

The Rosetta Stone

Up to 1800 A.D., modern historians were unable to read the hieroglyphs of Ancient Egypt. About that time a number of French and English scholars began to attack the problem of learning their meaning. The most important name among them is that of Champollion, a young Frenchman who worked for years upon this task. The first key to the hieroglyphs was obtained by means of the Rosetta stone, a stone tablet found near the mouth of the Nile, on the Rosetta branch of the river. It contained the same text in the ancient Greek language and in two forms of hieroglyphic writing. The Old Greek could be read, and through it the name of an Egyptian king was deciphered in the Egyptian. It was in 1822 that Champollion gave his first satisfactory explanation of the system of hieroglyphs, and now they can be read with comparative ease and certainty.