A SECOND LOOK AT THE MONUMENT OF CHABRIAS

(PLATES 115–116)

TO EUGENE VANDERPOOL ON HIS FORMAL RETIREMENT

In 1961 Anne Pippin Burnett and Colin N. Edmonson published additional fragments of an inscribed monument base, the previously discovered fragments having been published by Eugene Schweigert in 1940.¹ They were enabled by these new fragments to show convincingly that all the fragments were from the base of Chabrias’ statue, which had been erected in the Athenian agora. They argued further that the statue on the base portrayed Chabrias, armed with shield and spear, in a kneeling position.² This latter point, however, is open to question insofar as the evidence in Diodoros Sikeliotes XV, 32, 5 is concerned. The question here is whether the stance of Chabrias as described by Diodoros corresponds to the posture of Chabrias’ statue as suggested by Burnett and Edmonson.³ If any difference between these two postures exists, then the evidence of Diodoros must either be dispensed with or explained away, or another restoration of the statue put forward.

Diodoros in XV, 32 narrates the first invasion of Boiotia by Agesilaos in 378/7 B.C. Chabrias’ mercenary troops, together with a force of Theban hoplites,⁴ had fortified an oblong crest of hill and stood awaiting Agesilaos’ attack. Agesilaos launched a frontal assault uphill, in the face of which Ἀβρίας δ’ ὁ Ἀθηναῖος τῶν

² Hesperia, XXX, 1961, p. 89.
³ The monument base itself is so fragmentary that only its general shape is clear. Its approximate dimensions, as given in Hesperia, XXX, 1961, pp. 77–78, figs. 1-3, are: overall length of the base ca. 1.08 m.; height of base ca. 0.52 m.; and width of front face, depending on the restoration, either ca. 0.44 m., or ca. 0.79 m. I examined the base (Agora I 994) on July 31, 1971 and observed that the fragments of the solid base are thin pieces of marble which originally formed the outside face of the block upon which the statue stood. Naturally, therefore, there were no cuttings in any of the fragments that could help determine the pose of the statue itself.
⁴ J. K. Anderson, A.J.A., LXVII, 1963, pp. 411-413 has also come out against this interpretation, basing his opinion primarily on the literary evidence. My especial thanks to Miss Harrison, who drew my attention to this article after having read an early draft of this paper.
⁵ See also Polyainos II, 1, 2.
μοσθοφόρων ἀφηγούμενος παρήγγειλε τοῖς στρατιώταις δέχεσθαι τοὺς πολεμίους κατα-
πεφρονηκότως ἀμα καὶ ἐν τῇ τάξει μένοντας, καὶ τὰς ἀσπίδας πρὸς τὸ γόνυ κλίνοντας σὺν
ὀρθῷ τῷ δόρατι μένειν.⁵ Agesilaos, suitably impressed, retreated. This description is
echoed by Cornelius Nepos in his Life of Chabrias, I, 2: obnixoque genu scuto,
proiceta hasta impetum excipere hostium docuit. This incident was so striking and
the manoeuvre so successful that Chabrias selected this pose for the statues granted
to him by the Athenian demos⁶ and/or the statue publicly erected in the Athenian
agora.⁷

Burnett and Edmonson interpret Chabrias’ manoeuvre thusly: “In 378/7 Chab-
rias had turned Agesilaos back from Thebes by ordering his men . . . to wait for
the enemy each on one knee with his shield resting against the other knee and his
spear held in readiness.”⁸ This rendering, I suggest, exceeds both the Greek of Dio-
doros and the Latin of Nepos, and any restoration of Chabrias’ statue based on it
is unacceptable. I should prefer for the Diodoros text something a bit more mundane,
inlegant and literal: “Chabrias the Athenian, leading mercenaries, passed the word
to his soldiers to await the enemy contemptuously at the same time both remaining
in formation and also leaning their shields against their knees to stand with upright
spears.” Nepos I would translate: “he instructed them to meet the enemy’s attack
steadfastly with shield on knee and spears extended upright.” There is nothing in
Diodoros or Nepos about troops waiting on one knee, while their shields rest on the
other knee; therefore the authors’ paraphrase of the ancient evidence must be
abandoned.

