrup, Søren August (1906) *Guldmagere i Danmark i det XVII. Aarhundrede, efter skrevne og trykte Kilder*, København: V. Pios Boghandel
- Freudenthal, J. (1895) "On the History of Spinozism", in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1895, vol 8, no. 1, 17–70
- Fuller, Steve (2005) *The Intellectual*, Cambridge: Icon Books
- Gay, Peter (1967–69) *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. I–II, New York: Knopf
- Geismar, Martin von (1963) *Bibliothek der deutschen Aufklärer des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, I–II, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (photographic reprint of the 1847 five-volume original, Leipzig: Otto Wigand)
- Geschichtsverein Eberstadt-Frankenstein (no year) *Sechs Irrtümer zum Frankenstein*, https://www.eberstadt-frankenstein.de/content/irrtuemer_neu.pdf
- Geyer-Kordesch, Johanna (2010) *Pietismus, Medizin, und Aufklärung in Preußen im 18. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer
- Goebel, Max (1860) *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westphälischen evangelischen Kirche*, vol. III: „Die niederrheinische reformierte Kirche und der Separatismus in Wittgenstein und am Niederrhein im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert“, Coblenz: Karl Bädeker
- Goldschmidt, Stephan (2001) *Johann Konrad Dippel: (1673–1734); seine radikalpietistische Theologie und ihre Entstehung*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht
- Grammendorf, Laurentius (1719) *Hell-Polirter Secten-Spiegel ... Samt eine Vorrede Christiani Democriti* (Amsterdam: Betkio; in reality Hamburg: Philipp Härtel)
- Grossmann, Walter (1976) *Johann Christian Edelmann: From Orthodoxy to Enlightenment*, Berlin: De Gruyter
- Grunwald, Max (1897) *Spinoza in Deutschland: Gekrönte Preisschrift*. Berlin: Verlag von S. Calvary & Co.
- Haakonssen, Knud (2017) "Holberg's Law of Nature and Nations", in *Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754): Learning and Literature in the Nordic Enlightenment*, (ed. K. Haakonssen and S. Olden-Jørgensen), London and New York: Routledge, 59–79

- Hanegraff, Wouter J., m. Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, Jean-Pierre Brach (eds.) (2006) *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, Leiden/ Boston: Brill
- Hannak, Kristine (2008) "Die 'alte, vernünftige Philosophie' als 'Weg=Weiser' zur Aufklärung: Johann Conrad Dippel (1673–1734) als Grenzgänger zwischen Pietismus, Hermetik und Frühaufklärung", in *Aufklärung und Esoterik. Rezeption – Integration – Konfrontation*. Ed. Monika Neugebauer-Wölk i samarbejde med Andre Rudolph. Tübingen, Niemeyer 2008, 53–75
- Hannak, Kristine (2012) "'Lebendige Erfahrung': Erkenntiskritik und Autonomiestreben zwischen Radikalpietismus und Aufklärung (Johann Conrad Dippel und Johann Christian Edelmann)", in *„Aus Gottes Wort und eigener Erfahrung gezeiget“ Erfahrung – Glauben, Erkennen und Handeln im Pietismus. Beiträge zum III. Internationalen Kongress für Pietismusforschung 2009*. Ed. Christian Soboth and Udo Sträter with Hartmut Lehmann, Thomas Müller-Bahlke and Johannes Wallmann. 2 vols. Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen 2012, 81–95
- Hannak, Kristine (2013) *Geist=reiche Kritik: Hermetik, Mystik und das Werden der Aufklärung in spiritualistischer Literatur der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter
- Harrington, Joel (2013) *Bøddel af Guds nåde. En skarpretters dagbog fra 1573–1617*, København: Lindhardt & Ringhof
- Hassø, A.G. and Kroman, E. (1962) *Tyske Kancelli II. Gehejmekonseilet 1670–1770* (introduction Carl S. Christiansen) Copenhagen: Munksgaard
- Heiberg, K. (1905–07) "Fra den religiøse Brydningstid i Aarene 1725–50", in *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger* vol. V no. 3, 435–67
- Helk, Vello (2002) "Danske, norske og slesvig-holstenske navne i gavebogen for den lutherske menighed i Leiden", in *Personalhistorisk tidsskrift* 2002 2., 299–331
- Henning, Karl (1881) *Johan Conrad Dippels Vistelse i Sverige samt Dippelianismen i Stockholm 1727–1741*, Uppsala: Akademiske Boktryckeriet
- Henningsen, Peter (2002) "Rang og titler klingre skal omkring mit navn som bjælder. Titulaturer, prædikater og patronymy i 1700-tallets Danmark", 1066. *Tidsskrift for historie* nr. 2, 2002.
- Hoyer, Andreas (1829; ms. prepared 1732) *König Friederich des Vierten glorwürdigstes Leben*, I-II, Tondern: Königliche privilegirte Buchdruckerey der Wittwe Forchhammer
- Holm, Edvard (1891) *Danmark-Norges Historie fra den Store Nordiske Krigs Slutning til Rigernes Adskillelse (1720–1814)*, vol. 1, Copenhagen: Nielsen & Lydiche
- Holm, Edvard (1895) "Den store Votering om den politiske Stilling udadtil i Efteraaret 1718", in *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 6. Hentet fra <https://tidsskrift.dk/historisktidsskrift/article/view/54584>
- Hoops, Johannes (1891) "Lessings Verhältnis zu Spinoza", in *ARCHIV FÜR DAS STUDIUM DER NEUEREN SPRACHEN UND LITTERATUREN*, XLV. JAHRGANG, 86. BAND, BRAUNSCHWEIG: GEORGE WESTERMANN
- Hunter, Ian (2001) *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Israel, Jonathan (2001) *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Israel, Jonathan (2006) *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man*, Oxford: Oxford U.P.
- Jacob, Margaret C. (1981) *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*, London: George Allen and Unwin
- Jacob, Margaret C. (2006) *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*, 2nd revised edition, Hot Springs Village: Cornerstone Books
- Jakobsen, Jesper (2022) "Politi og privatliv i 1700-tallets Altona. Johann Peter Willebrand om politimesterens pligter og opgaver", in *TEOL-information* no. 66, September 2022

