

Review of the book women in ancirnt egypt



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Gay Robins' *Women in the Ancient Egypt* takes a different perspective than other books on Egypt. This book focuses on women in Ancient Egypt and their role in an illustrated manner. This is an exquisitely well written piece that covers around three thousand years. Robins informs the reader of the high women, such as the four female Pharaohs, to the common women, such as wives and mothers. Rather than taking the common road, studying Ancient Egypt through a male's point of view, Robins takes to task what it was to be a woman in Ancient Egypt. Overall *Women in the Ancient Egypt* is one of the best informed books on Ancient Egyptian women on the market today.

One point that Gay Robins make that is not all Egyptian women looked like Cleopatra or Nefertiti. Just like not all American women look like models, Egyptian women came in all sizes, shapes, and could be ugly, plain, or beautiful. Most of the Egyptian art that is famous contains pictures of the powerful and beautiful women. However upon second glance of the Ancient Egyptian art, Robins gleans information about all Egyptian women. Instead of taking a patriarchal look at Ancient Egypt, because that was the view in which the written and art was made, Robins delves into the past like no other.

Although describing common women, Robins also looks at women rulers and other royalty. She shows how these women rulers were placed on the level of a goddess. The royal women had influence, although not directly. A king's wife, mother, or daughter could affect his decisions. This shows that even in Ancient Egypt women were strong influences on the men around them despite the male dominant role in this society.

Priestesses were also examined in this book. After years of a male

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dominated society stating that priestesses were pagan and evil, Robins show how these women did fertility and other rituals. These priestesses were the religion in Ancient Egypt. They were honored and adored by many in order to have their wishes granted. It might have seem superstitious to the current audience, but many of today's religions would seem superstitious to the Ancient Egyptians.

Since Robins is examining Ancient Egyptian women through a woman's perspective, issues concerning women are shown. Examples range from fertility to marriage. Other issues were jobs outside the home, incest, and children. Cosmetics used by Ancient Egyptian women were explained. Soap and hair removal products were also examined. All of these issues did not just affect men, but women as well. There are two sides to every story, but until this book came along, only male version was available. Robins gives a glimpse into this ancient world through Women in the Ancient Egypt.

Another aspect of this book that makes it so creditable is the extensive referencing and research done by Robins. This is not just a book written on opinion, but on solid facts. Much of the research was done on Egyptian artifacts and other upstanding sources. The referencing was easy to follow. All of the assertions made in this book were backed up. This makes the book excellent for colleges and personal reference on Egypt.

Since this book was so well referenced many illustrations of artifacts were shown. This allows the reader to interpret the artifact themselves. The world of Ancient Egyptian women did not only come alive through words, but illustrations and photos as well. That is why this book seems to convey its message so easily. The facts are clear and backed up with colorful illustrations.

Women in the Ancient Egypt is the best book on women in Ancient Egypt. It is well referenced, illustrated, and very clear. All Ancient Egyptian women are represented in this book. All history buffs need to have a copy of this book.

Bibliography

Robins, G. (1993). Women in the Ancient Egypt. USA: Harvard University Press.