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**The existence of the Great Flood History in the
Eastern Mediterranean religions and the case
of its historical core in the Black Sea region**

Konstantinos Trompakas

MSc, MBA Pollution Control Technologies Engineer

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

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Student Name: Konstantinos Trompakas
SID: 2201160008
Supervisor: Prof. Manolis Manoledakis

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Abstract

This dissertation was written as part of the MA in Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Studies at the International Hellenic University. In the present dissertation the relationship between the main Eastern Mediterranean religions and the natural environment was presented and the fact that, through their traditions and their theological perception, they place and set the hierarchy of the relation between man and the natural environment, for which the term ecotheology is used. Subsequently, the main versions of the story of the Great Cataclysm from the religions and traditions of the eastern Mediterranean were presented. It followed an extensive chapter of interpretative approaches, highlighting the significance and complexity of the narrative of the Great Flood in the Eastern Mediterranean, and at the same time the immediate environmental character of the myth, being probably a structural environmental myth. Next, there is a presentation of the probability that the narrative of the Great Flood has a possible historical nucleus in the Black Sea area and is the derivative of various geological processes that took place between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Two opinions are episcopal mentioned, the one that claims that the historical core of myth lies in the Black Sea and the opposite which rejects that theory.

Next step was the development of a link between the ancient myths and the modern world and how they significantly influence/shape it. Also, how through the centuries the narrative of the Great Flood was a central point of human intellect, in his effort to understand it, highlighting the timelessness of the narrative and, in general, the effectiveness of myths in expressing brief and concise events that puzzled mankind from antiquity and prehistory to date.

Keywords: Flood Myth, Great Flood, Ecotheology, Geomyths, Environmental Myths

Konstantinos Trompakas

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*To my beloved wife Persephone and the fruit of our love Zinovia, for the hours that they
were deprived of my presence...*

Preface

The present thesis it may be said that is the derivative of the *Ancient Religion and Mythology in the Black Sea* course, which was part of the MA in Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Studies programme. The subject of the dissertation is quite complex and is a representative sample of interdisciplinary subjects. On the one hand, applied sciences are needed in order to examine issues related to chemistry, physics and geology. On the other hand, humanities for understanding the depth and the multiple messages of a basic myth that antiquity brings us and at the same time, the fact that this myth is the cornerstone of many religions upon which they build their theological essentials that shape the framework of the relationship between man and the natural world. The motivation that prompted me to such a subject was a combination of my academic background and my personal readings. This master is the third in a row that I study, so I had the experience and the will to combine my personal and academic interests in ways that are not so common, as the reading of ancient myths, through the environmental perspective and focusing on the theoretical interpretation and reading, in the light of the relationship between man and natural environment. So my love for the ancient myths and the timeless meanings they encompass, meets my studies so far.

However, I would like to thank some people for helping me in completing this step. First of all, I would like to thank my beloved wife, Persephone, for her patience and support, who helped me with dedication for completing this step. Our daughter Zinovia, for the hours she was deprived of her father. My mother, also Zinovia, who unselfishly supported me financially to be able to take part in this MA. My grandmother, Fotini, for the countless myths she told me in the form of fairytales and was a first impetus for dealing with the theoretical interpretation of myths. Also, of course Dr. Manolekakis, who accepted me in the postgraduate program and gave me the opportunity to work with such an exciting topic. Last but not least, Dr. Aristodemou for her patient response to various technical points that had to do with the writing of this dissertation.

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Introduction

Science and mythology are undoubtedly two areas that move in full contrast, but strangely they are also two areas that appeal to each other because in fact both attempt to interpret human existence within the natural world. Thus, many attempts are made to interpret ancient narratives in scientific terms which are either purely mythological or more often they are a combination of religious beliefs and ideas, a state where things begin to become complicated and the results unstable (Faden 2015, p.10).

Man has the tendency to personalize experiences and make the physical forces anthropomorphic. For several scientists, this point is the basis or otherwise the first cause of theological thinking in human history but undoubtedly this approach, as appealing as it may be found (because it is easy to understand), is a simplification that is likely to carry a great deal of alteration of human ontology. Thus, we come to the question of what value these ancient narratives have, which also contains a mythological character. Mythology is not a lie, it is a metaphor, it has been suggested that mythology is the penultimate truth since the latter cannot be said with words and is the source of human existence. But the theological background of all myths in the literal acceptance of narratives has been, is and will forever be a point of controversy for the people (Campbell 1998, p.292).

Thus, we come to examine the issue that we have focused on, the Great Flood and the exploration of the historical core of narratives around various geological phenomena which have happened in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea areas. The idea of the Great Flood is common to a vast array of ancient and modern religions, as well as to folk traditions, but in the East Mediterranean region these narratives have become a central reference point for the evolution and cosmological understanding of religions (Schmidt 2004d, p.156). The narratives of the Great Flood are the most widespread among other natural disasters that almost eliminated the human species. To be able to examine these narratives, a field called Geomythology, has been created, where ancient narratives that involve environmental changes are comparatively examined with the knowledge of the contemporary geological thinking. Hence, the narra-

tives of the Great Flood, as in the Holy Bible with Noah (Genesis 6-8), the Mesopotamian versions in the epic of Gilgamez with the Utnapishtim and Atrahasis epic and of course the Greek version of the Flood with Deucalion and Pyra, gain a great special weight in order to understand the nature of the Great Flood narration (Tepper 1999, p.221-223).

In general, there is a belief that the religious thoughts affect the environmental perception of societies and several investigations indicate that there is a high degree of correlation. In particular, natural disasters incite societies to interpret “the will of God” for the devastation they are experiencing, since it helps them both to understand them and to gain power to overcome them. Thus, the narratives of the Great Flood are the culmination of the relationship between man and the environment, according to the balances resulting from the will of the God/Gods. These narratives, as interpretations of natural disasters, survive to this day albeit to a lesser extent. There is the interpretation that all these narratives, like the Great Flood, are psychological archetypes that reappear in various assumptions as psychological motifs of societies. Such types of approaches are beneficial up to a certain degree, but also leveling from a point and after, as they ignore historical cores that exist in many myths - thus ignoring the real experiences of the people who experienced them. Among the most significant mistakes that can be made is to interpret with anthropocentrism (in psychological terms) phenomena that are both-ways, either from the religious perspective i.e. man-Creator relationships, or from the natural aspect man- natural environment relationship (Frankfort and Bing 1958, p.167; Gaillard and Texier 2010, p.81-82; Schlehe 2010, p.112; Botero et al. 2014).

Attempting, on a first level, to focus more on the narratives of the Great Flood, it is important to see the elements that compose them. Especially with the biblical interpretation and Noah, which is the most well-known narrative in the West through the Judeo-Christian tradition, there have been many attempts to interpret, date and understand it. Versions of the magnitude of the flood, if it was global or local, have been a point of dispute. A typical point, of intermediate placement of the two extremes of global and local cataclysm, is the assumption that the flood was not global for the natural environment but was anthropologically worldwide, that is where were people inhabited and this version is accepted by many religious geologists. Further-

more even beyond the biblical narrative, attempts have been made to understand structural elements such as the magnitude of the flood, or even the size of the described arks (e.g. Babylonian ark). Noah is the second Adam and in the course of the cataclysm nature comes to a pre-creation point, where the natural laws governing the world are altered. The narratives of the Great Flood are inseparably linked with the narratives of the creation of the world. The cataclysm symbolizes the end of the old creation and the dawn of a new one. The protagonist, Noah, is the characteristic example of the pure faithful man who wants to fulfil the will of God. His faith to the Creator's will is indisputable and the passages of Genesis emphasize that God commands and Noah executes without disagreement. Throughout the narrative Noah does not speak at all, except at the end, where he curses his son for mocking him. Most narratives have similar features of the faithful and virtuous protagonist of the cataclysm, as well as some basic elements such as the ark or sanctuary which is the shield that the God/Gods suggest to the elect to be rescued and the landing in a mountain where everything ends and is the world's restart point. The abovementioned are just some of the common elements shared by all the narratives of the Great Flood, through a syncretic prism (Haupt 1888; Piehl 1989, p.43,49; Seely 2004, p.294,296-298; Flores no date).

In an effort to make a reference to the diversification of narratives it is interesting that, as it is obvious, the biblical narrative is structured in a monotheistic prism while for example the Babylonian version, through the Gilgamesh epic, is polytheistic. But perhaps more interesting is that in the Babylonian narrative the protagonist of the cataclysm, Utnapishtim is simply a tool in the controversy of the gods Ea and Enlil. The same applies to the epic of Atrahasis. Here the cause of the cataclysm is the controversy between the gods, where naturally in such narratives there is the element of God who is a champion of humanity and the human entity is in the focus of narration but not in the focus of the causes that led to the Great Cataclysm. On the other hand in the biblical version God wants to rescue humanity through the most innocent (Noah) to whom he says that the Creator's will shall be rescued through him (*"But I will confirm my covenant with you."* Gen.6: 18), so Noah becomes a carrier of the soteriological vision and perspective of the human species, according to the Judeo-Christian tradition (Battenfield 1971, p.10; Kamsler 2001, p.239-240).

Thus, before completing the introductory reference to the narratives of the Great Flood, it will be interesting to see their geographic dynamics, which are incomparably larger in relation to the geographical boundaries of the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea that we have set as boundaries in this thesis. Referring only, we can say that the narration of the Great Flood appears in the Indian mythology with Manu being the protagonist and on others like the Celtic tradition, the Incas, the Eskimo, the North American Indians and the Maori of New Zealand, etc. Perhaps more impressive are narratives in the Chinese tradition, where reference is made to several texts such as Li-Ki, Book of Documents (Shu Jing), etc., but also to many other narrations where appears the motif of the couple brother-sister who was saved and formed the basis for the regeneration of the human race (Restelle 1907; Irwin 1990, p.55; Voo et al. 2005, p.96).

The other great part of the present thesis is the discussion about the hypothesis of the historical core of the Great Flood in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. Archaeological and geo-morphological researches undertaken in the Black Sea basin have shown that the prehistoric Black Sea was extremely sensitive to climatic and environmental changes in relation to the mainland of the wider region. The connection of the Black Sea with the Mediterranean Sea via the Marmara Sea at the beginning of the Holocene period was the basis for many hypotheses such as the Great Flood. Thus, a major controversy arise about the geological conditions under which these redevelopments took place in the Black Sea, and whether this big catastrophe can be substantiated through palaeo-environmental indicators. Also the heroes of these narratives, like Noah, were more and more connected with the Black Sea area (Yanko-Hombach 2004, p.6-7; Constantin 2010, p.2).

There are many scenarios about the way the Black Sea is connected with the Mediterranean. The Black Sea is one of the largest enclosed seas in the world and the way it is connected with other water masses is a point of research and conflict. According to Ryan et al. after the postglacial rise the Mediterranean, catastrophically, penetrated the Bosphorus straits and quickly filled the Black Sea basin, whose level was very low, about 8400BP or 7500BC. The Black Sea, before its connection with the Mediterranean was a huge lake with almost fresh water. According to another version, between 11800-11000 BP, the level of the Black Sea rose from -70 from the sea level, to -

10. When it reached -20, the Black Sea begun to flow towards the Marmara Sea and as a result towards the Mediterranean. Thus, consequently, the level of the Mediterranean rose and a double flow-connection from the black sea to the Mediterranean began, and vice versa. As a result, the salinity of the Black Sea changed and the exchange of marine molluscs which colonized the black sea shelves. It is also characteristic that it occurred a change from freshwater fauna to salty water and this phenomenon is one of the most important environmental indicators examined by specialists. In both assumptions and in many others that exist, the rivers that end up in the Black Sea play a key role since, with the melting of the ice, began to transfer much more water to the Black Sea, so they rose its level. One of the great differences in these approaches has to do with the speed, the volume and the time in which the events took place, since as if we take time as an example, if this procedure happened quickly then the historical core hypothesis starts to make sense. On the other hand, if the connecting procedure lasted for a longer period and there is no “violent water expansion” then the hypothesis collapses, along with the assumption that the people who experienced this “local” cataclysm are the basis for creating the story of the Great Flood. Another way of looking at the Black Sea flood hypothesis is to study the human societies of that time and their possible movements. Many specialists report that there is no significant movement of human communities at this time that documents a major environmental change or disaster, despite the fact that there are clues which indicate that during the early Holocene period the environment north of the Black Sea begun to change from steppe to a more Mediterranean one and the temperature was increasing (Cordova and Lehman 2005, p.275-276; Dergachev and Dolukhanov 2007, p.492-493; Panin 2008; Apostolova 2008, p.299-300).

Of course, there are many other assumptions related to the Big Flood such as the hypothesis of the Santorini volcano eruption and its association with the myth of Atlantis but also with the Deucalion Flood of the Greek tradition. Nevertheless, in the present thesis we shall not discuss with such hypothesis (Galanopoulos 1960, p.227).

In order to be able to walk through this study, we will need a combination of environmental sciences, archaeology and the study of religions and ancient myths. The narrative of the Great Cataclysm is an integral part of the human spirit and possibly of the collective memory of humanity. Examining the historical core of this narrative in

the Black Sea area is an important piece of work for linking theoretical-humanistic and applied sciences within a multidisciplinary perspective where such abilities increase human awareness and contribute to the advancement of science. But also the study of the universal human heritage, where through the examination of various hypotheses that can be historically documented, we are better able to understand them and perhaps at some point to end up accepting them as undoubted historical events or to understand their symbolic value for the human spirit (Briggs et al. 2006, p.180).

Chapter 1 The relationship between religions and the environment

The human-environment relationships are not stable and unchanged in time and space. On the contrary, they are historical which means that they are affected from specific social structures. Religions constitute a milestone for the overwhelming majority of societies, hence they greatly affects the moral background of the people that choose to “confess” and align themselves with a specific religion or dogma. Many researches in this field have demonstrated contradictory results, with quite a few of them indicating that the religious background can affect the human-nature relationship and other stating that this influence is not so important. The issue of natural environment and humans, it can be said that is dual. On the one hand there is the technical-organizational aspect related to the way the each society handles its natural resources and on the other hand the philosophical-theological aspect related to the position of humans in the natural world and the relationships and balances that should be build (Axelrod and Suedfeld 1995, p.184; Μποτετζάγιας and Καραμίχας 2008, p.39).

So, it can be proved really beneficial to demonstrate, in a general context, the basic principles that govern the religions with the biggest population in the Eastern Mediterranean, but of course their breadth is much greater this narrow geographical context.

According to Christian ethics and perceptions, the whole Creation along with humanity, are God’s creations. Creation is absolutely subjected to the will of God, apart from man who has the gift of the free will and can move according to his own will instead of God’s. Of course, denying God’s will and stepping away from it leads, deterministically, to humanity’s destruction. Thus, man as the sole self-sufficient person acquires a character of an administrator/master/caregiver of nature, who has been invited to see it as a gift of the Creator to him. Man begun to experience the natural environment in a utilitarian way and not as God’s gift and this notion lead to the alienation of the human-environment relationship. It is concluded that man losing all sense of the sacredness of nature began to see it without any respect with an absolutely aggressive and cynical spirit and resulted in the creation of extremely arrogant societies. The spiritual path of man is closely connected with the natural environment.

At this point, we end up with a structural Christianity's claim that the pollution of the environment reflects the inner spiritual contamination of man, where when we look at the technical issues, we simply aim for the symptoms and not for the illness itself that is the sick human spirit. Hence, the human-environmental relations are perfectly aligned with how man places himself in the nature, but also in the world, which directly reflects everyone's the theological background (Chryssavgis 2007, p.15; Chryssavgis 2010; Μαντζαρίδης 2015, p.573-582; Αναστάσιος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Τυράνων Δυρραχίου και πάσης Αλβανίας 2015, p.83-102).

Under this theory a new field, ecotheology, has been created where inter-religious dialogues were developed on the basis that there may be a difference in religious beliefs. However human societies share a common environmental experience and it is beneficial to find common points that will help them move towards a better relationship with the material world. In this context, specific days devoted to the environment have been established and in Eastern Christianity, in particular under Patriarch Bartholomew. these actions have peaked over the last few years. Several times in order to define something you have to define it based on what it encompasses and interacts with it, otherwise you will fall into fatal errors of misinterpreted concepts. St. John of Damascus stated a really interesting phrase: *"We must recall that we are less than human without God, less than human without each other and less than human without creation."* This is a very good example of the fact that when we try to define man and his role in the material world by isolating him from what frames-arranges him for being human, we end up defining human nature in a non-human way that structurally incites his ontology (Chryssavgis 2007; Chryssavgis 2010, p.222).

