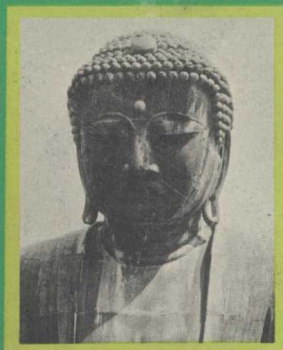
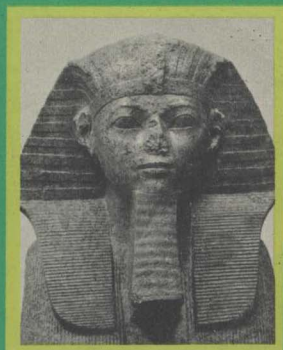


THE STORY OF CIVILIZATION
I



Our
Oriental
Heritage

WILL DURANT

*Being a History of Civilization in Egypt and the Near East
to the Death of Alexander; and in India, China and Japan
from the Beginning to Our Own Day; with an Introduction
to the Nature and Foundations of Civilization*

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By Will Durant



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BY WILL DURANT

The Story of Philosophy
Transition

The Pleasures of Philosophy
Adventures in Genius

THE STORY OF CIVILIZATION

BY WILL AND ARIEL DURANT

I. *Our Oriental Heritage*

II. *The Life of Greece*

III. *Caesar and Christ*

IV. *The Age of Faith*

V. *The Renaissance*

VI. *The Reformation*

VII. *The Age of Reason Begins*

VIII. *The Age of Louis XIV*

IX. *The Age of Voltaire*

X. *Rousseau and Revolution*

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W.C.

Preface

I HAVE tried in this book to accomplish the first part of a pleasant assignment which I rashly laid upon myself some twenty years ago: to write a history of civilization. I wish to tell as much as I can, in as little space as I can, of the contributions that genius and labor have made to the cultural heritage of mankind—to chronicle and contemplate, in their causes, character and effects, the advances of invention, the varieties of economic organization, the experiments in government, the aspirations of religion, the mutations of morals and manners, the masterpieces of literature, the development of science, the wisdom of philosophy, and the achievements of art. I do not need to be told how absurd this enterprise is, nor how immodest is its very conception; for many years of effort have brought it to but a fifth of its completion, and have made it clear that no one mind, and no single lifetime, can adequately compass this task. Nevertheless I have dreamed that despite the many errors inevitable in this undertaking, it may be of some use to those upon whom the passion for philosophy has laid the compulsion to try to see things whole, to pursue perspective, unity and understanding through history in time, as well as to seek them through science in space.

I have long felt that our usual method of writing history in separate longitudinal sections—economic history, political history, religious history, the history of philosophy, the history of literature, the history of science, the history of music, the history of art—does injustice to the unity of human life; that history should be written collaterally as well as lineally, synthetically as well as analytically; and that the ideal historiography would seek to portray in each period the total complex of a nation's culture, institutions, adventures and ways. But the accumulation of knowledge has divided history, like science, into a thousand isolated specialties; and prudent scholars have refrained from attempting any view of the whole—whether of the material universe, or of the living past of our race. For the probability of error increases with the scope of the undertaking, and any man who sells his soul to synthesis will be a tragic target for a myriad merry darts of specialist critique. "Consider," said Ptah-hotep five thousand years ago, "how thou mayest be opposed by an expert in council. It is

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foolish to speak on every kind of work.”* A history of civilization shares the presumptuousness of every philosophical enterprise: it offers the ridiculous spectacle of a fragment expounding the whole. Like philosophy, such a venture has no rational excuse, and is at best but a brave stupidity; but let us hope that, like philosophy, it will always lure some rash spirits into its fatal depths.

The plan of the series is to narrate the history of civilization in five independent parts:

- I. *Our Oriental Heritage*: a history of civilization in Egypt and the Near East to the death of Alexander, and in India, China and Japan to the present day; with an introduction on the nature and elements of civilization.
- II. *Our Classical Heritage*: a history of civilization in Greece and Rome, and of civilization in the Near East under Greek and Roman domination.
- III. *Our Medieval Heritage*: Catholic and feudal Europe, Byzantine civilization, Mohammedan and Judaic culture in Asia, Africa and Spain, and the Italian Renaissance.
- IV. *Our European Heritage*: the cultural history of the European states from the Protestant Reformation to the French Revolution.
- V. *Our Modern Heritage*: the history of European invention and statesmanship, science and philosophy, religion and morals, literature and art from the accession of Napoleon to our own times.

