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A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TRIADS OF KING MYCERINUS

By WENDY WOOD

THE valley temple of Mycerinus at Giza, excavated by G. A. Reisner from 1908 to 1910, yielded a great quantity of sculpture which exhibits a wide range in materials, sizes, types, degrees of finish, and states of preservation.¹ Much of the sculpture was in fragmentary condition, but among the works recovered more or less intact was a series of five triads (pls. XXIII–XXV, 1), each with the king, the goddess Hathor, and the personification of a nome, four of them in what passes for mint condition among Old-Kingdom survivals. The relatively pristine state of the quartet is doubtless owing to their seclusion in the south-western corridor of the temple. The fifth triad, of which the heads, feet, and left side had been shattered, was found on the northern side of the court. Reisner identified various fragments as parts of more triads, indicating that the series was originally larger. A thieves' hole of the Moslem Period in the corridor where the four intact triads were found also contained, below the pair statue of the king and queen now in the Boston Museum, a small fragment of a sixth triad with a seated figure in the centre and a standing male on the left (pl. XXV, 2). Other fragments were found in the south-eastern quarter of the portico, around the southern wall, and scattered about the surface debris of the original structure. All of the triads, the pair statue, and the fragments are probably made of greywacke from the Wâdi Hammamât.² Reisner tentatively identified a number of small alabaster fragments as 'nome triads (?)', but then added that the identification was 'probably fallacious and the fragments represent only small *ka*-statuettes'.³

The accepted interpretation of the triads centres on the nome figures and their inscriptions, which announce that 'all offerings' have been brought to Mycerinus. The triads are regarded as thematic descendants of the reliefs of processions of food-bearing women, who personify the king's estates in nomes of Upper and Lower Egypt, which adorned the entrance corridor and apparently continued on the side walls of the pillared porch in the valley temple of the Bent Pyramid at Dahshûr.⁴ W. S. Smith⁵ has stated the general opinion on the purpose of the Mycerinus triads:

. . . it is not unlikely that there were originally statues representing all the Nomes of Upper and Lower Egypt. Through these the king would have been able to draw upon the whole country for nourishment after death.

¹ G. A. Reisner, *Mycerinus: The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza* (1931), 34–54 and 108–15.

² According to Terrace, in Terrace and Fischer, *Treasures of Egyptian Art from the Cairo Museum* (1970), 14, the stone cannot be identified with certainty, except by petrographic examination.

³ Op. cit. 110.

⁴ Ahmed Fakhry, *The Monuments of Sneferu at Dahshur*, II (1961), 17–58.

⁵ *Ancient Egypt as Represented in the Museum of Fine Arts* (6th edn., 1960), 46.

The interpretation has two weaknesses. First, in every intact triad the king wears the White Crown of Upper Egypt. How odd that not one of the many postulated Lower-Egyptian triads survives! One could argue, however, that the series was never completed. Reisner suggested that the shattered alabaster 'nome triads (?)' might have been those of Lower Egypt, the change in material serving as an iconographic distinction, but we have already observed that he doubted the identification himself. He also denied the efficacy of the difference in materials, which he had suggested, because he assumed on the basis of a few traces of paint that all the sculpture was completely painted. For the iconographic distinction to be meaningful we would expect the material for Lower-Egyptian statues to be limestone, the only stone of Lower Egypt which could be called 'characteristic'. However, there was an alabaster quarry in the Wâdi Gerrawi near Helwân that was worked in the Old Kingdom.

The second weakness in the accepted interpretation of the triads is more important. It is extremely difficult to place over thirty triads, each almost a metre high, within the valley temple (fig. 1) in any meaningful relationship to the architecture—impossible if we grant the Egyptian artist of the Fourth Dynasty his sensitivity to the measured disposition of forms. Although the plan of the original stone temple begun by Mycerinus cannot be determined with absolute certainty because it was never finished, Reisner believed that no major changes in plan were made when the temple was subsequently completed in mud-brick during the reign of Shepseskaf. The only area which could possibly hold a large sculptural series is the open court, which is 19.4 m. east-west and 41 m. north-south. The only known precedents for exposed temple sculpture are the seated figures of Chephren carved in the round and apparently placed against piers between openings to a corridor around the court of his pyramid temple. Because the recesses in the court of the Mycerinus valley temple are a feature of brick architecture that would not have been part of the temple as it was originally planned in stone, Herbert Ricke has reconstructed the court with a piered portico.⁶ The court was probably never meant to be articulated, however, for formal analysis of the temple plan shows that it is more closely related to the valley temple of Sneferu at Dahshûr than to the plans of the temples of Cheops and Chephren.

Behind the court of the valley temple of Mycerinus the deep offering chamber flanked by magazines is closer in design to the great sanctuary hall of the Chephren valley temple than to the series of niches at the back of the Sneferu valley temple. But instead of the elaborate entrance halls found in the temples of Cheops and Chephren, the architect of Mycerinus's funerary complex returned to the portico of chapels. The tripartite ordering of space which governs the design is also a feature shared by the valley temples of Sneferu and Mycerinus but not found in the monuments of Cheops and Chephren.

All the Old-Kingdom sculpture of the Sneferu valley temple could not be placed with certainty, but it was predominantly located in roofed areas. There was nothing suggestive of a sculptural programme in the court. On the basis of the architectural

⁶ 'Bemerkung zur ägyptischen Baukunst des Alten Reichs, II', *Beiträge zur ägyptischen Bauforschung und Altertumskunde* 5 (1950), 58. Hans Wolfgang Müller was kind enough to call this reference to my attention.

