

## DOCUMENT 4

Johann Reuchlin

### *Defence against the Cologne Slanderers*

The following translation is based on the text entitled in Latin *Defensio contra calumniatores suos Colonienses* (Tübingen, 1513). It is addressed to Emperor Maximilian I, since Reuchlin took the position that the report (Document 3) condemned by the Cologne theologians had been a confidential document meant for the emperor's eyes only and that Pfefferkorn had made some of its contents public contrary to imperial law and on the instigation of the Cologne theologians. The aggressive tone of Reuchlin's *Defence* differs sharply from his polite exchanges with the faculty during the previous year, when he was still hoping to forestall a condemnation (see above, pp. 18–19). A critical edition of the Latin text with a German translation can be found in *Johann Reuchlin: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. W.-W. Ehlers et al. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1999), IV-1: 197–443. The passages translated are on pp. 202–26, 234–8, 260, 380–4, 442.

### *Defence against the Cologne Slanderers*

I put my trust in you, august Emperor, as I respond with alacrity and clarity to the atrocious, immense, and unprecedented insults and injuries to a man who is your councillor and a veteran courtier of your saintly father.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to everything that is right and lawful, a group of Cologne professors has published these vehement insults in slanderous pamphlets.<sup>2</sup> As I hear, they have been disseminated in a thousand copies and, having been read by practically everyone, have finally been brought before Your Majesty. Thus you and the whole world, whose governor and ruler you are, may not only regard them