Our story begins with the Orient, not merely because Asia was the scene of the oldest civilizations known to us, but because those civilizations formed the background and basis of that Greek and Roman culture which Sir Henry Maine mistakenly supposed to be the whole source of the modern mind. We shall be surprised to learn how much of our most indispensable inventions, our economic and political organization, our science and our literature, our philosophy and our religion, goes back to Egypt and the Orient.† At this historic moment—when the ascendancy of Europe is so rapidly coming to an end, when Asia is swelling with resurrected life, and the theme of the twentieth century seems destined to be an all-embrac-

* Cf. p. 193 below.

† The contributions of the Orient to our cultural heritage are summed up in the concluding pages of this volume.

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ing conflict between the East and the West—the provincialism of our traditional histories, which began with Greece and summed up Asia in a line, has become no merely academic error, but a possibly fatal failure of perspective and intelligence. The future faces into the Pacific, and understanding must follow it there.

But how shall an Occidental mind ever understand the Orient? Eight years of study and travel have only made this, too, more evident—that not even a lifetime of devoted scholarship would suffice to initiate a Western student into the subtle character and secret lore of the East. Every chapter, every paragraph in this book will offend or amuse some patriotic or esoteric soul: the orthodox Jew will need all his ancient patience to forgive the pages on Yahveh; the metaphysical Hindu will mourn this superficial scratching of Indian philosophy; and the Chinese or Japanese sage will smile indulgently at these brief and inadequate selections from the wealth of Far Eastern literature and thought. Some of the errors in the chapter on Judea have been corrected by Professor Harry Wolfson of Harvard; Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy of the Boston Institute of Fine Arts has given the section on India a most painstaking revision, but must not be held responsible for the conclusions I have reached or the errors that remain; Professor H. H. Gowen, the learned Orientalist of the University of Washington, and Upton Close, whose knowledge of the Orient seems inexhaustible, have checked the more flagrant mistakes in the chapters on China and Japan; and Mr. George Sokolsky has given to the pages on contemporary affairs in the Far East the benefit of his first-hand information. Should the public be indulgent enough to call for a second edition of this book, the opportunity will be taken to incorporate whatever further corrections may be suggested by critics, specialists and readers. Meanwhile a weary author may sympathize with Tai T'ung, who in the thirteenth century issued his *History of Chinese Writing* with these words: "Were I to await perfection, my book would never be finished."*

Since these ear-minded times are not propitious for the popularity of expensive books on remote subjects of interest only to citizens of the world, it may be that the continuation of this series will be delayed by the prosaic necessities of economic life. But if the reception of this adventure in synthesis makes possible an uninterrupted devotion to the undertaking, Part Two should be ready by the fall of 1940, and its successors should appear,

* Carter, T. F., *The Invention of Printing in China, and Its Spread Westward*; New York, 1925, p. xviii.

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by the grace of health, at five-year intervals thereafter. Nothing would make me happier than to be freed, for this work, from every other literary enterprise. I shall proceed as rapidly as time and circumstance will permit, hoping that a few of my contemporaries will care to grow old with me while learning, and that these volumes may help some of our children to understand and enjoy the infinite riches of their inheritance.

WILL DURANT.

Great Neck, N. Y., March, 1935

A NOTE ON THE USE OF THIS BOOK

To bring the volume into smaller compass certain technical passages, which may prove difficult for the general reader, have been printed (like this paragraph) in reduced type. Despite much compression the book is still too long, and the font of reduced type has not sufficed to indicate all the dull passages. I trust that the reader will not attempt more than a chapter at a time.

Indented passages in reduced type are quotations. The raised numbers refer to the Notes at the end of the volume; to facilitate reference to these Notes the number of the chapter is given at the head of each page. An occasional hiatus in the numbering of the Notes was caused by abbreviating the printed text. The books referred to in the Notes are more fully described in the Bibliography, whose starred titles may serve as a guide to further reading. The Glossary defines all foreign words used in the text. The Index pronounces foreign names, and gives biographical dates.

