

at this time. If we push the supposed allusion a little harder, we might take the senators' lament proleptically: this meeting occurred on the 31st October, and in under two months, on the 20th December, Vitellius will be dead. But the Senate will by then already have paid him such homage of grief as it was capable of.

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DRUSILLA REGINA

Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.9) tells us that Felix, a freedman of the emperor Claudius and governor of Judea, had married Drusilla, a granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra, thereby becoming the grandson-in-law of Antony, as Claudius was his grandson (*Drusilla Cleopatrae et Antonii nepte in matrimonium accepta, ut eiusdem Antonii Felix progener, Claudius nepos esset*).

This statement is the only direct mention we have of Drusilla. But Suetonius says that 'he [Felix] became the husband of three queens' (*Claud.* 28: *trium reginarum maritum*).¹ Josephus describes how in A.D. 53 or 54 Felix seduced and married Drusilla, a Jewish princess and the wife of Azizus, king of Emesa (Joseph. *AJ* 20.7.2). Clearly, this Drusilla is one of Felix's queens. Since Tacitus and Josephus give the same name, we might infer that they were discussing the same woman, even though Tacitus places the marriage of his Drusilla before Felix's appointment. However, the only person in the first three generations of the ancestry of the Jewish Drusilla whose name is unknown is the mother of her maternal grandfather Phasael.² Hence this Drusilla was not descended from Antony.

There are well-known difficulties with Tacitus' account. The first is chronological. Tacitus does not name either of Drusilla's parents. Antony and Cleopatra had three children: Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, born in 40 B.C., and Ptolemy Philadelphus, born in 36 (Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 54). It is conceivable that Drusilla was the daughter of one of the sons, who were released into their sister's care at the time of her marriage to Juba II of Mauretania (Dio Cass. 51.15), although an argument against this hypothesis will be presented below. A descent through Selene is more usually assumed. Juba is known, from at least one Athenian inscription, to have had a daughter. It has been proposed to identify this daughter as Drusilla,³ but a granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra by any route is very unlikely to have been born after the last decade B.C. This would make her considerably older than Felix, who is

¹ F. E. Brenk and F. Canali de Rossi, 'The "Notorious" Felix, Procurator of Judea, and his many wives (Acts 23–24)', *Biblica* 82 (2001), 410–417 at 414, suggested that Felix was the model for Petronius' Trimalchio, who began his career 'as a frog but is now a king'.

² N. Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty* (Sheffield, 1998), 176, 205, 245, 340.

³ *IG II*² 3439, *IG III*¹ 1309. Drusilla is seen in the former by N. Kokkinos, 'Re-assembling the inscription of Glaphyra from Athens', *ZPE* 68 (1987), 288–90 at 289. The latter is an epitaph erected by a king's daughter from Libya. A. Wilhelm, 'Ein Grabgedicht aus Athen', *Mélanges Bidez* (Brussels, 1934), 2.1007–20, proposed that she was Cleopatra VII, visiting Athens with Ptolemy XII during his exile c. 57 B.C., cf. M. Grant, *Cleopatra* (London, 1972), 5. The term 'Libyan' is explained as a loose Greek reference to North Africa. But it is highly unlikely that the daughter of a Ptolemy would be so described, especially once Libya proper was firmly under Roman rule. It makes more sense to identify her as the daughter of king Juba, who we know from Pausanias 1.17.2 was known in Athens as 'the Libyan'.

unknown before Claudius' accession, who was probably freed by him some time after 38,⁴ and who was active in government in the 50s.

This difficulty is resolvable by supposing that Drusilla was a great-granddaughter (*proneptis*) rather than granddaughter of Antony.⁵ She would then have been born in the early decades of the first century A.D., making her of marriageable age in the 30s, 40s, or early 50s. The problem is to reconcile this proposal with Tacitus' words. We might suppose that he simply made a mistake. Syme notes two instances in the *Annals* where similar mistakes may have been made.⁶ It is, however, very unlikely that Tacitus casually chose the word *neptis* to describe Drusilla's relationship to Antony, since he immediately contrasts the relationship that the marriage created for Felix (*progener*, grandson-in-law) against the birth relationship of the emperor (*nepos*, grandson), which was genealogically accurate. The force of this comparison would be greatly weakened if he had called her a *proneptis*. However, the discrepancy may be reconciled by noting that *neptis* could be used loosely to refer to a female descendant.⁷ This ambiguity allows Tacitus to choose the word deliberately in order to make his comparison, even if it was not, in a narrow sense, genealogically accurate.

