



Shield

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Toposa

Medium

Leather and wood

Description

The Toposa of southeastern South Sudan and neighboring Turkana of northern Kenya both relied primarily on these roughly rectangular shields. Neither Nilotic group particularly found prestige in warfare, but they still maintained active militaries should any of the usual motivations for war boil over. There is some question as to which groups exactly manufactured these shields and which ones traded for them, but the ability of Turkana craftsmen in creating other weapons explains why exactly these have commonly been attributed to them. The

warping on these shields—which almost appears as if the shields have shrunk on the finest examples—is very much intentional. The Turkana also made iron shields in the exact same shape.

Dimensions

15 3/4 × 9 1/2 × 5 in. (40 × 24.1 × 12.7 cm)