

= Odaenathus =

Lucius Septimius Udaynath , Latinized as Odaenathus (Aramaic : ????? / O?aina? ; Arabic : ????? / Udaynath ; 220 ? 267) , was the founder king (Mlk) of the Palmyrene Kingdom centered at the city of Palmyra , Syria . He lifted his city from the position of a regional center subordinate to Rome into the supreme power in the East . Odaenathus was born into an aristocratic Palmyrene family who had received Roman citizenship in the 190s under the Severan dynasty . He was the son of Hairan the descendant of Nador . The circumstances surrounding his rise are ambiguous ; he became the lord (Ras) of the city , a position created for him , as early as the 240s and by 258 , he was styled a consularis , indicating a high status in the Roman Empire .

The defeat and captivity of emperor Valerian at the hands of the Persian Sassanian monarch Shapur I in 260 left the eastern Roman provinces largely at the mercy of the Persians . Odaenathus stayed on the side of Rome ; assuming the title of king , he led the Palmyrene army and fell upon the Persians before they could cross the Euphrates to the eastern bank , and inflicted upon them a considerable defeat . Then , Odaenathus took the side of emperor Gallienus , the son and successor of Valerian , who was facing the usurpation of Fulvius Macrianus . The rebel declared his sons emperors , leaving one in Syria and taking the other with him to Europe . Odaenathus attacked the remaining usurper and quelled the rebellion . He was rewarded many exceptional titles by the emperor who formalized his self @-@ established position in the East . In reality , the emperor could have done little but to accept the declared nominal loyalty of Odaenathus .

In a series of rapid and successful campaigns starting in 262 , he crossed the Euphrates and recovered Carrhae and Nisibis . He then took the offensive to the heartland of Persia , and arrived at the walls of its capital Ctesiphon . The city withstood the short siege but Odaenathus reclaimed the entirety of Roman lands occupied by the Persians since the beginning of their invasions in 252 . Odaenathus celebrated his victories and declared himself King of Kings , crowning his son Hairan I as co @-@ king . By 263 , Odaenathus was in effective control of the Levant , Mesopotamia and Anatolia 's eastern region .

Odaenathus observed all due formalities towards the emperor , but in practice ruled as an independent monarch . In 266 , the king launched a second invasion of Persia but had to abandon the campaign and head north to Bithynia to repel the attacks of Germanic riders besieging the city of Heraclea Pontica . He was assassinated in 267 during or immediately after the Anatolian campaign , together with Hairan . The identities of the perpetrator or the instigator are unknown and many stories , accusations and speculations exist in ancient sources . He was succeeded by his son Vaballathus under the regency of his widow Zenobia , who used the power established by Odaenathus to forge the Palmyrene Empire in 270 .

= = Name , Odaenathus I and origin = =

" Odaenathus " is the Roman version of the king 's name who was born Lucius Septimius Udaynath c . 220 AD . " Udaynath " is the king 's personal name , an Arabic name that means " little ear " . " Septimius " was the family 's gentilicium (surname) adopted as an expression of loyalty to the Roman Severan dynasty , whose emperor Septimius Severus granted the family Roman citizenship in the late second century .

In the Temple of Bel at Palmyra , a stone block with a sepulchral inscription was found mentioning the building of a tomb and recording the genealogy of the builder : Odaenathus son of Hairan son of Wahb Allat son of Nador . Traditional scholarship believed the builder to be an ancestor of the king and he was given the designation " Odaenathus I " . In an inscription dated to 251 , the name of the " Ras " (lord) of Palmyra Hairan son of Odaenathus is written , and he was thought to be the son of Odaenathus I .

Prior to the 1980s , the earliest known inscription attesting king Odaenathus was dated to 257 , leading traditional scholarship to believe that Hairan Ras of Palmyra is the father of the king and that Odaenathus I was his grandfather . However , an inscription published in 1985 by archaeologist Michael Gawlikowski and dated to 252 mentions king Odaenathus as a " Ras " and records the

same genealogy found in the sepulchral inscription confirming the name of king Odaenathus ' grandfather as Wahb Allat . Therefor , it is certain that king Odaenathus is the builder of the tomb ruling out the existence of " Odaenathus I " . Ras Hairan mentioned in the 251 inscription is identical with Odaenathus ' elder son and co @-@ ruler prince Hairan I.

