C. Iulius Rhaskos, Son of Rhoimetalkes, at Samothrace

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Abstract: A list of mystai found in the Samothracian Sanctuary of the Great Gods and published by Nora Dimitrova (2008, 115-119, # 46) presents in first place, in large lettering, a hitherto unknown member of the Sapaean royal line, C. Iulius Rhaskos son of Rhoimetalkes, followed by Antonia Tryphaina, the Queen of Pontus. Placement of him in the most appropriate position in the Sapaean stemma in the first century A.D. requires choosing between the stemma published in PIR² IV, ad p. 264 (= VI, stemma 22a, ad p. 232) and the revised stemma in PIR² VI, stemma 22b, ad p. 232 (= VII, stemma 8, ad p. 58). The revised stemma is based significantly on the reading of the filiation of Pythodoris in IGBulg I 399 (= 5140), lines 8-12 as Πυθο[δω]βασιλέως Ροιμηταλκου | | Ροιμηταλκους Βασιλεως Πολ[εμος δε θυγατριδης] implying that Pythodoris might be the daughter of Rhoimetalkes II (PIR² I 517) and granddaughter of Polemo I (PIR² P 531). The critical reading is the initial epsilon in line 11, which has been regarded as certain by previous editors. However, personal autopsy of the stone in the National Historical Museum shows that the letter is certainly sigma, thereby confirming the text printed by H. Dessau (1913, 695, based on Kalinka’s edition): Πυθο[δω]βασιλέως Ροιμηταλκους | | Ροιμηταλκους Βασιλεως Πολ[εμος δε θυγατριδης]. Dessau’s text confirms the validity of the stemma published in PIR² IV, in accordance with which Rhaskos, initiated probably ca. A.D. 40-45, should be the son of Rhoimetalkes II (PIR² I 517).

Key words: Thrace, Sapaean, C. Iulius Rhaskos, Rhoimetalkes, Rheskouporis, Antonia Tryphaina, Kotys, Pontus, Sadalas, Samothracian, initiate, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula.

In 1971 a new list of initiates, discovered in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods in Samothrace, provided our first evidence of participation by members of the Thracian royal line in the Samothracian Mysteria. In 2008 Nora Dimitrova (2008, 115-119, # 46) published the text, description of the stone, and epigraphical commentary. Several years earlier, Kevin Clinton prepared, for a publication that did not appear, an editio princeps with commentary on the Thracian royalty; our joint revised commentary appeared in the recent Festschrift dedicated to the memory of Georgi Mihailov (Clinton / Dimitrova 2016, 85-100). There, in our discussion of the prosopography of the Thracian initiate C. Iulius Rhaskos, we had to choose between conflicting stemmata of the family that were published in PIR², and we presented in various footnotes arguments supporting our choice. Here, for the sake of clarity on this important issue, the primary focus will be an analysis of the two conflicting stemmata.

Dimitrova 2008, # 46
Ca. A.D. 40-45?
ἐπί βασιλέως Ἀγησάρχου τοῦ Ἀγη[σάρχου?]
Γαῖος Ἰούλιος ῞Ράς [κος]
The precedence of Γαῖος ᾿Ιούλιος ῾Ράσ[κος], a hitherto unknown member of the Thracian royal line, is given major emphasis by the size and spacing of the letters of his name. Following him, Antonia Tryphaina, daughter of King Polemon I of Pontus and Queen Pythodoris, receives much smaller lettering.

Antonia Tryphaina (PIR² A 900) provides the approximate date. She was the great-granddaughter (apparently) of Mark Antony (cf. Sullivan 1979, 203-204). Daughter of Polemon I (PIR² P 531), King of Pontus, she married Kotys VIII (PIR² C 1554), co-regent of Thrace, and produced several children. In A.D. 19 Rheskouporis III (PIR² R 60 = PIR R 42; cf. Sullivan 1979, 200-204), the other co-regent, took Kotys prisoner and killed him. Her three sons stayed with her in Rome and became “household mates and companions” (σύντροφοι καὶ ἑταῖροι) of Caligula (SIG² 798). After the death of their father, Tiberius assigned the rule of Thrace to the three sons in the care of a guardian (they were under age) and to their father’s cousin, Rhoimetalkes II (PIR² I 517), the son of Rheskouporis III, the man who killed their father. Rhoimetalkes II reigned over, roughly speaking, northern Thrace, first as “dynast,” later with the title of king, certainly until A.D. 26, probably at least until the end of the reign of Tiberius (PIR² I 517; Sullivan 1979, 204-207).

