

Soon after the end of the 4th century AD, when hieroglyphs had gone out of use, the knowledge of how to read and write them disappeared. In the early years of the 19th century, scholars were able to use the Greek inscription on this stone as the key to decipher them. Thomas Young (1773–1829), an English physicist, was the first to show that some of the hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone wrote the sounds of a royal name that of Ptolemy. The French scholar Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) then realized that hieroglyphs recorded the sound of the Egyptian language and laid the foundations of our knowledge of ancient Egyptian language and culture. Champollion made a crucial step in understanding ancient Egyptian writing when he pieced together the alphabet of hieroglyphs that was used to write the names of non-Egyptian rulers. He announced his discovery, which had been based on analysis of the Rosetta Stone and other texts, in a paper at the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres at Paris on Friday 27 September 1822. The audience included his English rival Thomas Young, who was also trying to decipher Egyptian