RASHI AND THE ENGLISH BIBLE.1

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RABBI SHELOMOH BEN YICHQAQ, commonly called by the Jews by juxtaposition of his initials RASHI, and by Christian exeges of the Old Testament Rabbi Salomon, was born in 1040. In normal circumstances this present year would have seen elaborate commemorations of the nine hundredth anniversary of his birth by the Jews all over the globe, among whom he holds not only a place of honour second to none of their old teachers but is in fact a household word. For traditional education as well as traditional exegesis of the Old Testament has been bound up with the writings of Rashi since they were first copied and then printed unto our own day. And although his chief importance within Judaism consists in Rashi the commentator of the Talmud, his popularity among the masses of devout Jews derives from Rashi the interpreter of the Old Testament. Hundreds of manuscripts of his Commentary on the Old Testament are extant, and the first dated printed Hebrew book is this Commentary, published in 1475. As a Bible commentator Rashi found his way into Mediaeval Christian exegesis, into the works of the Hebraists among the Humanists, and into the principal translations of the Old Testament into the Latin and the vernacular tongues in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In a study on Don Isaac Abravanel, published in October, 1937, in this BULLETIN, I drew attention in a footnote to Rashi's

1 I should like to thank the Librarian very much for his encouragement and advice and the facilities offered me to consult the unique collection of English Bibles in the Rylands Library. In no other place would I have been able to complete such a study in so short a time. No less am I indebted to both Mr. Vine and Mr. Taylor for invaluable help in bibliographical matters.
influence on Nicholas of Lyra. It so happens that this year is also the six hundredth anniversary of this Commentator who not only derives his method of literal interpretation, by his own testimony, from Rabbi Salomon, but quotes him so frequently in his own interpretation that the great Johannes Reuchlin hyperbolically wrote that not many pages would remain over if one were to cut out Rashi from Nicholas’ Postillae. A perusal of three German studies on Rashi’s influence on Nicholas of Lyra gave me the idea to examine the Authorized Version of the English Bible from the viewpoint of Rashi’s exegesis in it. From 1937 onward I paid special attention to passages which reminded me of Rashi. Not until some weeks ago had I concentrated on this problem, and it may not be quite out of place to recount briefly the way followed. For this may lend additional weight to the conclusions drawn from the inquiry. Direct influence of Rashi on any of the translators of the English Bible, from Tindale down to the Authorized Version, seemed unlikely at first. Nicholas of Lyra appeared to be the natural intermediary. Beginning with the German studies referred to already,—which are, however, concerned with comment, not with translation—I soon extended my search for parallels over a large part of the Pentateuch and the Earlier and Later Prophets, particularly the more difficult and obscure passages where a translator would obviously have recourse to Jewish exegesis prior to the existence of a reliable dictionary as the result of systematic study of the Hebrew language. In this way parts of Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the whole of Amos and Micah and a number of Psalms were examined. Despite the fact—to too often overlooked—that every translation is at the same time interpretation, I did not expect to find too many instances of borrowing from Jewish, in particular Rashi’s exegesis. Moreover, a good many borrowings

1 P. 459, n. 1.
go back to St. Jerome's *Vulgate*. St. Jerome often adopts the Aramaic rendering of the *Targum* transmitted to him with Rabbinic interpretations by contemporary Jews. All these passages naturally had to remain outside the scope of our inquiry.

Working from the *Authorized Version* backwards I examined its passages with a Rashi-background in Tindale, Matthew and Coverdale. It became soon evident that neither Nicholas nor Luther, who is commonly held to have influenced Tindale in his translation, could be the source for the English rendering based on Rashi. (Whether Tindale really followed Luther or whether both drew directly from Nicholas in such passages where they agree is a debatable point which deserves careful consideration.) Where could the contact with Jewish exegesis have been effected?

If we remember that Tindale spent many years on the Continent, chiefly in Worms, Marburg and Antwerp, it would only be natural that Jews acquainted him with their own interpretation if he made contact with Jews. The great popularity which Rashi enjoyed as interpreter of Scripture plausibly accounts for the transmission of his exegesis as the accepted Jewish one. Rashi and the Targum were the principal sources for the majority of Jews (and still are to a large extent). Only the more learned among the Jews would consult R. David Qimhi, Ibn Ezra, Nachmanides or Gersonides. In fact, there are among the passages examined by us many which must have accepted the Targumic rendering. All these remain outside our present study. But it must be emphasized that Targum and Rashi are the principal sources of information for the translators from the original Hebrew Old Testament. In this connexion it must not be forgotten that Rashi himself depends to a considerable degree on the Aramaic version. Frequently he puts the Aramaic into his Hebrew, as it were, without acknowledging his source, or at least receives his cue from the Targum.

Yet, even if we could trace individual Jews who supplied Tindale with information, this would in no way explain so many more faithful reproductions of the Hebrew original in the *Authorized Version* not to be found in the earlier English versions. The real turning-point is reached with the *Genevan* and the
Bishops’ Bibles, but to a large extent already with Coverdale’s Great Bible of 1539.

We shall return to the Great Bible later. Still looking for direct Jewish influence we thought of finding it with no great difficulty in the assumption that the translators of the Genevan Bible in the course of their exile had met with Jews whom they consulted for their translation. The problem is, however, complicated through the great influence exerted by Calvin and the Swiss reformers on them. A number of the Bishops and divines who undertook the Bishops’ Bible had been exiles, mostly in Switzerland, during the reign of Queen Mary. At least two of the principal translators of the Genevan Bible must have been good Hebraists. William Whittingham did not return to England with the other reformers at the accession of Queen Elizabeth but supervised the whole work in Geneva. Although there is no definite statement that he knew Hebrew it may be assumed that he would not have undertaken such a task without a knowledge of Hebrew. Of the other, Anthony Gilby, we know that he not only translated Commentaries of Calvin and Theodore Beza but wrote Commentaries of his own on Micah and Malachi. Unfortunately we were not able to secure copies of these. They would clearly throw light on their author’s work as a translator, and at the same time give us an answer to our question: Did Gilby have a direct knowledge of Jewish exegesis?

