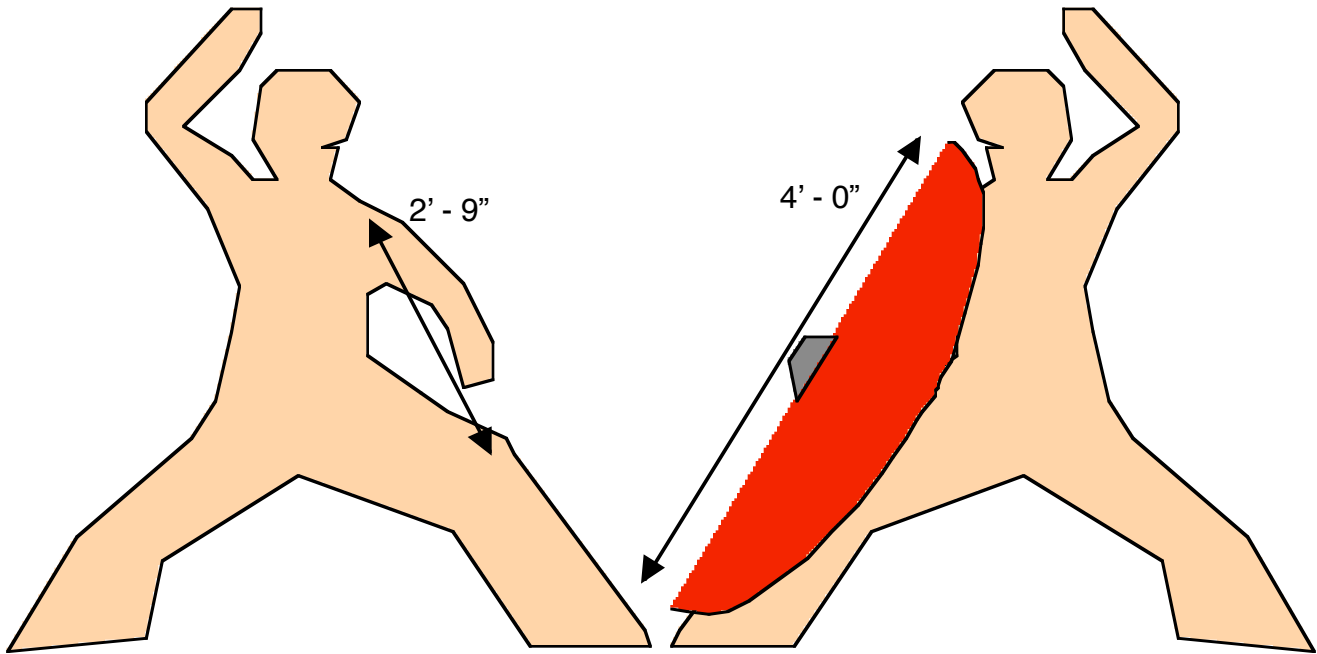


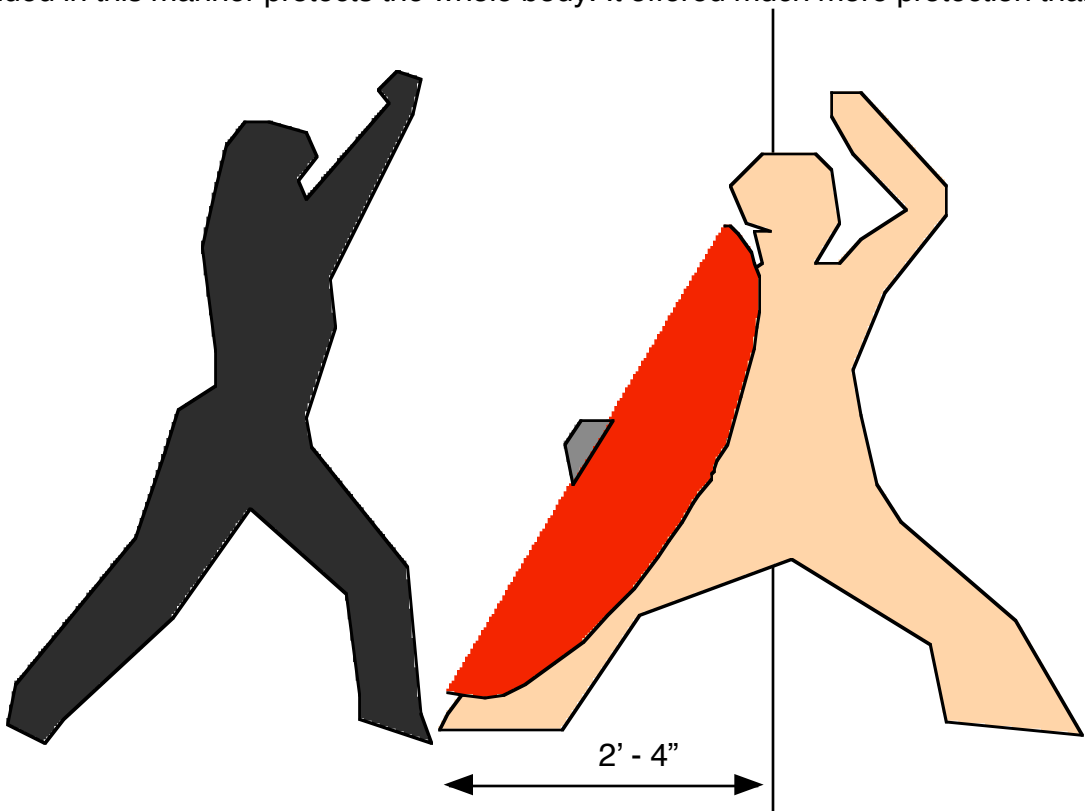
First Stance with Scutum  
Back Side Stance.



At least one source tells us Roman soldiers were on average 5'-4" tall.

As the soldier bends his knee, he reduces the distance between shoulder and knee. For a person 5'-4" tall holding this position, the distance between knee and shoulder would be under 2' -9". The scutum was 4 feet long. Holding the handle of the scutum near hip height, the scutum would extend from about 10" under the knee to about 5" over the shoulder. The soldier only had to move the shield a few inches up or down to parry a blow to either his foot or face.

Notice that a scutum wielded in this manner protects the whole body. It offered much more protection than the greek hoplon.



The head is about 28 inches behind the left toe in comfortable stand, but could be held further back if the soldier pressed his stand further down and back. An opponent trying to hit the head of a roman soldier has to extend his or her body too far forward, falling off balance.

The head of the Roman soldier is the obvious part of the body for an attacker (in black) to hit. But the head is so far back, the attacker will lose balance as he or she tries to reach out. The attacker's dilemma is further complicated by the weight of the attacker's shield. The shield is carried up front, and it is heavy. Thus the weight of the attacker's shield turns against the attacker.

As the attacker tries to reach for the head of the legionnaire, and in order to preserve balance, the attacker may retract his/her shield, tackle the Roman soldier with his/her shield, or lean his/her shield against the Roman Scutum. Either way, the attacker is in trouble. Retracting the shield leaves the attacker's entire body open to a counterattack. On the other hand, if the attacker tackles the Roman Soldier, or leans the weight of his shield on the Roman scutum, the angle of the scutum forces the attacker's shield away from the attacker's head, exposing the attacker to an overstrike to the face or neck.