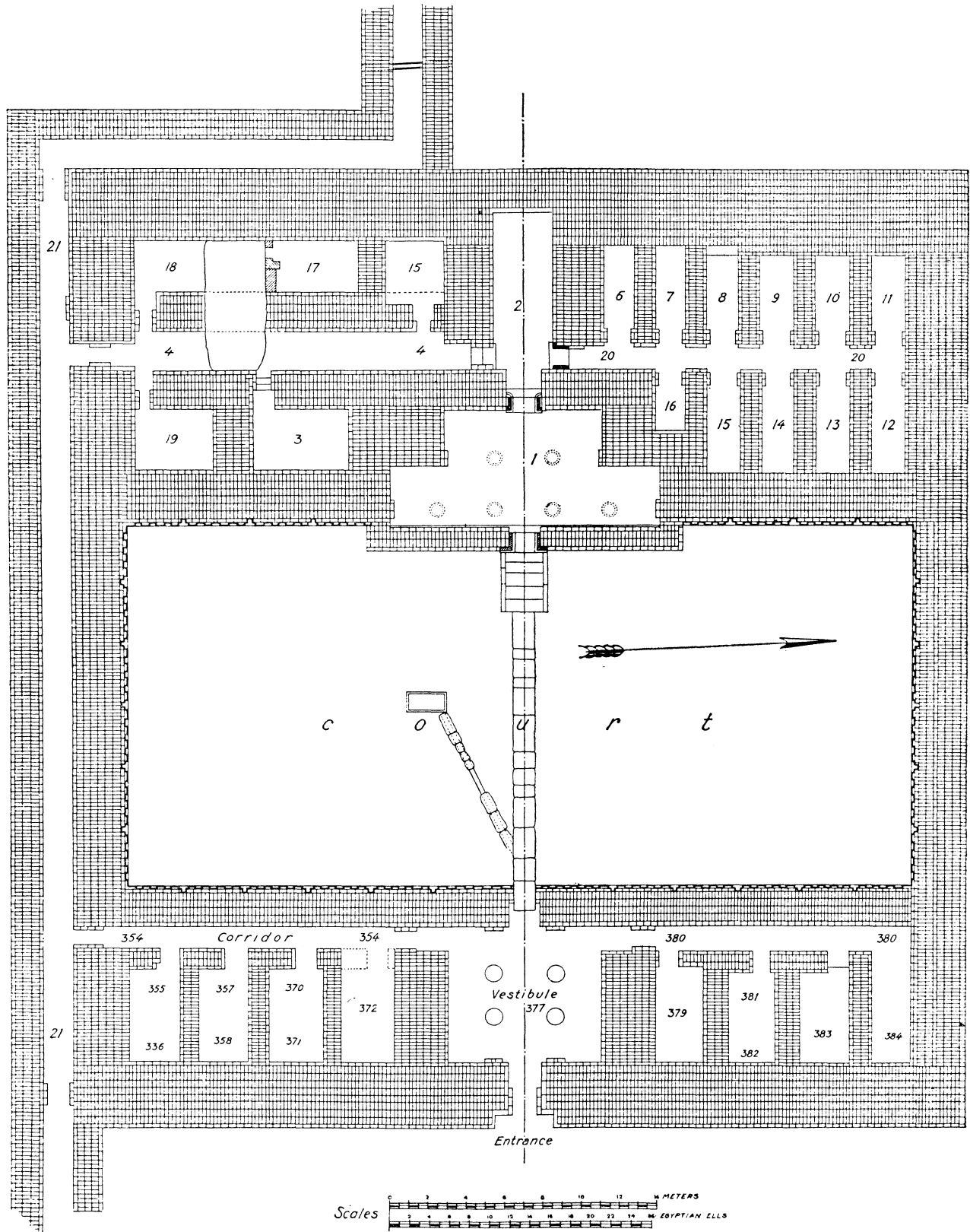


FIG. 1. The Valley Temple (Plan). After Reisner, *Mycerinus* (Harvard U.P.)

analogy between the valley temples of Sneferu and Mycerinus we can assume that the triads of Mycerinus were housed under cover. It is difficult to imagine more than thirty triads thus disposed without the loss of compositional and iconographic coherency.

The triads were clearly not intended for the ante-room to the sanctuary hall, for it contained seated alabaster statues of Mycerinus. Four such statues were found *in situ*, their placement in the rebuilt ante-room of the Fourth Dynasty being an approximation of their location in the original structure. The magazines on the north side of the sanctuary hall were, on the evidence of an assortment of ritual objects found in them, storage space for temple equipment.

The magazines and the corridor on the south side of the sanctuary hall contained a wide variety of sculpture—the intact triads, the small fragment of a triad, the pair statue of the king and queen now in the Boston Museum, and a large assortment of statuettes, both royal and private. Although the triads might have been in the south-western corridor before the restorations of the Sixth Dynasty, which apparently did not greatly disturb the placement of statuary, it does not follow that either the magazines or the corridor was their original destination. The variety of types of statues and their compression in the south-western quarter of the temple is not indicative of a balanced programme and we must assume that some threat, whether from architectural decay or looting, forced their removal to the position in which they were found.

In only one area of the temple, the eight portico chapels, can the series of triads be placed in harmony with the architecture. We can draw a parallel in the placement of the subject-matter with the representation of nome estates in the Sneferu valley temple portico, and note that the threshold is an appropriate place, given the hierarchical strictures of royal funerary decoration, for such terrestrial subject-matter as the provinces of Egypt.

I would reduce the triads from over thirty to only eight in number, one for each portico chapel. The total is much less impressive, but I hope to demonstrate that what the series loses in sheer numbers is more than recompensed by the richness of the conception and the level of artistry it attests.

Reducing the number of triads from over thirty to eight requires a new iconographic interpretation. I therefore offer an alternative which, in my opinion, is more plausible than Reisner's theory because it is based upon the triads as they have survived, without postulating a large missing series of which no trace has been found or violating the Egyptian sensitivity to the complementary relationship of architecture and sculpture.

