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TRAJAN, THE ANTONINES, AND THE GOVERNOR’S STAFF


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Since the late nineteenth century, scholars have succeeded in mapping the general outlines of the elaborately structured third-century Roman governor’s staff, the officium consularis. Recent work has even begun to clarify its complex workings. But the third-century officium did not appear ex nihilo. It resulted from a long evolutionary process, the beginnings of which lie far back in the early decades of the Principate. While a great deal is known about the mature officium, very little is known about its evolution, for although hundreds of inscriptions document the inner workings of the officium in the third century as well as the personnel assigned to it, very little information survives illuminating the earlier stages of its development. A possible reference in Tacitus’ Histories (Hist. iv.48) a handful of passages

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1 In this article the following abbreviations will be used:
   - Ott: J. Ott, Der Beneficiarier (Stuttgart 1995).

Additional bibliography:
   - Alföldy, G., Konsulat und Senatenorden unter den Antoninen (Bonn 1977).
   - Mann, J.C., Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate (London 1983).

2 The canonical treatment of the officium is found in RO2, 29-38. A. H. M. Jones included a discussion of the officium in "The Roman Civil Service (n. 1, Add. bibl.), 44-46. Joachim Ott devotes lengthy analysis to the beneficiarii who served the governors in Ott, 82-155. The literature on the beneficiarii is abundant and reaches back to the late 19th century, although the bulk of the analyses have focused on particular sites, texts, or on their role in the army rather than in imperial administration. Discussions of the beneficiarii have proliferated since the 1980s. There have also been some very exciting epigraphic finds during excavations of beneficiarii posts. Egon Schallmayer, Ott, and others excavated a beneficiarii statio at Osterburken in the agri decumates during the 1980s, containing thirty-one altars dedicated by beneficiarii who served there. He and his colleagues subsequently collected and published the texts of all beneficiarii inscriptions known up through the late 1980s in CBFIR. An even larger find was made at Sirmium (Srem Mitrovica) in 1988: the remains of a statio containing eighty-four beneficiarii altars, the largest single trove of beneficiarii texts ever found. Unfortunately, the find came too late to make it into Schallmayer’s CBFIR and publication of the texts has been delayed by the Balkan wars. However, Mirković’s article in Roman Frontier Studies 1989 (pp. 252-256) offers a very useful summary of the information they contain.
in Pliny the Younger’s Bithynian correspondence with Trajan (Ep. x.21, 22, 27), and several dozen inscriptions comprise the sum total of extant material documenting the governor’s staffs during the first century and the first seven decades of the second. But careful study of this meager corpus makes it possible to recover the broad features of the evolutionary process.

Two major stages in that process can be identified. The first came early in the second century, under Trajan, who began the practice of using members of the staff to man administrative posts in towns and along roads away from the governors’ headquarters, thus giving them a formal operational role within the scheme of administration. The second began at mid-century, during the principate of Antoninus Pius, and lasted some fifteen to twenty years, coming to an end under Marcus Aurelius. This stage had two elements. First, it greatly enlarged on the work initiated by Trajan, expanding the infrastructure he created, and with it the presence of the staff in the interiors of the provinces. Second, it fundamentally altered relations between the members of the staff and the governors whom they served. The staff emerged from the Antonine stage in its evolution with an insitutional identity and a role in provincial administration that made its members a widespread presence in the life of the provinces, at least along the frontiers. It stood poised for the last phase in its evolution, which under the Severans produced the officium consularis so well known from the third-century evidence.

I. Early Beginnings

During the first century, arrangements for providing governors with staff assistance in performing their duties were informal. Since the Republic, governors had brought amici and members of their personal households with them when they went out to their provinces, and under the Principate these individuals undoubtedly continued to assist in various official activities, although they have left scant trace in the record. But because governors were military commanders, they also could draw on the troops under their command for assistance. Literary evidence demonstrates that at least since the civil wars at the end of the Republic senior officers had been detailing men from the ranks to serve them as attendants and orderlies (Caesar, B.C. i.75; iii.88). Because such soldiers were recipients of the personal favor, or beneficium, of release from routine duties to attend a senior officer, the generic term for them was beneficiarii. The first indication that beneficiarii were being used by governors may come as early as the principate of Gaius, when legio III Augusta was removed from the authority of the proconsul of Africa and placed under the command of an imperial legate. According to Tacitus, the proconsul and the legate divided the numerus beneficiorum, or number of patronage exemptions, equally between them.3

Inscriptions of gubernatorial beneficiarii begin to appear soon afterward, in the middle of the first century.4 They are extremely rare, though, down to the beginning of the second century. Only three can

