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# Studi del settimo convegno RBS

Rhetorica Biblica et Semitica

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# Recognizing a Singular Knowledge and Wisdom

## Literary Strategies of Section Job 38:1–42:6

### I. INTRODUCTION

After having presented the study of the composition of the main parts of the section Job 38:1–42:6, establishing some proposals of composition and meaning<sup>1</sup>, we still have to do the study of the composition of two significant moments: Job 41:1-5 and 42:1-6 placing them in the entire composition. Our proposal is to do the study of these two moments and then to present an overall reading of the entire section of the book of Job. In this reading, we would like to apply the several aspects of meaning, collected in the different steps that define the process of rhetorical biblical analysis (the composition, biblical context and interpretation), to a new understanding of the literary and thematic strategy developed by the biblical author. The study already done gives us a strong perception about an enquiring movement that starts in God's initial challenging questions, turning from the cosmological universe to the animal kingdom (38:1–39:30). The focus on the animal kingdom is signalled by a new start with two explicit statements concerning two animal metaphors: Behemoth and Leviathan (40:6–41:26). We would like to explore how the literary strategies build upon different moments the hints of a progressive thinking in God's words to Job. It is within the understanding of this progression, that we can consider how the author states the absolute difference of God, achieving his main goal: to bring Job to another truth and knowledge of God's ways.

The rhetoric biblical analysis has shaped the composition of the entire section (38:1–42:6) in four main sequences (38:4-38; 38:39–39:30; 40:15-24; 40:25–

<sup>1</sup> Cf. The presentations done in the past *Conferences of the International Society for the Study of Biblical and Semitic Rhetoric* all published in the *Conferences Proceedings*: L. ALMENDRA, «Some remarks of Composition and meaning in Jb 38,39–39,30», in R. MEYNET – J. ONISZCZUK, ed., *Retorica Biblica e Semitica 2. Atti del secondo convegno RBS*, ReBib 16, Bologna 2011, 19-43; «“You know! For you were born then”. Remarks of Composition and meaning in Jb 38,1-38», in R. MEYNET – J. ONISZCZUK, ed., *Studi del terzo convegno RBS. International Studies on Biblical & Semitic Rhetoric*, ReBibSem 2, Roma 2013, 41-64; «Reaching the full meaning of God's Words (Part I). Remarks on the composition and meaning of Job 40,6-24», in R. MEYNET – J. ONISZCZUK, ed., *Studi del quinto convegno RBS. International Studies on Biblical & Semitic Rhetoric*, Retorica Biblica e Semitica, RBSem 11, Rome 2017, 35-48; «Reaching the full meaning of God's Words (Part II). Remarks on the composition and meaning of Job 40,25–41,26», in F. GRAZIANO – R. MEYNET, ed., *Studi del sesto convegno RBS. International Studies on Biblical & Semitic Rhetoric*, RBSem 18, Roma 2019, 43-56.

41:26), with an introduction (38:1-3) and a conclusion (42:1-6). At the centre, we find a part (40:1-5), where the biblical author places a question that sustains the dynamism of the entire question.

<b>GOD ANSWERED JOB... I will ask YOU and YOU will let me KNOW!</b>	38:1-3
<b>Can YOU KNOW</b> the laws of heavens or place its rule on earth? <b>YOU KNOW!</b> For you were born then...	38:4-38
<b>DO YOU KNOW</b> the time of giving birth of the mountain-goats? Is it from your <i>understanding</i> soars the falcon?	38:39–39:30
Who <i>argues (with)</i> <b>GOD (must) answer!</b>	40:1-5
I will ask <b>YOU</b> and <b>YOU</b> will let me <b>KNOW!</b> <b>Behold!</b> The <i>Behemot</i> , that I made as <b>YOU</b>	40:6-24
Can <b>YOU</b> draw out <i>Leviathan</i> ...? He is king over all that are proud.	40:25–41:26
<b>JOB ANSWERED GOD... I KNOW</b> that you can do all things!	42:1-6

## II. THREE DISTINCTIVE MOMENTS

The section 38:1–42:6 presents three distinctive moments (38:1-3; 40:1-5; 42:1-6) that are not included in the main sequences. They seem to play in the whole composition the role of an introduction (38:1-3) and conclusion (42:1-6), with a significant question at the centre (40:1-5).

### 1. AN INTRODUCTION: GOD ANSWERED JOB...! (38:1-3)

The first moment plays the role of an introduction and constitutes a piece composed of three segments (1-3). The first segment (1) begins both members with the two synonym verbs to answer and to say whose subject is God. This literary strategy emphasizes the aim to affirm God as the subject of the whole speech and his determination to answer Job. The explicit use here of the name God contrasts with the whole interior part of the book, where are found the other names for describing the deity<sup>2</sup>. The verb to answer appears in parallel with the verb to say, reaching the double purpose expressed with the verb to ask and the verb to know, used in the subsequent segments (3-4). This parallelism not only underlines God as the subject of the verbs to answer and to speak, but it sets up an unexpected opposition with the interior part of the book, where Job has constantly spoken and answered.

<sup>2</sup> For example: 'ēl; 'ēl-šadday; 'ēloah.



knowledge, used by God in the introduction (38:2), abruptly change the subject from Job to God. The segment interrupts Job's words and establishes an echo, that retrieves the initial challenge of God's words to Job. He, in fact, up to the moment, has been the one who through all his words risked hiding counsel and pronounced words without knowledge.

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. <sup>42:1</sup> Then <i>answered</i> . and <i>said</i> :	<b>JOB</b>	Yhwh
: <sup>2</sup> « <i>I know</i> : nothing will be thwarted	(that) all of yours	you can do, (with) purpose.
+ <sup>3</sup> Who is this	(that) hides	counsel <i>without-Knowledge?</i>
: Thus, : wonders	I have uttered for me	what I did <i>not understand</i> , which <i>I did not know</i> .
.....		
+ <sup>4</sup> Hear, : I will ask you,	and I and <i>you will let me know</i> .	will speak
: <sup>5</sup> A hearing : but now	-of the ear my eye	I have heard of you sees you!
: <sup>6</sup> Therefore : upon dust	I despise myself and ashes.»	and repent

---

The second segment (3b) is composed of two members and returns to Job's words. The form of question gives place to a declaration introduced by a particle «thus»<sup>4</sup>. The verb to utter in *hiphil* perfect first common singular followed by the two verbs to understand and to know preceded by the negative particle «no» permits envisioning this declaration as an immediate answer from Job. The piece (3-4) ends with a segment (4) that opens and closes with two verbs in the imperative: the verb to hear and the verb to know. These imperatives seem to ignore Job's previous declaration and return to God's challenge set in the beginning of the piece (3). The one who risks hiding counsel (in words) without knowledge, should hear what God has to say and answer him.