In the literature the intact triads are generally designated by a major city or the insignia of the nome. The three intact triads in the Cairo Museum are the Cynopolis, Diospolis Parva, and Theban nomes. The Hermopolis nome triad, also intact, is in the Boston Museum, together with the large fragment found in the courtyard. The location of the small fragment is unknown. The names are mnemonic but they unfortunately tend to focus one's attention on the nomes at the expense of the goddess Hathor, who plays merely a supplementary role in the accepted interpretation as the king's providing divinity in after-life. Yet she is the more important figure for in the Hermopolis

triad she assumes the central position that is occupied by the king in the other intact triads and the Boston fragment, whereas the nome figures are always in auxiliary positions. The king is linked to the goddess as to an equal by an inscription which appears on each triad. He is *beloved of Hathor, Mistress of the Sycamore Shrine*. The epithet of the goddess expresses her identification with a tree spirit who had a sanctuary near the great pyramids of Giza. On the Cynopolis, Diospolis Parva, and Theban triads the epithet in full is *Mistress of the Sycamore Shrine, in all her seats*. On the Hermopolis triad the phrase *in all her seats* is omitted, presumably to allow space for the advanced feet of the seated goddess. When the phrase is considered in conjunction with the nomes, the possibility emerges that the triads are not representative of all the nomes but only those in which the cult of Hathor had been established with the support of royal patronage.

According to H. G. Fischer,⁷ Hathor Mistress of the Sycamore Shrine and Hathor Mistress of Dendera are to be regarded as different divinities. His conclusion is directly opposed to the evidence he presents, in my opinion, and to the fundamental principle by which the Egyptian religion developed throughout dynastic history—namely, syncretism. A local god or goddess whose adherents gained political power tended to absorb or be identified with comparable divinities in other localities. Schafik Allam⁸ is therefore probably correct in interpreting an inscription in a rock-cut tomb at Giza of the early Fifth Dynasty which gives Hathor the epithets consecutively, *Hathor Mistress of the Sycamore Shrine, Mistress of Dendera*, as an indication that there was only one Hathor. Two other inscriptions of the Fifth Dynasty, one in a rock-cut tomb at Giza and one in a tomb at Hemamiya repeat the name of the goddess before each of these epithets, which in Fischer's⁹ view is evidence that the cults were separate. The Hemamiya inscription adds, however, *Hathor in all places*, which I interpret as a summary reference to cult centres of less importance than those of Memphis and Dendera. The epithets thus designate the realms of the goddess, not different goddesses. Fischer¹⁰ has stated:

At least three priests or overseers of priests and six priestesses of Hathor of Dendera are known from the Residence, ranging in date from Dyns. IV–VI. The number is not approached by any other Upper Egyptian cult in the Old Kingdom, and raises the question whether there might have existed a special connection between the priesthood of Dendera and the crown. I think the explanation is not to be sought in such a connection, but in the importance of Dendera's cult, first of all, and in its Heliopolitan associations.

But in the Egypt of the Fourth Dynasty, when the centralization of political and religious power in the person of the king reached its zenith, any cult of importance can be assumed to have derived its prominence from a royal connection. In the case of the Dendera cult this supposition is supported by the strength of its presence in the Memphite area. The Heliopolitan associations of the Dendera cult, upon which Fischer has dwelt, merely confirm my argument that the Dendera Hathor and the Mistress of the Sycamore Shrine are one and the same. On the triads the Mistress of the Sycamore

⁷ *Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C.* (1968), 23 n. 97.

⁸ *Beiträge zum Hathorkult* (MÄS 4, 1963), 21–2.

⁹ *Op. cit.* 24–5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 23.

Shrine wears the disc of Re^c between the horns of her head-dress, which did not become standardized until the Fifth Dynasty.¹¹ On the Cynopolis triad, moreover, Hathor carries a *shen* sign in her right hand and the nome carries one in her left hand. If both the Mistress of the Sycamore Shrine and the Mistress of Dendera have Heliopolitan associations, is it not all the more probable that they are one and the same?

As Mistress of Dendera, Hathor's influence throughout Upper Egypt during the Old Kingdom is indicated by inscriptions ranging from Thebes to Memphis.¹² If she is identified with the Mistress of the Sycamore Shrine, the crown of Upper Egypt worn by the king in the intact triads, the recurrent use of the phrase *in all her seats*, and the use of greywacke from the Wâdi Hammamât, a material which might well have been associated with Dendera owing to its geographical proximity, take on a new dimension of meaning. The interpretation of the triads as provision for the king's after-life is not obviated, but it must be viewed as subsidiary to the celebration of the joint rule of the divine sovereigns, Hathor and Mycerinus.

My reconstruction of the series in the portico of the valley temple is based on the assumption that the order of the series was determined by the geographical alignment of the nomes from north to south within eight chapels which run north-south, opening on the west. The reliefs of personified estates in the entrance corridor and the side walls of the pillared porch of the Sneferu valley temple are proof that the geographical orientation of sculpture had already been practised. The estates are grouped according to nomes, and the nomes of Lower Egypt are numbered from south to north in accordance with their actual progression. The nomes of Upper Egypt are numbered from north to south, the reverse of their actual designation, but even this alignment can be interpreted as dictated by geography in a scheme aimed at extending the extremities of Egypt into the pillared porch of the temple in celebration of the geographical extent to which kingship was acknowledged.

Using the abbreviations G for the goddess Hathor, K for King Mycerinus, and M or F for male or female nome figures, we can reconstruct the order of the intact triads as follows:

Nome:	Nome 18, U.E. Cynopolis	Nome 15, U.E. Hermopolis	Nome 7, U.E. Diospolis Parva	Nome 4, U.E. Thebes
Order of figures:	GKF	FGK	GKF	GKM
Line of heads:	Straight	Diagonal (ascending left-right)	Straight	(Diagonal ascending right-left)
Pose:	Standing	Seated (centre figure only)	Standing	Standing

There are also the two fragments to consider. The nome emblem on the Boston fragment is lost but the figures are, from left to right, Hathor, Mycerinus, and a male nome, all standing. The composition is thus comparable to the Theban triad in the order of the figures. The Boston fragment must also have had the diagonally aligned

¹¹ Ibid. 33 n. 140.