3 Hist. iv.48. G.E.F. Chilver and G.B. Townend, A Historical Commentary (n. 1, Add. bibl.), 60, state correctly that beneficium was a term generally used for patronage, but go on to assert that this passage does not refer to the creation of beneficiarii. If so, it is curious that, of all the administrative adjustments that the removal of III Augusta from the proconsul’s command and its placement under a legate must have entailed, this division of the “patronage” is the only one that Tacitus, writing eighty years later, deems worth mentioning. What could this “patronage” have been, involving III Augusta as it did, except the bestowal on men of the beneficium of detaching them from their routine military duties to attend the proconsul, or the legionary commander and his staff, thus making the recipients of this patronage beneficiarii in the very generic sense which the term carried before the late second century? And while it is true, as Chilver and Townend point out, drawing on D.J. Breeze’s unpublished dissertation, that no explicit evidence exists of III Augusta providing beneficiarii to the proconsul, the altar AE 1961, 224 (CBFIR 743) was set up in AD 166/167 at Hippo Regius by two beneficiarii anno Acili(i) Glabri-onis proco(n)sulis c(larissimi) v(iri) who do not specify their parent military unit and, in the opinion of the most recent commentator on the text, may have been soldiers of III Augusta rather than of the cohors I urbana at Cartaghe (CBFIR p. 576). Ott is inclined to accept Chilver and Townend’s analysis (84 n. 7), but the matter must be considered still open. It should be noted, further, that this inscription is the only epigraphic evidence for any beneficiarii of the proconsul.

4 AE 1967, 525 (CBFIR 700) [ἐνερχόμενοι] Τιβερίου Κλοεδίουτον Φθήλικον ἐπιτρόπου Σε[βαστοῦ Ιουδαῖον], from Bir-el-Malik in modern Israel. The restoration of the name of the procurator Augusti Iudaeae as Ti. Claudius Felix is not entirely certain: CBFIR pp. 541-542 discusses the various individuals who might be represented here. If it was in fact Felix, then his procuratorship falls between 52 and 60.
be assigned with certainty to the years before AD 100; another two might fall within that period or, possibly, in the first half of the second century. All five are funerary monuments. One was clearly set up in a different province from the one in which the man served, but the duty stations of the rest of these men cannot be determined from the findspots of their texts. Since they are funerary monuments, marking either the graves of the men involved or of some loved one, those findspots need not correspond to the men’s duty stations. Presumably these men served at their governors’ headquarters. The patronage relationship that bestowal of the beneficium established between the governor and its recipient is reflected in the incorporation of the governor’s personal name into the titles of four of the five beneficiarii. It is probable that a man’s service as beneficiarius normally coincided with his patron’s term as governor. Reappointment by the next governor was infrequent but not unknown: two examples exist, one from Numidia in the late first century and another from Noricum in the mid-second, of beneficiarii who name two consecutive governors under whom they served; no examples exist of men who served governors who were not consecutive. The paucity of inscriptions suggests that beneficiarii were few in number at this time, but the wide geographical distribution of the handful of texts shows that their use was not peculiar to any one region of the empire.

II. Trajan

It was under Trajan and most likely at his direction that gubernatorial beneficiarii first were given a distinct niche in the operational scheme of provincial administration. This occurred in conjunction with the establishment of an embryonic network of outposts, or stationes, scattered in various provinces, to which gubernatorial beneficiarii were assigned. That imperial directive led to the creation of these stationes, rather than the spontaneous initiative of individual provincial governors, is indicated by a series of circumstances surrounding their appearance: the stationes sprang up over a very short period of time, between ca. 110 and ca. 120; furthermore, they appeared in provinces scattered across the breadth of the empire, rather than concentrating in any one region; finally, all of them were manned in the same way, that is, by beneficiarii of the governors of the provinces concerned.

The evidence for the beneficiarii manning these Trajanic stationes differs markedly in kind from the evidence for the beneficiarii of the late first century. Instead of funerary texts, it consists of votive altars, erected by the beneficiarii while on active duty, at their places of assignment, expressing gratitude to various deities, but most often to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus. Furthermore, the early second-century altar evidence is far more plentiful than the funerary evidence, whether from the early second century or from the late first. Since the altars were expressions of thanks to the gods, set up by the men in fulfillment of vows, this abundance suggests that the men attached great importance to their assignments

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5 AE 1967, 525 (CBFIR 700), AD 52-80; CIL 12.2602 (CBFIR 39), indicating service as a beneficiarius beginning in AD 79; CIL 8.27854 (CBFIR 751), indicating service as a beneficiarius AD 81-83.
6 IGRR 3.677 (CBFIR 680), AD 70-130; AE 1991, 1473, perhaps under Nero, or perhaps second century, according to the editor of the text.
7 CIL 12.2602 (CBFIR 39). The man was buried at Genava in Gallia Narbonensis, but served in Gallia Lugdunensis.
8 IGRR 3.677 (CBFIR 680), from Patara in Lycia et Pamphylia, uses the simple title βενεфиκαρίου γεμιμώνος.
9 The exceptions are Sex. Sulpicius Senilis, who was beneficiarius Tetti(i) Iuliani et Iavoleni Prisci leg(atorum) Aug(usti) AD 81-83, CIL 8.27854 (CBFIR 751), and Adnamius Flavinus, who was first benef(iciarius) Ulpi(i) Victoris proc(uratoris) Aug(usti) ca.156 (CIL 3.5161 [CBFIR 220]), and then beneficiarius Usenii Secundi proc(uratoris) Aug(usti) ca. 158 (CIL 3.5162 [CBFIR 221]). Both inscriptions of Adnamius Flavinus are altars from the statio at Celeia in Noricum. For the dating of the two Numidian legates, see Thomasson, 395, nos. 11 and 12; for the praesidial procurators, see Alföldy, Noricum, Appendix V 246. Winkler, 55-56, places Ulpius Victor ca. 154-158 and Usenius Secundus ca. 158.
10 The literature on the religion of the Roman army is extensive, beginning with Domaszewski’s "Die Religion" (n. 1, Add. bibl.). A critical discussion of Domaszewski and a bibliography on the subject through the mid-1970s can be found in E. Birley, "The Religion", (repr. in E. Birley, The Roman Army (n. 1, Add. bibl.).
to these stationes, an importance noticeably greater than that which they attached to service at the governor’s headquarters, where altars of beneficiarii are almost unknown.11