The third piece (5-6) is composed of two segments. The first (5) establishes a parallel with the two words «hear» and «eye» associating the two main means

<sup>4</sup> *lākēn* is often translated as *according to such conditions, that being so, therefore* (cf. Num 16:11, 1Sam 27:6; Ps 16:9; 73:6; 73:10). Often introduces, after statement of the grounds, a divine declaration or command (cf., e.g., Judg 10:13; 2Kgs 1:6; Amos 4:12; Isa 5:13.14.24; 7:14; 10:16; 16:7; 27:9; Jer 6:15; 8:10). It can be used as an idiomatic expression, in conversation, in reply to an objection, to state the ground upon which the answer is made (cf. Gen 4:15; 30:15, Judg 8:7; 11:8; 1Sam 28:2; 1Kgs 22:19; Job 20:2). But also as an expression that inferring the cause from the effect, develops what is logically involved in a statement (cf. Isa 26:14b) or what is implicit in it (cf. Job 42:3 and 34:25); cf. BDB, 485-487.

through which comes understanding. Within them we find the verbs, to hear and to see, both stressing the suffix of the second masculine singular, that leaves no doubt that the speech returns to Job, finishing his answer to God. The adverb «now» signals a radical difference between the hearing-of the ear that Job has heard about God and what his eyes have seen, through all the words and the mysteries of the creation that God has passed through his eyes. The last segment (6) introduced with the adverb «therefore»<sup>5</sup>, assuming the tone of conclusion of Job’s words, well confirmed by the first person of the singular of the following verbs to despise and to repent). The second member opens with the preposition «upon» and is followed by the word: «dust» and «ashes», expressing self-abasement (cf. 18:27; Lam 3:29)<sup>6</sup>.

3. A CENTRAL QUESTION: WHO ARGUES WITH GOD MUST ANSWER! (40:1-5)

The part 40:1-5 is placed at the centre of the section (38:1–42:6) and is composed of two pieces (1-2; 3-5).

. <sup>40:1</sup> Then answered . and said:	<b>YHWH</b>	to JOB
.. <sup>2</sup> «Shall a <i>contender</i> : Who <i>argues (with)</i>	of the <b>ALMIGHTY</b> <b>GOD</b>	faultfinder? ( <i>must</i> ) <i>answer.</i> »
.. <sup>3</sup> Then answered . and said:	JOB	to <b>YHWH</b>
.. <sup>4</sup> «See, : My hand	I am of small account I put	what shall I return to you? on my mouth.
.. <sup>5</sup> Once : twice	I have spoken but I will not do again.»	and <b><i>I will not answer,</i></b>

The first piece (1-2) is formed of two segments each of two members. The first segment (1) starts immediately with the verb to answer highlighted by the verb to say in the second member, both having God as the subject and Job as the direct object. This segment is exactly the same as already used in the beginning

<sup>5</sup> *‘al-kēn* is usually translated as *forasmuch as* (cf. Gen 18:5; 19:8; 33:10; 38:26; Num 10:31; 14:43; Judg 6:22); lit. *for therefore*, emphasizing the ground pleonastic. The original force of the phrase is traceable in some of the passages in which it occurs (cf. Gen 18:5) *for therefore*, but in process of time the distinct sense of its component parts was no doubt gradually obscured, and it thus came to be used conventionally, as a *mere* particle of causation, even where there was no preceding statement to which *‘al kēn, therefore*, could be explicitly referred (cf. Job 42:6; also 34:27); cf. BDB, 487.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. BDB, 780, where the basic meaning of the two words – dust and ashes – together can assume the figurative sense of self-abasement (cf. *w<sup>o</sup>niḥamti ‘al- wā’ēper*, Job 42:6).

of the section (38:1), retrieving the challenge God still presenting to Job, now to answer him after having considered all the wonderful things of the creation whose origin he neither knows nor controls. The second segment (2) opens with the particle interrogative that normally comes associated with the verb, setting a direct question. This specific form of question permits that the verbal form (*qal* infinitive absolute) of the verb contender, with which Job is called together with the name «reprover, could be taken as a suggestion, more than a declaration. However, the masculine participle singular that opens the second member «the one who argues» as the subject of the verb to answer in the imperfect third masculine singular with a jussive meaning, leaves no doubt that despite not being declared a contender or a reprover, Job must answer God and in his answer consider all the words he said.

The second piece (3-5) is composed of three segments. The first (3) repeats the same words and structure of the first segment of the first piece (1), but now the subject of the verbs to answer and to say is Job. As an immediate reaction to God's challenge in the previous piece (1-2), Job answers God. This answer is given in the following two segments (4-5). The first (4) begins with the interjection behold! or see!<sup>7</sup> followed by the verb to be on small account and an interrogative, associated with the verb to return), through which Job linked his awareness of his human reality to a call to God's sympathy. The following segment (5) is intended to complete Job's answer. The construction of the segment forms a parallel with the two words once and twice, and with the two verbs to speak and to do again<sup>8</sup>. Job recognizes that having spoken once he will not do it again, at least in the same way. This determination is accentuated by the negative associated to the verb to answer well placed at the centre of the segment.

#### 4. RELEVANT LITERARY STRATEGIES

The three moments (38:1-3; 40:1-5; 42:1-6) although distinct in function have strong literary connections, demonstrating a thematic consistency within the section (38:1–42:6) and indicating the columns upon which God's words to Job are built.

##### *IN BETWEEN CHALLENGES AND THE ANSWERS*

Each of three moments (38:1-3; 40:1-5; 42:1-6) begins with this specific challenge to answer. However, in the introduction (38:1-3) God is the subject but, in the conclusion, (42:1-6), the subject changes to Job. This variation signals a dynamic movement, assuring that God's words were listened to and received a

<sup>7</sup> This interjection less widely used than *hinnēh*, and in prose mostly confined to calling attention to some fact upon which action is to be taken, or a conclusion based (cf. Job 13:15; 36:30; 40:4; 41:1); cf. BDB, 243.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Job 20:9; 34:32 (Elihu); 38:11; 40:5; 40:32.

reaction from the person to whom they were directed. This movement is well projected in the centre (40:1-5), where the text recovers the double schema of God’s challenge to Job to answer and Job’s answer to God. This literary feature makes this centre the core of the section, where it is assured that God’s challenges to Job includes a dialogic energy where God and the human being are called to speak to one another. God’s words to Job were intended to reveal to Job God as Creator and within this creation, the human being is the only one that is called to interact with his Creator, although recognizing the difference between Creator and creature. This particular recognition is well expressed at the end of centre (40:5) when Job considers the possibility of interrupting the dialogue not speaking again, sustaining precisely that he *will not answer*.

