

ANDREW ROBINSON is the author of some twenty-five books. They include *The Story of Writing: Alphabets, Hieroglyphs and Pictograms*, and *Lost Languages: The Enigma of the World's Undeciphered Scripts*, as well as biographies of Michael Ventris (*The Man Who Deciphered Linear B*) and Thomas Young (*The Last Man Who Knew Everything*) – the polymath who competed with Champollion to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphs. He holds degrees from Oxford University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, and has been a visiting fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge. A former literary editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, he is a regular book reviewer for newspapers, magazines and journals. www.andrew-robinson.org

Other titles of interest:

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'Andrew Robinson's Champollion is a brash genius, with the power to make loyal friends but also bitter enemies, a man at odds with the Church and much of the Establishment. Above all, how much did he know about the work of his great rival, the English polymath Thomas Young? This is a spirited account of a fascinating subject: the birth of Egyptology.'

– John Ray, author of *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*

'Andrew Robinson, the man who deciphered Michael Ventris and knows all that's worth knowing about Thomas Young, here shines his lamp of Diogenes on the Frenchman who broke the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic code, illuminating anew Jean-François Champollion's fascinating life as well as his prodigiously fertile work.'

– Paul Cartledge, author of *Alexander the Great and Ancient Greece: A History in Eleven Cities*

'An entertaining, highly readable and authoritative biography of the greatest decipherer of all time, the man who almost single-handedly enabled us to read the hitherto mysterious Egyptian hieroglyphs.'

– Michael D. Coe, author of *Breaking the Maya Code*

'At last, a definitive biography of Champollion in English! Andrew Robinson brings his expertise at ancient languages and his research into the nature of genius to bear on one of Egyptology's most remarkable figures ... A memorable, enjoyable and beautifully written historical detective story.'

– Brian Fagan, author of *The Rape of the Nile, and Floods, Famines and Emperors*

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CRACKING THE EGYPTIAN CODE
THE REVOLUTIONARY LIFE OF JEAN-FRANÇOIS CHAMPOLLION

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Ancient Egypt fascinated the ancient Greeks and Romans, including Alexander the Great. It still fascinates us more than any other ancient civilization. But no Greek or Roman could read the elaborate Egyptian hieroglyphs: for almost two millennia, the hieroglyphic script became a 'lost language', until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone by Napoleon's soldiers in Egypt in 1799.

Despite the efforts of some of Europe's most intelligent scholars, including the English polymath Thomas Young, to crack the hieroglyphic code, it was an impoverished, arrogant and brilliant child of the French Revolution, Jean-François Champollion, who made the vital breakthrough. Andrew Robinson's finely illustrated biography – the first in English of this celebrated, but insufficiently understood, figure – charts Champollion's dramatic life and achievements: how, against the odds, he began to decipher a lost world, led an expedition to Egypt with royal backing, lived in the tombs of the Valley of the Kings, and made the voices of the pharaohs and their subjects speak. Living life to the full, he formed undying friendships and rivalries – but his obsession eventually drove him into an early death, at the age of only 41.

Today, Champollion is rightly regarded as the founder of Egyptology, and is a national hero in France. Robinson's full-blooded account brings one of the world's greatest code-breakers, his setbacks and his ultimate triumphs vividly to life.

With 86 illustrations, 16 in colour

On the jacket: (front) Portrait of Jean-François Champollion by Léon Cogniet, 1831. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (background) Hieroglyphs. Photo: Urganhan Betin/www.istockphoto.com

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100mm

161mm

Spine 38mm

161mm

100mm

240mm