
Tom Boiy. *Between the royal administration and local elite: the pāhātu in Hellenistic Babylonia as epistates?*

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Tom Boiy. « Between the royal administration and local elite: the *pāhātu* in Hellenistic Babylonia as *epistates*? ». *Anabasis*, 1, 2010, p. 49-57.

- 1 The problem of the status of cities in the Seleucid Empire has often been discussed, especially in historical and philological studies, with regard to the epigraphic cuneiform documents unearthed in several sites of the Middle East or held in important museum collections. It is not infrequent to find that the most important distinction made in these studies is between the cities having the status of *poleis*, presumably granted with a degree of independence from the Seleucid crown, and the centers placed under royal officials. This old *vexata quaestio* will never be completely answered, despite the archaeological documentation, which seems to reveal a more complex picture – as do, for instance, the thousands of clay-sealings unearthed at Seleucia on the Tigris. These sealings set in a clear light a large number of official or semiofficial ranks in the city administration and even reveal the presence, in the city's plutocracy, of subjects with a special connection to, or in favor with, the king or his inner circle. However the many cuneiform documents that, dating from the Hellenistic period, have been recovered and gradually translated, have given rise to a debate about the exact authority and legal position of the officials mentioned in them. They serve as the grounds for several interesting parallels between the Greek and Akkadian terms referring to royal or city officials. The present article on the status of the cities in Hellenistic Babylonia and the officials called *epistates* and *pāhātu* intriguingly points out

that these office-holders might have been appointed to their positions in ancient centers like Babylon since the beginning of Seleucid rule in Mesopotamia.

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