

N. B. RANKOV

FRUMENTARII, THE CASTRA PEREGRINA AND THE PROVINCIAL OFFICIA

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## FRUMENTARII, THE CASTRA PEREGRINA AND THE PROVINCIAL OFFICIA

In a recent volume of this journal, Professor J. C. Mann has argued that the *frumentarii*, although formally enrolled in the legions, were in reality based at the *Castra Peregrina* on the *Mons Caelius* in Rome; that they owed their loyalty essentially to the emperor and not to the provincial governors in charge of their legions; and that their principal duty was to serve as the emperor's eyes and ears in the provincial capitals.<sup>1</sup>

It is undoubtedly true that the *frumentarii* were attached to a *numerus frumentariorum* based in Rome, complete with its own organization and officers.<sup>2</sup> It is equally true that this centralized organization in Rome allowed them to be employed by the emperor for his own purposes. The *Life of Hadrian* tells the story of a *frumentarius* sent to eavesdrop on a prominent senator, and the *frumentarii* appear as imperial spies in the *Lives of Macrinus and Claudius* and as assassins in the service of the emperor in the *Lives of Commodus, Iulianus and Niger* as well as in a passage of *Herodian* describing an attempt by *Septimius Severus* to eliminate *Clodius Albinus*.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that by the early third century they had acquired a thoroughly unsavoury reputation<sup>4</sup> which evidently led to the disbanding of the corps and its replacement by the *agentes in rebus*.<sup>5</sup>

It also appears from the epigraphical evidence that the *Castra Peregrina* could be used as a central point for the despatch of *frumentarii* to be sent to the *provinciae inermes*: we have records of a *frumentarius* of VII *Gemina* (based in *Hispania Tarraconensis*) and a *centurio frumentarius* of I *Adiutrix* (*Pannonia Superior*) in *Noricum*, although another inscription seems to show that the latter was transferred to II *Italica* perhaps when that legion became the garrison of the province c. 171; a *frumentarius* of I *Adiutrix* and *centuriones frumentarii* of III *Cyrenaica* (*Arabia*) and II *Traiana* (*Egypt*) in *Dalmatia*; *frumentarii* of I *Italica* (*Moesia Inferior*) and X *Fretensis* (*Syria Palaestina*) in *Achaea*; and *frumentarii* of VIII *Augusta* (*Germania Superior*), X *Gemina* and I *Adiutrix* (*Pannonia Superior*), and VI *Ferrata* (*Syria*

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<sup>1</sup> J. C. Mann, 'The Organization of the *Frumentarii*', *ZPE* 74, 1988, 149-50. On the correct name of the *Castra Peregrina* see id., 'The *Castra Peregrina* and the "Peregrini"', *ibid.*, 148.

<sup>2</sup> See P. K. Baillie Reynolds, 'The troops quartered in the *Castra Peregrina*', *JRS* 13, 1923, 168-89; W. G. Sinnigen, 'The origins of the *frumentarii*', *MAAR* 27, 1962, 213-24; M. Clauss, *Untersuchungen zu den principales des römischen Heeres von Augustus bis Diokletian. Cornicularii, speculatores, frumentarii*, Diss. Bochum 1973, 82-109.

<sup>3</sup> Spies: SHA *Hadr.* 11; *Macr.* 12; *Claud.* 17.1; cf. *Dio* 78, 17.1. Assassins: SHA *Comm.* 4.5; *Iul.* 5.8, *Nig.* 2.6, cf. *CIL* X 6657 = *ILS* 1387 (see Th. Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften. Juristische Schriften III*, Berlin 1907, 104); *Herodian* 3, 5.4-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Dio* 79, 15.1.

<sup>5</sup> *Aur. Victor Lib. de Caes.* 29, 44.