38:1 Then **YHWH answered JOB** (out) of the tempest and *said*:  
 2 Who is this that darkens counsel by words **without-knowledge**?  
 3 Gird like a strong man your loins and I will ask you, and ***you will let me know!***

40:1 *Then YHWH answered JOB and said*:  
 2 «Shall a contender of the ALMIGHTY be a reprover? Who *argues (with) GOD (must) answer?*»  
 3 *Then JOB answered YHWH, and said*:  
 4 «See, I am of small account what shall I return to you? My hand I put on my mouth.  
 5 Once I have spoken, and **I will not answer**, twice but I will not do again.»

42:1 Then **JOB answered YHWH** and *said*:  
 2 «*I know* that you can do all (things), and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.  
 3 Who is this (that) hides counsel **without-Knowledge**?  
 Thus, I have uttered what I did *not understand*, wonders for me which ***I did not know***.  
 4 Hear, and I will speak I will ask you, and ***you will let me know***.  
 5 A hearing of the ear I have heard of you but now my eye sees you!  
 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.»

#### EXPERIENCE TO KNOW WHAT DO NOT KNOW

Different from the previous dialogic dynamism that encompasses the three moments (38:1-3; 40:1-5; 42:1-6), the theme of knowledge is only present in the introduction (38:1-3) and in the conclusion (42:1-6), featuring both God and Job’s words. In God’s words (38:1-3) the reference to knowledge emerges inside a question that hides inside an accusation. God calls to the scene the one who darkens counsel with words without knowledge. The expression *without knowledge* in itself is quite neutral, but here it acquires a strong negative connotation in its association with the expression *darkens counsel*. The one who darkens counsel does it not through evil actions, but by words without knowledge. The knowledge becomes an instrument to obscure counsel and guidance. The dimensions of the danger require an action similar to the one of the warriors: to gird the loins for a battle. Here the battle is through a dialogue

where God will be the one *who asks*, and Job will be the one who will *let God to know*.

At the conclusion (42:1-6) this literary structure returns, however with an important change. The author places within it Job's recognition that he has spoken what I *did not understand* and wonders that he *did not know* anything about, establishing a strong link with the beginning of God's first words. Job has in fact answered God and recognized that he does not know, not the wonders about creation, where he belongs too. The intensity of this recognition is underlined in the opposition: *hearing of the ear I have heard of you but now my eye sees you* (5). Job's knowledge was built on a hearing of the ear, now after hearing God, his knowledge turns into an inner vision, able to welcome God's difference and inscrutable knowledge.

## II. THE SECTION: YOU WILL LET ME KNOW!

### 1. COMPOSITION OF THE SECTION

A previous study of the composition of the entire section (38:1–42:6) defined four sequences (38:3-38; 38:30–39:30; 40:6-24; 40:25–41:26)<sup>9</sup>, built upon three distinctive moments: an introduction (31:1-3; a centre (40:1-5) and a conclusion (42:1-6). A synopsis of this entire section reveals some particular literary features upon which the biblical author builds this singular moment of the book and of the entire biblical wisdom literature. In order to reach the genuine content and contribution of this section, we have to point out some of the most literary features between the sequences.

#### 1.1 SYMMETRIES BETWEEN THE SEQUENCES

##### *The Two Extreme Sequences: Can you...?*

Both, the first (38:4-38) and the fourth sequence (40:25–41:5) present a curious parallel in one of their passages (38:34-38 and 40:25–41:3). In the first sequence, this parallel is very clear in the second passage (38:22-38), more precisely in the second piece of this passage (38:31-38). There we notice that a significant number of the segments begin with a verb in the second masculine of the singular, preceded by the interrogative particle and the interrogative pronoun, translated as *can you...?* and *who...?* In this first sequence, these features form a literary strategy, through which God challenges Job about the eternal order of God's cosmic design. The sequence emerges constructed under a pattern of a supreme and exclusive knowledge: the knowledge God has as the Creator. Job is challenged not only to recognize God as the Creator, but also his

<sup>9</sup> Cf. note 1, about the articles already published with the Rhetorical Biblical Analysis of these four sequences.

difference as a human creature, that although created in God's image (Gen 1:28) can participate in this knowledge, only as gift and not as an appropriate power.

Similar features appear in the first passage of the fourth sequence (40:25–41:3), repeating the literary strategy this time to challenge Job's capability to hunt Leviathan (40:25-30), and to face him or lay his hands upon him (40:31–41:3). The descriptions of Leviathan's body – tongue, jaw, nose (25-26) and skin, head (41:1) – emphasise his terrifying strength, suggesting that even if by some extraordinary feat Job did capture Leviathan and control him, he could never domesticate him to the point where he was a trusted servant (25-30).

The interrogative particle and the interrogative pronoun maintain the rhetorical inquiry, mainly in the contrast and in the irony that he establishes between the strength of Leviathan and the possibilities of relating with Job (25-30 and 31-32). This strategy creates a sense of the absurd also suggested in the picture of a violent sea monster being fondled as a pet like the tiny birds (29-30). For Job to transform this chaos monster into a pet with which children may play exceeds the bounds of credibility. This very same absurdity is well suggested in 40:31–41:3, extending Job's incapability with regard to the whole creature.

#### The First Sequence 38:4-38

The interrogative particle and the interrogative pronoun maintain the rhetorical inquiry, mainly in the contrast and in the irony that he establishes between the strength of Leviathan and the possibilities of relating with Job (25-30 and 31-32). This strategy creates a sense of the absurd also suggested in the picture of a violent sea monster being fondled as a pet like the tiny birds (29-30). For Job to transform this chaos monster into a pet with which children may play exceeds the bounds of credibility. This very same absurdity is well suggested in 40:31–41:3, extending Job's incapability with regard to the whole creature.