One of the most important critics of the Christian ethics related to the environment was Lynn White, Jr., who stated that Christianity, in particular in its western form, is the most human-centered religion of the world. Also, he connected the perception related to the environment with ideological issues. Characteristic of the western societies it that the word "ecology" was first cited in English in 1873, which illustrates how late these societies started to pay attention to the environment. Everything we think about the environment depends on what we think about ourselves and how we identify ourselves and religion is the cornerstone in forming views on such issues. He believed that the Christian worldview created a dualism between nature and man,

with human excellence, which in other religions does not exist so emphatically. He concluded that human-environmental problems will continue to grow deeper until we reject Christianity's axioms related to the environment (White 1967; Horrell et al. 2008, p.220).

White's were simplified and almost obsessively focused on a point (Christianity), as similar examples can be found from the ancient world to the present day in East, where the Eastern tradition shows so much emphasis to harmony. Even in the present Marxist China, the concept of human sovereignty over nature can be distinguished. Of course, White's views have had and still have a tremendous impact on the environmental debate, where his position against the Christian perception of the environment has been described as the "White Thesis". Later on and in this skeptic many scholars and intellectuals, beyond the Jewish-Christian tradition, accused the Greek-Roman tradition for demystifying nature and seeing it in a rationalist way. All these arguments hide a romanticism view that a primitive system of values perceived something in a more "pure" way and a new tougher rationalist destroyed it and separated it from its value level. This fact is false since human beings and human societies from the moment of their existence intervene with the environment in order to be able to improve their standard of living, and the degree of intervention is not influenced by its ideological framework but by the possibility of intervention. Therefore, as the intervention capacity increases the intensity of the intervention increases too (Woodrum and Hoban, 1994, p.194; Axelrod and Suedfeld 1995; Γεωργόπουλος 2002; Hitzhusen 2007).

As expected, Christianity trying to escape from the framework of the Jewish tradition gave new interpretations through the New Testament. Particularly as is natural, Christ was presented as an absolutely positive model of harmony between nature and man. Certainly in many Christian circles there is the belief that the emphasis on environmental issues is futile as the natural environment cannot be destroyed before the end of the world, where it has a direct relationship with the eschatological perception of the biblical religions, and of course Christianity (Horrell et al. 2008, p.229).

Evidently, when we examine technical studies related to the issue, the landscape does not clear up as we would have hoped. Researches with people who believe in the Bible literally do not agree that man can only use nature according to his needs

and interests, but they obviously accept that man has some form of authorship/management upon the physical world. Also, in some statistical indices these people show even greater scores in relation to people who do not follow as much as they do the Christian teachings. Naturally, there are also researches that show exactly the opposite, that the more devoted the respondents are in Christian teachings, the lower their scores in studies related to environmental consciousness. It should also be borne in mind that many studies conclude that the religious background has a great impact on environmental concerns. It is very important to take into account the geography factor, as the same issues are interpreted differently from region to region and from country to country. It is characteristic that studies show a differentiation in environmental perception even at a structural level, where within the same religious system the individual dogmas provide several different views. Also between Catholics and Protestants, almost always Catholics are those with higher levels of environmental concern. This, is also reflected in the countries where these dogmas predominate. Thus, it has been suggested that environmental awareness and human environment relations are less religious and more political. This approach can also be supported by the fact that many conservative social groups that show low environmental interest are characterized by incomplete information about the environmental reality that another region, or even the area that they inhabit, experience (Greeley 1993, p.22; Woodrum and Hoban 1994, p.202; Eckberg and Blocker 1996, p.344; Schultz et al. 2000, p.578; Hitzhusen 2007; Sherkat and Ellison 2007, p.74).

At an interpretative level the terminology used in Genesis for human sovereignty requires lots of interpretations and scholars disagree over time on the interpretation of the terms. Furthermore, as it has been mentioned in the Christian tradition, the term sovereignty, on its bases, was interpreted as a authorship/manipulation of the natural world by man. At this point it could be beneficial to examine some passages from Judaism as, environmental concerns in the Jewish tradition have remained marginal.

The natural world belongs to the Creator and not to humanity, but man has a privileged position in the world because he is the only one who was made by the image of God. According to the Rabbinic tradition the material world that God created is good but not perfect and holy. It can be holy and perfect only through the course of

man and whether he follows the will of God. From the Judaic point of view, biocentric theories, i.e. those that focus on nature rather than mankind, are still a form of paganism and idolatrous approach to nature. Also, the Jewish tradition teaches that first we must love and respect mankind and as a result we will love and respect the material world. Finally as in the Christian perception it is believed that the erosion of the natural environment is a product of the spiritual corrosion of man and his failure to accept the will of his Creator and the position He has made for him in the material world (Axelrod and Suedfeld 1995; Tirosh-Samuelson, 2001; Schultz et al. 2000).

At this point it becomes necessary to mention another great religion of the Eastern Mediterranean, Islam. Islam in many points-issues follows the biblical tradition that was inherited from the Old Testament, but at other points tries to give its own independent teachings. The Qur'an preaches that the natural environment is not the result of random natural processes by chaotic parameters that have to thrive, but a system with purpose, vision and destination. Also in the Qur'an it is highlighted that nature is a prime miracle of God. The Islamic tradition emphasizes on nature and its importance, because it believes that through the natural world it can be proved the existence of God. Nature is God's gift to humanity and that everything has a reason for existing as its Creator gave him an ontology and perspective. Of course man preserves his "biblical inheritance" and is Allah's forerunner in the nature. It is characteristic that in the Quran and Sunna, there is a special reference to the importance of the water and the need for its proper management. It is also interesting to note that in many passages the Qur'an refers to animals and it is stated that they are made up of "community" (Umma), giving a unifying meaning between the way of life of man and animals. It is very interesting to take a look at the prototype: *"There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have We omitted from the Book and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end (Qur'an, 6: 38)."* It is also a structural point that the natural world has not been created only for man to make use of it, even if man is considered to be God's agent on earth, this alone does not give him the right to use nature only for his own interest with an opportunistic character. As in the other two biblical religions man is at the top of creation but not its owner (Wersal 1995, p.452; Özdemir 2003, p.5; Al-Damkhi 2008, p.14; Saniotis 2012, p.157).

Many academics and scholars believe that the Qur'an promotes a sustainable vision of the world and several Muslim intellectuals believe that Islam has very structural/critical views of the human-nature relationship. Interestingly, the word "earth" (ard) appears 485 times in the Qur'an. It may be true that it reappears the motif that God is the true owner of nature and man its steward and that when man diverges from the will of his Creator (Allah) there is an ontological erosion. They also think that it is clear that man is responsible of taking care of the natural environment. Thus, we can more simply say that the relationship between God-human-nature is covered by divine will and when this is disturbed man finds himself in a desperate position. Characteristic is the following passage: *"And whatever in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's and Allah encompasses all things (Qur'an, 4: 126)*. Hence, it becomes obvious the unity between man and nature and the responsibility that lies upon humanity in front of God (Abedi-Sarvestani and Shahvali 2008, p.613; Al-Damkhi 2008, p.17; Saniotis 2012).

According to Ibrahim Ozdemir the basic points are the following (Özdemir 2003, p.21):

- *"The natural world has an ontological and objective existence as has been created by God and which reflects His Divine Names and Attributes.*
- *Nature as a whole, being created and sustained by God, has intrinsic and inherent value, independent of its usefulness for human beings.*
- *Human beings, though being at the top of creation, are only members of the community of nature. They have responsibilities towards the whole environment, just as they have responsibilities towards their families.*
- *Human beings are the vicegerents of God on earth, and therefore they will be judged in the hereafter for their actions here. They would be held accountable also for their actions related with the environment.*
- *Biodiversity and the richness of the ecosystem is a result of God's creation and His Will, therefore it should be respected and maintained.*
- *Nature has been created in order, balance and with extra ordinary esthetic beauty, and all these aspects of nature while enhancing man's life here, should be honored, developed and protected accordingly.*

- *All patterns of man's production and consumption should be based on an overall order and balance of nature. The rights of man are not absolute and unlimited. We cannot consume and pollute nature as we wish, carelessly.*
- *To prevent the appearance and emergence of corruption in ecosystems, to prevent corruption on earth (fasad f'il-ard) is one of the primary responsibilities of all believers."*

It should not be forgotten that Islam also has the interpretation that the political structure that exists in a society is the interpretation of religious teachings. Thus, in Muslim countries, there can be seen variations from country to country but also between doctrines, which makes it very complicated to perceive the relationships of religion, man, the environment and society (Rice 2006, p.373).

It is also important to refer briefly in antiquity, in particular to the ancient Greek literature, where the narratives of the Great Cataclysm that we will examine later are preserved and since it is part of the geographical context we are examining, it is useful to see the environmental dimension in the ancient Greek spirit.

References for environmental balance are found in texts written by Pythagoras, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle and others. With the exception of some philosophers, most of the time the views expressed were of the same character, that man is the master of nature (Runnels 1995, p.96; Dillon 1997; Frank 2001).

Even in Plato's dialogue of Critias (entries 111a-111b), there is a clear reference to the erosion of the environment and the results of deforestation. Plato resembles the eroded landscape with a "skeleton of a sick body". Reflections on issues related to the natural environment are still not a dominant issue in the ancient Greek literature, but only references in specific points.

Nevertheless it is important to focus more on the religious beliefs rather than on the intellectuals of Greek antiquity. In the mysteries performed in Andania (Peloponnese) it was forbidden to harm the trees and there was a relevant sign. Also, in general it was not allowed to harm or corrode in any way the trees in sacred places. It is characteristic that all the gods and heroes were guardians of the forest lands which belonged to the sanctuaries that were dedicated to them. Also, it is indicative that fact that on Hera's sanctuary in Samos it was forbidden any intervention to the forest. In many cases this concept included the animals that lived in these forests. The Rheitoi

the streams dividing Eleusis from Athens were dedicated to Demeter and Persephone and only the priests had the right to catch any fish in the area of the sanctuary. More specifically we could refer to the god Dionysus, who was considered to be intimately connected with the course nature, its death and its regeneration. The motive that nature died and was reborn was very common in the ancient theatre and almost all theatre festivals, even in Athens, have their origins in the Dionysiac cult. Also, it may not be a coincidence that the god who is close connected with nature's course, is followed from the narration of Dionysus-Zagreus in the orphic version, where he dies and is resurrected and because of this he was considered to be the redeemer of the world that will save him from death (Dillon 1997, p.115-119; Schmidt 2004b, p.85; Schmidt 2004c, p.111; Parkins 2016).

Also, in order to make a reference to the tradition of Zoroastrianism, it is very interesting to mention the importance of the way in which all the seeds of the trees must be harvested, before the dawning winter which is another part of the Great Cataclysm as we will see later, but also the importance and sacredness of agriculture, as well as the contact of man with it, where it is believed that through this he realizes the will of his creator and follows the religion and tradition of Zoroastrianism. But perhaps the most emphatic point is the "hymn to the souls", which can be found in Avesta, in which the souls of the animals are referred to as eons and are honored along with human once as they contribute, through their existence, to the survival of mankind (Αβέστα 1992, 29-30,42).

Furthermore it should be mentioned that most of the time in antiquity they had not received the environmental degradation as much as they do now. Thus the environmental concern was at an embryonic level and most of the times the human-nature relations were determined by each of the narrations of the creation of the world, which enforced the hierarchy of the world in accord with each religious tradition.

Based on the abovementioned, narrative events, like the narration of the Great Flood, natural disasters were considered to have their main focus on humans. It was their actions and choices that caused destruction. From the Paleolithic societies there was the conviction that nature has its own "personality" and punishes humans when it is needed, according to the will of its creator. Hence, there is the concept of "theodicy"

which can be found from the most ancient societies to the most intelligent of our times (Taylor 2004, p.993; Chester 2005, p.321).

The various destructions like earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis, volcanos and floods have always put human lives in danger or under the threat of extinction, indicating a conflict dimension between man and nature. Mankind's need of understanding these natural disasters and interpreting them, were the basis for the creation of a religious character/background for a number of them. Also even nowadays, many natural disasters are interpreted from many social groups through a conservative religious prism. In fact, there is the view that in areas that are closest to zones with frequent natural disasters people present more intense religious beliefs (Grandjean et al. 2008, p.188,200; Ghafori-Ashtiany 2009; Bentzen 2013, p.2).

Many times the various disasters that occur in the environment, especially man-made ones, are valued in economic terms. This implies that there is an awareness of the consequences for future generations of environmental degradation, a fact that is very questionable (Βλάχου 2001). It is a mistake to take into account the same narratives of destructive nature that exist in religions and myths with a narrative that is varied in a vast number of religious systems and traditions which does not simply describes a natural disaster, but the complete dissolution of human beings and the material world. Even though it is impossible to find with certainty a historical core, it is incontrovertible that perhaps after all the narratives of the creation of the world this is the most important point of influence of religions in the formation of Creator-Human-Nature relations, where these influences are still visible in their frequent religions and traditions.

Chapter 2 The Great Flood in the Eastern Mediterranean

The narration of the Great Flood is widespread almost in the whole planet either as a native tradition or as a religious one. Nevertheless, in many traditions it is considered as a secondary narrative that does not have the dynamic in which it can be found in the Eastern Mediterranean, where it acquires a structural character for the spiritual development of the religions that surround it (Frazer 1916, p.233).

In this chapter, there will be a concise presentation of the main narratives present in the Eastern Mediterranean for the Great Flood, which they will also be presented in their full length in the annex.

Biblical narrative

First the Biblical narrative of Genesis (chapters 6-10), which is the most widespread in the West through the Judeo-Christian tradition, will be presented.

When men had overwhelmed the earth, the sons of God saw the daughters of men and took them as their wives. God saw mankind and said that his spirit did not exist inside them He so reduced mankind's life to one hundred and twenty years. But God also saw that the evil grew in men's hearts and He regretted making mankind. Noah was a fair and noble man who had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. After God saw that Earth was corrupted too along with the whole creation, He told Noah to construct an ark of wood and he gave him instructions on how to do it. And God said that He will bring a flood to the corrupted creation and that His "testament" will be continued via Noah. Also, God told that in the ark will enter Noah with his wife, sons and his sons' wives. Also, He ordered Noah to take seven couples (male-female) of all the clean animals and one couple of the unclean in order to save them. After God saw that Noah had executed His commands, He told him that in seven days will start the flood that shall eliminate everything from Earth and rain will last ceaselessly for forty days. At the time of the flood Noah was 600 years old. After Noah, his family and the animals entered the ark God sealed the door, the gates of the abyss cracked and the waterfalls of heaven opened for forty days. The flood begun and wiped every living creature upon Earth, men and beasts. Water covered even the highest mountains.

After forty days and nights God covered the gates of the abyss and the waterfalls of heaven and it stopped raining. The ark landed on Mount Ararat after 150 days and the tops of the mountains began to appear. Noah sent a raven to see whether the water had retreated but it never came back. The same happened with a dove. But after seven days Noah sent another dove which came back with an olive branch and he understood that the water had receded on the earth. Then God said to Noah to exit the ark along with his family and the saved animals. Noah made an altar and sacrificed to God. And God smelled the sacrifice and was pleased and said that the Earth will no longer be cursed. He blessed Noah and his sons and told them to grow and multiply and He gave them again laws on how to live. Also God said that from now on there will be a testament between Him and the creation, which will be symbolized with the “bow in the clouds” (rainbow), and He will never bring a flood, which will destroy the creation, upon Earth. Noah became a farmer and planted the vineyards, and drank a great deal of wine, got drunk and stripped himself out of his house. Ham after seeing his father’s nakedness mocked him, while Shem and Japheth took their father’s clothes and carefully covered him without seeing him naked. When Noah got sober and learned what Ham did he cursed him to always be a servant of his brothers. Noah after the flood lived for 350 years and died at 950. Through his sons all the nations upon Earth were created and Noah’s descendants were spread across the Earth.

