

Queen Zenobia of Palmyra

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The legacy of Zenobia includes not just her reputation as a "warrior queen," but also the masterful leadership of her subjects. She cleverly created an image of a Syrian monarch, Hellenistic queen, and Roman empress, which resulted in widespread support for her cause (Bergstein, 2016). This allowed her to manage an empire of people who spoke different languages and practiced different religions. This essay will discuss who was Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, why did she revolt against the Romans and what she achieved during her reign.

Queen of the Palmyrene Empire in Syria during the third century, Zenobia ruled over the region. Her family tree is shrouded in mystery, although it is claimed that she was not a commoner and married Odaenathus, the city's chief magistrate (Bergstein, 2016). In the year 260, her husband ascended to the throne and led Palmyra to its position as the preeminent power in the Near East by achieving victory over the Sassanians and bringing peace to the Roman East. Following Odaenathus' murder, Zenobia took on the responsibility of ruler for her son Vaballathus and maintained a position of effective authority throughout her son's reign. She took over her son's reign since, by the time of her husband's death, her son was not old enough to take over. In honor of her late husband and as a lasting legacy for her son, Zenobia expanded the Palmyrene Empire by expanding it into new areas and increasing its size (Bergstein, 2016). Her stated objective was to preserve the peace of Rome by warding off the threat posed by the Sassanid Empire to the Eastern Roman Empire. However, as a result of her efforts, her throne's authority significantly rose, ultimately leading to a confrontation with Aurelian in the western region. She only had a brief reign, but she rose to become possibly the most powerful woman the Roman Empire had ever seen.

In the third century A.D., Palmyra was a center for economic prosperity and political and cultural impact. Queen Zenobia's ambitious power play was acted out in this metropolitan capital of the Roman province with the same name, which is located near the empire's eastern borders (Intagliata, 2018). The confrontation was something that had been in the process for decades. Around the middle of the third century A.D., the Roman Empire was amid a political and economic crisis, with its boundaries coming under constant attack and its core struggling to maintain its position. The disastrous defeat and captivity of Emperor Valerian by the Persians in the year 260 threw Roman rule into much greater turmoil than it already was. In Europe, the rebel Gallic empire began to break away from Rome and establish its kingdom. The empire, which was weakened and distracted, was facing danger from every angle. From her vantage point in the East, Zenobia could spot her opportunity and immediately understood that she stood to gain an empire.

Lucius Domitius Aurelianus, Rome's subsequent significant emperor, was a different kind of rival than his predecessor, Hadrian. Aurelian came to power in the year 270 and was known for his strict military discipline, which he had developed through years of fighting on the imperial frontier. His viciousness on the front lines became legendary. This hardy soldier won the battle that his ancestors had been fighting with the Goths, resisted an invasion of barbarians into northern Italy, and restored Roman power in the rebellious provinces of Gaul, Britannia, and Hispania during the brief four years that he reigned as emperor (Intagliata, 2018). As a result of Zenobia's self-proclamation as regent, she assumed control of lands in the East that had only just been taken from the Persians. She put an end to those responsible for the death of her husband by having them executed, and then she put an end to the myth that Palmyra and its lands were obedient to the Roman Empire and its emperor. Zenobia was a shrewd strategist who took

advantage of a vulnerable time for the Roman Empire. She looked down her nose at Emperor Gallienus and his generals, who were helpless to stop her from achieving her goals. When the next Roman Emperor, Claudius Gothicus, took the throne, he had little choice but to acknowledge her supremacy because his reign would not last long. Zenobia successfully achieved her goal of elevating Palmyra to the same level as Rome.

Zenobia's rising popularity and total opposition of Roman authority piqued Aurelian's interest, especially after she proclaimed her son Caesar in 271. This action had to draw Aurelian's awareness to Zenobia (Intagliata, 2018). "Now all shame is exhausted," lamented the Augustan History, "for in the weakened state of the commonwealth, things came to such a pass that a foreigner, Zenobia by name, moved to cast regarding her shoulders the imperial mantle [and ruled] for a prolonged duration than could be endured from one of the females."

