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## Royal versus Divine Authority

Acquisition, Legitimization  
and Renewal of Power

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## The Cultic Relationship of the Menkaure Triads to the Small Step Pyramids

Florence Dunn Friedman

This paper expands on a brief observation made by Stephan J. Seidlmayer several years ago in which he compared ideas expressed by the small step pyramids to ideas expressed in the Sneferu procession of estates at Dahshur and the triads of Menkaure.<sup>1</sup> I largely agree with his observation and expand on it further by focusing especially on comparison of the triads with the small step pyramids.

The triads (Fig. 1) comprise part of the late Fourth Dynasty sculpture program at Menkaure's valley temple at Giza – a sculpture program that brought the king into relation with the two deities at the heart of royal ideology, Re and Hathor. Menkaure is brought into relation with Re through travertine (Egyptian alabaster) statues of the seated king, where the one fully inscribed example of the four (Fig. 2)<sup>2</sup> included the solar-related Golden Horus

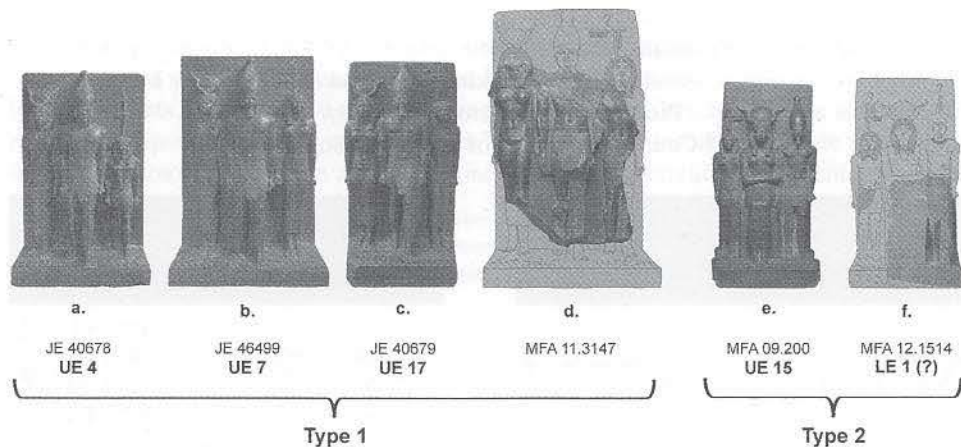


Fig. 1 Four intact (a, b, c, e\*) and two fragmentary (d\*, f\*) greywacke triads. Photography by Michael Fredericks. Grey areas are reconstruction by author, drawn by Michelle Pisa.

\* Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

- 1 S. J. SEIDLMAYER, Town and state in the early Old Kingdom: a view from Elephantine, in: J. SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, London 1996, 124; S. J. SEIDLMAYER, Die staatliche Anlage der 3. Dyn. in der Nordweststadt von Elephantine: Archäologische und historische Probleme, in: M. BIETAK (ed.), *Haus und Palast im Alten Ägypten*, Vienna 1996, 210. Summary of Seidlmayer's ideas in T. A. H. WILKINSON, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, London – New York 1999, 278.
- 2 MFA, Boston, 09.202; found with three other seated statues in the valley temple offering room. See G. A. REISNER, *Mycerinus. The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza*, Cambridge, MA 1931, pl. 47; MFA, Boston, 09.202 = statue No. 19, pl. 47 b and c. The text differs from that of the triads'.





Name<sup>3</sup> and very probably the *s3 R<sup>c</sup>* name with preceding cartouche in its missing text<sup>4</sup> (*s3 R<sup>c</sup>* in this period follows as opposed to precedes the cartouche – a cartouche which when followed by *s3 R<sup>c</sup>* we know from other Fourth Dynasty material contained the name “*Mn-k3w-r<sup>c</sup>*”). I suggest that the restored cartouche here functions as both the name for the *nswt-bjtj* title and the personal name for *s3 R<sup>c</sup>*, the cartouche name thus performing double duty, a practice found in Fourth Dynasty estate names where a cartouche is shown once but read twice (see p. 105 below and Fig. 5). This principle of a single word or concept implicitly assigned double usage will be raised again in a later context. Following the *s3 R<sup>c</sup>* name is the clearly inscribed phrase, *stwt r ntr nfr*,<sup>5</sup> “made into the likeness of the younger god”, *ntr nfr*, meaning, as Berlev shows, the younger form of the sun god and a title held only by the reigning king.<sup>6</sup> The seated statue (probably like its unfinished companions)<sup>7</sup> thus shows Menkaure as the living, reigning king<sup>8</sup> likened to the sun god.

Menkaure is brought into relation with Hathor through the greywacke triads, which omit the *s3 R<sup>c</sup>* and Golden Horus (as well as Two Ladies) Name in their titulary (Fig. 3),<sup>9</sup> and focus on Hathor, who supports Menkaure in what I believe is the main theme of the triads, the Heb Sed, through which he remains eternal king. Through identification with Re and support from Hathor Menkaure lives as eternal monarch. Though the solar aspect of Menkaure’s statuary will be returned to, this paper looks especially at the Hathor-related triads, and how their Heb Sed use of cult compares most notably with that of the small step pyramids. My hypothesis is that the triads, like the small step pyramids, concern royal cult tied to towns of economic value, but that, unlike the small step pyramids, the triads make a further link to Hathor.