Via this narrative, West inherits the tradition of the cataclysm, through the Judeo-Christian tradition. Judaism, Christianity and Islam have transported this narrative to a vast expanse of the planet. It is important to realize that in Islam too, this narrative has an important role because it accepts the Jewish tradition through a very specific interpretation of it, placing even Abraham as the first Muslim. Therefore Muhammad wanted to be a redeemer of the ancient monotheism, hence of the Jewish theology, resulting that all these structural biblical narratives also have a great deal of importance in Islam (Ziákka no date).

Of course, in addition to the Old Testament (Judean Bible), it is important to examine the references of the Great Flood in the New Testament and the Qur’an, which are the sacred texts of two of the three great monotheistic biblical religions of the eastern Mediterranean.

In the New Testament, it is interestingly presented, in the Matthew Gospel (chapter 24 entries 36-39), the end of the world, and it is described like the time of Noah's Flood. Furthermore it is said that a Noah's time people lived their lives and pleasures normally, without understanding the upcoming end, until it came and wiped them all, apart from Noah and his family. Thus it is parallel with the end of the world, in an effort to create an eschatological perspective to the spirit of the faithful and encourage them not to be complacent, for no one knows when the final judgment will come. Another reference can be found in the Luke Gospel (chapter 17, entries 24-28) where again the end of the world is described like the Noah's Flood, in relation to the social conditions that prevailed at that time.

In the Qur'an, perhaps the most interesting point is in chapter 23 entries 23-29, where great emphasis is placed on faith and on the fact that Noah is the exemplar of a pious man. Furthermore, the narrative in the Qur'an puts Noah in dialogue with the "infidels" and encourages them to believe in the one God and not to other gods. The infidels mocked him and Noah while asking for the help of God, he was informed that a flood would come and he would have to prepare an ark to save his own family and a couple of every animal. It is obvious that the narrative in the Qur'an gives tremendous gravity to faith and that this was the reason that led to the cataclysm.

The Biblical narratives of the Great Flood influenced the West and the Middle East, where through Christianity for the West and Islam for the Middle East the narrative was transported, affected and still affects millions of people. Perhaps the most poetic point where the dynamics of the Great Flood in the Religious-spiritual structure of the West is revealed is the ceiling Capella Sistina, as one of the central themes depicted by Michelangelo is the story of Noah's Flood.



Picture 1: Michelangelo scene from the ceiling of the Cappella Sistina (Gombrich 2002, p.309)

Mesopotamian Narratives

After presenting the Biblical versions of the Great Flood it is time to cite the Mesopotamian narratives. First, it will be presented the narrative that exists in the Gilgamesh epic, where the narration of the cataclysm, starring Utnapishtim, is not its central story but a secondary narrative that frames the quest of the protagonist (Gilgamesh) for the secret of immortality.

The Flood of Utnapishtim

Gilgamesh meets Utnapishtim, who seemed to him similar to himself, and while he was making a decision to fight with him in order to learn his secret of immortality, he finally asks what it was that led him to seek eternal life. Utnapishtim said that he would tell to Gilgamesh on the gods' secrets. Leading gods' heart led them to bring a Great Flood. Anu, father of gods, forced the other gods, Enlil, Ninurta, Ennugi and Ea, to take an oath for the flood. But Ea decided to reveal gods' plan to Utnapishtim and he said to him *"Abandon your home and build a boat. Reject the corpse-like stench of wealth and only save lives. Take on the boat the seed of all you need aboard."* Afterwards Ea gave Utnapishtim instructions on how to build the ship/ark giving great importance to symmetry.

Afterward, he tells Ea that he will execute his orders, but he asks how he is going to justify his actions and what he will say to the city and the elders. Ea told him to tell

others that Enlil is hostile to him (Utnapishtim) and for that he can no longer stay in the city. That is why he will prepare for the underground waters where he will descend and with his lord, Ea, he will live. But you, Enlil with abundance will flood you, rich harvests and fish will give and bread shall pour. So when it dawned, the whole city helped him to build the ark, since Ea played with the words and promised prosperity to the people, while he had announced the flood to Utnapishtim. While building the ark, every day was a feast where they drunk and ate. When they finished, it was difficult to put it on the water. After they managed to do so, Utnapishtim loaded the ark with everything precious he had, the animals and the beasts of the mountains. Also along with him his family and relatives and his engineers where boarded. When the flood begun, Utnapishtim sealed the door and the storm was tremendous and frightening. Various deities took part on the flood dissolving the world and the foundations that support it. Characteristic is the reference is that Erragal (the god of the underworld) broke the pillars of the cosmic barrage of the world. Thus all the earth as a clay vessel was cut down into pieces. The south wind blew all day and no no-one could see his companion. Nor the gods from heaven could see the people. The gods, however, were terrified by the cataclysm and gathered in the sky to see what they would do. Ishtar lamented as a woman who gives birth, as since she gave birth to the people, she spoke badly for them on the council of the gods and their destruction was permitted. The flood lasted for six days. On the seventh day the storm and the sea calmed and the cataclysm was over. All humanity soil was once again. Utnapishtim opened a window and searched for land. The ark landed on Mount Nimus. Then, the protagonist released a pigeon, but it turned back because it did not have anywhere to sit. Afterwards, he released a swallow, but it turned back too. Finally, he released a raven which, since the waters had become less, found a place to eat and did not return. Then Utnapishtim offered sacrifices to the gods and they smelled the odor. All gods had gathered, and Ishtar said that these days will never be forgotten and that all the gods should to come except from Enlil, because irrationally he brought the flood. Enlil, however, came and when he saw the ship he was angry and said that no mortal should survive. Then Ninurta said that Ea revealed the secret to humans. Ea spoke and said to Enlil that he wrongly brought the flood. He should punish the sinners but also he should have in mind that humanity cannot be extinguished. Instead of bringing the cataclysm, it

would be better to bring a lot of difficulties to humanity. Ea also said that he sent a dream to Utnapishtim (where at this point is mentioned as Atrahasis and is an important point that will be mentioned later) and this was how he managed to understand gods' secret. Then Enlil took Utnapishtim and his wife to the ark, put the woman to kneel, stood among them and blessed them saying that from now on they would be like gods. And the gods let the couple live far away, in the rivers estuaries (To Έπος 2001, 135-141).

The Flood of Ziusudra

Another story of the flood, which is considered to be the most ancient one, is that of the Sumerian myth, starring Ziusudra. The narrative is quite fragmentary because many columns are damaged and we can only see the central outline of the narrative.

The narrative begins with a god speaking (perhaps Enlil) telling that humanity in its destruction he shall bring. Then, a description is made on how people should build sanctuaries and their own cities and a reference to the creation of some people and animals. Thus, the kingdom of the heavens descended to the earth and five cities were established according to the commandments of the gods. Erindu, Bandirbira, Larak, Sippar and Surupak, where each had its own leader and these cities were centers of worship. After that, the columns are much damaged and the only thing that can stand out is that the flood was decided. Then, the goddess Ninlil (Enil's wife) began to cry. Ziusudra while seating heard a voice. We (gods) will send a flood to the centers of worship (cities) and destroy humanity. The decision is the reason for the assembly of the gods that Anou-Enil ordered. All the storms blew and the centers of worship were flooded by the cataclysm. For seven days and nights the cataclysm flooded the land and moved the ark in the vast waters. Utu then came out, shedding light on the earth, and Ziusudra opened the window of the ark and light came inside. Ziusudra the king worshiped Utu, slaughtered an ox and offered abunds lambs as a sacrifice. The next columns are also much damaged, but it is assumed that the gods came. Ziusudra bowed to Anu-Enlil and he gave him divine live and soul same with the gods'. And they put sent him to live at Dilmun, a place that is like a heaven on earth for Sumerians (Ο Κατακλυσμός 2001, 160-162).

The Epic of Atrahasis

The next narrative is the epic of Atrahasis, which also has more than one versions.

The narrative begins by saying that the gods did the jobs that men had to do, the job was very tough and for this they gaggged. Then the gods decide to revolt against Enlil and Anu (the great gods), and go to Enlil's house, ready to fight. Enlil goes out to meet the hostile congregation of the gods and learn the reason for which they are revolting. They tell him that their jobs are too hard and they cannot work anymore. Enlil then told Anu what the other gods complained about. Then the god Enki gets to speak (for many it is thought to be the god Ea) and says that we gods do not have to blame Enlil and Anu for the hard work, as the goddess Belet-ili (goddess of womb) is here and she can make a mortal man to pick up the gods' load. Then some gods suggested God Enki to do this work (creation.) He told them that he would be purified and that he would do it, but a god must be slaughtered, so that god and man can get stirred up in the clay. When the day came, the synod of the gods slaughtered Gestus, and with the clay his flesh and blood mingled, but the mind survived for not to be forgotten (that a god that was slain) and the gods spit on the clay. Again, the goddess of the womb told the gods that the man was created and that the gods were exempt, and they honored her. Along with Enki that divided they clay and created seven males and seven females. Afterwards, follows a great piece of how people should live according to the commandments of the gods.

Six hundred years had passed since the creation of man and people had multiplied. They made too much noise, the earth roared and the gods could not sleep. Then Enlil said tyrannical became the noise of the people, send the suruppu disease to break out. Then the god Enki warned Atrahasis, and told him to tell people to stop honoring the gods, make a lot of noise and an offer to god Namar (god of epidemics) in order to end the disease. So it happened and Suruppu's disease was gone. After that, history is repeated only this time the disaster is the lack of water, where again people in the same way make the gods to retreat. Then Enlil decides to send the flood and there is a dispute between the gods Enil and Enki, but the story is much worn in this point. Enki, with a dream, warns Atrahasis and tells him "Abandon your home and build a boat. Reject the corpse-like stench of wealth and only save

lives.”. And he gave him instructions for the construction of the boat. Atrahasis told the world that the gods Enlil and Enki were fighting and for this I must flee from my house because I am servant of Enki and I have to go to the underground waters to live with my god. The people helped him with the boat and enjoying themselves as they were building it. When it was finished, he put his family in it and when the weather changed, he shut the door. The cataclysm began and destroyed everything. Then, the goddess of childbirth was crying and accused Enlil for the decision to destroy humanity and along with her the other gods were crying too. Then a part of the narrative is missing, that obviously describes the end of the cataclysm. Atrahasis offered sacrifices to the gods and they were pleased. When Enlil saw the boat he was angry and told the gods that they had made an oath not to leave a man alive. The great Anu showed Enki and said that he betrayed the secret. And Enki said that came in contrast with the gods to preserve life. Then they told the goddess of birth to make castes in men with women who could not be pregnant, for decreasing births. The narrative closes by saying that the narration of the flood will be learned all over the world through the song (Ατραχάσις 2001, 165-190).

Xisourthos's Flood

Finally, in the Mesopotamian narratives we will include a very late narrative that, although chronically is later than the previous narratives, shows that it has a great connection with the Babylonian ones. The name of the protagonist is Xisourthos and is preserved by the Hellenistic-Babylonian writer Berossos. It is interesting, because even these late narratives of the flood contain elements and ideas that existed in antiquity for the flood in general (Kraeling 1947b).

To Xisourthos, who was the son of Otiartes, Kronos appeared to him in his dream and told him that the 15th day of the Daisios month, mankind would be destroyed by a flood. He instructed Xisourthos to bury all the writings in the city of Sippar and then gave him instructions for the construction of the ship, where his family and the closest friends would board. He should put inside food and animals of all sorts, and prepare himself to sail. If they ask him where he is going, he should tell them that he goes to pray to the gods for good things to come to men. So he did, he prepared everything, and got in the ship with his family and his close friends. On the third day

after the cataclysm, he freed birds to see if there was land anywhere. The birds did not find anything and turned back, and after a few days Xisourthos released the birds again and they turned back with their feet covered with mud. When he released them for the third time they did not come back. Then Xisourthos realized that land had appeared and his ship had landed on a mountain. Then he disembarked with his wife, his daughter and the pilot of the ship, he made a sanctuary and sacrificed to the gods and after that he and those who disembarked from the ship along with him disappeared. When Xisourthos and the others did not come back to those who remained on the ship, they came down searching for him and calling his name. Xisourthos was no longer visible to them, but a voice was heard from the skies. Because of his piousness, Xisourthos will live with the gods here, with his wife and the pilot having the same honors. Also, the voice told them to return to Babylon, dig up the writings from Sippar and distribute them to humanity. Finally it told them that they were now in Armenia. Listening to these, humans sacrificed to the gods and went by foot in Babylon. A section of the ship that remained in Armenia still lies there, in the Korduaian Mountains, and many people take a small piece of it and keep it as an amulet. When the survivors returned to Babylon they dig up the writings, established many cities, rebuilt sanctuaries and built a new Babylon (Burstein 1978, p.19-21).

Greco-Roman Tradition

In the Greco-Roman tradition, there are many narratives focusing on the flood, which have either a global or a local character. The ancient Greek literature has lots of references, which are many times contradictory and from different primary sources, so it will be an attempt to present the most influential ones. Mountains always have a dominant role in these narratives and more generally in the theological thinking of the ancient Hellenic spirit, making it easy to identify motifs among these narratives, as well as on the Mesopotamian narratives of the cataclysm (Buxton 1992, p.7).

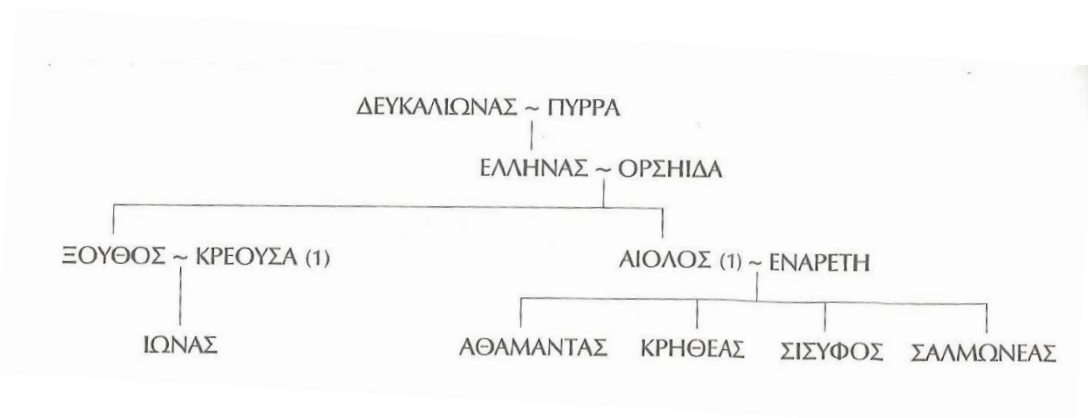
Deucalion's Flood

First we will begin with perhaps the most famous narrative, that of Deucalion and Pyra, where there was the tradition that King Nannacus, king of Phrygia who lived before the cataclysm, prophesied the events and told people to pray for the imminent destruction (Frazer 1916, p.269).

According to Apollodorus in *Bibliotheca I* (entries VII1-VII3) Zeus seeing humanity is not satisfied and a plan is preparing for its destruction. Prometheus the proponent of humanity will again intervene, his son, Deucalion king of Thessaly's land Fthia warns, who's married to Pyra, daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora. Prometheus gives them instructions and they make an ark, Zeus opened the skies and spilled many waters and for nine days they were in the boat while the flood destroyed everything. At the end, they land to Parnassus and the first thing that Deucalion is doing is offering sacrifices to Zeus, the protector of the fugitives. So Zeus sends them Hermes and tells them to make a wish and it will happen. Deucalion asks for the creation of a new humanity, and Zeus assigns this work to the survivors themselves. He tells them to throw stones and men will be born from the stones cast by Deucalion, while from those that Pyra throws women will be born. This will create a new world, beyond the pure (erotic contact) offspring of Deucalion and Pyra. Of course in some other narratives there have been some other survivors of the cataclysm, the few who climbed to the mountains. Cities with such narratives were Delphi, Megara and Lesbos (Richepin 1966, p.34; Kerényi 1975, p.216-217; Bulloch 2012).

Wishing to give a little more weight to the variations and the elements presented by the various sources, we can focus on Pindar's little reference to the Olympians (chapter 10 entries 40-48). Emphasis is placed on how Deucalion and Pyra, without erotic contact, sowed the stone race, which was called a people. We can say that, according to Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca I* entries VII1-VII3), the word "Λαός" derives from the word "Λαός" meaning stone, giving a very interesting interpretation of the origin of the term. Also, the city that happened the incident with the throwing of the stones and the regeneration of the people was called Protogenia and was dedicated to the daughter of the Deucalion and Pyra (Kerényi 1975, p.216-217; Mika 2012, p.22).

