

Robert K. Ritner

As lecturer for the March 2006 tour “Ancient Egypt and Libya,” **Robert K. Ritner** led the Oriental Institute’s first formal return to Libya since 1958, when Carl Kraeling completed three seasons of excavations at Ptolemais in the region of Cyrenaica. Among the many sites visited, the tour explored Ptolemais, saw the Institute’s former dig house, and benefited from a site guide who had worked with Kraeling. Unique among the newly feasible tours to Libya, Ritner’s selections and lectures emphasized the oft ignored connections between Egypt and Libya, beginning with predynastic depictions in the Cairo Museum and concluding with visits to comparable prehistoric rock art in the Acacus Mountains in far southwest Libya. Special additions to the tour included visits with the Potsdam archaeological team re-excavating Bubastis, seat of the Libyan Twenty-second Dynasty, the first public visit to Steven Snape’s ongoing excavation site of Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham, a fort built by Ramesses II to limit Libyan incursions, and an unhindered view of this year’s total solar eclipse in the Libyan desert.

Ritner’s lecture schedule continued unabated during the year. For the North Texas Chapter of the American Research Center in Egypt in Dallas, Ritner provided an evening lecture on “Magic and Medicine in Theory and Practice in Ancient Egypt” (October 7). The next day he conducted for the group an all-day seminar of seven lectures on Egyptian religion: “Creation Stories,” “The Great Deities of Mythology,” “How a Temple Works,” “The Funerary Cult,” “Curses and Love Charms,” “The Curse of Akhenaton,” and “Traditional Egyptian Religion in the Greek, Roman, and Coptic Eras” (October 8). For the traveling exhibit *Ancient Egypt: The Quest for Immortality*, he spoke on “The Magic of Egyptian Art” at the Dayton Art Institute (October 23) and at the Public Museum of Grand Rapids (April 13). In conjunction with the exhibit *The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, he lectured on “Magic within the Medical Practices of Ancient Egypt” (November 6). In late May, he was filmed by Tower Productions as an on-screen commentator for a forthcoming documentary on Egyptian magic destined for The History Channel.

Publications during the course of the year included “The Cardiovascular System in Egyptian Thought,” in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 65/2, and two additions to recent Oriental Institute Publications: “Scarab” in *The Amuq Valley Regional Projects, 1995–2002*, Volume 1: *The Oriental Institute Surveys in the Plain of Antioch, Turkey* (OIP 131), edited by Kutlu Aslıhan Yener; and an editorial “Preface” in *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, Volume 8, by James P. Allen (OIP 132). For *World Book Encyclopedia*, he contributed articles on “Seti I” and “Ramses II.” On the Oriental Institute’s Web site he posted “The Lost Land of Nubia: Egypt’s Southern Neighbor in Africa.”

In addition to various university, Oriental Institute, and departmental committee duties, Ritner’s year was dominated by teaching. He taught eight courses on aspects of Old Egyptian, Egyptian History, Demotic, Ptolemaic Hieroglyphs, and Coptic and continued to serve as Graduate Counselor for the ancient fields in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.