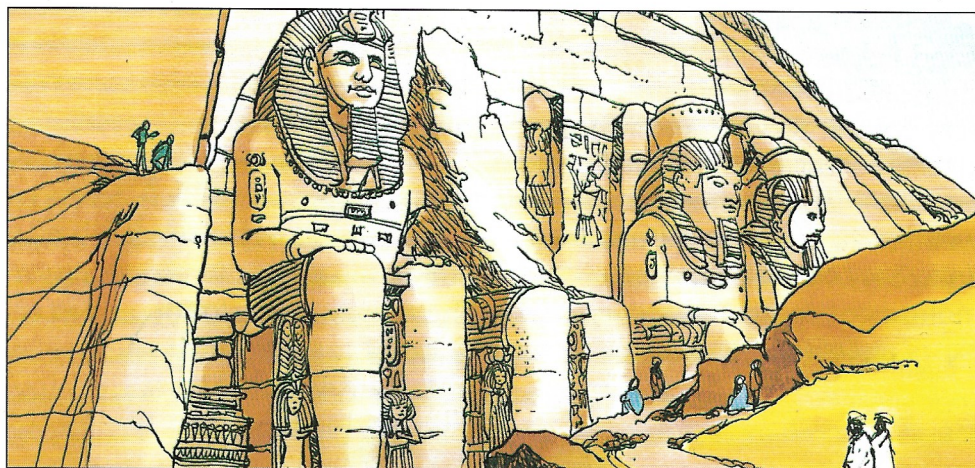


HOW WE KNOW ABOUT ANCIENT EGYPT

After Egypt became a part of the Roman empire in 30BC, its old way of life came to an end. The people began to worship new gods, and the secrets of hieroglyphic writing were forgotten. Over the centuries, the old temples and palaces became ruins and were covered with sand and rubble.

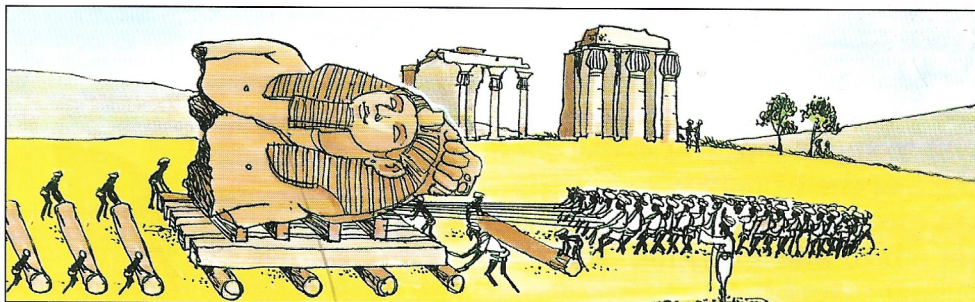
In the 18th century AD, European scholars began to take an interest in Egypt's past. They explored the ruined buildings, and eventually worked out how to read hieroglyphics again. Then archaeologists began to dig up tombs and temples, and found wall paintings, scrolls and things used in everyday life.

All these discoveries have helped to build up a picture of how the ancient Egyptians lived. The picture is still not complete, but each new find helps to fill in the gaps.



This is what the temple of Abu Simbel looked like 150 years ago. The four great statues of Ramesses II, for whom it was built, were half

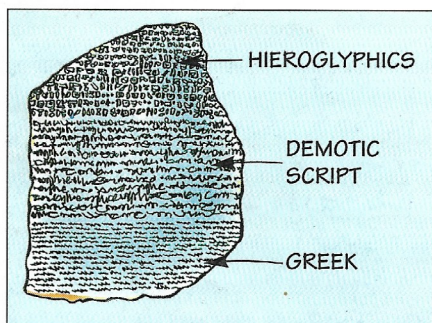
covered in sand. Many other famous Egyptian monuments were completely hidden until archaeologists uncovered them.



The first explorers were only interested in collecting spectacular finds. This huge sculpture of Ramesses II was taken to Europe.

Early archaeologists did a lot of damage in their search for treasures. Some even used battering rams on sealed tombs.

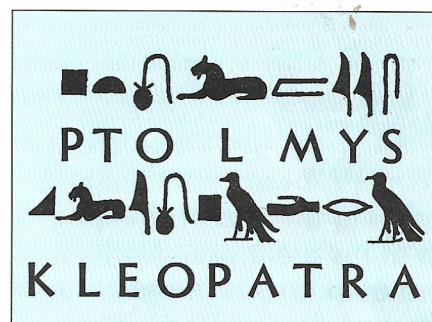
HOW THE HIEROGLYPHIC CODE WAS CRACKED



In 1799 a stone was found near Rosetta in the Delta. A message was written on it three times, in Greek and in two Egyptian scripts, Demotic and Hieroglyphic. This proved to be a vital clue.



A French scholar named Jean-François Champollion compared the hieroglyphs with the Greek part, which he understood. He worked for 14 years before he found out what anything meant.



Finally he recognized 'Ptolemy', a name of several pharaohs. He compared it with the name 'Cleopatra', which was carved on an obelisk, and was able to match up the symbols for 'p', 'l' and 'o'.