

DOCUMENT 6

Reports on the Confiscation of Jewish Books in Frankfurt, 1509

The following reports, written in Hebrew, come from a manuscript now in the city library in Amsterdam and published by I. Kracauer in 'Actenstücke zur Geschichte der Confiscation der hebräischen Schriften in Frankfurt a. M.,' *Monatsschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaft des Judentums* 44 (1900), 119–21, 124–6. According to Kracauer they were copied from documents in the archive of the Jewish community in Frankfurt. They describe Pfefferkorn's actions, the resistance of the community to the confiscation of Jewish books, and their appeal to the emperor.

1. A Report on Pfefferkorn's Actions

On Friday [28 September 1509] the butcher¹ came to us here in Frankfurt, together with three priests and two friends from the city council, and they seized the books in the synagogue – the Tefillot, Machzorim, and Selichot² – everything they could find, and forbade us in the name of the emperor to continue praying in the synagogue. It was [Pfefferkorn's] intention to return the following day and take also the books we have in our homes, for there was not enough time that day for him to complete the task. But the priests did not want to disturb the Sabbath, nor their own holiday, that is, the Sunday, which was the next day. On that same Friday we sent R. Jonathan to Worms to approach the justice department [Kammergericht] and see whether it might be possible to prevent this evil and to retain at least the books that are in our homes. But he was unable to accomplish anything. On Saturday, however, we sent R. Gumprecht Weissenan to the archbishop of Mainz