We fared not much better with the translators of the Bishops’ Bible. However, the Zürich Letters reveal one point of interest for our problem, i.e. the contact of the English reformers with scholars like Bullinger, Bibliander and Wolfius. Bishop Parkhurst praises in letters to John Wolfius the latter’s learned commentaries, and Bishop Sandys as well as Parkhurst speak highly of Bullinger’s Commentaries. The Parker Correspondence which

1 D.N.B., s.v.
2 Ibid.
3 Edited by the Parker Society.
4 Second Series, Camb. 1845, p. 127, on Kings, encourages W. to publish his discourses on Deut., Judges, Ruth, etc. P. 177 praises Comm. on Nehemiah; p. 199 urges publication of Comm. on Esther and lectures on Ezra.
5 Zürich Letters, 1558-76, Camb. 1842. On p. 145 Sandys’ letter to Bullinger about the latter’s ‘very learned Comm. on prophet Daniel’, speaks also about copious MS. Comm. on Genesis and Exodus by Bibliander. R. Hilles writes Bullinger about his homilies on Isaiah. Grindal and Parkhurst do likewise, with praise.
we consulted next yielded a most interesting and important result. Among the instructions issued by Archbishop Parker for the translation are two of special relevance to our problem. The first enjoins upon the revisers, whose list with the books allotted to them we find on pp. 334 ff., “to follow the common English translation used in the churches and not to recede from it but where it varieth manifestly from the Hebrew or Greek original.”¹ And the second rule points to the sources to be consulted for that purpose, in the words: “Item, to use sections and divisions in the text as Pagnine in his translation useth, and for the verity of the Hebrew to follow the said Pagnine and Münster especially, and generally others learned in the tongues.” Parker himself ‘revised’ the books of Genesis and Exodus.

It is the more astonishing to find Bishop Sandys, one of the translators, taking exception to Münster in his letter to Parker: “The setters forth of this our common translation followed Münster too much, who doubtless was a very negligent man in his doings, and often swerved very much from the Hebrew.” Does Sandys mean by “this our common translation” the work upon which the team under Parker, including himself, was engaged or rather the Genevan Bible which, however, never received the official sanction of the Church, or perhaps most likely of all, does he refer to Coverdale’s revision of Matthew’s Bible, known as the Great Bible? For was not the Bishops’ Bible a revision of the Great Bible, though, in the words of Dr. Guppy “it shows that good use was made of the ‘Genevan Version’, for some of the best and raciest of the notes in the ‘Bishops’ Version’ are taken from it verbatim, without acknowledgment”?² I must leave the decision of this matter to those who can speak with authority on the history of the English Bible. For our problem here it is of little concern since Sebastian Münster appears to have been godfather to the Great Bible no less than to its successors.³ Not only had Coverdale in all

¹ A similar statement is contained in Parker’s letter to Queen Elizabeth accompanying the volume of the Bible presented to the Queen (p. 337).

² Dr. Henry Guppy: A Brief Sketch of the History of the Transmission of the Bible down to the Revised English Version 1881-95, p. 53.

probability a hand in the *Genevan Version*, but this version betrays without any doubt the influence of Sebastian Münster as well as that of Leo Judae.\(^1\) Anybody who has ever looked closely into the translation of Sebastian Münster must recognise the soundness and wisdom of Archbishop Parker’s injunction. Parker, together with Bishop Grindal, can also not have shared the apprehension of the Church against the popular *Genevan Version*, for we find among his Correspondence a letter addressed jointly with Grindal to Sir William Cecil upon the subject of renewal of the licence of John Bodley to reprint the *Genevan Version*. In it they say: “So it is, that we think so well of the first impression, and review of those which have sithence travailed therein, that we wish it would please you to be a mean that [the licence may be renewed]. . . . For, though one other special Bible for the Churches be meant by us to be set forth, as convenient time and leisure hereafter will permit: yet shall it nothing hinder, but rather do much good, to have diversity of translations and readings.” Surely, a remarkable admission which betrays no mean quality of the chief-editor of the *Bishops’ Bible*!

Before discussing the character of the Latin translations of Sebastian Münster, Leo Judae and Santes Pagnino with special consideration for possible and actual influence of Jewish exegesis, we must proceed to glance briefly at the makers of the *Authorized Version*. The information concerning them in Anderson’s *The Annals of the English Bible*\(^2\) and the *Dictionary of National Biography* goes back in its bulk to Anthony à Wood’s *Athenae Oxonienses*. Histories of Oxford and Cambridge University are no more explicit on the attainments of those among the translators who were Regius Professors of Hebrew. The greater number of them, led by the Puritan leader Dr. John Rainolds, to whose initiative at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 we owe the *Authorized Version*, appear to have been noted Hebrew scholars. Some of them are granted with extensive knowledge of cognate Semitic tongues, Chaldaic [which is Aramaic], Syriac and Arabic. It goes without saying that all of them were excellent Classical scholars.

If we single out a few of them it is because we believe that they could best answer our question of who was acquainted with Rabbinic exegesis. Wood informs us that Richard Kilbye, who was Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, wrote a Commentary on the Book of Exodus, "the chief part of which is excerpted from the monuments of the Rabbins and Hebrew Interpreters." According to the D.N.B. Edward Lively, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, left Annotations to the first five of the Minor Prophets as well as a Commentary on Peter Martinius' Hebrew Grammar. It may well be that among the unpublished manuscripts left by Dr. John Overall, a correspondent of Hugo Grotius, material bearing on our question is to be found. He was for a time Librarian of St. John's and Christ's Colleges, Cambridge. Dr. John Rainolds left The prophecie of Obadiah opened and applied, etc., as well as Sermons on the Prophecies of Haggai, "never before printed, being very usefull for these times." Of both we shall speak later, whereas we could not see Kilbye's nor Lively's Commentaries. Of Dr. Miles Smith,—together with Bishop Bilson the final examinator of the whole work,—Wood says: "He ran thro' the Greek and Latin Fathers, and judiciously noted them in the margin as he went. The Rabbins also, as many as he had, with their glosses and Commentaries, he read and used in their own idiom of Speech. And so conversant he was, and expert in the Chaldaic, Syriac, and Arabic, that he made them as familiar to him, almost, as his own native tongue. Hebrew also he had at his fingers-ends." ¹

It would constitute a valuable contribution to the history of Hebrew scholarship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries if light could be thrown on the competence of the translators, chiefly those whose literary remains contain Biblical commentaries and Hebrew Grammars, as for instance Bishop Alley, one of the translators of the Bishops' Bible, Gilby (Genevan), Kilbye, Lively and Rainolds (Authorized). The latter's acquaintance with Rashi is evident from two quotations with which we shall deal later. But another question requires an answer as well, i.e. who were the instructors of these Hebraists and by which books were they guided? An answer to the last question may

¹ Athenae, p. 490.
be found by an investigation into the bequests of manuscripts and printed books made by our translators to the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges. Archbishop Parker, e.g., left among others "50 books chiefly consisting of commentaries upon the Old Testament and the New Testament." That Parker took a personal interest in the advancement of Hebrew Studies is shown by a letter, addressed jointly with Bishop Grindal to the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Houses at Cambridge in 1569 recommending to them Rodolphus Cavallerius, "otherwise called Mr. Anthony" [Chevalier].

We find among Parker's correspondents another Hebrew Professor, Immanuel Tremellius, a convert from Judaism. And in 1574 Parker promises to do "the best I can to other of my Cambridge brothers, to contribute some increase of living to that Hebrew reader."

