

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION OF AMERICA
WESTERN ILLINOIS SOCIETY AND THE
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS
PRESENT

The Gender Performativity of Ptolemaic Queens: Evidence from the Faience *Oinochoai*

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What kind of agency did royal women have in Hellenistic Egypt under the reign of the Ptolemaic dynasty (c. 323-31 BC)? The surviving corpus of Ptolemaic faience oinochoai – ritual wine jugs decorated with portraits of Ptolemaic queens from Arsinoë II to Cleopatra I (c. 275–176 BC) – provide a unique and highly gendered body of material that can improve our understanding of the ways these women held power. By examining the visual vocabulary of Ptolemaic queenship depicted on the faience oinochoai through the lens of third-wave feminist theory, we can uncover the many gender roles associated with royal female power in the religious, social, political, and domestic life of the kingdom.



THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2019

7:30 PM

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