

RECENT DISCOVERIES AT THE KAL'AT JALUD, JERUSALEM.

7th September, 1877.

AN interesting discovery has been made lately by the French monks at Jerusalem. While digging for the foundations of a new school on the site of the Kal'at Jalud, or "Goliath's Castle," they came upon four massive piers of ancient drafted masonry. A number of ruined vaults and masses of rubbish have been removed, and now the ancient work is uncovered almost down to the rock. Two of these piers were seen by Major Wilson, and were, in his opinion, of mediæval date; but the lower portions now disclosed seem to be earlier. The French monks are quite confident that they have here discovered the foundations of the tower of Psephinus.

The stones are large, measuring 8ft. 6in. by 2ft. 9in. by 2ft. 4in. high, and 7ft. 6in. by 2ft. 8in. by 2ft. 4in. high. Some are rather smaller; they are all drafted, the draft varying from three to four and a half inches. The joints are carefully finished, and the courses are quite regular; the stones are fixed together by a thin layer of very hard cement. The bosses are left rough and project in some cases as much as eight inches; the stones show no signs of being weather-worn. Four courses of the ancient work remain, and they measure 9ft. 4in. in height; on the top of these courses is mediæval work for two or three courses; there are also walls of probably the same date faced with large drafted masonry. In the vaults and passages there are also considerable remains of Crusading work. I have sent you a plan which will show the form of the four piers; where the lines are dotted the walls were not visible. The enclosed photograph was given me by the French monks. It seems impossible to make an octagon out of these remains, which is necessary for the tower of Psephinus, according to Josephus. I could see no traces of ancient arches, or any clue to what these piers supported originally. As far as I was able to see, there is no reason why the piers should not have been originally joined, forming two walls running south-east and north-west; this would then have probably been an ancient city gate. The scarpèd rock on the north-west, on which the city wall is built, runs out almost at right angles to the line of this gate, and on the south-west there are traces of ancient work running in the same direction; thus the gate would appear to have been flanked by two towers. That on the south-west may have been Psephinus, as it would have been on the highest ground of the city.

I am glad to be able to report that the owners have modified their plan so as to preserve these interesting remains for future examination. Unfortunately an ancient corner of wall south-east of the piers had to be removed. The stones are described as larger, and the appearance was not so finished as those recently found. Major Wilson examined them while excavating in this direction.

H. H. K.