

# Historiography: mesopotamia

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Mesopotamia is a historical region located in the middle east. There are two rivers that run through Mesopotamia the Tigris and the Euphrates. The name Mesopotamia is Greek for “land between rivers” because of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. These two rivers provided fertile land for civilization to thrive. Mesopotamia had its dominating kingdoms from the beginning of written history to the fall of Babylon. The history and historiography of this region is different.

History is the study of the past as it is written in documents. The history before written documents is called prehistory. Prehistory is given to the history of events that are in memory (Wikipedia). Historiography is the study of the methods of historians. The historiography of an event or topic is covered by historians and is studied how the historians have looked at the topic with theoretical approaches. The difference between history and historiography is simple. History is what actually happened that can be proved by documents and written history. Historiography is the way historians interpret history. This is important to know because some history may be stretched from the truth depending on the source.

The story of Gilgamesh is some history some mythology. Gilgamesh was the king of the city-state of Uruk in Sumer. It is not clear the time of his rule, but it is estimated to be between 2800 and 2500 BC. In Mesopotamian mythology, Gilgamesh is the main character in the Epic of Gilgamesh. The Epic is an ancient piece of literature and is considered to be the oldest written pieces in the world. The Old Testament was written around 1000 BC and is the foundation of two large religions. The two stories are very similar even though they were written far apart in time.

The Epic is originally not an Epic but a bunch of short poems. In the later Babylon era, the poems were combined into the Epic, around 1600-1155 BC (Wikipedia). Gilgamesh was most likely a real figure that ruled Uruk, but the story was written well after he died. The events in the epic are probably just stories that were made to make the true events seem more interesting. The Old Testament takes place in Mesopotamia. The stories with in like Gilgamesh, were probably just twisted to make them more interesting.

The relationship between Gilgamesh and the Old Testament is that some of the stories are similar in both. The main similarity would be the flood story in Gilgamesh and the story of Noah in the Old Testament. After the flood in both stories, they show regret about there haste decisions and say that they won't do anything like it again. In Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh sets out to gain immortality after Enkidu dies. Later he decides that death is not something he should avoid. In the Old Testament men are chosen to devote their lives to God, giving the men a purpose in life. In both books, Gilgamesh and the men give up their lives for something greater than themselves.

The history of Mesopotamia has influenced both stories but even though they have their similarities they are also different. It is tough to say if either is the correct history or if they are made up entirely. Gilgamesh was most likely a real king but the character in the epic is probably not him entirely but a collection of king or people that did stuff that was noteworthy. The tale was then most likely altered to sound more exiting to people who would listen to the story that was being told.