

The emblem on the right-hand shield of the 'Praetorian' relief has a scroll decoration with three rosettes in each quadrant, which is very similar to that of the left-hand bodyguard on the Praeneste relief. The former has the rosettes in the same place as the latter has only shoots, but the flowers may have been painted in. It is tempting to see the scroll emblem as that of Legio II Augusta because a simple 'S' scroll occurs in each quadrant of the shield of a soldier featured on the Arch of Orange which honoured that legion²². Arguably, one might see the Orange example either as a shorthand version of the scroll or an early stage in the development of the design. Again, the two shields on Trajan's Column bearing a scroll device may perhaps be seen as representing a vexillation of Legio II Augusta despatched to that war (Fig. 2); a vexillation from another British legion, Legio XX Valeria Victrix, may also have taken part²³.

The 'Commander' figure

Mingazzini's identification of the 'commander' as the Emperor Claudius may be disputed on a number of grounds:

1. The evidence of the shield emblems, as discussed above, suggests that the two bodyguards are legionaries rather than Praetorians.
2. The 'commander' is depicted as being shorter in stature than the surrounding figures, while emper-

22. R. Amy *et al* 'L'arc d'Orange' *Gallia supp* 15 (1962).

23. Rossi *op cit* fn 9, 93.

24. Cichorius *op cit* fn 16, cast 67.

ors are more often depicted slightly taller than their entourages.

3. The figure of the 'commander' is unusual in that he is holding a spear. The only other instance of an emperor depicted holding a spear occurs on Trajan's Column, where he is addressing a body of troops²⁴ and may be presenting the award of the *hasta pura* to a recipient²⁵.

The alternative identification offered is that with the Plautian family connection with Praeneste, the 'commander' represents the general himself. As Plautius had to wait some six weeks for Claudius to arrive at his Thames-side base and lead the army across the river²⁶, then some Roman naval craft must certainly have sailed up the Thames and one of their number may well have been this vessel.

Conclusions

Various pieces of evidence indicate that the Praeneste galley represents the arrival in Britain of Aulus Plautius, rather than the Emperor Claudius. The attribution of the Louvre 'Praetorian' relief to the Arch of Claudius would imply that the four different shield devices shown represent the four legions which took part in the invasion of Britain, a view reinforced by comparisons with an *aquilifer's* tombstone and a shield device on the Praeneste relief.

25. V. A. Maxfield *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (1981).

26. N. Fuentes 'Of castles and elephants' *London Archaeol* 5 (1985) 90-4, 106-8.

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