The altars conclusively demonstrate Trajanic origins for at least two stationes. One was located at Sirmium, on the lower Sava River in southern Pannonia inferior. Miroslava Mirković, the excavator of this statio, which was discovered in 1988, reports that of the more than eighty beneficiarius altars found at the site, four or five can be dated to the period prior to 150, and that the earliest of these are Trajanic (Mirković, 252). The other statio lay in southeasternmost Noricum, at Celeia. Twelve altars datable to before 150 were found at Celeia, documenting the service of eleven beneficiarii of the praesidial procurators who governed Noricum prior to the Marcomannic wars. The earliest text from Celeia records a beneficiarius of the procurator P. Prifernius Memmius Apollinaris, whose governorship falls around 110,12 another beneficiarius served Q. Caecilius Reddittus, who governed the province ca. 115.13

Celeia was a Claudian municipium that lay on the route that led out of northern Italy through the Alps then east down the Sava and Drava valleys to the Danube. It was the first provincial town that traffic encountered along that route after leaving Italy. Sirmium lay close to the Danube at the route’s eastern end; a Flavian colony whose origins went back to Augustus, it developed into the most important city in the Danube region. Both stationes, then, were located in well Romanized communities of some importance, at opposite ends of a major imperial communications artery. Their establishment must be seen both against this political, cultural, and geographical background as well as in the historical context of Trajan’s conquest and subsequent organization of Dacia. The two stationes remained in operation for many years, reflecting the importance both of their locations and of the route which ran through them: Celeia functioned until ca. 160, then was replaced briefly by a statio at nearby Praetorium Latobicorum in Pannonia superior; it subsequently reopened ca. 190 and operated until 217.14 Sirmium functioned without significant interruption until the 230s.15

Aside from the corpora of early second-century altars at Celeia and Sirmium, individual altars have been found at sites elsewhere, including Virunum and Iuvavum in Noricum,16 near Sebastopolis in Cappadocia,17 and at Charax in the Regnum Bosporanum.18 These texts indicate that Celeia and Sirmium were not isolated foundations, and that stationes manned by gubernatorial beneficiarii were established elsewhere as well.19 These isolated altars have been dated to the years either side of 120, which indicates either Trajanic origins for the posts where they were found or a continuation of the program of statio foundation early under Hadrian. In either case, the fact that no altars appear subsequently at these locations points to the conclusion that operations had ceased at them by about 130.

What that activity may have been is difficult to say, since the duties performed by beneficiarii assigned to the stationes have defied precise definition.20 Given their geographical situation, it is only

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11 Of sixteen beneficiarius altars from the period down to 150, only one, CIL 3.14362 (AE 1968, 408; CBFIR 249), comes from a provincial capital, Virunum in Noricum. Of twenty-two altars from the period 150-170, not a single one comes from a provincial capital, or even from a legionary base.


13 CIL 3.5163 (CBFIR 238). For his dates, see Noricum, App. V, 243 and Winkler 42-43. Thomasson places him ca. 122 (83, no. 7).

14 For a discussion of the statio at Celeia down to 160, see R. Dise, “The Beneficiarii Procuratoris ” (n. 1, Add. bibl.).

15 According to Mirković, 252-253, the last dated altar was dedicated in 231.


18 CBFIR 658, ca. AD 120; R. Syme, “The Ummidii” (n. 1, Add. bibl.).

19 Perhaps not at Virunum, which was the headquarters of the praesidial procurator, although Alföldy regards it as the site of a statio: Noricum, App. VIII, 252.

20 The problem of beneficiarial function is very vexed, for several reasons. First, virtually none of the epigraphic evidence from the stationes bears directly on it; second, function very probably varied from region to region and province to
logical to associate Sirmium and Celeia in some way with overland and river traffic between Italy and the Danube, but this does not mean that traffic supervision was their sole responsibility, nor does it mean that stationes elsewhere had the same function. The fact that each statio was manned only by one beneficiarius necessarily imposed some limitations on their role. But the notion that the beneficiarii who manned the stationes functioned as generalists, carrying out a variety of tasks, probably comes closest to the truth. Recent scholarship has emphasized the wide array of tasks performed by gubernatorial beneficiarii, both at stationes and at the governors’ headquarters, and has cast serious doubt on efforts to isolate some sole function for beneficiarii. 22

Although Trajan devised a wider role for beneficiarii by using them to man his stationes, he did nothing to alter the relationship between the beneficiarii themselves and the governors they served. That relationship remained personal in nature, reflected as before in the incorporation of the governors’ personal names into beneficiarius titulature. The status of the governor made no difference: the beneficiarii who served the equestrian praesidial procurators of Noricum used exactly the same formula as the beneficiarii who served senatorial legates elsewhere: beneficiarius + the name of the governor in the genitive + the governor’s title. In fact, the only change that occurred in this formula during the first half of the second century came in the title of senatorial legates, who from Trajan on are called “consularis” in the titles of their beneficiarii, rather than “legatus Augusti”. 23 But this change had no discernible effect on the personal quality of the relationship involved in the beneficium of appointment to the governor’s service.