The point of this entire episode is that while Agesilaos is mounting his attack,
Chabrias’ troops are standing at rest, a position roughly comparable to the “at ease”
position of modern armies. Chabrias’ men are standing in a position that permits
them to be ready for action at a moment’s notice, but still allows them to take their
ease. This matter of being at rest, as though they were oblivious to Agesilaos’ attack,
constitutes the καταπεφρονηκότως of Chabrias’ manoeuver. The casual attitude of
Chabrias’ line contrasts with the bravado of Agesilaos’ hoplite-phalanx making its
uphill attack. It was simply Chabrias’ graphic way of calling Agesilaos’ obvious bluff.⁹

Thus Chabrias’ men were standing upright with spear-butt on the ground and
spearhead upwards and with their shields leaning against their knees.¹⁰ Nevertheless,

⁵ Diodoros, XV, 32, 5 (ed. Vogel). That Chabrias’ men stood at rest is stated explicitly by
Polyainos (II, 1, 2): ἀλλὰ μένειν ἡσυχή.
⁶ Diodoros, XV, 33, 4.
⁷ Nepos, Chabrias, I, 3.
⁸ Hesperia, XXX, 1961, p. 89.
⁹ Obvious in the sense that no general ordered heavy-armed troops to attack uphill against a
line of enemy hoplites drawn up for battle. The tactical disadvantage of the attacking phalanx
is immediately apparent. For additional information on the rest position, see J. K. Anderson, Military
¹⁰ The shield could be leaned against the knee in two ways: (1) the shield-rim itself could rest
the authors point out three illustrations from sculpture and numismatics of their proposed restoration of a kneeling hoplite, and in addition they cite a metaphor of Lykoleon found in Aristotles’ Rhetoric, 1411b.\(^\text{11}\) Lykoleon speaks of the Athenians as οἴδε τὴν ἰκετηρίαν αἰσχυνθέντες αὐτοῦ, τὴν εἰκόνα τὴν χάλκην, but the problem is what Lykoleon meant by the phrase “his suppliant, the bronze likeness.”\(^\text{12}\) After all, there were several different ways in which a person could supplicate someone. Often, indeed, the suppliant clasps the knees of the person whom he is supplicating;\(^\text{13}\) but this is certainly not the only form of supplication and not necessarily the most common one at that. An extremely common way of supplication was simply to sit at an altar or in a temple. For instance when Themistokles was a fugitive, he took Admetos’ child in his arms and sat by the hearth, and Thucydides adds that this was the greatest form of supplication.\(^\text{14}\) True enough, Plutarch (Them., XXIV, 3) considered this type of supplication peculiar and extraordinary and said that it was most sacred among the Molossians. Even so, Dio Cassius (LXVIII, 21, 2-3) speaks of a man with his son supplicating Trajan; and in Aischyllos’ Suppliant Maidens, 189-192, the girls are told to sit around an altar with suppliant boughs in their left hands. Both Herodotos (III, 48) and Thucydides (I, 24, 7) tell of suppliants taking refuge in temples. Finally, Euripides, Suppliants, 93-94, 102-103, describes Aithra sitting at an altar surrounded by suppliant women holding boughs in their hands.

Furthermore, a man while standing could supplicate someone. In Sophokles’ Antigone, 1227-1230, the king comes forward to Haimon and supplicates while still standing; and similarly in the Odyssey, XV, 256-277, Theoklumenos stands by Telemachos and supplicates him. Even on the battlefield a person could supplicate his pursuers by throwing down his arms and stretching forth his hand towards them.\(^\text{15}\) There are many other cases of people becoming suppliants, either with or without a bough, while standing.\(^\text{16}\) Thus, the literary evidence in the Rhetoric is indecisive, simply because there were several different types of suppliant attitudes.

Burnett and Edmonson turn to the western pediment of the temple of Aphaia at Aigina and point to Figure M there as a pose somewhat similar to the one that

against the knee, as in the vase painting cited below in note 25; (2) the shield-rim could rest against the thigh while the inside of the convex shield leaned against the slightly bent knee. The latter is the more common, and is more frequently portrayed. The reason for it is the size of the hoplite shield, which had an average diameter of 0.80 to 1.00 m.; A. Snodgrass, Early Greek Armour and Weapons, Edinburgh, 1964, p. 64.