Palaestina), and a centurio frumentarius of XIII Gemina (Dacia) in Asia.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, frumentarii recorded in the armed provinces were almost always attached to one of the province's legions.<sup>7</sup>

It seems that the frumentarii detached to Asia, at least, operated, alongside similarly detached soldiers of the Praetorian Cohorts, as a sort of local police force, as indicated by an edict forbidding their ravages, and letters of complaint to the emperor or proconsul from local communities, which are preserved on stone.<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere they were often sent out to supervise special projects on behalf of the emperor: in Italy a centurio frumentarius and a frumentarius of II Italica are attested in charge of the extraction of marble at the imperial quarries at Luna; a frumentarius of I Italica oversaw building at Delphi on behalf of the emperor Hadrian; and a centurio frumentarius of II Traiana was put in charge of the vexillations of the newly-raised II (Italica) Pia and III (Italica) Concordia which built emergency walls for Salona, the capital of Dalmatia, in the crisis of AD 170, obviously as the result of an imperial rather than a provincial directive.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Noricum (before AD 171?): CIL III 5579 (VII Gemina); 4787 (centurion of I Adiutrix), cf. 4861 (the same man as centurion of II Italica); Dalmatia: CIL III 2823 (I Adiutrix); III 2063 (centurion of III Cyrenaica); 1980 (centurion of II Traiana); Achaëa: ILS 9473 (I Italica); CIL III 6108 (X Fretensis); Asia: CIL III 6084 = ILS 8244 (VIII Augusta); AE 1933, 256 = 1984, 838 (X Gemina); CIL III 433 (X Gemina and I Adiutrix); Chr. Habicht, *Die Inschriften des Asklepeions*, Berlin 1969, no. 106 (VI Ferrata); CIL III 7041 (centurion of XIII Gemina). The frumentarius of VII Gemina who apparently served at Emerita, capital of Lusitania (ILS 9279), that of I Minervia who was stationed at Lugdunum, capital of Lugdunensis (ILS 9476 = IGRR III 80), and perhaps that of I Adiutrix cited above (III 2823) who served in Dalmatia may have come direct from the legions of the provinces of Tarraconensis, Germania Inferior and Pannonia Superior respectively, which seem to have supplied officiales (and, for Lugdunensis, vexillations) to the governors of their unarmed neighbours.

<sup>7</sup> Tarraconensis: VII Gemina: CIL II 4150 (centurion); 4154; 4170; 6088; Germania Inferior: I Minervia: CIL XIII 8040; Noricum (after AD 171): II Italica: CIL III 4380; 4861 (centurion; see note 6); Pannonia Superior: X Gemina: ILS 9093; *Römisches Österreich* 8, 1980, 112 no. 17; I Adiutrix (before AD 214): CIL III 4462; Pannonia Inferior: II Adiutrix: CIL III 3241; 3466; 3524; 3578; Moesia Superior: VII Claudia: CIL III 8201. The only exceptions are found in Dacia (CIL III 1474 (VI Victrix from Britain); IDR II 35 (centurion of IV Flavia from Moesia Superior)) and Numidia (CIL VIII 2867 (V Macedonica from Dacia)); but of these the man from VI Victrix was commemorated by his father on what is clearly the family memorial, and the centurion of IV Flavia was buried at Drobeta on the north bank of the Danube at the main crossing point between Moesia Superior and Dacia, so that neither of them was certainly or even probably stationed in Dacia; the man from V Macedonica was setting up a memorial for his wife, and it has been suggested that he was not stationed in Numidia but merely honouring his deceased spouse in her home town, cf. M. Clauss, *op. cit.* (note 2), 174-5 note 36. The frumentarius of IV Flavia recorded at Aquincum, capital of Pannonia Inferior, is not an exception since the legion as a whole was frequently based there in the absence of II Adiutrix, cf. A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, London 1974, 99.

<sup>8</sup> Edict: IGR IV 1368; letters of complaint: J. Keil and A. von Premerstein, *Bericht über eine dritte Reise in Lydien und den angrenzenden Gebieten Ioniens*, ausgeführt 1911, Wien. 1914, no. 9; no. 28; AE 1964, 231; cf. *ἑκατόνταρχον φρουμεντάριον ἀγνώως καὶ ἀνδρείως ἀναστραφέντα ἐν τῷ τῆς Ἀσίας ἔθνει*. See M. Clauss, *op. cit.* (note 2), 103-7; S. Mitchell, 'Requisitioned transport in the Roman Empire', *JRS* 66, 1976, 106-31, esp. 114-5.

