Finch & Co



THREE EAST AFRICAN SOMALI GIRAFFE OR ORYX HIDE WAR SHIELDS

THREE EAST AFRICAN SOMALI GIRAFFE OR ORYX HIDE WAR SHIELDS
ERITREA PROVINCE, AFAR OR ESA PEOPLES
19TH CENTURY
SIZE : 36 CM DIA. (MAX) – 14 INS DIA. (MAX)

LITERATURE

FOR A SOMALI WARRIOR OWNING A SHIELD WAS A MATTER OF HONOUR AND TO LOOSE OR SELL IT WOULD BRING HIM DISGRACE. UPON DEATH THE SHIELD WAS LAID ON HIS GRAVE. THESE SMALL ROUND SHIELDS WERE WORN EITHER HIGH ON THE SHOULDER OR ON THE LOWER ARM LEAVING THE HAND FREE. THEY ARE RENOWNED FOR THEIR CAREFUL WORKMANSHIP AND DELICATELY EXECUTED AND GRACEFULLY ABSTRACT ENGRAVED DESIGNS.
UNUSUALLY THESE THREE SHIELDS ALSO HAVE ENGRAVED DECORATION TO THE REVERSE SURROUNDING A STURDY SEMI-CIRCULAR HANDLE.