The origin of the family is Aramean , while the king himself appears to be of mixed Aramean and Arab descent ; his name is Arabic , while the names of his ancestors (father Hairan and great grandfather Nador) are Aramaic . Zosimus asserted that Odaenathus descended from " illustrious forebears " , but the position of the family in Palmyra is debated ; it was probably part of the wealthy mercantile class . Alternatively , the family could have belonged to the tribal leadership who amassed a fortune as landowners and patrons of the Palmyrene caravans . In Dura @-@ Europos , a relief dated to 159 was commissioned by Hairan son of Maliko son of Nador ; this Hairan might have been the head of the Palmyrene trade colony in Dura @-@ Europos and probably belonged to the same family of Odaenathus . " Nador " father of Maliko mentioned in the Dura @-@ Europos inscription could therefore be Odaenathus ' great @-@ great @-@ great grandfather .

= = Rise = =

Palmyra was an autonomous city subordinate to Rome and part of Syria Phoenice province . Odaenathus descended from an aristocratic family , albeit not a royal one as the city was ruled by a council and had no tradition of hereditary monarchy . Bilingual inscriptions from Palmyra record the title of the Palmyrene ruler as " Ras " in Palmyrene and Exarchos in Greek , meaning the " Lord of Palmyra " . The title was created for Odaenathus , and was not a usual title in the Roman Empire or a part of the traditional Palmyrene governance institutions ; whether it indicated a military or a priestly position is unknown , but the military role is more likely .

The rise of the aggressive Sasanian Empire in 224 and the Iranian incursions which affected Palmyrene trade , combined with the weakness of the Roman empire , were probably the reasons behind the Palmyrene council 's decision to elect a lord for the city in order for him to lead a strengthened army . The " Ras " title enabled the bearer to tackle the difficult situation that arose due to the Sasanian insurgencies ; the supreme authority of the Ras probably made him the supreme civil and military commander with authority over the entire Palmyrene army , which was previously decentralized and led by different generals .

= = = Ras of Palmyra = = =

An undated inscription refers to Odaenathus as a Ras and records the gift of a throne to him by a Palmyrene citizen named " Ogeilu son of Maqqai Haddudan Hadda " , which confirms the supreme character of Odaenathus ' title . The earliest known inscriptions mentioning the title are dated to October 251 and April 252 ; the 251 inscription refer to Odaenathus ' eldest son Hairan I as Ras while the 252 inscription mention Odaenathus with that title . Hairan I was apparently elevated to co @-@ lordship status by his father . Although the written evidence for Odaenathus lordship dates to 251 , it is possible that he acquired the title as early as the 240s ; following the death of Roman emperor Gordian III in 244 during a campaign against Persia , the Palmyrenes might have elected Odaenathus to defend the city .

Odaenathus was described as Roman senator in the undated tomb inscription and Hairan I was mentioned with the same title in the 251 inscription . Scholarly opinions vary on the exact date of Odaenathus ' elevation to the position ; Gawlikowski and Jean Starcky maintain that the senatorial rank predates the Ras elevation . Udo Hartmann concludes that Odaenathus first became a Ras in the 240s then a senator in 250 . Another possibility is that the senatorial rank and lordship occurred simultaneously ; Odaenathus was chosen as a Ras following Gordian 's death , then after Philip the Arab concluded a peace with the Persians , the emperor ratified Odaenathus ' lordship and admitted him to the senate to guarantee Palmyra 's continuous subordination .

As early as the 240s , Odaenathus inflated the Palmyrene army , recruiting the desert nomads and increasing the numbers of the Palmyrene heavy cavalry units (*clibanarii*) . In 252 , Persian emperor

Shapur I started a full @-@ scale invasion of the Roman provinces in the east . During the second campaign of the invasion , Shapur conquered Antioch and headed south where his advance was checked in 253 by Emesa 's priest king Uranius Antoninus . The events of 253 were mentioned in the works of the sixth century historian John Malalas who also mentioned a leader by the name " Enathus " inflicting a defeat upon the retreating Shapur near the Euphrates . " Enathus " is probably identical with Odaenathus , and while Malalas ' account indicate that Odaenathus defeated the Persians in 253 , there is no proof that the Palmyrene leader engaged Shapur before 260 and Malalas ' account seems to be confusing Odaenathus ' future actions during 260 with the events of 253 .

