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The wall paintings and reliefs of ancient Egyptian tombs and temples record a continuity of customs and beliefs over nearly 3000 years. Even the artistic style of the scenes seems unchanged from century to century, but this appearance is deceptive. In this work, the author proves - with the help of her original research into grid systems and proportions - that innovation and stylistic variation played a significant role in ancient Egyptian art. This book presents a comprehensive account of the squared grids used by the artists of these lost millennia to achieve acceptable proportions for standing, sitting and kneeling human figures. The author traces the system from its Old Kingdom origins through its development in the Middle Kingdom and its continued employment in the Late and Ptolemaic periods. She explores for the first time its use to reflect physical differences between men and women. Also included are a detailed account of the canon of proportions discovered by the author - the Amarna canon - which accompanied the revolutionary changes instituted by the heretic king Akhenaten, and the first full analysis of how the grid system influenced composition as a whole. The text is illustrated by numerous line drawings of paintings and reliefs with superimposed grids, either derived from actual traces surviving on monuments or calculated according to the methods used by the ancient Egyptians themselves.

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