¹² Ibid. 23-35 and 40.

heads, for although Hathor's shoulder is almost level with the point where Mycerinus's shoulder would have been and the joints of their elbows are almost even, there is a drop in level between the king and the nome that is most obvious in the placement of the belts. Assuming that all variants upon the order of figures within a patterned group of eight triads are visible in the four intact examples and the Boston fragment, the seated figure in the centre of the small fragment must be Hathor. The standing male on the left cannot be the king for in other examples Mycerinus always appears on the goddess's left side. We thus have the following fragments to take into account in the reconstruction:

Nome:	Unknown	Unknown
Order of figures:	GKM	MGK
Line of heads:	Diagonal (ascending right-left)	Unknown
Pose:	Standing	Seated (centre figure only)

The eight portico chapels are divided into two sets of four by a central vestibule. We can designate the chapels as follows:

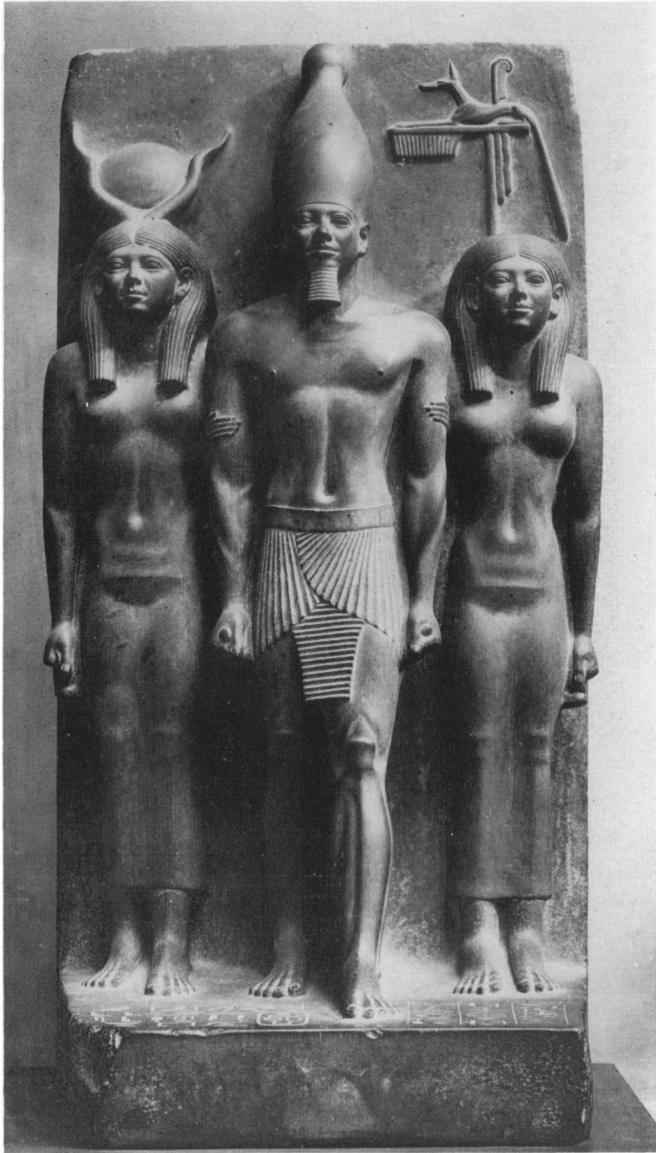
Chapel	Chapel	Chapel	Chapel	Chapel	Chapel	Chapel	Chapel
D-north	C-north	B-north	A-north	A-south	B-south	C-south	D-south

The wide numerical gap between the triads of nomes 15 and 7 suggests that the triads of nomes 18 and 15 were in the north chapels while the triads of nomes 7 and 4 were in the south chapels.

A further clue is provided by the range in quality among the triads.¹³ The fact that we are dealing with an iconographically and formally unified programme implies that the over-all design was the work of one master, but it is not to be supposed that he carved all the triads. Royal sculpture was made in workshops and may be the product of many hands. Presumably the master sculptor who headed the shop executed or at least supervised all the critical stages of important pieces. We can assume that the master's hand will be most apparent in the centrally located chapels A-north and A-south, which were apt to receive the greatest number of visitors.