To synthesize, this specific inquiry signals vividly God's answer to Job (40:25–41:26). Without creating any space for an answer, God seems only to be interested in defying Job and not listening to what he has to say. We must include the centre (40:1-5) and the conclusion (42:1-6) to be aware that the biblical writer offered some little space for a Job's answer. That although very short, this is tremendously meaningful: Job recognizes God's difference as Creator and his human condition as creature; what God as the Creator knows and is able to and what he as a creature will never know or be able to.

<p>38:4 Where were <b>you</b> when I founded <b>THE EARTH</b>?  5 <b>Who</b> set its dimensions, <b>do you know</b>  6 Upon what (are) its bases sunk  7 when sang the morning stars,  8 <b>Who</b> enclosed THE SEA with doors  9 When I wrapped with garments of cloud,  10 and I prescribed for it my statutes,  11 and I said: «Thus far you shall come and no farther;</p>	<p>Tell me if you know <b>understanding</b>?  or who stretched a line over it?  or who set its cornerstone,  and all the sons of God shouted-for-joy?  when, bursting forth, it comes out from the <b>womb</b>?  and swaddled (it) in dense cloud  and imposed a bar and gates,  here breaks the pride of your waves?</p>
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<p>12 <b>HAVE YOU</b> in your days command THE MORNING  13 that you might grasp <b>THE EARTH</b> by its edges  14 It changes like clay under a seal  15 Thus the wicked are robbed of their <b>LIGHT</b>  16 <b>HAVE YOU</b> entered into THE SPRINGS OF THE SEA  17 Have the gates of Death been revealed to you,  18 <b>HAVE YOU</b> understand the expanses of <b>THE EARTH</b>?  19 In which path abides <b>THE LIGHT</b>,  20 that you may take each to its boundary,  21 You know. For you were born then, and the number of your days was great!</p>	<p>or made DAWN to know her place,  and shake the wicked from it?  and they stand forth like a garment.  and the upraised arm is broken  or walked in the bottom of the deep?  the gates of the death-shadow, <b>HAVE YOU</b> seen?  Tell me if <b>you know</b> all this!  and <b>DARKNESS</b>, where is her place  and discern the path to its home?</p>
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<p>22 <b>HAVE YOU</b> entered the storehouses of THE SNOW  23 which I kept for the time of distress,  24 by which way are dispersed <b>LIGHT</b>,  25 <b>Who</b> bores a channel for THE DOWNPOUR,  26 so that <b>rain</b> may fall on earth without man,  27 to satisfy the wasted and wasteland,  28 Does the <b>rain</b> have a father,  29 From whose <b>body</b> came forth the ice,  30 when-like-stone, the water is hidden</p>	<p>or the storehouses of hail, have you seen  for the day of battle and war,  or the east wind scattered over <b>THE EARTH</b>?  and a way for the sound of thunderbolt,  on a desert without human in it,  and sprout forth seeds of grass?  who begot the dewdrops?  the frost of heaven, which gave birth to it,  and the surface of the deep congeals?</p>
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<p>31 <b>Can you</b> fasten the chains of the Pleiades,  32 <b>Can you</b> guide the constellations in their seasons,  33 <b>Do you know</b> the laws of HEAVENS?  34 <b>Can you</b> raise your voice to the dark clouds,  35 <b>Will you</b> send flashes, and they will go,  36 <b>Who</b> endowed (them) with inner <b>wisdom</b>  37 <b>Who</b> related every cloud with <b>wisdom</b>  38 until the dust solidifies</p>	<p>or the Orion's bands untie?  or guide the Great Bear with her sons?  Could you place their rule on <b>EARTH</b>?  for the abundance of water to cover you?  or they will answer, 'Here we are'?  and gave to the phenomenon <b>understanding</b>?  and the bottles of heaven, <b>who</b> tilts,  and clods of <b>EARTH</b> close up?</p>
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The Fourth Sequence: 40:25–41:26

40: <sup>25</sup> CAN YOU draw out <i>LEVIATHAN</i> with a fishhook, or HIS TONGUE with a cord?	
<sup>26</sup> CAN YOU put a rope in HIS NOSE,	or pierce HIS JAW with a hook?
<sup>27</sup> Will he make many supplications to you?	Will he speak soft words to you?
<sup>28</sup> Will he make a covenant with you	to be taken as your servant forever?
<sup>29</sup> Will you play with him as with a bird,	or will you put him on leash for your girls?
<sup>30</sup> Will traders' bargains over it?	Will they divide him up among the merchants?
<sup>31</sup> CAN YOU fill HIS SKIN with harpoons,	or HIS HEAD with fishing spears?
<sup>32</sup> Lay hands on him; think of the battle;	you will not do it again!
41: <sup>1</sup> Any hope of capturing him will be disappointed;	even the gods overwhelmed at the sight of him?
<sup>2</sup> Is him not ferocious when roused?	Who can stand before him?
<sup>3</sup> Who can confront him and be safe?	under the whole heaven, who?

<sup>4</sup> «I will not keep silence concerning HIS LIMBS,	or his mighty strength, or his splendid frame.
<sup>5</sup> WHO CAN strip off his outer garment?	Who can penetrate his double coat of mail?
<sup>6</sup> WHO CAN open the doors of his face?	There is terror all around his teeth.
<sup>7</sup> HIS BACK is made of shields in rows,	shut up closely as with a seal.
<sup>8</sup> One is so near to another	that no air can come between them.
<sup>9</sup> They are joined one to another;	they clasp each other and cannot be separated.
<sup>10</sup> His sneezes flash forth light,	and his eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn.
<sup>11</sup> From HIS MOUTH go flaming torches,	sparks of fire leap out.
<sup>12</sup> Out of HIS NOSTRILS comes smoke,	as from a boiling pot and burning rushes.
<sup>13</sup> His breath kindles coals,	and a flame comes out of his mouth.
<sup>14</sup> In HIS NECK abides strength,	and terror dances before him.
<sup>15</sup> The folds of HIS FLESH cling together;	he is firmly cast and immovable.
<sup>16</sup> HIS HEART is as hard as stone,	as hard as the lower millstone.

