

## DOCUMENT 3

Johann Reuchlin

### *Report about the Books of the Jews*

Reuchlin's report, dated 6 October 1510, was addressed to Uriel, archbishop of Mainz, who chaired the imperial commission investigating Pfefferkorn's proposal to confiscate the books of the Jews. It was confidential, but Pfefferkorn apparently obtained access to it and referred to its contents in the *Hand Mirror*, published in the spring of 1511. In reply, Reuchlin issued the *Eye Mirror* (Tübingen, 1511),<sup>1</sup> which contained an annotated version of his report and a brief account of the circumstances that led to its publication. The account and the report are in German, as was the original sent to the archbishop. The annotations by contrast are in Latin, that is, aimed at a scholarly audience. It was this book rather than the original report that was condemned by the Cologne theologians and, ultimately, by the papal court in Rome.

The following translation is based on the text in *Johannes Reuchlin: Gutachten über das Jüdische Schrifttum*, ed. and trans. into modern German by Antonie Leinz-v. Dessauer (Stuttgart, 1965), 28–105. Reuchlin supports his opinion with detailed references to imperial and canon law. I have omitted these references.

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As an obedient subject I have received with due respect the commission of His Majesty, the most exalted and eminent prince and lord, Lord Maximilian, Roman emperor, our most noble master, given first to Your Princely Grace<sup>2</sup> and now conveyed and given to me.<sup>3</sup> In it I am commanded to examine with due diligence the matter of the books of