

Egyptian sculpture

The objects in the Egyptian sculpture gallery represent three millennia of pharaonic history.

Modern Egyptology began with a French scientific expedition accompanying Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. After the British defeated the French, they took some of their most important finds, including the Rosetta Stone and the sarcophagus of the last Egyptian pharaoh, both displayed here.





Egyptian sculpture

- Later, the British Consul-General Henry Salt received permission from Egypt's governor, Muhammad Ali, to collect antiquities, many of which were acquired by the British Museum. He employed excavators such as Giovanni Belzoni to remove sculptures, including the colossal bust of Ramesses II.



Egyptian sculpture

- The civilisation of ancient Egypt arose in the fourth millennium BC
- The monuments in the Egyptian sculpture gallery were created for eternity.
- The Rosetta Stone is famous around the world
- The largest Egyptian sculpture in the British Museum represents one of Egypt's greatest kings
- The Egyptian sculpture gallery is also home to the sarcophagus of Nectanebo II, Egypt's last true pharaoh.

The Rosetta Stone

- *The Rosetta Stone is famous around the world for having served as the key to deciphering the ancient Egyptian language and hieroglyphic script. <https://skfb.ly/6stSI>*



Description of The Rosetta Stone

Object Type

Stela

Museum number

EA24

Title

Object: The Rosetta Stone

Description

Part of grey and pink granodiorite stela

Cultures/periods

Ptolemaic

Production date

196BC

Description of The Rosetta Stone

Excavator/field collector

Excavated by: Pierre Francois Xavier Bouchard

Findspot

Excavated/Findspot: Fort Saint Julien

Africa: Egypt: Lower Egypt: Nile Delta: Rashid, el-: Fort Saint Julien

Materials

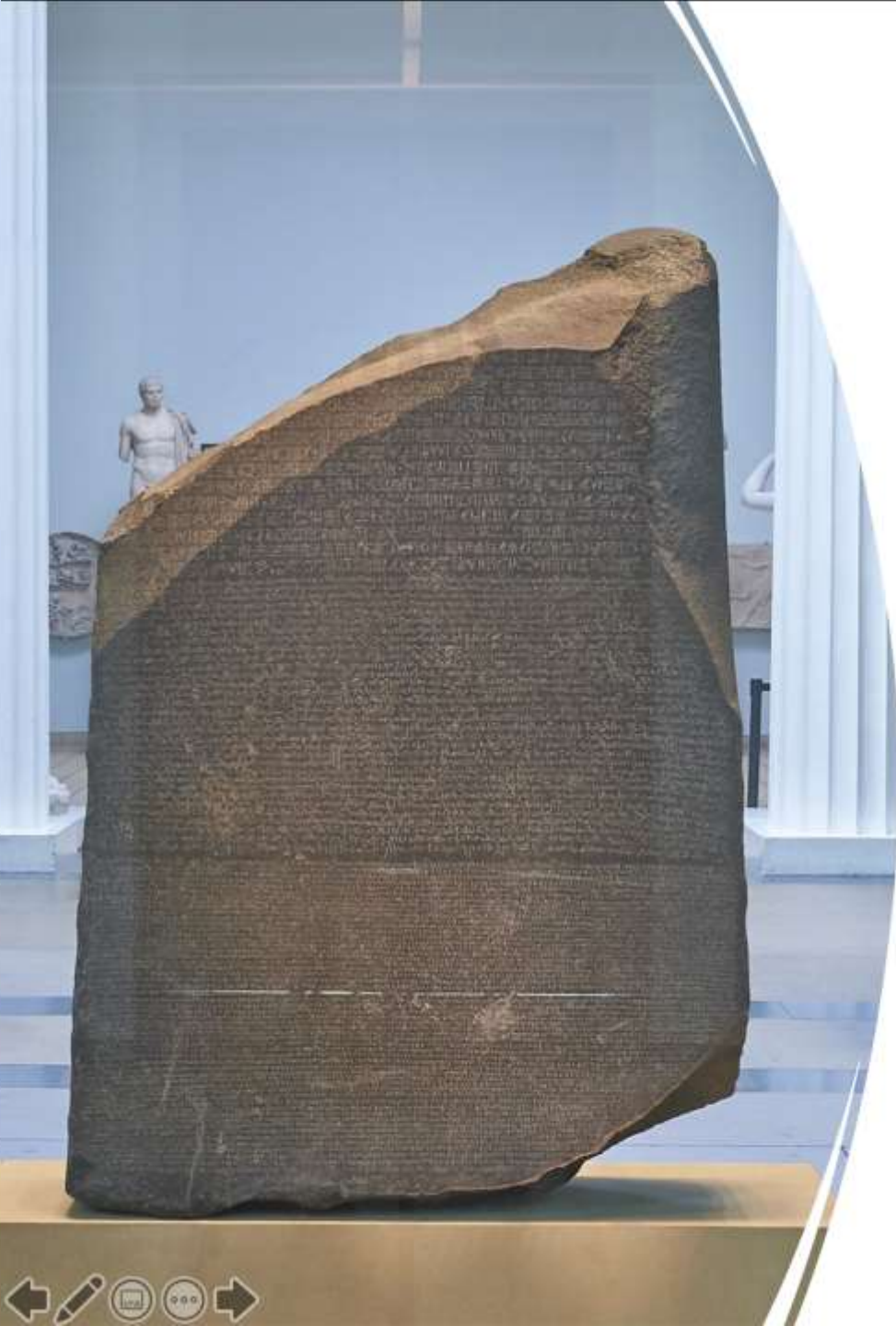
granodiorite

Dimensions

Length: 112.30 centimetres (max)

Thickness: 28.40 centimetres

Width: 75.70 centimetres



Description of The Rosetta Stone

- Inscriptions
- Inscription type: inscription
- Inscription script: hieroglyphic
- Inscription note: The inscription is a decree passed by a council of priests, one of a series that affirm the royal cult of the 13 year-old Ptolemy V on the first anniversary of his coronation.
- Inscription type: inscription
- The Rosetta Stone
- From Fort St Julien, Rosetta, Egypt
- Ptolemaic Period, 196 BC

Explore the collection