Fig. 1 follows the stemma first published in Prosopographia

1 As a result of Tryphaina’s testimony the Senate banished Rheskouporis to Alexandria and a short time later he died there (Tac. Ann. 2.64-67).
Imperii Romani in 1966 (PIR² IV, ad p. 264 = PIR² VI, stemma 22a, ad p. 232), later elaborated by Sullivan (1979, 200-204, stemma ad 192). Identification of the filiation of our C. Iulius Rhaskos, obviously a member of this family, is complicated by the existence of an alternative stemma, published in the 1998 and 2000 volumes of Prosopographia Imperii Romani (fig. 2). According to the latter stemma Kotys VII (PIR² C 1552) was the brother of Rheometalces I, who reigned from ca. 31 BC to ca. A.D. 12 (PIR² R 67), and Rheskouporis III, who died ca. A.D. 19 (PIR² R 60); the father of the three brothers was Rheskouporis I (PIR² R 58). The first stemma (fig. 1), from 1966, on the other hand, assigns to Rheskouporis I only a single son, Kotys VII (PIR² C 1552). The critical document that is used in support of the second stemma (fig. 2) is IGBulg I2 399 (= 5140) (fig. 3):

**Stemma (after PIR² VI, Stemma 22a, ad p. 232)**

Fig. 1. Stemma of the Thracian Royalty (after PIR² VI, stemma 22a, ad p. 232)

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**Stemma 8: reges Thraciae Sapaei**

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**Fig. 2.** Stemma of the Thracian Royalty (PIR² VII, stemma 8, ad p. 58)

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2 The stemma in fig. 1 follows that of Sullivan (ancestors of Kotys VII have been added, and Sullivan's numbering for Kotys and Rheometalces is used; references are to PIR²).

3 Stemma 22b ad PIR² P 531 = stemma 8 ad PIR² R 58.
As interpreted in the more recent volumes of PIR² (P 531, R 67), Rhoimetalkes of lines 2-3, the husband of Pythodoris, is the son of King Kotys VIII (PIR² C 1554) and grandson of King Rhoimetalkes I (PIR² R 67). This is reflected in the second stemma (fig. 2). His wife Pythodoris (lines 4-5) is taken to be daughter of King Rhoimetalkes II (PIR² I 517; cf. R 69) and granddaughter of King Polemon (PIR² P 531). This too is reflected in the second stemma (fig. 2, lower left). However, these filiations cannot be correct. They are based on a false reading in line 11 (Ῥοιμέταλκου ὑγιας καὶ σωτηρίας κτλ.), as we noticed upon inspection of the stone in the National Historical Museum (Clinton / Dimitrova 2016, 93, note 36). The first preserved letter is not epsilon as in IGBulg I 2 399, but sigma (Clinton / Dimitrova 2016, 92; fig. 3, photographs of the stone and a squeeze)⁴. Thus the first preserved letter in line 11, sigma, requires the restoration of the last two syllables of Πολέμων in line 11 (in fact four letters better fit the space), and, in parallel with her husband’s filiation in line 7, restoration of [καὶ] at the end of line 9, as in Dessau’s edition of this document (1913, 695), following Kalinka:

[Ἀπόλλωνι Ἰητρῶι ὑπὲρ τῆς Ροίμης βασιλέως Κοτύος καὶ βασιλέως Ροιμηταλκου, Ροιμηταλκου,]

5 [βασιλέως Ροιμηταλκου] [μητα]λκου υι[|o] νοῦ και Πυθοδώδω [βιδὸς βασιλέως] [Ροιμηταλκου,]

10 [βασιλέως Ροιμηταλκου] [μωνος δὲ] θυγατ[ρι]ς [δης υγιας καὶ σωτηριας κτλ.]