It’s important to keep in mind the gaps in the record, archaeological and otherwise, for both the triads and the small step pyramids. We have four intact greywacke triads, plus two large fragments, and many bits and pieces suggesting more triads, but lacunae abound – from missing findspots of known greywacke bits,<sup>10</sup> and a current inability to locate all the pieces in a Giza photo of 1913,<sup>11</sup> to a lack of concrete clues on original placement of the triads

3 R. J. LEPROHON, *The Great Name*, ed. by Denise M. Doxey, Atlanta, 2013, 16.

4 James Allen also suggested in personal conversation that the *s3 R<sup>c</sup>* name would appear in the damaged section of the statue base. Restoration of missing text is my own. The *s3 R<sup>c</sup>* name would give us, to my knowledge, the only Fourth Dynasty monument with all five names of a king (cf. V. DOBREV, *Considérations sur les titulatures des rois de la IV<sup>e</sup> dynastie égyptienne*, in: BIFAO 93, 1993, 179, n. 1). A full discussion of this statue and its inscriptions on all four sides of the base is in preparation in FRIEDMAN, in the publication for Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology, Warsaw, 2–6 July 2013, forthcoming.

5 The text flanks the king’s feet, illustrated in H. G. FISCHER, *Varia Aegyptiaca*, in: JARCE 2, 1963, 28, where it is translated as “made into the likeness of the good god”. Berlev, however, shows that *ntr nfr* is practically synonymous with *s3 R<sup>c</sup>* (O. BERLEV, *Two Kings – Two Suns – on the worldview of the ancient Egyptians*, in: S. QUIRKE (ed.), *Discovering Egypt from the Neva: The Egyptological Legacy of Oleg D. Berlev*, Berlin 2003, 29). I thank James Allen for this Berlev reference.

6 BERLEV, in QUIRKE (ed.), *Discovering Egypt from the Neva*, 32. I thank James Allen for his observation about the *ntr nfr* as the living king.

7 With more fragments of this statue type stored at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

8 I thank James Allen for this observation.

9 Differences in titulary between the two statue types needs its own study, which is under preparation in FRIEDMAN, in the publication for Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology, Warsaw, 2–6 July 2013, forthcoming.

10 REISNER, *Mycerinus*, 110 (15) mentions finding such bits and pieces but publishes only one, in pl. 64g.

11 Photo ID A1030\_NS in the Giza Archives shows 32 excavated but unregistered fragments of greywacke Menkaure statuary that were photographed in 1913. But only a few of those appear among the 35

in the valley temple. Similarly, there is insufficient archaeological or inscriptional data to fully piece together the meaning of all the small step pyramids. But with both categories of material, we proceed on the basis of what is known. Based on that data, my past articles on the triads have offered interpretations of meaning in which I suggest that Hathor is the key to their understanding. I outline the main points here, the full support for which appears in the relevant publications.<sup>12</sup>

Four intact and two fragmentary triads show two compositional types. Type 1 has the king at center, flanked by Hathor and a male or female nome personification; Type 2 has Hathor seated at center, flanked by king and nome personification. Hathor is the highest status figure of the three, even outranking the king. Different nome signs from Upper Egypt appear on the heads of the four surviving nome personifications, and we can assume that nome signs originally appeared on the damaged triads (Fig. 1 d; f). A provisioning text appears on the base of each triad (Fig. 3) that Seidlmayer, like others, seems to take as the main theme of the statues.<sup>13</sup> The inscription states that the king is given goods by an unnamed speaker from the nomes of Upper Egypt, which are cited on the heads of the personifications, male and female according to the gender of their nome.<sup>14</sup> The provisioning text on three of the four intact triads (Fig. 1, a–c) is addressed to the king, *sk tw h<sup>c</sup>(j).t(j) m nswt-bjtj dt*, “when you appear as King of Upper and Lower Egypt forever” (using Fig. 3, JE 40678, as an example).<sup>15</sup> His Appearance as king recalls the coronation rite of the Appearance of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt as seen in the Palermo Stone entry for Menkaure’s successor, Shepseskaf.<sup>16</sup> (Menkaure’s entry is essentially lost.) Menkaure’s provisioning thus appears in the context of coronation, which is a Heb Sed theme, the very theme made iconographically clear in the fourth intact triad (Fig. 1, c; Fig. 4).

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greywacke fragments now in Boston. The location of the rest has not been located in the MFA, Boston or the Cairo Museum. From the photo, many fragments probably went to triads; others at the MFA, Boston, I find go to more dyads and not triads: F. D. FRIEDMAN, The Menkaure Dyad(s), in: S. E. THOMPSON/P. DER MANUELIAN (eds.), *Egypt and Beyond, Essays Presented to Leonard H. Lesko upon his Retirement from the Wilbour Chair of Egyptology at Brown University June 2005*, Providence 2008, 109–144; F. D. FRIEDMAN, Evidence suggesting additional Menkaure Dyads, in: The 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Research in Egypt (ARCE), Abstracts, Providence, RI, 2012, 37.

- 12 FRIEDMAN, in THOMPSON/DER MANUELIAN (eds.), *Egypt and Beyond*; F. D. FRIEDMAN, Reading the Menkaure Triads, Part I, in: R. GUNDLACH/K. SPENCE (eds.), *Palace and Temple. 5<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Egyptian Royal Ideology*, Wiesbaden 2011, 23–41; F. D. FRIEDMAN, Reading the Menkaure Triads: Part II (Multi-directionality), in: N. STRUDWICK/H. STRUDWICK (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC*, Oxford – Oakville 2011, 93–114; F. D. FRIEDMAN, Economic implications of the Menkaure Triads, in: P. DER MANUELIAN/T. SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History for the Egyptian Old Kingdom. Perspectives on the Pyramid Age*, Harvard Egyptological Studies 1, Boston 2015, forthcoming.
- 13 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124.
- 14 The Theban nome is mistakenly male; see FRIEDMAN, in GUNDLACH/SPENCE (eds.), *Palace and Temple*, 24, n. 12.
- 15 Full provisioning texts: from UE 4 (JE 40678): *ht nb(t) jmj<sup>t</sup> Šm<sup>c</sup>w df<sup>3</sup> nb htpt nbt sk tw h<sup>c</sup>(j).t(j) m nswt-bjtj dt*; from (UE 7) JE 46499: *ht nb(t) nfrt jmj<sup>t</sup>.(j) htpt nbt jmj<sup>t</sup> Šm<sup>c</sup>w h<sup>c</sup>(j).t(j) m nswt-bjtj dt*; from UE 17 (JE 40679): *ht nb(t) nfrt jmj<sup>t</sup>.(j) htpt nbt jmj<sup>t</sup> Šm<sup>c</sup>w h<sup>c</sup>(j).t(j) m nswt-bjtj dt*; and from UE 15 (MFA 09.200): *nfrt nb(t) htpt nb(t) df<sup>3</sup> nb jmj<sup>t</sup> Šm<sup>c</sup>w dt*. See REISNER, *Mycerinus*, pl. 46.
- 16 T. A. H. WILKINSON, *Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt*, London – New York 2000, 149–151, PS v.1.2; FRIEDMAN, in GUNDLACH/SPENCE (eds.), *Palace and Temple*, 38 for expanded discussion related to Heb Sed.