Apollodorus (Bibliotheca I entries VII1-VII3) places great emphasis on the genealogy followed by the descendants of Deucalion and Pyra and also it is evident the local character of the cataclysm, in the context of Greece. It is interesting that their descendants become the kings and nationalists of the Greek nation. They had three children, two sons and a daughter. Their sons were the Hellene and Amphiction, and their daughter, Protogenia, who acquired a child from Dia. A very important point, which Apollodoros carries, is that Hellene was probably the son of Zeus and Pyra, giving a divine origin to the Greek nation. Below is a simplified diagram with the first descendants of Hellene.



Picture 2: The first descendants of Hellene (Schmidt 2004a, p.80)

Finally, Ovid gives great weight to his narrative from the point where the cataclysm ends and the ship lands in Parnassus. It describes in more detail how nature has returned to balance and has an important monologue of Deucalion, directed at Pyra, which presents a great deal of affection, coupled with questioning and remorse on how to continue their lives. Ovid also carries a variation of the narrative, where the rescued couple asks for help from Themis, where they went to her sanctuary and she gave them the oracle to *“cover your heads with your cloaks, untie them and throw back from your back the bones of the great mother”*. After the couple doubts about the oracle, they conclude that the “mother's bones” are the rocks from the Mother Nature’s body. The narrative closes with a vivid description of the transformation of the stones into humans (Μιχαλόπουλος and Μιχαλόπουλος 2015, p.99-108).

Finally, the Platonic references to the Deucalion's Flood are of interest, where Plato also gives weight to the genealogy of their offspring, but he also use it as reference point for calculating other catastrophic events. Also in *Timaeus* (entries 22a-23b), in Solon's dialogue with the Egyptian priests, it is reported that the Greeks only remember one cataclysm, while there have been many, showing that Plato knew many narratives related to the big floods. Even in his "Laws" (book C entries 677a-679) he describes the state of mankind after the cataclysm and that it has lost all the progress it had made, without of course naming the Deucalion's Cataclysm, but it is very likely that he refers to it, indicating that he knew the narrative and conveyed it with certainty, framed within a system of ideas that he built.



Picture 3: Stefano della Bella, 1964, Deucalion and Pyra (Μιχαλόπουλος and Μιχαλόπουλος 2015, p.101)

The Cataclysm of Samothrace

Otherwise, it is better known as the Cataclysm of the Dardanus, but he has no active role in the narration of the cataclysm, according to the narrative by Diodorus Siculus. This narrative is of particular interest because the description of the phenomena that led to the flood has a tremendous resemblance to modern studies on the conditions of connection between the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Caspian Sea, in a single hydrological system. As a matter of fact it is stated that the waters of the cataclysm came from the Black Sea and probably the Aegean had a lower water level

than the Hellespont, in order for the waters to flow, because otherwise the waters would have another direction (Μαριόλακος 2002).

The narrative of Diodorus Siculus in *Bibliotheca Historica* (book 5 entries 47.1-48.5) begins with a reference to the origin of the name of the island as Samothrace. Samothracians also had a narrative that, prior to the cataclysms that occurred to other nations, a large flood occurred in their area (this attests that they knew about the other flood narratives). In this case, the stout around the “Cyanide stones” opened and then the stout of the Hellespont. The narrative continues by saying that the Sea of Pontus (i.e. the Black Sea) was until then a lake, which was inflated from the waters of the rivers that poured on it and the quantity was so, that it flowed into the Hellespont. That's why the fishermen were raising with their nets remains from the cities that had been dissolved by the cataclysm. The inhabitants ran for their lives on the highest points of the island and prayed to the gods to save them. They were saved and in remembrance of their salvation they built altars all over the island – this stands as an evidence that the Samothracians inhabited the island before the cataclysm. Then it is reported that Dardanus, son of Zeus and Electra was born on the island. He was one of the Atlantians who went with a raft to Asia, established the city of Dardanus and founded a kingdom, which was later named Troy.

Baucis and Philemon

The next narrative comes from Ovid and it clearly describes a local flood.

Zeus and Hermes, once upon a time in Phrygia, transformed into mortals in thousands of homes searched for shelter and rest but all had closed the door, except one that accepted them. The house was of course small and poor, it had a roof of straw and an old couple resided, Baucis and Philemon. The couple was together from their youth, and they lived harmoniously. They accepted them, encouraged them to rest, gave them covers and lighted the fire. They also prepared them lunch, where they offered them meat that they kept for a while and provided them hot water to wash their feet. They set the table, which is humble but they clean and decorate it and they offer them the food and the wine. After they finished, they offered them walnuts, dried figs, currants, plums, purple grapes and fragrant apples with honey. The main thing is that their mood was good and selfless. At some point the couple realized that

wine is increasing by itself in the pot, and it does not end and horrified asks for help. The gods reassured them and told them that their wicked neighbors would pay their penalties and to you will be given as a gift the discharge from evil. Furthermore, the gods tell them to leave their home and climb to the top of the mountain. The couple obeys and climb to the top with difficulty. As soon as they reach and turn their gaze, everything is immersed in the water apart from their home. While they admire the facts, at the same time they mourn the death of the people and their poor home is transformed into a temple with the most precious materials to adorning it. Then Zeus addresses Philemon and asks what they want, and they tell him that they want to become priests in their temple, and when it is time for them to die, to happen simultaneously and none of them see the tomb of the other. So it happened, they became guardians of the temple for their life. At some point, when the years passed, Baucis saw Philemon growing leaves, as did the other way round and after exchanging mutual words of love and farewell, they turned into neighboring trees (Μιχαλόπουλος and Μιχαλόπουλος 2015, p.109-120).

In general, the area of Phrygia had a strong tradition in the narratives of the flood. King Nannakos, who prophesied the Great Flood, comes from this area. Characteristically, the city of Apamea had the nickname Ark and had coins with the inscription Noah written in Greek (Νώε), accepting the Jewish narrative of the cataclysm because of the powerful Jewish community in the area (Frazer 1916, p.270; Calder 1988, p.107; Berk 2010, p.132).

Thus, it is extremely interesting to see the numismatic depictions, as archaeological evidence, where on front side (obverse) the respective monarch is shown, and on the rear side (reverse), there is a representation of the flood based on the Jewish tradition. Of course, all these coins are a product of late antiquity and of the Roman period.



Picture 4: Phrygia, Apamea, Septimius Severus 193-211 A.D. Æ 34mm 22.99g Noah and wife in arc (right); Noah and wife on dry land post-flood with dove above (left) (Ancient Numismatic Mythology)



Picture 5: Phrygia, Apamea, Gordian III. 238-244 A.D. Æ 39mm 27.51g. Noah and wife in arc (right); Noah and wife on dry land post-flood with dove above (left) (Ancient Numismatic Mythology)



Picture 6: Phrygia, Apamea, Philip I 244-249 A.D. Æ 35mm 20.46g. Noah and wife in arc (right); Noah and wife on dry land post-flood with dove above (left) (Ancient Numismatic Mythology)



Picture 7: Armenien, Tigranes IV., 10 - 5 AD AE 18mm Copper 4,33g. Jugate busts of Tigranes IV and wife. Mount Ararat, the resting place of Noah's ark. (Ancient Numismatic Mythology)

Zoroastrian tradition

Zoroastrianism is a religion that has a strong presence in the area we are examining. Although the Zoroastrian tradition does not have an authentic history of cataclysm, it has the variant of a total world destruction as a punishment of the god. The protagonist, instead of an ark, builds an underground shelter in order to save himself from the demonic winters (Moazami 2002, p.55-56; Kryukova 2008, p.77).

The narrative begins with Ahura Mazda (supreme god) speaking to Yima, saying that wicked-demonic winters will come to the world, which will bring wild and deadly frost. He also tells him that animals living in the field and in the mountains must be rescued in underground dwellings. He warns him that before the big winter the country will get plenty of grass for the animals. Then Ahura Mazda begins to give directions to Yima for the construction of an underground shelter (Vara) and tells him to harvest the seeds of sheep, oxen, people, dogs and birds. This underground shelter will become the home of the people. Afterwards, he instructs Yima to choose the best seeds from the earth, the best animals from each flock and the best seeds of every tree, saying that there should not be people with serious problems neither in their bodies nor in their souls. He tells him that he will have to save a thousand men and a thousand women, and when Yima wondered how he could make the Vara, Ahura Mazda told him to melt the earth with a strike of your heel and then mold it with your hands like the potter does when he makes his clay. Yima did everything as Ahura Mazda commanded him, constructed the shelter, according to the specifications, and

gathered the finest seeds, the best animals and the best people to survive (Αβέστα 1992, 31-33; Vendidad 1995, p.11-15).

Egyptian Tradition

In the Egyptian tradition we have two narratives, which have elements of the cataclysm narration and the destruction of the world.

Egypt once was ruled by Ra, the superior god. When he became old mankind conspired against him. Then Ra called the eight primordial gods to consult them. So Hathor offered to help him and immediately started killing Ra's enemies, who had fled to the desert. But her fury continued and she killed whoever she found in front of her. Ra wanted to continue ruling over humanity and was afraid that Hathor would kill all of them all. In order to put an end to all this violence, he ordered men to carry Elephantine red ochre and told the priests of Heliopolis to mix it with 7,000 barrels of beer to resemble blood. Then Ra, sent the beer where Hathor (who now had taken the demonic form of Sekhmet) was resting and ordered to pour it into the meadows, so that when she wakes up she would think it's blood and would drink it. As he predicted, when Hathor woke up, she drank until she got drunk and quickly forgot her wrath to mankind (Garry 2015, p.57-59).

Also, in the Book of the Dead, another narrative tells us that the end of the world will come with a cataclysm when the waters of Nun shall return, Where two gods will survive, Ra (Atum) and Osiris, but this will not be the end of the world but the moment of a restart for a new beginning (Garry 2015, p.207-208).

All these narratives have many similarities, but also many differences - as we shall see in the following chapter trying to interpret them. Of course here only the main and most influential narratives are presented, but there are other narratives less well-known (e.g. the Ogyges' Flood), which were less influential and are more simplistic (in terms of the elements they carry), being at the same time too "localised", referenced specifically to a particular city or valley. Nevertheless, we can say that they present a common feature of Geological Myths; after the creation of the world, God/gods decided to destroy mankind because of its vileness and it was rescued at the last moment, thanks to some virtuous heroes- protagonists. At the point of destruction

it is shown how weak human existence is and that the natural-environmental balance, without extreme weather phenomena, preserves it in life and this is a gift of the God/gods, which is not perennial but given for a certain time and under certain circumstances (Farrar 1865, p.304; Emerson 1896, p.328; Noegel 1998).

Other Narratives and Rituals

Another narrative (though not a clear flood narration) that has some elements of these narratives, is that of the Atlantis. In the Platonic dialogues of *Timaeus* (entries 25a-25d) and *Critias* (passim), the great philosopher deals with the narrative of Atlantis. So, in general, we can say that the narrative begins with god Poseidon who had children with a mortal woman and placed them on the island to live. After Poseidon had an intercourse with Evenor's and Leucippe's daughter, who were among the first people born on earth, he formed the island with different water levels, circularly shaped between the land, like a labyrinth, to be impregnable. The island was very rich and gave to the residents everything they wanted it, as well as minerals that were extremely useful. People having these goods intervened in the structure of the island, altering its physiognomy, altering and deepening up to the cyclical levels of the sea that Poseidon had built, so that even the largest ships could enter. Also, Plato makes a very detailed description of the luxury and know-how that the locals had. The narrative and the Platonic dialogue of *Critias* close with an oath to the virtue of the inhabitants and that they defied passions and wealth, keeping the divine influence upon them. But when these virtues faded, the divine element dwelt and prevailed in human one, so that they were unable to withstand the weight of their wealth. Zeus, seeing this righteous people heading to their disaster, decided to punish them by calling the council of the gods to speak to them. Here the narrative is interrupted, but we can easily understand that it would follow a tough "nemesis" that would have some elements of flood and water disaster for the island. The end of the island is mentioned briefly in *Timaeus*, where it says that within a day and night earthquakes and floods devastated the island and it was swallowed by the sea.

At this point, it is important to present some rituals from the region of Greece. During the Festival of Anthesteria, a sacral container of seeds was offered to the

Chthonic Hermes, as a revival of what the survivors of the cataclysm had done, to honor their dead. Also, in Delphi during a Festival called Hosioi, the participants (who considered themselves the descendants of Deucalion), were throwing water on themselves, in memory of the first thing that Deucalion and Pyra did, when they just came out of the ark (Robertson 1993, p.201-202).

Chapter 3 Great Flood: comparisons, differentiations and interpretative approaches

Narratives beyond the geographical context

At this point, it is important to refer at two narratives that may not belong formally to the geographical context of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, but may be considered to have been affected by this region through various factors. Secondly, let us only refer to the narrative of the great flood, in order to understand the enormous extent of this narrative on the traditions and the religions.

Hindu Tradition

In the Hindu tradition we can find many references to Great Floods. It is characteristic that the end of each Yuga (the season) and the transition to the next one is accompanied by Great Floods destroying the world and hence everything starts from the beginning. But, there is a particular narrative that stands out from the rest. The history refers to Manu who is mentioned as “father Manu” implying that he was either a creator or a progenitor of the human race. In other sources he is referred to as the first man, father of the race, first to kindle the sacrificial fire and creator of the social order. Everything starts with a fish that warns Manu of an upcoming cataclysm. The fish is considered an avatar of Vishnu, who gives instructions to Manu about how to make the boat and get saved. Manu gathers all kinds of seeds and puts them on the boat and the fish, during the Flood, helps him to survive. When the deluge ended (which lasted for many years) the ship stopped at the top of the Himalayas (or in mount Himawan) and after Manu survived, thanked the gods by making a sacrifice in which he used melted butter. Finally, a woman, Ida, was created for him, and together they recreated the human race (Koppers 1988, p.288; Padhy et al. 2001, p.294; Williams 2003, p.210,290).

What is most interesting at first level is that the Indian flood myth, by many experts, is considered to be very relevant to the narratives of Mesopotamia and seem to have interdependence. Some comments that can be made about the narrative are

that the protagonist, Manu, is portrayed as a royal ascetic, a character that many more narratives present. A very interesting point is that, in some versions, at the beginning the fish asks for help from Manu and indeed he helps it, and then the fish helps Manu with the information of the cataclysm. So we would say that the text shows reciprocity in Manu's relations with the fish and keeps the key features of the other stories of the Great Flood. It can be also mentioned that the narrative of Manu appears in several texts of Hinduism, where many scholars believe that the changes presented in the texts reflect the evolutionary course followed by Hinduism (Magnone 2000; Gonzalez-Reimann 2006, p.221-223; Vassilkov 2014, p.266-268).



Picture 8: The fish avatara of Vishnu saves Manu during the Great Deluge (Shastri acquired in 1965)

Norse Mythology

According to an Euhemerism approach, Odin and the other great gods of the Scandinavian pantheon were real people, who moved from Asia to Sweden. Odin migration legend is a difficult issue, which requires multiple interpretations and approaches. The first to mention this theory was Snorri Sturluson (1178 - 1241), writer of the newer Edda that has been written. In the prologue of prose Edda it is stated that Odin was a military leader who, along with Aesir (a group of the most powerful gods in the Scandinavian Pantheon), started from Asia, building a new colony in Scandinavia. In fact, it links Odin to Troy, which was renamed after the Scandinavian tradition in Tyrkland. Thus, we can say that the term Aesir, by many, is interpreted as "those originating from Asia", with reference to one of Thor's most well-known names being Asa-Thor, where it can be interpreted as Thor from Asia. In fact, Snorri Sturluson

connects the historical start of Aesir with river Don, located on the Black Sea. The Roman invasions forced Aesir to fight and after a long trip through Russia and Germany, they stopped at Sigtuna, south of Uppsala, Sweden (Lindow 2001; Rix 2010, p.48-49).

