

## The Brutal Role of the Warrior Goddess Menet in eliminating Enemies in Ancient Egypt

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### Abstract:

The goddess Menet is one of the most significant protective lionesses in ancient Egypt and appeared at least in the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the Old Kingdom. Despite the lack of information about Menet and her noticeable absence in the texts, she played an important role in religious and royal beliefs, and participated with a number of deities from the beginning of its appearance until the Greco-Roman Period<sup>1</sup>.

The research aims to shed light on the representations and texts related to the goddess Menet, emphasizing her role as a warrior goddess who vanquishes and destroys enemies through the use of fire and flames. This study also dealt with the most important titles and her forms that show her aggressive role in eliminating enemies. As well, it delves into the various forms of writing her name and its interpretations. Furthermore, it explores Menet's connections with other ancient Egyptian deities.

**Key words:** Menet (*Mnt*), Mentyt (*Mntyty*), Lioness, Enemies, Fire, Flame.

### Introduction:

Menet, “*Mnt*”,  𓄎 𓄏, later transcribed Mentyt (*Mntyty*)<sup>2</sup>, was a warrior goddess with a lion's head and is often referred to as the Eye of Ra and is closely connected to the sun-god Ra. The first appearance of the goddess Menet was during the reign of King Sahure in the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, where her head and name appeared on one of the remains of King Sahure's funerary complex at Abusir (Fig.1)<sup>3</sup>.

Menet's principal functions, as evidenced by her titles and depictions, stressed not only her role as a mother or creator, but also as a fierce warrior goddess known for her might. In Egyptian mythology, she was noted for setting fire to the god Seth and his allies, defeating enemies, and dismembering flesh, demonstrating her formidable and aggressive character<sup>4</sup>.

Menet was also appeared during the reign of King Niuserra on one of the blocks of his solar temple at Abu-Gourab and she is depicted in paintings of his Heb-Sed

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<sup>1</sup>De Jong, A., “Feline Deities”, In: D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*. I, New York, 2001, p. 512-513; Houlihan, P., “Felines”, In: D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*. I, New York, 2001, p.513-516.

<sup>2</sup>LGG III, p. 286; Helck, W., & Otto, E., “Menet”, In: *LÄ IV* (1982), col. 48; *Wb II*, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup>Meyer, Ch., “Sahure”, In: *LÄ V* (1984), cols.352-353; Bonnet, H., *Reallexicon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1952, p. 455; Helck, *LÄ IV* (1982), col. 48.

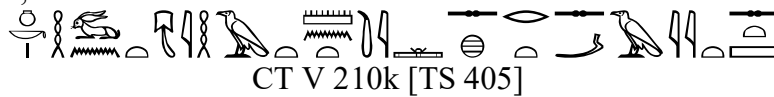
<sup>4</sup>Dieter, K., *The Temple of Edfou. A Guide by an Ancient Egyptian Priest*, New York, 2004, p.77.

celebration while assisting him (Fig.2)<sup>5</sup>. As well, Menet is depicted on the Heb-Sed festival of Pepi II in the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (CG. 1747)<sup>6</sup>, where Menet appeared as a guardian goddess for the king and his ointments and garments that used in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony for the statue of the king in a companion with two goddess *G3wt* at the *mst wpt-r* who assisting her in carrying the equipments. In the Late Period, Menet is associated with Mehit, Pachet, Sekhmet, and Tefnut<sup>7</sup>.

### Documents highlighting the brutal role of the goddess Menet and her ability to eliminate enemies:

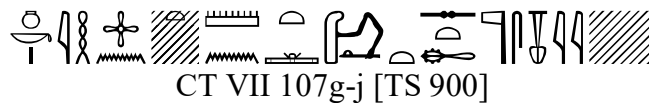
#### Doc. No.1:

Menet is mentioned in the Coffin Texts. In three similar passages, it is a designation of Beast, “*Hwn.t*”<sup>8</sup> and of the Fighter “*Jh3.t / h3.t*” and in these formulations, Menet is Seth’s slayer, as follows<sup>9</sup>:



“*jnk Hwn.t Jh3.t Mn.tj shr.t sm3y.t Stš*”

“*I am the Young Beast, the Fighter, Menet, She who overthrows Seth’s company*”



“*jnk Hwn.t [...] Mn.t h3.t Stš sm3y(.t)*”

“*I am the Young Beast [...], Menet, the Fighter, the one who kills Seth*”



“*šy.t šw[...] w<sup>c</sup>b.t p3.t mn.t sšš wr[s ...] jnk Hwn.t hnty.t Pr-Wr Nsr.t hnty.t Pr Nsr*”<sup>10</sup>.

“*The Pure? the Primordial/Pakhet?, Menet [...]? Head support [...]. I am Wadjet. I follow the Young Beast who is in front of the Pr-Wr, Neseret who is in front of the Pr Nsr*”.

In three similar passages, the goddess took the title of “Beast”, “*Hwn.t* and “Fighter”, “*Jh3.t / h3.t*”<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>Beckerath, J., “Niuserre”, In: *LÄ IV* (1982), cols. 517-518; Von Bissing F., *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-Woser-Re*, vol. II, Leipzig, 1905, pl. 23, 31; Schott, E., “Die Titel der Metallbeiter”, In: *GM 4* (1973), p. 33.

<sup>6</sup>Borchards, L., *Denkmäler des alten reiches*, CGC, vol.2, Le Caire, 1964, p. 172; Schott, E., “Das goldhaus ünter König Pepi II”, In: *GM 9* (1974), p. 33.

<sup>7</sup>Helck, *LÄ IV* (1982), col. 48.

<sup>8</sup>*LGG V*, p. 102-103.

<sup>9</sup>*Wb I*, p.217: 7; *LGG II*, p.187.

<sup>10</sup>Bartos, I., *Le lion dans les supports mobiliers égyptiens jusqu’à la fin du Nouvel Empire Histoire*, Université Paris sciences et lettres, Français, 2020, p.273.

<sup>11</sup>*LGG V*, p. 102-103.

**Doc. No.2. fig.3:**

The goddess Menet battled all of her enemies, whether they were humans or scorpions that threatened the god or the king. On this Magical Papyrus, which was written around the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Menet is shown as a laying lion with an *stf*-crown and exhaling fire. Menet punishes the scorpions by burning them with the fire that comes out of her mouth. This magical Papyrus, measuring 58.50 cm in length by 19.20 cm in breadth, was discovered at Thebes, and it provides protection against scorpions. This papyrus is on display at the British Museum Nr. (EA 10687).<sup>12</sup> *ndm.tj srt m dd dzy-pt sst R<sup>c</sup> m dd t3 Mnt Hmt [Hrw]*, “Your nose through the words of ‘Skyfarer’, the daughter of Re, through the words of Menet, the woman of Horus”<sup>13</sup>.

**Doc. No.3. fig.4:**

The goddess Menet punishes King Ramesses’ enemies, specifically by shutting the mouths of snakes. This information is derived from a text on the pink quartzite double statue of King Ramses III, which is an artifact from the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The statue is on display at the Egyptian Museum Nr. (JE 69771). The text on the back of the statue also identifies Menet as the wife of Horus<sup>14</sup>.



