

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

Robert K. Ritner

Throughout the past year, **Robert K. Ritner** has served as the formal academic consultant for The Field Museum Exhibit “Eternal Egypt,” on display in Chicago from April 25 until August 12, 2003. As content advisor, his duties included regular meetings with Field Museum staff to provide advice and text copy on matters of labels, wall plaques, translations, graphics, timelines, floor plans, case design, lighting, interactive displays, recorded tours, in-house and outreach lectures, staff training, adult education and gift-shop reproductions. Particularly successful innovations for the Chicago installation include three “talking stelae,” replicas which play Ritner’s recorded introductions and translations while precisely synchronized lights illuminate the relevant text and images. For public relations, Ritner conducted a series of live interviews for television (NBC, CBS, WGN), radio (WBEZ, WHPK) and the print media (Chicago Tribune, The Sun Times, Copley News, North Shore Magazine, Oak Park Journal, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Cachette Magazine).

Ritner lectured extensively for public and professional symposia. On August 14, Ritner spoke at the National Gallery of Art on “Egyptian Magic: Its Use in Temple Ritual, State Practices, and Private Funerary Tradition” in conjunction with “Ancient Egypt: The Quest for Immortality,” an exhibit for which he recorded an audio tour. Thereafter, he attended the Eighth International Congress for Demotic Studies in Würzburg, Germany, where he chaired a panel and delivered a grammatical lecture on “Some Problematic Bipartite Nominal Predicates in Demotic” (August 30). On December 7, he discussed “Libya in Egypt: The Culture Wars of the Third Intermediate Period” for the Egypt Exploration Organization of Southern California. For The University of Chicago Women’s Board, he analyzed “Reading Egyptian Art: Script and Representation in Ancient Egypt” on January 15. In association with the exhibit “Eternal Egypt,” Ritner lectured on “Eternity Held Captive: the Social and Religious Context of Egyptian Art,” delivered at The Field Museum on April 24, 26, 27, and 30. Further exhibit lectures were given May 1 (for the Breasted Society), 15 (Field Ambassadors), and 21 (Field Associates and Cultural Collections Committee), and June 9 (Egyptian Consulate and Egyptian Tourist Authority). Concurrently, Ritner lectured for the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth (“Magic in Ancient Egyptian Religion and Funerary Practices” on May 3) and The University of Chicago Alumni Association (“An Introduction to Egyptian Artistic Representation as Exemplified by the British Museum Exhibition ‘Eternal Egypt’” on May 17). On June 27, he providing the keynote lecture for the first Egyptological congress in Greece, speaking in Rhodes on “An Eternal Curse upon the Reader of These Lines (with Apologies to M. Puig).”

Ritner’s publications for the year include *The Context of Scripture, Volume 3* (W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, eds.; Leiden); “Third Intermediate Period Antecedents of Demotic Legal Terminology,” in *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies*, edited by K. Ryholt (Copenhagen); “Des preuves de l’existence d’une nécromancie dans l’Égypte ancienne,” in *La magie en Égypte: à la recherche d’une définition*, edited by Y. Koenig (Paris: Musée du Louvre); and “Ecstatic Episode from ‘The Report of Wenamon’ (col. 1/34–43)” in *Prophecy from the Ancient Near East*, by M. Nissinen (Atlanta). In August, Ritner was interviewed regarding Egyptian dentistry by the New York (Science) Times, with the remarks printed as “Q & A: Teeth and Millstones” (August 6). His article on “The ‘Breathing Permit of Hôr’ among the Joseph Smith Papyri” appeared in the July issue of *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. Now in press, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (third edition, edited by W. K. Simpson) has been announced for September. In addition to University and Oriental Institute committee duties, Ritner taught a full complement of courses, including the popular “Introduction to Religion and Magic

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in Ancient Egypt.” He will be on leave in the fall, having been invited to serve as visiting professor in Egyptology in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, the University of Pennsylvania, and as Egyptologist in Residence in the University of Pennsylvania Museum.
