

After the Second Macedonian War, the Romans awarded their loyal Athenian allies possession of the territory of the recently destroyed Boeotian city of Haliartos (Livy 42.63; Polybius 30.20). Although the Athenians controlled this area for at least two centuries, we know little of their administration or use of this fertile region in the Kopaic Basin. Even the best evidence of their presence in Haliartos is open to interpretation. In the inscription IG VII 2850 a *synodos ton kynegon* awards praise and a golden crown to Antagoros of Otryne, the Athenian *epimeletes* of the region in 122/1 B.C. The meaning of *kynegoi* here is not clear. In other Greek inscriptions, the word describes a hunting club or a military guard unit with dogs or a combination of the two (Roesch, 1982, 170; Roussel REG 1930, 361; RE s.v. *Kynegoi*).

The conditions at Haliartos under Athenian control might support the case for either group. Literary sources provide few details, but all convey a picture of a desolate, deserted countryside (Strabo, 9.2.30; Pausanias 9.33). Excavations and surveys have found little evidence at Haliartos to suggest extensive resettlement, much less a town during the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Temples were left in ruins, and rural areas also saw a dramatic reduction in activity (Austin ABSA 1925-1932; Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988, 62; Bintliff 1991, 122). Therefore, there was likely little need and few resources for a regular military unit in the area, but the possibility remains that the residents formed a guard unit with dogs to keep an eye on Athenian holdings. Indeed, some evidence of boundary issues with the neighboring Boeotian city of Thespiiai survives, including three *horoi* found in the area of Haliartos that identify the land as Athenian (Roesch 1965, 63; Knoepfler 1992, 481; Fossey 1994, 57). While it appears that the Athenians did not exploit the region extensively in terms of settlement or agriculture, the territory of Haliartos did provide them a wide range of hunting conditions, from the swamps around Lake Kopais to the rocky slopes of Mount Helikon. This region of Boeotia was a favorite hunting area of the emperor Hadrian, one of Athens' greatest benefactors (IG VII, 1828, 2851).

The text of the inscription provides the best evidence for the nature of the *kynegoi*. Although as *epimeletes* he was the ranking Athenian official in Haliartos, Antagoros served as treasurer of the *synodos ton kynegon*, which suggests that he was not the group's leader. He was praised for handling the accounts, repairing the group's *oikos* and doing "many useful deeds." Missing is any praise for commanding, training, or arming the *kynegoi* which one would expect if they were a military unit. The use of *oikos* seems more appropriate for a meeting place than a fort or guard post. No military official is mentioned in the resolution which was proposed by Kallistratos, the priest of Artemis, goddess of the hunt. Therefore, while we cannot be definite with such limited evidence, it seems likely the *kynegoi* were a hunting club which may be indicative of the main use the Athenians made of the land of Haliartos.