\(^{11}\) Hesperia, XXX, 1961, p. 89 and note 45.

\(^{12}\) Anderson, A.J.A., LXVII, 1963, pp. 412-413, correctly interprets the meaning of this passage: “the stance of the statue was not supplicating.” As I hope to show, the phrase “suppliant attitude” is so vague as to be meaningless.

\(^{13}\) Sophokles, Philoktetes, 485; Aias, 1170-1175; Euripides, Medea, 710.

\(^{14}\) Thucydides, I, 136, 3-137, 1.

\(^{15}\) Herodotos, VII, 233; Thucydides, III, 67, 5; Plato, Apology, 39A.

\(^{16}\) Herodotos, I, 45, V, 51, VII, 141; Demosthenes, XXVII, 68; Euripides, Ion, 468.
they suggest for the statue of Chabrias.\textsuperscript{17} To this Figure could be added Figure B from the same pediment.\textsuperscript{18} In the case of the pedimental sculpture, of course, the pose of both these figures is determined by their positions on the pediment.\textsuperscript{19} They must fit into the decreasing space in the angle of the tympanum, and this factor in turn determines their kneeling stance. Added to this aspect is the fact that neither Figure M nor Figure B corresponds to the evidence of Diodoros. Quite apart from the consideration that these figures are not standing, neither figure rests his shield on his knee, but rather holds it up to protect his body; and furthermore the spears of both warriors point downwards. Moreover, Figure B illustrates the one great weakness of this kneeling pose, in that the shield masks most of the figure. In the pedimental arrangement at Aigina, to be sure, this weakness is inconsiderable due to the wealth of vitality and movement of the entire composition. Figure B is successful there because it is part of a whole and was not intended to stand alone as an independent piece of sculpture. Finally, both figures are very active and are seen in the rigors of combat, and this action itself is diametrically opposed to the relaxed but vigilant attitude that Chabrias ordered his troops to assume. Thus, Figure M does not correspond to the evidence of Diodoros and can therefore be dismissed.

On the other hand, the authors’ second parallel for the suggested pose of Chabrias’ statue excellently and exactly illustrates their restoration. They draw attention to a coin from Klazomenai which shows a nude hoplite crouched down behind his shield, which rests on his left knee, while he kneels on his right knee and holds his spear pointing ahead of him.\textsuperscript{20} The composition is handsome and very effective on the coin, but the same cannot be said of the same pose in sculpture in the round. On the coin the figure is meant to be seen only in profile, whereas the same composition in free-standing sculpture could be seen from all sides. As long as the statue was seen from the sides, it, like the warrior on the coin, would be very effective. But as viewed from the front, the figure would be entirely covered by his shield, the only part of his body visible being part of the head from nose to crown and part of the right arm holding the spear. Yet since the monument base, fragmentary though it is, is long and narrow, it means that this frontal view of the statue is made the central focal point. This arrangement would give the least effective view of the statue greatest emphasis and would thus be glaringly ineffective. Although this warrior covered by his shield is very pleasing on the coin, he is not effective when translated into sculpture.

\textsuperscript{17} Hesperia, XXX, 1961, p. 89, note 45.

\textsuperscript{18} A. Furtwängler, \textit{Aegina, das Heiligtum der Aphaia}, Munich, 1906, I, p. 207. Recently Dieter Ohly, “Die Neuaufstellung der Ägineten,” \textit{Arch. Anz.}, LXXXI, 1966, pp. 515-528, has suggested new restorations and groupings for these pedimental sculptures, including a new arrangement for Figure B. Ohly, \textit{ibid.}, p. 521, places the warrior more towards the middle of the pediment, and the warrior is no longer kneeling. Perhaps Figure M should also be placed nearer the center.

\textsuperscript{19} E.g. Furtwängler, \textit{Aegina}, I, p. 206, fig. 148 and II, pl. 104.

