

# [Bronze age mesopotamia leadership](https://assignbuster.com/bronze-age-mesopotamia-leadership/)

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The Epic of Gilgamesh Bronze Age Mesopotamia had a distinctcultureand tradition; their rich cultural heritage was passed down by some incredible fictitious and non-fictitious writings like the ‘ Epic of Gilgamesh’. There are many inferences that can be made about Bronze Age Mesopotamia by reading the ‘ Epic of Gilgamesh’. It’s clear from this document that the dichotomy between a tyrannical and a just leader existed in the society where the leaders were expected to be courageous, bold and adventurous.

The importance of the role of religion onleadershipcannot be overlooked and religion seemed to mingle with and govern the lives of the leaders. One of the most powerful deductions that can be made about Bronze Age Mesopotamia is the constant struggle between a tyrannical ruler and a just ruler. In fact one can go as far as claiming that the entire document highlights the need for a leader who rules well over his people. In the end of the tale we see Gilgamesh, a tyrannical barbaric ruler, repent by pledging to become someone who loves the people he rules (Kovacs).

This shows that perhaps corrupt tyrants who thrived at the expense of the common people marred the Bronze Age Mesopotamia. Similarly another key deduction on leadership is the apparent divine mandate to rule. The Persian Empire is known to have solidified the ‘ divine mandate to rule’ and it seems that the Bronze Age Mesopotamia wasn’t too far off from the same notion. In the story we see Gilgamesh as a ‘ hero’ mandated by the Gods to rule and after he displeases the Gods we see the birth of another ‘ hero’ once again mandated by Gods to challenge Gilgamesh (Kovacs).

This intricate relationship between heroes and Gods is something that seems to be a key feature of leadership as no ordinary person could simply become a leader. The Bronze Age Mesopotamian society had somewhat unique expectation from their leaders. The most important expectation dealt with courage and strength, which is to clear from the numerous incidents during the ‘ Woe unto Gilgamesh who slandered me and killed the Bull of Heaven! ” We see Enikdu and Gilgamesh fight off ‘ the bull of heaven’ as well as fight each other with courage, passion and determination. A leader who did not ave the courage to fight and the strength to win was considered no leader at all during the Bronze Age Mesopotamia (Kovacs). Similarly, the leaders were also expected to have a sense of adventure to test out their courage. During the ‘ Epic of Gilgamesh’ we see Gilgamesh and Enikdu travel to the dark cedar forest to fight the great monster called Humbaba. There seemed to be no reason for both these leaders to fight this monster but in order to prove their worth and win over the love of their people they had to embark upon this journey and prove their courage as seen in this quote, “ I am Gilgamesh, I killed the Guardian!

I destroyed Humbaba who lived in the Cedar Forest… I slew lions in the mountain passes! ” (Kovacs) . During the course of the ‘ Epic of Gilgamesh’ we also find out about interesting and intricate relationship between Gods and leadership. The Bronze Age Mesopotamian notion of God was very different from our modern notion and God’s often had physical form and interacted with men and other beings. Its clear from the tale that Gods were deeply concerned about who rules and it what manner. As seen in tablet VI, after Gilgamesh rejected Ishtar’s proposal to her father, “ the god of creation, brings about a curse upon the city of Uruk (Kovacs).

Even though the Gods do not have complete control over how the leaders behave they seem to be the ones who ultimately decide their fate as is evident from the death Enkidu. The Gods also seem to decide the creation of leaders and their qualities. The leaders can be seen as ‘ appointed officials’ and whenever a leader is doing what the Gods would have him do the God’s can create a new one to bring about balance and harmony. To conclude, the ‘ Epic of Gilgamesh’, one of the few surviving works of the ancient literature, provides with wonderful insights into the hidden world of leadership in the Bronze Age Mesopotamia.

From this tale we find out that the Mesopotamian society had experienced tyrannical rule but at the same time people seemed to have realized a way forward where rulers needed to be just. We also find out that Bronze Age Mesopotamian culture recognized courage, passion and a sense of adventure as important virtues in their leaders. Similarly a lot can be said about the close connection between leaders, Gods and the ultimate power of the Gods over the leaders. Works Cited Kovacs, Maureen. The Epic of Gilgamesh. N. p. , n. d. Web. 14 Sep 2012. .