*“h<sup>t</sup>m r n ddft nbt t3-bjtt thn hr mnt hmt Hr ‘nh Hr snb”*

*“Shut the mouth of snakes, the lady of t3-bjtt, bright-faced, Menet, the wife of Horus, the life of Horus, health”*<sup>15</sup>

**Doc.No.4.fig.5:**

The goddess Menet is represented on a Papyrus amulet<sup>16</sup>, as an enthroned, lion-headed goddess with a sun disc and a serpent on her head. The paragraph also mentions her role in battling enemies who threatened the god or the king. The papyrus is dated to the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and is on display in the British Museum Nr. (EA 10732).<sup>17</sup>

**Doc.No.5:**

According to the Louvre Papyrus Nr.3129 and the British Museum Papyrus (Nr.10252), Menet was essential in punishing enemies and adversaries since she had painful claws as mentioned in the text<sup>18</sup>.



*“jnk mnty<sup>t</sup> mr ‘nw”*

<sup>12</sup>Gardiner, A. H., *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third Series Chester Beatty, gift.* vol I. text, London,1944, p.61,pl 35,36.

<sup>13</sup>Derchain, P., *Le Papyrus Salt 825(B.M.10687), rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Egypte*, Brussels, 1965, p.104.

<sup>14</sup>Drioton, E., “Une Statue Prophylactique de Ramses III”, In: *ASAE* 39 (1939), p. 67.

<sup>15</sup>*Wb* IV, p.159.

<sup>16</sup>The British Museum Papyrus amulet was discovered at Thebes. It is written in hieratic script. The papyrus was 16.50 cm in height by 19.50 cm in length.

<sup>17</sup>Donnat, S., “Le Papyrus-Amulette British Museum EA 10732 et le Billet Modèle P. Chester Beatty VII, Verso 7”, In: *JEA* 105 (2020), p.243-257.

<sup>18</sup>*Urk* I, p.53:6.

*“I’m Mentyt with painful Claws”.*

**Doc.No.6.fig.6:**

Menet is depicted on Papyrus Salt 825<sup>19</sup>, as a lioness with an *stf* crown, exhaling fire to inflame her enemies. The papyrus dates back to the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and is displayed in the British Museum Nr. (EA10051). As part of the ceremonial year’s festivals, Menet was one of the gods who took part in a ceremony when she gave the north wind to Osiris’ nostrils. This rite was most likely done by the scribe of the chamber which is called the House of Life<sup>20</sup>.

The following text is from a papyrus Salt 825, where the god Shu stands behind the goddess Isis, and the goddess Menet stands behind Shu, all of them in the presence of the god Osiris.

This document explains the relationship between the goddess Menet and other deities such as Shu, Osiris, and Isis.



*“jt.k šw ir t3w ndm ‘nh r fnd.k r n b rdjt mht t3w fnd.f mnty st3 n.f nbj m kk”*

*“Your father Shu who created the breeze of celibate life for your nose every day, you give the breeze of the north wind for his nose Menet, the flames light for him at night”<sup>21</sup>.*

**Doc.No.7.fig.7:**

Menet is shown as an enthroned lion-headed goddess, crowned with a sun disc and a serpent on her head. Menet is known as the eye of god Re with terrible pupil and Sekhmet the great, the mistress of all Sekhmet goddesses, accompanied by several deities such as; Shu and Tefnut as was documented in the text<sup>22</sup>:



*“Šw jm m mhjt r hnm šrtj.f mj jr.w.f n zht nhh hn fnt m nbj r wbd hftjw.f mj jrt.s h3w rkh h3 jw.s m Mnt jrt R nh3 dfd šhmt ‘3t nbt šhmt nbt”*

*“Shu is there as north wind, to unite with its nostrils, as is its task in the Horizon-of-Eternity (tomb), together with Tefnut as flame, to burn up its adversaries as it (it) does in Areq- heh being Menet, the eye of Re, with terrible pupil, Sekhmet the great, the mistress of all Sekhmet goddesses [... . . . ]”<sup>23</sup>.*

This text elucidates the significance of the title *“mnt irt R nh3 dfd”*, which translates to *“Menet, the eye of Re, with a terrible pupil”*, associated with the goddess Menet.

<sup>19</sup>Papyrus Salt 825 contains a composition entitled ‘The End of the Work’ in vignettes of black and red. This section of the papyrus consists of columns 8 and 9 and is written in a mixture of cursive hieratic, hieroglyphs and figurative hieroglyphs.

<sup>20</sup>Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, p. 140; Drioton, É., “Une erreur antique de déchiffrement”, In: *RdÉ* 12 (1960), p. 27-31; Cabrol, A., “Les voies processionnelles de Thèbes”, In: *OLA* 97 (2001), Leuven, p. 686.


<sup>21</sup>Fermat, A., *Le Rituel de la maison de Vie: Papyrus Salt 825*, Paris, 2010, p.155-156.

<sup>22</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’Edfou*. VII, p.14-15.

<sup>23</sup>Kurth, D., *Die inschriften des Temples von Edfou*, vol. VII, Wiesbaden, 2004, p. 19 (line14, 6-15,1).



selected and designated piece of meat, known as “*shp stpw*.” This ritual is closely associated with the goddess Mehyt.<sup>28</sup>


  
 “*dd mdw jn mhjt jrt-R<sup>c</sup> hry(t)-jb Bhd̄t nb(t) shmt ...mnt wrt mr.... s(hr) sbjw r st wrt*”

“Words spoken by Mehyt, the eye of Re, settled in Edfu, the lady, Sekhmet.... Menet, the great gain...., who destroys enemies in the great place”<sup>29</sup>.

The title “*mnt wrt mr*”, meaning “Menet with great pain,” alludes to how the goddess Menet inflicts severe suffering upon her adversaries as a form of punishment. Menet’s responsibility included eliminating her foes in the grand precinct of the temple of Edfu, as indicated by the title “*s(hr) sbjw r st wrt*”<sup>30</sup>.

**Doc.No.10:**

The text discovered in the hidden passage of the temple of Edfu unveils the intimate connection between Mehyt and Menet.

  
 “*dd mdw in mhjt mnt wrt m Bhd̄t njwt.s mntt shmt ntr nb(t) jm.s(t) nb(t) snd̄ hnwt wd̄*”<sup>31</sup>.

“Words spoken by the great Mehyt-Menet in Behedet (Edfu) her city, Mentyt, the power of the god, the lady in it, the lady of fear, and the lady of command”

As per this text, the goddess Menet is recognized by the titles “*shmt ntr*”, signifying her role as the power of the god Horus in Edfu. The title “*nb(t) snd̄*” references Menet’s position as the lady of fear and her capacity to inspire dread and anxiety among her adversaries in the Edfu region. Additionally, the epithet “*hnwt wd̄*”, meaning “the lady of command”, reflects the elevated status achieved by Menet due to her association with Mehyt in Edfu.

**Doc.No.11:**

This text, discovered in the western chamber of the Edfu temple, highlights Menet’s role in setting her enemies ablaze and delivering the wicked to the place of their demise.