<sup>9</sup> Luna: CIL XI 1322; Delphi: ILS 9473; Salona: CIL III 1980 = ILS 2287; cf. *ἑκατόνταρχος φρουμεντάριος* recorded at Djebel Dokhan in Egypt (AE 1936, 61), perhaps in charge of the local porphyry quarries; see M. Clauss, *op. cit.* (note 2), 94-5.

If there were any doubts about the attachment of the *frumentarii* to the emperor they would be dispelled by two inscriptions, one of which records a *λεγιῶνος πρώτης Μεινέρβα[ς] φρουμεντάρης Αύγουστος* (sic) *χώρας Λουγδούνου* (i.e. stationed at Lugdunum), and the other a *frumentarius Augusti* who is evidently the same man who supervised building at Delphi for Hadrian.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, such an attachment to the emperor does not necessarily preclude an attachment to the officium of a provincial governor. Like the *officiales*, the *frumentarii* were legionaries, and it is unlikely that this was a 'mere formality'. Two at least of the known *frumentarii* served as legionaries before promotion to that rank, one of them being *probato* in *leg(ione) VI Ferra[t(a)] tra[ns]lato frum(entario) in leg(ionem) VII G(eminam) P(iam) F(idelem)*, the other serving in VII Gemina in Spain before being *fact(o) fru[m(entario)]* either in that legion or in I Minervia in which he subsequently served on the staff of a tribune.<sup>11</sup> These examples show clearly that existing legionaries were appointed to this post. The transfers between legions may indicate that they were seconded via the *Castra Peregrina*; but the first man's *origo* was *Italica* in *Baetica* so that he was in effect returning to his local legion, whilst the second was commemorated at Cologne by a man to whom he was *avunculus*, i.e. mother's brother, so that he may have been returning to his province of origin, and the transfers may have no more significance than that. Once they were appointed *frumentarii*, of course, their duties would not normally have involved them directly with the legion, just like the governor's *officiales*.

The recorded origins of *frumentarii* indicate that they were mostly local to the province in which their legion was situated,<sup>12</sup> which would also be, for many of them, the province in which they served. This strongly suggests a general pattern of local recruitment, just as for all other legionaries. It is difficult to see by what mechanism an emperor would have been able to recruit his own men from the provinces into the legions without the assistance of the provincial governors, or why he should not rather have recruited in Italy, given the small

<sup>10</sup> *Φρουμεντάρης Αύγουστος*: ILS 9476 = IGRR III 80 (see note 6); *frumentarius Augusti*: AE 1977, 60, cf. ILS 9473; note also CIL XIII 1771 (?).

<sup>11</sup> CIL II 4154; XIII 8282.

<sup>12</sup> Of the men whose *origo* and legion are both recorded, the following may be regarded as serving in a local legion: CIL II 4154 (*Italica*, VII Gemina after transfer from VI Ferrata); VI 232 (*Carthago*, III Augusta); 3336 (*Savaria*, II Adiutrix); 3342 (*Oescus*, V Macedonica); 3346 (*Glevum*, VI Victrix); 3353 (*Augusta Vindelicum*, VIII Augusta); 3360 (*Ara (Agrippinensium)*, XXX Ulpia); 36775 (*Nicomedia*, III Parthica); XIII 8040 (a Frisian, I Minervia); 8282 (a Spaniard, VII Gemina); AE 1917/18, 57 (*Karthago*, Verecunda, III Augusta); AE 1978, 342 (a Spaniard, VII Gemina); the following may be regarded as serving in a non-local legion: CIL III 1474 (*Sarmizegethusa*, VI Victrix); VI 423 (*Heliopolis*, a centurion of IV Flavia); 1636 (an Italian, centurion of III Gallica); 3343 (*Mogontiacum* (or *Lindum*? cf. A.E. Birley, *The People of Roman Britain*, London 1979, 105), VI Victrix); 3348 (*Ara (Agrippinensium)*, VII Gemina); XI 448 = AE 1977, 259 (an Italian, VI Victrix); AE 1940, 84 (*Berytus*, II Traiana); note that of the latter group two were centurions and so particularly subject to transfer between legions (cf. CIL III 4787 and 4861), and another three were from VI Victrix based in Britain where local recruitment into the legions may have developed rather slowly (cf. B. Dobson and J. C. Mann, 'The Roman Army in Britain and Britons in the Roman Army', *Britannia* 4, 1973, 191-205; P.A. Holder, *The Roman Army in Britain*, London 1982, 46-9).