In this corrected edition of IGBulg I 2 399 (actually Dessau’s edition) the parallel formulation of the filiations is striking: only names of grandfathers are given, not the fathers. Pythodoris is the granddaughter of King Rhoimetalkes and King Polemon, a fact not satisfied by the recent stemma (fig. 2). In parallel phrasing, the correct text of IGBulg I 2 399 tells us that her husband Rhoimetalkes is the grandson of King Kotys and King Rhoimetalkes; this too is not satisfied by the second stemma (fig. 2). The first stemma (fig. 1), first published by PIR² in 1966, satisfies all the requirements of IGBulg I 2 399: Rhoimetalkes II (fig. 1, lower right corner) is the grandson of

⁴ Mihailov in IGBulg I 2 declared the epsilon to be “certissimum”, but this is certainly not the case; the stone may not have been cleaned very well when he reviewed it.
Kotys VII and Rhometalkes I; Rhometalkes II’s wife Pythodoris is the granddaughter of Rhometalkes I and Polemon I. Three other documents specify that Rhometalkes II is the paternal grandson of Kotys and the maternal grandson of Rhometalkes:

*IGBulg* II 743

βασιλεύοντος Θρᾴκων Ροιμηταλκου

βασιλέως Κοτυος υἱωνοῦ [καὶ βασιλέως]

Ροιμηταλκου θυγατριδοῦ, [Ῥησκουπορε]-

ως δὲ Θρᾴκων δυνάστο[υ υἱοῦ]

5 Ἀπολλώνιος ἑπταικενθου [υ Βιζηνὸς]

στρατηγὸς Ἀνχιάλου καὶ Σελλητῆ]-

κῆς καὶ Ρυσικῆς τὸν βω][μὸν ἀνέθηκεν].

Dessau (1913, 696)5

[Ἀπόλλ]ωνι Πα-

[κτυ]ηνῷ ἀνέ-

[θηκε]ν Ἀπολλώ-

[ν Βιζηνὸς στρατη-

γὸς τῶν περὶ Ἀνχ-

[ιάλη]ν τόπων ἐπ-

[I Ρο]ιμηταλκου Θρα-

[kω]ν δυνάστου

5 [Βιζη]νὸς στρατη-

[γὸς τ]ῶν περὶ Ανχ-

[ιάλη]ν τόπων ἐπ-

[I Ρο]ιμηταλκου Θρα-

[kω]ν δυνάστου

10 [βα]σιλέως Κοτυο-

[υ Βιζηνὸς κα]ὶ[λ]

[β]ασιλέως

Ροιμηταλκου

θυγατριδοῦ

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5 *Editio princeps:* Dawkins / Hasluk 1905/6.
Rheskouporēs δὲ Θρᾴκων δυνάστου υἱοῦ.


Vasilévontos Θρᾴκων υἱοῦ, βασιλέως δὲ Κοτυος υἱοῦ καὶ βασιλέως Ροιμηταλκου θυγατριδοῦ, ἔτους Ι', Ιαίνιος Ιουλίος Απολλόνιος Επικεκνθού βιζηνὸς στρατηγός ["περὶ Ἀνχίαλον" τὸν ἀνδριάντα Διολύσσω.] 2nd text

Here the filiations in IGBulg I' 399 are confirmed by these filiations specifying precisely which grandfather is paternal and which is maternal. One remarkable feature of IGBulg I' 399 is that the patronymics of Rhoimetalkes and his wife Pythodoris are not given: only their royal grandfathers are named. The reason for the omission of their fathers is not hard to divine, especially in a document that honors Pythodoris. Rhoimetalkes’ father, Rheskouporis III, was a murderer and an exile; he murdered Kotys VIII, the father of Pythodoris; both fathers died inglorious deaths (cf. Sullivan 1979, 205). (Documents concerning Rhoimetalkes II alone, in which Pythodoris does not appear, do mention his father Rheskouporis, as in these last three examples.) A dedicatory inscription on a slab of an altar to Demeter at Aquae Calidae, discovered in 2015 (Шаранков 2015, 65-66; 2016, 968), also omits the patronymic of Rhoimetalkes, but it includes both the patronymic and avonymic of Pythodoris ("daughter of the son of King Rhoimetalkes, Kotys’):

Δήμητρος τὸν βωμὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν κυρίων σωτηρίας (β)ασιλέως Ροιμηταλκου καὶ Πυθοδωρίς φίλακτον ὁ περὶ Ἀνχίαλον στρατηγός.

