

# Preface

The limitations of this book should be stated at the outset. It is simply too brief to do justice to a system of communication as complex and many-sided as the hieroglyphic writing of ancient Egypt. The account of the subject presented here has had to be very selective, covering, in an introductory manner, only those areas that I believe to be of the greatest importance and interest. For more detailed and scholarly treatments of the various aspects of the system, readers are recommended to consult the works listed in the Bibliography.

In the preparation of the book I have been kindly and ably assisted in various ways by a number of colleagues. Mr T. G. H. James made several valuable suggestions concerning its organization and content; Professor A. F. Shore and Miss Carol Andrews provided information on Coptic and demotic matters; Mrs Christine Barratt drew the line illustrations and the hieroglyphs in the text; Mr Peter Hayman prepared the bulk of the photographic material; Miss Felicity Jay typed the final copy; members of the staff of British Museum Publications skilfully expedited the book's completion and its progress through the press. To all these I offer grateful thanks, as I do also to those institutions who have allowed me to use illustrations of objects in their collections.

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