



Shield

Date

late 19th Century

Primary Maker

Sukuma

Medium

Leather and wood

Description

Though the lobe-shaped shield of the Sukuma is far better known, this buffalo hide shield is also found among this largest tribal group of southern Tanzania. Setting themselves apart from other groups in Tanzania, for at least the past 200 years the Sukuma only ever existed as loose clans without a central ruling structure. The Sukuma are an agrarian society. Curiously, there is no supporting frame for this shield save for the central beam. This is something seen in Sukuma's ceremonial shields, but unexplained for a shield which likely served a more

utilitarian function. The dome-shaped protrusion at the center of the shield allows for the bisecting wooden beam to be grasped.

Dimensions

46 7/8 × 26 × 4 3/4 in. (119.1 × 66 × 12.1 cm)