

## Design your own Roman Shield

Imperial Roman legionaries used a shield called a *scutum* to protect themselves in battle. This was a large, heavy curved oblong or rectangular shield designed to protect soldiers fighting in formation. Its shape allowed it to be interlocked with other shields.

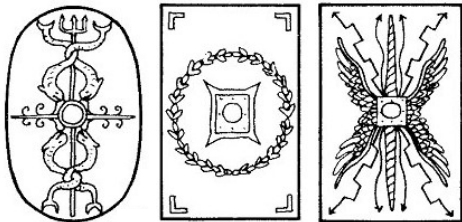
The *scutum* was made from multiple thin sheets of wood glued together (Roman ply board) and covered with canvas or leather with a metal edging rim and boss.

Designs were often painted on the front. One of the most famous is an eagle wing and lightning bolt motif. The eagle was the symbol of the Roman army and a lightning bolt was the symbol of the god Jupiter, the chief deity of Roman state religion. Other symbols included victory wreaths, tridents, images of gods and animals, zodiac symbols, and legion emblems and names.

The emblems of the four legions which conquered Britain in AD 43 were a capricorn (Legio II Augusta & Legio XIV Gemina), a bull (Legio IX Hispania) and a boar (Legio XX Valeria Victrix).

### Why not have a go creating your own Roman shield design?

Below are some Roman shield designs to inspire you.



**Right:** The Dura-Europos shield from Syria is the only surviving example of a Roman *scutum*. It is painted with the Roman iconography of victory, including an eagle with a laurel wreath, winged Victories and a lion.