The second difficulty is explaining how a Hellenistic princess came to have the Roman name 'Drusilla'. Macurdy noted that it is particularly unlikely that Cleopatra Selene would have named a daughter 'Drusilla'.⁸ Throughout her life Selene stressed her Ptolemaic origins. She named her son 'Ptolemy', and we would expect her to name her daughter 'Cleopatra'. Her brothers, last known as exiles in her kingdom, would probably have behaved similarly. Macurdy suggested that Tacitus had confused Selene's daughter with the Jewish Drusilla. But, since Tacitus clearly chose his words carefully in this passage, it is difficult to accept that he slipped up on her name. The onus is on modern scholars to explain what we should assume is an accurate transmission.

The form of her name is unusual. Although client royal families of the period were adopting a Latin *gentilicium*, this was normally done by taking the Julian *nomen* with a traditional personal name as a *cognomen*. However, fully romanized personal names, directly comparable to Drusilla, are well documented amongst the Herodians. The relevant instances are: (i) Agrippa I, named after M. Vipsanius Agrippa and born in 11 B.C., very shortly after the latter's death the previous year (Joseph. *AJ* 19.18.2);⁹ (ii) Drusus, son of Agrippa, named after Agrippa's friend the son of Tiberius, and probably born shortly after the latter's death in A.D. 23;¹⁰ and (iii) Drusilla, Agrippa's youngest daughter and later the wife of Felix, born in A.D. 38, the date of the death of Caligula's favourite sister Drusilla (Joseph. *AJ* 19.9.1).¹¹

It seems that Agrippa and his father chose these names to honour prominent Romans close to the emperor, who had recently died and whom they knew personally. It is not improbable that Tacitus' Drusilla received her name in a similar fashion.

If so, we can estimate the date of her birth. There are only two prominent Drusillas in this period: Augustus' wife Livia Drusilla, who died in A.D. 29, and Caligula's sister

⁴ N. Kokkinos, 'A fresh look at the *gentilicium* of Felix Procurator of Judea', *Latomus* 49 (1990), 126–41. Kokkinos's arguments that Felix's *gentilicium* was Ti. Claudius are persuasive. While Claudius may have obtained Felix before his mother's death in 38, it is more likely that he inherited him.

⁵ Most recently, Brenk and Canali de Rossi (n. 1), 411–12.

⁶ R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), 2.748–9.

⁷ Brenk and Canali de Rossi (n. 1), 412, n. 5 cite Juvenal 6.265.

⁸ G. H. Macurdy, *Hellenistic Queens* (Baltimore, 1932), 226.

⁹ Cf. Kokkinos (n. 2), 271.

¹⁰ Ibid., 276.

¹¹ Ibid., 277.

Julia Drusilla. However, Livia was adopted into the Julian *gens* on the death of Augustus, becoming Julia Augusta (Tac. *Ann.* 1.8), so it is unlikely that our Drusilla was named for her. That leaves Caligula's sister. Thus, if the Herodian model was strictly followed, we may infer that the two Drusillas married to Felix bear the same name because they were born about the same time, c. A.D. 38.

This analysis has two further consequences: (i) Drusilla must have been a great-granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra; and (ii) Felix was her first husband, and they married very shortly before his appointment.

We can make further progress by pressing the language of Suetonius. In what sense was Tacitus' Drusilla a queen? It is widely held that Suetonius used *regina* to refer loosely to a woman of royal descent.¹² However, in every other use of the term, he refers either to a ruling queen (Cleopatra [*Caes.* 52, *Aug.* 69]), or to the wife of a king (the wife of Nicomedes of Bithynia [*Caes.* 49]; Eunoe, queen of Mauretania [*Caes.* 52]; Berenice, queen of Cilicia [*Tit.* 7]); and, notoriously, to Caesar as 'queen' of Bithynia in a homosexual affair with Nicomedes (*Caes.* 49). Thus Suetonius gives us no grounds not to take him literally. Since no ruling queen Drusilla is known, we may infer that Tacitus' Drusilla was a queen consort, either before or after her marriage to Felix. In view of her date of birth, her royal marriage took place after her marriage to Felix. Therefore Felix divorced her in order to marry the Jewish Drusilla.

This observation suggests the identity of Drusilla's royal husband. Shortly after Felix married the Jewish Drusilla, her former husband Azizus died and was succeeded by his brother Sohaemus (Joseph. *AJ* 20.8.4). Sohaemus is a natural candidate for the second husband of Felix's previous wife. Such a marriage would benefit both men. For Felix, it quickly counteracted the scandal arising from his elopement with Azizus' wife, in Emesa by providing the new king with an eminently suitable queen and in Rome by providing Drusilla with a suitable new husband. By helping to solve Felix's problem, Sohaemus ensured himself of the aid of the Roman procurator should he need it.