Service as a beneficiarius appears at this time to have remained a temporary affair, and recruitment seems to have been ad hoc, with soldiers being detached from their units to attend governors or other officials whenever the need arose, the men presumably returning to their units at the governor’s pleasure or at the end of his term. This suggestion receives support from several sources. First, as noted previously, service under more than one governor was extremely rare (see note 9). Second, there is very little evidence that in the late first or early second centuries service as a gubernatorial beneficiarius played any role in the legionary career ladder, whether leading to further staff duties or to higher posts within the army. The only known early example of a man whose career continued past his service as a gubernatorial beneficiarius was M. Carantius Macrinus, who was beneficiarius of T. Tettianius Serenus, governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, from AD 78 to 83, then cornicularius of Serenus’ successor, C. Cornelius Gallicanus, from 83 to 87; after becoming an evocatus in 87, he ended his career in 90 with promotion to centurion in his parent unit, cohors I urbana, stationed at Lugdunum. 24 The only other early example of a beneficiarius whose service led to promotion is a man who was beneficiarius to a le-

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21 This is clear from the fact that the vast majority of altars are dedicated by individual beneficiarii. The handful of joint dedications are discussed by Ott, 111-113 and, at Sirmium, by Mirković, 253. With a single exception from Africa proconsularis, dated to 166/167 (AE 1961, 24 [CBFIR 743]), there are no joint dedications prior to 170.

22 In particular see Dise, “A Reassessment” (n. 1, Add. bibl.) and the detailed discussion in Ott, 113-155.

23 AE 1992, 1402, the funeral memorial from Carnuntum of a soldier of legio I adiutrix who died in active service and was, or had been, a beneficiarius legati co(n)sularis, is dated to the the last half of the first century by the editors of the text, but this seems unlikely. Not only is the titulature anomalous for the first century, even the late first century, but the dead man was a native of Savaria, and I adiutrix does not seem to have recruited in Savaria or elsewhere in Pannonia superior until after Hadrian posted it to Brigetio following its return from Trajan’s anabasis (J.C. Mann, Legionary Recruitment [n. 1, Add. bibl.] Tables 17.2 and 17.3, pp. 119-120; A. Mócsy, Pannonia [n. 1, Add. bibl.] 98-99).

24 CIL 12.2602 (CBFIR 39). He died during Nerva’s principate and was buried at Genava. As might be expected, given how carefully Macrinus chronicled his career on his funerary monument, the literature on this text is lengthy. For a summary, see Schallmayer’s comments and discussion in CBFIR, pp. 44-45.
governor, being imperial, rather than gubernatorial, officials. Trajan therefore would have determined and Gavius Bassus as unusually close interest in the administration of the province. Second, Virdius Gemellinus as procurator province from the Senate and dispatched Pliny to rectify its problems, which meant that Trajan had an unlikely that emperors routinely attempted to micromanage provincial personnel matters. It must be re-

Trajan’s assignment of ten beneficiarii to Bassus, and of another ten to the imperial procurator in Bithynia, Virdius Gemellinus (Ep. x.27), raises the question of the emperor’s role in determining the number of beneficiarii to be used in a province and how they were to be apportioned. It is on balance unlikely that emperors routinely attempted to micromanage provincial personnel matters. It must be re-

T. Flavius. The other example is C. Aprilius Surus, b(ene)ficiarius leg(ati) XIII g(eminiae). Ott identifies this man with the Surus who was b(ene)ficiarius Memmi(i) Apoll(inarii) proc(uratoris) Aug(usti) at Celeia ca.110 (CIL 3.5179 [CBFIR 222]). This identification is based on the fact that the one man’s gentilicium is the same as the other’s name. The commentator on the text in CBFIR makes no such identification (p. 245), in fact indicating the belief that the man was a native Norican; C. Aprilius Surus gives his origo as Milan. Alföldy was convinced that the Celeian Surus was a peregrine (Noricum, App. V.243).

For epigraphic examples of these scholae, see CIL 3.876 (CBFIR 552), AD 200-201, from Potissa in Dacia, and CIL 8.17628 (CIL 8.10717; CBFIR 755), early third century, from the statio at Vazaivi in Numidia.

Bassus’ office is not otherwise known, but the interaction between him and Pliny and Trajan does not suggest that he was Pliny’s subordinate. It appears, for example, from Ep. x.21 that Pliny had never met Bassus before he came to demand additional beneficiarii of Pliny. Furthermore, not only did Bassus appeal to Trajan when Pliny denied him those beneficiarii, but Trajan replied directly to Bassus, with an only information copy to Pliny, rather than routing his reply through Pliny.

This total rises to four or five if either AE 1991, 1473 or IGRR 3.677 (CBFIR 680) is placed in the early second rather than the late first century.