numbers involved, if he wanted to insert spies into the provincial armies. The frumentarii, after all, made no secret of their attachment to the Castra Peregrina. There is no reason, therefore, to doubt that the frumentarii were ordinary legionaries, recruited in the usual manner, who had been seconded for special duties, and if that is so, the secondment must have been made by their provincial governor and not by the emperor.

As evidence that frumentarii were not members of the officium consularis, Mann cites an inscription from Lambaesis, capital of Numidia, which records four speculatores, thirty beneficiarii consularis, six candidati, five ex frumentariis, four quaestionarii, five beneficiarii sexmestris and one haruspex.<sup>13</sup> This may imply that current frumentarii were technically not members of the officium consularis. However, neither this nor a very similar inscription from the same place (without, however, listing any candidati or ex frumentariis)<sup>14</sup> makes any mention of other undoubted members of the officium such as stratores, singulares, or librarii, all of which are attested at Lambaesis.<sup>15</sup> And the listing of the ex frumentariis on this inscription after the candidati, who were evidently awaiting promotion to beneficiarius consularis, suggests that they too owe their appearance here with this title to their incipient status as beneficiarii, without any implication for their former membership or non-membership of the officium as a whole. It may, however, indicate that there were a number of places amongst the beneficiarii consularis reserved for ex frumentariis, and in this context it is interesting to find three other inscriptions which refer to a beneficiarius consularis ex frumentario.<sup>16</sup>

Certainly, there is some reason to suppose that the frumentarii could have been attached to the officium consularis. Having become a frumentarius, a man, if he proved himself worthy of further promotion, could pursue a career path either within the legion or within the Castra Peregrina or within the officium consularis of the province where his legion was stationed. Known promotions within the legion include the officer cited above who moved to the officium of a legionary tribune, and perhaps two frumentarii, one of VII Gemina, the other of XXII Primigenia, who are later recorded as centurions of the same legions;<sup>17</sup> within the Castra, frumentarii are known to have risen to optio peregrinorum (?) and centurio

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<sup>13</sup> AE 1917/18, 57; cf. J. C. Mann, *op. cit.* (note 1), 149.

<sup>14</sup> CIL VIII 2586.

<sup>15</sup> Stratores at Lambaesis: CIL VIII 2565; 2567; 2568; 2569; 2597; 2748; 2749; 2792; 2957; 18084; AE 1915, 27 = 1917/18, 49; 1917/18, 78; CRAI 1954 p. 273 note 2; singulares: CIL VIII 2911 = ILS 2419; AE 1957, 122 = 1971, 507 = 1973, 629; AE 1978, 890; librarii: CIL VIII 2553; 2560; 2564; 2568; 2626; 2884; 2929; 2954; 2973; 2985; 18086.

<sup>16</sup> See note 19.

