

Published in
Graham Shipley, John Vanderspoel, David Mattingly, Lin Foxhall (Eds),
The Cambridge Dictionary of Classical Civilization, 724-725, 2006,
which should be used for any reference to this work

procurators An agent for some upper class individual, usually a paid employee, **FREEDMAN** or freeborn, in charge of administering parts or all of his principal's **HOUSEHOLD** and/or property and of representing him in court. Acting upon a general mandate or the assumption of later ratification, the procurator had a separate juristic personality and was held solely accountable for his acts, insofar as negligence or fraud on his part was involved. When Roman nobles started expanding their economic interests far from home, procurators proved to be efficient and sometimes ruthless middlemen. The city of Salamis on Cyprus ran into serious financial crisis because **BRUTUS'** procurators insisted on collecting exorbitant compound interest on a loan (**CICERO**, *Letters to Atticus* 5.21; 6.1–3). Personal loyalty to employer, self-interest and unlimited duration of tenure were the foundations of an administrative system adopted in the public sector by **JULIUS CAESAR**. He put his personal staff and dependants in charge of the mint and the fiscal administration, threatening to do the same for the government of the city of Rome (**SUETONIUS**, *Julius Caesar* 76.3; 79.3). During the early **PRINCIPATE**, imperial freedmen and members of the **EQUESTRIAN** order took over most of the imperial government at Rome and across the empire. Landed properties and **MINES**, tax collection, public finances and mints, **GLADIATORIAL GAMES**, water and **FOOD SUPPLY**, and even **MINOR PROVINCES** were entrusted to them. A differential pay structure, and the variously desirable nature of the tasks, caused equestrian procuratorships to be arranged into a fixed career path open to ranking military **OFFICERS** and leading up to the major prefectures. JJA

See Aubert, J.-J. (1994) *Business Managers in Ancient Rome*.