29 CIL 3.151 (CBFIR 707). The reading of the inscription is uncertain in places, but identifies the governor as G. Ant(ius) Ve(tus); Thomasson gives his full name as C. Antius A. Iulius Quadratus. For his governorship, see Thomasson
Nemausus, for a *beneficiarius* of Iunius Homullus, who was governor of Hispania citerior around 133 (CIL 12.3168 [CBFIR 41]; Thomasson, 16, no. 25). Finally, a damaged text from Solva in eastern Noricum mentions a *beneficiarius* of Pontius Laelianus, probably M. Pontius Laelianus Larcius Sabinus, governor of Pannonia superior in the late 140s. The fact that the quantity of funerary texts does not seem to rise in the first half of the second century emphasizes the importance of the *stationes*, and of the practice of dedicating altars at them, for our knowledge of the *beneficiarii*. It also suggests that the volume of altar evidence does not indicate a sharp increase in the actual number of *beneficiarii* in service. This is not surprising. Given that only one *beneficiarius* manned each *statio*, staffing the handful of *stationes* established by Trajan would have required only a comparable handful of *beneficiarii*. The dedication of altars is important, though, for what it reveals about the importance that the men themselves placed on their assignments to and service at the *stationes*. What made duty at the *stationes* something that the men bargained with the gods to achieve, in contrast to duty at the governor’s headquarters? It may be that they sought the opportunity to serve alone, and unsupervised, at locations distant from meddling superiors, particularly locations, like Celeia or Sirmium, in Romanized towns. Or it may be that they valued the responsibility, or power, which such independent duty brought with it. It was, in any case, duty upon which the *beneficiarii* themselves placed a high premium from the very beginning.

### III. The Antonines

Except perhaps at the beginning of his principate, Hadrian seems to have given little or no attention to the *stationes* created by Trajan, and, as noted, it appears that only Celeia and Sirmium remained in operation by about 130. Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, however, more than compensated for any lack of activity on Hadrian’s part. Much of what they did involved reviving and expanding the work begun by Trajan, but they also, and more importantly, went beyond his initiatives to address fundamental questions involving the relationship between the governors and their *beneficiarii* on the one hand and the relationship between imperial authority and gubernatorial authority in managing the details of administration on the other. It is not always clear where the line should be drawn between Antoninus Pius’ actions and Marcus Aurelius’, or even sometimes whether a line should be drawn at all. It is, however, apparent that the important changes that occurred within the staff during this period once again originated in imperial policy rather than in gubernatorial initiative, for not only did these changes occur over the entire empire in a very brief period of time, but they also would appear to have worked to the disadvantage of the governors, limiting their influence over the soldiers who served on their staffs.

Considered as a whole, the Antonine reform of the staff had two dimensions, which may be labelled "operational" and "organizational". The operational dimension centered on the revival and expansion of the *statio* network created by Trajan, and the resulting increase in the deployment of gubernatorial *beneficiarii* to locations around the interiors of the provinces. This is clearly reflected in the epigraphic record. As noted, evidence for *stationes* other than those at Celeia and Sirmium is absent for the period between about 125 and 150. During the 150s, however, there is a very sudden increase in both the number of altars and in the number of sites where they are found. Aside from Celeia and Sirmium, altars datable to the decade between 150 and 160 are known from six locations, in five provinces, including Germania inferior (Rigomagus: CBFIR 87).


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309, no. 40, CBFIR gives his nomen as Ant(isti)us and seems to place his government somewhere 119 and 127, but this is surely too late, since he was *cos. suff.* in 94 and *cos. II* in 105.

30 *CIL* 3.5517 (CBFIR 263; Thomasson, 104, no. 33). Alternatively, this could be a *beneficiarius* of his son, also named M. Pontius Laelianus, who was governor of Moesia inferior under Marcus Aurelius (Thomasson 137-138, no. 99). The text is heavily restored, reading *beneficiario* Pont[i(i) Laeliani con(sularis)], but plainly incorporates the governor’s personal name. Since the governors’ personal names dropped out of titulature between 155 and 170, either man is possible, but it is marginally more likely, since governors’ names were in universal use in *beneficiarius* titulature during the 140s, that the Pontius Laelianus indicated here is the elder.
Furthermore, during the 150s the altar evidence from Celeia also increased sharply, with no fewer than seven altars being dedicated; 31 patterns at Sirmium are harder to establish, but dedications there also seem to have risen from 157 on (Mirković, 252). Evidence for the expansion of beneficiarius operational activity remains plentiful through the 160s. Despite the closing of Celeia in or shortly before 160, 32 and the disruptions caused along the middle Danube by the outbreak of the Marcomannic wars, nine altars can be dated to the period 161-170, not counting any from Sirmium. 33 These altars come from seven sites in six provinces: Germania inferior (Nettersheim: CIL 13.11990 [CBFIR 77]), Germania superior, 34 Noricum (Meclara: AE 1977, 605 [CBFIR 267]), Pannonia inferior (Mursa: AE 1973, 448 [CBFIR 413]), Cappadocia (Dazimon: AE 1968, 505 [CBFIR 695]), and Africa proconsularis. 35 This surge in the number of beneficiarius altars between 150 and 170 marks the beginning of a veritable flood of altars that continues through the late second century and on down to the middle of the third.