It should be added that this book has no relation to, and makes no use of, a biographical *Story of Civilization* prepared for newspaper publication in 1927-28.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the following authors and publishers for permission to quote from their books:

Leonard, W. E., *Gilgamesh*; the Viking Press.

Giles, H. A., *A History of Chinese Literature*; D. Appleton-Century Co.

Underwood, Edna Worthley, *Tu Fu*; the Mosher Press.

Waley, Arthur, *170 Chinese Poems*; Alfred A. Knopf.

Breasted, Jas. H., *The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*; Scribner's.

Obata, Shigeyoshi, *Works of Li Po*; E. P. Dutton.

Tietjens, Eunice, *Poetry of the Orient*; Alfred A. Knopf.

Van Doren, Mark, *Anthology of World Poetry*; the Literary Guild.

"Upton Close," unpublished translations of Chinese poems.

Illustration Section



FIG. 1—*Granite statue of Rameses II*
Turin Museum, Italy
(See pages 188, 213)

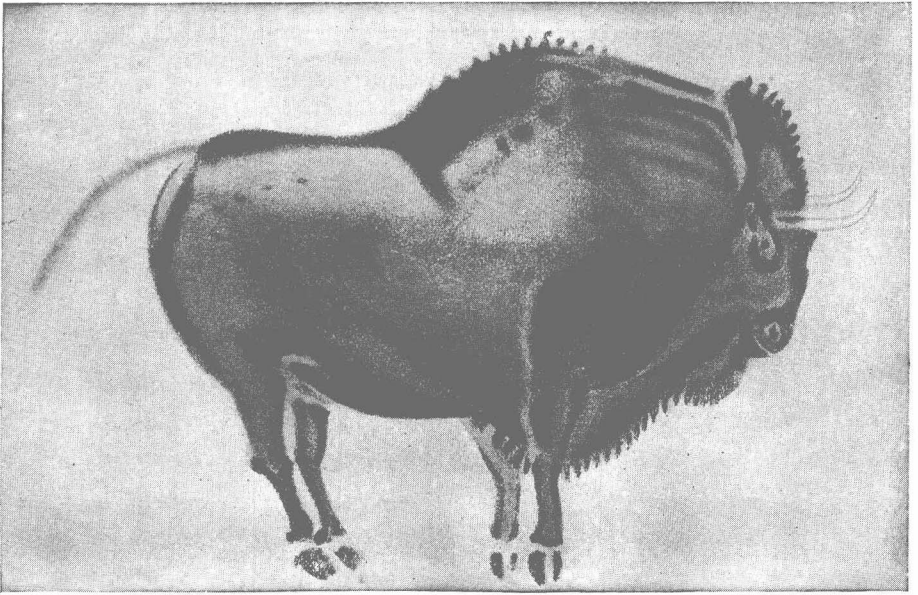


FIG. 2—*Bison painted in paleolithic cave at Altamira, Spain*
Photo by American Museum of Natural History

(See page 96)

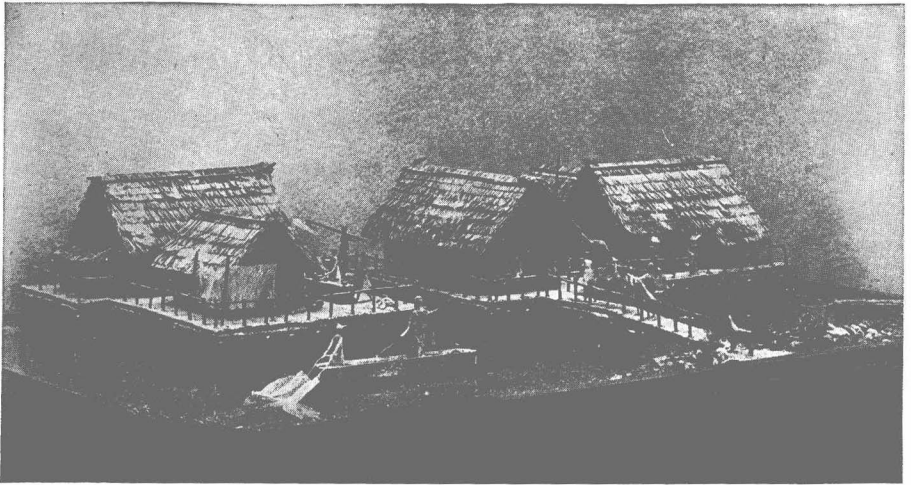


FIG. 3—*Hypothetical reconstruction of a neolithic lake dwelling*
American Museum of Natural History