- Jakubowski-Tiessen, Manfred (1983) *Der frühe Pietismus in Schleswig-Holstein: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Struktur*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht
- Jensen, Mads Langballe (2020) "Libertas philosophandi and natural law in early eighteenth-century Denmark-Norway", *Intellectual History Review*, 30:2, 209–231, DOI: 10.1080/17496977.2019.1643601
- Jessen, von Franz (1937) *Slægten von Jessen*, København: Det Hoffenbergske Etablissement
- Jørgensen, Troels G. (1961) *Andreas Hojer, jurist og historiker*, København: Arne Frost-Hansens Forlag
- Karl V (1900) *Die peinliche Gerichtsordnung Kaiser Karls V. Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* (ed. J. Kohler and W. Scheel), Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses (org. 1532)
- Koch, Hal and Bjørn Kornerup (eds., 1951) *Den danske Kirkes Historie*, vol. V, København: Gyldendal
- Koch, Philippa (2015) "Slavery, Mission, and the Perils of Providence in Eighteenth-Century Christianity: The Writings of Whitefield and the Halle Pietists", *Church History*, Volume 84, Issue 2, June 2015, 369–393
- Kofod, Helmer (1964) "Guldageren på Hammershus", *Bornholmske Samlinger*, vol. I, Rønne: Colbergs Bogtrykkeri, 27–42
- Kraft, Alexander (2019) *Berliner Blau. Vom frühneuzeitlichen Pigment zum modernen Hightech-Material*, Berlin: GNT-Verlag GmbH
- Kraft, Alexander (2023) "Animal Oil, Wound Balm, Prussian Blue, the Fire and Light Principium and the Philosophers' Stone Made from Phosphorus: on the 350th Birthday of the Chymist Johann Conrad Dippel (1673–1734)", in *Substantia*, May 2023 137–59, DOI: 10.36253/Substantia-2107
- Krogh, Tyge (1994) "Bødlens og Natmandens Uærlighed". *Historisk Tidsskrift*, Bind 16, række 3
- Lærke, Mogens (2008) *Leibniz lecteur de Spinoza: La genèse d'une opposition complexe*, Paris: Honoré Champion
- Langen, Ulrik (2012) *Det sorteste hjerte. Historien om et dybt fald i enevældens København*, Copenhagen: Gad
- Langen, Ulrik & Frederik Stjernfelt (2022) *The World's First Full Press Freedom: The Radical Experiment of Denmark-Norway 1770–1773*, Berlin: De Gruyter
- Lausten, Martin Schwarz (2004) *Danmarks Kirkehistorie*, København: Gyldendal
- Levin, Herman (1896) *Religionstvang och religionsfrihet i Sverige 1686–1782. Bidrag till den svenska religionslagstiftningens historia*, Stockholm: Andrée's Boktryckeri
- Ljungberg, Johannes (2017) *Toleransens gränser. Religionspolitiska dilemman i det tidiga 1700-talets Sverige och Europa* (Ph.D. dissertation), Lund: Historiska Institutionen
- Ljungberg, Johannes (in preparation) *Upplysningstidens Frankenstein: Johann Conrad Dippels skandalösa resa genom Nordeuropa*
- Ljungberg, Johannes & Jesper Jakobsen (2023) "The establishment of the police office in mid-eighteenth-century Altona: new opportunities for privacy in transitional times?", in *Urban History*, 1–20, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926823000512>
- Lundbye, Jørgen (1903) *Herrnhutismen i Danmark. Det attende Hundreedaars Indre Mission*, København: Karl Schönberg
- Mansikka, Tomas (2007) "Vetenskap och upplysning inom den tidiga pietismen: några ledmotiv till adeptskapets historia", in *1700-tal Nordic Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol. 3, 110–127
- Mchangama, J. & F. Stjernfelt (2016) *MEN – ytringsfrihedens historie i Danmark*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal
- Mulsow, Martin (2002) *Moderne aus dem Untergrund. Radikale Frühaufklärung in Deutschland 1680–1720*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner
- Mulsow, Martin (2008) *Prekäres Wissen: Eine andere Ideengeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Mulsow, Martin (2018) *Radikale Frühaufklärung in Deutschland 1680–1720*, vol. I–II, Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag

- Mulsow, M. and M. Multhammer (ed.) (2014) *Kriminelle – Freidenker – Alchemisten; Räume des Untergrunds in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Köln etc: Böhlau
- Nielsen, Oluf (1892) *Kjøbenhavn under Kong Frederik den Fjerde (1699–1730)*, Bog I, Kbh.: G.E.C. Gad
- Olden-Jørgensen, S. (2023) "Johann Konrad Dippel 1719: ærekrænkelse eller blasfemi? Frederik Stjernfelt: Alkymist i lænker. Sagen mod mystikeren Johann Konrad Dippel. Gyldendal, København, 2022", in: *Historisk Tidsskrift*. 123, 2, 457–465
- Olsen, Poul Erik: "Danske Lov på de vestindiske øer", in Tamm, Ditlev (ed.) *Danske og Norske Lov i 300 år*, Kbh. 1983: Jurist- og Økonomforbundets forlag, 289–322
- Paludan-Müller, C. (1877–78) "Omrids af Kong Frederik den Fjerdes Kamp med Grev Magnus Stenbock og Baron Görtz i Aarene 1712, 13 og 14", booksize offprint from *Historisk Tidsskrift*, Vol 4. R, VI (1877–1878)
- Pedersen, Johannes (1951) "Pietismens Tid 1699–1746", in Koch and Kornerup (eds., 1951), 11–229
- Pedersen, Karl Peder (2002) "I kommissionens kløer. Kommissionsdomstolene – dansk forvaltnings særlige undersøgelses- og domstolsinstanser", paper in *Informationsserien 1. Statens Arkiver*, https://themis.dk/synopsis/docs/Artikler/I_kommissionens_kloer.html
- Pedersen, Sune Christian (2008) *Brudte Segl. Spionage og censur i enevældens Danmark*, København: Post- & Tele Museum
- Pedersen, Sune Christian (2020) "Mesterspionens kulsorte kabinet: Han arbejdede sig op fra ingenting og blev en af kongens mest frygtede mænd", in *Politiken Historie*, 12, 60–67
- Petersen, Julius (1893) *Den Danske Lægevidenskab 1700–1750*, København: Gyldendal
- Reeh, T. R., & Hemmingsen, R. P. (2023) "Melancholy diagnostics: On pietist introspection and forensic psychiatry in statu nascendi", in J. Ljungberg, & E. Sidenvall (Eds.), *Religious Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century Nordic countries: Reason and Orthodoxy*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 263–286, <https://doi.org/10.7765/9789198740417.00021>
- Rehlinghaus, Franziska (2017) "Farewell to Fortuna – Turning towards Fatum: The Transformation of Fate Conceptions in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" in: Arndt Brendecke/Peter Vogt (Hg.), *The End of Fortuna and the Rise of Modernity*, Berlin/Boston 2017, 151–73
- Reimann, Christoph (2019) *Die Tagebücher des Grafen Casimir zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg (1687–1741) als Selbstzeugnis eines pietistischen Landesherren*, Kassel: Kassel University Press
- Rørdam, Holger Frederik (1893) *Historiske Samlinger og Studier vedrørende danske Forhold og Personligheder især i det 17 Aarhundrede*, Bd. II, Hæfte 1, Kjøbenhavn: Universitetsboghandler G.E.C. Gad
- Rørdam, Holger Frederik (1905–07) "Bidrag til Separatismens Historie i Christian VI's Tid" [I], in *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger* vol. V no. 3, 98–143
- Rørdam, Holger Frederik (1907–09a) "Bidrag til Separatismens Historie i Christian VI's Tid" [II], in *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger* vol. V no. 4, 427–512
- Rørdam, Holger Frederik (ed.) (1907–09b) "Fra den religiøse Brydningstid i Aarene o. 1725–50. Af Kn. Heibergs Samlinger", in *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger* vol. V no. 4, 288–372
- Roth, Klaus (2021) "Berliner Blau – Entdecker und Verräter, *Chemie unserer Zeit* 2021, vol. 56, no. 1, 34–49. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ciuz.202100033> (Eng. version <https://www.chemistryviews.org/prussian-blue-discovery-and-betrayal-part-1/>)
- Rustmeier, Walther (1956) "Johann Conrad Dippel in Schleswig-Holstein. I. Dippels Eingreifen in die Kontroverse Dassow-Muhlius", *Schriften des Vereines für Schleswig-Holsteinische Kirchengeschichte*. vol. II.14, 36–50
- Rustmeier, Walther (1957) "Johann Conrad Dippel in Schleswig-Holstein. II. Der Prozeß gegen Dippel in Altona". In: *Schriften des Vereines für Schleswig-Holsteinische Kirchengeschichte*. vol. II.15(1957), 91–116;

