Veteran archaeologist Donald P. Ryan will discuss his investigation of one of the world’s most famous sites Thursday, April 29, at The University of Montana. 

Ryan will present “Recent Archaeological Adventures in Egypt’s Valley of the Kings” at 7 p.m. in the Masquer Theatre, located in UM’s Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center. The event is hosted by the Montana Museum of Art & Culture at UM.

As the royal cemetery of Egypt’s prosperous New Kingdom (c. 1500-1000 B.C.), the Valley of the Kings, located near Luxor in the south of the country, was the burial place of many of the greatest pharaohs.

Ryan is a faculty fellow in the Division of Humanities at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Wash., and director of the university’s Valley of the Kings expeditions. His lecture will summarize the work and discoveries of the expeditions, which began in 1989.

The focus of the expeditions has been the more obscure, undecorated tombs that lie among the large and often elaborate tombs of the pharaohs. Many of the smaller tombs remained virtually unstudied.

Expeditions led by Ryan found several preserved items in previously unexplored tombs that included female mummies, funerary food provisions, broken bits of burial equipment, necropolis seals and coffin fragments. Using these finds, Ryan has published fascinating and occasionally controversial results.

For several years, Ryan worked closely with world-renowned Norwegian explorer, archaeologist and author Thor Heyerdahl. Together they excavated the mysterious pyramids of Guimar in Tenerife on the Canary Islands before Heyerdahl’s death in 2002.

Ryan is the author of eight books. He will complete Heyerdahl’s last book about the ancient colonization of the islands of the South Pacific. His latest book, “Beneath the Sands of Egypt,” will be released in June by HarperCollins.

For more information, call the Montana Museum of Art & Culture at 406-243-2019 or visit the museum’s Web site at http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum .

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