(See page 98)

ENGLISH	EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPH	ABU-SIMBEL	MOABITE STONE	IONIAN GREEK
A		Δ	←	Α Α
B		Β Β	↵	Β
G			∩	Γ Γ
D			∇	Δ
E		Ε Ε	↘	Ε Ε
F(W)			Υ	
Z	Υ		Ζ	
H		Θ	Η	Θ
TH			⊗	⊗
I		Ι	Ζ	Ι
K			Υ	Κ
L		Λ	Ϛ	Λ
M		Μ	ϛ	Μ
N		Ν	Ϝ	ΜΝ
X(SH)			ϝ	Ξ
O		⊙ ⊙	⊙	⊙ ⊙
P		⊙	⌒	⊙
S			⌒	
Q		⊙	⌒	
R			Ϙ	Ρ Δ
S		Ϙ Ϙ	ϙ	Ϙ Ϙ Ϙ
T		⌒	ϙ	⌒
Ü		⌒	ϙ	⌒
P-H				Χ
KH				Ϙ ϙ
PS				ϙ
Ö				⊙

FIG. 4—Development of the alphabet

FIG. 5—Stele of

Naram-sin

Louvre; photo
by Archives
Photographiques
d'Art et
d'Histoire

(See page 122)

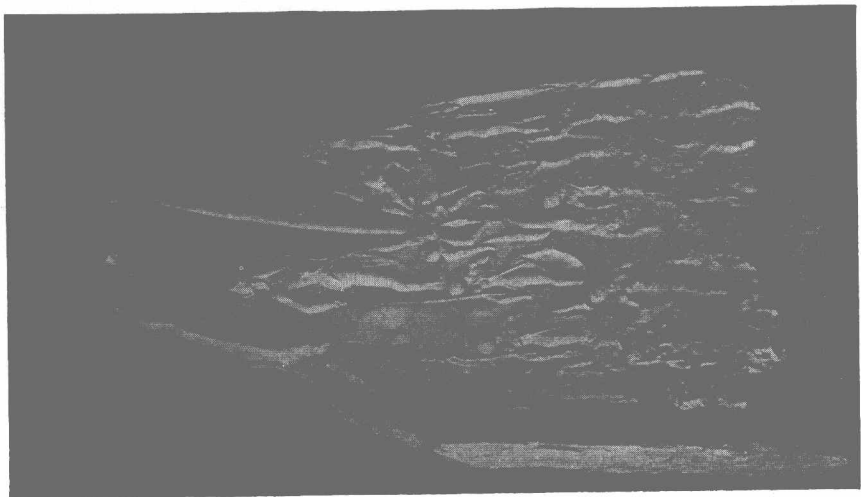


FIG. 6 -The
"little" Gudea

Louvre; photo
by Metropolitan
Museum of Art

(See page 122)

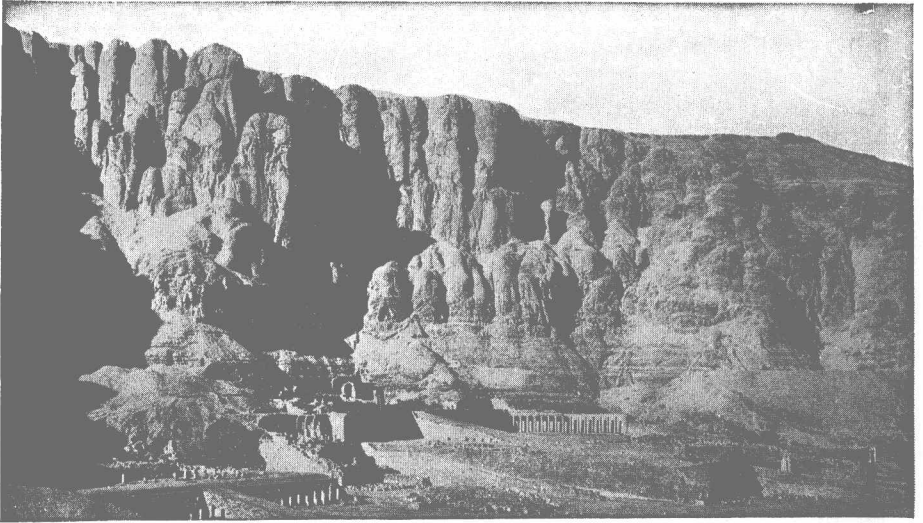


FIG. 7—*Temple of Der-el-Babri*
Photo by Lindsley F. Hall

(See page 154)