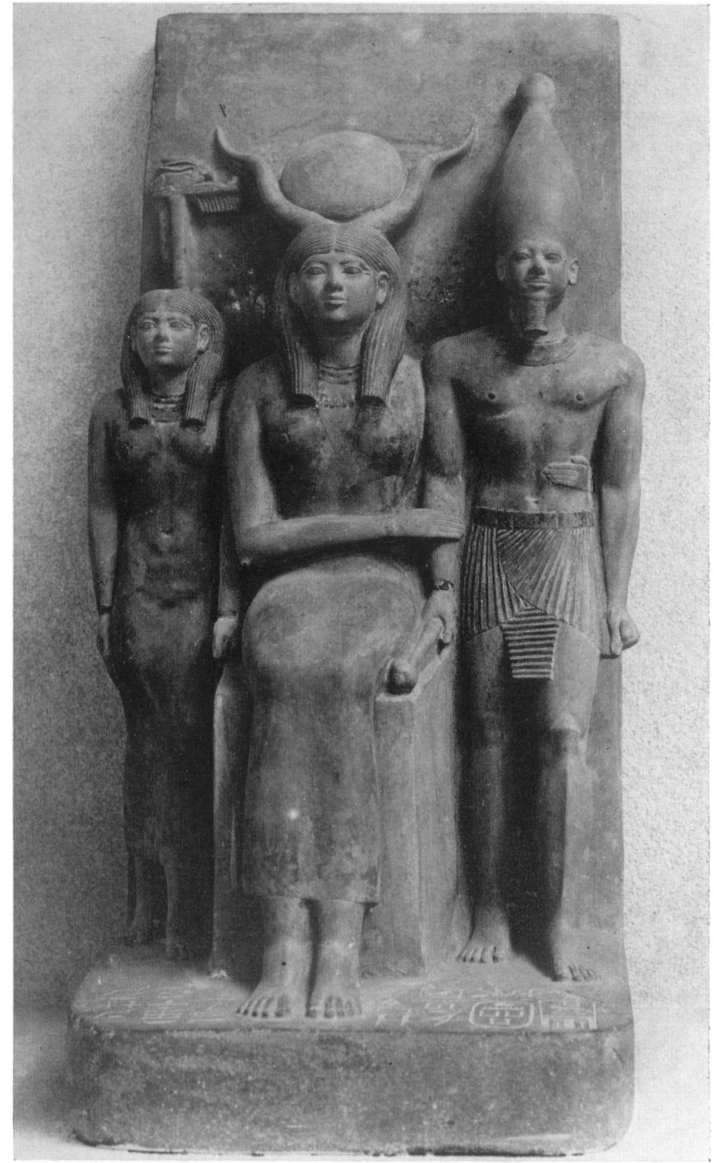
On the basis of quality we can place the Boston triad of nome 15 in chapel A-north. It is the best of the intact triads, combining a subtle richness in the anatomical modelling with smoothly curving surfaces, which are played against the flat planes of the base, seat, and back slab, and accented by the crisp ridges of the kilt and the striations of wigs and the king's beard. The ascending diagonals created by the heads, the overlapping shoulders, and Hathor's right arm are particularly remarkable for their subtlety because their combined directional force gives vitality to the composition without disturbing the frontality of the group. The fusion of Hathor and Mycerinus into a pair within the equilibrium of the triad by means of Hathor's embrace and the support her seat provides for the king's mace, also bears witness to the hand of a master sculptor. The portraiture is very fine, offering the most delicately modelled and idealized Hathor and

¹³ My judgements on quality had to be made on the basis of photographs, but John D. Cooney, who is familiar at first hand with all the works in the series, except the lost fragment, confirmed my opinions. I am grateful to him for this help and for his encouragement. Pl. 23, 2, it may be noted, does not adequately represent the fine quality of that triad.



