



RHODOGUNE

RHODOGUNE (Gk. *Rhodogounē*) in all probability is rendering OIran. **Vrda-gaunā-*, fem. “rose-colored” or “rosy-complexioned” (cf. Schmitt, 2011, pp. 312f., also for other interpretations), even if with assimilation to Gk. *rhódon* “rose”; the same origin must be assumed for Sogd. *warδγōn* “rosy” and Pers. *gulgūn* “rose-colored”. There is evidence for several historical women bearing this name, in particular:

1. The younger daughter of Xerxes I (r.486-465 BCE) and **Amestris** (Ctesias, fragm. 13 § 24 and 14 § 34); the information given by Justi, p. 261b, that she is named after her grandmother, is incorrect (see Schmitt, 2006, p. 183).
2. A daughter of **Artaxerxes II** (Plutarch, *Artoxerxes* 27.7 after **Heracleides** of Cyme), married to the Armenian satrap **Orontas** (cf. Xenophon, *Anabasis* 2.4.8; 3.4.13). She is the link connecting the Orontid dynasty of **Commagene** with the Achaemenids.
3. A daughter of the Parthian king Mithradates I (ca. 171-139/38 BCE) and sister of Phraates II (d. 126 BCE; Appianus, *Syr.* 67f.), married to the Seleucid king Demetrius II Nicator (d.125 BCE); she was the model for *Rodogune*, the eponymous heroine of Pierre Corneille’s drama of 1645.

The Old Persian cuneiform inscriptions on a wooden coffin with a mummy and on two objects in the coffin (a gold plaque and a stone slab), all saying that the dead woman embalmed and embedded therein is “Rhodogune, the daughter of king Xerxes” (i.e., no. 1 above), are crude modern forgeries as the coffin itself, too. The name of the alleged Achaemenid princess, written



irregularly r^u-d^u-g^u-u-n, apparently is nothing else than a transposition of Gk. *Rhodogounē* (see in great detail Schmitt, 2003).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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G. Plaumann, “Rhodogounē,” in Pauly–Wissowa, *RE* 1A/1, Stuttgart, 1914, col. 956–957.

R. Schmitt, “A Further Spurious Inscription in Old Persian Writing: The Mummy of ‘Rhodogoune’,” *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 3/1, 2003, pp. 3–13.

Idem, *Iranische Anthroponyme in den erhaltenen Resten von Ktesias’ Werk (Iranica Graeca Vetustiora. III)*, Wien, 2006.

Idem, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch. Band V/5A: Iranische Personennamen in der griechischen Literatur vor Alexander d.Gr.*, Wien, 2011.