

Basic Detail Report



Shield

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Amhara

Medium

Leather

Description

This is a shield made by the Amhara peoples from the Amhara region in Ethiopia sometime in the 20th Century.

Shields were typically made from hippopotamus, buffalo, or rhinoceros hides. To make an Amahara shield, the creator would stretch animal hide over a wooden mound, fasten it with pegs, scrape, pound, and oil the hide, decorate the shield with line etchings, and finally add embellishments of silver, gold, or bronze. Another common trait of some Amhara shields, as seen in this object, was the thick bulbous rim which was used to prevent a spear tip or blade from sliding off during battle. Although shields were used for warfare, they also acted as prestigious symbols of honor for warriors. Shields with valued goods (such as silver, semi-precious stones, and lion’s mane) were occasionally rewarded to warriors by the provincial governors for bravery in battle.

Dimensions

19 × 18 3/8 × 7 in. (48.3 × 46.7 × 17.8 cm)