- Rustmeier, Walther (1958) "Johann Conrad Dippel in Schleswig-Holstein. III. Dippels Kontroverse mit Petrus Hansen in Plön", *Schriften des Vereines für Schleswig-Holsteinische Kirchengeschichte*. vol. II.16, 147–169
- Shantz, Douglas H. (2013) *An Introduction to German Pietism: Protestant Renewal at the Dawn of Modern Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press
- Schäufele, Wolf-Friedrich (2009) "Taufe und Wiedergeburt bei Johann Konrad Dippel", in: *Alter Adam und Neue Kreatur. Pietismus und Anthropologie. Beiträge zum II. Internationalen Kongress für Pietismusforschung 2005*, hg. von Udo Sträter (Hallesche Forschungen 28/1+2). 2 Bde., Tübingen 2009; 219–228
- Scheele, Walter (2015) *Burg Frankenstein – eine Zeitreise*, Hamburg: Tredition Verlag
- Schmid, Ludolf Hinrich (1747) *Versuch einer historischen Beschreibung von der an der Elbe belegenen Stadt Altona*, Altona und Flensburg: Gebrüder Korte
- Schneider, Hans (2007) *German Radical Pietism*, Plymouth: Scarecrow Press
- Schneider, Hans, Christian Bunners, and Hans-Jürgen Schrader (eds.) (2011) *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus Im Auftrag der Historischen Kommission zur Erforschung des Pietismus*, Band 55, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht
- Schroeder, Winfried (1987) *Spinoza in der deutschen Frühaufklärung*, Würzburg: Königshausen+Neumann
- Schueler, Heinrich (1735) *Christianus Democritus redivivus: das ist, Beantwortung derer hier beygefügeten Anmerkungen Hr. M. Joh. Henrich Schülers, Stadt-Predigers in Hachenburg, über des seel. Christiani Democriti Veram Demonstrationem evangelicam, Welche nunmehr nach Democriti Tode von einem Freunde desselben aus Liebe zur Wahrheit übernommen worden* (no place nor printer indicated)
- Shelley, Mary (1818) *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones
- Skinner, Quentin (1969) "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas", in *History and Theory*, 8 (1), 3–53
- Sowell, Thomas (2012) *Intellectuals and Society*, New York: Basic Books
- Spalding, Paul S. (1988) *Johann Lorenz Schmidt and Censorship in Eighteenth-Century Germany*, West Lafayette Indiana: Purdue University Press
- Spinoza, Baruch de (1951) *Theological-Political Treatise*, New York: Dover; <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/990> (first 1670)
- Spinoza, Baruch de (1883) *The Ethics*, London: G. Bell and Sons; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3800/3800-h/3800-h.htm>, (first 1677)
- Stjernfelt, Frederik (2023) *Alkymist i lænker. Sagen mod mystikerne Johann Konrad Dippel*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal
- Stjernfelt, Frederik (in press) "The Case Against Dippel in Altona 1717–19", in Soboth, Christian (ed.) *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht
- Stoeffler, F.E. (1973) *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden: Brill
- Søttrup, Jan (1995) "Brødremenigheden i København", in *Historiske Meddelelser om København*, København: Københavns Kommune, 23–41
- Vogt, Gottfried (1719) letter to August Francke, Altona 27. Oct. 1719, <https://digital.franckehalle.de/mod8/content/titleinfo/185112>
- Voss, Karl-Ludwig (1970) "Christianus Democritus: das Menschenbild bei Johann Conrad Dippel: ein Beispiel christlicher Anthropologie zwischen Pietismus und Aufklärung", in *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, Beihefte; 12, Leiden: Brill
- Wad, Louis (1886) "Det Kongelige ridderlige Academis Matrikel", in *Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift*, 2. Rk. 1. Bd., 203–16
- Wallmann, Johannes (2005) *Der Pietismus*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht

- Warholm, Joh. W. (1871) *Skara Stifts Herdaminne*, 1. part, Mariestad: Abr. A. Berg & C:i
- Weller, Emil (1864) *Die falsche und fingierten Druckorte*, Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann
- Werlauff, C.C. (1858) *Historiske Optegnelser til Ludvig Holbergs atten første Lystspil*, Copenhagen: Thieles Bogtrykkeri
- Winkle, Stefan (1988) *Die heimlichen Spinozisten in Altona und der Spinozastreit*, Hamburg (Beiträge zur Geschichte Hamburgs. 34)
- Wotschke, Theodor (1931) "Leonhard Christian Sturms religiöse und kirchliche Stellung" In: *Mecklenburgische Jahrbücher*, Band 95. 103–142
- Zahrtmann, M.K. (1935) *Borringholmernes Historie*, Bd. 3–4, Rønne: Colbergs Eftf.

