



Proportion and Style in Ancient Egyptian Art

By Gay Robins

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The painted and relief-cut walls of ancient Egyptian tombs and temples record an amazing continuity of customs and beliefs over nearly 3,000 years. Even the artistic style of the scenes seems unchanging, but this appearance is deceptive. In this work, Gay Robins offers convincing evidence, based on a study of Egyptian usage of grid systems and proportions, that innovation and stylistic variation played a significant role in ancient Egyptian art.

Robins thoroughly explores the squared grid systems used by the ancient artists to proportion standing, sitting, and kneeling human figures. This investigation yields the first chronological account of proportional variations in male and female figures from the Early Dynastic to the Ptolemaic periods. Robins discusses in detail the proportional changes underlying the revolutionary style instituted during the Amarna Period. She also considers how the grid system influenced the composition of scenes as a whole. Numerous line drawings with superimposed grids illustrate the text.

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Proportion and Style in Ancient Egyptian Art By Gay Robins Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

The painted and relief-cut walls of ancient Egyptian tombs and temples record an amazing continuity of customs and beliefs over nearly 3,000 years. Even the artistic style of the scenes seems unchanging from century to century, but this appearance is deceptive. In this pioneering work, Gay Robins offers convincing evidence, based on a study of Egyptian usage of grid systems and proportions, that innovation and stylistic variation played a significant role in ancient Egyptian art. Robins provides a comprehensive account of the squared grid systems used by ancient Egyptian artists to achieve acceptable proportions for standing, sitting, and kneeling human figures. She traces the grid system from its Old Kingdom origins as a system of guide lines through its development in the Middle Kingdom and continued employment into the Late and Ptolemaic periods. She is the first author to explore its use with female figures to reflect the actual physical differences between women and men. From this investigation, Robins offers the first chronological account of variations in the proportions of male and female figures - an important component of style - from the Early Dynastic Period to the Ptolemaic Period. Her study includes a detailed account of the Amarna canon of proportions, which she discovered, that accompanied the revolutionary stylistic changes instituted by the heretic king Akhenaton. She also considers for the first time how, in general, the use of a grid system influenced composition as a whole. Numerous line drawings of paintings and reliefs with superimposed grids, either derived from actual grid traces surviving on monuments, or calculated according to the systems used by the Egyptians themselves, illustrate the text. *Proportion and Style in Ancient Egyptian Art* uniquely reveals some of the principles and practices of Egyptian art that are essential to its proper understanding by both interested lay persons and professional Egyptologists and art historians. It will be impossible for any future study of Egyptian art to ignore the findings of this book.

Users Review

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Jill Goulet:

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