A major question for this paper is whether Menkaure's original plan included 42 triads, assuming that the full complement of nomes was in place by the end of the Fourth Dynasty. A similar question arises with the small step pyramids, that is, was one intended for every nome? Given that the king was theoretically supplied by the entire country and would want to represent this piece of political ideology, whether true or not, 42 triads would make sense just as the same number of small step pyramids would. Seidlmayer assumes that this was probably the case in principle for both the small step pyramids and the triads.<sup>17</sup> Seidel agrees.<sup>18</sup> Wendy Wood, however, writing some years earlier, took a different approach, suggesting that the original sequence of triads did not include all nomes but only those in which there was a Hathor cult.<sup>19</sup> In previous work, I discuss why I agree with her. If she is right, we would expect many fewer than 42 triads to have been planned, much less executed. And in using fragments from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, I estimate the whole sequence to have been perhaps 10–12 triads, and suggest, following Wood, that each was associated with a Hathor sanctuary, which I would identify as either real or symbolic.<sup>20</sup> Hathor and her cult, I have suggested, are at the heart of understanding the triads. Always to Menkaure's right, she embraces the king, holds his hand, supports and legitimizes him. He is "Hathor's beloved" (Fig. 3), linked to her in the Upper Egyptian nomes from which the inscription says he is provisioned.

A critical issue is who is doing the provisioning. The giver is unnamed (Fig. 3). Since the provisioning text appears in front of the male or female nome personification, the simplest explanation is that the offerings are given by that nome. I would argue that while the nome

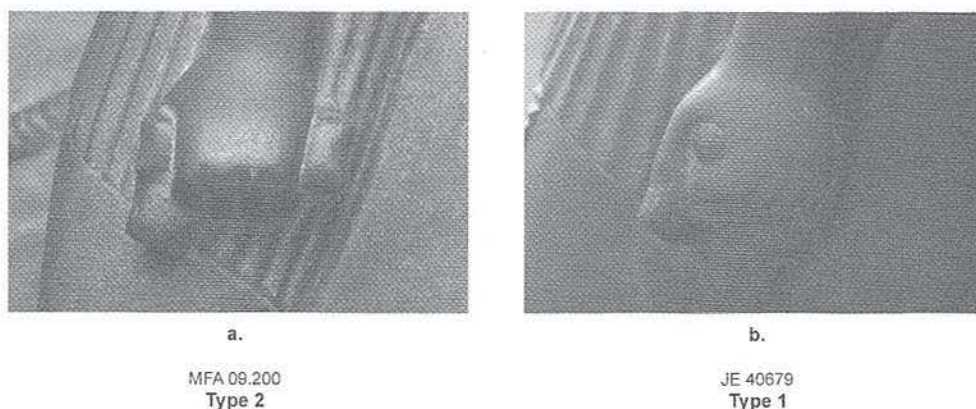


Fig. 4 In Type 2 triad (MFA 09.200\*), king holds *mks*; in Type 1 (e.g., JE 40679) he holds the "enigmatic object". Photography by Michael Fredericks,  
\* Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

<sup>17</sup> SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124.

<sup>18</sup> M. SEIDEL, *Die königlichen Statuengruppen*, Band. 1: *Die Denkmäler vom Alten Reich bis zum Ende der 18. Dynasties*, HÄB 42, Hildesheim 1996, 44.

<sup>19</sup> W. WOOD, A reconstruction of the triads of king Mycerinus, in: *JEA* 60, 1974, 86. SEIDLMAYER, *Die staatliche Anlage*, 210, n. 81 disagrees.

<sup>20</sup> FRIEDMAN, in GUNDLACH/SPENCE (eds.), *Palace and Temple*; and FRIEDMAN, in STRUDWICK/STRUDWICK (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*.



figures are indeed the delivery system for the goods, it is Hathor, Menkaure's divine mother, who should be understood as the ultimate source of the offerings, feeding her son, just as when in cow form she will later suckle Thutmose III at Deir el Bahri. The nome personifications, akin to anthropomorphized glyphs with human hands, assume tasks that the figure of Hathor is physically restricted from doing, but it is Hathor, daughter of Re, king's divine mother, and cosmic female principle, who should be understood as the one from whom "all good things" proceed to the king. Whether she or the nome is the speaker in the provisioning text, the point is the same: Hathor equips her son with all things necessary to appear as king forever. The occasion for the provisioning is his Heb Sed.