As Sharankov noted, the second text, written over the erased original text, was most likely inscribed shortly after Rhoimetalkes II received the title of king in A.D. 26. It is the only document that refers to children of Rhoimetalkes and Pythodoris.

In the correct stemma (fig. 1, upper right) the position of Kotys V (PIR2 C 1553) is noteworthy. We wrote in the recent volume in memory of G. Mihailov (Clinton / Dimitrova 2016, 87, note 5): “A critical filiation concerns the Rheskouperis who died at the hands of the Bessi in 11 B.C. (Cass. Dio 54.34.5). He was the son of Kotys V and nephew of Rhoimetalkes I. Kotys was no longer alive in 16 B.C. when Marcus Lollius, coming to the aid of Rhoimetalkes, the uncle and guardian of the sons of Kotys’ subjugated the Bessi (Cass. Dio 54.20.3). There is no evidence that the Rheskouperis who died in 11 B.C. was a Sapaean king; it seems most likely that he was the son of the Odrysian Kotys V (PIR2 C 1553) who married a daughter of the Sapaean Kotys VII (PIR2 C 1552) and died in 16 B.C.; no children of the Rheskouperis who died in 11 B.C. are attested. Consequently, Rhoimetalkes II, son of Rheskouperis III (the king of Thrace who died in A.D. 19), would have been the Rhoimetalkes who married a daughter of Antonia Tryphaina,

6 For the present text see Clinton / Dimitrova 2016, 89-90.
7 The nouns υἱωνός and θυγατριθὴ can mean simply “grandson” and “granddaughter,” but υἱωνός contrasted with θυγατριθὴ differentiates the paternal and maternal lines.
8 The beginning of the original text, according to Sharankov, read: Ρθοιμετάλκου Θρᾳκῆς δύναστου υἱοῦ, βασιλέως δὲ Κοτυος υἱοῦ καὶ βασιλέως Ροιμηταλκου θυγατριδοῦ, ἔτους Ι', Ιαίνιος Ιουλίος Απολλόνιος Επικεκνθού βιζηνὸς στρατηγός ["περὶ Ἀνχίαλον" τὸν ἀνδριάντα Διολύσσω.] 2nd text
9 For his filiations see Sullivan 1979, stemma ad 192; PIR2 IV, stemma ad 264.
by the name of Pythodoris. Cf. Bowersock 1965, 152-156 for a succinct and persuasive account of this intermarriage of the Odrysian and Sapaean clans and its reflection in the stemma.\(^{10}\)

Delev (2016) points out weaknesses in this widely accepted account of the evidence, starting with the discrepancy between the passages of Cass. Dio 47.25.1-2 and App. B. Civ. 4.10.75 and dissociating IGRR 1775 of Bizye (βασιλεύς Κότυς βασιλέα Σαδάλα[ν]) καὶ βασιλισσαν Πολεμοκράτειαν, τοὺς ἐἀντοῦ γονεῖς) from Kotys V (PIR\(^2\) C 1553), who he suggests was a son of Kotys VII (PIR\(^2\) C 1552), not of Sadalas. This is a thoughtful and useful discussion, which does not affect the central argument of our paper and cannot be discussed at length here, except merely to note that none of his points seem to be decisive against the widely accepted interpretation.

The most appropriate place in the stemma for C. Iulius Rhaskos would be as son of Rhoimetalkes II and Pythodoris II, as we explained in detail recently (Clinton / Dimitrova 2016).

Our analysis of the prosopography of the royal family led to the conclusion that 'Ράσ[κος], a person of considerable importance, as his spectacular precedence in the Samothracian list indicated, was presumably the son of a ruler, most likely the son of either Rhoimetalkes II or Rhoimetalkes III (fig. 1), in either case, the grandson of Antonia Tryphaina\(^\text{11}\), who follows him in the list of initiates. The prosopography of Rhoimetalkes III shows, as we explained (Clinton / Dimitrova 2016, 90), that when he was archon at Athens in 36/7, he was presumably just at or slightly above the minimum age of thirty years for the office\(^\text{12}\), and at this time he was already king.\(^{13}\) He became king in this year, apparently the last king of Thrace, inheriting the domain of southern Thrace from his father Kotys VIII, and he ruled presumably until ca. A.D. 46, when Thrace became a Roman province.\(^{14}\)