As in the early part of the second century, some of these altars are isolated finds and therefore in all likelihood represent only brief activity by gubernatorial beneficiarii at their findspots, but five of the stationes which opened in the years between 150 and 170 have site corpora which show that they became lasting elements of the administrative infrastructure. One was in the mining area of Montana in Moesia inferior. 36 The other four were located in the two Germanies. In Germania inferior, the statio at Nettersheim has dated altars that continue down to 227; 37 at Rigomagus the dated series extends to 242. 38 Both stationes in Germania superior were situated in the agri decumates: Stockstadt, where the first dated altar was set up in 166, was active at least until 208; 39 at Jagsthausen, the altar series at extends from 167 to 186. 40

While altars become much more numerous in the 150s and 160s, funerary monuments remain scarce. Only two beneficiarii who served during these years are commemorated on funerary texts, one of them a beneficiarius of the procurator Usenius Secundus, governor of Noricum ca. 158-160, 41 the other a beneficiarius of M. Valerius Etruscus, governor of Moesia superior, probably during the mid-160s. 42 The absence of any significant increase in the quantity of funerary evidence in the face of the dramatic increase in the number of altars adds weight to the suggestion that increases in altar evidence

31 CIL 3.5172 (CBFIR 224), 5164 (CBFIR 243), 5169 (CBFIR 234), 5161 (CBFIR 220), 5166 (CBFIR 242), 5162 (CBFIR 221), and 5171 (CBFIR 241).

32 The last altar of a beneficiarius procuratoris Augusti at Celeia dates to ca. 160 (CIL 3.5171 [CBFIR 241]). In all likelihood, Celeia was to be replaced by a statio at Praetorium Latobicorum, on the same route between between Italy and the Danube and located nearby, just inside Pannnia superior. The first dated altar from that site is consular-dated to 158 (AE 1944, 134 [CBFIR 338]). The Marcomannic wars thinly disrupted life in the area, though, and afterwards, Celeia was reopened, remaining in operation until 217. Praetorium Latobicorum, meanwhile, was closed, but its dated epigraphic series resumes in 217 when, evidently, it again replaced Celeia. See ZPE 113 (1996) 288.

33 Mirković, 252, assigns eighteen to twenty altars to the period 157-185, but only one bears a consular date.

34 Stockstadt: CIL 13.6634 (CBFIR 193), 6636 (CBFIR 194), 6649 (CBFIR 184); Jagsthausen: 6556, 11762 (CBFIR 115).

35 Hippo Regius: AE 1961.24 (CBFIR 743); this altar was a joint dedication of two beneficiarii.

36 CIL 3.7449 (CBFIR 643). There are five altars from Montana, set up by four beneficiarii. Of the five, only this one is dated, to 155. For a discussion of activity at Montana, with considerable emphasis on the beneficiarii there, see N. B. Rankov, “A Contribution” (n. 1, Add. bibl.).

37 Nettersheim has seven altars, five of which can be dated: CBFIR nos. 76-82.

38 Rigomagus has seven altars, three of which can be dated: CBFIR nos. 84-90.

39 Stockstadt has twenty-one altars dedicated by nineteen beneficiarii, of which thirteen can be dated with some accuracy: CBFIR nos. 178-198.

40 There are five altars in the series, of which three are datable: CBFIR nos. 111-115.

41 CIL 3.11826 (CBFIR 251). The stone was found at Lauriacum. The date of Secundus’ governorship is established by CIL 3.5166 (CBFIR 242), consular-dated to 158.

42 CBFIR 600. Thomasson, 127, no. 40. For a discussion of the dating of Etruscus’ governorship, see CBFIR, p. 460.
result from increases in the number of *stationes* and not necessarily from any substantial expansion of the number of *beneficiarii* in service.

The organizational dimension of the Antonine reforms represents the most radical element of their activity, but presents greater difficulties than its operational counterpart, because the epigraphic evidence documents internal administrative reorganization less directly than it does relatively straightforward operational measures such as the revival and expansion of the *statio* network. It seems, however, that at the heart of the measures taken by Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius lay an effort to alter in a fundamental way the connection between governors and their *beneficiarii*. It is difficult to distinguish measures taken by Pius from those taken by Marcus, but the final result of their efforts was the weakening of the personal bonds between bestower and recipient of the *beneficium* that had existed previously, and the substitution of a relationship that was more institutional in nature, in which *beneficiarii* were attached not to individual governors, but rather to the governorship itself, through assignment to a body that by the end of the second century came to be called the *officium consularis*.

The term *officium* first appears in conjunction with a gubernatorial *beneficiarius* on a text from Tyana in Cappadocia, dated to the early 150s (IGRR 3.6800 [CBFIR 691]). It would seem, therefore, that it was *ca.* 150 at the latest that *officium* came into use as a corporate designation for the body within which the governor’s *beneficiarii* served. That the use of the term was official in nature is suggested by the fact that in this particular inscription the Latin is transliterated into Greek. But at this date the *officium* was still associated personally with the governor, at least in this case, for the *beneficiarius* describes himself as ἐγὼ φίλημα Κασσίου Ἀπολλιναρίου: "from the *officium* of (M.) Cassius Apollinaris,"43 rather than ἐγὼ φίλημα ἵππατικοῦ, "from the *officium* of the governor."