Until this question of books is decided one can only surmise, though not without foundation, that Reuchlin's *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* must have been the main source of information for the English Hebraists no less than for those on the Continent. This fundamental work was published for the first time in 1506. It drew largely on Rashi's Commentary, published, as stated before, in 1475, and for the dictionary embodied in his work Reuchlin made ample use of R. David Qimhi's *Book of Roots* (*Sefer hasHorrashim*), published in 1480. After years of private studies, Reuchlin obtained his first teacher of Hebrew in 1492

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1 See Strype, *Life of Parker*, II, 475.
3 *Parker Correspondence*, p. 468. The reference is to Peter Bignon, but Edward Lively was appointed. *See Strype, op. cit. II*, 379.
4 *See the full study by Dr. Ludwig Geiger*, Johann Reuchlin, etc., Leipzig, 1871, especially pp. 105 ff., and based thereon *S. A. Hirsch's essay on Reuchlin in A Book of Essays*, London, 1905.
in the person of Jacob ben Yeḥiel Lozan, body-physician to Emperor Frederick III, and later in Rome he studied under Obadiah Sforno of Cesena. According to Geiger, Reuchlin follows closely the arrangement of Qimhi, whose grammar (Sefer haMikhlol) he mentions once in his Rudiments and whose Commentaries he uses freely. He also quotes Maimonides. But he holds Rashi as the Ordinary Interpreter of Scripture (ordinarius scripturae interpres) in special regard and often accepts his interpretations. Reuchlin was well known among the English reformers. One of his disciples was Conrad Pellicanus, the teacher of Sebastian Münster, who speaks very highly of his master in the Preface to his Latin translation of the Old Testament. Sebastian Münster undertook a second impression of Reuchlin’s Rudiments in 1537, with considerable changes. As regards Sebastian Münster’s translation we may do well in quoting his own words to show to what an extent he allowed himself to be guided by Jewish exegesis. In his Preface he admits: “Consuluimus . . . in Pentateucho ex Heb. scriptoribus Chal. [daeuum] interpretem, Rabi Salomonem [Rashi], David Kimhi, Ibn Ezra, R. Menahem [ben Saruq, the Grammarian and author of a Hebrew dictionary], . . . Mosen Gerundensem [Nachmanides] . . . et quosdam alios: et cuius expositio in obscurioribus locis nobis commodior visa fuit, hunc sequi sumus.” In other words, he consulted the Targum and the Rabbinic mediæval Hebrew commentaries in order to arrive at a better understanding of the obscure passages in the Pentateuch (and we may add, the same applies to the other parts of the Bible), and he follows the best explanation. Of value and interest is his observation on the importance of the Targum for Jewish exegesis: “Facimus autem saepiuscule Chal. aeditionis mentionem quod illa sit veluti asylum Hebraeis, ad quem confugiant, quando aliquid obscurum et senticosum occurrit. Nam illa luculent explicant, quod in divinis libris minus clarum positum inventur, ut saepo in nostris monstrabimus annotationibus.” We venture to suggest that almost wherever we find a Targumic interpretation as the English translation from the Great Bible onward such a translation originates in Münster’s Latin version.

1 Basel, 1534-35.
if he either translates like the Targum or, even if he should follow the Vulgate in a different translation, at least quotes the Targum in his annotations following upon each chapter. This is not the place to assess the critical value of Münster's version. But it ought to be stated, in view of Parker's instruction and of Sandys' adverse verdict that Münster was not only a sound Hebraist but well versed in Jewish exegesis as well. He does not follow the Rabbis blindly, he carefully weighs their interpretations in his mind and never forgets to mention dissenting views if he quotes Hebrew exegesis.¹ Who imparted this knowledge of Jewish exegesis which is exceptionally extensive and sound to Münster? We have heard before that Pellicanus and Reuchlin's Rudiments were his teachers. But not they alone. He like Reuchlin had his Jewish teacher, as he says himself in his Preface: "Mihi ab Hebraeo, qui me in Scripturis erudivit, ita expositum est." This Hebraeus was no other than Elias Levita. He may account for the authorities quoted other than those found in Reuchlin, notably Rashi and Qimhi. For the ordinary Jewish teacher would rarely adduce Ibn Ezra, Nachmanides, Gersonides, etc., but would rather confine himself to the Targum and Rashi. Münster repaid his teacher by translating most of his grammatical works into Latin, and another of Levita's disciples and friends, Paul Fagius, published his Targumic Dictionary, the first of its kind, and also his Tishbi which he translated into Latin. Fagius who, together with Münster, did most to spread Levita's fame and to establish his influence on Hebraists, held the Chair of Hebrew at Cambridge in 1549,² preceding Immanuel Tremellius. It stands to reason that Fagius made use of Levita's treatises at Cambridge. But this has yet to be verified.

As far as possible at the moment we have answered the question of books used. Fagius as well as Tremellius partly answer for the other question: who were the instructors of the English Hebraists. Towards the close of the sixteenth century

¹ E.g. in Gen. xlix, 5, he adopts the Jewish interpretation, based on the Targum, in his translation of רָוָשׁ by 'murus' in these terms: "Suffoderunt murum: Hebraei exponunt hic רָוָשׁ pro הָיוֹשׁו muro, et non pro tauro, praeter unum Rab. Sal. qui per taurum docet intelligendum Joseph."

² See Mullinger, op. cit., and Athenae Cantabrigienses, I, 95, 538.
we find at Cambridge another baptized Jew, Philip Ferdinand, giving Hebrew private lessons. That Tremellius had acquired a considerable knowledge of Jewish exegesis prior to his conversion can easily be gauged from his Latin translation of the Old Testament. From my perusal of his version I am inclined to think, however, that his use of Hebrew exegesis must at least partly be attributed to Münster's transmission whose arrangement he seems to follow by adding linguistic and exegetical notes at the end of chapters. His translation is said to have enjoyed wide Protestant approval. A study of his literary remains would establish his scholarship. He wrote among other works a Commentary on Hosea, a Chaldaean and Syriac Grammar, and translated the XII Minor Prophets in Aramaic into Latin. Rainolds on Obadiah attacks his translation, but we shall find traces of it in the Authorized Version. Finally, "in 1608" we find that "two Jews, who were not members of the University, were allowed to read in the Bodleian Library, viz. James Wolfgang, who is described in the certificate of admission as "a man well deserving in the Hebrew tongue and a convert from Judaism," and James Levita, 'Judaeus Orientalis'. In the following year Isaac Casaubon meets Jacob Barnett whom he recommends to Oxford, where Kilbye licensed him to lecture in Hebrew. Only Kilbye's Commentary can show us whether Barnett influenced him. Wood's remark rather suggests it.

