

# Israel 2



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Israel 2 Page In their illustrious book *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, Miller and Hayes highlight essential conflicts in the sources relating to the Omride kings who were the first northern kings to accomplish dynastic succession, which they were able to do for three generations. The authors provide the general political circumstances of the Omride period and prove the conflicts in the sources. According to them, the summations of the reigns of the Omride kings, the Elijah stories, the account of Jehu's coup, the Mesha's Inscriptions, and the Assyrian records conclude that the Omrides (especially Omri and Ahab) were powerful kings who ruled over an independent kingdom. " In contrast to these sources which presuppose that the Omrides were strong rulers over an autonomous kingdom and in hostile relations with the Yahwistic prophets, the stories of the three battles with Ben-haded and the Elisha stories presuppose quite a different situation. Both of these narrative groups...depict the king or kings of Israel as international weaklings, bullied by the Syrian kings of Samaria." (Miller and Hayes, 262) Therefore, as pointed out by Miller and Hayes, the sources relating to the Omride kings disagree over the political power of the Omrides. Similarly, the authors argue that there are significant conflicts in the sources relating to the Omride kings as the sources disagree over the sequence of Syrian kings during the period of the Omrides. The information about the sequence of Syrian kings during the period of the Omrides conflicts " with the biblical stories of the three battles with Ben-haded as well as with the Elisha stories, if one assumes that these two narrative groups are in proper context. That is, if the stories of the three battles with Ben-haded actually pertain to the last years of Ahab and the Elisha stories actually pertain to Jehoram's reign, then we have a Ben-haded on the throne of Syria followed by Hazael rather

than a Hadadezer followed by Hazael.” (Miller and Hayes, 263)

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Miller and Hayes provide an important picture of Omri and Ahab in international politics/affairs in the famous book *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* and they give convincing evidences to establish and support their picture. According to the authors, Israel reached the zenith of its glory during the rule of Omri and Ahab. The readers are not able to gather a great picture about Omri from the documents, although he is the earliest biblical characters to be mentioned in ancient non-biblical documents and also the first king whose son and even two grandsons were able to follow him to the throne. “ It is clear that Omri was a successful military figure. He was commanding Israel’s army against the Philistines at Gibbethon when Zimri assassinated Elah... Otherwise, the only specific item recorded for Omri’s reign is that he established Samaria as new capital of the northern kingdom.” (Miller and Hayes, 266) According to the authors, Omri and Ahab were the chief rulers of the Omride rule and they provided an international level to their kingdoms. Both the rulers were important military figures of the Omride rule and the picture of Omri and Ahab in international politics is rightly justified by the evidence that the authors provide. “ Omride international policies involved a system of negotiated alliances, combined with a buildup of military strength and territorial annexation, all conducted under the shadow of emerging Assyrian imperialism. Close relations with Phoenicia and Judah are indicated by the marriages between the royal families.” (Miller and Hayes, 267)

Work Cited

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Miller, James Maxwell and John Haralson Hayes. A history of ancient Israel and Judah. Westminster John Knox Press. 1986. P 262.