Joram

Joram (MT Yôrâm; LXX Iωραμ) is the head of a family mentioned in Ezra 2:18 who brought one hundred and twelve people from Babylon to Jerusalem and Judah. In the parallel list in Neh 7:24 the name is replaced by Hariph. Bergdall argues that since Joram means “autumn rain” and Hariph refers to “autumn,” these names should be regarded as “two forms of the same family name.” The name “Hariph” is later used again in Neh 10:20, when the covenant of the reform was sealed.


Esias Meyer

See also → Hariph

Jorai

Jorai (MT Yôray; LXX Iωραι) is a Gaddite and one of seven “clans” mentioned in 1 Chr 5:13. These seven are listed as the sons of Abihail. According to 1 Chr 5:11 the sons of Gad lived next to the Reubenites. The information in 1 Chr 5 does not correlate with other lists of Gaddites found in Gen 46:16 and Num 26:15–18 (Jonker: 60).


Esias Meyer

Joram

1. King of Judah

Joram (Jehoram; MT Yôרâm/Yêhôrâm; LXX Iωραμ) was king of Judah (r. ca. 850–843 BCE), son and successor of Jehoshaphat and contemporary of Joash of Israel. According to the Deuteronomistic introduction formula referring to his reign (2 Kgs 8:16–17), which is probably based on an older source (i.e., a king list), he was thirty-two years old when he took the throne and he ruled Judah for eight years.

1. Chronology. The synchronism given in the introduction formula for Jehoram’s reign states that he ascended the throne in the fifth year of the reign of Joram, king of Israel (2 Kgs 8:16). According to the synchronism given in 2 Kgs 3:1 Joram of Israel ascended the throne in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. If so, and considering the fact that Jehoshaphat ruled over Judah for 25 years (1 Kgs 22:42), Joram of Judah should have ascended the throne in the seventh year of Joram’s reign, and not the fifth year, as is stated in his introduction formula. This three-to-four-year discrepancy is usually accounted for by postulating a co-regency with his father Jehoshaphat, which is perhaps implied in the introduction formula (2 Kgs 8:16). The inability to accurately calculate his co-regency (if such in fact existed) results in disagreements in the dating of his reign, e.g., (852) 847–845 BCE (Begrich), (853) 848–841 BCE (Tiele) and 850–843 BCE (Andersen).

2. Geo-political Setting for Jehoram’s Reign. Joram reigned over Judah in the mid-9th century BCE, a formative period of the Judahite monarchy during which its territory expanded from the Judahite hill country to the Shephelah in the west and the Beer-sheba and Arad valleys in the south (Na’aman 2013; Sergi 2013). Since the days of Joram’s father, Jehoshaphat, the Davidic kings of Judah were allied with the powerful Omride kings of Israel. The Omride-Davidic alliance was sealed with the marriage of Jehoram and Athaliah, an Omride princess, likely the daughter of King Omri (2 Kgs 8:16). Diplomatic marriages were common in ANE diplomacy, and were intended to strengthen loyalty between kings and royal dynasties. Thus, powerful kings in the ANE sent their daughters to the royal courts of their vassals (or to kings inferior to themselves) with the expectation that they would take the position of “chief wife” and bear the royal heir. Considering the superior political and territorial status of the Omride Dynasty in the mid-9th century BCE, it seems that this was also the reason behind the marriage of Jehoram and Athaliah. Clearly Athaliah had won the status of a chief wife in the Davidic court, as her son, Ahaziah, inherited the Judahite throne following the death of his father (2 Kgs 8:26). The presence of an Omride princess in the Jerusalem court, and the fact that Athaliah was a descendant of both the Omrides and the Davidsides, allowed for the establishment of Omride hegemony in Judah. Omride hegemony is also reflected in the fact that both the historical narrative in the book of Kings (e.g., 1 Kgs 22:1–38, 45; 2 Kgs 3:4–27; 8:28–29) and the Tel Dan Stele (lines 7–9) indicate that the kings of Judah addressed Omride military needs even when this endangered their own lives.

3. Joram King of Judah in the Book of Kings and in History. The book of Kings is the only source that mentions the reign of Joram in Judah. Except for the theological evaluation of his cultic activities (2 Kgs 8:18–19) the short summary of his reign (2 Kgs 8:16–24) only includes information regarding his marriage to Athaliah (2 Kgs 8:18) and a report regarding his military/diplomatic efforts south and west ofJudah (2 Kgs 8:21–22). This report is “chronistic” in nature – that is, it is short, factual and contains no theological message, and thus seems to have been taken from an older chron-
Joram

4. The Deuteronomistic Theological Evaluation

Their regional dominance. Since he was married to Athaliah, who was the first in an ongoing effort by the Judahite kings to push the desert dwellers south, and probably to establish Judahite hegemony in the region. Within the account of the Edomite revolt there is a short note on a similar conflict west of Judah, in the Shephelah (2 Kgs 8:22b): "Then Libnah revolted at the same time." Libnah thus reflects the expansion process of the kingdom during this period. Since he was married to Jehoram, who attacked the inhabitants of the southern desert fringe who at some point rebelled (cf. 2 Sam 8:14; 1 Kgs 22:48).