Shapur I destroyed the Palmyrene trade colonies all along the Euphrates (including the colonies at Anah in 253 and at Dura @-@ Europos in 256) ; Peter the Patrician says that Odaenathus approached Shapur to negotiate Palmyrene interests but was rebuffed and the gifts sent to the Persians were thrown into the river . The date for the attempted negotiations is debated ; Some scholars including John F. Drinkwater set the event in 253 while others such as Alaric Watson set it in 256 following the destruction of Dura @-@ Europos .

= = = Governor of Syria Phoenice = = =

Several inscriptions dating to the end of 257 or early 258 show Odaenathus bearing the title " ? ?????????? ???????? " (Clarissimus Consularis) ; this could be a mere honoring or a sign that he was appointed as the Legatus of Phoenice . However , the title (? ????????????? ?????????) was sometimes used in Syria to denote the provincial governor and William Waddington proposed that Odaenathus was indeed the governor of Phoenice .

Five of the inscriptions mentioning Odaenathus as consul are dated to the Seleucid year 569 (258 AD) during which no governor for Phoenice is attested , which might indicate that this was Odaenathus ' year of governorship . In the city of Tyre , Phoenice 's capital , the lines " To Septimius Odaenathus , the most illustrious . The Septimian colony of Tyre " were found inscribed on a marble base ; the inscription is not dated and if it was set after 257 then it indicates that Odaenathus was appointed as the governor of the province .

These speculations cannot be proven without doubt but as a governor , Odaenathus would have been the highest authority in the province and above any legionary commander and provincial officials ; this would make him the commander of the Roman forces in the province . Whatever the case may be , starting from 258 , Odaenathus strengthened his position and extended his political influence in the region . By 260 , Odaenathus held the rank , credibility and power to pacify the Roman east following the Battle of Edessa .

= = = Edessa = = =

Faced with Shapur 's third campaign , the Roman emperor Valerian marched against the Persian monarch but was defeated near Edessa in late spring 260 and taken as a prisoner . The Persian emperor then ravaged Cappadocia , Cilicia and claimed to have captured Antioch , the metropolis of Syria . Taking advantage of the situation , Fulvius Macrianus , the commander of the imperial treasury , declared his sons Quietus and Macrianus Minor as joint emperors in August 260 opposing Valerian 's son Gallienus . Fulvius Macrianus took Antioch as his center and organized the resistance against Shapur ; he dispatched Balista , his praetorian prefect , to Anatolia . Shapur was defeated in the region of Sebaste at Pompeiopolis prompting the Persians to evacuate Cilicia while Balista went back to Antioch . Balista 's victory was only partial , as Shapur withdrew east of Cilicia where the marauding Persian units continued to occupy the area , while a Persian force took advantage of Balista 's return to Syria and headed further west in Anatolia .

= = Reign = =

According to the Augustan History , Odaenathus was declared king of Palmyra as soon as the

news of the Roman defeat at Edessa reached the city . It is not known if Odaenathus contacted Fulvius Macrianus and there is no evidence that he took orders from him .

= = = Early Persian war and Syria = = =

Odaenathus assembled the Palmyrene army and Syrian peasants then marched north to meet the Persian emperor , who was back from Cilicia . The Palmyrene monarch fell upon the retreating Shapur at a place between Samosata and Zeugma west of the Euphrates in late summer 260 . Odaenathus defeated the Persians , expelling Shapur from the province of Syria . However , the Sassanians kept the regions east of the Euphrates .

In the beginning of 261 , Fulvius Macrianus headed to Europe accompanied by Macrianus Minor leaving Quietus and Balista in Emesa . Odaenathus ' whereabouts during this episode are not clear ; he could have distributed the army in garrisons along the frontier or might have brought it back to his capital . The Palmyrene monarch seems to have waited until the situation clear , declaring loyalty neither to Fulvius Macrianus nor to Gallienus . In the spring of 261 , Fulvius Macrianus arrived in the Balkans but was defeated and killed along with Macrianus Minor ; Odaenathus then marched on Emesa where Quietus and Balista were staying . The Emesans killed Quietus as Odaenathus approached the city , while Balista was captured and executed by the king in autumn 261 .

