Hoplon

The Greek shield of Ancient Greece was called a hoplon or aspis. It was from this word that hoplite (a Greek soldier) is derived.

A hoplon shield was a deeply-dished shield made of wood. Some shields had a thin sheet of bronze on the outer face. This was placed just around the rim. In some periods, the shield was decorated. At other times, it remained undecorated. These large shields were designed for a mass of hoplites to push forwards into the opposing army, and it was their most essential equipment.

Probably the most famous decoration is the Spartan. This was a capital lambda. From the late 5th century BC onward, Athenian hoplites usually used the Little Owl (Athena’s sacred bird). The shields of the Theban hoplites were sometimes decorated with a sphinx, or the club of Herakles.