Thus in this tradition, there is an extremely interesting narrative, which states that there was a primary giant, Ymir, whom the gods slaughtered. The members of his body made the material world and from his blood the sea was created. But the gods, through the deluge that was created by his blood, drowned all the frost giants, of which one person along with his wife managed to survive. The name of the giant who survived the blood flood was Bergelmi. He is the predecessor of all the frost giants, the future enemies of the greatest gods of the Scandinavian pantheon, the Aesir. Bergelmi and his wife managed to survive by entering a wooden coffin or chest or mill box, and for many it is considered a cataclysm narrative analogous to the Jewish tradition but also to other religions too. It is important to focus that in this narrative most of the elements of the flood narratives appear, but mostly the notion that through the flood occurs a land laundering (from the Giants), which however is not complete as they continue to live. Indeed, the narrative is inextricably linked to the narrative of the creation of the world, as is the case in most of the narratives of the eastern Mediterranean (Lindow 2001, p.322-326; Kure 2003, p.2-4).

Based on the above we may say that, beyond the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, we can find narratives of the Great Cataclysm also in East Asia (China and Japan). It is noteworthy that narratives originating from the southeast Asia do not have the motif of the punishment-catharsis of the cataclysm. Similar narratives are detected in some less known regions and population in Europe, such as Wales, Lithuania, the Transylvania Gypsies and the Eastern Russia Voguls. In other regions we can mention the Indian Archipelago in the islands of Sumatra, Borneo and Celebs, the Philippines, New Guinea and Australia. In the Pacific such narratives exist in Hawaii and the New Zealand. In America, such narratives are to be found through the continent (north, central and southern). The Maya narrative is of particular interest. There the flood appears again as a blood flood that happened in the past as a restart of the world, but also in the form of Butic, the great fire flood that will bring the end of the world. Flood narratives can be also found in the Eskimos of Alaska and Greenland.

All these references (of course others can be made) show the huge spread of the Great Cataclysm as a narrative and demonstrate the importance of understanding them as much as possible, either as allegorical narrations containing moral elements for the evolution of each societies, or as narratives that include historical universal human truths (Frazer 1988, p.119; Van 1993; García 2006; Witzel 2010).

Interpretative approaches on Genesis

At this point, it is important to mention some general points that cover most narratives of the Great Cataclysm. The flood narratives are inextricably linked to the histories of the Creation of the world by various religions and traditions. Characteristically most of the times the term "Creation-Flood texts" is used and almost all narratives hold a very basic pattern that consists of three main points in chronological order: (a) a view of the mode of creation employed by the gods/God; (b) some references to the world before the cataclysm; and (c) the conditions that led to the Great Flood and the events that took place during it. Many times the narratives of the Great Flood have been interpreted as myths of destruction, but this is not correct since there are other narratives where disasters are totalitarian, without hope. On the contrary, it could be said that the narratives of the Great Flood are survival stories, as great importance is given to the salvation of the human race through the hero-protagonist. This is clearly understood, especially in the Biblical narrative where, at the end of the cataclysm, God gives man guidance to multiply and overwhelm the earth and more generally how to live, instructions that are extremely similar to those God gave to man after the creation and the "fall" from Paradise. One interesting point of interpretation is that in the creation of the world the Biblical narrative emphasizes the separation of waters, therefore the creation of life is the result of this separation. On the contrary, at the moment of the cataclysm, the laws of nature cease to have power and the water takes over everything, it is as if the world came to pre-creation level, with disastrous consequences for the material world. Other general components that appear in almost all flood myths can be shown in the basic structure presented in the figure below. After the catastrophe, a couple is preserved, which is the nucleus of each nation's creation,

according to the origin of the narrative (Shea 1979; Shea 1984, p.10; Van 1993; Săvulescu 2015, p.163).

great flood → man + woman → ethnicities

Picture 9: General components of a flood myth (Van 1993, p.304)

At a first level for Genesis, we can say that all the conditions for which nature was deteriorating are directly related to the spiritual state of man, hence his foolishness that led to the cataclysm. It has been argued that this moral perspective is absent from the Mesopotamian narratives, which has become a springboard for many "controversies" that is also based on the fact that many interpret that the Biblical account of the flood has strongly the character of "judgement", which they consider to be absent from other narratives. Another important point of differentiation for the Biblical narrative is that the decision on the cataclysm is the final decision of the one and only God, while on the contrary in the Mesopotamian narratives there is a dispute between the gods about the flood and the future of mankind. Characteristically in the Biblical narrative God, in his first speech to Noah, clears from the beginning the reasons leading to the cataclysm and it is a final decision. Noah, the hero of the flood, executes God's commands, without questions and doubts (the only point that he speaks is where he curses his son) but with absolute faith, sketching the virtuous hero-believer profile (Shea 1979; Shea 1984; Habel 1988 p.17; Pfof 2014, p.12).

Also within the Christian perspective there is the belief that the Biblical account of the Great Flood has moral elements and gravity that other accounts do not have and thus end up being just ancient narratives which simply share some common patterns-structural elements, as in other cases there are many traditions, such as the Garden of Eden with the tree of life-knowledge. All these are interpreted as mythological motifs, where through them Biblical writers were trying to express some "absolute" truths. So this reasoning ends up being highlighted as the culmination of the Biblical story of the cataclysm, that God concluded a covenant with the people (through Noah), despite their evil, in order to save the human race and continue the

soteriological perspective of the world, through the Judeo-Christian tradition. At this point an extremely interesting point emerges as to the wider theological interpretation of the Old Testament. Whenever mankind tries to equate itself with God and cut off from the framework defined by God for its ontological substance, either by acquiring knowledge (eating the forbidden fruit) or by biologically improving the species (marriage of supernatural beings with mortal women, where their offsprings albeit organically superior, are "flesh" as they have no "personage"), or by the uncontrolled technological progress (tower building), ends up experiencing a split of its relations with God. Therefore, a moral and in many cases pragmatic fall occurs with terrible consequences in their life. But the Biblical interpretation of sin cannot be interpreted morally-legally but anthropologically-soteriologically, since good and evil are interpreted only through the light of saving the world, so the concepts of good and evil acquire a more relevant character than it was later attributed to traditions, based on the Biblical perception of the world (Κωνσταντίνου no date; Κωνσταντίνου no date).

Another point in support of this view is that after the cataclysm, humanity is no different, it has not changed. The reasons that caused the cataclysm have not escaped mankind, but on the contrary to the end of the Biblical narrative the one who is bound is God, who through the rainbow promises that no cataclysm will ever threaten mankind. Thus, the loving-soteriological perception of God for the human world is crystallized, but at the same time man's wickedness did not change after the cataclysm, but perhaps the cataclysm could alter the situation at a certain time when there was a great diversion and not altogether human nature. This is shown by the fact that God, before the flood, watching the progress of mankind took other measures, for example at the beginning reduced the maximum life in 120 years, but mankind did not change its course (Kraeling 1947a; Κωνσταντίνου no date; Κωνσταντίνου no date).

Of course, despite the interesting approaches, which in many cases is difficult to contradict, there is always a different "reading-interpretation" of the elements. For example, many scholars believe that the term noise that appears to be the reason that brought the cataclysm to the epic of Atrahasis can be interpreted as the evil behavior of man (there is great controversy over the interpretation of the term), so the flood is also connected here with the wickedness of mankind. In addition, the fact that cataclysm was the result of the human sin, appears also in the Ovid's Flood narratives.

Hence it has been argued many times that the Biblical narratives, especially those of creation and cataclysm, have been drawn from other sources and more specifically that the Jews "borrowed" these narratives from the Mesopotamian ones, which could be achieved through contact between the Jews and the people of Mesopotamia (from Babylonia) and the cultural osmosis that took place (Clay 1922; May 1941, p.289; Clines 1972-3; Inman 2000, p.16-20; Gurmin 2013).

Thus, it becomes very interesting to see a summary of the common elements that share in their structure the narratives of the cataclysm: the Biblical narrative, the Atrahasis epic and other Mesopotamian narratives.

Table 1: The common elements of three flood myths. (Shea 1984, p.21)

	Biblical Genesis	Eridu Genesis	Atrahasis Epic
<i>1. The Flood was brought upon mankind by decision of the God/gods</i>	+	+	+
<i>2. The information was relayed to the Flood hero by God/a god</i>	+	+	+
<i>3. The Flood hero was selected because he was righteous or devotee of the gods</i>	+	+	+
<i>4. The purpose of the Flood was to destroy mankind in general</i>	+	+	+
<i>5. The Flood hero was given instructions on how to build his boat for escape</i>	+	?	+
<i>6. After completing the boat, the hero took his family and animals aboard</i>	+	+	+
<i>7. The boat was caulked with pitch</i>	+	?	+
<i>8. The boat was roofed over in such way that it limited the amount of sunlight admitted to it</i>	+	+	+
<i>9. A special period of 7 days occurred just before or right at the beginning of the Flood</i>	+	+	+
<i>10. Upon exiting the boat the hero sacrificed to God/gods and his sacrifice was accepted</i>	+	+	+

Another point worth mentioning is the very structure of the text of Genesis, namely the flood, where the structure itself is the starting point for interpretations, syncretes and differentiations. Someone by reading chapters 6-9 of Genesis, comes in contact several times with conflicting data as to the narrative of the Flood. Conflicting elements that they have to do with the number of animals that were put in the ark and the duration of the cataclysm, where at 7:17 it is reported to have lasted forty days, while at 7:24 one hundred and fifty days. These data have led many experts to believe

that there are two flood narratives that overlap, contradict and complement each other. These two narratives between them have temporal deviation. One of them is called Priestly and is symbolized with a "P" and the other one is called Yahwist and is symbolized with a "J". The name of narratives has to do with the term used to refer to the God. One uses the term Yahweh and the other Elohim. The earliest is considered to be Yahwist, where it is placed around 10-9 centuries BC, while Priestly, the youngest, is placed around the 6th century BC. Continuing with interpretations that have to do with the text, the term used in Hebrew to describe the sinners who filled the earth is "hamas". By itself this term constitutes a field for endless pages of analysis, but in general we can say that the narrative emphasizes on the fact that earth was filled with hamas and we could say that it was infected by their sinful nature. Thus, God brings the flood not as a punishment but as a cleansing-rinsing-baptism of the world in order to restart pure now, but not different, since as mentioned above human nature did not change after the cataclysm (Frazer 1916; Petersen 1976; Frymer-Kensky 1977, p.153; Habel 1988, p.14; Inman 2000, p.16).

Apart from the similarities and differences with other narratives that we have mentioned in the interpretation of the Biblical narrative of the flood, it is interesting to see some other elements that help us to understand the significance of the story of the cataclysm for the Jewish tradition. Post-Biblical Jewish literature is filled with references to Noah, but also with references to apocryphal, whose existence is questionable, enriching the original narrative of Noah's Flood. For example, we can say that these texts emphasize more the concept of the prophecy of the cataclysm and that Noah will be the "savior" of the world. Enoch informed Lamech that God would send a cataclysm to cleanse the earth from corruption and his son (Noah) has been chosen as a savior. On an interpretative and comparative level, in these texts Noah acquires more firmly the elements of the savior of the world and it is easier to compare him with "saviors" from other religions-traditions. Of course in Genesis (5:29), a clear reference is made to Noah stating that he will release mankind from the labors and sorrows and will take from the earth the curse that God has given, clearly showing the significance of Noah's deeds. But perhaps the culmination of all these is condensed in the reference to the existence of the Book of Noah, which Noah left and mentions all the instructions that he received from God about how man should live.

Through this text the Noachide Laws were created, which appear in the Judaic tradition (Talmud), are considered to be a precursor of the ten commands of Moses as well as the basic rules that mankind should follow. The first reference to the Noachide Laws is found in the Tosefta in the 4th century CE. Another point of friction, is that it is widely interpreted that God, in the instructions given to the protoplasts, did not allow the consumption of meat (animals). Meat was allowed only in the second phase, after the cataclysm where God allowed man to eat meat, however without the blood. Of course, the acceptance and existence of Noah's Bible and Laws is an issue that has created many controversies about its validity and so it is a matter of conflict (Muller and Milman 1919, p.263; Kraeling 1929, p.139; Rosenberg 2004, p.3-4; Baxter 2006, p.181-182; Hegg 2006, p.1-2; Pfost 2014).

Another point that needs interpretation, is the cause of the deluge. At the time of the cataclysm on earth were the Nephilim (literally means "the fallen ones"/"γίγαντες" in Greek) and their sexual union with the daughters of men and the creation of their offspring brought imbalance and confusion to the divine commandment, so the cataclysm was decided. This point is one of the many interpretations that exist about the reasons that caused the flood in the Biblical narrative, but such arguments are so general that you can neither disagree nor agree with them. All someone can do is just to distinguish some elements in the narrative that can reveal the state of mankind just before the flood (Hendel 1987).

At this point, having seen some interpretative points of the Biblical story of the Great Cataclysm, it is interesting to discuss about the enormous influence of this narrative. As we have already mentioned, cataclysm narratives exist almost all over the world and in all traditions. However this consideration is at the same time right and wrong, since many narratives are subsequent and were even created for political reasons. A good example is the Maori Flood Myth, where cultural pressure from Christianity and fear of losing cultural heritage created and copied narratives from the Judeo-Christian tradition, adapted to the local Pantheon and native heroes, thus perfectly in harmony with religion and the local tradition. All this happened as a "spiritual embankment" against Christianity, which came with hostile attitudes against local religions and traditions. On another level, over time, the cataclysm narrative troubled scientists, theologians and philosophers on how it could have taken place and

what happened to the material world. Still, there was concern regarding the provenance of such large quantities of water that could cover the earth, and where these went after the flood. Indicative of the importance of this narrative is that the first use of the term Geology in English was the title of a 17th century book about the Noah's Flood. And for centuries the Great Flood was a milestone for the geological formation of the earth as we know it today. An interesting point is that these do not belong in the past, but they are timeless and continue to be a controversy, as groups of scientists who identify themselves as scientific creationists are trying to prove the validity of the Biblical narrative and how it could have taken place by creating various scenarios for what happened geologically on earth at the time of the cataclysm. As we will discuss in the next chapter, the scientific community is indeed largely concerned with the story of the Great Flood, but it usually examines it through a prism of local cataclysms that have influenced the various traditions and resulted the creation of the narrative of the Great Flood. So the reflection on the flood, through the centuries, has gone through many stages of whether it was catholic, if it was local, if it was anthropologically catholic, as well as the examination of many more scenarios that will trouble the intellectuals forever (Peschel 1971, p.120; Soroka and Nelson 1983; Montgomery 2013, p.9-11).

Mesopotamian narratives

At first, we could say that we have three different Babylonian Flood stories. The Sumerian Flood story, the ninth tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic and the Atrahasis Epic. The earliest of the three narratives is that of King Ziusudra, dating back to about 2500 BC. The epic of Atrahasis, which is the Akkadian version, dates back to around 1700 BC. An interesting point is the interpretation of the names of the protagonists of the cataclysmic narratives. The name of Ziusudra can be interpreted as a "long of life", the Atrahasis is interpreted as "very wise" or "exceeding wise" and the name of Utnapishtim can be interpreted as "he who found life" or "long of life". It is extremely interesting that all three names can be interpreted conceptually either as longevity or as primordial wisdom. The strong interest in these narratives, beyond the circles of specialised scholars and intellectuals, is because they reflect (in another way) the

Biblical narratives. But also because for many of them there is a presumption of truth that the most "true" narrative is the oldest. Consequently search for the oldest recorded sources of these narratives was launched. However this presumption, that the earliest source reflects the truth of the narrative, is a very questionable one (Clay 1922, p.23; Poplicha 1927; Hämmerly-Dupuy 1968, p.2,4,8; Frymer-Kensky 1977, p.147-148; Oden 1981, p.26; Inman 2000; Adamthwaite 2014, p.84; Pfost 2014 p.7; Săvulescu 2015, p.167-169).

The narrative that was firstly known is that which is chronologically later, the Flood story of Berossus, which for years was considered the only known narrative of the Great Flood that had survived and originated in Mesopotamia (Hämmerly-Dupuy 1968, p.11).

Regarding the Gilgamesh epic, the story of the cataclysm is not central to the epic, but it is part of the narrative of the protagonist's search for the secret of immortality. However, the epic from the beginning clarifies that one of Gilgamesh's most important achievements is that he knows and conveys the narration related to the Great Flood and also the legends about the world before the cataclysm, so although it is not considered the main story of the epic it shows how important was the narrative in Babylonian tradition. The cataclysm is mentioned by Utnapishtim for explaining to Gilgamesh how he managed to become immortal, that he (Gilgamesh) cannot become immortal in the same way and have to seek elsewhere the secret of immortality. In other words he is worried that he shall fail, while under specific conditions an ancient hero managed to find immortality. It is important that Utnapishtim mentions nothing about why the gods decided to send the deluge (Millard 1967, p.13; Gresseth 1975; Frymer-Kensky 1977, p.147; Veenker 1981, p.201; Inman 2000; Adamthwaite 2014, p.83).