= = = Ruler of the East = = =

The elimination of the usurpers left Odaenathus as the most powerful leader in the Roman east ; he was granted many titles by the emperor but those honors are debated among scholars :

Dux Romanorum (commander of the Romans) : was probably given to Odaenathus to recognize his position as the commander in chief of the forces in the east against the Persians ; it was inherited by Odaenathus ' son and successor Vaballathus .

Corrector totius orientis (commander of the entire East) : it is generally accepted by modern scholars that he bore this title . The corrector had an overall command of the Roman armies and authority over the Roman provincial governors in the designated region . There are no known attestations of the title during Odaenathus ' lifetime . Evidences for the king bearing the title are two inscriptions in Palmyrene dialect ; one posthumous dedication describing him as MTQNN? of the East (derived from the Aramaic root TQN , meaning to set in order) , and the other describing his heir Vaballathus with the same title albeit using the word PNRTT? instead of MTQNN? .

However , the sort of authority accorded by this position is widely discussed . The problem arise from the word MTQNN? ; its exact meaning is debated . The word is translated to Latin as corrector but restitutor is another possible translation ; the latter title was an honorary one meant to praise the bearer for driving enemies out of Roman territories . However , the inscription of Vaballathus is clearer as the word PNRTT? is not a Palmyrene word but a direct Palmyrene translation of the Greek term Epanorthotes which is usually an equivalent to corrector .

According to David Potter , Vaballathus inherited his father 's exact titles . Hartmann points that there have been cases where a Greek word was translated directly to Palmyrene and a Palmyrene equivalent was also used to mean the same thing . The dedication to Odaenathus would be the using of a Palmyrene equivalent , while the inscription of Vaballathus would be the direct translation . Despite all the arguments , it cannot be certain without doubt that Odaenathus was a corrector .

Imperator totius orientis (emperor of the entire East) : only the Augustan History claims that Odaenathus was conferred with this title , and also goes so far as to claim that he was made an Augustus (co @-@ emperor) following his defeat of the Persians . Both claims are dismissed by scholars . Odaenathus seems to have been acclaimed as Imperator by his troops which is a salutation reserved for the Roman emperor ; this acclamation might explain the erroneous reports of the Augustan History .

Regardless of the titles , Odaenathus controlled the Roman East with the approval of Gallienus who could do little but to formalize Odaenathus self achieved status and settle for his formal loyalty . Palmyra itself , although officially still part of the Roman empire , became a de facto allied state to

Rome instead of a provincial city . Outside of Palmyra , Odaenathus ' authority extended from the Pontic coast in the north to Palestine in the south . This area included the Roman provinces of Syria , Phoenice , Palaestina , Arabia , Anatolia 's eastern regions and later (following the campaign of 262) Osroene and Mesopotamia .

== = First Persian campaign 262 == =

Perhaps driven by the will to take revenge for the destruction of Palmyrene trade centers and discourage Shapur from initiating future attacks , Odaenathus launched an invasion against the Persians . In the spring of 262 , the king marched north into the occupied Roman province of Mesopotamia , driving out the Persian garrisons and freeing Edessa and Carrhae . The first onslaught was aimed at Nisibis , which Odaenathus regained but sacked since the inhabitants were sympathetic toward the Persian occupation . The Palmyrene monarch destroyed the Jewish city of Nehardea , 45 km west of the Persian capital Ctesiphon , as he deemed the Jews of Mesopotamia loyal to Shapur . By late 262 or early 263 , Odaenathus stood at the walls of the Persian capital .

The exact route taken by Odaenathus from Palmyra to Ctesiphon remains uncertain ; it is probably similar to the route emperor Julian took in 363 during his campaign against Persia . Using this route , Odaenathus would have crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma then moved east to Edessa followed by Carrhae then Nisibis ; here , he would have descended south along the Khabur River to the Euphrates valley and marched alongside the river 's left bank to Nehardea . After taking the city , he penetrated the Sassanian province of As?rist?n and marched along the royal canal Naarmalcha towards the Tigris where the Persian capital stood .