The warrior on the coin does not conform to Diodoros’ description in his stance, since he is kneeling, nor in his attitude, which is tense and poised for action. Chabrias, however, had ordered his men to await the enemy καταπεφρονηκότως, whereas the warrior on the coin is anything but contemptuous; he is prepared to meet the enemy and he obviously means business.

A different interpretation of his crouching stance, however, can be put forward. I suggest that the warrior on the coin is prepared to face a cavalry assault. An illustration of this tactic comes from the Battle of Falkirk in A.D. 1298, which was in part a battle between English cavalry and Scottish pikemen. This parallel is not so very outlandish in view of the similarity in offensive arms between the Greek hoplite and the mediaeval pikeman. The part of the battle that concerns us is the English cavalry attack through Darnrig Moss against Wallace’s Scottish pikemen. “But the great schiltron [great masses] of pikemen easily flung back the onset of the horsemen. The front ranks [of the Scotsmen] knelt with their spear-butts fixed in the earth; the rear ranks levelled their lances over their comrades’ heads.” This parallel is inexact, since the Scotsmen carried no shields; but the stance of the pikemen at Falkirk is similar, in my opinion, to that of the warrior on the Klazomenian coin.

The last parallel mentioned by the authors is the statue of a Roman soldier in Florence. The soldier kneels on his left knee and holds his left arm down at his side. On his left arm he holds his shield so that it covers his left side from biceps to thigh. In his right hand he holds his spear in an upright position. The soldier does hold his spear upright, but otherwise this statue conforms to Diodoros’ evidence not at all. The soldier is not standing, nor does his shield rest against his knee. It cannot be used to illustrate Chabrias’ manoeuvre.

At this point it would be useful to look again at the disposition of Chabrias’ mercenaries as they awaited Agesilaos’ attack. If there is any doubt that Chabrias’ men are at the rest position as they stand with spear held upwards and shield leaned against the knee, one need only look at an incident described by Xenophon (Anabasis, I, 5, 13). At one point in the March of the Ten Thousand, a dispute broke out in Kyros’ camp when Menon’s troops tried to stone Klearchos to death. Klearchos immediately rode back to his camp καὶ εὐθὺς παραγγέλλει εἰς τὰ ὅπλα· καὶ τοὺς μὲν ὄπλιτας αὐτοῦ ἐκέλευσε μείναι τὰς ἀσπίδας πρὸς τὰ γόνατα θέντας. Klearchos next took

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21 C. W. C. Oman, A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages, New York, 1924, II, p. 80. Interesting in this connection is a scene from a kylix in Boston attributed to Epiktetos. An unarmed warrior, probably an archer, crouches and holds his shield in front of him. He faces left and his shield-device, a charging horseman, faces right. The composition strongly suggests opposition, as though the crouching warrior were fighting the horseman on his shield. See L. D. Caskey and J. D. Beazley, Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Oxford, 1931, I, pp. 7-8, no. 9, pl. III.

his Thracian peltasts and his cavalry and marched against Menon. The manoeuvre ordered by Klearchos is the same as that ordered by Chabrias; the very wording of the two passages is nearly identical. As in the case with Chabrias' men, Klearchos' troops stood in a comfortable position, while ready at once to swing into action should that be necessary. Since the Thracian troops had advanced towards Menon's camp, there was little likelihood that Klearchos' hoplites would see immediate action, and so they could stand at ease. But at the same time, they had to be ready for action in case Menon's hoplites attacked the Thrakians. As in the case of Diodoros' passage, Xenophon's Greek says nothing of hoplites in a kneeling position.

This "at ease" position was so common to the hoplite-phalanx that figures in this position are frequently encountered in vase painting. An extremely close parallel is the figure of Athena as depicted by the Oionokles Painter (Pl. 115, a).\(^2\) Athena is portrayed in helmet with cheek-pieces up, her spear leaning against her left shoulder and her shield leaning against her left knee, while she writes upon a tablet. An almost exact parallel to this stance comes from an Athenian white-ground lekythos.\(^2\) The warrior, wearing a helmet with the cheek-pieces up, holds a spear upright in his right hand and his shield leans against his right knee. One more fine example of this pose depicts a young hoplite in armor with his spear upright in his left hand and his shield resting on his greaved left knee (Pl. 115, b).\(^5\) In fact vase painting abounds with such scenes, although generally the hoplite is in a relaxed position as he bids farewell to his family.\(^6\) Nevertheless, there are numbers of other representations which clearly illustrate the "at ease" position in a different context: scenes of the hoplite arming, or of the hoplite preparing to go into battle, or of the hoplite lifting his shield from its position at his knee.

