

Basic Detail Report



Cuirass

Date

mid to late 20th Century

Primary Maker

Dani

Medium

Probably bast fiber

Description

Collected in 1989 in the Papua Province (Irian Jaya) of Indonesia. This object bears a striking resemblance to a bast fiber woven shield already in our Oceanic Collection (2015.7.7). Rather than held, the shape of this item

indicates that it would have been worn around the torso to protect a warrior's mid-section. Rather than use large shields like the Asmat-speaking peoples of Indonesia's Papua Province, the Dani people of the Baliem Valley tend to use closely-woven rattan cuirasses to protect their torsos from arrows. Groups further east of the Dani such as the Mek and Ok Sibil people tend to use thicker weaves woven like basketry of thicker rattan. Many of the surrounding groups trade for these items, explaining how the little-documented Kimyal people Jean Brenner acquired this cuirass from could have come to possess a typically Dani, Mek, or Ok Sibil item. Though originally intentioned for war, these cuirasses are worn by males for certain ceremonial occasions.

Dimensions

19 1/4 × 17 × 2 5/8 in. (48.9 × 43.2 × 6.7 cm)