25. March 30, 1710. Letter from Jonas Loheer to Henrich Freydt and other Palatine Mennonite leaders reports that fifty-six Swiss prisoners have arrived at Mannheim on March 29, of whom twenty-eight remained behind and the rest have traveled on.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This letter itself is interesting as a physical object because of the pressing events surrounding it. Fifteen days after he wrote his previous letter (Document 13), the elderly minister had to act quickly and send this letter overland to another congregation along the route. Someone from that church was to accompany the prisoners down the Rhine River to Neuwied, and someone from there to accompany them to Holland where an attempt could be made to release the prisoners. The letter is briefer than Loheer’s previous one, and as he turned it over to write the address on the back in haste, his handwriting became worse than usual. The outside of the letter is rather dirty, having passed through a number of hands all the way down the Rhine to Holland. It was the signal to alert the Dutch to help. Dutch Mennonite brethren, probably sensing the drama connected with the letter, preserved it, poorly written, torn, and dirty as it is.

[recto]

Much beloved friend and brethren, Johannes Dallem,[[2]](#footnote-2) Abraham and Gotthart Holl, Hinrich Freydt,[[3]](#footnote-3) together with all,

This is to let you know that the imprisoned Swiss, fifty-six persons arrived the day before yesterday at Mannheim in the afternoon. Twenty-eight persons have remained at Mannheim, old, lame, and sick.

The rest are in custody. There is a rumor that they are supposed to go to the new land [America]. So wanted to send this on hastily so that someone from the Wolfsheim[[4]](#footnote-4) church could go along as far as Neuwied.[[5]](#footnote-5) Those from Neuwied could go to Holland to see how they fare or whether they all will be released. We must all [work] together on this account. A friendly greeting to all. Offstein, March 30, 1710.

Jonas Loheer

[verso: address]

to Johannes Dallem

Abraham and Gotthart

Holl. To open immediately

and in haste

to send to

Ober-Flörsheim [and on to] Wolfsheim.[[6]](#footnote-6)

1. 25 See Hanspeter Jecker, “Von der ‘Ausschaffung kriminalisierter Einheimischer’ zur ‘Endlösung in der Täuferfrage,’” 32/33 MH (2009/10), pp. 249-255. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Johannes Dahlem moved away from Offstein in 1742; Peter Dahlem lived here in 1664 according to ME, IV, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Henrich, Hinrich Friedt is mentioned in Lowry, Documents of Brotherly Love I, pp. 576-577, 664-665. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Wolfsheim near the Rhine, 6 miles (9 ½ kilometers), from Alzey in Rhenish Hesse where a number of Mennonite families named Holl lived in the period 1660-1680. ME, IV, 970-971. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Neuwied, where Thielmann Rupp was minister. ME III, 859-860. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The route for this letter to take was by Ober Flörsheim and Wolfsheim, hence overland to cut across the circuitous course of the Rhine River. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)