An interesting point, but not firmly justified, is that many researchers believe that there are common features in the Biblical narrative with the Mesopotamian ones that have to do with genealogy. In the Gilgamesh's epic, it is reported that the protagonist was half a giant, many consider that in various occult and post-Biblical texts there are reports that can be interpreted as Noah was descendant of the giants who then lived on earth and had come in contact with mortal women. A similar genealogy pattern, that the protagonist of the flood narrative was not a simple man,

appears in many narratives, even in the Greek myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha, where Deucalion was the son of Titan Prometheus. Naturally, such arguments create more questions than they solve and cannot withstand the burden of scientific consideration, but only a philological approach, because there is no clear reference in the Biblical narrative (Reeves 1993, p.110,112).

The cataclysm is a central theme in the epic of Atrahasis, but before the deluge the gods sent other disasters to the people. First they sent the plague, after the drought and at the end cataclysm came as a final solution. The main reason that is given in the epic as the cause of the deluge is the overpopulation and the "noise" that people did. This is, for example, a point of differentiation from the Biblical account as to the cause of the cataclysm. This point is structural, since in the Biblical narrative God, after the cataclysm, commanded people to multiply as the sinful nature of man is clearly accounted as the cause of the cataclysm, showing that it has nothing to do with the reason from the Atrahasis epic, where it had a population control character (Millard 1967; Frymer-Kensky 1977, p.150; Oden 1981, p.27-28; Pfof 2014).

A very interesting theory, which is also a unifying point of the narratives, is that Utnapishtim and Atrahasis are the same person, but who have different adjectives or address from different traditions, but they refer to the same flood narrative. More generally, we can say that all Mesopotamian narratives have tremendous similarities and the differences are based on names of gods and expressions of points that can be considered very secondary. But also the names of all the protagonists Utnapishtim, Atrahasis, Ziusudra and Xisuthros can easily be interpreted as different adjectives of the same hero, which have to do with the temporal differentiation and the area of linguistic idioms and the traditions developed in the wider region. Indeed, in the Gilgamesh epic where the hero of the cataclysm is Utnapishtim, when god Ea explains how he warned the hero, he does not call him Utnapishtim but Atrahasis. So we could easily conclude that all texts of Mesopotamia (Assyrian, Babylonian and Sumerian version) actually refer to the same ancient tradition of the Great Flood (Clay 1922, p.23; Hämmery-Dupuy 1968, p.4,17).

Another interesting point is the issue of the ark and its parallelism with the temple. It is believed that the dimensions mentioned in each narrative for the construction of the ark express a complex pattern which reflects the dimensions of the

iconic temples of each religious tradition. In general, there is an interpretation that when in the Near East God commands people to build something, it acquires the form of a temple. That is, the dimensions of the ark are very similar to the dimensions of the higher-most important temples of the traditions these narratives came from. The Mesopotamian narratives connect with the Marduk temple (ziggurat) in Babylon, and the Biblical narrative with the idealized temple of Solomon. Therefore, through the dimensions of the ark, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East, there is probably the temple ideology of each tradition and thus the aesthetic perception of the sacredness of each tradition and how the "sanctuary must be depicted and shaped" (Holloway 1991, p.329; Crawford 2013; McCann 2013, p.8).

Another comment that can be made about the ark is that the dimensions always have a monumental character and do not sketch a simple ship but a mythical ark of salvation. It is even more difficult for anyone who wants to read the narratives in another way and to interpret that they are not referring to a global cataclysm. Even the theme of sending birds for finding dry land is considered a classical practice of ancient mariners. We meet it even in the Argonautic expedition in which Euphimos freed a pigeon to see if they could go through the Symplegades stones (entries 530-610). Thus, we can say that even the arm of building the ark seems to be multi-level and requires a serious study for its understanding (Yaroslav 2015).

On an interpretative level it has been previously reported that many Biblical narratives have a moral weight that the Mesopotamian narratives do not have. In contradiction, this interpretation is widely considered to be a product of the 19th century theological thought and cannot stand as an argument when it accepts "strong rational pressure". Naturally, the terms "rational approach" and "religion" may be in itself contradictory, because religion itself always describes man's relationship with transcendence, so rationality alone can hardly understand issues that are not subjected to rationally leaked and evidence. On the contrary, traditionally the theological-philosophical thought attempts to place man in his ontological-transcendental orbit that goes beyond his rational perception. In addition, for the narratives we can say that they share many common elements but also a "common" view, that the cataclysm is the end of an era and the beginning of a new. Indeed, the events that took place before the cataclysm are quite misty in all the flood narratives

beyond the Hebrews and Babylonians. Of course this perspective is shared by most cataclysmic stories that tell the Great Flood that destroyed the world (Millard 1967; Oden 1981, p.27).

Interpretative comments of other narratives

A first reference to the narratives of the Greco-Roman tradition is that in the narrative of Deucalion and Pyra, especially in early references, there is no mention of rescue for the animals in the ark. This is interpreted by many as that the Hebrew and Babylonian tradition saw animals as an important part of creation, while the Greco-Roman tradition did not give so much importance. Another point is that it was not Zeus the one who warned the couple of the cataclysm, but Prometheus, the proponent of the mankind. Indeed Zeus in the end gave no promise, as in the biblical narrative, that the cataclysm will not come again. An impressive point is the abundance of narratives related to the cataclysm of the Greco-Roman tradition and the range of writers mentioning them (which the present study mentions only synoptically). Nevertheless, in the Greco-Roman tradition no narrative of the cataclysm presents the central role that has in other narratives, such as Babylonian and Hebrew. On the contrary, the Greco-Roman tradition is dominated by the narrative of the Trojan War. Thus, there is an approach/interpretation based on the “Cypria” epic text, which states that Zeus caused the Trojan War to control overpopulation. In the poem “Ehoeae”, Zeus brings war to wipe out demigods and separate them from men. These causes have very strong similarities with the causes that were previously mentioned, regarding the reason for which the flood occurred, in various traditions. So it is widely interpreted that the Trojan War is a destruction myth, which at some point replaced the narratives of the cataclysms in the Greco-Roman tradition, but kept within it some structural elements from these narratives. Of course there are other interpretive theories that link the flood narratives with other Greek narratives, but they are quite meteorous (Scodel 1982, p.39-40; Kitchell 1993, p.342-343; Koenen 1994; Kaplan 2011, p.664; Collins 2012; Kleczkowska 2012).

In addition to the direct flood narratives we also have indirect ones, such as the significant Platonic narration about Atlantis. On the first level we see Plato using the Atlantis narrative for outlining his political views and ideas. But, beyond that, we can discern motifs that appear in the Trojan War and other narratives, so this narrative has the character of a destruction myth. The narrative seems to contain elements from many, and probably pre-existing ones, which Plato included in his own narrative so that he would be able to highlight the elements he had in mind. At the same time however he bequeaths us with elements of an ancient narrative beyond his political views (Rosenmeyer 1956; Zangger 1993; Naddaf 1994; Kathryn 1998; Johansen 1998).

Thus, by closing the comments on specific narratives, we can say that the Zoroastrian narrative of the Great Winter reflects for many the climatic conditions of the eastern Iran, from where the narrative is thought to derive. Therefore, narrative can be interpreted as an adaptation to the structure of a flood myth but with local climatic data where people were more afraid of the cold than the flood. Also, in the Egyptian narrative, this blend of beer and ochre that Ra ordered, was associated in the Egyptian thought with the waters of the Nile, which every year flooded and covered everything. As a result Hathor drinks from the “beer” (Nile's waters) and forgets her wrath for humanity. So here we may conclude that the cataclysm placate the wrath of a deity who wants to exterminate mankind, and even adapted to the Egyptian geographic reality where the waters of the Nile save mankind (Koenen 1994, p.17; Oettinger 2013, p.173-174).

General interpretations of the Flood myth

In general, there are many interpretations and approaches to the legends of the Great Flood or major disasters in general. A first point, which has been already mentioned, is that the flood narratives are inextricably linked to the narratives of the world's creation. That is right, but they also have a significant difference. The narratives of the Great Flood occur in the historical continuance of mankind, so there is an experience/recollection of the events that are transferred from generation to generation and from region to region and present secondary differentiations (names, gods). On the other hand, the creation of the world occurred before the existence of

man. Man has no "memory" of these events, as only God knows exactly what happened. Additionally, in an attempt to comment on archetypal interpretations of narratives, it is important to see some features. Many interpret that there is an archetypal jealousy of man towards women, towards female parturition, where in many ancient myths and narratives it appears as a "male pregnancy". Therefore most of the flood myths contain male gods, destroying the world, but there is one male survivor to repopulate the earth, so we have a re-creation of the world through the male presence (male myth of creation) with little if any mention of females (characteristically the name of Noah's wife is not even mentioned) (Woolley 1988, p.91; Dundes 1988, p.170).

These archetypal interpretations are extremely interesting, and they are very effective in interpreting and explaining human psychosynthesis, hence the structures of societies. But man is not only a product of psychological excitement and archetypes-instincts but has an ontology that differentiates him both qualitatively and quantitatively from any other species known so far in the material world. So the interpretation of ancient narratives, only in the light of the social motifs of the era they reflect, where they began to be expressed as steady stories and from the oral speech passed into the written, is an axiomatic error. For at the first level these narratives attempt, either metaphorically or literally (as interpreted), to describe-harmonize man with his/hers transcendent origin or search. Secondly, they are a useful guide to conclude upon the social ideas and perceptions that existed in the world at the time when they were formulated and began to acquire a stable structure as narratives thus becoming non-independent of the human societies, impregnated with the "spirit of the time" and carriers of it.

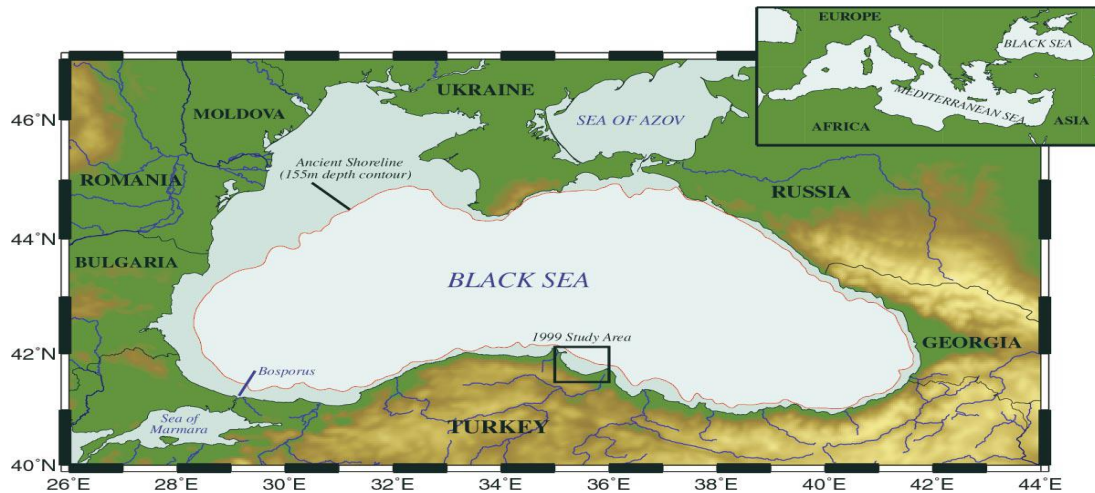
Chapter 4 The case of a possible historical core in the Black Sea region

The examination of the probability that the narrative of the Great Cataclysm has a historical nucleus, which in this particular case is placed in the wider area of the Black Sea, is a difficult issue that has created many conflicts.

Thus, at a first level, it can be said that the Black Sea had become a freshwater lake (isolated from the Mediterranean), whose level had fallen from -90 m to -110 m from the current level during the last glacial when global sea level dropped below its outlet. The reconnection of the Mediterranean with the Black Sea, via the Sea of Marmara, occurred at the end of the last deglaciation during global sea level rise in the early Holocene period. But the mechanism that led to the rise of the Black Sea and its reconnection with the Mediterranean is a point of friction where supporters of the Black Sea Flood hypothesis believe that there had been a sudden rise in the Black Sea level and consequently a steep-destructive reconnection with the Mediterranean around 7150 yrs BP (later changed this date to 8.4 yrs BP- Ryan et al.), which led to a two-way exchange between the two basins and the salinization of the Black Sea. The consequences were disastrous for local human communities, with massive population movements. On the other hand, continuous Outflow Hypothesis is supported by Aksu et al., Hiscott et al., Valentina Yanko-Hombach et al., according to which all this process took a long time because it was a gradual process. It started around 9000 BC when the sea level was only 30 - 40 m below sea level, so there were no violent environmental changes that would radically affect human communities and local ecosystems. It is therefore perceptible that the way of reconnection, the time, the height of water, but also the pre-flood events and the level of the lake, even the biomarkers used to be disputed factors, hence controversial points of contradiction (Leroy et al. 2002, p.532; Atanassova 2005, p.576; Kuprin and Sorokin 2007, p.217; Soulet et al. 2010, p.245; Soulet et al. 2011, p.57,64; Bikoulis 2015; Goldberg et al. 2016, p.178-179).

Because of the abovementioned, it can be extremely interesting to have a visual representation of the change of the Black Sea shoreline in order to understand the differentiation in relation to the current one. According to some researchers, the difference with the current coastline may reach up to -155 m. Indeed, archaeologists

working in Sinop report the absence of human communities in the area up to 5500 yrs BP, a fact that some interpret as a result of the fear of the violent cataclysm that occurred in the area, so people avoided living there (Ballard et al. 2000, p.259-260).



Picture 11: Diversification of shoreline compared to today (Ballard et al. 2000, p.254)

On the other hand, through the study of population movement and therefore using anthropological evidence to interpret natural phenomena, since human communities were very sensitive to environmental changes, it is reported that there is no evidence of a significant movement of communities/populations that substantiates a violent rise of the sea level (Turney and Brown 2007, p.2040; Dolukhanov and Arslanov 2009).

However, wishing to see other important elements and understand the hydrological behaviour of the Black Sea, which is associated with the other surrounding water, we may say that at times when the Caspian Sea's level was high through the Kumo-Manych Strait, it fuelled the Sea of Azov and the Don river with Caspian waters. Indeed, a tremendously interesting element of the interdependence of the three water masses (Mediterranean, Black Sea, Caspian) is that there have been found molluscan shells immigrants from the Black Sea, of Mediterranean origin, and which colonized in the Caspian Sea during the Holocene (Dolukhanov et al. 2009; Svitoch et al. 2013, p.844).

So, seeing global hydrological behaviour, we can link it to that of the Black Sea, something of course extremely complex even for the field specialists. However, it is

interesting to look at a general description of the mechanisms that probably increased the level of all water masses surrounding and connected to the Black Sea. With the melting of the ice, through the Turgay spillway, the level of the Aral Lake was raised in turn, and through the Uzboy Spillway, dropped water in the Caspian. As a result the water level of the Caspian sea raised too, so finally, the Caspian Sea, through the Kerch-Manych Spillway, fuelled the Black Sea and raised its level too. All these successive floods are called Altay Floods and can be interpreted as the hydrological background that led to the reunion of the Black Sea with the Mediterranean (Aksu et al. 2016, p.115,134).

Subsequently, the key points for supporting or rejecting the Black Sea Flood hypothesis need to be examined in depth, along with the variables that constitute the issue. On the other hand, we see that in-depth analysis of the issue is extremely difficult, especially at a theoretical level, because the Black Sea, like all water masses, has many variables that affect its behaviour. In order to understand its behaviour, we need to study climate change, global sea behaviour, hydrological models, etc. That means, to deal with many different fields where specialists find it difficult to agree with each other. Consequently, evidence of truth is always difficult to be found. It consists the result of many different points, which are interrelated when we see them in details, thus creating a mechanism that unifies them (Atanassova 2005).

