

## New(ish) Evidence for Drama on Rhodes

In this paper, I will discuss an overlooked inscription from Rhodes and the light it sheds on the developments in Greek tragedy and satyr play on the island in the Hellenistic period.

The inscription, a funerary epigram for the otherwise unknown poet Diokles, dated roughly to the early half of the second century BC, was first uncovered in 1976 and is now on display at the Archaeological Museum in Rhodes (no. 565). The discovery was published promptly in 1977 by Trypanis, but until recently it has been neglected almost entirely. It was discussed briefly in 2014 by Dreliosi-Irakleidou, which finally saw the inscription into *SEG* LXIV in 2018. In 2020 it was the subject of a commentary by Coward.

I will focus on the importance of the inscription for our understanding of the development of drama on the island of Rhodes. Apart from supplying us with the name of a new poet of tragedy and satyr play, the inscription fills out the picture provided by two other inscriptions to do with dramatic performance on Rhodes. Taking these inscriptions together, we can observe the local development of the tragic competition, from revivals of Classical tetralogies from Athens in the fourth century BC, to two separate, fully-fledged contests for tragedy and satyrplay supported by a local *choregia* in the second century BC.

In the second half of the paper, I will turn to the text of the epigram and its place in literary trends of the Hellenistic period. This topic has been treated extensively by Coward (2020), but I will highlight how some peculiarities of the verse inscription, including an alleged *hapax legomenon*, are uniquely paralleled in *TrGF adesp.* F 646a, a fragment likely from a Hellenistic satyr play. Although we know nothing about the plays Diokles wrote, these parallels

are suggestive of broader trends in the perception of tragedy and satyrplay during the Hellenistic period.

### Bibliography

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