

Carasik, Michael. *The Commentators' Bible: The Rubin JPS Miqra'ot Gedolot*. 5 vols. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 2018. 1798 pp. Hardcover. USD 360.00.

The recent publication of Michael Carasik's edition of the Genesis commentary of the Rubin JPS series concludes the project's presentation of the Jewish medieval commentators of the Pentateuch in the famous comparative format of *Miqra'ot Gedolot*. Thirteen years after its inception, the Genesis commentary completes the project's five-volume set. The volumes were released in the following order: Exodus (2005), Leviticus (2009), Numbers (2011), Deuteronomy (2015), and Genesis (2018). The set is now part of a long lineage of Jewish commentary editions of the Hebrew Bible adhering to a specific format that displays famous medieval rabbinic commentaries around the Hebrew text of the *Tanakh*. As a *Miqra'ot Gedolot*—also commonly called the “Rabbinic Bible”—it offers an English translation, providing a more accessible version to readers of all levels of Hebrew. Previous versions of the *Miqra'ot Gedolot* format offer a literalistic translation of the medieval translators, from which the Rubin JPS *Miqra'ot Gedolot* deviates by adopting a free rendering and thus adapting more to modern English.

Each volume is adorned with a beautiful binding and has a selection of preliminary sections designed to help the reader better experience the text. I find especially helpful the section called “frequently asked questions” (xi–xiii), in which Carasik explains: the meaning of the term *Miqra'ot Gedolot*—Large-Format Bible—as well as of what this Bible format is comprised; the reasons for the inclusion of both OJPS and NJPS translations as comparative resources; the rationale for a new translation of the commentators; and why modern readers should get acquainted with the work of the medieval commentators. The volumes are arranged in such a way as to promote the reader's “active participation” (xii) in the study of the text, as if in conversation with the old commentators. Thus, each page contains the Hebrew text of the Leningrad Codex, which is circled by several other elements: NJPS and OJPS translations, a set of preliminary questions taken from Abarbanel's commentary—designed to demonstrate the type of questions with which the commentators operated; and the text of each commentator's work and eventual annotations from the editor's hand—designed to elucidate some difficult aspects of a given commentator's work.

The major medieval commentators represented in the commentary are R. Solomon b. Isaac (RASHI, 1040–1105), R. Samuel b. Meir (RASHBAM, ca. 1085–ca.1174), R. Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1164), and R. Moses b. Nahman (NAHMANIDES) (1195–ca. 1270). In addition, the works of minor medieval commentators are included: the *Masorah* (ca. 1000), Jacob b. Hayyim's additions to the *Masorah* (1525), Joseph b. Isaac Bekhor Shor (twelfth century), R. David Kimhi (ca. 1160–ca. 1235), R. Hezekiah b.

Manoah (mid-thirteenth century), R. Levi b. Gershom (1288–1344), Don Isaac Abarbanel (1437–1508), and Obadiah b. Jacob Sforno (1470–1550).

I think the commentary reaches its goal and delivers a format that effectively compares the medieval works and engages the reader in a careful consideration of details that are usually not appraised in a surface reading. One is amazed by how useful the commentary can be to modern readers by helping them observe the ability of medieval Jewish commentators in offering fuel for the inquisitive study of the text. Innumerable examples can be pointed out. Among others, I mention especially (1) Rashbam's remarks of Gen 32:32 on the paradoxical depiction of the victorious Jacob coming limping from the darkness as the sun shone upon him after having wrestled with an angel (*Genesis*, 299); (2) the interesting legal implications and intricacies regarding the "reciprocity/retaliation principle" found in Exod 21:24–25 as discussed by all the commentators (*Exodus*, 179–80); (3) the interpretation of Lev 16:8 and the difficult identification of the term *לְיָסוּר* (*Leviticus*, 120); (4) the alternative meaning of "bearing of guilt" (Num 18:1) as applied to the priestly class in an expression of the extreme importance of their task and not necessarily their actual carrying of the nation's sins (*Numbers*, 131); and (5) the harmonizing perspective shown by the commentators between Deut 1–2 and the differences between these chapters and the accounts they retell from Exodus–Numbers (*Deuteronomy*, 3–21).

The set is a masterful accomplishment, considering the scope of the translation task and the fact that it has been accomplished by a single scholar. Michael Carasik's annotations and translation offer a set that is ideal for students of the Pentateuch ranging from the initial stages in knowledge of the Hebrew to more advanced levels, for non-specialists seeking a more in-depth meditational encounter with the text, and for any person who wants to be introduced to Jewish rabbinic interpretation of the Torah. Whether reflecting traditional Jewish interpretation in its colorful medieval cultural expressions or in its emphasis on the specific meaning of a given biblical term, the Commentators' Bible proves itself to be an invaluable acquisition for any student of Torah, irrespective of his stage in academic training.

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Elledge, Casey D. *Resurrection of the Dead in Early Judaism: 200 BCE–CE 200*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xiii + 272 pp. Hardcover. USD 95.00.

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