Joram's campaign failed (Montgomery: 395; Würthwein: 322; Miller/Hayes: 322). The first victories over the Edomites south of Judah are recorded only in the days of Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:7) during the early 8th century BCE. This information puts Joram's southern campaign in context: it was the first major attempt by the Judahite kings to establish Judahite hegemony in the region. Within the account of the Edomite revolt there is a short note on a similar conflict west of Judah, in the Shephelah (2 Kgs 8:22b): "Then Libnah revolted at the same time." Libnah thus reflects the expansion process of the kingdom during this period. Since he was married to Jehoram, who attacked the inhabitants of the southern desert fringe who at some point rebelled (cf. 2 Sam 8:14; 1 Kgs 22:48).

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5. Joram in Chronicles (2 Chr 21). The author of 1 Chr 21 takes up – albeit not in great detail: a summary of Joram's reign from the book of Kings (2 Chr 21:5–10b). He also reinforces the Deuteronomistic negative evaluation of Jehoram by ascribing to him additional crimes that are not mentioned in Kings. First, he accuses Joram of having his brothers, to whom their father, Jehoshaphat, granted riches and fortified cities, slain (2 Chr 21:2–4). He then goes on to argue that the unsuccessful military campaigns to Edom and Libnah (recounted in 2 Kgs 8:21–22) were the result of his cultic misdeeds (2 Chr 21:10–11). Furthermore, the Chronicler cites a legendary letter by Elijah (2 Chr 21:12–18) in which the prophet foretells that Joram will face divine punishment for his crimes against Yahweh, against his brothers and against his people. The fulfillment of the prophecy can be seen in the report of bands of Philistines and Arabs attacking Judah and killing the king's sons and wives. Joram himself died in agony from a severe illness (2 Chr 21:16–20). The entire portrayal of Jehoram in 2 Chr 21 seems to be marked by the Chronicler's theology regarding guilt and punishment, and thus it hardly contributes to the historical reconstruction of Jehoram reign.

Bibliography


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Na’aman, N., "Three Notes on the Aramaic Inscription
2. King of Israel

1. Chronology. The absolute chronology of Joram’s reign can be quite easily determined from extra-biblical sources. According to the Kurkh Monolith (RIMA 3: A.0.102.2) Ahab was the king of Israel in the sixth year of Shalmaneser III’s reign (853 BCE). According to the Assyrian annals inscribed on the Black Obelisk (RIMA 3: A.0.102.14), in the 18th year of Shalmaneser’s reign (841 BCE), Jehu, who usurped the Omride throne, was already reigning over Israel. Since Joram ruled Israel for 12 years (2 Kgs 2:1), and he was preceded by Ahaziah, who ruled for two years (1 Kgs 22:52), it seems that Ahab died a short time after the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE (Na’aman 2005). If so, his son, Ahaziah, reigned until 852/851 BCE and Joram reigned during most of the 840’s BCE (Thiele; Lipiński; Yamada). Other suggestions do not deviate much from this chronology: 853 to 842 BCE (Andersen); 851 to 845 BCE (Begrich).

2. Geo-political Setting for Joram’s Reign. Joram was the last king of the Omride dynasty. Under Omride rule Israel controlled vast territories and important trade routes, exerted regional hegemony in both cis- and trans-Jordan, and played a prominent role in the international arena (Miller/Hayes: 284–327; Finkelstein: 83–118). During Joram’s reign Israel was part of an alliance of central and southern Syrian kingdoms that was formed in an attempt to resist Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria (859–826 BCE), who led military campaigns west of the Euphrates and who subjugated the Syro-Hittite kingdoms. The alliance managed to block Shalmaneser’s advance in central Syria in 853, 849, 848 and 845 BCE. According to the Assyrian annals (RIMA 3: A.0.102.2) the three kings who contributed the main body of the fighting forces in the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE were Hadadezer, king of Aram-Damascus, Inhulami, king of Hamath and Ahab, king of Israel. The Assyrian annals documenting the western campaigns of 849, 848 and 845 BCE mention Hadadezer and Inhulami along with twelve other kings, whose identities are not elaborated on (RIMA 3: A.0.102.6, 8, 10, 14, 16). Since it seems that the same anti-Assyrian coalition resisted Shalmaneser, continuously blocking his advance in central Syria, Israel, under the rule of Joram, probably maintained an important role in the coalition throughout the 40s of the 9th century BCE. (Yamada: 164–183; Younger). Sometime after the last battle between the coalition and Shalmaneser III (845 BCE) a dynastic crisis erupted in Damascus, resulting in the seizing of the Aramaean throne by Hazael (Lipiński: 376–83) and the termination of the alliance between Israel and Aram-Damascus. Consequently, in the Battle of Ramoth-gilead, fought between Israel and Aram-Damascus (842/841 BCE), Joram was defeated by Hazael, and Jehu, son of Nimshi, a senior officer in Joram’s army, usurped power in a bloody coup (2 Kgs 9:9–10; Hos 1:14) during which all the descendants of the Omride dynasty (in Israel) were killed. Thus, By 841 BCE when Shalmaneser III campaigned against Aram-Damascus, Hamat allowed him to pass through its territory, and Israel – already under the rule of Jehu – was subjugated to him.