One thing before all will be clear from this fragmentary sketch of the state of Hebrew studies in this country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: without a close investigation of hitherto unpublished or at least unused evidence it will not be possible to decide the part which personal contact with Jews of more or less Jewish learning and the first systematic treatises on Hebrew Grammar and Lexicography played in

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2 See later, p. 162.

3 See later, pp. 154, 159.


5 On Barnett and his strange fate, see L. Wolf, op. cit., and Neubauer, op. cit.

6 See above, p. 162.
equipping the translators with their Hebrew knowledge, in addition to the help they derived from previous translations in accordance with their terms of reference. A complete answer will perhaps never be given. Yet the road leading to it runs through notes about ownership of Hebrew Manuscripts in the British Museum, the Bodleian Library and the Libraries of the various Oxford and Cambridge Colleges which have received bequests by Archbishop Parker and others. Records of these Colleges may yield some information as well as correspondence, published and especially unpublished of English divines and scholars with their opposite numbers on the Continent and among themselves. The State Papers in the Record Office must also be consulted.

As far as the English translations are concerned, contemporary Latin translations made from the Hebrew original as well as Luther’s German version, probably in the case of Tindale, certainly in the case of Coverdale in his Bible of 1537, will account for most of this influence of Jewish exegesis. Luther owes his acquaintance with Rashi mainly to Nicholas of Lyra. Tindale may have received help from Jews during his Continental stay. What is most remarkable is the fact that Coverdale approaches much nearer to Jewish exegesis in his revision of Matthew’s Bible, thanks to Münster’s Latin version, whereas in his own attempt, 1537, he is strongly influenced by Luther. The Genevan Version clearly shows the imprint of Münster. But not only will it have to be proved in every case whether this imprint is a direct one or comes through the Great Bible, but there is also Leo Judae’s Latin Version of 1544 to be considered. That Leo is of Jewish descent is probable. His son says of this matter: “Nun möchte es wohl sein, dass vielleicht seine Vorfahren wären Juden gewesen, vom Judenthum abgestanden und Christen geworden, besonders weil dort im Elsass viele Juden wohnen.” Though this is likely so the anyhow remote Jewish parentage does not appear to have left traces in the form of Hebrew and Rabbinic knowledge, for we are told by Leo’s

\[1\] We are told, e.g., that Tremellius was in correspondence with “many of the most distinguished men of an illustrious age” (see L. Wolf, op. cit.).
biographer that he translated the whole Bible from 1538, assisted by Michael Adam, a convert from Judaism. Most likely, this convert supplied the Jewish exegesis found in Leo's translation.

Turning to the Bishops' Bible we recall Archbishop Parker's injunction to follow "for the verity of the Hebrew the said Pagine, etc." Pagnino betrays considerable familiarity with Jewish exegesis in his Latin version (1528), must obviously have seen Münster's translation, but—as is only natural for a Dominican—follows the Vulgate much more than any of the other versions. That he took his Hebrew studies seriously and attained a certain efficiency is proved by the existence of a Hebrew glossary, first published at Lyons, 1529, and printed by Plantin at Antwerp in 1570 in an abridged form under the title Epitome Thesauri linguae sanctae. In it he often quotes Rashi, R. Jonah [Ibn Djannāh], Qimhi, R. Abraham (ibn Ezra ?). Whether this work rests on Pagnino's own research, based on Qimhi's Book of Roots, or is modelled upon Reuchlin's Rudiments is a matter for close investigation. His knowledge of Hebrew was certainly considerable.

As stated above, Tremellius' Latin translation is to be taken into account for the Authorized Version. Where this Authorized Version stands on its own, the source must be sought in the scholarship of the translators. Here is a profitable field for

1 In : Leben und ausgewählte Schriften der Väter und Begründer der reformierten Kirche IX. Edid. K. R. Hagenbach, etc. Elberfeld, 1861.
2 The Hebrew title is: שְׁפֵּי נֵצֶר הָרָאָה הַקָּדָשָׁה, Anthony Chevalier, see n. 2, p. 145, published emendations of it. We have consulted the Rylands copy of it.
3 Since this paper was sent to press we have been able to consult the original Rudimenta Hebraica, 1506. Dr. Geiger's views are fully borne out. As regards Pagnino, it is not always possible to decide whether he used Qimhi or only Reuchlin in the cases where both Qimhi and Reuchlin coincide. But so much is certain that Pagnino follows Qimhi much more closely by citing all the words derived from one and the same root. As a rule he only shortens the argument or substitutes for an authority named by Qimhi ali. He also introduces every letter by Litera נ, e.g., just as Qimhi writes נאשָׁה נאשָׁה, etc. Contrary to Reuchlin he brings at the end of each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, just like Qimhi, all the quadrilaterals mentioned by the latter in exactly the same way. These two last mentioned points suggest rather a direct perusal of Qimhi by Pagnino. But his Thesaurus—we had only the Epitome at our disposal—must be carefully examined for this question.
The possible lines of approach have been tentatively suggested above. A number of characteristic examples may supplement the foregoing pages.

II. Rashi's Interpretation Followed in the English Versions.

A. In the Translations.

1. *Genesis* xlix. 5

Rashi offers two explanations which both find their echo in the translations. He says: 'an expression for weapons. The sword in Greek *(means)* μαχαίρα *(Tanhumā)*. Another explanation is *(Ber. R.)* in the land of their sojourn they are wont to weapons of violence, like *Ezekiel* xvi. 3. And this is the translation of Onkelos.'

T(inda1e): weked instruments are their wepons.
C(overdale): their deadly weapons are perilous instrumentes.
M(iinster): vasa violenta in habitaculis eorum.

In a note he quotes, just like Rashi, two opinions, the one following the Targum, the other seeing a Greek word in it.

GR(eat Bible): cruell instrumentes in their habitaciones.

Quidam legunt, habitatio eorum.

G(enevan Bible): the instruments of crueltie are in their habitacions. Or, their swords are instruments of violence.

P(agnino): ... in habitationibus suis. The other meaning is quoted in his *Epitome.*

B(ishops' Bible): are cruell instrumentes in their habitations.
A(uthorized Version): instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. Or, their swords are instruments of violence.

R(evised Version): weapons of violence are their swords.

TR(emellius): instrumenta violentiae conventiones eorum.

He explains this in a note: hoc est pactionibus illis quibus cum Schecemitis convenerunt. This agrees with Ibn Ezra's own
explanation who says, after reviewing and rejecting existing interpretations: after they had concluded an alliance with the Shekhemites they murdered them cunningly.