1. Hathor, Mycerinus, and the nome-goddess of Cynopolis
(Cairo Museum)

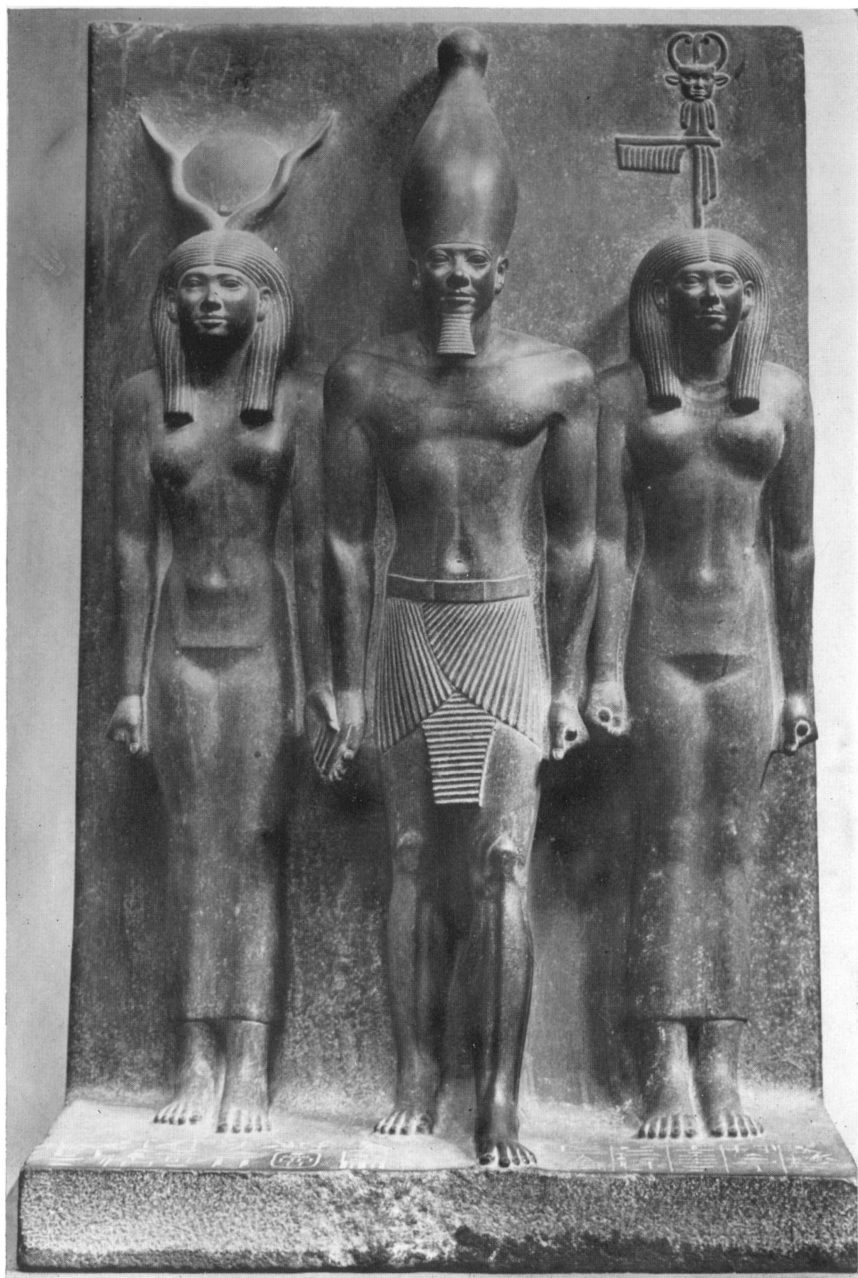
Courtesy Hirmer, Munich



2. The nome-goddess of Hermopolis, Hathor, and Mycerinus

Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

THE TRIADS OF MYCERINUS



1. Hathor, Mycerinus, and the nome-goddess of Diospolis Parva
(Cairo Museum)

Courtesy Hirmer, Munich



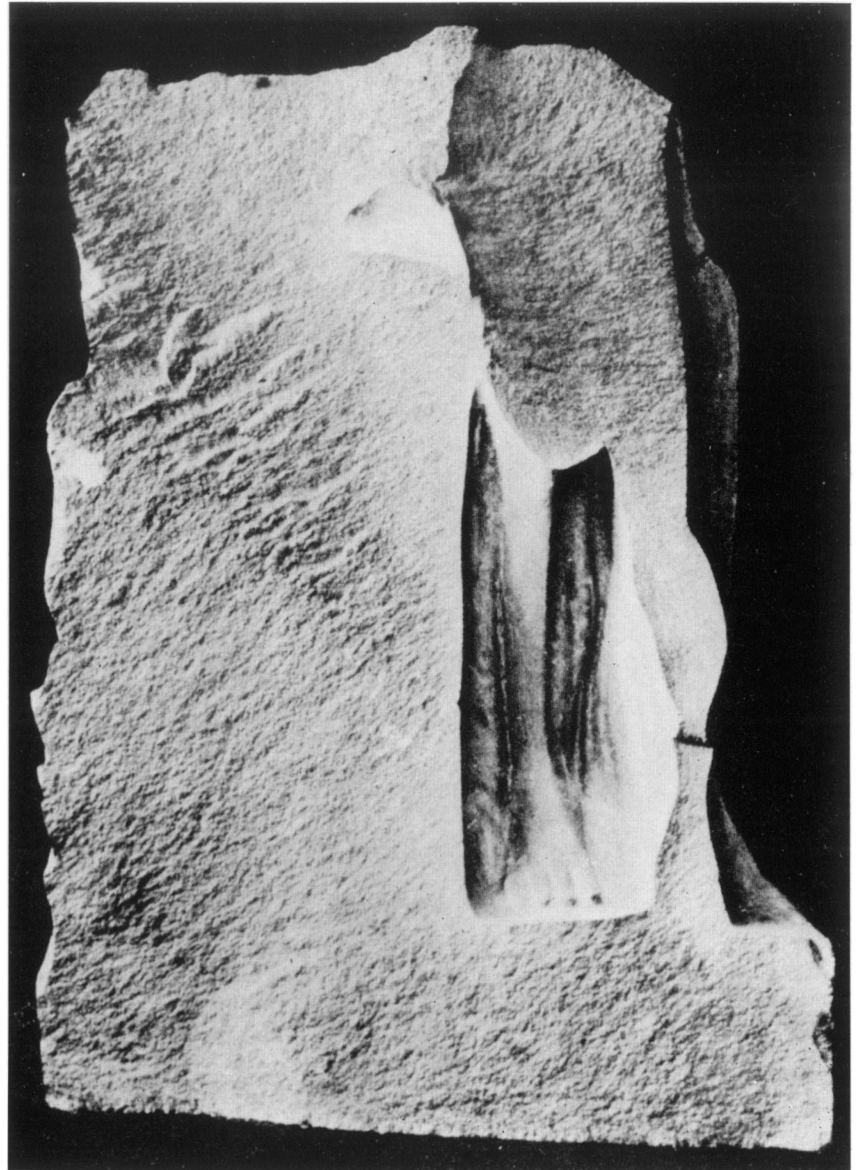
2. Hathor, Mycerinus, and the Theban nome-god (Cairo Museum)

Courtesy Hirmer, Munich

THE TRIADS OF MYCERINUS



1. Fragmentary triad found on the northern side of the court
Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



2. Fragment of triad with a seated figure in the centre and a standing male on the left

From Reisner, Mycerinus (Harvard U.P.)

THE TRIADS OF MYCERINUS

the most individualized study of Mycerinus. The masculine character of the king is enhanced by his broad-shouldered physique and juxtaposed to the feminine curves and fine facial features of the goddess. Even the hieroglyphs on the base are superior in drawing and alignment.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Theban triad of nome 4. The absence of subtlety in the composition is evident in the harsh alignment of the heads where there is too great a drop in level between the king and the male nome figure, who consequently appears squat. The complexities introduced by multiple diagonals are missing, and the union of Hathor and Mycerinus is effected only by the scale they share. No effect of portraiture or beauty is conveyed by the faces, which are generalized and relatively coarse. Since the Theban triad is the poorest in quality we can assume that it stood in chapel D-south at the end of the portico in a less important position. We should note that the south-eastern doorway which connects the portico with the causeway was not the main entrance.

The Cynopolis and Diospolis Parva triads fall between the two extremes. The latter has a slight edge in that nothing disturbs the vertical rhythm as the disembodied hands of the Cynopolis triad do. Moreover, the portraiture of the Diospolis Parva triad is finer. The differences, however, are not sufficient to justify placing the triads on the basis of quality alone, particularly since the importance of Dendera might have been a factor in the effort expended on the Diospolis Parva triad. We can merely observe that they belong somewhere between the centre and the end chapels.