The Heb Sed is identifiable from the *mks* that Menkaure holds in his left hand (Fig. 4) in the intact Type 2 triad (Fig. 1e), unlike the enigmatic object he holds in Type 1 triads. The Heb Sed is the major theme of the triad series, not provisioning, as it seems at first glance. Provisioning, like legitimation, and what I term multi-directionality – the ability of the king to move freely in all directions – are sub-themes found in Type 1 triads that support the Heb Sed and Menkaure when he appears as dual king.<sup>21</sup> Focus on the Heb Sed in Menkaure's lower (valley) temple in Giza recalls, as I have argued elsewhere, Sneferu's same focus in his lower temple at the Bent Pyramid that Stadelmann now confirms was a Heb Sed temple.<sup>22</sup> In both the Menkaure and Sneferu temples, the depicted provisioning is for the kings' Heb Sed, a rite that is not about the afterlife, though it was surely celebrated by the king in perpetuity after his biological death. The Heb Sed is a cult for the living king, the same point Seidlmayer makes with regard to the celebration of royal cult in the context of the small step pyramids.<sup>23</sup> Increasing evidence points to kings' celebrating their cult during life. While Baer, some years ago, marshaled evidence mainly from the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty to show that the cult of a king could be active while the king was still alive.<sup>24</sup> Nolan's recent study of sealings from Giza reveals a Fourth Dynasty cult of the living Menkaure.<sup>25</sup> The only oblique reference to death I see in the triads may be the lack of a Horus name in Fig. 1 c, suggesting the statue was made after the king's death.<sup>26</sup>

The nomes on the four surviving intact Menkaure triads – UE 4, 7, 15, 17 – allude to the provinces from which Hathor provisions the king's Heb Sed. This geographic spread of nomes in the triads recalls the geographic spread of the earlier small step pyramids, also found across Upper and Middle Egypt, in UE 1, UE 2 UE 3, UE 5, UE 8, UE 16, and UE 21. The small step pyramids themselves were located near the towns of Elephantine, Edfu, Hierakonpolis, Nagada, Abydos, Zawiyet el-Metjin, and Seila, respectively. That the locations of the monuments were associated with towns that in turn were in nomes is

21 On Menkaure, Djoser and Sneferu's multi-directional movement in connection with the Heb Sed, see FRIEDMAN, in STRUDWICK/STRUDWICK (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*.

22 R. STADELMANN, The heb-sed temple of Senefru at Dahshur, in: M. BÁRTA/F. COPPENS/J. KREJČÍ (eds.), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2010/II*, Prague 2011, 736–746. See also FRIEDMAN, in STRUDWICK/STRUDWICK (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, 105–107.

23 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 122.

24 K. BAER, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom*, Chicago 1960, 45–46.

25 J. S. NOLAN, The cult of Menkaure and the royal funerary workshop: new seal reconstructions from Giza, in: *The 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt*, April 1–3, 2011, Abstracts, 69–70.

26 FRIEDMAN, in GUNDLACH/SPENCE (eds.), *Palace and Temple*, 26, n. 20; FRIEDMAN, in STRUDWICK/STRUDWICK (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, 111. See especially J. S. NOLAN, *Mud Sealings and Fourth Dynasty Administration at Giza*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2010, 25–40.

geographically demonstrable – unlike the situation with the triads, which were located in the Giza valley temple and only alluded to distant nomes through their iconography. Information in the small step pyramids, made clear by virtue of their location, was communicated through iconography in the triads. Just as towns link to the nomes for the small step pyramids, so towns should be inferred for the triads' nomes. The small step pyramids were associated with towns that lay in or near capitals of Middle and Upper Egyptian nomes,<sup>27</sup> towns which were “close to important centers of provincial authority in the early Old Kingdom”.<sup>28</sup> The particular town near which a small step pyramid was located, Dreyer and Kaiser pointed out in their foundational study, was the overriding reference point for where these monuments were located, the probable goal being to connect royal cult to royal domains, at least in part.<sup>29</sup> This is just what I think is going on with the triads: that the triads linked to nomes that linked to important towns that were, at least in principle, royal domains. Interestingly, the nome numbers for the small step pyramids do not overlap with those of the triads, though we cannot know if this was by chance or design. Still, one cannot help but wonder if the triads as successors to the small step pyramids added to rather than repeated the royal estates of the small step pyramids. The archaeological data, however, are too scant to know.

All but one of the small step pyramids represent a unified group, datable to Huni in the late Third Dynasty,<sup>30</sup> with the one outlier dating to the early Fourth Dynasty with Sneferu. Sneferu's is identified on the basis of stelae that name him, along with a naos fragment, a royal statue and an offering table,<sup>31</sup> attesting to an offering cult for the king that has been assumed to be a feature for all the small step pyramids.<sup>32</sup> But it is not a cult for the dead king. The most important feature of Sneferu's and the other small step pyramids is what they lack: a burial chamber. They are not funerary monuments.<sup>33</sup> Dreyer and Kaiser plausibly suggest that these little pyramids were a sign of the power of the living king in his residence,<sup>34</sup> which together with the reference to cult lead Seidlmayer to state that the little pyramids “must have marked the locations of an official cult centered around the person of the king”,<sup>35</sup> these monuments representing “a project of mapping the royal cult across the country”.<sup>36</sup> This notion is seconded by Papazian who observes that Huni's “innovative practice of building several small pyramids across the provinces ... would have represented a novel approach to true nationalization of a royal cult”.<sup>37</sup> The triads also relate to a royal cult that required

27 A. ČWIEK, Date and function of the so-called Minor Step Pyramids, in: GM 162, 1998, 42–44; J. C. MORENO GARCÍA, The territorial administration of the kingdom in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium, in: J. C. MORENO GARCÍA (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, HdO 104, Leiden – Boston 2013, 92.

28 MORENO GARCÍA, in MORENO GARCÍA (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, 93.

29 G. DREYER/W. KAISER, Zu den kleinen Stufenpyramiden Ober- und Mittelägyptens, in: MDAIK 36, 1980, 56.

30 DREYER/KAISER, MDAIK 36, 54; though ČWIEK, GM 162, 51 dates them all to Sneferu's reign.

31 STADELMANN, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 122, citing LECIANT, in Or 57, 1988, pl. 32 for images of a few finds.

32 H. PAPAZIAN, Perspectives on the cult of Pharaoh during the third millennium B.C.: A chronological overview, in: H. VYMAZALOVÁ/M. BARTA (eds.), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt (The Third Millennium B.C.)*, Prague 2008, 74–75.

