**Babatha**

*Babatha* was born in 104 CE in the kingdom of Nabataea. When she was two years old, the kingdom was conquered and became part of the Roman Empire.

She married in 120 CE, and had a son. But her husband died four years later. Under Roman law, she lost custody of her son and much of her property. In fights to reclaim both, she used all of the tools she had available to her.

**If a man dies leaving a son, and the mother says: “let him be brought up by me” and the heirs say: “let him be brought up by us,” then the son may not be brought up by those who are entitled to be his heirs.”* (Bek. 11:4)  
— Jewish Law

**A guardian is put in charge of his ward’s property, but also of his conduct and character. And thus should not assign the lowest possible wages to the teachers, but pay them in accordance with the resources of the inheritance and the rank of the family.”* — Roman Law

This claim was successful, and Babatha got her land back. She managed to keep it. In fact, her second husband had to borrow money from her years later.

**I, Babatha, daughter of Shimeon, of Mahoza in the Zearene district of Petra, domiciled in my own private property in the said Mahoza, register [to the census] what I possess.”**

— Babatha’s legal claim

She eventually perished during a period of revolt against Roman rule, but she kept these legal documents with her until her death, and they survived to tell us about her life.