It was between the mid-150s and 170 that the personal bonds that linked *beneficiarii* and governors were addressed. The earliest text documenting this process is an altar from the mining district of Montana in Moesia inferior, consular-dated to 155 (CIL 3.7449 [CBFIR 643]). Its dedicator gives his title without a governor’s name, describing himself simply as *beneficiarius consularis*. Examples of this generic titulature, which links the *beneficiarius* to the governorship rather than to any particular governor, proliferate rapidly from 155 on. One comes from Praetorium Latobicorum in Pannonia superior, consular-dated to 158 (AE 1944, 134 [CBFIR 338]), another from Jagsthausen (CIL 13.6556, 11762 [CBFIR 115]), and three from Stockstadt in Germania superior in the mid-160s;44 further examples include altars from Mursa in Pannonia inferior, consular-dated to 164 (AE 1973, 448 [CBFIR 413]), and from Hidria in Moesia inferior, on the latter of which the title was translated into what became its standard Greek form: βενεφράχτης ὑπατικός (AE 1927, 59 [CBFIR 633], dated to 159/160). After 170, the generic formula was universal: a total of nearly five hundred examples are known from 155 through the end of the third century.45 Most striking of all is the fact that, after 170, only four examples exist of *beneficiarii* using the old-fashioned title incorporating the personal names of governors.46 Clearly, the *beneficiarii* had shed their identification with the individual governors.

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43 For the dates of M. Cassius Apollinaris’ governorship, see G. Alföldy, *Konsulat* (n. 1, Add. bibl.), 197 and 220 Thomasson, 270, no. 28.

44 CIL 13.6649 (CBFIR 184), 6634 (CBFIR 193), 6636 (CBFIR 194).

45 The figure results from a tally of the indices of *CBFIR*, and probably errs on the low side. It does not include any of the *beneficiarii consularis* from the *statio* at Sirmium.

46 In chronological order, they are *CBFIR* 759, dated 4 April 210, from Cuicul in Numidia, an altar set up by a *beneficiarius* Sabatinian(i) Procui leg(ati) Avg(ustorum) pr(o) pr(aetore) co(n)s(ulis) desig(nati); CIL 3.1783 (CBFIR 495), sometime after 212, from Narona in Dalmatia, a heavily restored text of a *beneficiarius* [Senec]ionis [cos]; AE 1971, 218 (CBFIR 22), dated between 216 and 219, from Eburacum in Britannia inferior, a text of a *beneficiarius* Gordian(i); ILS 9258 (AE 1905, 211; *CBFIR* 722), dated 245-246, from Philadelphia in Arabia, a text of a *beneficiarius* Claudi(i) Capitoline. Interestingly, all four of these texts come from provinces that either had no legionary garrison but still used large numbers of *beneficiarii consularis* (Dalmatia), or that had only single-legion garrisons. Two other mid-third century texts from single-legion Arabia appear in the index to *CBFIR* (nos. 727 and 728, dated 260 and 262 respectively), but I have excluded them here because the governors’ names are not used as elements of the men’s titulature. Similarly, several texts of
It is particularly difficult to establish how the Antonine reforms affected such internal administrative matters as the length of time for which men were appointed as beneficiarii and the duration of their assignments at stationes. If the reforms that lay behind the new Antonine titulature had the aim of weakening the personal bonds between beneficiarii and governors, then one of the things they would have sought to change was the appointment system, so that the lengths of beneficiarius appointments no longer coincided with the lengths of the terms of the governors themselves. There is consensus that in the late second- and third-century officium, men appointed as beneficiarius consularis served terms that were, in effect, permanent, unless they were promoted. Such terms, of course, would have helped to focus the men’s loyalties more on the institution in which they served and less on the transient executives who ran that institution. The Antonine reforms offer a plausible context for the introduction of these open-ended appointments. Permanent appointments also would have made it possible to integrate service as a beneficiarius consularis into the legionary career scheme. Comparatively few inscriptions exist on which to reconstruct the place which such service occupied, and debate continues on the interpretation of those inscriptions, but from dated examples of careers it appears that, aside from the first-century example of M. Carantius Macrinus, service as a gubernatorial beneficiarius only began to figure into the career pattern during the late second century, subsequent to and perhaps as a consequence of the Antonine reforms.

If the Antonines did introduce open-ended appointments as a way of weakening the ties between the beneficiarii and the governors, they may have tried initially, as a companion measure, to regulate the lengths of beneficiarius assignments to stationes as well, even though this would have involved them in micromanagement of the details of provincial administration, similar to Trajan’s dictation of the number of beneficiarii that Pliny was to assign to Gavius Bassus and Virdius Gemellinus. Still, there is some evidence that Antoninus Pius, at least, acted to mandate the terms of beneficiarii. The evidence comes from Celeia, the only statio with a sufficiently large corpus of altars from this period to make discussion and comparison of the lengths of assignments possible across the period between 110 and 160. During the years from the founding of the post ca. 110 to ca. 150, eight praesidial procurators are named by beneficiarii serving at Celeia. Six of these procurators are named only by single beneficiarii, which suggests that the assignments of the beneficiarii during this period normally coincided with the governorships of the procurators, lasting about three years. During the 150s, however, four procurators are named, three of them by two beneficiarii each; only the fourth and last is named by a single beneficiarius eius but avoid actually including the governors’ names in the men’s titulature (e.g., AE 1985, 725 [CBFIR 642] and CIL 13.11801 [CBFIR 132]).

