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Sons, Brothers and Relatives in the Entourages of the Roman Provincial Commanders during the Republic: A Characteristic Behaviour of the Roman Ruling Class

Alejandro Díaz Fernández (Universidad de Málaga)

It is a well-known fact that, during the Republic, the consuls and praetors sent to the Roman provinces were accompanied to their destinies by several collaborators and companions who composed the emperor's *cobors* or entourage. Among its members, there usually were individuals linked to the social and familiar circles of the commander, particularly relatives, brothers and sons. Some well-known instances of this practice are L. Valerius Flaccus (*cos.* 86 a.C.), whose son Lucius moved with him to Asia; M. Licinius Crassus (*cos.* 55), who died in the battle of *Carrhae* (53) with his son Publius, a probable *legatus* of his father in Syria; or Cicero, who was accompanied by his brother Quintus during his proconsulship in Cilicia (51-50). Our sources do not usually pay attention to the role of the relatives in the entourage of the provincial commanders, but their usual presence in these *cobortes* points that it was a characteristic behaviour of the Roman ruling class, particularly important by its consequences to the social and political promotion in Rome and by its own role as exclusive habit of the *nobilitas*. The aim of this paper is to study the participation of sons, brothers and relatives in the cohorts of the Roman provincial governors to determine the significance of this practice in the public life of a Roman citizen.