  
 “*dd mdw jn shmt ʿzt hr hbt mnty wrt m Bhd̄t nsrt sbjw fdf̄d̄ hftyw ʿk̄ h̄skw-jbw m hbt.sn*”

<sup>28</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. VII, p. 102:8-10.

<sup>29</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. VII, p.102,15-16.

<sup>30</sup> رؤوف أبو الوفا محمد & رضوان عبد الراضى سيد، المعبودة منتيت في مصر القديمة، في مجلة مركز الدراسات البردية والنقوش، المجلد 32، العدد 1، جامعة عين شمس، 2015، ص. 69.

<sup>31</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. I, p. 113,10.

*“Words spoken by Sekhmet the great in the place of slaughter, the great Menet (Mentyt) in Behedet (Edfu) that ignites the enemies and that burns the enemies, and that brings the sinful (the hated) into the place of their slaughter”<sup>32</sup>.*

The epithet “*nsrt sbjw*”, meaning “inflame the enemies”, characterizes Menet’s ability to terrify her enemies by burning them with flames that emanate from her mouth. This power is visually represented in the depiction of Menet as a recumbent lion on Papyrus Salt 825, where she is shown exhaling and spewing fire from her mouth. The epithet “*fdfd hftyw*”, which translates to “burns enemies”, unequivocally affirms Menet’s role in retribution, where she inflicts punishment upon her enemies through the act of burning.

The title “*ḳ hḳkw-jbw m hbt.sn*”, signifying “brings the sinful to the place of their slaughter”, uncovers Menet’s active involvement in exacting punishment upon her adversaries in her city of Edfu. This entails killing and slaughtering them, and her knowledge of the specific location designated for their slaughter in the temple of Edfu.<sup>33</sup>

**Doc.No.12:**

The deity Menet was referenced alongside Mehyt in the temple of Edfu<sup>34</sup>.



*“dd mdw jn mht mnt hry(t) jb-Bhdt wbd hftyw mhh n nsrt.s wbd hftyw.k m ḥt”*

*“Words spoken by Mehyt-Menet settled in Behedet (Edfu) that burns enemies with the flames of its fire and burns your enemies in flames”*

This document bestows upon Menet two titles: “*wbd hftyw mhh n nsrt.s*”, which means “burns enemies with the flames of its fire” and “*wbd hftyw.k m ḥt*”, signifying “burn your enemies in flames”.

**Doc.No.13:**

The text from the stone chapel in the temple of Edfu elucidates Menet’s role in defending the king and the god Horus at Edfu.



*“dj.j n.k sbjw.k hr m hbt bštḳ hr.k m hbt dd mdw jn mnt hry(t)- jb Bhdt ḥzt hy ḥt hr nšny jrt šmt wrt šm m sbjw..... ḥwt nt hftyw.s”*

*“I make for you your enemies fall at the altar and the rebels against you at the place of slaughter, words spoken by Menet (Mentt), settled in Behedet (Edfu), the warrior, high-browed with anger, eye of Sekhmet, great power in the enemies..... the place of her enemies”<sup>35</sup>.*

<sup>32</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. I, p.154,4-5.

<sup>33</sup>رؤوف أبو الوفا مجد وأخرون، متنتيت، ص. 65.

<sup>34</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. I, p.252,13-14.

<sup>35</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. I, p.271,17-18.

The term “*ḥst*” in this title signifies Menet’s role as the warrior deity who safeguards god Horus and the king from their adversaries. The title “*ḥy ḥt ḥr nšny*”, meaning “high-browed with anger,” characterizes the goddess Menet, who is depicted with a fierce and angry countenance directed at her foes and adversaries. The term “*jrt šhmt*”, which means “eye of Sekhmet”, describes the association or connection between Sekhmet and Menet. The title “*wrt šhm m sbjw*”, translating to “great power in the enemies,” underscores the role played by the deity Menet in safeguarding and defending the god Horus in Edfu, highlighting her formidable strength in overcoming adversaries.

**Doc.No.14:**

A text from the hall of “*ḥdt*” in the temple of Edfu references Menet in a ritual called “*tw3-pt*” which involves the concept of “raising the sky.”

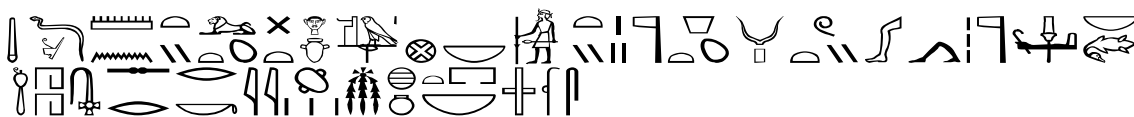


*“Words spoken by Menet (Menty), lady of great fear and terror, Pakhet, who causes and scratches (pain) with her power like fire, who destroys enemies, who throws enemies into the slaughterhouse under her control and burns his limbs with her flame”<sup>36</sup>.*

The term “*nbt šfyt ʿst snḏ*” meaning “lady of great Fear and terror,” was found in Hall “*ḥdt*” in the temple of Edfu during the “raising the sky” ceremony, “*tw3-pt*”. This title conveys that the fear instilled in the adversaries of the king and the foes of Horus is attributed to the deity Menet. The text further elucidates Menet’s role in causing pain with her fire, annihilating and casting the enemy into the area of slaughter, and searing their limbs with her flames.

**Doc.No.15 (fig.9 a,b):**

Horus, Khnum, Hormerty, and Amun are all male deities who are depicted alongside Menet on the eastern staircase of the southern wall of the Edfu temple<sup>37</sup>. The identical representation is duplicated on the eastern staircase of the eastern wall of the temple of Edfu.



*“Words spoken by Menet (Mentyt), the great, who settles in the province of “wšs-Ḥr”, queen regnant of the gods, the mistress of the messengers of the gods, the powerful,*

*“Words spoken by Menet (Mentyt), the great, who settles in the province of “wšs-Ḥr”, queen regnant of the gods, the mistress of the messengers of the gods, the powerful,*

<sup>36</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. I, p.314,17-18.

<sup>37</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. I, p.255,6-7.



*the mistress of fear who directs her fire at the opponents, Mskhnet, a woman in her year*<sup>38</sup>.

The titles mentioned in the text shed light on various aspects of Menet's role and significance:

1. "*mntyt wrt hry(t)-jb wts-Hr*", "Mentyt, the great, who settles in the province of 'wts-Hr' indicates that Menet held a central position as the main divinity in the 12th Nome of Upper Egypt.
2. "*nb(t) jtyt ntrw*", "queen regnant of the gods" suggests Menet's elevated status and authority among the deities.
3. "*nb(t) wpwtyw ntrw*", "mistress of the messengers of the deities" signifies Menet's role in directing divine messengers.
4. "*shmt*", "the powerful" portrays Menet as a potent force who punishes and eliminates adversaries with flames and fire.
5. "*nb(t) snd wq hb.s r rkʷ*", "mistress of fear who directs her fire at the opponents" clarifies her role in instilling fear and destruction among her enemies.
6. "*nb(t) imy mpt.s*", "woman in her year" describes Menet as overseeing the progression of events throughout the year while simultaneously punishing and destroying foes with fire and flames.

These titles collectively depict Menet as a powerful and formidable deity with a significant role in various aspects of Egyptian mythology<sup>39</sup>.