Ott discusses the cursus of the beneficiarii on pp. 39-48 of his book and schematizes it in Appendix 1, pp.167-173, and Appendix 4, pp. 178-179. Important earlier discussions of the legionary career include RO2 33-34, and Breeze, BJ 174 (1974) 263ff. Whether service as a beneficiarius formed a stepping stone to the centurionate has been questioned by M. P. Speidel, ZPE 91 (1992) 229-232, challenging the readings of two Syrian inscriptions used as evidence for such promotions (AE 1952.88 [CBFIR 701]; CBFIR 705). Breeze notes that promotion from beneficiarius consularis was impeded by the small number of posts above that rank, and concludes that service as a beneficiarius consularis acted as an “efficiency bar” (BJ 174 [1974] 275-276).

See the chronologically arranged career examples in Ott, Appendix 1.4, 170-172. His dating is often vague, assigning men only to the second century, for example, but clearly, the more closely dated examples of beneficiarii consularis that appear in his list (aside from the first, CBFIR 327, discussed in note 28 above) all fall in the late second or third centuries.

For a full discussion of this material, see R. Dise, “The Beneficiarii (n. 1, Add. bibl.).

CIL 3.5179 (CBFIR 222), 5163 (CBFIR 238), 5177 (CBFIR 239), 5165 (CBFIR 226), 5170 (CBFIR 244), CIL 5173 (CBFIR 231).

Alföldy’s estimate of the average term of a procurator in Noricum: Noricam 79.

T. Flavius Titianus, ca. 153: CIL 3.5172 (CBFIR 224), 5164 (CBFIR 243); Ulpius Victor, ca. 156: 5161 (CBFIR 220), 5169 (CBFIR 234); Usienus Secundus, ca. 158; CIL 3.5162 (CBFIR 221), 5166 (CBFIR 242). The procurators’ dates are taken from Noricum, Appendix V. Thomasson’s dates agree substantially with Alföldy’s (84-85, nos. 16-19). Winkler’s dates differ, but only slightly (53-59).
ciarius (M. Bassaeus Rufus ca. 160: CIL 3.5171 [CBFIR 241]), probably because the post ceased operation part of the way through his governorship. Since beneficiarii serving together appear generally to have dedicated a single altar jointly rather than two individual altars (Ott 111-113; Mirković 253), this phenomenon at Celeia more likely represents a halving in the lengths of beneficiarius assignments than a doubling in manpower at the statio. In the absence of similarly detailed data from other stationes for this period, it is impossible to know whether this abrupt change in assignment lengths at Celeia took place elsewhere, too, and therefore reflects imperial mandate. But several of its features raise the possibility. First, it coincided with the inception of the Antonine reforms at the beginning of the 150s. Second, the reduction in assignment lengths was maintained by three successive procurators. Finally, the reduction was regular across those three procurators’ governorships, that is, under each of them two, and only two, beneficiarii served at Celeia. Had the reduction originated in the initiative of one of the procurators themselves, it need not have been maintained, and certainly not maintained so scrupulously, by his successors.

If Antoninus Pius did attempt to micromanage internal administrative practices in this way, Marcus Aurelius soon abandoned the effort. The evidence is plain that during the late second and third centuries the lengths of statio assignments and similar administrative details varied extensively from province to province and even, in some provinces, from decade to decade. Clearly, variation of this sort indicates that by this time the minuHitiae of day-to-day internal administration were left to the discretion of the governors or their chiefs of staff. Reasons for returning authority over matters of day-to-day administrative matters to the governors are not hard to find. On the one hand, Marcus faced chronic and severe military crises throughout most of his principate, and petty administrative matters would have been a waste of efforts desperately needed on other fronts. It is also possible that the weakening by 170 of the personal bonds between individual beneficiarii and individual governors, as proposed above, rendered further micromanagement unnecessary. Recent scholarship has suggested, and the evidence indicates that in the main it does so correctly, that during the late second and third centuries, governors even enjoyed the authority to establish or close stationes as local needs dictated (Ott 103-104); their receipt of such authority probably also came under Marcus.

The use of seconded soldiers to assist the governors in their many duties had its roots in late Republican practice, and continued to reflect those Republican roots well into the Principate, service to the governor being personal and recruitment ad hoc. Trajan devised a new role for these beneficiarii, using them to man his stationes, a role that was official rather personal in nature. But it was the Antonine reforms that marked the great watershed in the evolution of the governor’s staff away from its informal Republican past and towards its institutional imperial future. The Antonine revival of the statio network inaugurated a century-long era during which these posts, each manned by one or two beneficiarii consularis, proliferated rapidly until they became a frequent presence in the towns and along the roads of the provinces of the imperial frontiers, and an important element in the administrative infrastructure of the empire. Of greatest significance, however, is the Antonines’ reconfiguration of the relationship between the seconded soldiers who manned that infrastructure and the aristocrats who formed its executive echelon. By attaching those soldiers to the governorship rather than to the governor himself, the Antonines strengthened the institutional structure of the administrative apparatus and laid the basis of the careerist and functionally specialized officium consularis of the third century.

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54 See two recent articles by the present author: "The Recruitment" (n. 1, Add. bibl.) and "Variation in Roman Administrative Practice (below, pp. 284-299). I differ sharply from the traditional interpretations on these matters, most recently advanced by Ott, 82-85 and 105-106.