

VÍCTOR MORLA, *Libro de Job: Recóndita Armonía* (Comentarios teológicos y literarios del AT y NT; Pamplona: Verbo Divino, 2017). Pp. 1550. €95.

The present volume is a magisterial commentary on Job in a Spanish commentary series that is underappreciated among scholars. Morla's commentary is a monumental 1,550 pages. It is printed on thin paper in one volume, with many pages evenly divided between text and footnotes. Scholars of Job will want to access this richly researched and detailed commentary on Job.

In his foreword, M. indicates his appreciation of Job as “a song to the dignity of the human being” (p. 11), the desire to know, and the search for meaning in apparent senselessness. The book begins with received wisdom and raises hard questions. It offers no essential definition of God, but a sea of images and metaphors. The introduction is concise for such a long commentary (fifty-two pages). M. does not seek to offer a definitive interpretation of the book but to highlight major questions in scholarship and themes within the book. His introduction covers the usual topics (authorship, date, language, text, etc.) and offers refreshingly sound judgment, for example by observing that a *hapax legomenon* in Job need not be an Arabic or Ugaritic word but could be a word in Hebrew not otherwise attested. He also cautions against the dangers of deriving the meanings of Hebrew words from cognates and situates the book in a Hebrew-Palestinian context during the Persian period when Aramaic influence was significant.

He summarizes tensions within the poetry and between the poetry and the prose. In

the prose, for example, Job's siblings appear out of nowhere in 42:11, and the conclusion offers no recapitulation of the satan's role or Job's illness or recovery. Further, the resigned Job of 2:10 becomes the protesting Job of chap. 3. Within the poetry, Job has no audience in 3:1; the third cycle of dialogue is notoriously messy; the speaker of the wisdom poem in chap. 28 is unclear; and Elihu appears nowhere before or after his intervention. M. conveniently summarizes how twenty-seven major commentators (in Spanish, German, French, and English) have treated the speeches in the third cycle (chaps. 22–27) and offers his own analysis, detailed in the commentary. M. also gives his vision of how the book developed. He offers solid reasons for his positions but is not dogmatic about them. He imagines the dialogue in chaps. 3–27 as a unity to which a redactor added the prologue and chaps. 29–31 in order to explain why God speaks back to Job. M. thinks that there was originally one divine speech focused on creation and one response by Job. The material about weather and animals in 38:22–39:30 was added after the similar material in 36:22–37:27. He also doubts the originality of the Leviathan and Behemoth speeches. The speeches of Elihu were added to respond to the provocative words of Job in chaps. 29–31, much as chaps. 4–27 respond to Job's opening speech in chap. 3. As for the responses of God, the wisdom poem in chap. 28 was added to make sense of the inadequate responses of Job's friends. M. next discusses the literary form of Job, summarizing various attempts to classify its genre and preferring drama or tragedy to such labels as legal dispute or dialogue. He notes ancient Near Eastern parallels but prefers to read the book in its OT context. M. concludes the introduction with a brief discussion of selected themes: disinterested integrity, the destiny of the wicked and divine justice, divine mystery and religious truth. On the last topic, M. notes that Job does not pour out his complaint when God appears, since he seems to have doubted God's justice but not God's power or wisdom about the cosmos. M. concludes with a reflection on God's freedom: "The friends of Job cultivate religious conviction more than relationship with the living God, since they believe in a rational divinity enslaved to a single principle: justice" (p. 76).

After the foreword and introduction, the commentary divides into four main parts. The first and last concern the prose frame narrative. Commentary on the poetic dialogue is divided into two "diptychs": the first includes three sections devoted respectively to Job's monologue (Job 3), the three cycles of debate (Job 4–27) and the wisdom poem (Job 28). The second diptych also has three sections: Job's soliloquy (29–31), the speeches of Elihu (32–37), and the speeches of God and Job's responses (38:1–42:6). Each unit of the commentary covers one or two chapters, determined by the length of a speech (e.g., Eliphaz in chaps. 4 and 5) or textual unit (e.g., each chapter of Elihu's speech in Job 32–37 is discussed separately rather than all six consecutively). Each unit of commentary consists of a general introduction to the unit of text discussed, a translation in bold font, textual observations on issues in each verse, and commentary on the passage organized around units of text (typically three to six verses). The textual observations routinely draw on the ancient versions (Greek, Latin, Targum, Syriac), reproducing them in their native scripts rather than transliteration, which adds to the visual appeal and readability of the volume.

Morla offers a rich commentary on Job that is deeply informed by the ancient versions and its OT context, frequently referring to biblical passages related to an expression or idea in Job. He does not draw on ancient Near Eastern parallels of languages as much as some other commentators, but he is aware of the connections and they appear periodically. Sim-

ilarly, he is familiar with much reception history of the book but does not make it a focus of the commentary. Instead, he has produced a detailed analysis of Job within its biblical context, with attention to language, text, and theology.

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