Name Index

The index comprises names of persons, including derivations (“Lutheran”) and mythical characters (“Hermes Trismegistos”). Contemporary scholars are not covered.

“f” indicates the succeeding page; “ff” two succeeding pages.

- Adam 12f, 22, 26, 243
- Agerbech, Andreas, Danish doctor and pietist
vicar (1701–70) 216
- Alanus of Lille, French alchemist (1116–1203) 20
- Ambtschoff, Johann Georg, commander,
Bornholm (?–1731) 192, 247
- Archenholtz, Johann Henrich, member of the
Altona City Council (?–1724) 75, 83, 86, 94,
101, 103f, 136, 245
- Aristotle, philosopher, Greece (384–322 BC) 46
- Arndt, Johann, German theologian, mystic
(1555–1621) 13f, 17
- Arnold, Gottfried, German church historian,
radical pietist (1666–1714) 3, 8, 13f, 17, 25,
243
- Bachstrom, Johann Friedrich, German doctor,
theologian, adventurer (1686–1742) 229
- Bahrdt, Karl Friedrich, rationalist theologian,
enlightener, Halle (1741–92) 3
- Bandau, Andreas, industrialist, Hamburg-Altona
(1652–?) 59, 64–67, 70f, 73, 76ff, 80, 86–90,
92f, 95ff, 101f, 105, 109, 115, 122f, 136, 140f,
146, 148, 170, 181, 244f
- Bartholin, Caspar, doctor, anatomist,
Copenhagen (1655–1738) 213, 218
- Bartholin, Hans, orthodox theologian, Professor,
Copenhagen (1665–1738) 213
- Baumgarten, S.J., rationalist theologian, Halle
(1725–91) 3
- Bayle, Pierre, French philosopher, Rotterdam
(1647–1706) 40, 43, 175, 225, 232
- Behn, Hinrich, member of the Altona City
Council (?–?) 75
- Beissel, Georg Conrad, radical pietist,
Pennsylvania (1691–1768) 3
- Bender, Wilhelm, theologian, historian of
religions, Germany (1845–1901) 6, 33, 59,
221, 231
- Benzelius, Jacob, Swedish theologian and Bishop
(1683–1747) 209
- Bernard, Jean-Frédéric, historian of religions,
geographer, Amsterdam (c. 1680–1744)
225
- Besse, Pierre de, French Catholic theologian
(1567–1639) 13
- Betkuis, Heinrich, bookprinter, Amsterdam
(1625–1708) 130
- Bluhme, Johannes, pietist theologian,
Copenhagen (1681–1753) 213
- Boehme, Jakob, German theologian, mystic
(1575–1624) 8, 13, 17, 25ff
- Boerhaave, Herman, medical doctor and
Professor, Leiden (1668–1738) 46
- Boettger, Johann Friedrich, German alchemist
(1682–1719) 28
- Borch, Ole, natural philosopher, linguist,
Copenhagen (1626–90) 200
- Brockdorff, Benedicte von, Countess
Reventlow, Chief Presidentin, Altona
(1678–1739)
4, 51, 53–59, 61, 69, 71, 85–98, 100–10,
112f, 115, 117f, 123f, 126ff, 130f, 136ff,
140–43, 146–51, 154–59, 164ff, 168–71,
190, 205f, 214, 217, 219, 229, 234f, 243,
245f, 248
- Broeske, Conrad, radical pietist court preacher,
Offenbach (1660–1713) 17
- Buchner, Karl, German poet and author
(1800–72) 6, 48, 192, 205f, 219
- Buffon, Georges-Louis Leclerc de, natural
philosopher, Paris (1707–88) 26
- Buttlar, Eva von, German radical pietist
(1670–1721) 27
- Buyser, Maria de, industrialist, Altona
(?–?) 68–71, 73, 79

- Caetano, Domenico, "Count of Ruggiero", Italian alchemist (c.1670–1709) 28, 33ff, 39, 128, 132f, 199, 243f
- Calvin, Jean, reformer, Geneva (1509–64) 11, 14, 47, 231, 244
- Canz, Johann Conrad, doctor, publisher, Berleburg (1680–1764) 6, 60, 74, 171
- Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Italian painter (1571–1610) 42
- Carl, Johann Samuel, German doctor, radical pietist (1677–1757) 46, 213, 220–23, 247f
- Carl, Maria Dorothea, daughter of J.S. Carl, married to Adam Struensee (1716–92) 222f
- Casaubon, Isaac, Huguenot scholar, London (1559–1614) 24
- Caseres, Caspar Dionis de, merchant, broker, Altona (?–?) 85f, 89, 91f, 94, 98, 100–10, 115ff, 122f, 136, 140ff, 146ff, 152, 245
- Caseres, wife of C.D. de Caseres, Altona (?–?) 107, 136
- Caseres, son of C.D. de Caseres, Altona (?–?) 107, 136
- CD see Christianus Democritus
- Christian IV, King of Denmark-Norway (1577–1648) 90
- Christian V, King of Denmark-Norway (1646–99) 51, 118
- Christian VI, King of Denmark-Norway (1699–1746) 118, 207, 215, 217, 222, 229, 247
- Christianus Democritus, pen name of Dippel (also: CD) 5, 13, 30, 33, 58, 128, 130, 173, 175, 181, 200, 205, 216, 223, 225ff, 229, 238
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius, philosopher, statesman, Rome (106–43 BC) 208
- Clarque (Clarke), Samuel, unitarian theologian and Newtonian, England (1675–1729) 230
- Claudianus, poet, Milan (370–404) 208
- Clement of Rome, church father (50–97) 25
- Collins, Anthony, author, freethinker, England (1675–1729) 225
- Condorcet, Nicolas de, philosopher, revolutionary, politician, Paris (1743–94) 232
- Conradi, Georg Johann, court doctor, Copenhagen (1679–1747) 213
- Cordatus Libertinus, pen name of Dippel 57
- Craaz, Mr., employee with the governor of Rønne, Bornholm (?–?) 200, 203
- d'Alembert, Jean-Baptiste le Rond, mathematician, encyclopaedist, Paris (1717–83) 29
- Dassow, Theodor, orthodox Superintendent (Bishop), Rendsburg (1648–1721) 57
- Deichman, Bartholomæus, Bishop, Trondhjem, Norway (1671–1731) 118
- Democritus of Abdera, philosopher (460–370 BC) 13
- Dencke (also: Dänicke), Michael, merchant, Altona (?–?) 101f, 146
- Denner, Jacob, Mennonite preacher, blue-dyer, Altona (1659–1746) 58, 150
- Descartes, René, French philosopher (1596–1650) 20, 40–43, 232, 236
- Devil, the (also: Lucifer) 5, 16, 26, 120, 125, 130, 133, 185, 188f, 194, 204, 228
- d'Holbach, Paul-Henri Thiry, philosopher, Paris (1723–89) 232
- Diderot, Denis, philosopher, author, encyclopaedist, Paris (1713–84) 26, 29, 232
- Diesbach, Johann Jacob, colormaker, Berlin (1670–1748) 28, 32f, 244
- Dippel, Jacob, Dippel's possible son (1718–86) 74
- Dippel, Johann Albert, doctor, Dippel's brother, Nieder-Ramstadt (1670–?) 57
- Dippel, Johann Philip, Lutheran vicar, Dippel's father, Nieder-Ramstadt (c. 1636–1704) 7, 12
- Dornemann, Christoph Heinrich, mathematician and pedagogue, Hamburg (1682–1753) 57
- Dorothea Charlotte of Brandenburg-Ansbach, pietist, Landgravine of Hesse-Darmstadt (1661–1705) 12
- Eberhard I von der Marck-Arenberg, German alchemist (1305–87) 20
- Eberhard, Christoffer, radical pietist, Copenhagen (?–?) 217
- Edelmann, Johann Christian, philosopher, Germany (1698–1767) 2f, 11, 221, 231
- Eickhoff, Claus, broker, Altona (?–?) 101, 103, 107
- Enden, Franciskus van den, Dutch philosopher (1602–74) 232

