

Attic Inscriptions: Education

4. Ancient Greeks at War

Shields and Spears

The ancient Greek world was divided into many different city states.

They sometimes went to war with each other.

The men did the fighting.



When ancient Greeks went to war they often carried shields and spears.

This monument (now in a Museum in Newcastle) from Greece shows a soldier getting ready for battle.

A small figure hands him his spear.



In combat they advanced at their enemies.

This formation is called a phalanx.

The soldiers pointed their spears at the enemy.

They protected themselves with round shields and helmets.



A hoplite's helmet.

From Greece, now
in the Manchester
Museum.

Made out of
bronze, it was very
heavy.



Sometimes Greeks depicted themselves in armour.

Archeades and Polemonikos from Athens (now at the British Museum).

What are the men carrying?



Other depictions of warriors from the British Museum.

Look how the shield is held with a hand-strap.



On this monument a boy on the left seems to be carrying the shield on behalf of the adults.



This vase painting shows how the shield was held.

The strap and handle meant they could be held in the left arm alone.

The right arm was left free to carry the spear.



The Greeks sometimes depicted their Gods and Goddesses as soldiers.

[This is Athena with a helmet and shield.](#)



Athena greets two other figures.

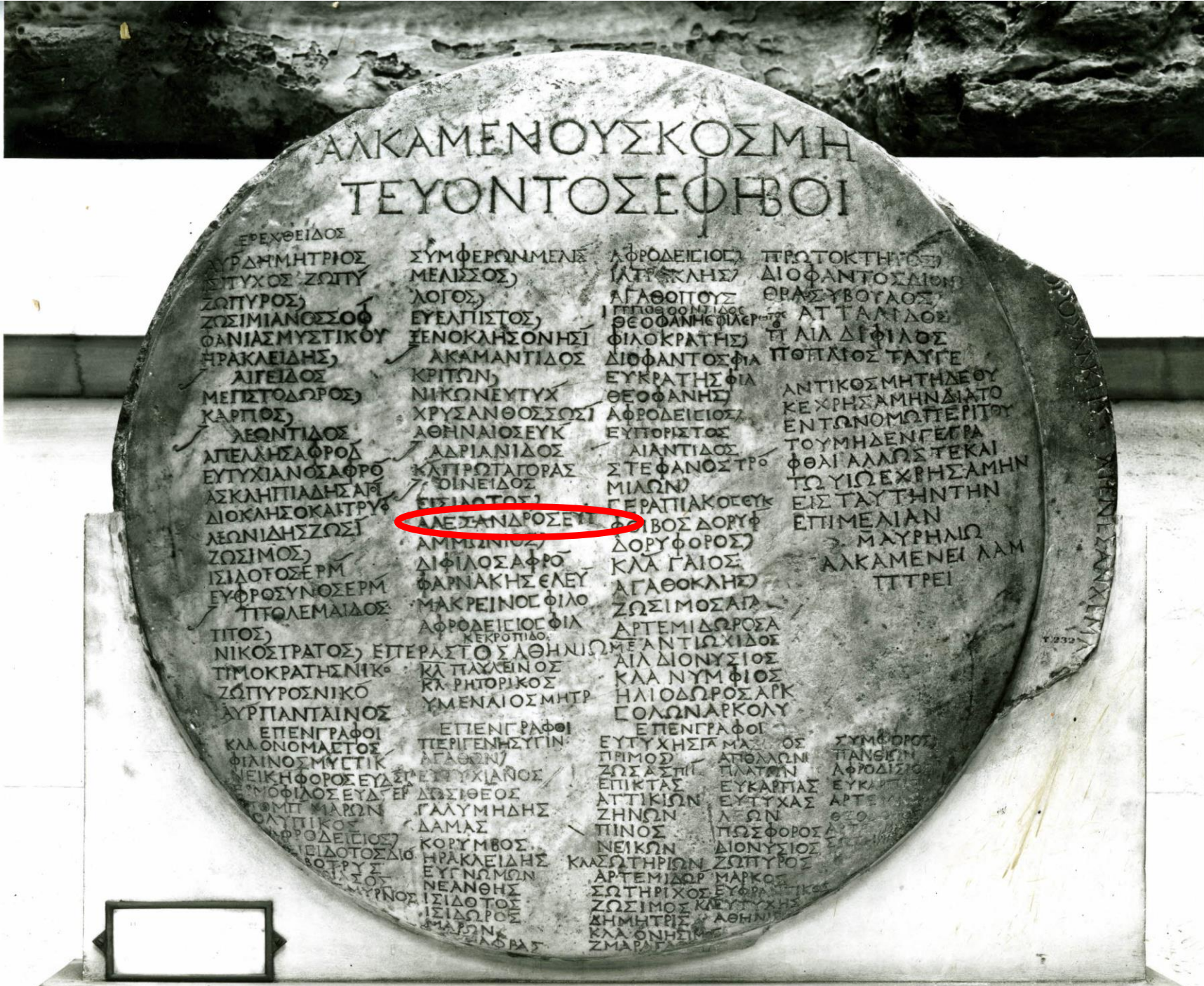


Young Greek men were enrolled as cadets and known as ephebes.

This stone model of a shield lists the names of the cadets enrolled in their class.

Can you read any of the names?

The one ringed in red is 'Alexandroseus': like modern Alexander or Alexandra!



Shields were decorated sometimes with a logo relating to their city-state.



You might like to try our shield-making activity: see
Resource 4b

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