Tindale, "Matthew" (who is not specially mentioned) and Coverdale follow the Vulgate with Jerome's explanation arma eorum, which is also the one view propounded by Rashi who himself quotes the Midrash. St. Jerome may well have heard it from his Jewish helpers. GR, following upon M, introduces the other Jewish view. J adopts the first in his translation and brings the second in his note. G and A bring both, B follows M's and P's translation, and R goes back to the older translations, substituting 'weapons' for 'instruments'. TR goes his own way by adopting Ibn Ezra's view which is comparatively rarely represented in the translations.

2. Genesis xlix. 10.

Rashi explains this phrase by an assembly of peoples.

Lyra accepts the rendering of the Vulgate but says: In Hebraeo autem habitur sic: Et erit ei aggregatio gentium.

T: to whom the people shall herken.
C: and unto him shal the people fall.
M: et ad illum aggregatio (erit) populorum.
GR: unto hym shal the gatheringe of the people be.
J: et ad illum gentes confluent.
G: and the people shal be gathered unto him.
P: Et ei erit aggregatio populorum.
BA: unto him shall the gathering of the people be.
TR: et sit ei obedientia populorum.
R: unto him shall the obedience of the people be.

Here again Rashi is introduced by M whose translation is adopted by GR which in its turn is followed by B and A. G only exchanges the noun for a verbal clause, perhaps under the influence of J. P either follows Rashi directly or via Lyra's explanation. He quotes Rashi in his Epitome.

T TR and R seem to follow the Aramaic rendering, for we read in the Targum and to him shall obey the peoples.
Rashi explains נֶאֶשָׁה by 'ends' and the whole phrase by *unto the end of the boundaries of the everlasting hills.*

_T C_: after the desire of the hilles of the worlde.
_M_: usque ad extremitatem collium mundi.
_GR B_: unto the utmost of the hilles of the worlde.
_J_: usque ad desiderabiles colles qui iam olim fuerint. But he explains: quidem legunt usque ad terminos collium vel circuitum.
_G_: unto the end of the hilles of the worlde.
_P_: usque ad terminum collium perpetuorum. But cp. his Epitome s.v. קְצָתָה גֹּורה giving 'desiderium', but not quoting this passage. He may follow Lyra in his translation.
_TR_: usque ad finem collium saeculi.
_A R_: unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.

_T C J_ translate the word in its usual meaning, following the *Vulgate._ But _J_ reproduces Rashi in his note and _M_ introduces it into all subsequent translations. _P_’s translation is more correct as 'mundi', 'of the worlde' would require מָעוֹן in the Hebrew text. But whereas these versions reproduce the text only, _A R_ include Rashi’s explanation in their rendering as well.

Of other examples in *Genesis* the following may be noted: iv. 1; xxxvii. 35; L. 5.

4. *Exodus* xiv. 20

Rashi says to ‘and it was a cloud and darkness’ for _Egypt_ (לְאֵנָשָׁה) to ‘and it lit up’ a _column of fire the night for Israel_ (לְאִשֵּׁרָא).)

Based upon Rashi directly or through the transmission of Lyra _J_ adds in brackets [Aegyptis] and [Israelitis].

_M_ in annotating this verse explains thus and says: “Et haec est expositio Chal. interprete et R. Abr. Sepharadi.”

_TR_: illis erat nubes et tenebrae, _his autem illustrabat noctem ipsam._

_A_: and it was a cloud and darkness _to them_ but it gave light by night _to these._
TR undoubtedly is the source for A, the only English version which inserts these words for the sake of clarity. Rashi as often follows the Targum.

5. xix. 13

Rashi if the horn draws out a long sound

חמשון והובֵל קַל לְאָרוֹן

_T C_: when the horne bloweth.

_P_: quum perplixum sonitum dederit buccina. _Epitome_: 'Cum protraxerit (i.e. longiorem sonitum dederit) cornu.'

_M_: cum prolaxis buccina sonuerit. He explains חמשון exactly like the Hebrew Commentators.

_GR_: when the trompe bloweth longe.

_J_: Quum protractus fuerit Jobel.

_G (B)_ : when the horne (trumpet) bloweth long.

_TR_: cum tractim sonabit cornu. His note runs: id est, audietur continens unius toni sonus.

_A R_: when the trumpet soundeth long.

Here again it is _M_ who introduces a translation which in Archbishop Parker’s phrase follows closely the verity of the Hebrew.

For other examples in _Exodus_ see i. 11; ii. 16, 25; xii. 8, 9, 21; xxi. 10; xxii. 18, 28; xxiii. 1; xxv. 2, 39. xxi. 10 and xxii. 28 are particularly instructive.

6. _Deuteronomy_ xxxii. 15 חשת

Rashi: חשת is like חשת. It is the expression of Job xv. 27, for he has covered his face with his fatness.

לשה אורב (לשה אורב) כה סומ פיני בחלב

All English versions translate with fatness undoubtedly under the influence of Rashi's explanation.

7. v. 42. מראות פרעות אורות

Rashi: because of the transgression from the beginning when the enemy broke in, for when the Holy One, blessed be He, punishes the nations he avenges upon them their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers from the very beginning of their onslaught upon Israel.
RASHI AND THE ENGLISH BIBLE

T: ‘and of the bare heed of the enemye.’

C: and in that enemies heade shall be discovered.

M: idque propter sanguinem occisorum et captivitatem (eorum) a capite ultyonum inimici. His explanation is: et eum captivum abduxerunt, incipiamque ulcisci a capite et initio primae iniuriae quam hostis intulit.

GR: and for their captivite, sens the beginning of the wrath of the enemy.

J: ab hosti summatim ulyones rependam. He adds in the margin: Alii legunt a capite nudatorum, alii, a capite ultzionem hostis.

G: when I beginne to take vengeance of the enemie.

P: reddam ultzionem hostibus meis.

B: since the beginning of the wrath of the enemie.

TR: confossorum et captivorum, inde a principio erunt ultyones inimici. He explains this: Inde a principio. id est cum ultzionem sumam de inimicis, nihil impunitum relinquam eorum quae inde a principio contra me commiserunt.

A: from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.

R: from the head of the leaders of the enemy (or, the hairy head of the enemy).

Rashi arrives at his explanation by taking the Hebrew root שד in the meaning it has in Aramaic as avenging punishment. Moreover, he takes וָאֵין to mean ‘beginning’ and not ‘head.’

T C J in his first alternative base their translations upon the Vulgate: et de captivitate nudati inimicorum capitis.

M strikes the middle between Vulgate and Rashi. He takes וָאֵין, both as ‘head’ and as ‘beginning’, thus working his two sources together. His explanation follows the Vulgate in the first part, but from incipiamque it is abbreviated Rashi. GR derives from M.

J likewise combines Vulgate and Rashi. P agrees with J and B with GR. G seems to reproduce the second half of M’s explanation in an abbreviated form. TR retains some of the Vulgate but the second part of his translation and his explanation
are clearly modelled upon Rashi. A is Rashi contracted. And R is in favour of yet two other possible meanings of the root נר.

