



## Shield (Wörrumbi)

### Date

20th Century

### Primary Maker

Mendi

### Medium

Wood and fiber

### Description

War was a common feature in Mendi society until at least the middle of the 20th Century. In combat, the Mendi have had three distinct types of shields. Based on the form and general design of this shield it is a wörrumbi, a medium-sized, elongated ovoid bowman's shield. There were both lighter and heavier variants, but the wörrumbi was favored as it allowed for a happy medium of mobility and defense. This shield appears to be carved from a hardwood strong enough to shatter or deflect bone or palm arrows on impact. Abstract, geometric designs are

most common, and the semi-circles seen on this shield as well as the central band carved in relief are also common fixtures. Generally, incising rather than pigmenting shields have been seen more in the neighboring Wola of Nembi Valley, but this can be explained by proximity. For example, the bark shields of other groups in Papua New Guinea's eastern highlands also made their way to the Mendi.

### Dimensions

49 × 19 1/2 × 2 in. (124.5 × 49.5 × 5.1 cm)