33 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 119.

34 DREYER/KAISER, MDAIK 36, 56–57.

35 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 122; and see ČWIEK, GM 162, 51.

36 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124.

37 H. PAPAZIAN, *Domain of Pharaoh: The Structure and Components of the Economy of Old Kingdom Egypt I*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2005, 102.

offerings, that also was not funerary in nature, and that also yields a kind of “mapping” of royal cult across the country. But now it is royal cult in the form of the Heb Sed that links the king to Hathor and the provisioning of his Heb Sed through her.<sup>38</sup> At the small step pyramids or in the Sneferu reliefs, however, I see no evidence of a specific single deity’s participation in the royal cult, though the upper tier of the Sneferu temple walls where parts of deity appear are too fragmentary to know for sure.

Besides the Seila evidence from Sneferu, earlier inscriptional material found at the small step pyramid at Elephantine also associates the small step pyramids with the practice of royal cult. It is from the Elephantine and the Seila finds that Seidlmayer attaches the meaning of a Heb Sed type of cult to the small step pyramids as a whole. The find at Elephantine is a conical piece of granite found in front of the small step pyramid’s north side, and reasonably assumed to come from that pyramid.<sup>39</sup> The inscription reads *ssd njswt Hwnj*, “Diadem of King Huni”, followed by a determinative that looks like an *ḥ* or *wsht* sign, suggesting a palace or fortified structure.<sup>40</sup> Though multiple translations have been suggested, the translation of *ḥ*-palace has gained the greatest traction, yielding the name of the Elephantine complex as the “(Palace named) ‘Diadem of King Huni’”.<sup>41</sup>

The Heb Sed has an historic connection with the *ḥ*-palace. According to Goelet, the *ḥ* was probably not a place the king lived full-time, but “seems to be ... connected with the religious and ceremonial affairs of the monarch, especially in connection with the *ḥb sd*”.<sup>42</sup> The *ḥ* appears with Djoser in the Third Dynasty, when he is shown running the Heb Sed race while holding the *mks*, in the middle panel under the Step Pyramid; the inscription starts with the *ḥ*-palace,<sup>43</sup> presumably, the place into which the king runs.<sup>44</sup> Seidlmayer also cites the later example of Hatshepsut’s coronation rites at Deir el Bahri, where as a male she is crowned in two *ḥ*-palaces and then in Heb Sed type garb that includes the same skirt flap and tail that Djoser wears (though I see no traces of Djoser’s *mks* in hand), s/he moves to the *wsht-ḥb-ssd*, the “court of the festival of the diadem”.<sup>45</sup> “As is well known”, Seidlmayer writes, “the *wsht*-sign normally shows an *ḥ*-palace in one corner, so it seems logical to assume also the existence of a ‘palace of the diadem festival’”.<sup>46</sup> “The coincidence with the key-terms encountered in the name of the complex at Elephantine ... may be taken to indicate that the cult practiced here was interpreted, as at the funerary pyramids, with reference to festivals of kingship”.<sup>47</sup> The major festival of kingship, as Seidlmayer

38 The practice may obtain for Khafre, too, whose complex shows traces of a triad and dyad: R. KRAUSPE, *Statuen und Statuetten, Katalog Ägyptischer Sammlungen*, Leipzig – Mainz 1997, nos. 26 (gneiss triad fragment) and 30 (gneiss dyad fragment).

39 Though ĆWIEK, GM 162, 47, objects.

40 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 119–120, 122, 124.

41 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 120, 122.

42 O. GOELET, *Two Aspects of the Royal Palace in the Egyptian Old Kingdom*, Pt. 2, University Microfilms, Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1982, 682.

43 F. D. FRIEDMAN, *The underground relief panels of king Djoser at the Step Pyramid Complex*, in: JARCE 32, 1995, 23, Fig. 14; SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124 seems to allude to this Djoser panel.

44 See FRIEDMAN, JARCE 32, 24 for fuller discussion and translation.

45 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 123–124; citing E. NAVILLE, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari III*, London 1898, pl. 63. See also pl. 64. NAVILLE, *Deir el Bahari III*, 8, n. 2 notes the similarity of this coronation festival to the Heb Sed, as seen later under Osorkon II.

46 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124; SEIDLMAYER, *Die staatliche Anlage*, 208.

47 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124.

notes,<sup>48</sup> is the Heb Sed, and the *ḥb sšd*, Festival of the Diadem, is a rite found in the Palermo Stone entry for Shepseskaf, Menkaure's successor, as part of the series of coronation rites that relate to festivals of kingship,<sup>49</sup> and which, as noted above, include the Appearance of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt. But the most important coronation festival is the Heb Sed, the very rite I see at the heart of the triads. One wonders if other small step pyramids in towns across Egypt were also specific about their connection to the king's Heb Sed: in any case, the small step pyramids in multiple towns, in multiple nomes across Egypt seem to have signaled the presence of the living king in his palace residence where Heb Sed-related rites ensured that he remain eternal king.