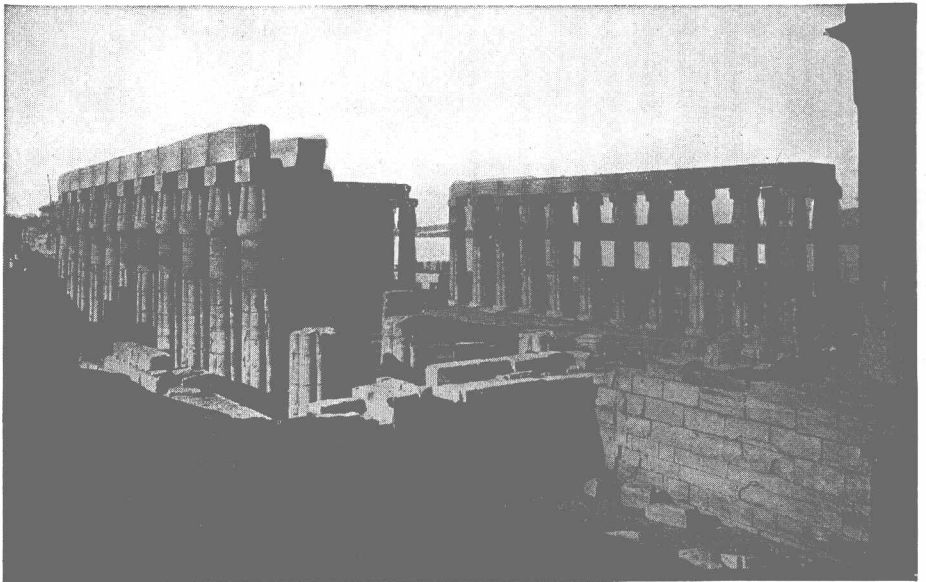


FIG. 8—*Colonnade and court of the temple at Luxor*
Photo by Metropolitan Museum of Art

(See page 142)

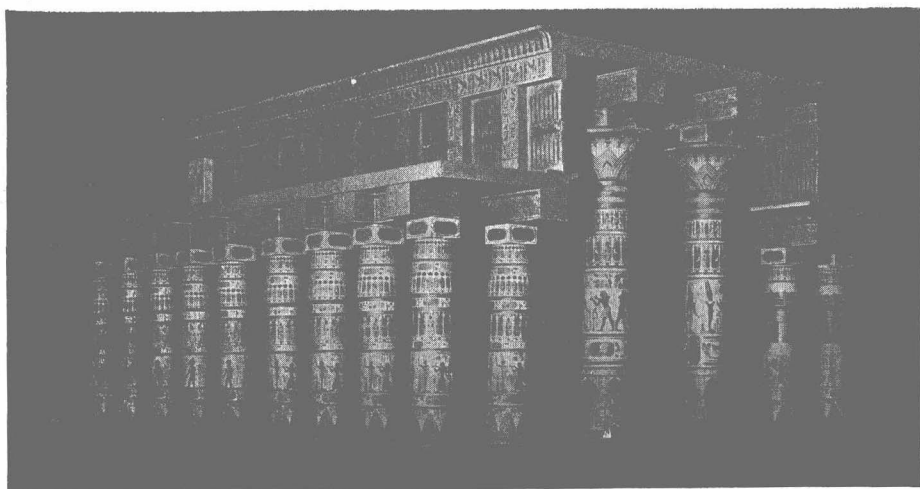


FIG. 9—*Hypothetical reconstruction of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak*
From a model in the Métropolitan Museum of Art