#### **Doc.No.16:**

A text belonging to the goddess Mehyt but mentioning the deity Menet found on the exterior front part of the sanctuary of the temple of Edfu. This inscription alludes to the "*dw3-ntr*", "devotional ceremony to the gods" in Edfu's temple.

  
"*dd mdw jn mht jrt-Rc hnt Bhd̄t rsyt wt̄ nsr m sbjw hr jt.s mnt hnt Bhd̄t j3bt̄ shr hft r jwn*"

*"Words spoken by Mehyt, the eye of Re in the southern Behadet (south of Edfu) who sets fire to the enemies for the sake of her father, Menet, settles in the eastern Behadet (east of Edfu) that overthrows the enemy of Iwn (Osiris)"*<sup>40</sup>.

The text "*mnt hnt Bhd̄t j3bt̄*" can be translated as "Menet settled in the eastern Behadet". The title "*shr hft r iwn*" can be translated as "The one who drove out and


<sup>38</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. IX, pl.38D.

<sup>39</sup>Faulkner, R.O., *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, 1964, p.33.

<sup>40</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. IV, p.379,7-8.



rebels with fire. In order to eliminate her foes, the goddess Menet murders, burns, torments, and slaughters them<sup>44</sup>.

  
 “*dd mdw jn mntyw wrt hry(t)-jb Bhdw hnw w hntyw nb(t) wpwtyw shmt nb(t) snd wtt  
 hh r rk w*”

“Words spoken by the great Menet (Mentyt), settled in Behdet (Edfu), Lady of the Khatuo (deities of slaughtering), lady of messengers, the Mighty, lady of fear, who sets fire against the rebels”<sup>45</sup>.



The term “*hnw w hntyw*” or “Lady of the Khatyo,” designates the goddess Menet as the mistress of the gods of slaughter, suggesting that she possesses knowledge of the location of the slaughter and leads adversaries there. This further indicates Menet’s role in overseeing messengers, as indicated by the title “*nb(t) wpwtyw*”. Her title “*shmt*” underscores Menet’s strength and proficiency in eliminating and controlling her enemies. “*nb(t) snd*” signifies Menet’s ability to instill fear and terror in the hearts of her adversaries. The titles “*wtt hh r rk w*” describe Menet assuming the form of a lioness, aligning with her duty to ignite fires against rebels, eliminate opponents, impose punishment, and consume them with flames.

### Analysis:

I-The forms of the warrior goddess Menet, as depicted in numerous documents, may vary based on the specific context and period. However, Menet is generally associated with protective and nurturing aspects, and her representations may include the following:

#### A. Menet in Human Form:

Menet is depicted in a human form holding “*W3s*” scepter in her right hand and wearing a large woman’s wig, a collar, and a tight robe with carrying straps<sup>46</sup>. This depiction is inscribed on a limestone stela of Pepy II, 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and is displayed at the Egyptian Museum (Nr. 1747). Menet’s name is written on both sides of the stela (Fig. 2)<sup>47</sup>.

In another representation, Menet is shown as a standing goddess with a celestial hieroglyph on her head<sup>48</sup>. Given her connection to Sopdu, she is sometimes referred to as “*Hnsky*”, <sup>49</sup>, which means curly, and is also known as the Lady of the East, “*Nbt-izbt*”, <sup>50</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> رؤوف أبو الوفا مجد وأخرون، منتيت، ص. 68.

<sup>45</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’ Edfou*. IV, p.273,15-18.

<sup>46</sup>Borchardt, V.L., *Cataloge General des Antiquites Egyptiennes du Musee du Caire*. II: N 1295-1808, p.171-172; *Urk* I, p.114,16.

<sup>47</sup>The stela Nr.1747 is displayed at the Egyptian Museum. Its height is 0.6 meters and it features a scene from the Heb Sed Festival celebrations; Borchardt, *Cataloge General*. II, p.170-172.

<sup>48</sup>*LGG* III, p. 286.

<sup>49</sup>*Wb* III, p.116.

<sup>50</sup>*LGG* III, p. 286; *Wb* IV, p.31.

### **B. Menet in Lion Form:**

In this form, Menet is portrayed as a lion-headed goddess, as seen on the limestone Sarcophagus of *Dḥwty-ir-di-sw* (CG 29315), dating back to the Late Period and discovered in El-Ashmunein, Tuna el-Gebel<sup>51</sup>.

A depiction of a kneeling lion-headed goddess holding two knives is depicted on the Black granite rectangular sarcophagus of “*T3-Hr-P3-t3*” (CG 29306) (Fig.10)<sup>52</sup>. This sarcophagus may be dated back to the reign of Nectanebo II, from the 30<sup>th</sup> Dynasty<sup>53</sup>. Menet is portrayed with a lion’s head on the front, while on the back; she takes the form of a crocodile and holding a knife as a protective attribute. Additionally, she wears a feather diadem adorned with a uraeus on her head. Menet is positioned in the center and the God “*3-hmhm*” preceding her and the God “*M’t-iwf*” following her<sup>54</sup>.

An enthroned lion-headed goddess adorned with a sun disc and a serpent on her head is depicted on a Papyrus amulet featuring the goddess Menet. This amulet, dating back to the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, was unearthed at Thebes. The Papyrus itself measures 16.50 cm in height and 19.50 cm in length and is currently on display in the British Museum under the number EA 10732. It bears hieratic script and is documented in (Doc.No.7. fig.7) and (Doc.No.15 fig.9 a,b)<sup>55</sup>.

A depiction of a recumbent lioness adorned with an *3tf*-crown, exhaling fire, can be observed in (Doc.no.2.fig.3).

### **C. Menet in Serpent Form:**

The goddess Menet was shown as a snake, with her name written in a serpent-like style. This representation of Menet can be found in an inscription on a double coffin that once belonged to Astmkhebjt, the daughter of the first prophet Ramnkheper and high priestess of Amun. The coffin dates to the Third Intermediate Period (21<sup>st</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) and is crafted from painted, varnished, and gilded cedar wood. This unique coffin is currently exhibited in the Egyptian Museum under the number 61031<sup>56</sup>.

II-The name of Menet is written in various forms throughout the different periods of Egyptian history, from the Old Kingdom to the end of the Greco-Roman Period.

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<sup>51</sup>Maspero, G., Gauthier, H., *Sarcophages des epoques persanes et ptolemaique*. 2 Bde, Cairo, 1914, p.39; <https://www.trismegistos.org/tm/detail.php?tm=109523>; LGG III, p.286.





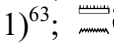

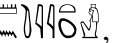




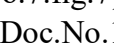




<sup>52</sup>The sarcophagus of “*T3-Hr-P3-t3*” was discovered by Quibell, at Saqqara. On either side of this sarcophagus are 25 protective deities.

<sup>53</sup>Maspero, M.G., *Catalogue General des Antiquites Egyptiennes du Musee du Cairo. N° 29301-29306 Sarcophages*, tome Premier, Cairo, 1914, p.234, Tf.21; Guglielmi, W., *Die Gottin Mr.t, Entstehung und verehrung einer Personifikation*, Köln, 1991, p.164.