Joined to this expression of cult at Elephantine is economics, a familiar coupling in ancient Egypt. About 40 meters to the north of the small step pyramid was a building complex<sup>50</sup> whose abundant seals<sup>51</sup> and other written materials suggest it was a royal domain with a state directed economic function as early as the Second Dynasty,<sup>52</sup> thus even before the adjacent Huni pyramid was built. Architectural and other finds signal that the building's economic function continued into the Fourth Dynasty.<sup>53</sup> The complex of administrative building plus pyramid by Huni's day, named *sšd njswt Ḥwnj*, the ("Palace named) 'Diadem of King Huni'", thus comprised a *ḥwt*-royal domain. A *ḥwt* was a type of income-producing property established mainly by and for royal needs (discussed extensively by Moreno García and recently summarized),<sup>54</sup> and through whose spread, as graphically represented on Sneferu's lower temple walls, the crown really or symbolically exploited and controlled the nomes for agricultural and other resources, while at the same time symbolically projecting the king's presence countrywide. Since the complex at Elephantine appears to be a royal *ḥwt*, and which, given the name of the pyramid as *sšd njswt* connects it to royal cult, one can ask whether all the towns with the small step pyramids were *ḥwt* royal estates? And indeed this is what Dreyer and Kaiser suggested years ago. Certainly, Elephantine, Edfu, Hierakonpolis, Nagada, Abydos, Zawiyet el-Metjin, and Seila were "close to important centers of provincial authority in the early Old Kingdom",<sup>55</sup> and Zawiyet el-Metjin, like Elephantine, was probably also a royal domain according to the recent work of the Belgians in UE 16,<sup>56</sup> who see "emergent supraregional connections for the region".<sup>57</sup> Čwiek's assessment of the location of the Seila little pyramid in the Fayum suggests that the importance of its location would logically accord with that of the other small step pyramids, suggesting that

48 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 122.

49 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 122–124.

50 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 120.

51 J.-P. PATZNICK, *Die Siegelabrollungen und Rollsiegel der Stadt Elephantine im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Oxford 2005.

52 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 121.

53 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 122.

54 MORENO GARCÍA, in MORENO GARCÍA (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, 85–150, with extensive bibliography of the author. See, esp. J. C. MORENO GARCÍA, *Ḥwt et le milieu rural égyptien du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire*, Paris 1999.

55 MORENO GARCÍA, in MORENO GARCÍA (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, 93.

56 M. DE MEYER, et al., The early Old Kingdom at Nuwayrat in the 16<sup>th</sup> Upper Egyptian nome, in: D. ASTON/B. BADER/C. GALLORINI/P. NICHOLSON/S. BUCKINGHAM (eds.), *Under the Potter's Tree: Studies on Ancient Egypt Presented to Janine Bourriau on the Occasion of her 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, OLA 204, Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA 2011, 692.

57 DE MEYER, in ASTON/BADER/GALLORINI/NICHOLSON/BUCKINGHAM (eds.), *Under the Potter's Tree*, 691.



it too was associated with an important provincial town connected to the royal residence,<sup>58</sup> while Moreno García notes that early Old Kingdom titles attest to “prominent economic activities” for this region close to the capital.<sup>59</sup>

If the combination of features found under Huni at Elephantine can be applied to all the small step pyramids (which only future archaeology can confirm), then one can suggest that Heb Sed related cult was tied to royal *hwt* estates across Upper and Middle Egypt. If so, then the Elephantine pyramid of Huni, as Papazian noted, “acted as the focal point of both the king’s cult and, perhaps more importantly, as the physical emblem of the estate bearing his name”,<sup>60</sup> illustrating, “the dual regal and economic character of kingship ... manifest in the conception of this Third Dynasty complex”.<sup>61</sup> This is just the combination of factors – regal and economic – that I believe are implicit in the triads, and which tie royal cult in the form of the Heb Sed to *hwt*-estates under Menkaure. For just as the small step pyramids “may have served as the focal point of economic organization in a given region”,<sup>62</sup> the triads alluded to the same idea.<sup>63</sup> The triads’ inscriptions do not name the estates which would link to towns. But we know that named estates were a significant piece of recorded information when the physical features of a monument allowed for its inclusion. For that’s just what we have with the earlier Sneferu 2D reliefs<sup>64</sup> where the offering bearers’ heads carry the names of *hwt*-estates. Indeed, Seidlmayer draws attention to comparisons of the small step pyramids and the triads with the Sneferu reliefs insofar as they all provision royal cult.<sup>65</sup> With Sneferu (Fig. 5), the estates are grouped by nome (now fragmentary but originally representing most, though

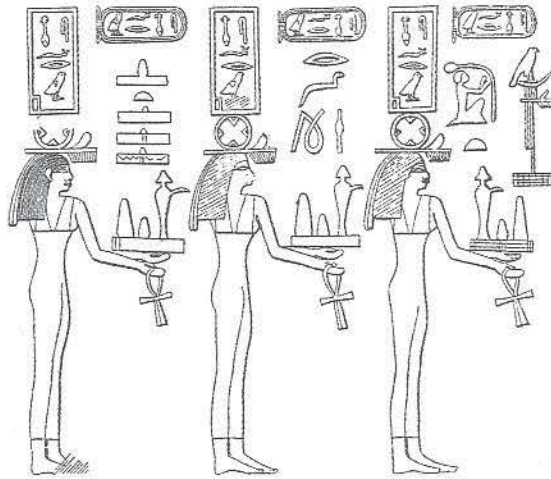


Fig. 5 Example of three named estates from the single nome shown on standard far right (UE 18). Drawing modified after D. ARNOLD, *Royal Reliefs*, in: *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, New York 1999, 85, Fig. 49. Full wall scene in A. FAKHRY, *The Monuments of Sneferu at Dahshur*, vol. II, *The Valley Temple*, pt. I, Cairo, 1961, Fig. 18

58 A. ĆWIEK, *Fayum in the Old Kingdom*, in: *GM* 160, 1997, 21.

59 MORENO GARCÍA, in MORENO GARCÍA (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, 93.

60 PAPAŽIAN, *Domain*, 106–107.

61 PAPAŽIAN, *Domain*, 107, n. 128.

62 PAPAŽIAN, in VYMAZALOVÁ/BÁRTA (eds.), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt*, 75.

63 PAPAŽIAN, in VYMAZALOVÁ/BÁRTA (eds.), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt*, 74–75, however, links the small step pyramids’ cult to the royal *ka*.