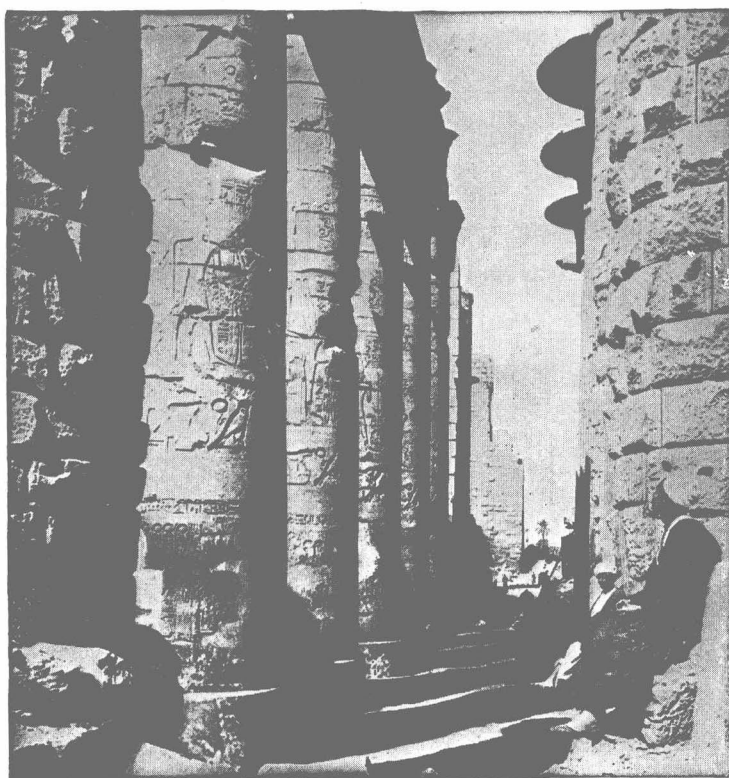


FIG. 10—*Colonnade of the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak*
Underwood & Underwood

(See page 143)

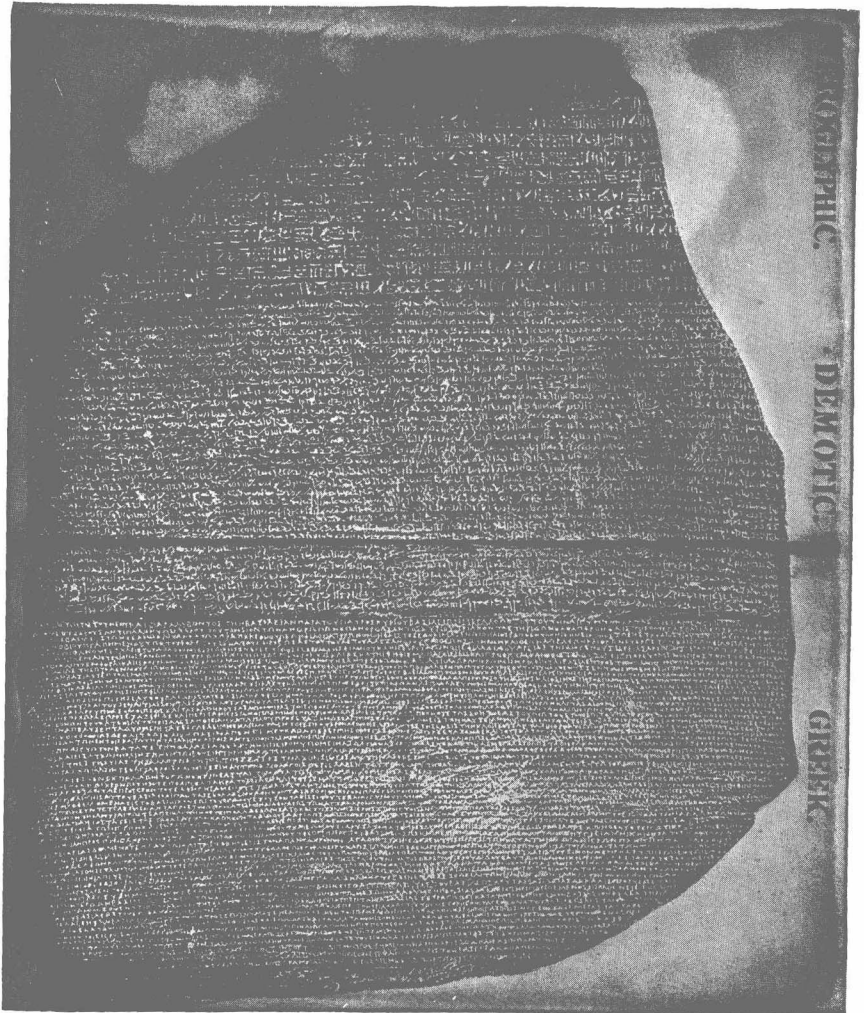


FIG. 11—*The Rosetta Stone*
British Museum
(See page 145)