<sup>17</sup> Promotions within the legion: CIL XIII 8282; ILS 9279; AE 1930, 151 = 1938, 20; CIL XIII 6682, cf. VI 3351.

frumentarius;<sup>18</sup> and within the officium consularis to beneficiarius consularis, which is in fact the best attested promotion for these officers, and to commentariensis.<sup>19</sup>

The most fundamental role of the frumentarii seems not to have been espionage, but the carrying of messages between the emperor and the provinces. Dio, in contexts which clearly refer to frumentarii, but not necessarily in their role as messengers, calls them γραμματοφόροι or ἀγγελιαφόροι;<sup>20</sup> a tombstone from Salona proclaims that the deceased cucurrit frumentarius annis XL;<sup>21</sup> the Life of Maximus and Balbinus records that scriptum est praeterea ad omnes provincias missis frumentariis;<sup>22</sup> an inscription from Appia in Asia refers to a letter from the emperor Philip to a M. Aurelius Eglectus which was carried by a frumentarius;<sup>23</sup> and Jerome identifies the frumentarii with the later agentes in rebus or veredarii.<sup>24</sup> As couriers, the frumentarii were serving the provincial governors as much as the emperors. In this context it may be significant that no frumentarius has yet been attested as belonging to II Parthica, the legion stationed at Albano outside Rome and the only one in the empire not subject to a provincial governor.

Even while they were at the Castra Peregrina, the frumentarii evidently retained a provincial identity, since those of them who died at Rome were always commemorated by colleagues from their own legion or from the legions of the same province.<sup>25</sup> This identity may have been fostered within the officium consularis. Speculatores and singulares from the provincial officia also on occasion came to Rome as couriers like the frumentarii, and they were almost certainly housed alongside them in the Castra Peregrina. When a frumentarius of II Augusta, based in Britain, died in Rome, he was commemorated by a singularis of the

<sup>18</sup> Promotions within the Castra Peregrina: to optio peregrinorum (?possibly to optio in the legion): XI 1322; to centurio frumentarius: III 2063; VI 36853 (possibly to centurion in the legion).

<sup>19</sup> Promotions within the officium consularis: to beneficiarius consularis: II 4154; III 3020 = 10057 (ex fru(mentario) bf. cos.); VIII 17627 (e|x frumen[ta]rio bf cos); AE 1917/18, 57 (five ex frum(entariis)); Spomenik 71, 1931, no. 209 (bf cos ex fru(mentario)); to commentariensis: XIII 1771.

<sup>20</sup> Dio 79, 14.1 (γραμματοφόροι); 15.1; 39.3 (ἀγγελιαφόροι).

<sup>21</sup> CIL III 2063 with 8581 = ILS 2370.

<sup>22</sup> SHA Max. et Balb. 10.3; cf. Herodian 7, 7.5.

<sup>23</sup> CIL III 14191: Iulius P]hi[lippus P. F. Aug.] .... M. Au[r. Eglecto] pe[r] Didymum mili[t]e[m] frum(entarium).

<sup>24</sup> Jerome In Abdiam 1.

<sup>25</sup> CIL VI 3332 = 4881 (a frumentarius of I Adiutrix commemorated by another of X Gemina (Pannonia Superior)); 3334 (a frumentarius of I Minervia commemorated by another of XXX Ulpia Victrix (Germania Inferior)); 3349 (a frumentarius of VII Gemina commemorated by another of the same legion (Tarraconensis)); 3351 (a frumentarius of VIII Augusta commemorated by three of XXII Primigenia (Germania Superior)); 3357 (a frumentarius of XX Valeria Victrix commemorated by another of the same legion (Britannia)); 3362 (a frumentarius of XXX Ulpia Victrix commemorated by two of the same legion (Germania Inferior)); 32873 = X 6575 (a frumentarius of XXII Primigenia commemorated by another of VIII Augusta (Germania Superior)); cf. III 433 = ILS 2368 from Ephesus, capital of Asia, a frumentarius of X Gemina commemorated by another of I Adiutrix (Pannonia Superior). Frumentarii from different provinces did, however, associate within the Castra: VI 230 = 36748, a dedication to the Genius of the Camp and the whole army by a frumentarius of VIII Augusta (Germania Superior) and one of XIII Gemina (Dacia).

same legion, and when a *specul(ator) exercit(us) Brittan(ici)* died, he was commemorated by a *frumentarius* of XX Valeria Victrix, also based in Britain.<sup>26</sup>