3. Joram in History and in the Book of Kings. The block of material in 2 Kgs 1:17–9:27 is situated in the days of Joram. This includes the short Deuteronomistic summary of his reign (2 Kgs 3:1–3); the prophetic story about the military campaign he led in order to suppress the revolt of Mesha, king of Moab (2 Kgs 3:4–27); short reports on his battle against Hazael, king of Damascus, for Ramoth-gilead (2 Kgs 8:28–29; 9:14–16) and the story about Jehu’s revolt, which contains the narration of Joram’s death (2 Kgs 9:17–27). Prophetic stories about wars with the Aramaeans (2 Kgs 6:8–7:20) together with other prophetic narratives that were ascribed by the editors of Kings to the days of Joram (2 Kgs 2:4–5; 6:1–7; 8:7–15) hardly reflect the political reality of the time. It has therefore been suggested that these should be ascribed to the reign of Jehu, or even later, as part of the compositions added to the book of Kings during a secondary redaction. Joram is also mentioned in an extra-biblical source – the Tel Dan Stele, commonly ascribed to Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus (Biran/Naveh). According to the prophetic story in 2 Kgs 3:4–27, Joram, together with Josaphat, king of Judah, and the king of Edom, led an unsuccessful military campaign to suppress Mesha’s rebellion in Moab. This story is complex on both the literary and theological level, and there is hardly any consensus regarding the extent and the content of its source (e.g., Schmitt: 32–34; Na’aman 2007; Gass). Considering this problem, it is very hard to use the narrative for historical reconstruction. It has often been suggested that Joram or Jehoshaphat (or both) were only introduced to the story in a secondary redaction. The literary arguments for such conclusions are highly disputed. The basic setting of the prophetic story (that Moab was subjugated to the Om-
rises until Mesha cast off their yoke) is confirmed by the Mesha Inscription, and thus there is little reason to doubt the historicity of the political context of the battle. From a historical point of view, Joram was engaged in the effort to block Shalmaneser III’s advance in central Syria at least three times in the years 849–845 BCE and immediately afterwards his alliance with the powerful kingdom of Aram-Damascus came to an end, marking a change in the balance of power in the southern Levant. Such a geo-political climate was enough to enable Mesha’s revolt. As for Jehoshaphat, it is indeed questionable whether he actually could have taken part in this campaign, as his reign seems to have preceded Mesha’s rebellion (Timm: 171–80; Würthwein: 284–85). However, evidence exists that Ahaziah, king of Judah, at least joined Joram in the battle for Ramoth-gilead, and it is safe to assume that he or his father (Jehoram) also joined Joram in his attempt to quell Mesha’s rebellion. This conclusion is further supported by the family ties between the Davidic and Omride kings (Athaliah, the Omride princess was the wife of Jehoram, king of Judah, and the mother of his son and successor, Ahaziah.)

The battle of Ramoth-gilead, which brought Joram’s reign to an end, also marks the fall of the Omride Dynasty and a shift in power balance in the southern Levant. It is mentioned in the summary of Ahaziah’s reign (2 Kgs 8:28–29) and as the background to the story of Jehu’s revolt (2 Kgs 9:14–16). The results of the battle are depicted in both texts in a similar manner, with almost identical narration (2 Kgs. 8:28, 9:15a, 16a) – Joram was wounded in the battle and retreated to Jezreel, where he met Ahaziah, king of Judah. However, the battle’s circumstances are presented in a contradictory manner. According to the story about Jehu’s revolt, only Joram confronted Hazael, who attacked Ramoth-gilead (2 Kgs 9:14b), while according to the note in the summary of Ahaziah’s reign, Joram was the one who attacked Ramoth-gilead, and he was joined by Ahaziah (2 Kgs 8:28). The Tel Dan Stele corresponds with the version in 2 Kgs 8:28, and relates that Joram, together with Ahaziah, king of Judah, were the aggressors who attacked the King of Aram-Damascus (Robker: 265, 285–291).

