

LATE ROMAN PALMYRA
IN LITERATURE AND EPIGRAPHY*

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PALMYRA IN THE LATE THIRD CENTURY A.D.

The usurpation of Zenobia ended in A.D. 272 when Palmyra surrendered to the army of the emperor Aurelian (Février 1931: 132-135). The victorious troops certainly deprived the city of much of its wealth, but it was neither plundered nor destroyed. Shortly afterwards, the rebellion of Firmus in Egypt encouraged the Palmyrenes' uprising against the triumphant emperor. This time the emperor reacted very quickly and severely. The city is reported to have been plundered and destroyed in 272/273 (Février 1931: 140-141). The reference to this fact is to be found in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Vita Aureliani* 31, 5-9 (ed. Ernest Hohl, Leipzig 1971):

Aurelianus Augustus Cerrenio Basso. non oportet ulterius progredi militum gladios. iam satis Palmyrenorum caesum atque concisum est. mulieribus non peperimus, infantes occidimus, senes iugulavimus, rusticos interemimus. cui terras, cui urbem deinceps relinquemus? parcendum est his, qui remanserunt. credimus enim tam paucos tam multorum supplicii esse correctos. templum sane Solis, quod apud Palmyram aquiliferi legionis tertiae cum vexilliferis et draconario et cornicibus atque liticinibus diriperunt, ad eam formam volo, quae fuit, reddi. habes trecentas auri libras <de> Zenobiae capsulis, habes argenti mille octingenta pondo de Palmyrenorum bonis, habes gemmas regias. ex his omnibus fac cohonestari templum: mihi et diis immortalibus gratissimum feceris. ego ad senatum scribam petens, ut mittat pontificem, qui dedicit templum.

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