

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.