Once at Ctesiphon , Odaenathus immediately began the siege of the well @-@ fortified winter residence of the Persian kings ; severe damage was inflicted upon the surrounding areas due to the battles with Persian troops . The city held its ground and the logistical problems of fighting in enemy 's land probably prompted the Palmyrenes to lift the siege . Odaenathus headed north along the Euphrates carrying with him numerous prisoners and booty . The invasion resulted in the full restoration of the Roman lands (Osroene and Mesopotamia provinces) occupied by Shapur since the beginning of his invasions in 252 . However , Dura @-@ Europus and other Palmyrene posts south of Circesium , such as Anah , were not rebuilt . Odaenathus sent the captives to Rome and by the end of 263 , Gallienus added Persicus Maximus (" The great victor in Persia ") to his titles and held a triumph .

== = King of Kings == =

In 263 , after his return , Odaenathus assumed the title King of Kings of the East (Mlk Mlk) , and headed to Antioch , the traditional capital of Syria , where he crowned his son Hairan I as co @-@ King of Kings . The title was a symbol of legitimacy in the East , starting with the Assyrians then the Achaemenids who used it to symbolize their supremacy over all other rulers and was adopted by the Parthian monarchs following their defeat of the Seleucids to legitimize their conquests . The first Sassanian monarch Ardashir I adopted the title following his victory over the Parthians . Odaenathus ' son was crowned with a diadem and a tiara ; the choice of the location was probably meant to express that the Palmyrene monarchs were now the successors of the Seleucid and Iranian rulers who controlled Syria and Mesopotamia in the past .

== = Relation with Rome == =

In the Roman empire 's hierarchical system , a vassal king usage of the King of Kings title did not indicate that he is a peer of the emperor or that the vassalage ties were cut . The title was probably a challenge not to the Roman emperor but to Shapur I ; Odaenathus was declaring that he , not the Persian monarch , was the legitimate King of Kings in the East . A tessera depicting Hairan I shows him wearing a crown shaped like that of the Parthian monarchs , so it must have been Odaenathus ' crown ; this combination of title and imagery indicate that Odaenathus considered himself the rival of

the Sassanians and the protector of the region against them .

Odaenathus ' intents are questioned by some historians such as Drinkwater who attribute the attempted negotiations with Shapur to Odaenathus ' quest for power . However , in contrast to the norm of his period when powerful generals proclaimed themselves emperors , Odaenathus chose not to usurp Gallienus ' throne , and minted no coins bearing his own image . The king had total control over his kingdom of Palmyra and effective control over the Roman East where his military authority was absolute . Odaenathus respected Gallienus ' privilege to appoint provincial governors , but dealt swiftly with opposition ; the Anonymus post Dionem mention the story of Kyrinus (Quirinus) , a Roman official , who showed dissatisfaction with Odaenathus ' authority over the Persian frontier and was immediately executed by the king .

In general , Odaenathus ' actions were connected to his and Palmyra 's interests only ; his support of Gallienus and his Roman titles did not hide the Palmyrene base of his power and the local origin of his armies , as with his decision not to wait for the emperor to help in 260 . Odaenathus ' status seems to have been , as Watson put it , " something between powerful subject , independent vassal king and rival emperor " .

= = = Administration = = =

Outside his kingdom , Odaenathus had an overall administrative and military authority over the provincial governors of the Roman eastern provinces . Inside Palmyra , no Roman provincial official had any authority ; the king filled the government with Palmyrene staffs . In parallelism to the Iranian practice of making the government appear as a family enterprise , Odaenathus bestowed his own gentilicium (Septimius) upon his leading generals and officials such as Zabdas , Zabbai and Worod .

The Palmyrene constitutional institutions continued to function normally during Odaenathus ' reign ; he maintained the council and most civic establishments , permitting the election of magistrates until 264 . When Odaenathus was on campaign , the kingdom was administered by a viceroy , Septimius Worod .

= = = Second Persian campaign 266 = = =

Sources are silent regarding the events following the first Persian campaign but the silence in itself is an indication of the peace that prevailed and that the Persians stopped being a threat to the Roman East . The evidence for the second campaign is meager ; Zosimus is the only one to mention it specifically . A passage in the Sibylline Oracles is interpreted by Hartmann as an indication of the second invasion . The campaign took place in 266 or 267 and was aimed directly at Ctesiphon ; Odaenathus reached the walls of the Persian capital but had to cancel the siege and march north to face the influx of Germanic riders attacking Anatolia .