- The online collection allows access to nearly four and a half million items on more than two million discs. Search is more intuitive and now offers suggestions as you type. The high definition images can be zoomed in and examined in detail, which will allow you to see the incredible workmanship of the royal game of Ur, the intricate carving on this African hunting horn, the incredibly preserved buckskin map of the North America or this delightful Raphael drawing of an old man's head. Have fun exploring the collection: from some of the earliest objects created by mankind to the works of contemporary artists. Or choose from the curated collections below, which reveal fascinating stories that transcend time.



ANCIENT AND EARLY MEDIEVAL SOUTH ASIA | TERRACOTTA TILE WITH A MUSICIAN

- In the 5th century, two distinct types of temples: small stone temples and more elaborate temples made of brick and decorated with terracotta panels. It seems that brick temples were more popular in areas where stone was in short supply, particularly in the Gangetic plain of northern India. This piece shows a male figure with a stringed instrument. He is probably a semi-divine musician. The figure sits in an arched niche. Typical of workmanship of the Gupta period (AD 320–550) are the cascading looped curls (almost wig-like), full lips, slightly bulging and elongated eyes, heavy jowled face and long and slightly flattened fingers and toes.





POLYNESIA | MOURNER'S COSTUME

- This dramatic costume was worn during a violent expression of grief when a Tahitian chief died; the chief mourner wielded a long-handled weapon set with sharks' teeth. He and his attendants would attack anyone who got in their way. When Captain James Cook's ship anchored at Tahiti for the first time in 1769, Joseph Banks took part in one of these heva tu-pa-pa'u ceremonies as an attendant.

POLYNESIA | MOURNER'S COSTUME

- However, attempts to collect a costume failed. This is probably the costume a chiefly family gave to Cook in 1774. These costumes were expensive to make. Each pearl shell could cost as much as a pig. The shimmering chest 'apron' ('ahu pa-rau) was made of tiny drilled rectangles of pearl shell. A small hole in one of the shells of the face mask allowed the wearer to see.





AFRICAN ROCK ART | BRANDBERG

- Some of the most famous rock art in southern Africa was made by the San, a people of hunters considered to be one of the oldest surviving populations. San's oldest rock art is thought to date back to around 4-5,000 years ago. This painting from high in the Brandberg Mountains of Namibia is positioned on a thin ledge above a sheer drop. It depicts the head and neck of a white giraffe which emerges through a veil of red rain into a cloud. The giraffe is approached by three male figures, one of which has a red snake painted on his stomach and a red lizard on his chest.

The end