<sup>17</sup> When he raises himself up the mighty men are afraid;	at the crashing they are beside themselves.
<sup>18</sup> Though the sword reaches him, he does not avail,	nor does the spear, the dart, or the javelin.
<sup>19</sup> He counts iron as straw,	and bronze as rotten wood.
<sup>20</sup> The arrow cannot make him flee;	sling stones, for him, are turned to chaff.
<sup>21</sup> Clubs are counted as chaff;	laughs at the rattle of javelins.
<sup>22</sup> HIS UNDERPARTS are like sharp potsherds;	pleads himself like a threshing sledge on the mire.
<sup>23</sup> He makes the deep boil like a pot;	he makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
<sup>24</sup> He leaves a shining wake behind him;	one would think the deep to be white-haired.
<sup>25</sup> On earth he has no equal,	a creature without fear.
<sup>26</sup> He surveys everything that is lofty;	<b>HE IS KING</b> over all that are proud.

*The Two Sequences at the Centre: Do you know...?*

The two sequences at the centre (38:39–39:30; 40:6-24) forged a vibrant link in the use of the verb *to know*.

<p>38:<sup>39</sup> Can you hunt a prey for the LION  <sup>40</sup> when they crouch in dwellings,  <sup>41</sup>Who prepares for the RAVEN his provision  when its fledglings to <b>GOD</b> cry out  39:<sup>1</sup> <b>DO YOU KNOW</b> the time  The writhe of the DEER,  <sup>2</sup> Have you counted the months of their pregnancy?  <sup>3</sup> When they crouch, their young to deliver,  <sup>4</sup> Are healthy their young, grow strong with corn  <sup>5</sup> Who gave the WILD-ASS freedom,  <sup>6</sup> To whom I gave the wastelands as his home  <sup>7</sup> He scorns the turmoil of the town,  <sup>8</sup> He roams the hills for his pasture,  <sup>9</sup> Is willing the WILD-OX to serve you?  <sup>10</sup> Can you bind the WILD-OX with ropes in the furrow?  <sup>11</sup> Can you rely on his massive strength,  <sup>12</sup> Can you trust him to harvest your seed,</p>	<p>or (with) sustenance the whelps fill,  waiting eagerly in their lair?    wandering without food?  of giving birth of the MOUNTAIN-GOATS?  have you observed?  <b>DO YOU KNOW</b> the time of their giving birth?  their pain they get rid of.  go out and never come back to them.  and the bonds (of) the WILD-DONKEY, who loosed?  and the salt plain as his habitat?  and the shouts of the taskmaster he does not hear.  and for anything green he seeks.  Will he lodge beside your manger?  Will he harrow the valleys behind you?  and leave to him your toil?  and your threshing-floor gather?</p>
<p><sup>13</sup> Can the wing of the OSTRICHs rejoice,  <sup>14</sup> When she leaves on the ground her eggs,  <sup>15</sup> forgetting that a foot may tread on it  <sup>16</sup> She is cruel to her chicks as if they were not hers,  <sup>17</sup> For <b>GOD</b> has <b>deprived her of wisdom</b>,  <sup>18</sup> <b>Yet, when</b> up on high she soars,  <sup>19</sup> Do you give to the HORSE strength,  <sup>20</sup> Do you make him leap like a grasshopper?  <sup>21</sup> They dig in the valley and he exults with strength,  <sup>22</sup> He laughs at dread; he is not shattered;  <sup>23</sup> On his back rattles the quiver,  <sup>24</sup> Trembling and impatient, he swallows the ground;  <sup>25</sup> At each horn-blast he neighs exultantly  the thundering of the commanders  <sup>26</sup> <b>Is it from your understanding</b> soars the FALCON  <sup>27</sup> If you open your mouth,  <sup>28</sup> (On) a rock dwell and abide upon the tooth of a rock  <sup>29</sup> From there he searches food;  <sup>30</sup> Even his young drink-blood;</p>	<p>the pinion of a STORK or (their) plumage?  and upon dust warms (them),  or a wild animal crush it?  as for nothing her labour goes caring little.  <b>and (gave) no share to her in understanding.</b>  she laughs at HORSE and his rider.  and cover his neck with flowing mane?  The splendour of his snorting (inspires) terror.  go out to the clash of weapons.  he does not recoil before the sword.  the flashing spear and javelin.  and he does not believe the blast of the horn.  and from afar he scents the battle,  and the blast of war.  spreading his wings to the south?  does move-higher the EAGLE when raise his nest?  and stronghold.  from afar his eyes detect (it).  where the dead are, there is he.</p>

The first sequence (38:30–39:30) continues the rhetorical inquiry, however, now the theme of the knowledge is related to two important aspects of God's governance of wild creatures: the unique capacity God has to know the times of the natural cycles, even the most hidden and concealed realities (1-4), and the extraordinary way God provided free life to the whole world (5-12). Repeating twice the question *do you know...?* (1.2b), God denounces Job's inability to know and challenges Job to face him as a God of knowledge and powerful freedom, completely unreachable to Job. These two dimensions reveal themselves very pertinent as an answer to some words Job has spoken<sup>10</sup>. To his

<sup>10</sup> In fact, Job has accused God of relentlessly hunting (*šwd*) him down like a lion (10:16). He had complained bitterly that God did not even acknowledge his cry (*šw'*) for litigation (19:7). Job

previous questions, Job receives, as an answer, the certainty of the divine providence even for the wild animals. This certainty is supposed to ensure that his peculiar knowledge implies a very special care for life. In the most disconcerting way, God challenges Job to reveal his wisdom and his capacity to exercise it. What is too wonderful for human beings and beyond their insight and power of command is nevertheless part of God’s design and knowledge. Job is called to look to his own battle, not from the human perspective of victory or punishment, liberation or oppression, but with the eyes of an Eagle who is able to find nourishment in the battle (26-30).