Black Sea Flood Hypothesis

At first it is good to make a basic reference to the chronological course of the Black Sea as well as the terms used. During the late Pleistocene and early Holocene the Black Sea can be divided into four periods. The first is the Neouxine, a period that encompasses the Black Sea glacial and deglacial until its connection with Mediterranean. Second is Bugaz a period where both fresh and marine mollusc shells exist in the same water mass. Third is the Old Black Sea, a period in which salinification gradually began to increase and fourth the New Black Sea during which the salinity level reached the current levels for the Black Sea (Yanchilina et al. 2017, p.14-15,32).

The Black Sea, before its union with the Mediterranean, was a fresh water lake or slightly brackish, similar to the modern Caspian Sea. This is based on differences in

aquatic organisms, pore-water chemistry etc. *In addition, the level of the Black Sea's coastline, before the connection with the Mediterranean, can be computed by the observation of the sediment diversification before and counts the inflow of Mediterranean water, the depth extent across the shelf with a measured decrease of water content beneath the coquina and the location of coastal dunes 14C dated with mollusc shell debris and the location of the 14C dated peat, wood and plant remains* . It has been reported that dunes have been found at -65 to -80 meters below the current surface of the sea, where it can be said that the old coastline existed. Thus, on the basis of these data, it is argued that around 9300 years BP (calendar years) the Black Sea suffered an intense and violent salinification, which is interpreted by supporters of the flood hypothesis as made by the sudden introduction of the Mediterranean Sea waters. These elements are reported to understand any evidence (technical points and/or methodology) used by the Black Sea Flood supporters. Afterwards, when the contradiction and criticism of the theory is reported. We will also look at the technical points since the opponents of the theory disagree even with the technical points used by flood theory proponents, as well as the opposite (flood theory supporters disagree with the rival methodology) (Ryan et al. 1997, p.115,120; Major et al. 2006; Ryan 2007; Yanchilina et al. 2017, p.15).

In addition, according to the interpretation of the above discussion, Ryan et al support that the Black Sea lake was -155 meters below the present sea level. Typically, it has been reported that the Sea of Azov was a terrestrial landscape. Therefore, if it is correct, there probably was a great "water spill" in order to reach current levels. Also, a large number of aquatic organisms was introduced into the Black Sea through the influx of Mediterranean waters. Thus, the reunion of the Black Sea with the Mediterranean resulted in a "Flooding of the Black Sea with marine waters to bring its surface to the level of the global ocean". Of course, the rise of the Black Sea was not only due to the Mediterranean, but also because of the high level of the Caspian Sea (caused by meltwater delivered to the Volga river). As a result it could occur a spill over in the Black Sea through the Manych depression (Ryan et al. 1997, p.115,120; Major et al. 2006, p.1-4,16; Ryan 2007).

Researchers have discovered shells of giant size in the Caspian Sea, dated around the late Pleistocene. This is considered as an indicator of the temperature rise

in the Caspian. One interpretation is that rivers received large quantities of water from ice melting. It is also well connected with the newer small sized thin shells that have been developed and can be interpreted by the large quantities of cold water that fed the Caspian rivers (Yanina 2014, p.88-89).

Thus, we can generally conclude that the Caspian Sea level rose due to the waters from the melting of ice, which in turn dropped water into the Black Sea (10.7 ky BP). As a result of its rise, changes in its hydrologic-hydrochemical and ecological behaviour occurred along with the throwing of water to the Sea of Marmara. Afterwards the Sea of Marmara fuelled the Dardanelles and finally, having all these water masses risen their levels, they were discharged into the Mediterranean. It is undoubtedly impressive that we can see how interconnected (on grounds of hydraulic correlation) all these water masses are, not to mention that in order to fully understand this hypothesis we must understand the hydrologic behaviour of the whole planet (Ryan et al. 2003; Yanina 2014, p.91-93).

Thus, scientists conclude that at about 8.4 ky BP (at the beginning they placed it around 7.5 ky BP) the Black Sea region experienced a devastating saltwater flood. This is placed in the Neoeuxinian period (18000-9000 yrs BP), where the level of the world's sea climbed after a late glacial lowstand. In fact, they posed a question to those who disagree; what do they think will happen on the planet if the global ocean level rises by 25 m? Will the face of the planet change and will we have structural changes? It is thought that the same water route, described earlier, will be repeated with a flood in the Black Sea. Additionally, the number of 25 m is much smaller than what happened at the time we are examining, where if the Black Sea was -155 m below the current level, there was a "big void-distance" covered, hence structural changes in the hydrological behaviour of the wider region (Ryan et al. 1997, p.115,120; Ryan et al. 2003; Ryan 2007, p.19; Yanina 2014).

The above resulted in a form of flood, where the waters followed a double direction, initially from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and vice versa. This can be thought to have been the historical core of the narrative/narratives of the Great Flood and the human communities that moved kept the memory of these natural events and shaped the tradition of the Great Flood (Ryan 2007).

Criticism on the Black Sea Flood Hypothesis

We could say that the community of scientists is divided into two groups; those who support the destructive scenario of the reunification of the Black Sea with the Mediterranean, which has resulted in a devastating cataclysm and a mass removal of local societies. And, those who reject the aforementioned statement and support a gradual increase in water level. In this case it did not have to cover such a long way, compared to the current level, since the old coastline had little difference to the current one, so there was no a catastrophic flood or removal of massive local communities. More generally, however, it is relatively acceptable that around 7500 yrs BP the Black Sea reunited with the Mediterranean, through the Bosphorus Straits (Giosan et al. 2009; Brückner et al. 2010).

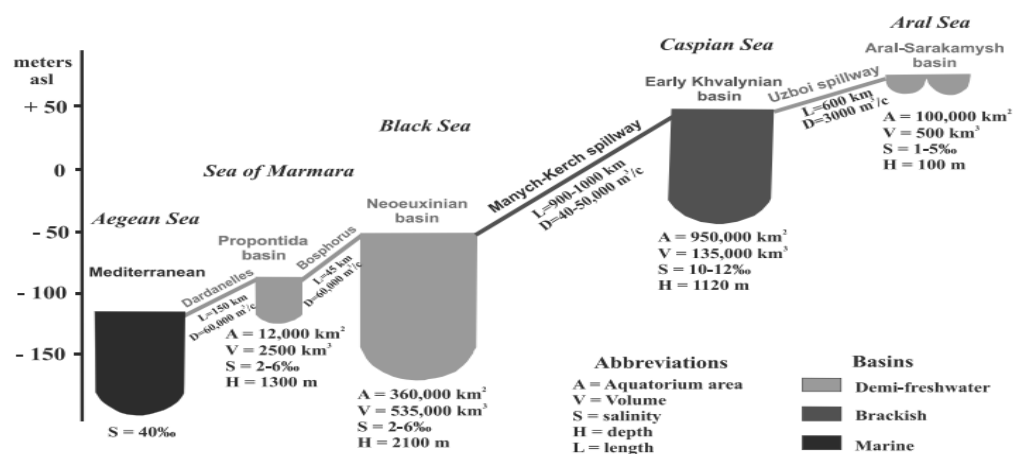
A first critic in Ryan et al. theory is that dating techniques may not be applicable to the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. The reason is that their waters are brackish (low salt concentration), so they cannot be applied as in seawater samples. Indeed, others also disagree with the view that in early Holocene the Black Sea coastline was lower than today, considering it similar or very close to the current. Of course, since the Roman period, cities such as Olbia, Pheodosia, Chersonessos and Phanagoria which were built on the coastline are now submerged, so the coastline was at least 1-2 meters lower than today's. This is a possible presumption of the differentiation of the coastline, but it is a really small variation that cannot tell us much about the sea level in an earlier period (Brückner et al. 2010; Fouache et al. 2012, p.170-171).

Other scientists study the Danube's deltas and compare their water level with the Black Sea, concluding that they were very stable during the last interglacial period. They consider that since the water level remained stable in the Danube's deltas, it would also remain in the Black Sea or would show very small variations (Giosan et al. 2009, p.3).

Of course, it has been widely argued that the main source of water supply of the Black Sea was from the northeast, i.e. from the Sea of Azov and through the Caspian Sea. Therefore, the main indicators of this vision are particular brackish-water mollusc that have been found only in the northern Caspian and the Azov-Black Sea basin, so it is concluded that they were transported and there was at one time a union of the

two water masses. From this perspective most experts do not accept a global Great flood but a local one. Thus, even those who accept the flood hypothesis in part, consider that the Ponto-Caspian Floods that occurred between late Pleistocene and early Holocene are in no way related to the biblical narrative of the flood or other flood traditions. Although we have many floods that may have resulted from the melting of the Scandinavian ice, the transport of large quantities of water to successively different water masses whose level was rising and the low level of evaporation due to low temperatures, they always had local character (Chepalyga 2007, p.143-144; Hiscott et al. 2007, p.4-6).

At this point, it is very interesting to see a sketch of the hydraulic union and water transfer from Aral Sea to the Mediterranean, according to the approach of a local flood, where in another case we change the quantities but the logic remains the same (Chepalyga 2007).



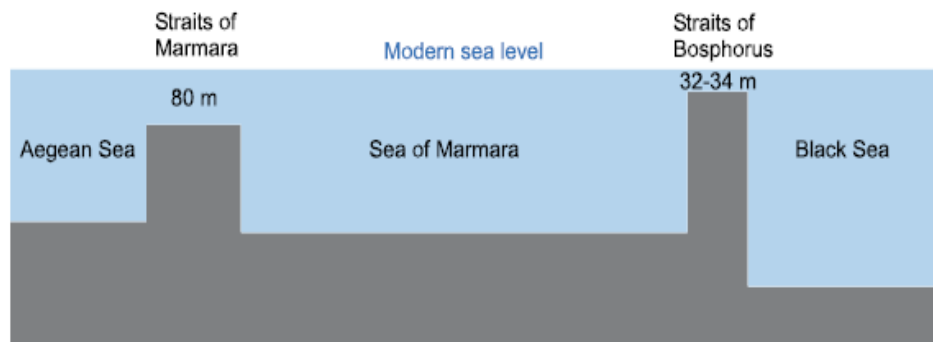
Picture 12: Hydraulic union of sea masses in a Local Flood (Chepalyga 2007, p.136)

Another indicator is salinity-paleosalinity. We may refer to the following water categories: fresh water (<0.5 psu), semi fresh (0.5-5 psu), brackish (<5-12 psu), semi marine -18 psu) and marine (> 18-26 psu). The Black Sea at the moment of its union with the Mediterranean passed from brackish to semi-marine conditions. However the change was gradually and not violent. It has been argued that the salinization of the Black Sea could have lasted for hundreds or even thousands of years in order to reach the current levels, averaging 17 psu, while the Mediterranean is

between 34-39 psu. Interestingly, Azov and Caspian Seas have almost the same levels, around 13 psu. However, there are disagreements regarding the methodology followed by each group. For instance, it has been reported by the against flood hypothesis supporters that they used ammonia-treated samples, whereas they consider that ammonia is unsuitable for salinity in paleoenvironment samples. As for the water level, Valentina Yanko-Hombach et al. have claimed that the level of the Black Sea, before joining the Mediterranean, was just -40 meters below current levels and not more than -100, as flood hypothesis experts claim, so the differentiation was much smaller and did not justify a devastating flood. Thus, the rising level of the Black Sea became gradually. They argue that it was more likely a continuous outflow from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and at certain moments from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Another clue is that many experts believe that the aquatic organisms found in the Black Sea from the Mediterranean date back to around 9.5 ka BP. This is much earlier than the date of the flood hypothesis, therefore they believe that the historical placement of the theory's supporters and the connection to the myth of the Great Flood are inappropriate (Yanko-Hombach 2007; Yanko-Hombach et al. 2007; Glebov and Shel'ting 2007, p.746,757; Balabanov 2007, p.724; Martin and Yanko-Hombach 2011, p.55-56; Yanko-Hombach et al. 2014).

Another important point to consider is the Sea of Marmara, which today presents a double flow between the two water masses, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. A cooler layer, which is lowest in salinity, flows from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean through the Sea of Marmara, while a warmer and higher salinity, flows in the opposite direction. This water behavior, combined with the morphology of the area with the Bosphorus and Marmara Straits, is a natural filter to control the salinity in the Black Sea. Thus, studying the water level in the Sea of Marmara, as well as salinity levels, is an important indicator for the understanding of the Black Sea as well as the flood hypothesis. As a result, they have argued that the assumption that the Black Sea was a freshwater lake, where water was used up to farming, is not right and that the Black Sea's gradual salinization mechanism, coupled with the steady water level which is found in the Sea of Marmara, are considered to be elements against the flood hypothesis. The following sketch provides an image of the morphology and connection

between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean (Mudie et al. 2004, p.147; Hiscott et al. 2007, p.4-5; Algan et al. 2007, p.607-609).



Picture 13: The connection between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean along with the Bosphorus and Marmara Straits (Goldberg et al. 2016, p.179)

Another important point for analysing the issue is an examination of the movement of human societies and how much they were affected by the possible changes in the water level of the Black Sea. Ryan et. al. all argued that, according to the flood theory, there would be massive movements of populations that moved to Europe's mainland. However there is no archaeological evidence for population movement from Northern Anatolia to Mesopotamia between 7600-7300 BC. This means that the flood, if it happened at all in the wider Black Sea area, had little effect on human behaviour. This approach directly downgrades the flood to a minor event in the region. An argument in favour of the flood hypothesis is that the most important Neolithic societies appeared in the area after the date of the flood. Some researchers interpret the absence of population movements as a general lack of a clear image in the area as far as human societies are concerned. However, this is a fact that leaves unclear points and makes it more difficult to a documented point of view (Bailey 2007, p.517; Anthony 2007, p.347-349,355-356,366; Dolukhanov and Shilik 2007, p.309,313; Özdoğan 2007).

The case of Creationism

Another "group" that has dealt extensively with the narration of the Great Flood and how it could have taken place in the historical process, in a way that is naturally inter-

puted are those engaged in understanding the possible natural mechanisms that could cause a global flood. They are known as Creationists, and they developed views of "theoretical geology" supporting that earth is now the result of the structural geological reorganizations that occurred at the time of the Great Cataclysm (Baumgardner and Barnette 1994, p.1,6; Austin et al. 1994, p.3).

Of course, there are disagreements here too, with a group accepting the scenario of a local flood, for which they even believe that there is biblical documentation. In addition, they interpret climatic and hydrological data of the Greater Mesopotamia and consider that they favour the creation of powerful floods (Hill 2002; Hill 2006, p.123-125).

Regarding the cases presented so far, it has been stated that all scenarios present a too local character, and cannot keep up with the narratives of the Great Flood. It has also been suggested that it is impossible for an event of such a local nature to have a structural impact on humanity, creating stories of cataclysm in a huge number of religions and traditions (Walker 2000, p.43).

However, a convincing argument, which seeks to separate the locally viewed floods and the biblical narrative and certainly describes a global cataclysm, is the reference to the creation of an ark. If the cataclysmic destruction had a local character, God would not have to tell Noah to make the ark for saving the animals and to say that everything out of the ark would be drowned. Simply the case of Lot by Sodom could be repeated with the fire that fell from the sky and God warned Lot's family to leave. This whole reference is made because a section of this sector is trying to document that biblical narration refers to a local cataclysm. On the contrary, the "traditional" reading of the narrative is more attractive, but at the same time, the creationists separate the natural elements of cataclysm from the narrative of the Great Flood, and those who do not and confuse them enter a state of collision (Whitcomb and Morris 1961, p.11,14).

Synopsis

It would be interesting to examine some other facts also. At about the same time when the flood scenario occurred, there was a significant rise in water level in the Arabo-Persian Gulf with a very significant increase in rainfall. There again there is a

theory of a violent coastal growth that would might affect human communities and an attempt to relate it to the narratives of the Great Flood. It is an attempt to combine the theory that places the Black Sea area in the geographical centre, with similar elements in the southern Mesopotamia (Teller et al. 2000, p.298,304; Kennett and Kennett 2006).

At the same time, we can say that in the early Holocene (11.5 - 7 Ka BP) we have a rise in the world's sea, which would have flooded many terrestrial areas on the planet, and this is largely due to the melting of land-based ice sheets during the last deglaciation. Probably this season is a key point for the transition from a glacial climate to the climatic reality, as we know it today. And this has decisively contributed to the hydrological behaviour of the planet (Mayewski et al. 2004, p.251-252; Blaschek and Renssen 2013, p.2651).

