



Balustrade, Guardrail of window from Ramat Rachel

Photos above and paragraph below From Carl Rasmussen's Site – holylandphotos.org

Ramat Rachel is a 6-acre [2.4 ha.] site that is located 2.5 mi. [4 km.] south of Jerusalem—half way to Bethlehem. It is a prominent site from which one can view Jerusalem to the north and Bethlehem to the south—along with the Valley of Rephaim to the west and the Wilderness of Judah to the east.

During the days of the late Judean monarchy a large palace was constructed, and reconstructed, there—possibly by the Judean king Hezekiah, and then by Jehoiakim. Its ancient name is not known, but Aharoni suggested that it might be Beth-haccerem and the palace that Jehoiakim built (Jer 6:1; 22:13–19).

Below Information taken from Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website

During the 8th century BCE, a royal citadel was built here by one of the kings of Judah. Of this citadel only a small section of a casemate wall (a double fortification wall with compartments), remained. But more than a hundred seal impressions of the lamelekh (Hebrew, to the King) type, stamped on handles of storage jars, were found and are associated with the early days of this citadel. They are indicative of the site's importance as an administrative center of the Kingdom of Judah. Towards the end of the 7th - beginning of the

6th century BCE, a new royal citadel, much larger than its predecessor, was built on the site; it had an outer fortification system, and an inner citadel with a palace.

The outer fortification system was composed of a massive, 3 - 4 m.-wide wall. Though only small portions of it were exposed, it may be assumed that it encircled an area of some five acres on the top of the hill. Inside this wall, no building remains were found. It is believed that this large courtyard served for mustering troops and chariotry.

The inner citadel, measuring 75 x 50 m., stood at the northeastern corner of the courtyard. It was surrounded by a 5 m.-wide casemate wall. The rooms in the wall had floors covered with a thick, hard plaster, which suggests that they were storerooms.

The gate to the inner citadel was in the center of the eastern wall and was reinforced with buttresses. It had two cells, one on each side of the entrance, with floors of massive stone flags. The gate was closed with inner and outer double doors. A narrower opening into the inner citadel was located in the same wall, several meters to the south.

The area inside the citadel was divided into a stone-paved courtyard with buildings along the northern and western sides. The northern building consisted of an open, inner courtyard surrounded by several rooms, and it probably served as the king's residence. A narrow, hidden postern, built of large stones under the northern wall connected the citadel with the outside, providing an escape passage.

The royal citadel at Ramat Rahel is one of the most instructive examples of Israelite-Phoenician architecture in the biblical period. The construction of the casemate walls and the buildings of the citadel was of excellent quality, with smoothed and squared stones laid in well-fitted courses. The main gate, built of large, dressed stones also shows fine workmanship. Several complete proto-Aeolic capitals were found in the ruins of the citadel; they once decorated the doorposts of the main gate and the entrances to the buildings.

Window balustrades consisting of a row of stone colonnettes, decorated with palmettes and topped with joined capitals in the proto-Aeolic style, were also found. They probably adorned the upper story of the buildings inside the citadel. These decorative architectural elements echo a verse in the book of Jeremiah, which describes the windows in the house of Jehoiakim king of Judah: *and cut out windows for it, paneling it with cedar, and painting it with vermilion...* (Jeremiah 22:14)

In the debris that covered the citadel after its destruction by the Babylonians, many luxury objects, such as imported Assyrian palace ware were found. A unique find is a seal impression with the inscription to Eliaqim, steward of Yochin is ascribed to an official of King Jehoiachin, king of Judah, who was the son of King Jehoiakim