- Erlund, Christian, Postmaster, Copenhagen (1673–1754) 93, 162
- Ernst Ludwig, Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt (1667–1739) 12, 223, 243, 248
- Esmarck, J.M., City Council Secretary, Altona (?–?) 100, 136, 161
- Eugen, Prince of Savoy, Austrian field commander (1663–1736) 53
- Ewald, Enevold, radical pietist vicar, the Orphanage, Copenhagen (1696–1754) 213, 217, 221
- Fabre, Pierre-Jean, alchemist, Castelnau-dary, France (1588–1658) 21
- Fielden, von, street sweeper, Altona (?–?) 109, 136, 138
- Fleischer, Georg Christian, Dean, Altona (1684–1746) 58, 82, 119ff, 167, 170, 179ff, 234, 244
- Fludd, Robert, doctor, philosopher, London (1574–1637) 25
- Francis of Assisi, Italian mystic, poet, friar, Saint (1182–1226) 193
- Franck, Sebastian, radical reformer, Germany (1499–1543) 25
- Francke, August Hermann, pietist theologian, Halle (1663–1727) 16, 22, 121, 175
- Frederik III, King of Denmark-Norway (1609–70) 70, 152, 154
- Frederik IV, King of Denmark-Norway (1671–1730) 38ff, 49, 51–99, 70, 106f, 110–152, 156–163, 165, 168, 170, 172, 180f, 190, 197–200, 207, 213–16, 243f, 247
- Frederik V, King of Denmark-Norway (1723–66) 214
- Fredrik I, King of Sweden (1676–1751) 208f
- Friedrich I, Duke of Württemberg (1557–1608) 132
- Friedrich I, King of Prussia (1657–1713) 22, 27f, 33, 35, 37ff, 121, 132f, 175ff, 243
- Friedrich II, Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg (also called the “Prince of Homburg”, 1633–1708) 21
- Friedrich IV, Elector of Brandenburg (see also Friedrich I, King of Prussia) 28
- Friedrich Wilhelm I, King of Prussia (1688–1740) 28, 35
- Frisch, Johann Leonhard von, natural philosopher, entrepreneur, Berlin (1666–1743) 32f, 244
- Frode the Peaceful (Frode Fredegod), mythical Danish king 202
- Frölich, Bengt, Count of Wollsjö, officer, radical pietist, Scania, Sweden (1684–?) 212f
- Gabel, Christian Carl, naval officer, minister of war, Copenhagen (1679–1748) 62, 113, 118
- Gabel, Valdemar, Privy Councilor, Copenhagen (1650–1725) 62
- Geilfuss, Philipp Wilhelm, preacher, Giessen (1669–1737) 20, 243
- Gennadius Massiliensis, Church Father, Marseille (?–496) 8
- Geuder, Friedrich Philipp von, Baron (called Rabensteiner), Utrecht (1659–1727) 29f, 40, 48, 205
- God (also GÖd; GOD) 1, 6–27, 36, 40, 42ff, 46, 49, 62, 87, 93, 98, 116, 121ff, 127, 133, 155, 162, 169, 171, 174, 177, 179, 181–190, 198f, 207, 210, 214, 222, 226, 230–33, 237ff
- Gram, Hans, philologist, professor, Copenhagen (1685–1748) 213
- Grammendorf, Lorenz, attorney, mystic, Berlin (?–1650) 92, 121, 128, 181, 229, 234
- Grevenburg, Gerhard, Mennonite glassmaker, Altona (?–?) 179f
- Gulder, von, Baron see Geuder, Johann Georg von
- Gyldenløve, Anna Christiane, Princess of Denmark-Norway (1676–89) 51
- Hagedorn, Hans Statius von, Danish representative to Hamburg (1668–1722) 104, 116, 119f, 129, 135, 246
- Hagen, Franz von, Justice Councilor, German Chancellery, Copenhagen (1672–1749) 122, 125, 127, 131, 134, 156, 168, 245
- Hanssen, Peter, Superintendent (Bishop), Holstein (1686–1760) 223, 247
- Haug, Johann Jakob, publisher, bookprinter, Berleburg (1690–1756) 182, 224f, 229
- “Heinrichs, the four”, Altona City Council 65, 75–80, 83, 103, 109f, 122ff, 134, 149, 153, 167f