Two arming scenes appear on a kylix in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.\(^7\) The action in the indoor scene involves a group of young warriors arming for battle; the figure on the left, of which only the lower part remains, holds a spear in his right hand and leans his shield against his left knee. Or possibly he could have held the shield against his left knee with his left hand; certainty is impossible since the top


27 Caskey and Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings*, I, pp. 26-27, no. 31, pl. XI. That these figures with their shields on their knees are not merely conventional can be seen when they are compared with the third figure from the left in an Amazon arming scene; D. v. Bothmer, *Amazons in Greek Art*, Oxford, 1957, pl. LIX, no. 1.
of the shield is missing. The other arming scene takes place out of doors; the warrior on the left, again only his lower part preserved, stands in a comfortable position, holding a spear in his right hand and leaning his shield against his left thigh and knee. Similar to these two scenes is one in which three Amazons are depicted by Hypsis preparing for battle. The Amazon on the left stands ready in the rest position, while the one on the right prepares to pick up her shield.

Two other representations show the hoplite moving from the rest position to one of readiness. The hoplite did so by bending down, picking up his shield and putting his arm through the arm-band. He next picked up his spear and stood squarely facing his enemy. In the first instance, in a scene from the eponymous vase of the Niobid Painter, the hoplite between Herakles and Athena stands in full armor with spear held upright in his right hand. He places his left hand on the shield-rim, which rests against his bent left knee, as he prepares to lift the shield. The position of his left hand indicates clearly that he is picking up the shield and he is using his knee to help lift it from the ground. The second illustration, by the Thalia Painter, depicts a warrior with upright spear in his right hand reaching down and putting his left hand into his shield, which has obviously been leaning against his left knee. These last two scenes show how a hoplite prepared for action after being at rest.

From sculpture comes a number of direct parallels, statues of standing soldiers with their shields leaned against the front of the knee, as well as an even larger number of quite similar representations of standing warriors with their shields leaned against the side of the knee. The difference between the two types may be merely a matter of aesthetics. For instance, the figures with their shields in front of them constitute a less effective synthesis, since the large blank surface of the shield obscures part of the figure, although adding nothing to the composition. But this defect could be avoided by having the figure hold his shield in such a way that it covered only part of his body, the larger part of it being away from the body. More than one sculptor tried to solve this problem by having his figure hold his shield, which faces the viewer, next to his body so that the shield does not mask the body at all. Nevertheless, all these postures echo the same theme of a warrior at rest while holding shield and spear.

28 Beazley, ARV², I, p. 30, no. 1; for a photograph, v. Bothmer, Amazons, pl. LXXII, no. 2.
32 Ibid., VIII, p. 9, no. 5901; X, pp. 54-55, no. 7331 (figure of Minerva); XI, pp. 64-65, no. 7751 (figure of Minerva); É. Espérandieu, Recueil général des bas-reliefs, statues, et bustes de la Germanie romaine, Paris and Brussels, 1931, pp. 147-148, no. 224 (figure of Minerva, an excellent example).
33 Espérandieu, Gaule romaine, III, pp. 161-168, no. 2067 (especially fig. 4 on p. 165); VII,
The sculpture that exactly depicts the stance described by Diodoros is identical in its essential features to the representations on vase paintings. The relief from Darmstadt is an excellent parallel and in fact has much in common with the resting warriors on vase paintings. In this relief Minerva is seen, as are the majority of hoplites on vases, more from the side than front; whereas in other reliefs the problem of the cumbersome shield is solved by having part of the shield cover the side of the figure.