This analysis of the triads is illuminating in its implications for the larger stylistic problem of royal sculpture of the Fourth Dynasty, and for Reisner's¹⁴ theory of two workshops at Giza headed by sculptor A and sculptor B during the reigns of Chephren and Mycerinus. Basing his stylistic distinction on two facial types, one lean and the other full, Reisner's attributions to sculptor A included the three triads in Cairo, while the Boston intact triad was among the works assigned to sculptor B. In the case of the triads the distinction is not between masters, however, but between shop work and a masterpiece. We can therefore translate the attribution of the large Boston fragment to sculptor B made by E. L. B. Terrace,¹⁵ who broadened the basis for stylistic analysis to a consideration of the whole work, into an attribution to the master who planned the series and executed the intact Boston triad, for the two works are superior to the rest of the series. On the basis of quality the Boston fragment can be placed in chapel A-south (fig. 2).

We now have the key to reconstructing the entire series if we assume that the basic principles governing the formal pattern are contained within the central works executed by the master. When the two triads are considered jointly it is clear that their correspondence is in terms of images which are generically the same but specifically opposed. Thus the female nome of the Boston intact triad corresponds to the male nome of the Boston fragment, the goddess to the king, the king to the goddess. The basic motive underlying the correspondence is the pairing of equivalent male and

¹⁴ Op. cit. 127-9.

¹⁵ 'A Fragmentary Triad of King Mycerinus', *Boston Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 59 (1961), 40-9.

female figures. The alignment of heads also corresponds and contrasts—the diagonal in the north ascends from left to right, and that in the south ascends from right to left.

We can proceed on the assumption that each north chapel corresponds to a south chapel in a progression that begins in the centre of the portico and moves out from it. Thus A-north corresponds to A-south, B-north to B-south, etc. Similarly each triad will have its opposite member in the corresponding chapel.

← NORTH								
CHAPEL D-NORTH	CHAPEL C-NORTH	CHAPEL B-NORTH	CHAPEL A-NORTH	VESTIBULE	CHAPEL A-SOUTH	CHAPEL B-SOUTH	CHAPEL C-SOUTH	CHAPEL D-SOUTH
			NOME 15		NOME ?			NOME 4
			HERMOPOLIS					THEBES
			FGK		GKM			GKM
			DIAGONAL		DIAGONAL			DIAGONAL
			SEATED		STANDING			STANDING

FIG. 2

That standing and seated centre figures, male and female nomes, and the king and the goddess cannot simply alternate is clear from the fact that chapels A-south and D-south contain triads which duplicate each other. To perceive the entire scheme we must take what we know of the subsidiary triads into account.

We now have three triads—the Boston fragment, the Diospolis Parva triad, and the Theban triad—on the south, and two triads—those of Hermopolis and Cynopolis—on the north. The standing king occupies the centre of all three southern triads, but since he also appears in the centre of one triad on the north we can assume that the missing triad on the south had Hathor seated in the centre. To carry through the principle of corresponding opposites, the north side must have had three triads in which the seated goddess was in the centre and one, the Cynopolis triad, in which the king is in the centre. The north side of the portico is predominantly female, the south side is predominantly male, but each side has one exception to reinforce the bond between the halves. The scheme is in keeping with the best of classical Egyptian art, which places a premium on equilibrium but avoids the monotony of perfect symmetry.

The missing southern triad probably stood in chapel B-south because the numerical gap in nome numbers is much greater, even with the Boston fragment in chapel A-south, between nomes 7 and 15 than between nomes 7 and 4. The Diospolis Parva triad therefore stood in chapel C-south.

The triad of chapel B-south must have had a male on the left for the pattern of the nomes to correspond to the king-goddess pattern. But the group would not have had

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a diagonal alignment because that would have placed the head of the nome higher than the heads of Hathor and Mycerinus. Since the diagonals, moreover, are not used consistently throughout the series and do not alternate with straight alignments, they are meaningful only in relation to the architecture. In the outermost chapels they set up a directional line that invites the viewer to move toward the centre. The centre diagonals establish the impetus needed to span the vestibule, and they elevate Hathor

← NORTH

CHAPEL D-NORTH	CHAPEL C-NORTH	CHAPEL B-NORTH	CHAPEL A-NORTH		CHAPEL A-SOUTH	CHAPEL B-SOUTH	CHAPEL C-SOUTH	CHAPEL D-SOUTH
			NOME 15	VESTIBULE	NOME ?	NOME ?	NOME 7	NOME 4
			HERMOPOLIS				DIOSPOLIS PARVA	THEBES
			FGK		GKM	MGK	GKF	GKM
			DIAGONAL		DIAGONAL	STRAIGHT	STRAIGHT	DIAGONAL
			SEATED		STANDING	SEATED	STANDING	STANDING

FIG. 3

← NORTH

CHAPEL D-NORTH	CHAPEL C-NORTH	CHAPEL B-NORTH	CHAPEL A-NORTH		CHAPEL A-SOUTH	CHAPEL B-SOUTH	CHAPEL C-SOUTH	CHAPEL D-SOUTH
NOME 1	NOME 20	NOME 18	NOME 15	VESTIBULE	NOME 12	NOME 9	NOME 7	NOME 4
FGK	MGK	GKF	FGK		GKM	MGK	GKF	GKM
DIAGONAL	STRAIGHT	STRAIGHT	DIAGONAL		DIAGONAL	STRAIGHT	STRAIGHT	DIAGONAL
SEATED	SEATED	STANDING	SEATED		STANDING	SEATED	STANDING	STANDING


FIG. 4

and Mycerinus to the compositional peaks that flank the central axis of the temple (fig. 3).

We can now restore the northern chapels completely as the counterparts of the southern chapels. The Cynopolis triad belongs in chapel B-north. The triad in chapel C-north was like that in chapel B-south, and the small fragment found in the thieves' hole therefore came from one of these two rooms. The triad in chapel D-north was like that in chapel A-north (fig. 4).