Some support for this proposal may be found in the claim of Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, to be descended from Cleopatra and Dido.¹³ While this claim is best known from the *Historia Augusta*, it was almost certainly made by Zenobia herself. An imperial declaration sent to the people of Alexandria describing Alexandria as 'my ancestral city' fits only her son Vaballathus.¹⁴ Callinicus of Tyre, a known contemporary of Gallienus, dedicated a book on the history of Alexandria to 'Cleopatra', who can only be Zenobia.¹⁵

Settipani has recently studied the connections between the Palmyrene and Emesan aristocracies.¹⁶ According to Zosimus (1.39), Zenobia's husband Odaenathus was murdered by his nephew while visiting Emesa. Although Zenobia's immediate ancestry is not known, she was probably closely related to Julius Aurelius Zenobius, governor of Palmyra in A.D. 229. His paternal ancestry is traceable for six generations. It includes a Sampsigeramus, whose name is that of the founder of the Emesan dynasty,¹⁷ and a C. Julius Bassus, priest of Baal, whose name recalls Julius Bassianus, high priest of Baal at Emesa and ancestor of the Severan emperors Caracalla, Alexander Severus

¹² Macurdy (n. 8); most recently, Kokkinos (n. 4), 126, n. 2.

¹³ Trebellius Pollio, *Historia Augusta: Tyranni Triginta* 27, 30.

¹⁴ P. J. Parsons, 'A proclamation of Vaballathus?', *CdE* 42 (1967), 397–401.

¹⁵ A. Stein, 'Kallinikos von Petra', *Hermes* 58 (1923), 448–56.

¹⁶ C. Settipani, *Continuité gentile et continuité familiale dans les familles sénatoriales romaines à l'époque impériale: mythe et réalité* (Oxford, 2000), 433–43.

¹⁷ R. D. Sullivan, *Near Eastern Royalty and Rome 100–30 B.C.* (Toronto, 1990), 199–200.

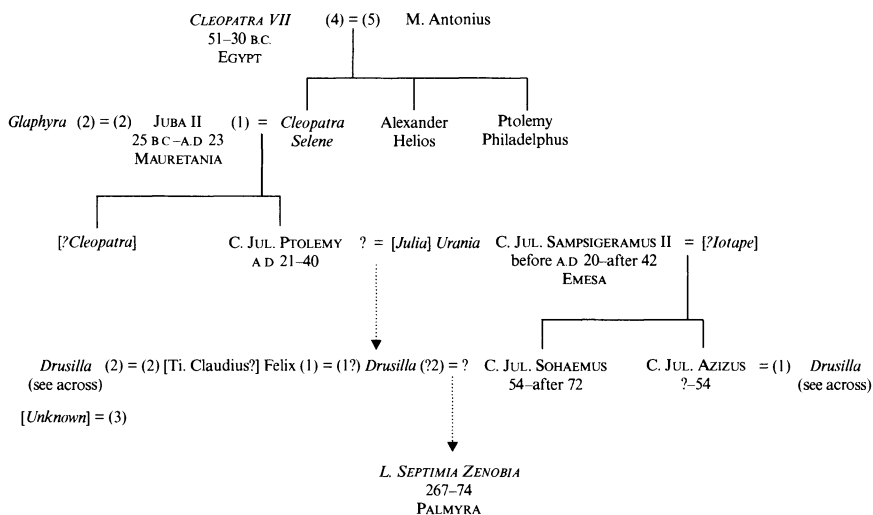


FIGURE 1. Proposed genealogy of Drusilla, descendant of Cleopatra.

and Elagabalus.¹⁸ In the late 390s, Libanius mentions a Eusebius son of Odenathus, descended from king Odaenathus. In the ninth century Photius noted that in *c.* 500 the pagan philosopher Damascius had dedicated a book to Theodora, daughter of Diogenes, son of Eusebius son of Flavianus and descendant of king Sampsigeramus of Emesa.¹⁹ Settapani notes that these two fragments fit chronologically if we make Flavianus the son of Libanius' friend Eusebius, and thus a descendant of both Odaenathus and Sampsigeramus.

The proposed marriage of Drusilla to Sohaemus thus fits in well with Zenobia's claim to descent from Cleopatra. Her claim to descent from Dido points specifically to Cleopatra Selene. Selene's husband Juba claimed descent from Hannibal's sister,²⁰ whose family, the Barcids, claimed descent from a brother of Dido (Sil. *Pun.* 1.71-7). With a birth date of *c.* 38, Drusilla was not a daughter of Selene's daughter but of her son, Ptolemy king of Mauretania.