Joram’s defeat in the battle of Ramoth-gilead was the immediate catalyst for Jehu’s revolt. According to 2 Kgs 9, Joram was wounded in the battle and returned to Jezreel. In his absence, Jehu, one of the leading army commanders, was proclaimed King, and soon after headed back to Jezreel, where he killed Joram, his mother Jezebel, and Ahaziah, the king of Judah. According to the Tel Dan Stele, however, Hazael credits himself with the death of Joram and Ahaziah, probably in the battlefield at Ramoth-gilead. This version of events has more credence than the version in Kings, as contemporaneous inscriptions should be considered more reliable than a prophetic story that was composed after the events it depicts and which are written on a high literary level (Na’aman 2000).

4. The Deuteronomistic Theological Evaluation of Joram. Like all the other kings of Israel, the Deuteronomists accused Joram of “not doing right in the eyes of YHWH” because he maintained the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kgs 3:2–3), who erected the cult places in Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:26–30). Yet, the theological evaluation of Joram includes an important reservation – he was not considered as bad as his father (Ahab) and his mother (Jezebel), since he removed the cultic pillar of Baal (2 Kgs 3:2). This reservation should not be taken as evidence of any major cultic or religious change in the days of Joram however. It seems that it was meant to imply that the demise of the Omride dynasty during Joram’s reign was not only the result of his own sins but of the accumulated cultic sins of his family (cf. 1 Kgs 16:25–26, 30; 21:21–26). A similar concept is seen in the theological evaluation of the last king of Israel in 2 Kgs 17:2.

5. Joram in the Book of Chronicles. The Chronicler is only interested in the Judahite king, so that Joram of Israel serves only as background. The Chronicles only gives the summary of Ahaziah’s reign from the book of Kings, where Joram is mentioned in the context of the battle of Ramoth-gilead (2 Kgs 8:28–29; 2 Chr 22:5–6).

Jordan River

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

The headwaters of the Jordan River (MT *Yarden*; LXX *Ἱορδάνης*) lie at the foot of Mount Hermon. They flow through the Huleh Valley before entering the Sea of Galilee. The Jordan flows southward from there, winding torturously on its journey to the Dead Sea, into which its waters empty. The river is a political boundary in modern times; it seems to have occasionally been a tribal and political boundary in antiquity as well. According to the biblical record, the river could pose difficulties to commerce and travel, especially when at flood stage. The river’s status as a political and economic boundary in antiquity, although not impassable, led to its uniquely symbolic position in the text of the HB/OT.

1. Name and Derivation. The linguistic origin of the Jordan River’s name has been heavily debated, in large part because of the varying forms in which it was preserved in antiquity. The name is *yarden* (*"yardin"*) in Biblical and Modern Hebrew (see also *yarden* in Aramaic [e.g., TO Gen 13:10–11]), but *Ioqebwēvy* (*"yārdān"*) in Greek texts (see *ywrdn* in the Aramaic of TPT [e.g., 42:7]), and *Urduan* (*"yuřdun/ů?"*) or *Urdan* (*"yuřdun/ů?"*) in modern Arabic (Thompson: 954; Hommel: 169). The river is named in an Egyptian text of the 19th Dynasty (13th cent. BCE) as *ḥḏy n ɾyḏwn* “the river (of) Jordan” (p. Amarna 1: 22–23.1, for which see Gardiner: 68; = ANET, 477; see also Ahituv: 123). Albright rendered this spelling syllabically as Ya-ar-du-na (1934: 36, iv:6; 1968: 111–12, esp. n. 5). He considered this orthography to betray the name’s West Semitic origin (which he esteemed to show the development *yurdōn* > *yurdān* [Canaanite shift] > *yarden* [dis-simulation of u-a vowels]). The name is also commonly identified with entry 150 (*jwrdwn*) in the Tabulate Palmate list of Sheshonq (22nd Dynasty, 10th cent. BCE; see Ritner: 208, 210). Albright considered *yarden* to be an “Aramaizing development from Canaanite-Hebrew” (1968: 111n.5).

Some have argued for a Semitic derivation of the name, citing either the verbal root *y-r-d* “to descend,” or the common noun *yul* “river,” followed by the element *dan* (purportedly incorporating the name of the city at the river’s headwaters). This etymology is typically credited to Jerome (e.g., Hommel: 169), and was preserved by several Medieval and Renaissance cartographic representations