

# The Astonishing Story Behind the Ancient Artifacts: The Rosetta Stone - Unveiling a 2,000-Year-Old Secret




Discover the captivating tale of the Rosetta Stone, a relic that revolutionized the understanding of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and provided unprecedented

insight into one of the world's most enigmatic civilizations. This article will take you on a journey through time, unraveling the mysteries of this extraordinary artifact that has captivated historians, linguists, and archaeologists for centuries.

## The Discovery

In 1799, during the occupation of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte's army, a French soldier named Pierre-François Bouchard stumbled upon a slab of black granite while renovating a fort near the town of Rashid (Rosetta). This unassuming stone, now famously known as the Rosetta Stone, was an essential piece of the puzzle that eventually unlocked the secrets of ancient Egypt.

 Ancient Artifacts: The Rosetta Stone

### Ancient Artifacts: The Rosetta Stone

by Charles River Editors (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English  
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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 42 pages  
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## The Inscriptions

The Rosetta Stone measures around 1.14 meters in height and 0.72 meters in width. What makes it truly extraordinary are the inscriptions carved on its surface. The scribe inscribed a decree issued in 196 BCE during the reign of King Ptolemy V, written in three scripts: hieroglyphic, demotic, and ancient Greek. The Greek

text, considered the key, provided the means to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphs.

## **The Language Barrier**

Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs were virtually indecipherable for over a millennium. The Rosetta Stone's inscriptions sparked hope in scholars seeking to unlock the lost knowledge of the pharaohs. By comparing the ancient Greek translation with the hieroglyphic writings, pioneering linguist Jean-François Champollion made an astonishing breakthrough in 1822, finally cracking the code of the ancient written language.

## **Unlocking Ancient Egypt's Secrets**

With the Rosetta Stone as their guide, researchers began to translate countless inscriptions and writings found across Egypt. A vast array of knowledge about ancient Egyptian history, culture, religion, and administration was unveiled. It enabled the decipherment of temples, tombs, and monuments, shedding light on the lives of the pharaohs and their subjects, the symbolism of hieroglyphs, and the religious and cultural practices of this ancient civilization.

## **The Rosetta Stone's Impact**

The Rosetta Stone's significance is immeasurable. It acted as a key that opened the door to understanding one of the most fascinating and advanced civilizations in history. Its decipherment unraveled countless mysteries, allowing modern generations to explore and grasp the complexities of ancient Egypt. The Rosetta Stone remains a testament to mankind's relentless pursuit of knowledge and the power of linguistic and archaeological breakthroughs.

## **The Rosetta Stone Today**

After its discovery, the Rosetta Stone was acquired by the British during their military campaign in Egypt. Today, this iconic artifact is prominently displayed in the British Museum in London, where it continues to awe visitors from around the globe. Its existence serves as a reminder of the wonders that lie hidden within the ancient world, waiting to be explored and understood.

The Rosetta Stone stands as a legendary testament to the relentless pursuit of understanding our past. Through its discovery and decipherment, it has unlocked the enigmatic secrets of the ancient Egyptians and brought to light a civilization that shaped the course of human history. The Rosetta Stone is a reminder that even the most cryptic of mysteries can be unraveled, given time, dedication, and an unyielding desire to explore.



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\*Includes pictures.

\*Explains how the Rosetta Stone was discovered and deciphered, along with a full translation of the stone.

\*Includes a bibliography for further reading.

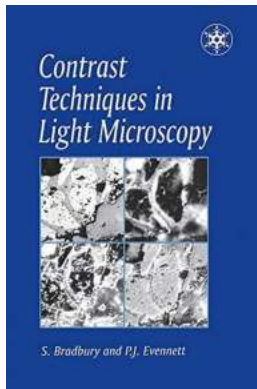
\*Includes a table of contents.

Despite the fact Ancient Egyptian history happened so long ago and covered an immense span of time, Egyptologists are able to learn an incredible amount about different periods through reading the surviving texts now preserved in museums throughout the world and in the many temples and tombs in Egypt. Egyptologists know that the language of ancient Egypt went through many phases and was written in a variety of different scripts, such as the well-known hieroglyphic script and the cursive versions known as hieratic and demotic. But this was not always so, and the key to unlocking it all took place with one groundbreaking discovery.