- Heinrich XXIV, Count of Reuss-Köstritz, pietist (1681–1748) 38
- Heinson, Johann Theodor, senior pastor of St. Peter's Church, Hamburg (1663–1726) 57
- Helmont, Johannes van, alchemist, Brussels (1580–1644) 20
- Heraclitus of Efesos, philosopher (540–480 BC) 13
- Hermes Trismegistos (also: Mercurius Trismegistos), mythical Egyptian prophet 15, 24f, 202
- Hersleb, Ole, pietist preacher, Copenhagen (1692–1760) 217
- Hertel, Philipp (or Härtel), bookprinter, Hamburg (?–1756) 130
- Hirschfeldt, Georg Michael, vicar, Altona (1677–1757) 89, 92–95, 115, 122, 142, 170, 245
- Hobbes, Thomas, English philosopher (1588–1679) 41ff, 230, 232, 236
- Hoffmann, Friedrich, German medical doctor (1660–1742) 30
- Hoffmeister, Johan, merchant, Kristianstad, Scania, Sweden (1699–1744) 208, 212f, 247
- Hojer, Andreas, legal scholar, historian, Copenhagen (1690–1739) 39, 41, 57, 59, 194–97, 247
- Holberg, Ludvig, author, playwright, Copenhagen (1684–1754) 195, 197, 213
- Holm, Peder (Petrus Holmnius), theologian, Professor, Copenhagen (1706–77) 121
- Holst, Peter Nicolai, radical pietist vicar, Copenhagen (1699–1774) 213, 217
- Holstein, Johan Georg von, Count, official, Copenhagen (1662–1730) 97ff, 142, 245
- Holstein, Ulrik Adolf von, Count, official, Copenhagen (1664–1737) 95, 97ff, 142, 206, 213f, 245
- Holsten, Mrs., guarantor, Altona (?–?) 71f
- Holy Ghost, the (also: Spirit) 11, 27, 65, 93
- Honauer, Jürgen (also: Hanawer, Georg), alchemist, Stuttgart (1572–97) 131f
- Horch, Heinrich, Reformed radical pietist and mystic, Herborn (1652–1729) 8
- Huber, Marie, Swiss author (1695–1753) 225
- Hume, David, Scottish philosopher (1711–76) 232
- Isis, Egyptian goddess 200
- Israel, Isaac, merchant, Hamburg (?–?) 101ff
- Janssen, Johann, collector, Altona (?–?) 109, 136, 138
- Jenckel, Jorge, merchant, Altona (?–?) 101f
- Jerusalem, J.F.W., rationalist theologian, Wolfenbüttel (1709–89) 3
- Jessen, Matthias, President, Altona (1641–1712) 66
- Jessen, Thomas Balthasar von, Chief Secretary, German Chancellery, Copenhagen (1648–1731) 112
- Jesus Christ (4–33) 6f, 11ff, 15, 22, 41f, 44, 120, 127, 167, 172, 177, 181, 188ff, 203f, 222, 227
- Joenssen (Jönssen), Joachim Henrich, member of the Altona City Council (1680–1755) 75, 83, 86, 117, 136, 153, 245
- Juel, Povel, Danish-Norwegian official, author, convicted traitor (c. 1673–1723) 117
- Kalsenius, Andreas, Dean in Stockholm, Bishop in Vesterås (1688–1750) 211
- Kant, Immanuel, philosopher, Königsberg (1724–1804) 232
- Karl, Prince of Denmark-Norway (1728–29) 214
- Karl V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1500–58) 119, 154
- Karl VI, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1685–1740) 49
- Karl XII, King of Sweden (1682–1718) 37f, 47, 52, 175f, 212, 244
- Karl Friedrich, Duke of Sleswick-Holstein-Gottorp (1700–39) 49
- Katharina I, Czarina of Russia (1684–1727) 206
- Kleinmann, pen name of Dippel 47
- Klose, Samuel Benjamin, author, Breslau (1730–98) 43
- Knittel, Mayoress, Altona (?–?) 125
- Koltemann, Johann, attorney, Altona (?–?) 106, 136–39, 144
- Kühn, Johann Christian, attorney, Altona (?–?) 136, 145f
- Kunckel, Johann, alchemist, Berlin (1630–1703) 28

- Land-Reuther, Vice President, Altona (?–?) 82, 178, 180f
- Lange, Joachim, moderate pietist, Halle (1670–1744) 35
- Lascaris, wandering Greek alchemist (?–?) 33
- Lau, Theodor Ludwig, German lawyer and freethinker, (1670–1740) 3
- Leade, Jane, mystic, England (1624–1704) 15
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, philosopher, mathematician, Hanover (1646–1716) 2, 23, 28, 223, 236
- Lentzer, Johannes, orthodox vicar, Weithershausen (?–?) 13
- Leopold I, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1640–1705) 34
- Leopold, Thomas, radical pietist, Dippelian, Scania, Sweden (1693–1771) 212f
- Lidholm, Erland, vicar in Gökhem, Sweden (1674–1726) 194
- Lieben, Christian Niclas, industrialist, Altona (?–?) 68–73, 79, 136, 140, 148, 244
- Lieben, Michael Christian, Chamber Scribe, Altona (?–?) 68–71, 79, 86, 89, 92f, 96ff, 100ff, 108f, 115ff, 122f, 136, 138, 140, 146, 148, 152, 158, 162, 245
- Llull, Ramón, alchemist, philosopher, Mallorca (1232–1316) 20f
- Locke, John, English philosopher (1632–1704) 40, 230, 232
- Lohe, Joachim von, fisherman, innkeeper, Altona (c. 1500–70) 51
- Lopez, Gregor, Mexican mystic (1542–96) 227
- Louise of Mecklenborg-Güstrow, Queen of Denmark-Norway (1667–1721) 207, 215
- Luther, Martin, reformer, Wittenberg (1483–1546) 1, 3, 5f, 7, 9–15, 17, 19, 37, 47, 50, 57f, 62, 74, 91ff, 133, 165, 171, 179, 184, 194, 212, 218, 223, 235
- Mack, Alexander, pietist, founder of the Schwarzenau Brethren (1679–1735) 17
- Makarios of Egypt, church father (c. 300–90) 8, 20
- Maldini, Giovanni Giacomo, Italian alchemist (1678–?) 57, 197, 199
- Malebranche, Nicholas, French philosopher (1638–1715) 44, 184
- Mary Magdalene 42
- Mary, Virgin 42
- Matthew, evangelist (?–?) 167, 179
- May, Johann Heinrich, theologian, Professor, Giessen (1653–1719) 7, 57
- Mayenberg, Johann Matthias, Superintendent (Bishop), Clausthal (1678–1743) 219
- Mayer, Johann Friedrich, Superintendent (Bishop), Greifswald (1650–1712) 37, 49, 175, 244
- Meder, J.F. von, Baron, alchemist, Berlin (?–1709) 28
- Melanchthon, Philipp, reformer, Wittenberg (1497–1560) 11, 13
- Melle, Jacob von, theologian, historian, Lübeck (1659–1743) 200–03
- Mercurius see Hermes
- Meschmann, Christian, merchant, Amsterdam (1629–?) 40
- Meyer, Franz, investor, Altona (?–?) 64–67, 70, 76, 78
- Meyer, widow of Franz Meyer, Altona (?–?) 66f, 70, 76ff
- Michaëlis, Johann Heinrich, theologian, Halle (1688–1738) 36, 196
- Michelangelo Buonarroti, Italian artist (1475–1564) 42
- Møinichen, Christian, Finance Deputy, Chief Secretary, Danish Chancellery (1683–1749) 118
- Möller, Christian, War Councilor, Copenhagen (?–?) 117, 160f, 192
- Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de Secondat, French philosopher (1689–1755) 70, 232
- More, Henry, English theologian, philosopher (1614–87) 25
- Morhoff, Daniel Georg, author, Professor, Lübeck (1639–91) 25
- Moses (?–?) 24, 144
- Muhammad, prophet (570–632) 44
- Muhlius, Hinrich, pietist Superintendent (Bishop), Gottorp, Sleswick (1666–1733) 57
- Münchhausen, attorney, Hamburg-Altona (?–?) 87
- Münchmeyer, Anna Eleonora, Dippel's mother (c. 1640–1710) 12

