

The Iconography of Ptolemaic Queens  
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Ptolemaic Egypt (305-30 BCE) was an ethnically diverse society that sought to maintain a balance between the culturally dominant Egyptians and the politically and socially dominant Greeks. The Macedonian rulers of this dynasty were forced to walk a fine line as both Egyptian pharaohs and Greek kings in order to maintain control over both groups.

This project will shed light on the subject, not by studying the Ptolemaic kings as is most frequently done, but by looking at the iconography of the royal women, who by all accounts were some of the most bloodthirsty, power hungry villains of the ancient world. Several representations will be considered including coins, temple relief decoration, and free standing sculpture, both of the Greek and Egyptian varieties. I will examine the iconography, location, material, and artistic characteristics of each piece in an attempt to understand the symbolism behind each artistic choice and to consider what these women were trying to accomplish in the creation of these objects.