

# Personification of the throne in Greco-Roman temples

Mohamed Ragab Sayed

Assistant professor – Archaeology Dept. – Minia University

[mohragab82@gmail.com](mailto:mohragab82@gmail.com)

## Key words

Personification - Throne - Dendara - Edfou - Menbet  
birth couch - birth bed.

## Abstract

Personification represents a clear phenomenon in Egyptian civilization. Some elements have a great influence in religion and mythology. In Ptolemaic texts some objects like cities, throne, offerings, lance, spear and even beer cup have their avatars. Ptolemaic temples are rich with texts of things' avatars. At the temple of Edfou some texts make the throne as a counterpart of a female goddess "Menbet". Some complete offerings scenes were dedicated for "Menbet" as an avatar of the throne. The main propose of this paper is to shed light on throne avatar and its personification. Trying to show the relation of throne and the temple belong to a major city. In some scenes the throne and Edfou were personified together, as two goddesses. The paper will also discuss the common features which those two goddesses share.

## introduction

The kingship has a lot of insignias that represent the authority and legitimacy of the king. The crown, crook, flail, regalia and throne all gives the king his power to rule Egypt. The throne among all regalia represents a special important for the king as the throne represents the kingship itself. In most civilizations the throne is the first counterpart of the king and kingship. The texts of Ptolemaic temples personified the throne as a female goddess that represents mother and guardian of kingship. The gender of the goddess of the throne "Menbet" as a female woman represents the power of fertility, and rebirth. The king when ascend the throne he started a new life. The important of the throne appears in the texts as a complete offering was dedicated to the throne's goddess "Menbet". In two scenes we find both personifications of the throne and Edfou behind Horus upon his throne. This reflexed the strong relation between the throne and Edfou as two goddesses.









## iconography

The throne as a personified goddess she is shown as a lion headed goddess wearing the red crown. Just in one scene she wears Hathor's crown. She holds ankh and a papyrus scepter stave in her two hands.



Figure 1: iconography of the throne as a personified goddess

## Orthography and epigraphy

The writing of the name "Mnbit" have a lot of orthographies. The main sign of the word is  and its synonymous  ;  ;  ;  ;  . The sign represents a birth couch or bed. It also could be a side depiction of the royal throne.





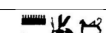

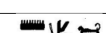

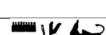



	
	
	
	
	
	

Figure 2: orthography of the word **mnbit** that equal to the throne

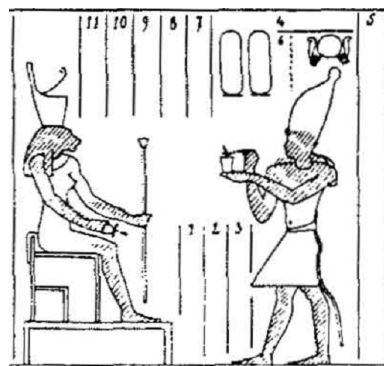


Figure 3: the king Burning incense to Menbet

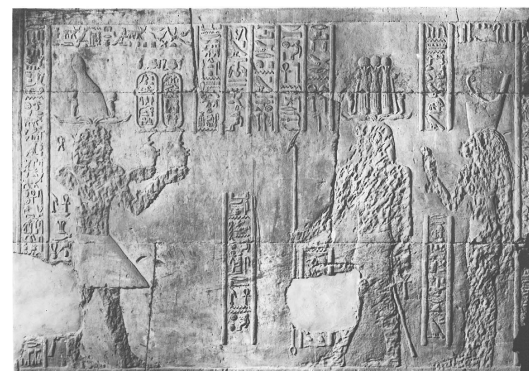


Figure 4: the king offer milk to Harsomtut and Menbet

## Menbet is speaking

→ MENIT :   
  
  


*hnm.i hm.k imytw rdwy.i , T3-mri 3m.tw m hf ʿ.k , dd mdw in Mnbit irt-Rʿ hryt-ib Bhd, nbtj rhyt wd.tw hk3w rrt wnp Nhs shrr dw-kd , swd3 iwʿ.s , hwi rkyw.f , dd mdw iw.tw m htp hwn nb hkrw whm mswt m Wrt-hk3w , šsp.n.i sntr.k nšp sw hnmty.i , hwt-ntj phr m sty.f , di.i n.k mhnjt hr hwyw h3.k , nbt Šmʿw hr mki hʿw.k*

I suckle your majesty upon my thighs, Egypt is seizing in your fist, words spoken by Menbet eye of Re who resides at Edfou, lady of the Rekhyt-people (i.e. humankind), she decrees magic, nurse of who stabs Seth (i.e. Horus), she drives away the hostile people (Lit. evil of character), preserve her heir, strike down his adversaries. Words spoken : come in peace ! O child lord of adornment, One who repeats children of Great of magic, I receive your incense and inhale it my nostrils, the temple is filled with its scent. I give to you uraeus to protect your back, and lady of Upper Egypt to preserves your limbs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the committee of the 12th Annual Birmingham Egyptology Symposium to give me the opportunity to participate in this great scientific event. many thanks and regards.

## References

- Kuhlmann,K.P.; Der Thron im Alten Ägypten,Glückstadt,1977.
- Leitz,Chr., Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen, Bande I–VIII, OLA 110–116 & 129, Leuven: Peeters 2002–2003.
- Chassinat,É.,et Daumas,F., Le Temple de Dendara, vols 6-8, Le Caire,1965-1978.
- Cauville,S. & Devauchelle,D.; Le Temple d'Edfou XV., Le Caire,1985.
- Cauville,S., Le Temple de Dendara, Les Chapelles Osiriennes, Commentaire, BdÉ,118, Le Caire, 1997.
- Wilson,P.; A Ptolemaic Lexikon A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu,OLA 78,Leuven,1997.
- Otto,E.; Gott und Mensch nach den Ägyptischen Tempelinschriften der griechisch-römischen Zeit Abhandlungen der Heidelberg Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klass Jahrgang 1964, 1. Abhandlung , Heidelberg ,1964.