We concluded (Clinton / Dimitrova 2016, 91-92): “In the two Athenian documents in which the archonship of Rhoimetalkes III is given, he has in each case the epithet ἔφτερος, to distinguish him from Rhoimetalkes II, which should mean that Rhoimetalkes II was still alive.\(^{15}\) The honor given to 'Ράσ[κος in the Samothracian list – precedence over Antonia Tryphaina – implies that he was not a boy, and consistent with this is the fact that as an initiate he should be at least a young adult (as at Eleusis, there is no evidence for initiation of children in the Samothracian Mysteries)\(^\text{16}\). We therefore have to assume that he was at least eighteen years old. If he were a son of Rhoimetalkes III, who was ca. 30 years old in A.D. 36, presumably married shortly thereafter, this son would not have reached the proper age for initiation before A.D. 46, the year in which Thrace became a province.”

'Ράσ[κος as the name of a son of Rhoimetalkes III seems at first glance inappropriate; we should expect Rhoimetalkes to have named his first-born son after his father Kotys VIII. Similarly, the first-born son of Rhoimetalkes II should have been named after Rhoimetalkes’ father, Rheskouporis III. But Rheskouporis III was a murderer and an exile, his victim Kotys VIII, the father of his wife. We have seen in public documents, from evidently early in the reign of Rhoimetalkes II, a reluctance on the part of the royal couple to mention their fathers, who died inglorious deaths (IGBulg I 399). Especially significant is the absence of the name of Rheskouporis in documents in which the name 

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\(^{10}\) Cf. also Sullivan 1979, 193-194.

\(^{11}\) Kirov 2011 argued for identifying Rhaskos with a son of Rhoimetalkes II, not with a son of C. Iulius Rhoimetalkes II (PIR\(^2\) I 517), because the latter “était un parent assez éloigné pour qu’il figure sur la stèle (217).” But as the correct stemma (fig. 1) shows, Rhoimetalkes II was Antonia Tryphainas’s son-in-law, and his son, if Rhaskos, was her grandson, just like a son of Rhoimetalkes III. So the question of distance of relationship is not a decisive criterion.

\(^{12}\) IG II\(^\text{1}\) 2292, lines 27-29: ἐπὶ Ροιμητάλκα νε(ωτέρος) [Ἰάος] Καίσαρ αὐτ[όκράτωρ ἔφηβεύσαντες ἐνιαυτῶι. The correct date (as opposed to 37/8) was recognized by Graindor 1922, 69-70, # 39.

\(^{13}\) IG II\(^\text{1}\) 1967, lines 1-3: οἱ ἐφηβεύσαντες ἐν τῷ ἐπὶ βασιλέως Ροιμητάλκα γε ἐρχόντος ἕναντω. The date for the creation of the province of Thrace is given in Eur. Chron. 262F (Helm).

\(^{14}\) So Neubauer 1876, whose date of 37/8 was corrected by Graindor (1922, 69-70); Mommsen (1875, 258) acknowledged that it is not impossible that the Rhoimetalkes who died ca. A.D. 46 was Rhoimetalkes II. Collart (1937, 256, note 1) also recognized that Rhoimetalkes II was still alive in A.D. 37, when Rhoimetalkes III became king. Sullivan (1979, 207) regarded νε(ωτέρος) as unreliable evidence, without giving a reason.

\(^{15}\) At Eleusis the child hearth-initiate was the only exception; cf. Clinton 1974, 10-12.
of Pythodoris occurs, and so it would be natural to assume that the same reluctance would motivate them to look for another name in the Sapaean royal line for their son; the result was that the king chose the name of a famous ancestor, Rhaskos, the brother of his great-grandfather Rheskouporis I. This Rhaskos was joint ruler with Rheskouporis I in 42 B.C. and supporter of Antony in the campaign leading up to Philippi (App. B. Civ. 4.11.87, 13.104, 17.136)17. ῾Ράσκος could have been born ca. A.D. 21 (his parents’ marriage took place around this time), when his mother was ca. 16 years old (Clinton / Dimitrova 2016, 89). The present document could, then, be dated ca. A.D. 40-45, when such a son of Rhoimetalkes II would be old enough to participate in the Samothracian Mysteries.

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