= = = Anatolian campaign = = =

The Romans used the designation " Scythian " to denote many tribes regardless of ethnic origin and sometimes the term would be interchangeable with Goths ; the tribes attacking Anatolia were probably the Heruli who built ships to cross the Black Sea in 267 and ravaged the coasts of Bithynia @-@ Pontus besieging Heraclea Pontica . According to Syncellus , Odaenathus arrived at Anatolia with Hairan I and headed to Heraclea but the riders were already gone . They loaded the spoils onto their ships but many perished in a sea battle probably conducted by Odaenathus ; another possibility is that they were shipwrecked .

= = Assassination = =

Odaenathus was assassinated along with Hairan I in late 267 ; the date is debated and some scholars propose 266 or 268 , but Vaballathus dated his first year of reign between August 267 and

August 268 , making late 267 the most probable date . The assassination took place either in Anatolia , or in Syria while the king was returning to Palmyra ; there is no consensus on the manner , perpetrator or the motive behind the act .

According to Syncellus , Odaenathus was assassinated near Heraclea Pontica trying to quell a tribal incursion into Pontus ; he gives the name of the assassin as another Odaenathus who may or may not have been a relative of the king . The assassin was killed by the king 's bodyguard . Hartmann support the theory that Odaenathus was killed in Pontus .

Zosimus simply mention that Odaenathus was killed by conspirators near Emesa at a friend 's birthday party without naming the killer . Zonaras attributes the crime to a nephew of Odaenathus but does not give a name .

The Augustan History claims that a cousin of the king named Maeonius killed him , while the Anonymus post Dionem names the assassin as another Odaenathus .

== = Burial == =

The stone block found in the Temple of Bel bearing Odaenathus ' sepulchral inscription was brought from the tomb built by him ; this shrine 's location is unknown . At the western end of the Great Colonnade at Palmyra , a shrine designated the " Funerary Temple no . 86 " (also known as the House Tomb) is located . Inside its chamber , steps lead down to a vault crypt which is now lost . This mausoleum might have belonged to the royal family , being the only tomb inside the city 's walls .

== = Assassination theories == =

Roman conspiracy : John Antiochenus accuse Gallienus of the assassination . An interesting passage in the work of the Anonymus post Dionem speaks of a certain " Rufinus " who orchestrated the assassination on his own initiative then explained his act to the emperor who condoned the crime . This story talks about Rufinus ordering the murder of an older Odaenathus out of fear that he would rebel , and has the younger Odaenathus complaining to the emperor . Since the older Odaenathus (Odaenathus I) was proved to be a fictional character , the story was neglected by most scholars . However , according to Theodor Mommsen , younger Odaenathus is an oblique reference to Vaballathus ; Rufinus should be identified with Cocceius Rufinus , the Roman governor of Arabia between 261 / 262 . The evidence for a Roman conspiracy is very weak and can not be confirmed .

Family feud : According to Zonaras , Odaenathus ' nephew misbehaved during a lion hunt ; he made the first attack and killed the animal to the dismay of the king . Odaenathus warned the nephew who ignored the warning and repeated the act twice causing the king to deprive him of his horse which is a great insult in the East . The nephew threatened Odaenathus and was put in chains as a result ; Hairan I asked his father to forgive his cousin and his request was granted but as the king was drinking , the nephew approached him with a sword and killed him along with Hairan I. The bodyguard immediately executed the nephew .

Zenobia : the wife of Odaenathus was accused by the Augustan History of having formerly conspired with Maeonius , as Hairan I was her stepson and she could not accept that he was the heir to her husband instead of her own children . However , there is no suggestion in the Augustan History that Zenobia was involved in the event that saw her husband 's murder ; the act is attributed to Maeonius ' degeneracy and jealousy . Those accounts by the Augustan History can be dismissed as fiction . The hints in modern scholarship that Zenobia had a hand in the assassination out of her desire to rule the empire and dismay with her husband 's pro @-@ Roman policy can be dismissed as there was no reversal of that policy during the first years following Odaenathus ' death .

Persian agents or Palmyrene traitors : the possibility of a Persian involvement exists but the outcome of the assassination would not have served Shapur without establishing a pro @-@ Persian monarch on the Palmyrene throne . Another possibility would be Palmyrenes dissatisfied with Odaenathus ' reign and the changes of their city 's governmental system .