- Negenborn, Magdalena, Hamburg (1684–?) 84
 Neuhaus, Heinrich, member of the Altona City Council (?–?) 75
 Neumeister, Erdmann, theologian and psalmist, Hamburg (1671–1756) 35, 230
 Newton (also: Neuton), Isaac, English physicist, philosopher (1642–1727) 23, 35, 232
 Normann, Olle, wood bailiff, radical pietist, Andrarum, Scania, Sweden (?–?) 212f
 Nüchtern, Heinrich, bleacher, Altona (?–?) 64
- Origen, church father, Alexandria (185–254) 25
 Osiris, Egyptian deity 200
 Otte, Johann Berend, financier, Hamburg (?–?) 84f, 89ff, 94, 102ff, 109, 142, 245
 Otte, David Jr., Hamburg (?–?) 84
 Otte, David Sr., financier, Hamburg (?–?) 84f, 89ff, 94, 102ff, 109, 142, 245
- Pagencopen, Christian von, German pietist (?–?) 192, 203, 206f
 Paine, Thomas, English-American author, revolutionary, politician (1737–1809) 232
 Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim), doctor, alchemist, Basel (1493–1541) 20, 25
 Paul, preacher, missionary, Saint (10–67) 8, 15, 185
 Peirce, Charles, philosopher, USA (1839–1914) 236
 Percent, Mr., receiver of mail for Dippel in Hamburg (?–?) 99
 Perckentin, Gebhardt Ulrik von, Count, Pinneberg (1689–1766) 62, 74
 Peter the Great, Czar of Russia (1672–1725) 204f
 Petersen, Johann Wilhelm, German radical pietist (1649–1727) 3, 15, 175
 Petersen, Johanna Eleonora, German radical pietist (1644–1724) 15, 175
 Plato, philosopher, Greece (c. 427–348 BC) 25
 Pontoppidan, Erik, pietist top theologian, Copenhagen (1698–1764) 121, 213, 217f
 Popper, Karl, Austrian philosopher (1902–94) 236
 Postel, Guillaume, French polyhistor, Professor (1510–81) 20
 Prehn, jailed Hamburger (?–?) 146, 150
- Prince of Homburg see Friedrich II, Landgrave
 Proserpina, Queen of the Underworld 125
- Quellinus, Thomas, Flemish-Danish sculptor (1661–1709) 55
- Reenberg, Morten, orthodox vicar, Copenhagen (1660–1736) 213
 Reimarus, Hermann Samuel, theologian, philosopher, Hamburg (1694–1768) 11
 Reitz, Johann Heinrich, Reformed pietist theologian, Braunfels (1665–1720) 8
 Reitzer, Christian, law scholar, philosopher, Professor, Copenhagen (1665–1736) 213
 Repenklaui (see also Reventlow, Christian Detlev) 90
 Reventlow, Anna Sophie von, Frederik IV's morganatic wife; as of 1721 Queen of Denmark-Norway (1693–1743) 53, 118, 207, 214f, 247
 Reventlow, C.D.F. von, Count, Prime Minister of Denmark (1748–1827) 55
 Reventlow, Christian Detlev von, Count, Chief President of Altona (1671–1738) 4, 38, 48f, 51, 53–78, 81–138, 140–72, 175ff, 180–83, 189f, 197, 205ff, 214, 217ff, 225, 229, 234f, 243–48
 Reventlow, Conrad von, Count, Grand Chancellor, Copenhagen (1644–1708) 51
 Rock, Johann Friedrich, vagrant radical pietist (1678–1749) 3
 Rösser, alchemist, Berlin (?–?) 32
 Rosén, Sven, radical pietist leader, Stockholm, Altona (1708–50) 210f
 Rosenbach, Johann Georg, spurmaker, wandering radical pietist prophet (1678–1747) 29, 96, 150
 Rostgaard, Frederik, Chief Secretary, archivist, collector, Copenhagen (1671–1745) 117f, 213
 Rustmeier, Walther, German theologian and church historian (1907–89) 40, 58f, 79, 99, 165, 169, 171, 249
- Salomon, Elias, financier, Hamburg (?–?) 84
 Sartre, Jean-Paul, philosopher, Paris (1905–80) 234

