Abstract

The presented paper deals with the flood motive in the literature of ancient Mesopotamia from the 2nd mil. BC until the 2nd cent. BC as it appears repeatedly in a variety of texts in this period. Apart from the varied versions of the mythical flood narrative I will examine the king lists, especially the Sumerian king list in which the flood appears, and sources about antediluvian kings. In a separate chapter I will focus on the tradition of the sages (apkallu) who are sometimes situated before the flood. The common feature of all the treated sources seems to be that the flood is a watershed. Its importance stems not from the dividing of qualitatively distinct periods of time but from the possibility to get over the boundary. According to the anthropological theory of antistructure I will try to explain that the flood is a breakthrough of chaos which can strengthen the order. I will examine god Ea, too, as he is intrinsically bound to the flood and I will show his position in pantheon as analogical to the role of the flood.