The fact that numerical intervals of three appear twice in the series, between nomes 4 and 7 and nomes 15 and 18, suggests that the progression was based on such intervals in keeping with the triad format. There cannot, however, have been nine intervals between nomes 7 and 15. This is to be anticipated, for if the numerical series corresponds in pattern to the sculptural one we can expect an irregularity in chapels B-south and C-north. Since the irregularity must be a contraction we can assume the interval is reduced to two in harmony with the pair theme. We now have in the southern chapels, from the exterior to the centre, the Upper Egyptian nomes 4, 7, 9, and 12. The northern chapels must continue in a corresponding progression: nomes 15, 18, 20, and nome 1 of Lower Egypt (fig. 4).

The assumption that the triads of highest quality have survived is justified by other considerations which support the reconstruction. The inscriptional evidence of Hathor worship extends, as we have observed, from the Memphite area to Thebes, corresponding to the geographical range of the triads. Although the governing principle is the correspondence of northern and southern elements which are the opposite members of pairs, north and south are not equated with Lower and Upper Egypt, for three of the Upper-Egyptian nomes, 15, 18, and 20, were in the northern chapels. The division is not unnatural, however, if we recall that the Old-Kingdom Egyptians thought of the Upper-Egyptian nomes as tripartite, probably in accordance with political units.¹⁶ Nomes 1 through 9 were probably the 'Southern Region' and nomes 10 through 15 were probably the 'Middle Nomes'. If the northern group had a similar geographical term of reference, it is unknown. During the Fourth Dynasty provincial administrators had more than one nome under their jurisdiction.¹⁷ Nomes 5, 6, and 7 of Upper Egypt, for example, made up one political unit. Since the southern extremity of Upper Egypt was probably more sparsely populated, nomes 1 through 4 were probably also under one administrator. The northernmost nomes of Upper Egypt might have been under the direct administration of Memphis, blurring the boundary between Upper and Lower Egypt. Although only eight nomes were actually represented in the triads, all of Upper Egypt and at least the Heliopolitan area of Lower Egypt were implied.

The Delta might well have been implied, too, by the northernmost of the triads where the king presumably wore the Red Crown of Lower Egypt that is also worn by Neith. By the Fourth Dynasty Neith, like Hathor, had Heliopolitan associations as a daughter of Rē^c, and the close relationship of the goddesses at Giza as early as the reign of Chephren has been noted by Siegfried Schott.¹⁸ The divine sisters are also linked in a number of Old-Kingdom tomb inscriptions. A Fourth Dynasty inscription from Dahshûr in the Louvre, for example, gives the titles of the wife of Sneferu's eldest son as *priestess of Hathor Mistress of the Sycamore; priestess of the Opener of Ways, Neith North of the Wall; priestess of the Mistress of*  *in all (her) places.*¹⁹ Fischer

¹⁶ Fischer, op. cit. 65.

¹⁷ Ibid. 12.

¹⁸ 'Ein Kult der Göttin Neith', *Das Sonnenheiligtum des Userkaf*, II (Beiträge zur ägyptischen Bauforschung und Altertumskunde, 8, 1969), 127. Dieter Mueller was kind enough to call this reference to my attention.

¹⁹ Fischer, op. cit. 31.

has shown that the final epithet is probably deliberately ambiguous, referring to both Heliopolis and Dendera, because the Old-Kingdom Egyptians probably 'played upon the similarity of the names *Iwnw* and *Iwnt* . . . rendered meaningful by Hathor's solar associations'.²⁰ *North of the Wall* might also be a geographical epithet, referring to the area north of Memphis, the great walled capital city of Egypt. The sequence of epithets thus both individuates and unites the realms of the daughters of Rē throughout all of Egypt—the Memphite area, the Delta, Heliopolis, and Upper Egypt.

It might be objected that the emphasis on Upper Egypt in the reconstruction still appears disproportionate. We must remember, however, that the alabaster from which many of the statues in the funerary complex were carved might have been associated with Heliopolis, owing to proximity to the Wādi Gerrawi, as greywacke might have denoted Dendera. The inscription on the only finished figure among the four seated alabaster statues of the king found in the ante-room to the sanctuary describes Mycerinus as *Hor(us Kay-Khet)*, *shining brighter than any other good god*.²¹ The alabaster works could thus be said to give iconographic equilibrium to the programme as a whole.

Where shall we place the pair statue of Mycerinus and his queen? If we put it in the central chamber beyond the court, we can postulate a tidy progression from the greywacke triads, in which both seated and standing poses are found, to the seated alabaster figures of the king, to the standing greywacke pair, to the seated alabaster colossus in the pyramid temple. We would then have an alternation of poses and iconographic materials and a diminishing pattern of numbers that is very satisfying. But simple alternation is not the pattern of the sculptural programme, as it was not the pattern of the triads. To mention only the most interesting complication, the wooden fragments found by Reisner in the western half of the valley temple suggest the probability of sycamore statues dedicated to the Mistress of the Sycamore Shrine. The wooden statues were probably from a royal workshop, rather than private offerings from various sources, for the eyes, which were all that survived from a statue and three statuettes, are uniformly of an unusual technique.²² The wooden statues were probably part of the original programme and must be accounted for in any reconstruction of the whole. The triads, which are simple in their over-all scheme but enriched by internal intricacies of pattern, attest the sophistication of the Old-Kingdom artist and warn against oversimplification. The location of the pair statue and the role of the wooden figures are part of the unsolved riddle of the sculptural programme to which the triads are only the prelude.

²⁰ Ibid. 34–5.

²¹ Reisner, *op. cit.* III.

²² A. E. Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries* (4th edn., 1962, rev. J. R. Harris), 121.