Until about 200 years ago the writing of the ancient Egyptians was an enigma to the world, but that changed when an ancient Egyptian monument known today as the Rosetta Stone was discovered (or rediscovered serendipitously) by French soldiers in Egypt in 1799. Now one of the most famous monuments in the world, the Rosetta Stone is a black granite stela that was inscribed with texts in Greek and two different scripts of the ancient Egyptian language: demotic and hieroglyphs. Stelae like the Rosetta Stone were monuments that ancient Egyptian kings inscribed texts on, usually to proclaim a battle victory or a legal decree. Since the kings who commissioned stelae to be built believed that the information they contained were important, they were usually large, as is the case with the Rosetta Stone. Although damaged over time, the Rosetta Stone still stands nearly four feet tall and over two feet wide, and it originally stood probably between five and six feet tall (Andrews 1982, 12). The discovery of the Rosetta Stone finally provided researchers with a way of reading the Egyptian language based on an understanding of the Greek translation.

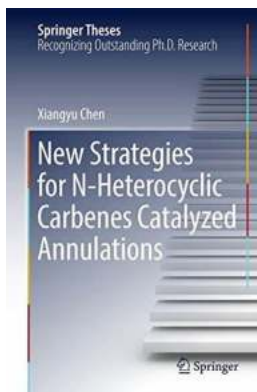
The texts on the Rosetta Stone were written during the reign of Ptolemy V in 196 B.C. Ptolemy V was descended from Ptolemy Lagos, who took control of Egypt after the death of his close friend, Alexander the Great, in 323 BC (Lloyd 2000, 396). Like their pharaonic Egyptian predecessors, the Ptolemies ruled Egypt as a royal dynastic family, and as time went on they even assumed the traditional royal Egyptian titles of kingship. Although not one of the most important of the Ptolemaic rulers, Ptolemy V's reign was important for a couple of reasons. Most of his rule was marked by rebellion of the native Egyptians against their Greek overlords; no matter what the Ptolemies did to try to appear as Egyptians, they were still viewed as foreign by many who wanted to restore a native born ethnic Egyptian dynasty to power. A native Egyptian named Ankhwenefre led the rebellion against Ptolemy V, but it ultimately failed and was suppressed in 186 B.C. (Chauveau 2000, 11). The Rosetta Stone, which conferred benefits to the native Egyptian priests, was commissioned 10 years later by the king in order to appease the important religious class (Lloyd 2000, 415). Other than suppressing that rebellion and commissioning the Rosetta Stone, Ptolemy V is perhaps best known for having Cleopatra I as his queen. Cleopatra I was the first of seven Ptolemaic women to have that name, and like her best known descendant, Cleopatra VII, she also briefly exercised sole rule over Egypt.

The historical importance of the Rosetta Stone as a primary source of events during a turbulent period in Egyptian history cannot be minimized, but its true importance was as a tool that scholars used to unlock the language of ancient Egypt. This was not lost on the Europeans at all, as the discovery and subsequent translation of the Rosetta Stone not only opened the door for the development of modern Egyptology but also proved to be an important chapter during the period known as the Enlightenment.



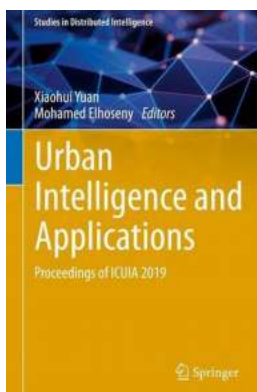
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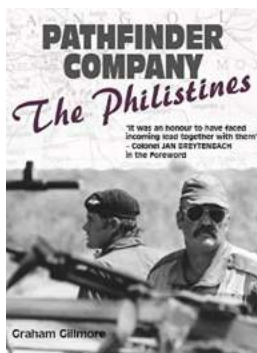
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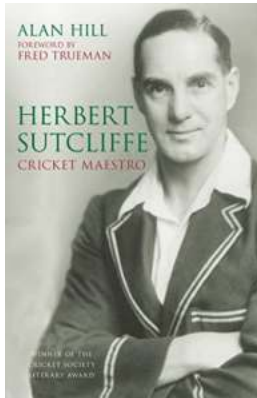
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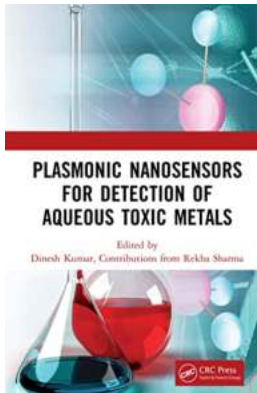
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