

Egypt's Rosetta Stone

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In news- Egypt has recently asked the UK to return the Rosetta Stone, a large stone slab that has fascinated the world since its discovery around two centuries ago.

About the stone-

- It is a 2,200-year-old granodiorite stele inscribed **with hieroglyphs, Ancient Egyptian Demotic script, and Ancient Greek**, all of which convey a decree or public message.
- The Rosetta Stone stands out for being the discovery that **helped to develop the specific field of ancient Egypt studies, Egyptology.**
- Before it was found, there was no knowledge of what Egyptian hieroglyphs meant and how they were translated.
- According to the British Museum, the **engraving was done during the reign of King Ptolemy V who ruled from 204–181 BC.**
- This puts the stone's age at well over 2,000 years. **It is believed to carry messages by some priests in support of the king.** With time the stone, among other inscriptions, was displaced.
- This stone was **'rediscovered' in the time of French king Napoleon Bonaparte, who launched a campaign in Egypt from 1798 to 1801.**
- While details of its discovery are vague, it is said to have been found by Napoleon's soldiers accidentally in 1799 in the city of Rashid (called Rosetta by the French) in the Nile Delta.
- **On Napoleon's defeat later at the hands of the British, the Treaty of Alexandria (1801) led to its transfer and it has been at the British Museum since then.**