While the *frumentarii* were in the provinces, they were employed by the governors not just as couriers but exactly like the governor's own *officiales*. For instance, they are recorded at Bedaium in Noricum and Burnum in Dalmatia where there are known to have been *stationes* manned by *beneficiarii consularis*.<sup>27</sup> More clearly, like the *beneficiarii*, they were used by the governors as arresting officers in the provincial capitals: Eusebius tells us that during the Decian persecution Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, was arrested by a *frumentarius* sent by the Prefect of Egypt, and according to a letter of Cyprian he himself was escorted to face trial at Utica before the Proconsul of Africa by a group of *frumentarii*.<sup>28</sup> These men were self-evidently working under instruction from the governor and not the emperor.

One final piece of evidence may be adduced to suggest that the *frumentarii* were indeed members of the *officium consularis*. A number of military inscriptions in the provinces bear depictions of a special type of decorated, non-functional lance, the so-called 'Benefiziarierlanze'. A number of actual full-sized lance-heads of this type have been found, as have brooches depicting such lance-heads in miniature.<sup>29</sup> The most recent find of a full-sized lance-head was made at Osterburken in Germania Superior in 1983 in the area of a sacred enclosure full of dedications made by *beneficiarii consularis*.<sup>30</sup> The inscriptions

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<sup>26</sup> *Singulares* in Rome: CIL VI 3339 (a *singularis* of II Augusta commemorates a *frumentarius* of the same legion (Britannia)); 3614 (X Fretensis, Syria Palaestina); *speculatores*: CIL VI 3358 = ILS 2372, cf. CIL VI 3357, 3359 (a *speculator* of the British army commemorated by a *frumentarius* of XX Valeria Victrix); 3562 (II Adiutrix, Pannonia Inferior); 36775 = ILS 484 (*Genio Sancto Castror[um] Peregrinorum ... quod speculator leg(ionis) III Parth(icae) Severianae vovit, hastatus leg(ionis) X Fretensis, princeps peregrinorum reddedit (sic)*). On *singulares* as couriers cf. P. Oxy. 1022, a letter from the Prefect of Egypt to the prefect of a cohort within the province, delivered per *Priscum singularem*; on *speculatores* as couriers: Livy 31, 24 (*speculator - hemerodromos vocant Graeci*); Tac. Hist. 2, 73; note also CIL III 1650 with p. 1021 = ILS 2378 depicting a *speculator* travelling on a cart, cf. III 3241 depicting a *frumentarius* doing the same.

<sup>27</sup> *Frumentarii* in *stationes* (?): CIL III 2823 (Burnum), cf. III 14989; AE 1925, 130; A. and J. ael, *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Jugoslavia inter annos 1940 et 1960 repertae et editae sunt* (Situla 5), Ljubljana 1963, nos. 830; 831 (*protector co(n)s(ularis) pro b(ene)f(iciario)*); 832, recording *beneficiarii consularis* there; CIL III 5579; 5592 (Bedaium), cf. III 5575; 5580 = ILS 4853, recording *beneficiarii consularis* there.

<sup>28</sup> Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 6, 40.2, cf. Th. Ruinart, *Acta Primorum Martyrum Sincera et Selecta*, Amsterdam 2nd ed. 1713, 52: *ego ... domi mansi adventum exspectans frumentarii*; Cyprian Epistles 81.1; see G. Lopuszanski, 'La Police romaine et les Chrétiens', *L'Antiquité Classique* 20, 1951, 5-46, esp. 22-3 and 23 note 3. Cf. also *Passio Fructuosi 1* with G. Lopuszanski, op. cit., 13 on *beneficiarii consularis* as arresting officers.