The proposed marriage may not be the earliest link between the Mauretanian royal family and Emesa. A Mauretanian queen Urania is known through a funerary inscription of her freedwoman Julia Bodina.²¹ Since freedmen and women took on the *gentilicium* of their former owners, Urania probably had the *nomen* 'Julia', which she shared with the Mauretanian royal family. Carcopino, noting the Greek name, Julia Bodina's failure to mention a *nomen*, and the absence of any other information about Urania, considered her to be a concubine of servile origin. Since Juba was apparently monogamous, he argued that Urania's husband was Ptolemy, supposing that he had revived the ancestral Numidian custom of harem polygamy; the title of 'queen' ascribed to Urania by Julia Bodina was a courtesy. But Coltelloni-Trannoy²² notes, as an objection to the theory that Juba II married his second wife Glaphyra while Selene

¹⁸ [Victor], *Epitome de Caesaribus* 23.2.

¹⁹ Settapani (n. 16), 441.

²⁰ Schol. Lucan, *Pharsalia* 8.287.

²¹ J. Carcopino, 'La reine Urania de Maurétanie', *Mélanges dédiés à la mémoire de Félix Grat* (Paris, 1948), 1.31-8.

²² M. Coltelloni-Trannoy, *Le royaume de Maurétanie sous Juba II et Ptolémée* (Paris, 1997), 38.

was still alive, that polygamy was forbidden to Roman citizens. The same objection applies to a polygamous Ptolemy.

Settipani²³ points out that the name Thea Urania (=Astarte) was royal, being held by a wife of Phraates IV of Parthia. He notes a certain Uranius Antoninus, an Emesan high priest of Astarte and usurper of the mid-third century. He suggests that the name is in origin Emesan, and that Julia Urania was connected to the Emesan royal house; it may be noted that this dynasty also adopted the Julian *gentilicium*. On this theory, Urania is called 'queen' because that was her actual status. In theory, she could be a wife either of Juba II, very late in his life, or of Ptolemy. Of the two, Ptolemy seems more likely. We may suggest that Urania was Drusilla's mother.

While Ptolemy could have been in his late fifties in Caligula's reign, he is more likely to have been in his forties. In either case, he could easily have had a daughter at this time. Since he was close to the imperial court, it is quite likely that he would name such a daughter Drusilla. After his execution, his orphan daughter may well have been raised in Claudius' household, just as Selene had been raised by Octavia.

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²³ Settipani (n. 16), 438–9, n. 11.

THE EXECUTION OF L. SALVIUS OTHO COCCEIANUS

By the time Martial published his sixth book of epigrams, the poetic treatment of noble or notable deaths from Roman history was an established theme in his work. Virtuous suicides were treated early on in the corpus: the self-inflicted death of Arria, wife of A. Caecina Paetus, was celebrated (1.13); so too that of Porcia, daughter of Cato Uticensis and wife of Brutus (1.42). In the second book, the theme was continued with the suicide of a certain Fannius (2.80).¹ To these examples the cognate topic of the unmerited deaths of historical figures may be added: Antony's murder of Cicero (treated twice: 3.66, 5.69), and the deaths of Pompey's sons (5.74).

For this reason, when the poet turns in Book 6 to the noble suicide of Otho, the ephemeral emperor of the year 69, the thematic context of the epigram is well established:

Cum dubitaret adhuc belli ciuilis Enyo
forsitan et posset uincere mollis Otho,
damnauit multo staturum sanguine Martem
et fodit certa pectora tota manu.
Sit Cato, dum uiuit, sane uel Caesare maior:
dum moritur, numquid maior Othone fuit? (6.32)

These are curious sentiments for a court poet to express under Domitian. Otho, the sources record, was survived by a nephew (the son of his brother L. Salvius Titianus Otho) who, *prima iuuenta* in the long year 69 (Tac. *Hist.* 2.48), lived to hold the consulship under the Flavian emperors, in c. 80.² L. Salvius Otho Cocceianus (PIR¹ S

¹ Probably not Fannius Caepio, notes F. Grewing, *Martial, Buch VI: Ein Kommentar* (Munich, 1997), 234, from where this catalogue is drawn, though we have omitted 1.21 from the present discussion because of the absence of a death in the Scaevola episode.

² R. Syme, 'The Ummidii', *Historia* 17 (1968), 81; G. W. Houston, 'Roman imperial adminis-