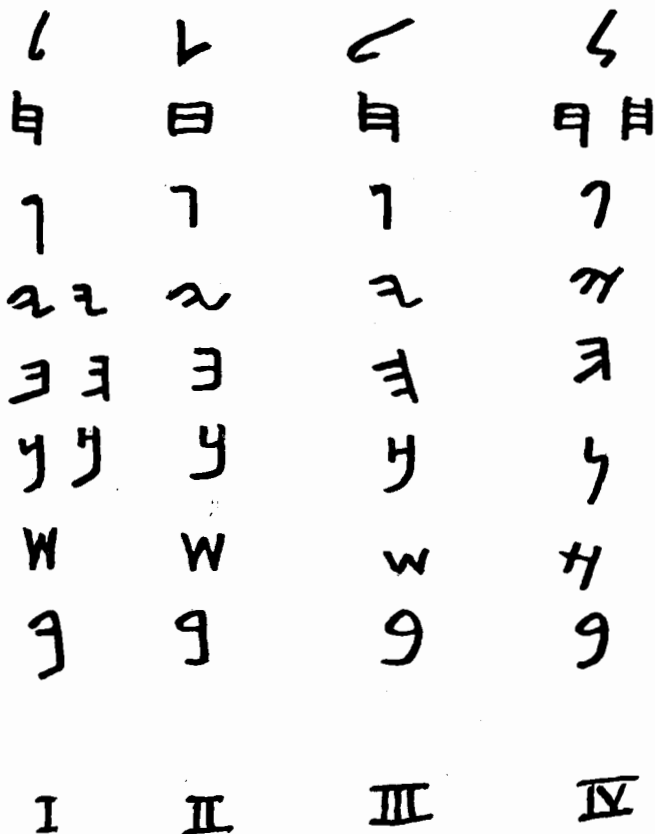


The assertion that the Siloam text presents older forms than the Moabite stone is as yet unproved ; on the contrary the forms of the *mim*, *nun*, and especially of the *aleph* are those found on texts of the 7th



century B.C. and later, and the text is only placed as early as 700 B.C. because some of its letters approach those of the older Moabite alphabet.

C. R. C.

### BEZETHA.

THIS name applied to the new part of Jerusalem, north of the temple. Josephus speaks of Bezetha (Βεζηθά) "which is also called the New City" 2 Wars xix, 4) which by no means shows that the Hebrew name meant "New City." Dr. Neubauer (Geog. Tal. p. 139) says the word has been

variously translated. The common etymology is בית חדתא *Beth Haditha* "New house" others give בית זיתא "House of Olives." R. Schwarz points to the word בעצא "swamp" but there are no swamps at Jerusalem. Yet the real meaning of the name may not be unconnected with a passage to which R. Schwarz was referring.

Dr. Neubauer cites this passage which appears in various Talmudic works. Tosiphta *Sanhed*, ch. 3 ; Tal Jer *Sanhed* i, 2 ; Tal Bab *Shebuoth* 16a, *Megillah Taanith*, ch. 6. "Two places called Bitzin (בעצין or ביים) existed at Jerusalem, the lower and the upper. The lower was added to Jerusalem by the exiles who came back from Babylon and had the same rights as the rest of the city, the other was added later by a king and without consulting Urim and Thummim. It had not previously been added to the city because it was on the weak side of Jerusalem."

Now since Bezetha was both on the weak side of Jerusalem, and also only added in the later times of the Herodians, it is clear that the Upper Bitz'a may, as Dr. Neubauer said, very probably be Bezetha.

I would now call attention to the meaning of the word. The root בעע in Aramaic is used according to Buxtorff with the meaning "to cut off" or "divide." Hence the Bitz'a was the "cutting" (*Frustra Fovea Fossa*) and Gesenius (s. v. בוא) makes the Hebrew roots בוא and בעע and בוע equivalent, all with the sense of *dividing*. Hence we might easily suppose that βεζθηα (with the long vowel *Bezéthā*) represents a word בואתא from the Root בוא equivalent to the Aramaic בעע.

Bezetha only appears in history after the Christian Era, that is after the building of Herod's Temple. Now, as Josephus explains (5 Wars iv, 3), "It lies over against the Tower Antonia, but it is divided from it by a deep valley which was dug on purpose, and that in order to hinder the foundations of the Tower of Antonia from joining to this hill." It is true that in the same passage he seems to consider Bezetha as equivalent to the Greek "New City," but the translation may here be doubted.

It seems probable that Bezetha, therefore, may simply be the Hebrew or Aramaic *Bezéthā*, and may mean "the cutting," referring to the fosse north of Antonia, which still exists and which was converted, after the time of Josephus, into the Twin Pools. This explanation has not, as far as I know, been previously proposed.

C. R. C.

## ESAU'S HEAD.

THERE is a curious legend in the Talmud as to the death of Esau. According to this account, Hushim, son of Dan, cut off Esau's head in the faction fight which followed the burial of Jacob. The head was buried in Hebron, but the body in Mount Seir.

On the Survey Map north of Hebron will be found the village of Siar