<sup>54</sup>LGG III, p. 286.

<sup>55</sup>Donnat, *JEA* 105 (2020), p.243-257.

<sup>56</sup>Daressy, G., *Cercueils des caachettes royales*, Cairo, 1909, p.144-146.

These forms were: , *mnt*<sup>57</sup> (Doc.no.1)<sup>58</sup>, , *mnt*, (Doc.no.16)<sup>59</sup>; , *mnty*<sup>60</sup>, (Doc.no.14)<sup>61</sup>; , *mnty.wrt* (Doc.no.8)<sup>62</sup>, (Doc.no.11)<sup>63</sup>; , *mnt wrt* (Doc.No.9.fig.8)<sup>64</sup>; , *mnt* (Doc.no.10)<sup>65</sup>; , *mnty* (Doc.No.5)<sup>66</sup>; , *mnty* ( Doc.No.6.fig.6)<sup>67</sup>; , *mnt*, (Doc.No.7.fig.7)<sup>68</sup>; , *mnt* (Doc.No.12)<sup>69</sup>; , *mntt* (Doc.No.13)<sup>70</sup>; , *mnty* (Doc.No.15 fig.9 a,b)<sup>71</sup>; , *mntt* (Doc.no.18)<sup>72</sup>; , *mnty* (Doc.no.19)<sup>73</sup>; , *mnt* (Doc.No.17)<sup>74</sup>; , *mnt* (Doc. No.3. fig.4)<sup>75</sup>.

By studying all the previous documents that related to the goddess Menet, it has been concluded that her name appeared in various written forms from the Old Kingdom until the end of the Greco-Roman Period, such as: *mnt*, *mnty*, *mnty.wrt*, *mnt wrt*, *mnty*, *mntt*.

Leitz believes that the interpretation of the name of Menet means “the remaining” or “the constant,” and this is represented in writing as “*t3-mnt*”<sup>76</sup>. Helck believes that this goddess *Mnt* was previously referred to as *Mnty*<sup>77</sup>. Faulkner believed that her name is derived from the verb “*mn*”, means “to be stable” and is documented in the Spell.405 in Coffin Texts<sup>78</sup>.

Based on the name and the representation of the deity Menet in the form of a lioness, she is recognized as a deity responsible for protection. This is substantiated by the magical texts against snakes and scorpions found in the following documents (Doc. No. 2, Fig. 3). The goddess Menet was also linked to the sky, as evident from her

<sup>57</sup> *Wb* II, p. 68. 3; *Urk* I, p. 114.

<sup>58</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. I, p.256,16-17.

<sup>59</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. IV, p.379,7-8.

<sup>60</sup> *Wb* II, p. 68. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. I, p.314,17-18; *LGG* III, p.286.

<sup>62</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. VI, p. 313,1-4.

<sup>63</sup> Dieter, K., *Die inschriften des Temples von Edfou*, vol, VII, Wiesbaden, 2004, p.102 (line 102,15,16); *LGG*. III, p.287.

<sup>64</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. VII, p. 277.

<sup>65</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. I, p.113,10; *LGG* III, p.287.

<sup>66</sup> *LGG* III, p.286.

<sup>67</sup> Fermat, A., *Le Rituel de la maison de Vie: Papyrus Salt 825*, Paris, 2010, p.155-156.

<sup>68</sup> Dieter, K., *Die inschriften des Temples von Edfou*, vol.VII, Wiesbaden 2004, p.19 (line 14,6-15,1).

<sup>69</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. I, p.252,13-14.

<sup>70</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. I, p.271,17-18.

<sup>71</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. I, p.255,6-7.

<sup>72</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. II, p.85,14-17.

<sup>73</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. IV, p.273,15-18.

<sup>74</sup> Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. VII, p.14,1-7.

<sup>75</sup> Drioton, *ASAE* 39 (1939),p.68.

<sup>76</sup> *LGG* III, p.284.

<sup>77</sup> Helck, *LÄ* IV (1982), p.48; *Wb* II, p.69.

<sup>78</sup> Faulkner, R.O., *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, vol.2, England, 1977, p.54,87,210; de Buck, A., & Gardiner, A., *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, vol. V, Chicago, 1945, p. 210(k).



being referred to as the daughter of Re with a terrifying pupil, as indicated in (Doc. No. 17) and (Doc. No. 7, Fig. 7).

The goddess Menet was associated with various religious rituals, including:

- A) The selected and specified piece of meat “*shp hꜥt stpw*”.
- B) Incense burner “*hnk- ‘h*”.
- C) Raising the sky “*twꜥ-pt*”.
- D) The ritual of devotion to the god “*dwꜥ-ntr*”.

In the Old Kingdom, during the Heb Sed festival, Menet is portrayed as a mother figure. The goddess Menet plays a crucial role in allowing the King to undergo a symbolic rebirth, reaffirming his divine status. She also supports the birth, specifically in the creation and the Opening of the Mouth ceremony for a Heb Sed statue of the king. Menet, as a priestess with the title “*jmj-hꜥt*”, is depicted in human form, holding the “*Wꜥs*” scepter in her hand, wearing a large woman’s wig, a collar, and a tight robe with carrying straps. Menet bestows upon the king all aspects of life, stability, health, and joy of heart, much like the god Re.

In the New Kingdom, the goddess Menet assumed a protective role against scorpions. She is depicted as a recumbent lioness wearing the *ꜥtf*-crown and breathing fire. In inscriptions, she is referred to as “*dꜥy-p*”, meaning the “Sky farer”, signifying her role as a protector and guardian of the gods (Doc. No. 2, Fig. 3).

Through the examination of certain documents related to the goddess Menet, it has been discovered that she was mentioned twice in the New Kingdom as the wife of the god Horus (Doc. No. 2, Fig. 3, Doc. No. 3, Fig. 4). Menet had various connections to other deities in ancient Egyptian religion, including gods such as Anubis, Osiris, Re, Hathor, Pakht, Horus, Mehyt, Meskent, Menhyt, Shu, and Tefnut<sup>79</sup>. In the temple of Edfu, specifically in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hypostyle Hall, the goddess Menet is depicted among several gods and goddesses. Menet appears at the center, flanked by “*Hr-Pꜥ-hꜥd*”  and “*Mhyt-m-šmyt*”  (Fig. 11, 12)<sup>80</sup>.

In the Late Period, Menet is depicted as Seth’s slayer. She was one of the 16 goddesses who vanquished Seth and his companions in the fire within the compound. Menet appears in the middle, with “*Shmt-Mrt-nsrt*” preceding her and “*Wnmyt-Iwtt-hsfs*” following her<sup>81</sup>.

Through the study of earlier texts, all of Menet's titles are documented to explain her role in punishing all enemies and ensuring that no harm comes to the king or god. The goddess Menet held the title “*mnt irt Rꜥ nhꜥ dꜥd*”, meaning “the Eye of Re with a terrifying pupil”. This title is mentioned once in the temple of Edfu, confirming her role in the solar cult and her significance as one of the most crucial protective

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<sup>79</sup>Cauville, S., *L’hymne, a mehyt d’Edfou*, Bulletin of the French Institute of Oriental Archeology, BIFAO 82, Cairo, 1982, p.1B.


