

A story about  
tutankhamun in a  
book by christina  
riggs



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Christina Riggs begins *The Unwrapped* history of Ancient Egypt by describing in vivid details the destruction of King Tutankhamen's burial treasure display in the Egyptian Museum of Cairo. Riggs likens this destruction to the original destruction when Howard Carter uncovered King Tutankhamen's burial site. Riggs descriptive style of writing enables the reader to visualize a detailed picture through her descriptions of discovered Egyptian artifacts, and then to provide additional illustrations she offers the readers pictures of the artifacts in various states of destruction as these valuable artifacts fell prey to people who wished to sell these artifacts for enormous gains. For example, Riggs then describes King Tutankhamen's tomb. She provides a picture to show how disheveled King Tutankhamen's tomb was when the excavators finally opened the doors so that they could properly document everything. The picture Riggs provides illustrates treasures such as chests and other items to be used in the afterlife. These artifacts were stacked on one another with chest drawers open and tops thrown on the ground. By adding authentic pictures, the reader is provided with an additional level of awareness which solidifies her accounts. Though Riggs is a very detailed writer, occasionally her accounts of Egyptian historical preservation tends to be too much detail at times. For example, Riggs misplaces the information that she attended the Griffith Institute at Oxford University by disrupting the author's flow of information. This justification of her historic preservation credentials would be best suited placed at the end of the book within an author's biography page. Once the reader overlooks this minor flaw the reader can delve into more information about the mummification process. As the book continues, Riggs provides the reader with additional interesting facts, such as the difference between "cloth" garments and wound bandages. After the rich

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description of the differences of “ cloth” garments and wound bandages, Riggs cleverly provides the reader with pictures of the different styles of wrapping that were practiced in Ancient Egypt for the different classes. Riggs continues to keep the reader interested in reading as she gives colorful and descriptive examples of unwrapping history and then follows those descriptions with archival photographs which enrich the reader’s understanding of Ancient Egypt.

Unwrapping Ancient Egypt, is a very well written and well organized book. Riggs tells many factual stories within each chapter, captivating the readers. The way that Riggs organizes her chapters with stories, facts, and with authentic photographs layered into the chapters focusing on mummification and important archaeological finds makes for a very interesting read for the reader. Riggs is reasonably objective as well as passionate when writing about Ancient Egypt archaeological finds and excavations. She is able to relay facts from different sources such as from an Egyptian Museum Curator and use research from the British Museum which houses the largest collection of Egyptian artifacts outside of Egypt. Using this research allows Riggs to provide information without having a biased point of view and allows the reader to form an opinion about how history has treated the subject of unwrapping Ancient Egypt.

Riggs uses endnotes in the back of the book to provide additional information for the reader about the sources that she uses. There are a multitude of different sources that Riggs uses which helps add validity to her book. The sources that Riggs includes in her book vary from anthropology

sources to the accounts from the British museum. By having so many varying sources Riggs provides much credibility for the readers.

Throughout the course of this semester, our Ancient and Medieval class has explored the realms of Ancient Egypt. Unwrapping Ancient Egypt provides additional details which support the instructor's lectures. Riggs was able to go into greater depth covering Ancient Egypt's archaeological excavations and mummification practices. It was very interesting to intertwine the knowledge that I gained in Ancient and Medieval world history class about Egypt and then further expanding my knowledge that I gained from the book. Riggs' accounts of historical events followed by her authentic photographs allowed me to better understand Ancient Egypt history and culture. Some of the information that was taught by the instructor in class coincided with the information that was presented in the book such as King Tutankhamen's tomb which was found disheveled from previous Egyptian grave robbers. Similarly, Riggs writes of the accounts from the excavators and how they saw the chaos presented in King Tutankhamen's tomb. Using material presented by the instructor and Riggs' account of King Tutankhamen's tomb allowed me to have a deeper and more thorough understanding of the mummification process.

1. What is the book about?
2. What, in your opinion, is the importance or value of the subject?
3. Is the subject of the book interesting?
4. What use does the author make of primary sources? That is to say, does the author refer to first-hand accounts by people who were

eyewitnesses. Is this expressed in footnotes or endnotes in the book or in the bibliography cited at the end of the book?

5. Is the book reasonably well-written and well-organized?

6. Is the author reasonably objective? If not, what are his biases? Do you agree with these?

7. Does the author's point of view coincide with that of other readings you have done on the

same subject? With the viewpoint of the instructor, if the instructor has lectured on the subject? What have other book reviewers said about the book?