

Rosetta stone essay



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The Rosetta Stone In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte and his army invaded Egypt, Napoleon's army was helping to repair a fort near the Egyptian town of Rosetta. In the process of dismantling the wall, a member of the expedition discovered a slab of stone with inscriptions from 196 B. C.

E. , of three languages; hieroglyphics which was the script used for important or religious documents, demotic a commonly used style of Egyptian writing, and Greek which was the language of the rulers of Egypt at that time.

(Rosetta Stone). The Rosetta Stone is written in three scripts because when it was written, there were three scripts being used in Egypt The Rosetta Stone was written in all three scripts so that the priests, government officials and rulers of Egypt could read what it said (" Ancient Egypt").

The discovery happened during the French Revolutionary Wars in the present day Rashid. Napoleon and his army were not aware that this eleven inch thick, black basalt rock would be one of the greatest discoveries in history today (Rosetta Stone). Although scientists have known for a long period of time that the priests of Ancient Egypt used a type of symbol, or picture writing called hieroglyphics. For many years no one was capable of reading this forgotten language (Rosetta Stone) because, scholars were unable to learn or verify facts.

The Rosetta Stone was written during the Ptolemaic period, The Rosetta Stone included fourteen lines of hieroglyphs, thirty-two lines of Demotic symbols, and fifty-four lines of Greek. Its dimensions are approximately one meter tall by seventy centimeters wide by thirty centimeters deep. It is called the Rosetta Stone because it was discovered in a town called Rosetta

(Rashid) (" Ancient Egypt"). The Rosetta Stone names honors bestowed on Pharaoh Ptolemy V Epiphanes in March 196 B. C. After praising Ptolemy V Epiphanes, the Rosetta Stone describes the siege of Lycopolis and the king's good deeds for the temple.

The text continues with its main purpose, establishing a cult for the king (Gill, N. S). No one could read hieroglyphs at the time of the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, but scholars soon pieced out a few phonetic characters in the demotic section, which, by comparison with the Greek, were identified as proper names. Soon proper names in the hieroglyphic section were identified because they were circled.

These circled names are called cartouches, an elongated oval that always contains a name, " ID" (Gill, N. S). Within this slab of stone lay the key to unlocking the secrets of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. this biography of the Rosetta Stone traces the story of many scholars that individually matched symbols with meanings, until Jean-Francois Champollion tried. By the time he was 17 years old, Champollion knew more than eight languages.

Champollion could read both Greek and Coptic.

He was able to figure out what the seven demotic signs in Coptic were. By looking at how these signs were used in Coptic he was able to work out what they stood for. Then he began tracing these demotic signs back to hieroglyphic signs. By working out what some hieroglyphs stood for, he could make educated guesses about what the other hieroglyphs stood for. Coptic was the language that provided the final key to unlocking the secrets of the stone and, the history of the ancient Egyptian people (Anonymous).

Although, the initial work was done by Thomas Young from England and many other scholars; Champollion from France furthered the investigation and cracked the code in 1822 by comparing the languages, hieroglyphics were finally translated.

Now that the mystery has been solved the science of Egyptology could begin! Champollion also realized that the glyphs were not just symbols for things, but were also to be used phonetically. Until it was deciphered, much of Egyptian history had been lost. The British Museum has housed the Rosetta Stone since 1802 except for the years 1917-1919 when it was temporarily moved underground to prevent possible bomb damage. The Rosetta Stone spent the next two years in a station on the Postal Tube Railway fifty feet below the ground at Holborn. Prior to its discovery in 1799 it had been in the town of el-Rashid (Rosetta), in Egypt (Gill, N.

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