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THE DANISH INSTITUTE AT ATHENS

**The Danish Institute at Athens is pleased to invite you to a lecture in English,
Monday the 21. January at 19.00**

Burial complexes of Koina in the Rhodian necropolis

by

Vaso Patsiada, Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese



During its economic and commercial apogee, Rhodes attracted a large number of foreigners, who, temporarily or permanently, made the island their home. The process of their integration into Rhodian society was very much assisted by their membership of privately founded associations (*koina*). These units, which in Rhodes are known to have been both numerous and varying in character, included men as well as women, Rhodian citizens as well as foreigners, free persons and slaves. One of their activities was the burial of their members. Inscriptions on tomb monuments or with the decrees passed of these *koina*, but also tomb complexes that have been discovered through excavations by the Ephoreia, provide significant information about precisely this aspect of the associations' activities.

According to the preserved decrees, the *koina* possessed their own tomb complexes, where they not only buried their members, but also gathered to hold celebrations. At these events, they commemorated dead members, awarded honours to living and deceased benefactors of the association and decorated the tomb monuments of benefactors with wreaths. Common meals might also have taken place at these gatherings.

Some of the burial complexes that have been discovered within the Rhodian necropolis can, on the basis of decrees and tomb inscriptions, be connected to some of these *koina*, while others seem to belong to private families. Those inscriptions that reveal the identity of the dead persons show that in the tomb complexes of the *koina* there were buried foreigners, but almost always also Rhodian citizens, individuals of lower social status and slaves and persons (foreigners and Rhodians) connected by family ties. Regarding the family tomb complexes, on the other hand, it seems that those buried there were members of a larger family consisting of relatives counting two or three generations, while other complexes appear to have been used by two different families.