





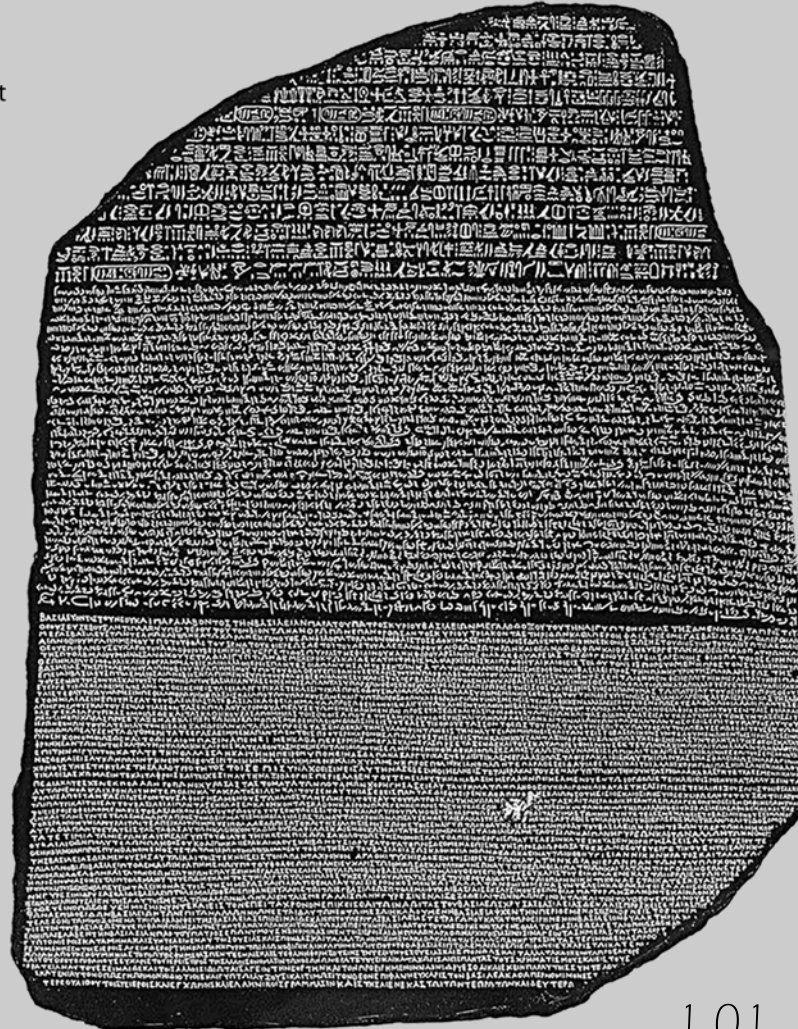
01

introduction

Historical Background

'The Rosetta Stone is an Ancient Egyptian artefact which was instrumental in advancing modern understanding of hieroglyphic writing. The stone is a Ptolemaic era stele with carved text made up of three translations of a single passage: two in Egyptian language scripts (Hieroglyphic and Demotic) and one in classical Greek. It was created in 196 BC, discovered by the French in 1799 at Rashid (a harbour on the Mediterranean coast in Egypt which the French referred to as Rosetta during Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign in Egypt) and contributed greatly to the decipherment of the principles of hieroglyphic writing in 1822 by the British scientist Thomas Young and the French scholar Jean-François Champollion. Comparative translation of the stone provided the key in understanding many previously undecipherable examples of the ancient Egyptian language, and also assisted in unlocking the Egyptian culture. It was the multicultural nature of Egyptian society that led to the stone being inscribed in two different languages. The stone is actually a decree issued by the priests of Egypt in favour of the Greek born King of Egypt Ptolemy and among other things details rather mundane tax concessions. The stone has been on public display at The British Museum since 1802.'

(Rosetta Stone on www.wikipedia.org)



1.01
The Rosetta Stone

01 introduction

“About 100 000 years ago there was a dramatic jump in the quality of stone tools. This may also have been the moment when gasps, grunts and groans flowered into language. A time when man began to communicate thoughts and ideas.”

(Fletcher, 2001: p.391)

This statement indicates that language, consisting of different sounds and body movements, gives humans the ability to express themselves in such a way that their development as a species is dramatically altered. The existence of language and communication is therefore considered a highly valuable tool for the continued existence of the human race.

The image on the adjacent page (fig. 1.01) serves to introduce the intentions of this dissertation. As a metaphor cast in stone, the Rosetta Stone symbolises a celebration of cultures coming together and people learning one another’s language, and therefore creating a platform for the sharing of knowledge.

This dissertation attempts to address the paradigm of willingness to be educated in other natural languages; by being an instrument for cultural convergence. A tool that forms a formal language of architectural space, attempting to fill the communication void within a certain social framework, whilst celebrating this important idea of cultural convergence and knowledge gain.

The theoretical investigation of this dissertation therefore reacts to the concept of integration, and is therefore weaved into the development of an architectural conclusion.