Despite the strategic importance of her position (Fossey, 1988: 300–320) this city is scantily represented in epigraphic sources. Even after the excavations of R.P. Austin (1925–1926; 1926–1927; 1931–1932) the number of inscriptions from the site remained exiguous; apart from the usual small crop of tombstones, a few graffiti from the area of the sanctuary on the akropolis, and a group of boundary stones to which we shall return, we have just half a dozen public documents, all of them more or less fragmentary and several of them badly worn. Of the latter group four are parts of proxenia decrees which, despite their rarity, are revelatory of Haliartos’ political history and external relations; two of them date to the middle or second half of the 4th century BCE, and are only small fragments, while the other two date to the Hellenistic period and before the city’s destruction in 171 BCE. By their very nature all decrees of proxenia have the potential to reveal something of a city’s external relations but I will try to show that this is particularly the case here at Haliartos.

The two earlier, very fragmentary texts were found during Austin’s second season of excavations and thus came from in or by the sanctuary of Athena. The longer of the two has several peculiarities (BSA 1931/2: 197–198 no. 1); the earlier part is missing with the result that we have no idea of the proxenos’ identity or origin, but the later, preserved part containing the privileges accorded is written stoikhedon although, at the same time, with the observation of word ends, resulting in a straight left-hand edge (as reconstructed) and a ragged right-hand margin. The inscription was subsequently “published” by Stéphanos Koumanoúdhis (1970: 141–142) with a wrong attribution to Halai; in correcting this error Denis Knoepfler (1978: 375–381) re-examined the whole text and suggested the following reconstruction:

\[
\begin{align*}
&[\text{name patronym}] \\
&[\text{ethnic πρόξενον}] \\
&[\text{ἡμέν τάς πόλιος}] \\
&[\text{Ἀλιαρτίων κῆ}] \\
\end{align*}
\]

* For a discussion of the aspiration (Haliartos or Aliartos) cf. Etienne & Knoepfler, 1976:221–225. Without wishing to pass any judgement here on their argument, I retain the traditional “Haliartos” for consistency with so many other publications. Even Etienne and Knoepfler themselves continued to write “Haliarte”.
I have emended the beginning of his reconstruction which apparently envisaged an impossible total of name + patronym + ethnic + προξένον all in one line, and one should, of course, imagine that this reconstructed part would be preceded by an introduction recording the date (the names of the eponymous and other (?) magistrates) and the usual formula for the act (δεδόχθη τῇ βουλῇ κῇ τῷ δάμῳ vel sim.); otherwise the rest of the text seems reliable, given that the right-hand edge of the stone is preserved showing the deliberate blanks at the ends of lines 8–11 and ensuring that line 12 gives the maximum length of the line—a length with which lines 5 and 7 agree, and within which line 6 is also accommodated (with a blank space at its end). At the same time, even if the left part of the stone’s inscribed surface is worn away, the block is wide enough in theory to permit a much larger restoration in that half of the text; nonetheless the proposed restoration of the last line seems inescapable.

The stoikhedon style is a little surprising here at Haliartos though not unparalleled (Austin, 1938: 76). Since the only other Boiotian cities to make much use of this style were Plataiai and Thespiai their adoption of what is largely regarded as an Athenian procedure can be seen as an extension of their being “ill at ease in the Boeotian commonality and peculiarly susceptible to Athenian influences” (Austin, 1938: 74) and it is the proximity of Thespiai which is seen as the cause of this Atticism in Haliartos. Is this, however, the only possible reason in the present case? Apart from the fact that a 4th century example of stoikhedon has been attested in the interim at Thebai too (Roesch, 1970: 140–144), Austin himself (1938: 122–123) again suggested another mechanism for the use of stoikhedon in individual cases outside Athens—when a copy of an Attic honorific decree was set up in the recipient’s home city. It is perhaps worth noting that the consistent -οίς endings of the dative plural in the text would not be discordant with the copying of what was essentially a document in κοινή, although “ἐπτασιν” clearly reflects local Boiotian terminology.

At the same time this cannot surely be a copy of an Athenian decree as early as the fourth century (where Austin and Koumanouðhis both dated it),