<sup>80</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d’Edfou*. II, p. 23-24 (120).

<sup>81</sup>LGG III, p.286; Schott, S., *Urkunden des Aegyptischen Altertums urkunden Mythologischen inhalts*. VI, Leipzig, 1929, p.53,6.

lionesses in ancient Egypt. It indicated the relationship between the two lionesses, Sekhmet and Menet. Menet, through her title, confronted her enemies, ultimately defeating them by using fire and flame.

The goddess Menet has many titles associated with her role in fighting enemies and killing them by slaughtering them or burning them with her flames and fire, for example: “Beast”, “*Hwn.t*” and the “Fighter”, “*Jh3.t / ʿh3.t*”, “*hʿw šps m Hwt-sbkt*”, “sacred organs in *Hwt-sbkt*”, “*s3t Rʿ*”, “Re’s daughter”. This following titles clarifies the role of Menet as one of the protective lionesses, as the daughter of the god Re, “*mntytr mr ʿnw*”, “Mentyt with painful Claws”, “*mnt irt Rʿ nh3 dfd*”, “Menet, the eye of Re with terrible pupil”, “*wrt šhm mwt nsr*”, “powerful of death and fire”, “*nb(t) snd*”, “Lady of fear”.

Menet is called the eye of Re with terrible Pupil “*jrt Rʿ*”, which is an epithet of goddesses especially Hathor, as in the story of destruction of the humankind. Also the lioness goddess like Tefnut and Menbit as Hathor is another eye of Re. The title “*šhm ntr*”, “the power of God” and title “*hʿw šps m Hwt-sbkt*”, “the sanctity of the members *Hwt-sbkt*” appeared in the northern wall of the Hall of Columns in the temple of Edfu. The goddess Menet took on the responsibility of guarding the deity Osiris and defeating the god Seth. This was because Behdet (Edfu), which was consecrated to the organs (*Hwt-sbkt*), the sacred location where Osiris’ feet were laid, is said to be the home of the goddess Menet<sup>82</sup>. The text mentioned that:

  
“*dj.j.n.k dww j3btt hr jwn.sn dd mdw jn mntt hry(t)-jb Bhd t šhm ntr hʿw šps m Hwt-sbkt*”, “I gave you the eastern mountains with its products, words spoken by Menet, settled in Behdet (Edfu) the power of god, sanctifying the organs in (*Hwt-sbkt*)”<sup>83</sup>.

### Conclusion:

The name of Menet is written in various forms and its meaning is “the remaining” or “the constant”. Her name is probably derived from the verb “*mn*”, means “to be stable”. The warrior goddess Menet is depicted in numerous forms, such as: human form, lion form or serpent form. Menet is recognized as a protective goddess against snakes and scorpions. Menet is also linked to the sky as the daughter of Re with a terrifying pupil. She was one of the 16 goddesses who vanquished Seth and his companions in the fire within the compound. Through the study, Menet held many titles that explaining her role in punishing and fighting all enemies and killing them by slaughtering them or burning them with her flames and fire.

<sup>82</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. I, p.256,16-17.

<sup>83</sup>Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. I, p.256,16-17.



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## الدور الوحشي للإلهة المحاربة منيت في القضاء على الأعداء في مصر القديمة

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### الملخص:

الإلهة منيت تُصوّر على شكل لبوءة الأسد، حيث تعتبر عين حورس، كما يتضح من الألقاب التي تحملها. وظائفها الرئيسية ليست كأم ولا كإلهة خالقة، بل تتمثل في دور محاربة الأعداء والقضاء عليهم لحماية الملك أو الإله. تُمثل أيضًا في تقطيع اللحم، وذلك للدفاع عن إله الشمس رع، مما يؤكد العقيدة الشمسية والدفاع عنها. ولذلك كان لها علاقة قوية بمنطقة هليوبوليس الشمالية (*Iwnw*) وهليوبوليس الجنوبية (طيبة) وبالتاسوع العظيم بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ارتبطت بإله الشمس رع من خلال لقبها "عين رع". أول ظهور لإسم الإلهة منيت كان أثناء حكم الملك ساحورع في الأسرة الخامسة، حيث ظهر إسمها على قطعة واحدة من مجموعة الملك الجنائزية في أبوصير، ثم ظهرت المعبودة منيت مرة ثانية في عصر الملك ني وسر رع في الأسرة السادسة. شاركت منيت في احتفال الحب سد الخاص بالملك، وقامت بمساعدته في طقوس تنظيفه وإرتداء الملابس. كما ظهرت الإلهة منيت في الأسرة السادسة أثناء احتفال الملك بيبي الثاني من خلال لوحة رقم 1747 من الحجر الجيري، والتي توجد حاليًا في المتحف المصري.

يهدف هذا البحث إلى إلقاء الضوء على التمثيلات والنصوص المتعلقة بالإلهة منيت، مع التركيز على دورها كمحاربة تهزم وتدمر الأعداء باستخدام النار والذهب. كما يتناول الدراسة أيضًا أشكال كتابة إسمها المختلفة وتفسيراته من خلال الوثائق التي تم تناولها بالدراسة. علاوة على ذلك، يستكشف البحث علاقات منيت مع الآلهة المصرية القديمة الأخرى، بدءًا من ظهورها الأول في عصر المملكة القديمة حتى الفترة اليونانية والرومانية.

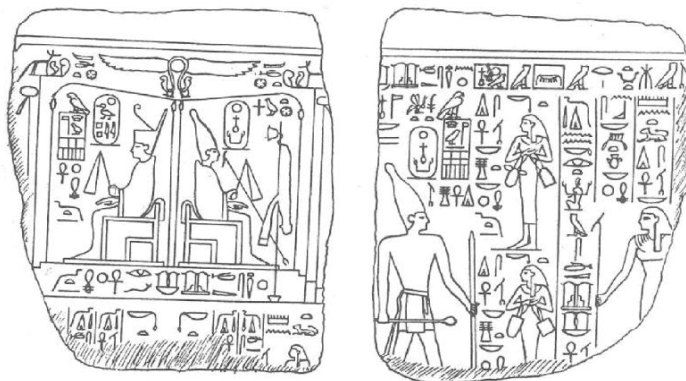
**الكلمات الدالة:** اللبوءة، منيت، منتيت، الأعداء، النار، اللهب.

## Figures



(Fig.1): The name of the goddess Menet is found on a stone piece from the funerary complex of King Sahure at Abusir.

رؤوف أبو الوفا محمد وآخرون، منتيت ، شكل. 1، ص.109.



(Fig.2): Limestone stela from the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty, display in the Egyptian Museum Nr.1747, depicting the celebration the Sed Festival Memorial Jubilee

After: Schott, *Gm 9* (1974), p. 33; Borchardt, *Cataloge General. II*, p.171-172; Borchardt, L., *Denkmäler des Alten Riches. II*, Le Caire, 1964, p.172.



(Fig.3): Magical Papyrus from the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, New Kingdom, displayed in the British Museum Nr. EA 10687.