= = Family and succession = =

Odaenathus was married twice ; nothing is known about his first wife 's name or fate . Zenobia was the king 's second wife whom he married in the late 250s when she was 17 or 18 years old .

The number of children Odaenathus had with his first wife is unknown and only one is attested :

Hairan I : the name appears on a 251 inscription from Palmyra describing him as Ras implying that he was already an adult by then . In the Augustan History , Odaenathus ' eldest son is named Herod ; the inscription at Palmyra dating to 263 celebrating Hairan 's coronation mentions him with the name Herodianus . It is possible that Hairan of the 251 inscription is not the same as Herodianus of the 263 , but this is contested by Hartmann who conclude that the reason for the difference in the spelling is due to the language used in the inscription (Herodianus being the Greek version) , meaning that Odaenathus ' eldest son and co @-@ king is Hairan Herodianus .

The children of Odaenathus and Zenobia are :

Vaballathus : he is attested on several coins , inscriptions , and in the ancient literature .

Harian II : his image appear on a seal impression along with his older brother Vaballathus as the sons of Zenobia ; his identity is much debated . Potter suggest that he is the same as Herodianus who was crowned in 263 and that Hairan I mentioned in 251 died before the birth of Hairan II .

Herennianus and Timolaus : the two were mentioned in the Augustan History and are not attested in any other source ; Herennianus might be a conflation of Hairan and Herodianus while Timolaus is most probably a fabrication , although Dietmar Kienast suggest that he might be Vaballathus .

Possible descendants of Odaenathus living in later centuries are reported ; " Lucia Septimia Patabiniana Balbilla Tyria Nepotilla Odaenathiana " is known through a dedication dating to the late third or early fourth century inscribed on a tombstone erected by a wet nurse to her " sweetest and most loving mistress " . The tombstone was found in Rome at the San Callisto in Trastevere . Another possible relative is " Eusebius " who is mentioned by Libanius in 391 as a son of an " Odaenathus " who was in turn a descendant from the king ; the father of Eusebius is mentioned as fighting against the Persians (most probably in the ranks of emperor Julian) . In 393 , Libanius mentioned that Eusebius promised him a speech written by Longinus for the king . In the fifth century , the philosopher " Syrian Odaenathus " lived in Athens and was a student of Plutarch of Athens ; he might have been a distant descendant of the king .

The Augustan History claims that Maeonius was proclaimed emperor for a brief period before being killed by the soldiers . However , no inscriptions or other evidence exist for Maeonius ' reign and he was probably killed immediately after assassinating the king . Odaenathus was succeeded by his son , the ten @-@ year @-@ old Vaballathus under the regency of Zenobia . Hairan II probably died soon after his father , as only Vaballathus succeeded to the throne .

= = Legacy = =

Odaenathus was the founder of the Palmyrene royal dynasty ; he left Palmyra the premier power in the East , and his actions laid the foundation of Palmyrene strength which culminated in the establishment of the Palmyrene Empire in 270 . Many writers wrote about deeds of Odaenathus ; Nicostratus of Trebizond probably accompanied the king on his campaigns and wrote a history of that period starting from Philip the Arab and ending shortly before the king 's death . According to Potter , Nicostratus ' account was meant to glorify Odaenathus and demonstrate his superiority over Roman emperors .

The memory of Odaenathus was highly esteemed in the Roman empire ; the Augustan History , written in the fourth century , places Odaenathus among the Thirty Tyrants (probably because he assumed the title of king) . However , it speaks highly of his role in the Persian war and credit him with saving the empire : " Had not Odaenathus , prince of the Palmyrenes , seized the imperial power after the capture of Valerian when the strength of the Roman state was exhausted , all would have been lost in the East " .

The king was praised by Libanius , and was the subject of a prophecy in the Thirteenth Sibylline

Oracle : " Then shall come one who was sent by the sun [i.e. Odaenathus] , a mighty and fearful lion , breathing much flame . Then he with much shameless daring will destroy ... the greatest beast ? venomous , fearful and emitting a great deal of hisses [i.e. Shapur] " .

Odaenathus is viewed negatively in Rabbinic sources ; his sack of Nehardea mortified the Jews , and he was cursed by the Babylonian Jews and the Jews of Palestine .