64 A. FAKHRY, *The Monuments of Sneferu at Dahshur II, The Valley Temple*, Pt I, Cairo 1961, 17–58, figs. 9–34.

65 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124.

not all, of the nomes of Egypt),<sup>66</sup> each *hwt* estate name determined by *njw*t, an agricultural unit controlled by a *hwt*.<sup>67</sup> The result is a visual nesting of one concept within another: *hwt* estates with *njw*t farms, nested within nomes, nested within the *hwt*-temple itself.<sup>68</sup> Before considering the small step pyramids, I thought that the Sneferu principle of naming *hwt* estates within given nomes for the purpose of provisioning royal cult should also be implicit in the triads. In this context I suggested reading the triads as *hwt*-estate names.

I used the back slab as the *hwt* hieroglyph without corner box; Hathor's embrace, handholding and close juxtaposition to the king as the verb, *mr*, "love"; and the nome sign as the given nome, to read: *hwt Mn-k3w-Rc: mr hwt-hr Mn-k3w-Rc*, "The *hwt* estate of Menkaure (called) 'Hathor loves Menkaure'", in the given nome. I based the reading on other Fourth Dynasty estate names. Note that the king's name appears twice in the reading but the figure of the king appears only once in the triads (as the standing king himself), reflecting a practice found after Sneferu in the writing of estate names on 2D surfaces, presumably to save wall space.<sup>69</sup> There is no *njw*t-town/village sign on the triads as one finds with estate names on the Sneferu procession, not because the concept was not operative on the triads but because it could not as conveniently be included on 3D sculptures as on reliefs. The Type 2 triad I now read differently from Type 1s.<sup>70</sup> I still used the back slab as the *hwt* hieroglyph without corner box, but translate Hathor's embrace as *mr* – "wish" instead of "love"; and translate the nome personification's extended *nh* as "live",<sup>71</sup> yielding *hwt Mn-k3w-Rc: mr hwt-hr nh Mn-k3w-Rc*, "The *hwt*-estate of Menkaure (named) 'Hathor wishes that Menkaure live'", which in this case is in UE 15.<sup>72</sup> The feature that is omitted but that I think should be understood on all the triads is the specific town associated with each *hwt* estate in the given nomes. With the small step pyramids, the towns are demonstrably clear, which is not the case with the triads that are fixed in Giza. The Sneferu procession gives the *hwt* estates and the nomes, though we don't know to which towns those estates (real or symbolic) refer. But occasionally, we can infer towns. For example, the Sneferu procession probably depicted UE 1,<sup>73</sup> which given the archaeological evidence would logically include Elephantine as at least one possible estate.<sup>74</sup> The triads give the nomes and names of estates, if I am right, but not the towns. Again, we need to infer the towns.

Given the data, an underlying structure emerges, implicit or explicit, which includes: 1. a named *hwt* estate; 2. associated with a town; 3. in a nome; 4. from which provisioning issues for a Heb Sed-related cult (small step pyramids) or the Heb Sed itself (Sneferu temple and Menkaure triads); 5. supplied by the estate (small step pyramids), or female

66 FRIEDMAN, in GUNDLACH/SPENCE (eds.), *Palace and Temple*, 31–32.

67 J. C. MORENO GARCÍA, *Administration territoriale et organisation de l'espace en Egypte au troisième millénaire avant J.-C. (III-IV)*, in: ZÄS 125, 1998, 38, 42; MORENO GARCÍA, *Hwt*, 128.

68 Quarry marks on blocks for the temple, label the temple a *hwt*: FAKHRY, *The Monuments of Sneferu II*, I, 14; FRIEDMAN, in DER MANUELIAN/SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History*, forthcoming.

69 H. JACQUET-GORDON, *Les noms des domaines funéraires sous l'ancien empire égyptien*, BdE 34, Cairo, 1962, 5.

70 Discussed in FRIEDMAN, in DER MANUELIAN/SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History*, forthcoming.

71 This is the only time *nh* appears on the triads, contra W. S. SMITH, *History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting*, Oxford 1946, reissued by Hacker Art Books, New York 1978, 38.

72 FRIEDMAN, in DER MANUELIAN/SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History*, forthcoming.

73 FAKHRY, *The Monuments of Sneferu II*, I, 18, Fig. 8; and see FRIEDMAN, in GUNDLACH/SPENCE (eds.), *Palace and Temple*, Fig. 15.

74 MORENO GARCÍA, *Hwt*, 152.

personifications of those estates (Sneferu), or, in the chronologically latest of the monuments, Hathor (the triads). Just as female personifications of estates bring food to Sneferu in his lower temple at Dahshur, so Hathor in the triads takes up this role, a role that combines the elements of estate, nome and offering bearer found in the small step pyramids and/or the Sneferu reliefs. While the appearance of the small step pyramids, the Sneferu reliefs or the triads differ, the comparable objective to provision the king drove them all, as Seidlmayer rightly notes.<sup>75</sup> I agree with Seidlmayer on this point, but would emphasize further that the provisioning is for the Heb Sed. I would also note that since these monuments operate largely in parallel, when we find estates identified at the small step pyramids and at the Sneferu temple, it strengthens the case that estates are embedded in the triads. The triads, I thus believe, include the idea of named estates as economic centers associated with towns in their nomes. If I am right, this would mean that at the end of the Fourth Dynasty under Menkaure, royal estates and their associated towns in given nomes are linked to provisioning the king's Heb Sed through Hathor.