Thus, although it is extremely difficult to approach theoretically some purely technical issues, we may observe the morphology of the Black Sea, which from the north has large rivers that can supply it with water and in the south (Northern Turkey) there is a an extremely mountainous area that can act as a barrier. Moreover, while at the same time seeing structural changes in the hydrological cycle as well as elements in other large water masses that may have created floods, we can say that there could have been strong local floods in various places. Therefore, as it would be ,expectable in nature, this must have been a case of a natural "decompression" phenomenon (Algan et al. 2007, p.609).

Of course, this cannot be linked to the narratives of the Great Flood that are of a global nature, and the attempts to relate them follow two different points. One good example, that could be more easily associated with narratives is the flood of Samothrace, the description of which fits well with many technical elements that have been presented. The narrative itself describes a local flood tailored to the area we are examining. It could be said that we have both written and narrative and technical documentation, so we have a much more complete picture.

Chapter 5 The Effect of Ancient Myths-Narratives in the Modern World

"For it is the fate of every myth to creep by degrees into the narrow limits of some alleged historical reality, and to be treated by some later generation as a unique fact with historical claims."
(Nietzsche 1990, p.95)

A critical/scientific analysis of myths is always a very difficult process, as the field itself is often unclear. Even today, there are huge disagreements about the definition and the interaction between myths, legends and fairy tales, where the one begins and where the other ends. However, a big misconception that exists today is that myths are something "ancient and outdated". The political elite, the social standards and the ideals of every age, largely contain myths that affect the vast majority of people. Myths, in any context, are trying to create symbols that will form the foundation of morality but also respect for the social group that is affected by each one of them (Des Bouvrie 2002, p.31,52).

It is not the object of this study to write a definition of the term "myth". We may say, in general, that myths give information about the origin of the world, society and institutions, the gods/God and their/its relationships with people. In other words, myths govern the human existence. A large issue is that myths were to some extent transferred to us by the ancient writers, but how they got them and what value they had for them and the social context they were living in is a difficult question. So fatally, ignoring such an important parameter, there are interpretive efforts over time that often lead to a demythologization where the narratives remain but their value is eroded (Graf 2011, p.1; Honko 2014).

The religious factor is very significant, since to some extent is the guardian of a myriad of myths that consist the foundations and are interpreted as "real events" for each religion. Thus, the narrative of a great natural disaster, which has changed the way of life of many people and is framed by a theological prism, acquire a tremendous moral value for the people who believe in it, if we remove the value framework and see just the narrative, is difficult to holistically understand it. Even from a psychological

perspective, a traumatic event of a natural disaster in a society, would need religion and meta-physics in order to be interpreted and understood. Of course, through a critical prism, when you see common values in many religions, such as the prohibition of incest and myths that substantiate the reason that led to this ban, it is fatal for a reasoning of syncretism to discern their common value and settle there something which is not wrong, but sometimes it loses its value. Because each prohibition or each value does not have the same weight in all religions or cultures, even if they have similarities to a certain extent. This very reason led, for example, a large number of theologians to compare the ancient world with the facts of their time and to consider that the "pagan society and values" is simply a corruption of the "truth of the Bible". Ignoring that modern religions were not created in a "social vacuum", but they transmitted narratives and values from the ancient world, which "borrowed" to frame the new worldview they created (many times these values are also structural for the existence of religions) (Showerman 1908, p.158,163; Barr 1985, p.204,214; Gibbs 1989, p.491,507; Birren and Svensson 2005, p.3; Sanderson 2008, p.151,153; Mesoudi and Danielson 2008; Peoples and Marlowe 2012, p.254).

It is almost impossible for us to study religious systems and myths without using a cultural relativism. It is the only way approach them without a levelling rationale, according to the interpreter's standards. But at the same time it requires a distinction between emotional/moral value and rationality, in order to be able to grasp in depth not only the existence of some patterns/values of a system but also their gravity (Eller 2007b; Τοιτοίγκος 2007).

Returning to myths and the narration of the Great Flood, we can report that the "world/scenery of myths" is a dramatic world within which everything is moving towards a systemic collapse. This is exactly what is happening in the narration of the Great Flood. The hero has to save himself and his family, but at the same time, all humanity will be saved through him. The hero of the cataclysm is the symbol of inherent vitality that survives even in the worst destructive conditions and sins of human existence. This narrative is a turning point for influencing all of human history until today (Campbell 2001, p.65; Eller 2007a).

A characteristic feature of the power of the flood myth in the modern western world is the curse of Ham. According to it, Africans were considered his offsprings. This

was used as a moral background for the "legitimization" of their degradation and slavery by "powerful countries". Indeed, this association started at the beginning of the 16th century and until the 19th century, it was established that the inhabitants of the African continent were descendants of Ham so they must be subordinate, thus acquiring a strong political character. Also, another tradition with great influence upon the modern world over time is that the habitats of Dante (Italy) and their language descent from Noah. Nevertheless, beyond that, we can say that the narrative of the Great Flood had a structural effect on science, philosophy/theology and poetry. At the same time, it was a point of disagreement, interpretation and effort to understand the narrative and the likelihood of being a real cosmist story event or just a symbolic one (Bastomsky 1976, p.146-147; Braude 1997, p.103,111,119,142; Putter 1997; Kempe 2003).

The story of the Great Flood is by far a massive historical trauma that humanity carries and will carry forever. However, the narratives of the Great Flood, as already mentioned, carry an ancient idea that man is responsible for the balance of the environment. Indeed, for the narratives of the cataclysm it is very difficult to find and place their origin. Opinions, for example, that the Greeks brought these narratives in Greece from Asia are quite out of the question. Therefore, it is far safer to study them in the socio-historical context that they developed and what value they had there (Kenrick 1834, p.27; Kempe 2003; Geller 2014, p.77).

All this created a strong scientific interest in the study of the natural environment of the ancient world, consequently myths too. The search for historical cores in myths is much easier to be done with environmental footprints, thus, archaeology has made attempts to discover natural events that have left their mark and possibly changed the course of humanity. Myths, such as those of the Great Flood (and others with a strong environmental character), began to be characterized as geomyths. Terms such as hydromythology, geomythology are becoming more common for the study and interpretation of ancient myths (O'Connor 1997, p.2; Dickinson 2003, p.856; Kempe 2003; Mayor 2004; Krinitzsky 2005; Clendenon 2009; Liritzis 2013).

Nevertheless, the interesting point is that the ancient narratives managed to survive in the modern world and influence it, despite the fact that they lost their value and begun, especially in the scientific world, to have value only as potential events

with historical core. Nevertheless, modern art and the film industry constantly draw on elements from ancient myths. There is an abundance of analysis, even direct links, by the creators themselves, for example, the super heroes derive evidence from ancient heroes, and this all greatly affects societies since they are used as role models (Salvador and Norton 2011, p.49-50; Hafçi and Erbay Aslitürk 2017).

At a socio-cultural level, we may refer to the example of Greece, where Christianity has a huge influence, and although there was a strong “Christianization” of ancient temples and traditions, the pagan background did not disappear. Instead, it was preserved, either ideologically or theologically, and terms such as “romantic Hellenism” and “romantic paganism” began to appear (Gregory 1986, p.230).

All of this shows briefly that ancient myths and values not only they did not die, but they had a great impact upon the modern world more - than it is believed. However, there is something even more deep since myths actually influence every historical period. Economic myths, sustainable growth and perfect markets are probably the myths of our time. Though our ancestors would see us as gods (we can travel to the “skies”, communicate directly with the whole planet, control nature and our weapons are able to destroy entire mountains) it is now evident that this Utopia can easily be transformed into Dystopia. It is now very easy to find high-level analyses of every material success of a person, however with an environmental price, which in practice affects him and weights him (Small and Jollands 2006, p.344-345,352).

Man shares the same "nature" with that of his ancestors. Though means may have changed, human nature remained the same. It has the same passions, fears, hopes but also prospect. Perhaps the ancient myths tell us more about the human nature than modern sciences with the doctrine of "measurable physical reality". Difficult question that goes beyond the context of the text but structural about the course of mankind.

This is precisely how the narrative of the Great Flood had a structural effect on human civilization. Its impact on art and aesthetics is easily observed. At the theological level, most major religions contain a story of a Great Flood. Especially in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, biblical religions present a more pronounced influence from the narration of the Great Flood. It is probably the first and greatest environmental myth that shows how interdependent human actions and also human spir-

ituality are with the environment. And that the erosion of human ontology has direct physical implications. All this shows that the story of the Great Flood is not just a legacy of the ancient world or a religious narrative, but also a guide with moral messages about the modern man and his relationship with the natural environment and the world.

Conclusions

The narrative of the Great Flood as we have seen has exerted a huge influence on human civilization. It is a multilevel and difficult narrative in its interpretation and in many cases the flood narratives present a common character with many similarities. The narrative of the Great Flood can be found in a huge number of religions and traditions throughout the world, making it a cultural product of high importance.

It could be said that in most traditions-religions is the landmark that separates prehistory from history (Klein 2011, p.152).

Relationships between religions and the environment are a very important issue as they determine largely the relations of societies with the natural environment. The natural environment is a key feature for most religions and the narrative of the Great flood has an environmental myth-narration character. Therefore, in many cases, after the narratives of the creation of the world, it is the cornerstone of man's relationship with the natural environment and how his actions and his spiritual state can disturb his relations with the natural environment.

In the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the narration of the Great Flood seems to have an even more important role. Particularly in the Biblical and Mesopotamian religions is one of the narratives with the most important significance. Also for others, like for example the ancient Greek religion and the Zoroastrian, it was an important narrative with great effect upon societies. On an interpretative level, there is a vast array of interpretative approaches, where an overview and an attempt was made to give a new perspective on the narrative's interpretation. Here it is very important to make an incision in the stories of the flood. We could separate them into two categories; the first is the narratives of the Great Flood where narration seems to have a very important character for the course of humanity. There are elements such as that the whole world was flooded or the whole country (depending on religion) or all the known world (depending on the society that tells it). In addition, the ark, the surviving pair, which is the salvation point of humanity, the sacrifice to the God/gods after the end of the flood, etc. are highlighted. The second group concerns flood narratives that are deliveries of some areas related to the foundation of cities or the origins

of important ancestors, such as the Flood of Samothrace and the case of the Dardanus. Therefore, we can see that the narratives of the cataclysm are not a single object, but a multi-level field that requires a careful and in many cases a personalized approach.

Even the hero of the narratives of the cataclysm is presented with many qualities, either as a descendant of royal lineage or in many cases with the qualities of a priest. Therefore, the understanding of the personality depiction of the hero of the cataclysm gives one more push for a broader understanding of the accounts of the Great Cataclysm (Davila 1995).

The case of the historical core for the narrative of the Great Flood is a timeless question of human history. It is characteristic that Eusebius of Caesarea was trying to document the narrative and believed that the existence of marine fossils at the top of the mountains is a proof of a Great Flood that covered everything. His may be one of the first geological approaches to support the narrative. In addition, the possibility of transferring narratives from one tradition to another looking for a "true one" with a historical core, is quite ambivalent, since the traces of many narratives are lost in the past (Lang 2008, p.212; Richet 2017, p.231).

In the Black Sea area, the rise of the Black Sea and its union with the Mediterranean could be the historical core that was depicted in humanity, creating the story of the Cataclysm. This is still an ongoing discussion (mentioned above), but we could say that the geological processes that took place in the Black Sea during the early Holocene could be a historical core of a flood narration such as that of Samothrace where there is a documentary evidence. While, on the contrary, the case of the Great Flood cannot be supported, despite attempts to connect it with the geological phenomena that took place.

The ancient myth-narratives show to be present in modern societies either as narratives that have lost their religious value, or as religious narratives with theological significance for the society. Their influence co-shapes social ethics and forms an integral part of human spirituality. The problem is that myths have been greatly disdained in the modern world and along with them, the wisdom they carried. Even in the scientific community, it is more important to find historical core (of course very important) of ancient myths rather than the theological and moral messages they have.

The narrative of the Great Flood is a global spiritual heritage, which can be a guide even in the modern world for the relationship of man with the natural environment and how they can be eroded by human wickedness. Thus, the narrative of the Great Flood is an environmental myth that builds the role of man in the natural environment after the creation of the world (within the historical development) and places it at the centre of the course of the natural world. Always in the sense that his spiritual condition, accompanied by his deeds, is inextricably linked to the harmony of nature and the laws governing it and how it can be disturbed by signalling its "end" as long as man does not follow the ontological path that God/gods set for him.

Epilogue for the myths

At this point, it would be more beneficial to make a reference to the value of myths as a whole rather than specific, drawing theme from the ancient Greek religion, which is also a part of this dissertation.

In 1959, a very popular and simplified version of Greek mythology was published in Greece, which for many decades was read by an enormous number of people and shaped the view. At the beginning of the book, the author quotes a poem:

*HE CREATED THEM the people of the Greeks, immortal, handsome and mighty, and
brought them into the deep heavens, - overseeing his fate.*

*But they often descended on the bright earth of the eternal adolescents and walked
between them, to become the miracle.*

*So when the miracle of the hero's race happened, then the Greek gods smiled and said:
"Nothing more wonderful can be done. Let's die." They closed their eyes. But only slept.*

(Γεράλης 1959)

This poem is of great beauty and lyricism but at the same time levelling itself to the interpretation of ancient myths, making them fairy tales or narratives that fall entirely within the imaginary space. In addition, it is a very representative view of how modern societies perceive, largely, the ancient myths. Value-theologically dry, superficial with minimal messages for the modern man.

In contrast to this text we can see the legend referring to the Platonian dialogue of Protagoras where, while much has been written about Plato's view of myths,

he uses them in important points where he wants to express some of his ideas/opinions. Because a scientific/rational view is always controllable, so it can always be dismissed altogether. While the myth, being probable or possible, can express truth even if an important part of it is rejected. So Plato always tried to connect ethics with the metaphysical perspective of man, and puts in Protagoras' mouth an amazing narrative, whose synopsis follows (Καραμανώλης 2008, p.129).

According to Protagoras dialogue (entries 320c-322d), there was once a time when there were only gods and there were no mortals. When the time of creation of mortals arrived, gods mixed alloys of fire and earth to create them. In addition, they commanded Prometheus and Epimetheus to divide the forces that fit into each creation. Epimetheus asked Prometheus to make that sharing, and Prometheus would examine them at the end. So Epimetheus distributed to all creatures abilities and to other gave speed, to other power and to other arms. To others gave small shape or wings to survive. In all species, he shared abilities trying to create balance, making sure that nothing disappears. However, because Epimetheus was not very wise, he consumed all the forces to animals and the human race remained more “naked”. Prometheus seeing the state of humanity by his brother's sharing and how helpless they were, decided to steal the fire from Hephaestus and the other gods and donate it to mankind. Therefore man gained wisdom about his life, his survival and material progress, but not the political wisdom that was in the hands of Zeus. So in the beginning people lived scattered and there were no cities. They were destroyed by the beasts because they were weaker in every respect, and the creative art they acquired through the fire was enough to find food but not to survive. When they tried to cohabit and build societies, they were unfair to each other and they were re-separated and destroyed. Fearing Zeus that the human race may disappear, he sent Hermes to bring to people decency and justice, which will form the ornaments of humanity and will unite them. So, Hermes asks Zeus, how should I share decency and righteousness to people, as the arts were shared? That is, one is good in Medicine, the other is good at another art, and everyone has some skills. And Zeus tells “to all” you should share them, and “all can participate”. Because there could exist human societies, if some were involved in decency and some in righteousness.

And while Plato places a legend in Protagoras' mouth in support of his political and theological views, there is something more important (McCoy 1998; Rayan 2014).

In a few pages manages to say what others would need volumes and thousands of pages to say; the personalized skills of man, the common ontological nature of human morality, which has a metaphysical origin and consists humanity's common heritage for its course in the physical world.

Myths express ancient ideas from the first moment of human existence, identified even into the modern myths, which govern the modern world. Undoubtedly, the question raised in chapter 5, whether myths can reveal more about human nature than modern science, is extremely difficult to answer, For that we will have to turn to simplifications. But what we may say, which is also a common element in narrative the Great Flood, is that myths manage to speak with amazing accuracy about human nature either by reading them as religious narratives or as surviving narratives of the ancient world. Where they reflect the timeless and unchangeable course of human nature in a very direct, understandable and targeted way.

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