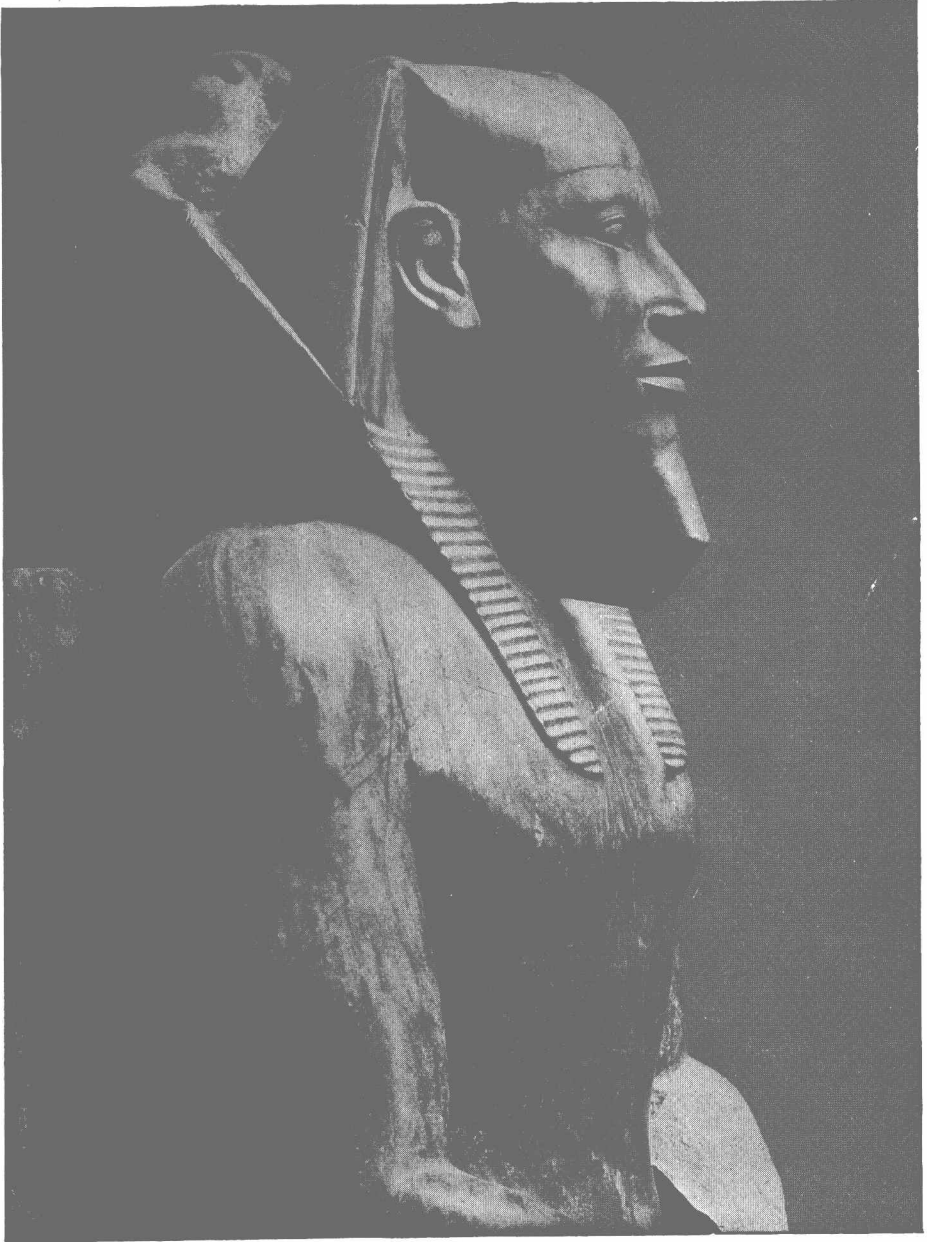


FIG. 12—Diorite head of the Pharaoh Khafre
Cairo Museum; photo by Metropolitan Museum of Art
(See pages 148, 186)