The relevant nomes on the triads are UE 4, 7, 15 and 17, and the question arises as to what towns might link to *hwt* estates in those nomes, and would those towns have any connection to Hathor? Elsewhere<sup>76</sup> I look at new archaeology that can be helpful in this regard. The Belgians working in UE 15, the nome on the Type 2 triad (Fig. 1c), find evidence that points to Sheikh Said as being a royal *hwt*-estate already by Khufu's reign,<sup>77</sup> founded by Khufu, or possibly Sneferu,<sup>78</sup> and was the town where Khufu established a cult for himself,<sup>79</sup> thus linking his cult to a site of economic importance. Recent archaeological evidence also suggests that Giza in LE 1 was the *hwt* estate on which Sheikh Said in UE 15 was based,<sup>80</sup> both towns being provisioned by the central government.<sup>81</sup> I have suggested that the unnamed town for the estate for the Type 2 damaged triad would be Giza, so that we should restore this triad with LE 1, the nome in which Giza lay, designated by the White Walls of Memphis (Fig. 1, f). Moreover, we now know from the Belgian team at Sheikh Said<sup>82</sup> and the even more recent findings of Mark Lehner and his team at Giza, that Sheikh Said and Giza had economically significant ports in the Fourth Dynasty. An entire "lost city of the pyramids" is now being uncovered by Mark Lehner and his team at Giza, who reveal that town's connections to resources throughout the country as far south as Aswan and northeast to Babylon.<sup>83</sup> Both Sheikh Said and Giza are associated with Hathor cults. (For Sheikh Said,

75 SEIDLMAYER, in SPENCER (ed.), *Aspects of Early Egypt*, 124.

76 FRIEDMAN, in DER MANUELJAN/SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History*, forthcoming.

77 M. DE MEYER, Two cemeteries for one provincial capital? Deir el-Bersha and el-Sheikh Said in the fifteenth Upper Egyptian nome during the Old Kingdom, in: N. STRUDWICK/H. STRUDWICK (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC*, Oxford – Oakville 2011, 49; H. WILLEMS, et al., An industrial site at Al-Shaykh Sa'id/Wadi Zabayda, in: *Ä&L* 19, 2009, 326.

78 WILLEMS, *Ä&L* 19, 313; 323.

79 WILLEMS, *Ä&L* 19, 325–326.


80 H. WILLEMS, Un domaine royal de l'époque du roi Khéops/Khoufou à al-Cheikh Saïd Ouadi Zabcida, in: *BSFE* 175, 2009, 26–27; WILLEMS, *Ä&L* 19, 314–315; 323–324; discussed in FRIEDMAN, in DER MANUELJAN/SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History*, forthcoming.

81 A. TAVARES, Village, town and barracks: a fourth dynasty settlement at Heit el-Ghurab, Giza, in: N. STRUDWICK/H. STRUDWICK (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC*, Oxford – Oakville 2011, 271.

82 WILLEMS, *Ä&L* 19, 322–323.

83 M. LEHNER, Heit el-Ghurab site reveals a new face: The lost port city of the pyramids, in: *AERAGRAM* 14.1, Spring 2013, 2.

the earliest attested evidence for Hathor is from the Fifth Dynasty, though I believe there is good reason to suggest a Fourth Dynasty Hathor presence by the reign of Menkaure.<sup>84</sup>) The suggested Hathor sanctuaries/temples with their own *hwt*-estates may have been real or forms of idealized political fiction, or, I increasingly believe based on new archaeological data, a combination of both.<sup>85</sup> The important point is that through the triads, Menkaure is given a symbolic connection to Hathor in economically important towns to which the Hathor cult has been added, probably after the town's economic value was already established. The result is that the king, for the first time appearing with divine support, is shown as controlling the economic resources of the nomes that fed his Heb Sed through Hathor.

Given the importance of Hathor to the triads, I suggest a further hypothetical model for the triads that includes the stated nomes, within which were royal *hwt* estates, associated with towns, within which were Hathor cult temples, real or symbolic, which had their own *hwt* estates named "Hathor loves Menkaure" or "Hathor wishes that Menkaure live". Such a theoretical model of nesting one form of *hwt* within another recalls the nesting of one idea of *hwt* within another at the Sneferu lower temple at the Bent Pyramid,<sup>86</sup> where the temple itself appears from quarry marks to have been termed *hwt*,<sup>87</sup> and within which was the procession of personified *hwt* estates. Doubling the usage of *hwt* to refer to both royal and divine estates in the triads would also recall the doubling principle found in the reading of the cartouche in the restored Menkaure titulary on the travertine seated statue, or in the reading of Fourth Dynasty estate names, where a king's name is written once but read twice, noted above. I'm suggesting that the triad's use of *hwt* may also operate on two levels concurrently, nesting the idea of Hathor estates within royal estates, both for cultic reasons and to save space (a 3D sculpture has little room to repeat elements). Embedding one idea within another, in this case, would integrate the divine and the royal, an idea implicit in the writing of Hathor's name *Hwt-Hr*, , in which Hathor is literally the estate (*hwt*) within which is the king (*Hr*).<sup>88</sup> King and Hathor abide in and through one another.

Using Seidlmayer's brief observation as a starting point, my comments here have used both established data and hypothetical modeling to try to better understand the triads as the latest in a series of ideas on royal cult developing since the small step pyramids in the early Old Kingdom. It is only with the triads, however, at the end of the Fourth Dynasty that a new player is introduced into this picture in the form of Hathor. She and Re, the other main deity in Menkaure's statue program, will take on added meaning in the Fifth Dynasty when their cults, together with that of the king, are brought into the sun temples and the celebration of the king's Heb Sed.<sup>89</sup> In Menkaure's valley temple statue program, in fact, we may be witnessing a bridge between cult ideas of the Third and Fourth Dynasty and those of the Fifth.

84 FRIEDMAN, in DER MANUELIAN/SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History*, forthcoming.

85 FRIEDMAN, in DER MANUELIAN/SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History*, forthcoming.

86 FRIEDMAN, in DER MANUELIAN/SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Towards a New History*, forthcoming.

87 FAKHRY, *The Monuments of Sneferu*, II, 1,14; P. SPENCER, *The Egyptian Temple: A Lexicographical Study*, London – Boston – Melbourne – Henley 1984, 24.

88 This idea was suggested to me in personal discussion with Hana Vymazalová, Filip Coppens and Jiří Janák, whom I thank.

89 H. VYMAZALOVÁ, *The economic connection between the royal cult in the pyramid temples and the sun temples in Abusir*, in: N. STRUDWICK/H. STRUDWICK (eds.), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC*, Oxford – Oakville 2011, 299–300.