Before Mandulis son of Horus, by the hand of Nesmeterakhem, son of Nesmeter, the Second Priest of Isis, for all time and eternity. Words spoken by Mandulis, Lord of the Abaton, great god.

I, Nesmeterakhem, the scribe of the House of Writings of Isis, son of Nesmeterpanakhet the Second Priest of Isis, and his mother Esoweret, I performed work on this figure of Mandulis for all time, because he is fair of face towards me. Today, the Birthday of Osiris, his dedication feast, year 110 (= 24 August AD 394).
PRESENTED BY KING GEORGE III

CAPTURED IN EGYPT BY THE BRITISH ARMY 1801
Transliteration: hr ḫjj ntj ḫt nwḥ m sḥ n mdw nṯr sḥ n šjj šhḥj j n ḫw nbw

Pronunciation: her ahay neti aat rudj em sech ni medu netcher sech ni shay sekhay
ni Hau-nebu

Literal gloss: upon stela which stone hard in writing of god’s words
writing of letter script of Aegeans

Translation: upon a stela of hard stone in hieroglyphic writing, in demotic
writing, and in the script of the Aegeans
Dear Sir,

I send you a few memorandums which I shall be much obliged by your forwarding to your son for the chance of his seeing them before his return to Egypt, as I doubt not that so enlightened and interesting a traveller will be as willing as I am to assist in promoting the investigation of the hieroglyphical antiquities of that singular country; and I trust that a few hints of what has already been done will enable him to effect this purpose, with considerably less labour than might otherwise have been bestowed on it.

1. The great desideratum of all is the recovery of the lost fragments of the Rosetta stone, which to an Egyptian antiquary would be worth their weight in diamonds. The part found by the French contains little more than one third of the inscription in the "sacred characters"; and this portion, imperfect as it is, has afforded an explanation of about fifty hieroglyphics; a number which would be more than doubled by the discovery of the remainder. Mr. Salt was engaged by the British government to expend a liberal sum in digging in the neighbourhood of Port el-Aden, or otherwise, in pursuit of this object; but there is reason to fear that it has wholly escaped his memory.

2. A duplicate of this stone is described by Dr. Clarke as having been found in the house occupied by the Institute at Cairo, but in imperfect preservation. It would be of the utmost importance to have this duplicate brought to England, since the slightest trace might possibly be rendered intelligible by a careful comparison; and it is indeed hoped that Mr. Salt has already taken measures for this purpose.

3. Many inscriptions on the ruins of buildings still existing in Egypt; and even on unruined blocks and rocks are far too numerous to be copied by any single traveller: it becomes therefore of importance to be directed to the most important facts of them: which are commonly the names of the kings whom they commemorate, and those of the deities to whom they are dedicated. The names of the deities are generally distinguished by a basket or a sitting figure which follows them; those of the kings universally by an oval ring which surrounds them, preceded by a rod and a disc; and frequently followed by a goose and a circle, and then a second name, which is that of the father.

4. The inscriptions almost universally relate to the figures over or below which they are placed: and they are always read from the front to the rear of the figures; but in some cases, from right to left, or from left to right, without any difference.

Specimen,

A god, or Goddess.
Pharaoh, or Pharaoh's.
Lord, or Lord's.
Day, or Day's.
Month, or Month's.
Year, or Year's.

Pharaoh.
Bosom, or Bosom's.
Almighty, or Almighty's.
Heaven, or Heaven's.
Sun, or Sun's.
Her, or Her's.

A goddess, or Goddess's.
Pharaoh, or Pharaoh's.
Lord, or Lord's.
Day, or Day's.
Month, or Month's.
Year, or Year's.

Pharaoh.
Bosom, or Bosom's.
Almighty, or Almighty's.
Heaven, or Heaven's.
Sun, or Sun's.
Her, or Her's.

Pharaoh.
Bosom, or Bosom's.
Almighty, or Almighty's.
Heaven, or Heaven's.
Sun, or Sun's.
Her, or Her's.
Dans cette maison où il habitait

Jean-François Champollion

Découvrit en septembre 1822
Le principe du déchiffrement des hiéroglyphes égyptiens
THE DECIPHERMENT OF HIEROGLYPHS

The English scholar, Thomas Young believed that the cartouches were used to write only non-Egyptian names like those of the Ptolemaic rulers, and that most hieroglyphs were symbols. Jean-François Champollion went much further and using the hieroglyphs that he had already identified, he began deciphering names on other monuments. He realised on 14 September 1822 that he could also read the names of earlier native pharaohs. From this he deduced that hieroglyphs must have been used as sound-signs to write Egyptian names and words as well. He also realised that Coptic, the language of Christian Egypt which survived in the Coptic church and was written in an adaptation of the Greek alphabet, was a form of the language of Ancient Egypt.

Knowing both some of the signs and a form of the language, he deduced that Ancient Egyptian words were written with a mixture of sound and picture signs. For example, the ancient Egyptian word for 'cat' is written 'were', the first three signs record the sounds 'new' (like new), followed by a picture showing the animal. By the time of his early death in 1822 he had laid the ground for understanding the Egyptian language. Although most texts can now be read quite easily, much remains to be done before we fully understand this ancient language and its four thousand years of written culture.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HIEROGLYPHS

For many centuries after the end of Ancient Egyptian culture, hieroglyphs were a great mystery. The last known hieroglyphic inscription was carved at the Temple of Isis at Philae on 24 August 394 AD, and during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance hieroglyphs were regarded as mystic symbols of ancient wisdom. Since Egyptian hieroglyphs are signs that look like pictures, people assumed that they were emblems recording ideas rather than signs which could record the sounds of the Ancient Egyptian language.

As soon as the Stone was known, renewed attempts were made to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs. Important contributions were made by scholars such as J. Åkerblad (1763-1819) and Sylvester de Bury (1758-1830). Two excations men were working at the same time in England and France: the polymath Thomas Young (1773-1829) and the brilliant Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832).

Scholars had already guessed that rings, cartouches, probably enclosed Egyptian royal names, and these names were known from Greek and Roman sources. Young studied the cartouches on the Stone and other inscriptions, including an obelisk brought from Philae to Kingston Lacy in Dorset, and he identified a few of the signs in the royal names. The Greek name Ptolemy was written:
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<th>Lettres Phonétiques</th>
<th>Signes Démotiques</th>
<th>Signes Hiéroglyphiques</th>
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Cette inscription qui signifie, à Mon ami Dubois,
a été tracée par Champollion, jusqu'ici non donnée
et exemplaire.

J.J. Dubois
ROSETTA

For the closest inspection of a comet ever made

Une première dans l’histoire de l’exploration cométaire
1795: a high-society wedding in London leads Rose Hall to Paris, the Rosetta Stone and the River Nile. And to a child.

ROSETTA
Barbara Ewing

Author of The Trespass and A Dangerous Vine
George III ruled Great Britain from the late 18th to the early 19th centuries, around the same time that Napoleon was in power in France.

It was Napoleon's army that first discovered the Rosetta Stone in Egypt, but then the British army captured it. That is inscribed on one side of the stone, isn't it?

I am sure there was only one, King George III (1738–1820).

What is inscribed on the other side?

About who?

Napoleon!

You spoke about him when we first met.