<p><sup>6</sup> Then <b>YHWH</b> answered Job,  <sup>7</sup> Gird like a man, your loins.  <sup>8</sup> Do you want to pervert my judgment,  <sup>9</sup> Do you have <i>an arm</i> like God,  <sup>10</sup> Adorn yourself with grandeur and dignity,  <sup>11</sup> Let burst forth the fury of your anger,  <sup>12</sup> Look upon all-proud and humble it,  <sup>13</sup> Hide them in the dust together,  <sup>14</sup> Then, <i>also</i> I will pay you homage,</p>	<p>from <i>the tempest</i> he said:  <b>I will ask you</b>, and you will let me know!  condemn, in order you might be just?  and with <i>a voice</i> like his, can you thunder?  with glory and majesty clothe yourself.  look upon all proud and abase them.  cast down the wicked where they stand.  their faces bind in the hidden place!  or the victory (is) for you at your right hand</p>
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<p><sup>15</sup> Behold, now Behemoth, that I made, as you,  <sup>16</sup> Behold, also the strength in his loins,  <sup>17</sup> When erect <i>his tail</i> is like a cedar,  <sup>18</sup> His bones like tubes of bronze,  <sup>19</sup> He the first of God’ ways,  <sup>20</sup> Indeed, a tribute the mountains bring him  <sup>21</sup> Under the lotus he lies,  <sup>22</sup> Covers him the lotus with his shadow,  <sup>23</sup> If overflows the river, he does not worry,  <sup>24</sup> At his eyes He takes him,</p>	<p>on green stuff like cattle he feeds  and the power of the muscles in his belly!  the sinews of his thighs knotted together.  <i>his limbs</i> like forged iron.  his maker draws near his sword  and all the animals of the field that play there.  in the secret of the reeds and of the marsh.  surrounding him the willows of the brook.  it is confident if Jordan gushes forth up to his mouth.  with rings he pierces the nose.</p>
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The second sequence (40:6-24) recalls the verb *to know* in the context of rhetorical inquiry to Job, however now the literary context is the human environment. The theme of knowledge moves to the concrete dispute about two ways of understanding justice (7-8)<sup>11</sup>, and to Job’s capacity to exhibit the same capacities of God by unleashing his wrath, abasing the proud and crushing the wicked<sup>12</sup>. The author identifies a clear difference between Job and God. God does not simply ask Job about the strength of his arm or voice but if they can be equal to his (9). God goes further defying Job’s power to adorn or cloth himself, in grandeur and dignity, glory and majesty as God does (10). The paradox of this

had objected that God not only fixes the life span of mortals but fills that brief period with excessive hardship (7:1-3).

<sup>11</sup> The two verbs «to pervert» and «to condemn», both in the *hiphil*, stress this tension as a distortion of Job’s position in the confrontation.

<sup>12</sup> This literary strategy seems to suggest an interesting association between the proud and the wicked, whom Job is defied to judge together, as an act of retributive justice, as God will do in the day of his judgement.

defiance of the clearly implied inability Job has, defies Job in his implied inability to humble it or cast down the wicked, dominating and punishing them (11-13). The passage (40:7-14) ends with a rhetorical admission that if Job can prove to have the same strength, dignity and power of God, he will be the first to pay him homage and consider the justice of his judgement (14).

To synthesize, the repetition of the verb *to know* manifests the determination to clarify a crucial difference between God and human beings, as exemplified in Job.<sup>13</sup> Job's questions and request for a direct dispute with God had insisted on a common ground unachievable and, in a certain sense intolerable. As the wild creatures, it is proper for human beings to be creatures not the Creator. However, even if these numerous questions may imply that God can know and Job does not, the emphasis seems to be on the divine creativity more than on Job's or God's knowledge. This is well confirmed by the very discrete direct references to God or to Job in the entire sequence (38:41; 39:17). God's enigmatic design will throw Job back into a bewildering world of wonder. In fact, at the end, remarkably in that world Job reluctantly forgoes his demand for litigation and accepts God's design, difference and knowledge (42:1-6).

## 1.2 THE PECULIARITIES OF THE ENTIRE SECTION

### *The Strong Concentration on the Verbs to Answer*

The composition of the section (38:1–42:6) demonstrates a strong concentration on the verbs to answer. This verb is present in the introduction (38:1-3) and conclusion (42:1-6), and in three of the four sequences (38:3-38; 38:30–39:30; 40:6-24). The centre (40:1-5) repeats three times the verb to answer, underlining the primacy of this feature within the dynamism of God's words to Job. The biblical author moves us through a literary strategy very subtle towards a deep challenge: the human ability in times of great distress to answer and to establish a dialogue with God.

<b>A - God answered Job (38:1-3)</b>	<i>Introduction</i>
<b>A' - God answered Job (40:1-2)</b> Who argues with <b>GOD</b> must <b>answer!</b>	<i>Centre</i>
<b>B - Job answered God (40:3-5)</b> Once I have spoken, and <b>I will not answer</b>	
<b>B'- Job answered God (42:1-6)</b>	<i>Conclusion</i>

<sup>13</sup> See N. HABEL, *The Book of Job. A Commentary*, London 1985; C. NEWSOM, «The Book of Job. Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections», in L.E. KECK – *al.*, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible*, IV, Nashville (TN) 1996, 608: «First, as 38:4-38, all but one of the individual sections in 38:39–39:30 are introduced by the familiar rhetorical questions that serve to point out the limits of Job's knowledge and ability, while underscoring God's power and wisdom».

This dialogic dynamism retains an arduous tension. In fact, if God's challenge to Job to answer leads the section from the beginning (38:1-3), when it returns in first part of the centre (40:1-2) it acquires an awareness of duty (41:2b)<sup>14</sup>. In fact, the second part of the centre (40:2-3) expresses perfectly this tension. For the first time, we have the declaration that Job answers God (40:3). However, now, right before God Creator and inside God's creation, Job became aware of his human smallness; a little drop inside the creation. Therefore, although he has already spoken and direct many words to God<sup>15</sup>, now that he must answer God openly, he realizes how thoughtless and impulsive he was. He refuses the idea of answering God, not wishing to repeat the same words of superficiality (41:5).

*The Energetic Use of the Verb to Know*

Placed inside the dynamism created by the verb to answer and the verb to know offers a specific content to the section. The verb to know and the noun «knowledge» emphasize what God's challenge to answer is about. The substantive and the verb come right at the beginning of the section, in the introduction (38:2-3), as an accusation and a challenge to Job. God reproaches Job to have darken counsel, the design God has hidden inside creation, and expresses his allegation saying that he had done it through words without knowledge. Job has pronounced many words, but they didn't communicate knowledge; they were only words. Therefore, God challenges him to prepare himself as a warrior to a fight (*gird like a strong man your loins*) and asks Job to let him know (2-3). The key of what Job must let God know must be learned through the many questions that confront Job with God's knowledge about all creation. The two first sequences (38:3-38; 38:30–39:30) demonstrate this repeating the expression *Do you know...?* Twice (38:5.33; 39:1.2b). The context is the knowledge of the cosmic creation and of the wild animal realm. At the centre of the first sequence (38:3-38), the author places the expression: *You know! For you were born then, and the number of your days was great!* (38:21). In fact, Job doesn't know, precisely because he was not yet born when God created heavens and earth. He is neither a partner in the work of creation nor in God's knowledge.

