

a third of the original inscription was missing. The lower type of writing was Greek and the language was also Greek, so that it could be read fairly well. It stated that it had been set up by certain priests to express their thanks to the young king Ptolemy V. for the remission of certain taxes that had formerly been imposed on them. It was thought highly probable and it proved later to be true that the upper two ^{inscriptions} references contained the same writing in a different language. When the English took Egypt from the French in 1802, they seized this stone and placed it in the British museum. During the next twenty years, English and French scholars busied themselves with comparison of the signs in the upper part of the stone with the inscription in Greek on the bottom. Hieroglyphic inscriptions on certain obelisks in Egypt were also used in studying the meaning of these characters.

In 1822 a young French scholar, Champolion, succeeded in deciphering the upper ^{part} of the stone and in finding the key to the hieroglyphic writing of ancient Egypt. Using the meaning for the characters that he worked out, other inscriptions were studied and a beginning was made in reading the hieroglyphics.

From that time to this, progress has been constantly made on the understanding of the language and writing of ancient Egypt. Today hundreds of pages of ancient Egyptian writing have been carefully translated and published. Much of it can be read with absolute accuracy. In poetic and other types of writing, there is still a great deal of obscurity because of the fact that the Egyptians wrote only the consonants and left the vowels unrepresented, but sufficient progress has been made to enable us to establish with certainty the main details of the history of Egypt during a period of many centuries.

We divide Egyptian history into three principal periods with gaps between them. You might literally call these high points