8. xxxiii. 29.

ר' חшен

Rashi: like the Gibeonites, כנף הגרים. He takes like the Targum, ר"ך זוﺑך. He is followed by Lyra.

T: shall hyde themselves from the.
C: shall pyne awaye.
M: debilitati sunt inimici tui erga te.
B (GR): have lost their strength to the (warde).
J: Et mentientur tibi inimici tui.
G: shalbe in subjection to thee.
P: negabunt (like Vulgate).

A: shall be found liars (or, shall be subdued).
R: shall submit themselves unto thee (marg. yield feigned obedience).

J is the first to follow Rashi, either directly or through Lyra.
M is followed by GR and B. A follows ultimately Rashi in the text, in the margin, however, G and TR.

Among other examples in Deuteronomy the following may be mentioned: xxxii. 17, 18; xxxiii. 12, 27.

9. Micah i. 9.

יכ אמשה מחה

Rashi: for she is sick of her wounds, הרולה היא במכותה.
T/M (for Tindale-Matthew) C GR B: is paste remedy.
M (J): quia (quoniam) desperata est plaga eius.
P: quia desperatae sunt plagae tuae.
G: for her plagues are grievous.
TR: aegra fuit Shomron plagis suis.
A: for her wound is incurable (or, she is grievously sick of her wounds).

R: for her wounds are incurable.

A adopts Rashi's explanation in the margin. TR brings here R. David Qimhi's interpretation, without naming his source as he did with Ibn Ezra above. Qimhi says ad loc. among other things: the plague that fell upon Samaria and came as far as Judah.
RASHI AND THE ENGLISH BIBLE

10. iii. 5. קדרשך עליי מלומדך

Rashi, rendering the Targum into Hebrew without acknowledgment, says: and they prepare war against him.

T/M C GR: they preach of warre.
M: adornant. But he quotes the Targum in the note thus: contra hunc excitant bellum.
J: bellum denuncian.
P: praeparant bellum.
G B A: they even prepare war against him.
TR: indicunt bellum.
R: like A, but has in the margin: Heb. 'sanctify.'

P G B A are clearly influenced by Rashi, possibly through the medium of P or of M in which latter case it would be correct to attribute the influence to the Targum. If P is responsible this would constitute the only case we have come across of P's influence; cp. also his Epitome.

11. v. 3. לכו יהוה

Rashi, possibly taking his cue from the Targum's ימעורן they will be handed over explains: he will give them into the hands of their enemies.

T/M C GR: whyle he plageth them.
M: in a note ad loc. says before the Messiah is born into the world tradet deus Jehudaeos in magnas afflictiones.
G B A: Therefore will he give them up. Targum or Rashi are behind this translation.
TR: exponet quidem eos.

12. Amos v. 12. ואביזים בשער הום

Rashi: 'in the gates of your courts they pervert the right of the poor.'

T/M C GR: ye oppresse the poore in judgment.
M: et pauperum (causam) in porta pervertunt.
J: ut dejiciatis pauperem in foro (foro, Ebr. nam fora in portis erant).
G B: and they oppresse the poore in the gate.
TR: et egentes in porta pervertentium.
P: et pauperum iudicium in porta perverterunt.
A (R): and they turn aside the poor (needy) in the gate from their right.

Here again Rashi is behind A R, whilst P's iudicium also comes from Rashi.

Other examples of Rashi's influence are: Micah ii. 3; iv. 13; vi. 3, 13. Amos vi. 4; ix. 1, 9.

To assess the imprint of Jewish exegesis properly we must not limit our inquiry to Rashi. A systematic investigation must comprise the Targum as well as all the Mediaeval Hebrew Commentators. A few examples may illustrate this.


Ibn Ezra: let his hands be sufficient for him.
T: let his handes fyght for him.
C: let his handes multiplye.
M: manus eius sufficiens est sibi.
GR B: his handes shalbe good ynough for hym.
J: manus eius multae erunt.
P: contendent sibi.
G A: let his hands be sufficient for hym.
TR: manibus eius satis sit ei.

T and P, following the Vulgate; C and J; M G A and GR B TR agree with each other. M accepts the interpretation of Ibn Ezra tacitly and hands this down to all subsequent English versions.


Targum: What is the desire of your soul.
T/M (C) GR: whatsoever thy soul (heart) desyreth.
M: quidquid dixerit anima tua.
J: quidquid pro voto desideras. Note: Ebr. quid dixerit anima tua.
TR: quod sit desyderium tuum. Marg.: Hebr. quis sit animus tuus. sic animus pro desyderio Ps. 27. 12 et alibi frequenter.
A: whatsoever thy soul desireth (Heb. speaketh, or thinketh).
R: like A (Heb. saith).
In this case $T/M$ already follows the Targum. Perhaps Tindale owes this acquaintance with the Targum to personal instruction from Jews? TR makes a plunder, for it is not that means ‘wish’ but the verb אמר is rendered by the noun רוא ‘will, pleasure’!

15. Micah vi. 9. R. David Qimhi: the man of wisdom . . . said the prophet: “if I announce your words in the midst of the city he who is the man of wisdom among them alone shall see in his innermost heart your honoured name . . .”

Rashi explains similarly “who sets his heart upon the task to understand and see your ways.”

$T/M C GR$: that thy name may be righteousness.

$M$: et (vir) salutis videbit nomen tuum. He explains: Est autem והרשיה non salus sed existentia, et id quod firmum manet, quales sunt electi et praeordinati ad salutem. Hebraei tamen exponunt חכמה sapientiam, quae sola in mundo inferiori permanet. . .

$J$: quique ratione praeditus est, videbit nomen tuum. marg. alij legunt, timebit. Does he mean Pagnino by ‘alij’?

$G A$: and the man of wisdom shall see thy name.

$TR$: nam quod res est videt nomen tuum.

$A$ marg. Or, thy name shall see that which is.

$B$: the man that shalbe saved consydereth thy name.

$P$: et vir sapiens timebit nomen tuum. In his Epitome he gives also other meanings quoting Qimhi.

$GR$ does not follow $M$ in this case. But $M$ borrows (vir) from Qimhi as well as his explanation. And it is this Jewish exegesis which found its way into $G$ and $A$ whilst $A$ follows $TR$ in the alternative translation of the margin.

$J$ may equally well be influenced by Rashi or Qimhi.

Apart from Rashi the Targum, Qimhi and Ibn Ezra will be the principal exponents of Jewish exegesis in the English versions. It is for this reason that we gave the last three examples.
B. In the Notes of the Genevan and the Bishops' Bibles.

