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**Rosie:** Hello and welcome to On the Town from BBC Learning English. I'm Rosie and Li joins me today to talk about a fascinating object in London.

**Li:** Hello... but what is this object?

**Rosie:** Ah, now that's what you have to guess. We're going to listen to the director of the British Museum, Neil MacGregor, talking about one of the objects in the museum. Let's see if you can guess what he's talking about.

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*To look at, it is decidedly dull. It's a grey stone about the size of one of those large suitcases you see people trundling around on wheels at airports, and the rough edges show that it's been broken from a larger stone, with the fractures cutting across the text that covers one side. And when you read that text, it's pretty dull too. It's mostly bureaucratic jargon about tax concessions. But as so often in the museum, appearances are deceiving.*

**Li:** Don't tell me what it is... I want to guess.

**Rosie:** Go for it.

**Li:** So it's a grey stone. 一块灰色的石头。And it's about the size of a large suitcase. 大小吗, 和一个大好的旅行箱差不多, 但不是可以随身携带!

**Rosie:** OK, so it's a stone. It's big. It's grey. And what else?

**Li:** We heard that there is text on it... Er... Not sure...

**Rosie:** Well, I'll give you a clue. The name of this object sounds slightly like my name.

**Li:** Your name? Rosie? Rosie... Ah, I know! It's the Rosetta Stone!

**Rosie:** Well done, Li. It is indeed the Rosetta Stone. This is a stone that was made in Ancient Egypt and which has text on it. In the clip we heard, Neil MacGregor says that the stone look dull or boring, and that the text on the stone is pretty dull too.

**Li:** 讲话的人说有很多官僚术语 bureaucratic jargon 比如, 税收优惠 tax concessions. So what's so special about the stone then?

**Rosie:** Well, the script is in three different languages on the stone and it was the key to understanding the Ancient Egyptian language of hieroglyphs. Let's listen to a clip which describes the languages used on the Rosetta Stone:

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*What matters about the Rosetta Stone is not what it says but that it says it three times and in three different languages: in classical Greek, the language of the Greek rulers and the state administration; and then in two forms of Ancient Egyptian: the everyday writing of the people known as Demotic and the priestly hieroglyphics which had for centuries baffled Europeans.*

**Li:** 最重要的是石碑上的刻纹都是古希腊文字 classical Greek 这是当时希腊统治者和衙门使用的文字 the state administration. 然后又刻上了用两种不同的古埃及文字：一个是通俗文 demotic 另一个是象形文或埃及圣书文 hieroglyphics.

**Rosie:** These were the three languages used in Ancient Egypt. They wrote the text in different languages to make sure that everyone would understand it.

**Li:** 这就是为什么罗塞塔石碑被视为如此重要，因为石碑上的三种文字犹如字典，帮助人们解读象形文字。It was the key to deciphering hieroglyphs.

**Rosie:** Yes, although it took a long time to decipher what these meant. It was a very complex puzzle. Much more difficult than learning English!

**Li:** 这么说你觉得解读象形文字比学英语还要难吗？不知道我们的学英语的听众朋友是否同意。你刚才说很长时间都没有人能够解读那些文字到底是什么意思。

**Rosie:** So Li, do you know who managed to decipher the texts?

**Li:** I know that it was more than one person. 除了 Thomas Young, 之外，主要的一个人物还是法国学者让-弗朗索瓦·商博良，Jean-François Champollion. 他于 1822 年成为第一位识破古埃及象形文字结构并破译罗塞塔石碑的学者。并从而成为埃及学的创始人。

**Rosie:** So the hieroglyphs were only deciphered in 1822. And in that last clip we heard that this key to understanding hieroglyphs is what really matters, rather than what the text says.

**Li:** 石碑上的文字很乏味，不外乎是有关埃及法老的内容。It was about the pharaoh of the time. 但是它之所以如此有名就是因为它为后人打开了解读埃及象形文字的窗口。

**Rosie:** Yes... The text is all about all the great things that the pharaoh Ptolemy V did for the priests and the people of Egypt.

**Li:** 这么说罗塞塔石碑上的文字都出自宗教牧师之后，为当时的埃及法老们歌功颂德，是吗？

**Rosie:** Let's listen to another clip in which Neil MacGregor gives us a brief introduction to why the Rosetta Stone was made:

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*The Rosetta Stone was made in 196 BC on the first anniversary of the coronation of Ptolemy V, by then a teenager. It's a decree issued by Egyptian priests, ostensibly to mark the coronation and to declare Ptolemy's new status as a living god. Divinity went with the job of being a pharaoh.*

**Li:** 罗塞塔石碑标志着埃及法老托勒密五世的加冕 coronation 和他作为现世神的地位 a living god.

**Rosie:** That's how pharaohs were seen in Ancient Egypt, as divinities or living gods. That's quite impressive considering Ptolemy V was only a teenage boy at the time.

**Li:** 一个十几岁的法老被供奉为现世神, it sounds like the last emperor of China!

**Rosie:** So make sure that if you're in London you go and see the Rosetta Stone. It's in the British Museum and it's free to visit.

**Li:** That's all for now from On The Town, but please join us again at [www.bbcukchina.com](http://www.bbcukchina.com). Bye!

**Rosie:** Bye bye!