As Aurelian's forces moved throughout Asia Minor, Zenobia's territory was gradually retaken by Aurelian's retaliatory conquests. After being beaten by Aurelian's forces in Antioch, her army of 70,000 men staged a fight, but after they were driven back, the remaining warriors fled to Palmyra. They were chased by Aurelian's legions, who arrived at the city walls in the year 272. They laid siege to Palmyra, but Zenobia was certain that her archers and cavalry could withstand the assault and save the city. The Romans might have succumbed to hunger and the hard desert environment if this plan hadn't worked (Bergstein, 2016). Aurelian requested her surrender, according to Zenobia, Queen of the East, as if he were oblivious. Despite her lofty position, Cleopatra opted to pass away as a queen rather than live. Rather than live, Cleopatra decided to pass away as a queen.

Aurelian was hurt by his rejection from a woman, so he redoubled his attempts to conquer the city. According to Augustan History, the queen made a desperate attempt to flee

eastward to Persia but was apprehended when she reached the Euphrates River (Bergstein, 2016). In honor of her late husband and as a lasting legacy for her son, Zenobia expanded the Palmyrene Empire by expanding it into new areas and increasing its size. Her stated objective was to preserve the peace of Rome by warding off the threat posed by the Sassanid Empire to the Eastern Roman Empire. However, as a result of her efforts, her throne's authority significantly rose, ultimately leading to a confrontation with Aurelian in the western region. She only had a brief reign, but she rose to become possibly the most powerful woman the Roman Empire had ever seen.

Zenobia made the most of the opportunity and proclaimed herself the regent (Bergstein, 2016). She then set out to demonstrate that Palmyra was on par with or even superior to Rome's authority by seizing control of the territories in the East. By taking advantage of Rome's weakness, Zenobia began to chip away at Palmyra's formerly unbreakable alliance with Rome. This process was carried out in an organized and steady manner. She soon seized several neighboring realms, including all of Syria, Anatolia and Arabia, by utilizing her intelligence and the strength of a devoted general named Zabdas. In 269, she conquered Alexandria, and by the following year, she had Egypt under her authority. This may have been due to a romantic tie to the area, the economic protection of Palmyra, or despite Rome. This struck right at the heart of the Roman Empire, as Egypt's food and wealth were essential to the survival of the Roman Empire. By the end of the year 270, her name, 'Zenobia Augusta,' was used to produce coins and papyri in her capacity as Queen of the East. At this time, it appeared as though she might have no limits.

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Hellenistic queen, and Roman empress, which resulted in widespread support for her cause. This allowed her to manage an empire that consisted of people who spoke different languages and practiced different religions (Intagliata, 2018). Her court was renowned for emphasizing education and welcoming individuals of all faiths at its gatherings.

Since her passing, she has been held up as an example of someone who was both ambitious and daring, placing her in the company of figures such as Cleopatra and Boudicca (Bergstein, 2016). Even Catherine the Great was fond of drawing comparisons between herself and Zenobia, drawing inspiration from the fact that Zenobia was both a powerful military leader and an intellectual powerhouse. Her image is included in the currency of Syria, and she is revered there as a national icon. She was a queen who opposed Rome and constructed the energetic and potent Palmyrene Empire, which at the time had to be taken seriously. She was a queen who did these things, in spite of that the few reports that have remained tend to contrast and romanticize her story..

In conclusion, Septimia Zenobia was the ruler of the Palmyrene Empire in Syria in the third century. Although it is thought that she was not a commoner and that she wed Odaenathus, the city's top magistrate, her family history is a mystery. This ancient Palmyran queen was successful in capturing Roman lands and conquering Egypt. Her dominion thus came very close to matching Rome's empire in size. Palmyra was a hub of political sway, intellectual refinement, and economic success in the third century A.D.

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