

Robert K. Ritner

In late October, **Robert Ritner**'s volume *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period* was published by the Society of Biblical Literature and Brill for the series *Writings from the Ancient World*. The volume provides translations, transliterations, and textual commentary for the primary documents of Egyptian history, society, and religion from approximately 1100 to 650 BC, when Egypt was ruled by Libyan and Nubian dynasties and had occasional relations with Judah and the encroaching Assyrian empire. The 176 texts collected in the volume include first editions as well as re-edited inscriptions and chronicle the collapse of a unified Egypt into multiple, local states with titular "pharaohs" and ruling princes of Libyan ancestry (Dynasties Twenty-one to Twenty-four), the relatively superficial control of Nubian imperialism (Dynasty Twenty-five), and the ultimate reunification of the state by rulers of Sais (Dynasty Twenty-six). A significant underlying feature of the collapse and recovery is the intrusion and later suppression of Libyan tribal features; see Ritner's contributions in *Annual Reports* for 2007–2008 and 2008–2009.

Ritner's further publications during the year include an analysis of a Pyramid Text spell that likely inspired a critical episode in Demotic literature: "Setna's Spell of Taking Security (Setna I, col. IV/31–34)," published in *Honi soit qui mal y pense: Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen*, edited by Hermann Knuf, Christian Leitz, and Daniel von Recklinghausen, pp. 425–28 (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 194; Leuven and Walpole: Peeters, 2010). His study of "Two Third Intermediate Period Books of the Dead: P. Houston 31.72 and P. Brooklyn 37.1801E," published in *Millions of Jubilees: Studies in Honor of David P. Silverman*, edited by Zahi Hawass and Jennifer Wegner, pp. 591–608 (*Cahiers* 2; Cairo: Supreme Counsel of Antiquities of Égypte, 2010), examined two funerary

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texts prepared for women engaged as chantresses in the cults of the Theban gods Amon, Mut, and Khonsu. The publication of the Houston papyrus marks the beginning of Ritner's fuller study and complete catalog of the Egyptian collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

The issue of chantresses of the Third Intermediate Period was again treated by Ritner in an online response to the Oriental Institute's recent exhibit on Meresamun. His "Reading the Coffin of Meresamun" provides critical, but overlooked, information regarding the text and decoration of Meresamun's coffin, yielding both the name of her father and, far more importantly, the name of the "universalist" deity that she invoked and presumably served: "Ra-Horachty-Atum, Lord of the Two Lands, the Heliopolitan, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, Lord of the Sanctuary of Sokar, Onnophrios ('The Perfect Being'), Lord of the Sacred Land, the Great God, Lord of Heaven." This composite name, uniting two trinities of solar and underworld gods, is strikingly addressed by the singular "he" and represents a further example of a theological statement of "one unified god" securely linked to the little temple of Medinet Habu. Meresamun's coffin is significant in providing the only example of a woman associated with this theological development. The article appears on the Oriental Institute's Web site: http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/is/reading_coffin_meresamun.html.

Ritner was particularly active on the lecture circuit, speaking on "The Nubian Pharaohs and Their Rule in Egypt" at the Clay Center in Charleston, West Virginia, in conjunction with the exhibit *Lost Kingdoms of the Nile: Treasures from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (January 20). In Philadelphia on March 12, he delivered the keynote address "Aspects of Cushite 'Egyptianization': Piety, Prestige and Propaganda" for the Center for Ancient Studies at the University of Pennsylvania's second annual graduate student conference *The Sincerest Form of Flattery: Emulation and Imitation in the Ancient World*. On April 9, he spoke in Ann Arbor at the Midwest Consortium in Ancient Religions session on "The Hymns of Isidorus from Medinet Madi," explaining the pantheistic nature of Isis "The One" in "Thiouis at Medinet Madi." On April 16, he concluded the seventh annual *Legacy of Egypt* lecture series at the University of Memphis, with a discussion of "Curses and Love Charms in Ancient Egypt." On May 13, for the Classical Art Society of the Art Institute of Chicago, he contrasted the differing artistic traditions of Egypt and Greece and their exceptional interactions in "The Legacy of Thoth-Hermes: Cross-cultural Interactions in Hellenistic Egypt." In late May, he was an invited participant at the conference *Problems of Canonicity and Identity Formation in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*, held at the University of Copenhagen, where he provided a discussion of "'King Petemenekh': New Kingdom Royal Sarcophagi Texts on a Private Coffin" (May 27).

In addition to research, he taught courses on Coptic and hieroglyphic texts and grammar and served on multiple committees for the Oriental Institute and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.