The third sequence (40:6-24) repeats the same expression already mentioned in the introduction (*I will ask you, and you will let me know*, 38:3), maintaining the focus of the dialogue with the theme of knowledge. However, the context changes abruptly. The Knowledge that Job must show now is related to justice (40:8-10). Job's awareness of having done nothing wrong to deserve his circumstances of great loss and suffering throws him to a knowledge of traditional retribution. In light of this knowledge he finds himself just and innocent. He never says explicitly that God is unjust, however his many words may insinuate

<sup>14</sup> This sense is given by the verb *ya'ānennā* in the Imperfect third masculine singular with jussive meaning of the verb.

<sup>15</sup> See the main moments of the book when Job while is spoken with the friends is really directing words to God: 7:7-21; 10:2-22; 14:13-22).

it. Now, in front of God, as he has asked so often, he must answer about God's judgment. Not in a theoretic debate but realizing God's power over the proud and the wicked (40:12-13).

A - <b>You will let me know!</b>	<i>Introduction</i>
B - <b>Do you know?</b>	<i>First sequence / Second sequence</i>
A' - <b>You will let me know!</b>	<i>Third sequence</i>
B' - <b>I know ...</b>	<i>Conclusion</i>

The conclusion (42:1-6) recaptures all the expressions used throughout the section. However, an unexpected change occurs: *Then Job answered God* (42:1). Strategically, the author keeps the same structure of the phrase already used in 38:1 and 40:1 (*Then God answered Job*) to declare God's the decision to answer Job. This change of the subject already occurred in 40:3 but was followed by a clear decision not answer God (41:5). But this is not the unique textual surprise. The first thing Job says is *I know...* (42:2). Job, the one we learned has hidden counsel with words without knowledge (38:1) having listened to God's words, learned a different knowledge and recognizes that he had uttered what he did not understand spoken about wonders he did not know (42:3b.4a). Reaching the highest moment, this recognition demonstrates that Job is no longer the same. He has now acquired a different knowledge, the one that comes directly from the word of God, through its evidence in creation. The literary peculiarity of these changes offers an unquestionable key to the function and content of the section.

## 2. INTERPRETATION

### *THE WISDOM DYNAMISM OF GOD'S REVELATION*

God's personal appearance is what Job both desired and feared (9:16-17). Ironically, God does appear answers *from the tempest* (38:1), overwhelming Job with a series of challenges<sup>16</sup>. Although Job had expressed his fear that God would appear in court, saying that he would be prevented from having a fair trial (9:34; 13:21), his great passion was to confront God face to face (13:15.20.24). For Job to expect God to appear in person, however, was oddly presumptuous. According to Israelite tradition, no mortal could see God and live (*But, he said:*

<sup>16</sup> The pattern still the one of a theophany used to anticipate God's self-revelation to his people Israel (cf. Exod 19:9-20; Judg 5:4-5; Hab 3:5-6; Ps 18:8-16). The images of storms and lightnings occurs in Ezek 1:4 to indicate a revelation from heavens and a vision of God that assures to the exiled that God is not a prisoner of the Temple and is able to be where his people are; and in Zech 9:14 the same images occur to describe God's revelation and coming to Israel for his re-establishment.

'You cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live!' Exod 33:20; cf. Exod 19:21; Lev 16:2; Num 4:20)<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, a direct and private revelation for a reprobate individual was unthinkable. Despite this, the biblical author ventures to give us an unexpected end, picturing a narrative where God appears to Job as he did to heroic figures like Noah (Gen 6:13–7:17) and Abraham (Gen 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–22; 22:1–2). The long silence that has persisted during constant Job's supplications, breaks up and God does appear and speaks, confounding Job not with terror but with a battle of questions. The explicit use here of the name *Yhwh*, rather than other names used in the book<sup>18</sup>, integrates God's words, and this specific section (38:1–42:6), with other narrative elements of the book where the name of *Yhwh* is used: the God who appeared to Job still be the one who has appeared to Israel in later theophanies<sup>19</sup>.

Surprisingly, despite this strong integration in Israel tradition, the study of the composition (the rhetorical biblical analysis) revealed some new features, that we would like to consider as specific of wisdom thinking. One of these features is the dialogic dimension of this singular theophany. If God's words are in fact not a simple answer but as a self-revelation from God (38:1–39:30 and 40:6–41:26), that shows to Job God's absolute difference as Creator, they comprise a time to the human word (40:3–5 and 42:1–6), strategically inserted inside of God's words. The newness of this feature permits envisioning advanced thinking in wisdom understanding of God's revelation; something that some recent studies have not yet noticed or given enough attention<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> This tradition explains why Moses (Exod 3:6), Elijah (1Kgs 19:13) and the Seraphim (Isa 6:2) cover the face before *Yhwh*. The fact to remain alive after having seen God receives great recognition (cf. Gen 32:1; Deut 5:24) and is considered as a great favour from God (cf. Exod 24:10–11; Deut 5:4), particularly with Moses (cf. Exod 33:11; Num 12:7–8; Deut 34:10) and Elijah (cf. 1Kgs 19:11). Here, in the book of Job this tradition comes directly from Elihu's words (*It is not for a mortal to set a time, to come before El in litigation*, 34:11) mainly when he proclaimed the absolute transcendence of God (Job 35:1–16).

<sup>18</sup> 'ēl šadday; 'ēlōhīm; 'ēlōah.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. N. HABEL, *The Book of Job* (cf. nt. 13), 528: «...Thus when the Creator God El moves from behind the scenes of his creation to establish a direct personal relationship with Job we are confronted with a veiled allusion to *Yhwh*, the covenant God. Job's heroic faith has provoked the *deus absconditus* into becoming the *deus revelatus*, even before the Sinai.»

