

Finch & C^o



CENTRAL AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, WESTERN ZANDE/BANDIA WICKER WORK SHIELD

A CENTRAL AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, WESTERN ZANDE/BANDIA WICKER WORK

WARRIORS SHIELD

LATE 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 91CM HIGH, 38CM WIDE – 35¾ INS HIGH, 15 INS WIDE

LITERATURE

ZANDE SHIELDS VARY IN SIZE AND WICKER DESIGN AND ARE REGARDED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT IDENTIFICATION MARKINGS OF A WARRIOR. THE EXPRESSIVE ABSTRACT DESIGNS OF THE SHIELD WERE MADE WITH GREAT CARE WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO THE ARTISTICALLY DECORATED HANDLE BOARD. MADE OUT OF SPLIT RATTAN CANE THE STRENGTHENING OF THE SHIELDS WAS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH PLACING A TIGHTLY BRAIDED ROD COMPLETELY AROUND THE RIM. THE SHIELDS WERE ALWAYS STRIKINGLY DECORATED AND THE WICKERWORK PATTERNS ENABLED WARRIORS AT NIGHT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FRIEND AND FOE. THE OBSCURING OF THESE IDENTIFICATION MARKINGS IN BATTLE WAS SEVERELY PUNISHED. HOWEVER, THERE EXIST NO ACCURATE REFERENCES REGARDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ORNAMENTATION.

REGARDED AS AN ORGANISED MILITARY POWER, THE ZANDE WERE FORBIDDEN, WITH THE ADVENT OF COLONIAL RULE, TO CARRY WEAPONS AND THEN THE MANUFACTURE OF THEIR SHIELDS. WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF FIREARMS AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY THE MILITARY MIGHT OF THE ZANDE WAS FINALLY BROUGHT TO A COLLAPSE.