

**ZENOBIA, A
DRAMA IN
FOUR ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649489275

Zenobia, a Drama in Four Acts by R. Warwick Bond

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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R. WARWICK BOND

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ZENOBIA

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ZENOBIА

A DRAMA
IN FOUR ACTS

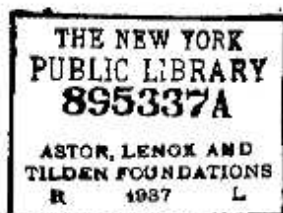
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Ἡ φύσις οὐ ταπεινὸν ἡμᾶς ζῶον οὐδ' ἀγεννὲς ἔκρινε, τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ',
ὡς εἰς μεγάλην τιμὴν παρέγγικεν, εἰς τὸν βίον καὶ εἰς τὸν σύμπαρτα κόσμον
ἐπέγουσα, θεατὰς τινὰς τῶν ὄλων αὐτῆς ἐσομένων καὶ φιλοτιμοτάτους
ἀγωνιστὰς, εὐθὺς ἔμαχον ἔρωτα ἐπέφυσεν ἡμῶν ταῖς ψυχαῖς παντὸς δει τοῦ
μεγάλου, καὶ ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς δαιμονιοτέρου.

Longin. de Sublim. xxxv.

Nature chose not us, her brood of Man, to be creatures base and ignoble: rather she ushered us into life and her vast rondure as into some high festival, where we might witness and be stirred to emulate her mighty scale; implanting in our breasts from the outset an unconquerable passion for all of great that meets us, for all that seems diviner than ourselves.

Longinus on the Sublime, sect. 35.

Art thou a Magistrate? then be severe:
If studious; copie fair, what time hath blurr'd;
Redeem truth from his jawes: if souldier,
Chase brave employments with a naked sword
Throughout the world. Fool not: for all may have,
If they dare try, a glorious life, or grave.

GEORGE HERBERT, *The Temple* (1633).

XROY WJIN
DLIGIN
YRAGLI

PREFATORY NOTE

THE drama here offered to the public—retouched work of 1895-6, and the fulfilment, however meagre, of a dream of much earlier years—is founded chiefly on the brilliant narrative of Gibbon's tenth and eleventh chapters; though I have spared no pains in examining the original sources, and have embodied from them a few touches not found in the modern historian. His account is mainly based on the Greek of Zonaras and Zosimus in the Byzantine History, and the Latin of Trebellius Pollio and Vopiscus in the Augustan; of whom Zosimus is the most picturesque, and Vopiscus perhaps the most reliable, writer.

Of previous dramatic attempts to deal with the story, we have to regret the loss of a *Zenobia*, mentioned in Henslowe's Diary as performed once at the Rose Theatre on March 9, 1591-2. Next comes a prose tragedy of the French classical school, *Zenobie*, by the Abbé d'Aubignac, published at Paris, 1647: a somewhat frigid piece, whose scene is laid wholly in Zenobia's chamber. Longinus is not in the cast; but Zabas and Timagene, Zenobia's generals, are rivals for her love, and die in her defence. The circumstances of her suicide at the close seem reminiscent of *Antony and Cleopatra*. A Portuguese version, printed at Lisbon about 1785 (*Tragicomedia intitulada Zenobia no Oriente*) again omits Longinus; and

* Prof Joll 'Alma Zingarn
6 May 1937

PREFATORY NOTE

hazards a grave departure from history in the assassination of Aurelian in mid-triumph by his general Decius, who defends himself in a speech to the Romans, is declared Emperor, and invites Zenobia to share his throne. Murphy's play of the same title (*Zenobia*, London, 1768), which was performed at Drury Lane, and for which Garrick wrote an epilogue, does not deal with Palmyra at all, but with a war between Rome and Armenia: and, similarly, Adolf Wilbrandt's *Der Meister von Palmyra* (Stuttgart, 1870), though it introduces Longinus, is no transcript of the thrilling series of events recorded by Gibbon, but a purely mystical and imaginary creation, in which Zenobia only appears at the end as a young girl, the latest love of the worn-out hero Apelles.

Besides these, Zenobia's story is borrowed by Chaucer, in his *Monkes Tale*, from Boccacio's *De Mulieribus Claris*, cap. xcvi. ; and forms the fourteenth in the Second Volume of Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*. It is also the subject of a romance by W. Ware (New York, 1838, 8vo), which was re-issued under the title of *The Last Days and Fall of Palmyra*, in Messrs. Cassell's Red Library. The book is largely occupied with the conflict in thoughtful minds of that age between Paganism and Christianity, a conflict which finds no echo in these pages; but those who care to make the comparison between my play and the novel will see that I have borrowed, here an incident, and there some suggestion for the minor characters, from the latter.

The following brief summary of the historical facts will enable the reader to judge how far I have modified them to suit my dramatic purpose. A few notes are appended at the end, for the benefit of those who care for original authorities and fuller detail.

PREFATORY NOTE

The defeat and capture near Edessa, A.D. 260, of the Roman Emperor Valerian by Sapor, King of Persia, was followed by a period of anarchy, during which the Roman provinces were harassed by incursions of the Goths and other barbarians, and various individuals in different parts of the Empire asserted their independence. The only attempt to avenge the Roman defeat was made by Odenathus, a wealthy citizen of Palmyra, who gathered a force among the Syrian towns, and chased Sapor back to Ctesiphon, on the east of the Euphrates. The supineness of Valerian's successor, Gallienus, was glad to recognise Odenathus' achievement by the title of Augustus, with authority over the East; and on his death in 267 his widow, Zenobia, succeeded to his power, and gradually extended her dominions by conquest or intrigue, till they stretched from Egypt to Armenia, and from Bithynia to the Euphrates. Gallienus died in 268; and his successor Claudius, though resenting Zenobia's independence, was too much occupied with the German tribes to take active measures against her. He was succeeded in 270 by Aurelian, the son of a Sirmian peasant, whom his own character and fortune had raised from the ranks. He reformed the discipline of the army, defeated the Goths, subdued a rising of the Alemanni on the Danube, and finally turned his arms against Zenobia. By conquest or treachery he mastered successively the towns of Asia Minor, defeated her and her general Zabdas in two battles, near Antioch and Emesa respectively, and at length shut her up behind the impregnable fortifications of her capital in the Palmyrene oasis. His demand for surrender was met by a defiant reply, written, it is said, by the Greek philosopher Longinus, who visiting Syria perhaps on family affairs—his mother was an Emesan—had been induced to