<sup>20</sup> As far as we know just one author have tried to approach this featured, focusing the dimension of the dialogue in God's ethical behaviour: K. DELL, «Does God Behave Unethically in the Book of Job?» in K. DELL, ed., *Ethical and Unethical in the Old Testament: God and Humans in Dialogue*, New York – London 2010, 170–186. For the studies that still lack this approach cf. M.V. FOX, «God's Answer and Job's Response», *Bib* 94 (2013) 1–23; D.C. TIMMER, «God's Speeches +, Job's responses, and the problem of Coherence in the Book of Job: Sapiential Pedagogy Revisited», *CBQ* 71 (2009) 286–305; S.A. GELLER, «Nature's Answer: The meaning of the Book of Job in its Intellectual Context», in H. TIROSH-SAMUELSON, ed., *Judaism and Ecology. Created World and Revealed Word*, Cambridge (MA) 2002, 109–132; J.B. CURTIS, «On Job's Response to Yahweh», *JBL* 98 (1979) 510; B.O. BOLOJE – A. GROENEWALD, «'I know you can do all things' (Job 42:2): A literary and theological analysis of Job's testimony about Yahweh's sovereignty», *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72 (2016) 1–17

*WISDOM STRATEGIES OF AN UNFATHOMABLE KNOWLEDGE*

The study of the composition of the section (38:1–42:6) strongly demonstrates a construction based upon a specific knowledge. In his answer to Job, God does not challenge him to prove his innocence or the integrity of his arguments, rather he calls Job to demonstrate his knowledge, *let him know* about the all mysteries of creation, that he as Creator knows, oversees and reigns (38:3; 40:7; 42:4). The focus on knowledge is stressed by the intensity of the repetition of the interrogation *do you know* (38:5.33; 39:1.2). Within this inquiring, apparently normal and reasonable, the biblical author sets two affirmations, one from God (*You know!* 38:21) and other from Job (*I Know!* 42:2). Both are positive affirmations, respecting Job's knowledge. However, the one coming from God surprises for its strong irony. Declaring *you know*, God considers the possibility of Job's having God's similar knowledge about how creation comes to existence because as God he already existed. Instead of simply denying Job's entire ignorance (no-knowledge) and the supremacy of God's knowledge, the text subtly makes us enter in a literary strategy proper to wisdom thinking. A strategy that continues in Job's affirmation *I know*, that not refers to Job's knowledge about the mysteries of creation, but to Job's knowledge concerning to God, that he learned from God's challenges: God's power as Creator and the wonders of creation.

The entire dialogue between God and Job emerges rooted upon wisdom literary strategies able to conduct the reader to a confrontation between two different knowledges, the one of God (divine) and the one of Job (human). Two different knowledges that should not be taken simply in opposition, but as an important reality that comes through a creative dialogue, proper to a context of revelation. As all the mysteries of creation, this knowledge about God is a gift that does not erase a personal human commitment, rather implies it strongly. Something suggested in Job's words (*A hearing of the ear I have heard of you but now my eye sees you!* 42:5).<sup>21</sup>

*THE WISDOM ACHIEVEMENT OF GOD'S SINGULARITY*

Despite all the controversy attested throughout decades by the exegesis studies about God in the book of Job, the study done on the composition of the entire section (38:1–42:6) allows us to affirm an achievement of God's singularity. It is true that the whole book raises in a particularly acute way the problem of acceptable behaviour in relation to God. God's words to Job are

<<https://hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3356>>; K. DELL, «Creation in the Whirlwind Speeches and Job's Response: 38:1– 42:6», in R.S. FYALL, ed., *Now my Eyes have seen you. Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job*, Leicester 2002, 117-135; W. MORRISTON, «God's Answer to Job», *RelSt* 32 (1996) 339-356.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. K. DELL, *Job. Where shall Wisdom be Found?*, Sheffield 2013. One of the most recent and relevant studies about wisdom dimension of the book of Job.

a celebration of God's creation of a strange world of wild animals about which human beings know very little and of which they only have a glimpse. These words are about a very singular power, particularly attested to in the third (40:5-24) and fourth sequence (40:25–41:26), with its emphasis on God's power over the greater monsters (Behemot and Leviathan). But they are also about the sheer wonder, beauty, and non-conformity of the created world. The order that God has set up does not correspond exactly to human ideas of order; his wisdom and behaviour cannot be contained by human expectations. In the end, the otherness of God is strongly stressed and becomes the key to a new knowledge and wisdom.

Assumed as a unique narrative moment in the entire Old Testament, by the narrative length and time of God's direct intervention, God's words to Job show that there are no assurances and indeed that to expect such certainties is to seek to control and demean God in his infinite greatness and wisdom. Through a form of challenges, God's words raise the issue of divine freedom. Through them Job understood that it is simply because God does not react automatically to human conduct that God is free. In all of this, the biblical author gives voice to a wisdom accomplishment of God's difference. A difference affirmed fundamentally on his being the Creator, whose mysteries are possession of his singular knowledge<sup>22</sup>.

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#### RIASSUNTO

Questo articolo presenta una lettura complessiva dell'intera sezione del libro di Giobbe (38,1–42,6), utilizzando alcuni contributi di significato, raccolti in studi di anteprime sulla composizione di questa sezione. Inseguendo il processo di analisi biblica retorica (composizione, contesto biblico e interpretazione), in questa tappa finale, siamo stati in grado di enfatizzare alcune strategie letterarie e tematiche di base, ottenendo alcune nuove intuizioni di comprensione. In primo luogo, i due pilastri che sostengono letteralmente la narrazione: le sfide e le risposte e al loro interno l'esperienza di sapere ciò che non si conosce. In secondo luogo, siamo riusciti a giustificare che queste caratteristiche letterarie conducano ad una comprensione dell'intervento di Dio come espressione di uno singolare dinamismo sapienziale su la rivelazione di Dio. Un dinamismo che si sviluppa attraverso le strategie di una conoscenza insondabile, che si torna in grado di svelare una comprensione sapienziale della singolarità di Dio.

*Parole chiave:* conoscenza, saggezza, sfide, risposte, rivelazione

<sup>22</sup> Two important contributions on this subject are the articles written by K. DELL, «Creation in the Whirlwind» (cf. nt. 20), 117-135; and M.V. FOX, «God's Answer» (cf. nt. 20), 1-23.

## ABSTRACT

This article presents an overall reading of the entire section of the book of Job (38:1–42:6), using some meaningful contributions, gathered in previous studies of the composition of this section. By pursuing the process of biblical rhetorical analysis (composition, biblical context and interpretation) we were able in this final stage to emphasize some basic literary and thematic strategies, obtaining some new insights of understanding. First, the two pillars that literally support the narrative: the challenges and the answers and within them the experience of knowing what is unknown. Secondly, we justified that these literary characteristics lead to an understanding of God's intervention as an expression of a singular wisdom dynamism on God's revelation. A dynamism that develops through the strategies of unfathomable knowledge, that becomes able to indicate point some traces of a wisdom intelligence of the singularity of God.

*Keywords:* knowledge, wisdom, challenges, answers, revelation

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