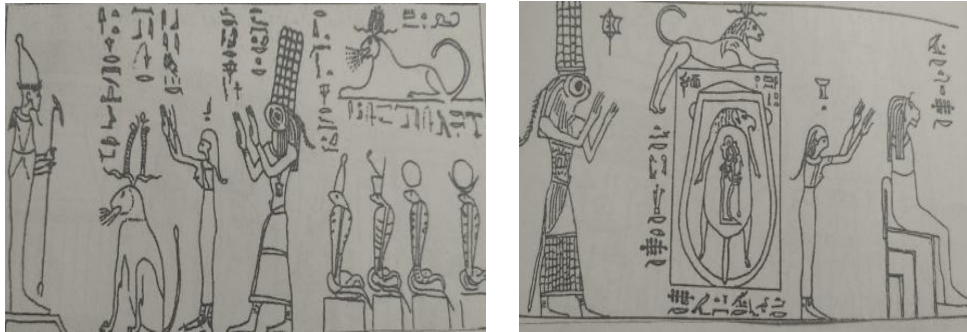
After: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y\\_EA10687-2](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA10687-2)



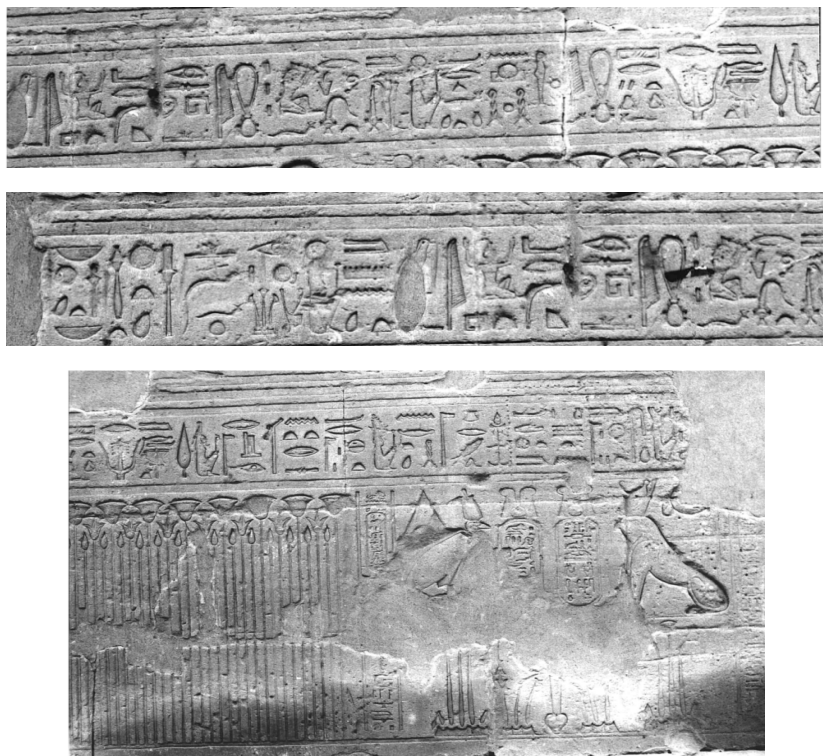
(Fig. 4): The pink quartzite double statue of King Ramses III, display in the Egyptian Museum Nr. JE 69771. Menet punishes the enemies of King, as she eliminates the snakes by shutting their mouths.  
After: Drioton. *ASAE* 39 (1939), p.57-89, Taf. III.



(Fig.5) The papyrus amulet, dating back to the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, is displayed in the British Museum under number EA 10732. In this amulet, the goddess “Menet” is depicted as an enthroned lion-headed goddess with a sun disc and a snake on her head. She is portrayed as a protector who battled all her enemies that posed a threat to the god or the king.  
After: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y\\_EA10732](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA10732).



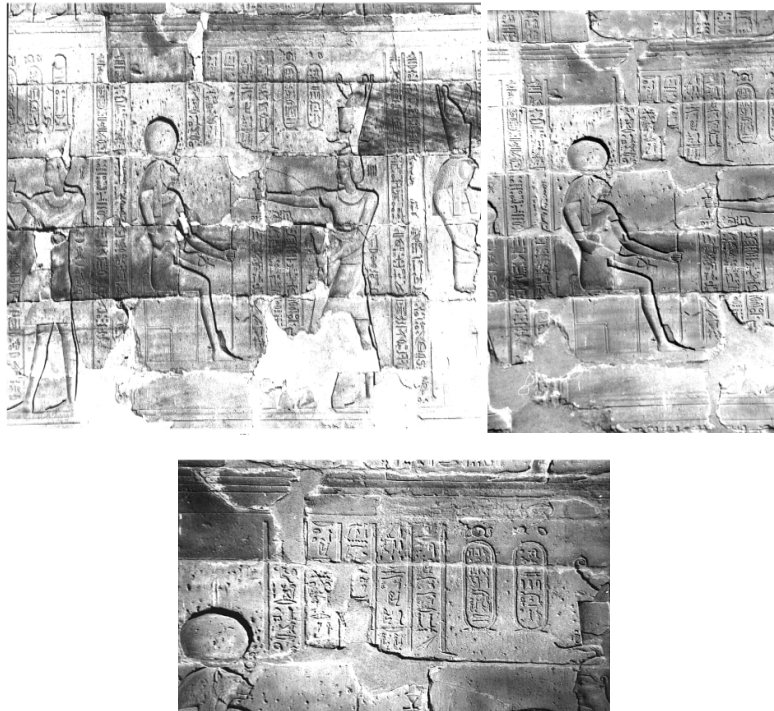
(Fig.6): Menet is represented as a recumbent lioness wearing the *3ff*-crown and breathing fire. Papyrus Salt 825, 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and on display at the British Museum under the number (EA 10051). After: Derchain, *Papyrus Salt 825*, p. 140, fig.xix.



(Fig.7): Menet is depicted as an enthroned lion-headed goddess, adorned with a sun disc and a serpent on her head. She is known as the Eye of the god Re, with a terrifying pupil. In the temple of Edfu, she is accompanied by several deities, including Sekhmet the Great, the Mistress of all Sekhmet goddesses, as well as Shu and Tefnut.

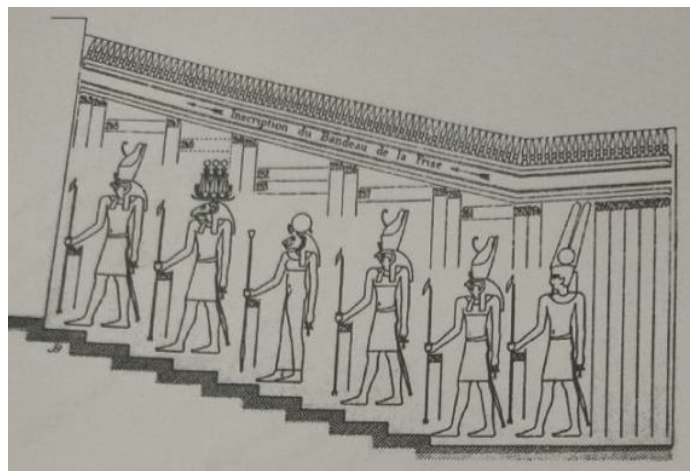
After: Edfu Datenbank: Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AdW) (adw-goe.de).



