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With thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.
INSCRIPTION ON FRAGMENT OF BASE FROM TEMPLE OF DIANA EPSHESUS.
OBSERVATIONS ON AN INSCRIPTION IN AN UNKNOWN CHARACTER,

Found on a Fragment of Base in the Temple of Diana at Ephesus.

By C. T. Newton, C.B.

Reprinted from the "Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology."
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Mr. Newton exhibited a paper impression from an inscription on a base found by Mr. J. T. Wood in the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. This inscription consists of five characters, very deeply and legibly cut on the curved face of a fragment of marble, which has evidently formed the base of some sculpture, as the outline of a foot may still be traced on its upper side. The section of this base is rectangular, and its depth 4½ inches. It is uncertain how far the inscription extended on the right, but on the left the marble is left perfectly plain after the last letter. Beginning from the left the two last characters  fullfile might be either archaic Greek or Semitic, the third would be the Greek iota, but the fourth character I cannot be at present recognized in any ancient alphabet, unless we suppose it to be a new variety of the I. There are two finer strokes under the lower cross-line, which seem part of the original character. Whether we read this inscription from right or left, the characters do not suggest either a Greek or a Semitic word.

The curve of the base and its rectangular section correspond with those of other fragments of bases found in the Temple of Diana, to which are still attached portions of sculptured figures in relief in a very archaic style. On striking the curve of these bases it has been found that we obtain a circle six feet in diameter, a dimension very nearly corre-
sponding to that of the bases of the sculptured columns which Mr. Wood discovered, and which unquestionably belong to the temple built in the time of Alexander the Great, and which Pliny describes as celatae columnae. After a careful examination of all the fragments of archaic sculpture already alluded to, Mr. Newton has come to the conclusion that they belong to the earlier temple, some of the columns of which were the gift of Croesus, and that they are in all probability fragments of celatae columnae, a peculiar architectural feature, which would thus seem not to have been the invention of the architects of the later temple, but to have been adopted by them in accordance with the tradition of the original design. The fragment of inscribed base of which an impression was exhibited, may belong to one of these celatae columnae of the earlier temple, though its depth (4½ inches) is less by half an inch than that of the other fragments of base of the same character. We may, however, in any case, assume that it is the inscription on the base of some piece of sculpture, and that it is most probably part of a dedication. If this dedication was made in the earlier temple, the date of the inscription may be as early as B.C. 560, though the mode of cutting in the letters suggests a more recent date. We may now be quite sure that there were originally in Asia Minor several alphabets derived in the main from the same source as the Greek, but which, unlike the Greek, never spread beyond the district where they first came into use. The question which has now to be examined is, assuming the inscription before the Society to be Asiatic, to what alphabet do its characters belong?