16. To Genesis xlvii. 21, 'he removed them from one end... of Egypt to the other end.'

Rashi: as a reminder that they had no longer any share (or portion) in the land.

M: Seu ut Hebraica habent: in signum quod nihil propriam amplius haberent in terra.

G: 'By this changing they signified that they had nothing of their owne but received all of the kings liberalitie.'

B: This was a token that they had no proprietie more in the lande.

B is a literal translation of M who, in his turn, translates Rashi.

17. To Genesis xlix. 10, 'until Shilo come.'

Rashi: the king Messiah whose will be the kingdom. And thus Ongelos translates.

P translates: donec veniat Messias. In his Epitome s.v. שילה refers to this passage and translates Filius eius, quoting 'Tharg. Christus.'

J: in the margin we find: Shilo, felicitator.

M: quotes רישון, based on Targum.

B: Shило, Messias is here promised.

TR: usquedum venerit filius eius. Heb. secundae eius, hoc est, Christus, ut Chaldaea paraphrasis utraque (i.e. Pseudo-Jonathan as well as Ongelos), et Hebr. interpretes fere omnes consentiunt.

B may derive from P, M or Rashi. TR follows Pseudo-Jonathan עליר הבני, the youngest of his sons.

18. To Exodus xxi. 6, 'and he shall serve him for ever.'

Rashi: until the Jubilee, or not so but for ever? Therefore Scripture teaches (Leviticus xxv. 10): and ye shall return every man to his family. This shows that 50 years are called يولם; but not that he serve him all the 50 years, nay, he shall serve him until the Jubilee be it near at hand or far off.
M: Id est, usque ad iubileum: sive is annus prope fuerit, sive longe abfuerit. Sic enim Hebraei communiter exponunt hunc locum.

B: The worde in Hebrue dooth not always sounde perpetuitie, sometyme it is taken for a long continuance for in this case they were never set free tyl the yeare of Jubilee, whiche was a tyme of generall pardon.

TR also explains until the Jubilee.

The origin of the note in B is quite clear.

19. To *Exodus* xxix. 24, 'and shalt wave them for a wave offering.'

Rashi: He waves forward and backward unto Him who possesses the four sides of the world. . . He waves upward and downward unto Him who possesses Heaven and Earth.

*M*: Siginifcat קִנֵּה aliiquid in sublime porrectum, hinc inde ad quattuor mundi plagas movere, et quasi ventilare.

*B*: 'This sort of offering after the priest had lyfted it up, was moved into every side of al coastes, to signifie that God was Lorde of al the earth. It was muche lyke to the manner of blessings used in papistes churches over the chalice.'

Here *M* alone does not account for *B*. It must therefore be assumed that the writer of the note had a first-hand knowledge of the original Rashi.

Attention may be drawn to another notable instance of Rashi serving as interpreter, i.e. *Exodus* xxi. 10. Other examples are xxii. 18, 25, 28.

20. *Isaiah* xli. 1. אָיִם ' Islands."

Rashi: Islands. Idolators to reprove them.

*Б*: By the Ylandes, God meaneth the Gentles whom he reproveth for their idolatrie.

21. v. 5. 'The isles saw it and feared.'

Rashi: The idolators. the wonders I am performing. . (or, powerful works).
G: considering mine excellent workes among my people.

'and came.'

Rashi: they assembled themselves to fight.

וֹז אֶתְלוּ זָו נָאָסְפִּים לַהֲלָלָם.

G: they assembled themselves and conspired against me to maintain their idolatrie.

Both notes go back to Rashi.

22. v. 25.

Rashi: and Cyrus shall, etc. ...

G translates: from the East sunne shal he call upon my name. ‘he’ in marg. That is, Cyrus. So also B.

These examples may suffice to show that Rashi did not only supply the translation of many a passage but also furnished a number of notes for the better understanding of both the Genevan and the Bishops’ Bibles.

That Rashi’s influence could not be limited to the actual translations but ought to have extended to the writings of the translators dealing with the Old Testament appears to be a safe assumption.

We may therefore be allowed to conclude this study with a short paragraph on

C. Rashi’s Interpretation in English Biblical Commentaries.

As stated above we were unable to procure copies of the Commentaries written by Gilby of the Genevan nor Kilbye and Lively of the Authorized Version. But we were able to consult John Rainolds’ treatises on Obadiah and Haggai.¹

23. In his commentary on Obadiah Rainolds translates i. 9, יהו כִּהנֵי יָרָה עַשֵּׁר by ‘the valiant of the mount ...’ Commenting on this verse he polemises against Tremellius’ translation ‘every one of the mount ...’ He continues: ‘But sith the Hebrew word כִּהֲנֵי signifieth a valiant man, differing from כִּהָנִי as vir doth from homo, and ἄντρωπος from ἄνθρωπος. . . .’²

Now we find in Rashi ad loc. ‘Every valiant man, כִּהֲנֵי כִּי נוֹבֵר

¹ First published Oxford, 1613, resp. London, 1648. The edition used for this paper is dated 1864 and appeared in Nichol’s Comms.

² Obadiah, p. 20. On p. 39 he rails against ‘the frantic dreams of Jewish rabbins’ who refer the captivity of v. 20 to Titus, etc.
24. Commenting on *Haggai* i. 8 he refutes the Jewish interpretation that the missing נ in רַּחַי signify that ‘the latter temple was greater than the former.’ He goes on: ‘Some of them will say in regard of the building, others in respect of the continuance, for that as they account this stood ten years longer than the former which is laid down by the author of their ordinary gloss. . . .’ “Nay, they are convinced of madness by the same rabbin, for on the same word, because the Hebrew word wanteth the letter נ, which in number standeth with them for fifth, he saith it is a note of mystery; for that this latter temple wanted five things which the former had: (1) Urim and Thummim; (2) the ark of the covenant; (3) fire from heaven; (4) the sign of God’s glory; (5) presence of the Holy Ghost; and this is proved, alleging a place of Talmud, which is among the Jews as the decretal among the papists, the author thereof would no more err, than can the pope; a Talmudical fancy; for although נ were wanting (as it is not in those copies which are received without points);¹ but if it were by their fault that copied out of the book, what reason that there would want five things because נ signifieth five in numbering, which is nothing but a sottish and cabalistine toy; for even this temple wanted more than these five things, as they also confess, even in the same book, for there was not the cup of manna, and therefore not only five, but eight or nine more were wanting . . . etc.”