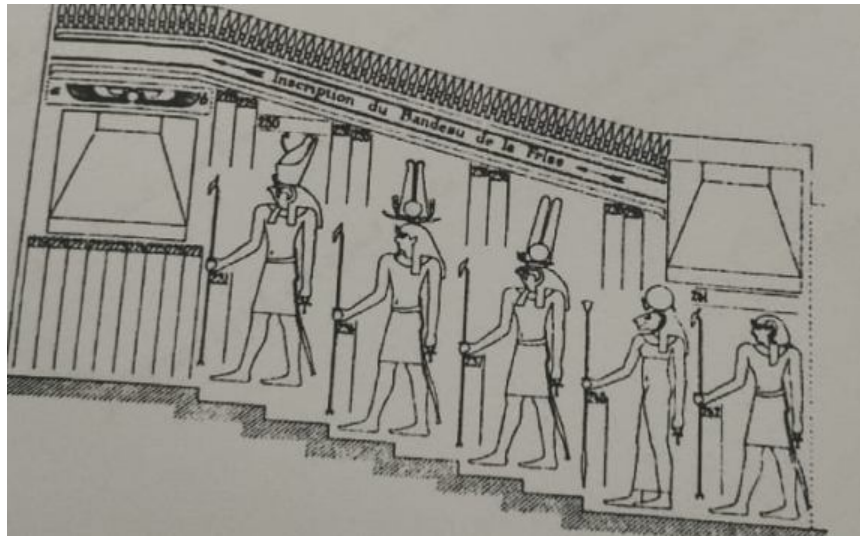


(Fig.8): The goddess Menet is depicted in the ritual of offering of a selected and specified piece of meat known as “*shp stpw*”. This ritual is associated with the goddess Mehyt and is depicted in the temple of Edfu.

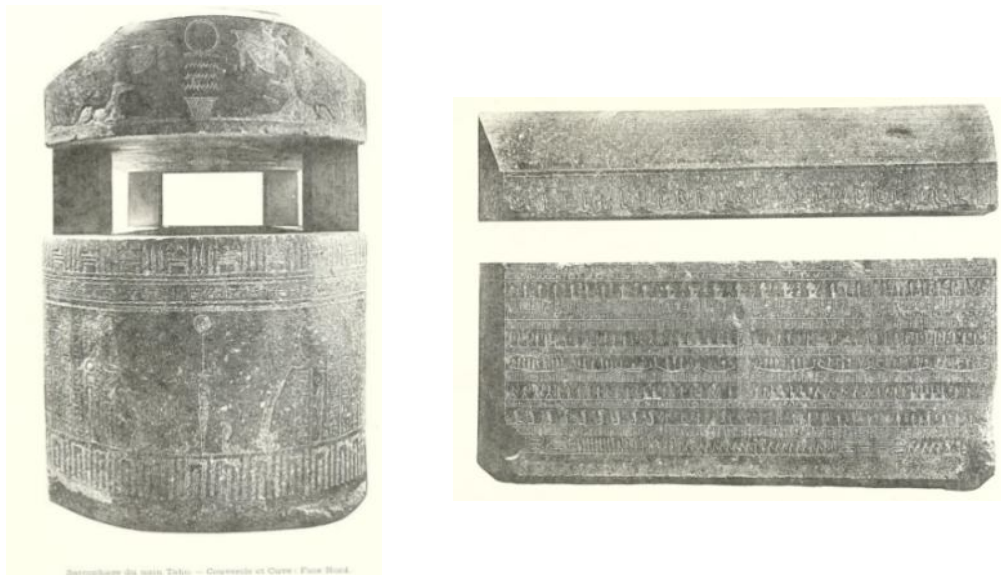
After: Edfu Datenbank: Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AdW) (adw-goe.de).



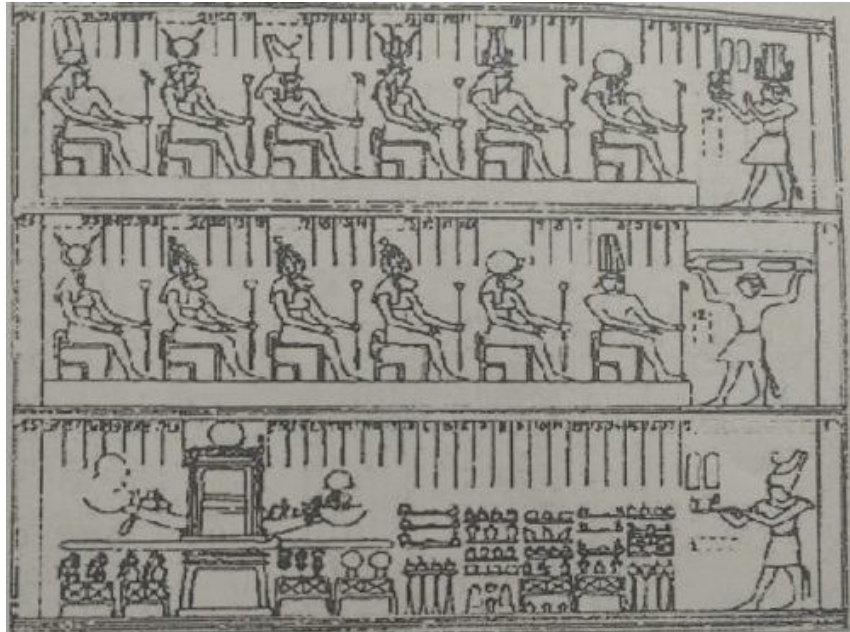
(Fig.9.a): The deity Menet is the only female deity among the male deities; Horus, Khnum, Hormerty, and Amun on the eastern staircase, specifically on the southern wall of the Edfu temple. After: Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. IX, pl, 38c.



(Fig.9.b): The deity Menet is the only female deity among these male deities on the eastern staircase, the eastern wall of the Temple of Edfu.  
After: Chassinat, E., *Le temple d' Edfou*. IX, pl, 38c.

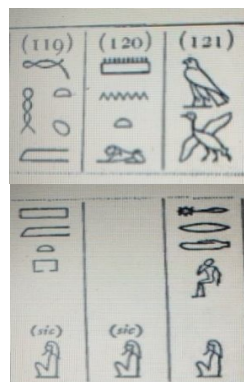


(Fig.10): The black granite rectangular sarcophagus of **T3-Hr-P3-t3** (CG 29306) from the 30<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. After: Maspero, *Catalogue General*. I, p.234, Tf.21.



(Fig.11): Menet is depicted as a seated woman with the head of a lioness and wearing the *3tf*-crown and holds the *W3d* scepter in her left hand while clutching the *nh* sign in the other. Menet is accompanied by a group of gods, including Anubis, Tefnut, Mehyt, Sekhmet, and Nephthys.

After: Cauville, *L'hymne, a mehyt d'Edfou*, p.1B.



(Fig.12): The goddess Menet is depicted alongside many gods and goddesses of Edfu in the temple of Edfu's 2nd hypostyle hall. Menet is positioned in the middle, preceded by the god *Hr-P3-hrd* and followed by *Mhyt-m-šmyt*.

After: Chassinat, *Le temple d' Edfou*. II, p.23-24 (120).