- Schlemann, Miss, witness, Altona (?–?) 109, 136, 138
- Schmidt, Lorenz, German theologian and freethinker (1702–1749) 3
- Schroeder, Georg, Chancellery Councilor, Glückstadt, member of the Dippel Commission (?–?) 125
- Schroeder, Herman, pietist vicar, Stockholm (1676–1744) 212
- Schroeter, Philip, theology student, Altona (?–?) 101
- Schueler, Johann Henrich, city preacher, Hachenburg (?–?) 229
- Schuetz, Johann Jacob, radical pietist, hymn writer (1640–90) 17
- Schwenkfeld, Kaspar, reformer, Silesia (1490–1561) 13
- Schwentzel, Johann Ulrich, pietist theologian and vicar, Halle (1685–1747) 230
- Seebach, Christoph, pietist preacher, Berleburg (c. 1675–1745) 222, 224, 227
- Sehested, Christian Christophersen, Chief Secretary, the German Chancellery, Copenhagen (1666–1740) 53, 75f, 78–81, 83, 107, 110–17, 122, 124–129, 134f, 144f, 156f, 160–65, 244ff
- Senckenberg, Johann Christian, doctor, natural philosopher, Frankfurt (1707–72) 10, 23, 59, 167, 205, 209, 213f, 223–27, 233, 247
- Sentrup, Johann Hendrich, merchant, Hamburg (?–?) 101, 106, 148
- Servetus, Michel, Spanish reformer, humanist (1509–53) 47
- Shelley, Mary, English novelist (1797–1851) 1
- Simon, Richard, French theologian, humanist, Bible critic (1638–1712) 15
- Skeel, Christen, Chamberlain, son of Jørgen Skeel and Benedicte Brockdorff, Altona (1694–1731) 91, 167
- Skeel, Jørgen, Chamberlain, landed proprietor, Gammel Estrup, Denmark (1656–95) 53–56
- Slange, Niels, chancellery official, historian, Copenhagen (1656–1737) 206
- Soehlenthal, Friedrich Ulrich von, German nobleman, Danish State Councilor, head of the Dippel Commission (1660–1721) 63, 125, 135, 245
- Soehlenthal, Georg Wilhelm von, German pietist nobleman in Danish service (1698–1758) 125
- Soehlenthal, Heinrich Friedrich von, German nobleman, Danish representative to London (1685–1752) 125
- Sophie Magdalene of Brandenburg-Kulmbach, Crown Princess, as of 1730 Queen of Denmark-Norway (1700–70) 207, 214
- Spener, Christian Maximilian, alchemist, Berlin, P.J. Spener's son (1678–1714) 28, 35
- Spener, Philipp Jacob, German theologian, father of pietism (1635–1705) 9f, 17, 28, 35, 57, 216, 243
- Spinoza, Baruch de, philosopher, the Netherlands (1632–77) 15, 27, 41, 43ff, 184, 232, 236ff
- Stahl, Georg Ernst, German medical doctor (1659–1734) 30, 33, 46, 216, 243
- Stallbohm, broker, Hamburg-Altona (?–?) 86, 95f, 159
- Stallknecht, Claus, architect, Altona (1681–1734) 166
- Stenbock, Magnus, Swedish Field Marshal (1664–1717) 51
- Stendahl, Johannes, radical pietist, Dippelian, Scania, Sweden (1702–?) 212f
- Strandiger, Otto, radical pietist, Copenhagen; Flensburg (c. 1650–1724) 58, 217
- Strokirch, Carl Michael von, member of parliament, founder of a Dippelian congregation in Stockholm (1702–76) 210f
- Struensee, Adam, pietist vicar, Berleburg; Halle (1708–91) 222f, 247f
- Struensee, Johann Friedrich, son of Adam S., medical doctor, statesman (1737–72) 222f
- Sturm, Leonhard Christoph, architect and mathematician, Hamburg (1669–1719) 48
- Svedberg, Jesper, Bishop of Skara, Sweden, Swedenborg's father (1653–1735) 194
- Swedenborg, Emmanuel, Swedish natural philosopher, spiritualist, sect founder (1688–1772) 194, 204, 210
- Tertullian, church father, Carthage (150–220) 8, 25

- Thomasius, Christian, philosopher, Halle (1655–1728) 3, 14, 175, 194, 232
- Titian Vecellio, Italian painter (c. 1490–1576) 42
- Tollstadius, Erik, radical pietist, Dippelian, Stockholm (1693–1759) 210
- Traytorant, Nicolay de (also: Treytorans), Swiss pietist in Rotterdam (1671–1728) 205, 247
- Treviso, Bernardo, alchemist (1406–90) 20
- Ulfeldt, Corfitz, Danish statesman, convicted traitor (1606–64) 192f
- Ulfeldt, Leonora Christine, author, state prisoner in Copenhagen (1621–98) 192f
- Ulstadius, Lars, Finnish radical pietist, state prisoner in Stockholm (c. 1650–1732) 209f
- Valentinus, Basilius, pseudonym of one or more 16th century German alchemists (?–?) 20
- Vincelius, Johann, house teacher, quartermaster (?–?) 85, 90ff, 94, 100, 102–09, 111, 117, 123, 127, 145–48, 150, 190, 245
- Voltaire, François de, author, philosopher, France (1694–1778) 232f, 235
- “W’s, the three”, government in Berlin (1702–10) 27, 220
- Walcker, Elias von, radical pietist, Stockholm (1660–1733) 209, 247
- Wartenberg, Count Johann Kasimir Kolbe, member of the Prussian three-Count cabinet of “Three W’s” (1643–1712) 27, 220
- Wartensleben, Count Alexander Hermann von, member of the Prussian three-Count cabinet of “Three W’s” (1650–1734) 27, 220
- Weißmann Christian Eberhard, German pietist and Professor, Tübingen (1677–1747) 35
- Wellingk, Mauritz, Count, General, Sweden (1651–1727) 70
- Werff, Pieter van der, painter, the Netherlands (1665–1722) 42
- Westh, Niels, Commander, Bornholm (1666–1752) 192, 197, 207, 247
- Wibe, Ditlev, Privy Councilor, Copenhagen (1670–1731) 162
- Winckler, Johann Friedrich, senior pastor of St. Nikolai Church, Hamburg (1679–1738) 57
- Winkle, Stefan, German doctor, microbiologist and historian of medicine (1911–2006) 58f
- Wittgenstein, August von, Count, Laasphe, member of the Prussian three-Count cabinet of “Three W’s” (1663–1735) 27f, 38, 90, 175, 192, 205ff, 219f, 227f
- Wittgenstein, Casimir von, Count, Berleburg (1687–1741) 6, 28, 187, 219f, 222f, 225, 247
- Wittgenstein, Hedwig Sophie von, Countess, Berleburg (1669–1738) 219
- Wohlgemüth, Christophilus see Schwentzel, J.U.
- Wolff, Christian, German philosopher, Halle (1679–1754) 223, 236
- Wolff, C., Justice Councilor, member of the Dippel Commission, Glückstadt (?–?) 125
- Worm, Ole, natural philosopher, Professor, collector, Copenhagen (1588–1654) 202
- Wulf, Marie, radical pietist preacher, Copenhagen (1685–1738) 213, 217
- Wulf, Matthias, entrepreneur, Copenhagen (?–1728) 217
- Zinzendorf, Nikolaus Ludwig von, Count, head of the pietist Herrnhuter movement, Berthelsdorf (1700–60) 17, 217, 221f, 225, 247
- Zoroaster (also: Zarathustra, ?–?) 25