We quoted this lengthy tirade in full because it allows us a glimpse into the mind of one of the principal figures of Puritan Biblical scholarship. His knowledge of the Talmud must not have been substantial if he could seriously hold such views! But he must obviously have combined with a militant outspokenness a sound knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and of Jewish exegesis, notably of Rashi whom he calls the author of their ordinary gloss, just like Reuchlin. For he actually quotes Rashi’s comment on *Haggai* ii. 9: רַּחַי

¹ The Massoretic text distinguishes between הָבֵד נִנְזְכָּב K’tib and Qere הָבֵד נִנְזְכָּב. The quotation occurs in his *Haggai*, p. 30. His reference to Josephus goes back to Rashi in this instance. But there are other references to Josephus throughout his *Commentary* which suggest that he read Josephus just as he read and quoted other classical authors.
Rab and Shemuel (are of different opinion), the one says with regard to the building, the other says with regard to the continuation, for the first temple stood 410 years and the second 420. And what Rainolds says about the five things, this is literally taken over from Rashi ad loc.: “the missing accounts for five things which were in the first temple but not in the second: the ark, Urim and Thummim, Fire, Divine Presence and Holy Spirit.” Now, the Athenae Cantabrigienses inform us that Drs. Akay and Rainolds secured a position for the aforementioned Philip Ferdinand as teacher of Hebrew in several Colleges and Halls. Both scholars acted as a sort of tutor to Ferdinand who removed to Oxford in 1596. His knowledge of Hebrew must have been extensive and is attested to by J. Scaliger who was his pupil in the Talmud. We venture to suggest that this former Polish Jew, steeped in Hebrew and Aramaic literature, showed gratitude to his benefactor Rainolds by acquainting him with Jewish exegesis. But without a record for it as yet nothing more definite can be asserted. It may be that a perusal of Ferdinand’s literary remains may throw some light on this point. Any future research into the state of Hebrew scholarship in Elizabethan England will have to concentrate on correspondence such as the letters of Scaliger, Casaubon and other famous contemporaries. Though John Selden reaches over into the second half of the seventeenth century it is just likely that among his vast collection of letters material bearing on this question may be found. Generally speaking there should be no lack of material in a century noted for the high quality of its scholarship. And although Hebrew studies could not compete with Classical scholarship their significance cannot be doubted, both as regards mere scholarship and particularly by their bearing upon the genesis of the monumental Authorized Version. A monograph on Hebrew scholarship in Elizabethan England is not only a contribution to the history of learning but also to the history of the English Bible. And although much of the advance of the

1 P. 239.  
2 Ibid., p. 549. Where his writings are enumerated.
standard Version of King James is due to Sebastian Münster, it is obvious that even the perusal of his learned notes was only possible for men with an adequate knowledge and understanding of Hebrew. And although Ferdinand and Tremellius, Kilbye, Lively and Rainolds could not vie with Reuchlin, Münster and Fagius in fame perhaps, these scholars after all provided the background for Pococke. A study of their literary remains may well show that their attainments were considerable, and such a study should be made.

That the labours of the Mediaeval Jewish exegetes bore fruit in the works of these Hebraists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and not least in their Latin and English Versions of the Hebrew Bible, even the limited number of passages quoted in the foregoing pages should convincingly demonstrate. The English Bible as a literary monument is without rival. Its influence on English style has been recognized by competent judges. Still more obvious and significant is the great moral force which has gone forth from its pages and has so conspicuously helped to mould and shape the English character. It is therefore well to remember that the foundations for this monument were laid by men who saw in the promulgation of God's Word in the vernacular a powerful weapon for the attainment of Christian liberty and freedom. And it is to their lasting credit that in their fierce struggle for reform, helped by the spirit of Humanism and the zeal of the reformers with whom they established contact when in exile on the Continent, they did not spare energy nor industry to turn to the Hebrew fountain and bring it to life in their own tongue. In this task they were assisted by Jewish exegesis, directly or indirectly, through the instrumentality of Latin translations, among which that of Sebastian Münster occupies first place.

To follow up their labours and to assess their failure or success is an academic matter. Yet even the historian who patiently follows the translators of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries on their wanderings through the Bible and watches them at work liveth in the present. Witnessing the tragic persecution of the descendants of these Mediaeval exegetes and teachers he cannot but marvel at the coincidence that the descen-
dants of Parker and Rainolds, of Grindal and Kilbye should have again to defend those Rights of Man to which the Bible bears testimony, that Bible which these his forbears introduced to all Christians of their own and all subsequent generations!

It had seemed to me to be a worthy tribute to the memory of one of these teachers on the occasion of the ninth centenary of his birth to recall the services which his interpretation has rendered to the perfection of the English Bible. The same qualities which have endeared Rashi to his people, which have enabled him to teach generation after generation the beauty and truth of their Bible, have also commended him to the Christian student of the Hebrew Bible and to the Christian teachers of their nations. Nobody has set Rashi a finer memorial than that great Humanist Reuchlin in calling him the Ordinary Interpreter of Scripture, the echo of which apt characterisation we heard in Rainolds' author of their ordinary gloss. It is the simplicity of diction, the directness of approach, the distinction between the literal sense and the homiletic lesson, the attention to grammar—faulty as it sometimes may seem to us moderns—and at the same time the ease with which the often drawn-out Rabbinic interpretation is set forth and brought home to the ordinary reader, it is all these peculiarities of his Commentary singly and all combined which have appealed to the Christian exegetes from the fourteenth century onward. And it is surely no coincidence


Hirsch, in his Presidential Address, mentions quotations of Rashi by the Franciscan Henry of Costessy in his Expositio super Psalmos, written ca. 1336, alongside with quotations from other Jewish authorities. William de la Mare, a contemporary of Roger Bacon, in his Correctorium Vaticanum [of the text of the Vulgate], cites the Perush [Commentary] by which is almost certainly meant the Commentary of Rashi (s. Hirsch, ibid., p. 12).

It remains to be seen whether the English Hebraists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries knew of and used these earlier, mainly Franciscan Commentaries and other Hebrew and Biblical studies.
that his Commentary was the first dated printed Hebrew book, a fact which must have largely contributed to the popularity of Rashi's interpretation at a time when 'Back to the original sources' was the battle-cry of the educated. Though Rashi's achievement in the field of Talmudical exegesis by far outdistances his fame as a commentator of the Bible, it is the same quality in both which accounts for his success. Yet, seen in a wider perspective, it is Rashi the Bible-commentator who will live in the minds and memories of men not confined to Jews and Judaism.

All those who value culture and civilization, in particular those who see in Christianity and its teachings the highest ideal for our endangered civilization and who believe that the realization of the Biblical ideal—and after all the Old Testament forms part of it still—is the only road to salvation, would do well to remember that Rashi furnished many a brick to the building of the moral wall which we feel called upon to defend and make into a secure reality.

The last decade of his life was overshadowed by the savage persecutions of the first Crusade and its aftermath. There is great relief in the thought that a more humane generation of Christians have at a time of grave trial vindicated the genius of a persecuted people and have thus enriched a work which they set up as a standard for all times through the toilings of a devout man of God who lived what he taught: Rashi.