In free-standing sculpture the warrior never has his shield leaned against the front of his knee, but instead it is always parallel to the body, and thus seen in profile. Indeed from sculpture in the round there are no exact parallels to Chabrias' stance, although a large number of statues are similar in attitude. One such example in the rest position may have classical or Hellenistic origins. This piece is a colossal statue of Mars in full armor, including upright spear in his right hand and shield by his left leg. The pose here is much the same as that of the Athena in the Palazzo dei Conservatori and is quite similar to that of the statue of Athena in the Vatican. Still other statues in this pose include an imperial statue in the Lansdowne collection; a statue of Hygieia, perhaps copied from a Greek original of the second half of the fourth century B.C.; and to a lesser extent the Athena in Brocklesby Park, Lincolnshire. It is surely significant that so many of these statues are Roman copies of original Greek works.

Although these statues give an idea of the stance of Chabrias' statue, they are not exact parallels. Chabrias would have been portrayed on the base with his left foot advanced and weight resting chiefly on his right foot. He would have held his spear in his right hand, with the spear-butt grounded in front of his body. His shield would have been resting at his left knee, with the shield-rim against his thigh while the inside of the convex shield leaned against his knee. The shield would have been either parallel to the body or somewhat at an angle across the knee (Pl. 116). The

p. 287, no. 5750, pp. 311-313, no. 5790; VIII, p. 11, no. 5905; X, p. 39, no. 5750. Greek examples include the relief in the Tegea Museum (no. 140), and the grave relief of Herodoros from the Akropolis Museum, W. Fuchs, *Die Skulptur der Greichen*, Munich, 1969, p. 534, no. 626.

Examples cited above, notes 32, 33.


Amelung, *Die Sculpturen*, I, pp. 775-777, no. 683, pl. 83.

latter position for the shield would thus cut across two planes, so that whether the statue was viewed from the front or the side, the shield would still be seen at an angle.\(^\text{42}\) Perhaps also the left leg was bent with the foot resting on a rock to symbolize Chabrias on the mountaintop.\(^\text{43}\) This very stance of one foot resting on an elevation was portrayed by the Niobid Painter \(^\text{44}\) and was a hallmark of Lysippos.\(^\text{45}\)

The conclusions to be drawn from this material are clear. First and above all, Chabrias' maneuver as described by Diodoros did not involve kneeling hoplites; Chabrias' men were standing upright while Agesilaos attacked. Secondly, examples of kneeling warriors in Greek and Roman art are comparatively rare, and only one direct parallel to the proposed restoration of Burnett and Edmonson was found, and that from a coin. On the other hand, representations of standing hoplites at rest abound in ancient vase painting and sculpture, and a considerable number of these examples date to the fourth century B.C. either directly or indirectly. Furthermore a standing hoplite with one foot advanced and a shield either parallel to his body or at an angle across the knee makes good use of a long, narrow base. For that matter, a base \(\text{ca. 1.08 m. long and ca. 0.79 m. wide} \) is not unusually long and narrow.\(^\text{46}\) Indeed since the base is only some 1.08 m. long, but certainly not much longer, a standing figure would fit the base much more comfortably than a kneeling figure. For if the kneeling hoplite was a life-sized statue of a man of medium height (for example, five feet, nine inches tall), the distance between his advanced left foot, upon which the shield leaned, and his right leg and foot, upon which the figure rested, would be \(\text{ca. 1.10 m.} \) This length, though arbitrary, is a reasonable approximation. Hence, a figure of middle height in a kneeling position would be cramped on this base. These things in themselves may not be enough to prove beyond all doubt that Chabrias' statue stood upright on its base, but the evidence is far better for this restoration than for a kneeling figure.

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**Plate 2.** Courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. H. L. Pierce Fund.

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\(^{42}\) A base \(\text{ca. 0.79 m. wide} \) is sufficient for such a restoration.

\(^{43}\) This was suggested to me by Miss Harrison, who points out that this convention was widely used in vase painting.

\(^{44}\) Above, p. 472 and note 29.


\(^{46}\) *Hesperia*, XXX, 1961, p. 90 and note 46.


JOHN BUCKLER: A SECOND LOOK AT THE MONUMENT OF CHABRIAS
Proposed Restoration of the Monument of Chabrias.

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