Verses 10-21 of Chapter 19 form the conclusion of the Book of Wisdom. In it the author states the principles which have previously been exemplified in 10:1-19:9. Here the history of salvation is read typologically as “the history of Wisdom in action.” While this conclusion describes, in philosophical language, the nature of the ἐπισκοπήν of God for his people in the events of the Exodus, it also accounts for what makes it possible: the omnipotence of God, the Creator, who refashions the creation (cf. 19:6). The use of the verb διετυπών in 19:6 brings to mind a revolution in the order of things: creation, which has been placed in a constant state of obedience towards the Creator (cf. 16:24), shows new possibilities, a new way of being regulated by the divine activity, which changes the properties of created things. These end up exhibiting exceptional capacities, which, on occasions, are contrary to their normal powers.

Within this very clear-cut frame of reference, 19:18, with its appropriate musical analogy, is an attempt to present to an audience, already familiar with a way of thought, that draws, perhaps in the first place, on the Greek world, the miracle of the Crossing of the Red Sea. This is understood, interpreted and presented as an act of “continuous creation:” the elements become interchangeable, an astonishing act, which remolds nature, offering the just the possibility of a safe passage. What we are presented with is a change of rhythm that is the result of a new relationship between the elements. These would normally have a different range, but they are changed, reciprocally, to achieve different results.

1 I would like to thank Dr. Michael Tait, who translated the text into English.
Wis 19:18, therefore, conveys an idea that is particularly important in Wisdom, a kind of *leitmotiv* that runs throughout the book (cf. 5:17b-20; 16:17, 22, 23b) and that belongs to the Old Testament tradition. The idea is that of God who puts the κόσμος at the service of his people, but it does this by resorting to cosmological and musical concepts typical of Hellenistic culture. This is achieved without being disloyal to the existing Scriptural tradition, above all that of Gen 1, of which it presents an exegetically appropriate reading.

In this contribution, therefore, I intend to examine the *arrière-plan* to which the author of Wisdom makes reference in his cosmological argument. Then, after having briefly analysed the syntactic structure of 19:18 and taking account also of 11:17, I would like to try to describe the conception of creation held by our author. Present in the book in a very straightforward and coherent manner, it is a concept that does not allow the book to be understood as an apocalyptic work. In fact, in 11:17 there is a clear affirmation of creation *ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὡλῆς*. However, this has always been interpreted with a sort of inexplicable, neo-apologetic prudery, because it seems to break the line of evolution of faith in creation *ex nihilo*, which is “virtually” present in the oldest Old Testament traditions and which comes to clear definition in the text of 2 Mac 7:18. This would henceforward become classic.2 J. Reider puts it like this:

Amorphos hyle is a Greek philosophical term which is entirely foreign to Jewish thought and conception. The Jews believed in creation out of nothing; the Greeks believed in creation out of formless matter which was eternal. On the one hand religious monism (God alone is eternal); on the other philosophic dualism (God and matter are eternal). It is difficult to assume that the author of Wisdom, who was far more Jewish than Philo, would adhere to the Greek view of creation. Undoubtedly the allusion is *casual* and not dogmatic.3

In his commentary, J. Vílchez Líndez, in a tone that is brusquely apologetic, recognises a purely linguistic datum in the expression *ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὡλῆς*. It is, in fact,

the attempt to explain the unchanging phenomenon of creation by means of earthly, human concepts to render the great mystery of the origin of all things a little more accessible. In the context, the expression does not have the

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