<sup>29</sup> On 'Benefiziarierlanzen', see E. Ritterling 'Ein Amtsabzeichen der *beneficiarii consularis* im Museum zu Wiesbaden', BJ 125, 1919, 9-37; A. Alföldi 'Hasta - Summa Imperii. The Spear as Embodiment of Sovereignty in Rome', AJA 63,1 1959, 1-27; id., 'Vom Speerattribut der altrömischen Könige zu den Benefiziarierlanzen' in *Limes-Studien. Vorträge des Internationalen Limes-Kongresses in Rheinfelden/Basel 1957*, Basel 1959, 7-12; on the miniature lance-head brooches, see G. Behrens, *Mainzer Zeitschrift* 36, 1941, 19-21; K. Raddatz, *Saalburg-Jahrbuch* 12, 1953, 60-5; H. J. Hundt, *ibid.* 14, 1955, 50-9.

<sup>30</sup> See E. Schallmayer, *Archäologische Ausgrabungen in Baden-Württemberg 1983, 1984*, 175 with Abb. 165; id., *Der Keltenfürst von Hochdorf*, Stuttgart 1985, 407 no. 15 with Abb. 607.

depicting "Benefiziarierlanzen" commemorate or were dedicated by only three types of officer: *speculatores* and *beneficiarii consularis*, both of whom were undoubtedly members of the *officium consularis*, and *frumentarii*.<sup>31</sup> It seems that the most likely explanation of these lances, both full-sized and in miniature, is that they indicated the bearer's attachment to the *officium consularis*.

If the *frumentarii* were recruited by the provincial governors from the ordinary legionaries of the province to serve as their *officiales*, then their attachment to the *Castra Peregrina* and to the emperor came about only once they had been sent to Rome on official business. There can be no link, therefore, between their security duties and their presumed origins as corn-supply officers.<sup>32</sup> Rather, it was their availability, whilst they waited to return to their provinces with despatches, and their lack of ties in the Capital outside the *Castra* which suited them to be employed in Rome for the special purposes of the emperor. And it was their organization in the *Castra* which gave them as individuals a dual attachment and a dual loyalty.

The evidence suggests that the *frumentarii* were members of both the *officium consularis* and the *Castra Peregrina*, in roles which were complementary. Their principal function was to carry despatches between the two; while they were in their province, they did the governor's bidding, while they were in Rome, the emperor's, whether it be secondment to another province, or spying, or even murder. No doubt, they told their governor what was going in Rome, and they certainly told the emperor what was happening in the provinces. Those who did well might find advancement, some in the legion, some in the *Castra*, some in the *officium consularis*. It is perhaps unlikely that those who advanced to what may have been reserved places amongst the *beneficiarii consularis* did so as 'moles' since they would obviously not be operating in secret and communication with Rome would be extremely dangerous and virtually impossible when it really mattered; their promotions were rather a mark of imperial favour. But while they served as *frumentarii*, and perhaps later as *centuriones frumentarii*, and were constantly on the move between the provinces and Rome, their attachment to the *officium consularis* was part of their usefulness to the *Castra Peregrina*.

University of Western Australia

N.B.Rankov

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<sup>31</sup> 'Benefiziarierlanzen' on inscriptions recording *speculatores*: CIL III 9401; AE 1914, 75; 1945, 88 (all from Salona, capital of Dalmatia); CIL III 1650 with p. 1021 = ILS 2378 (from Viminacium, capital of Moesia Superior, depicting a speculator riding on a cart with a servant holding his lance); on inscriptions recording *beneficiarii consularis*: CIL III 6376 = 8656; 12895 (both from Salona); XIII 1909 (from Lugdunum, capital of Lugdunensis); 6557; 6628; 7400 = ILS 4192a; 7731; 11777; on inscriptions recording *frumentarii*: CIL III 3241 (depicting a *frumentarius* carrying a lance and sitting on a cart); 5579.

<sup>32</sup> Only at Portus (Ostia) is there any suggestion of the continued involvement of *frumentarii* with corn supply, where a *centurio frumentarius* set up an inscription on behalf of the *Praefectus Annonae* (AE 1977, 171); P. Gen. Lat. 1 recto part II, 32, *exit cum frumentariis*, clearly refers to a legionary grain convoy rather than this grade of officer.