Finch & Co



AN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL WESTERN DESERT SHIELD

AN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL WESTERN DESERT SHIELD
CARVED WITH A GEOMETRIC ZIG-ZAG PATTERN AND DECORATED WITH RED AND WHITE OCHRE. AGED PATINA. AN OLD COLLECTION LABEL IN INK TO THE REVERSE READING: 'AUSTRALIAN SHIELD'
19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 81CM LONG, 14CM WIDE – 31¾ INS LONG, 5½ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THERE ARE TWO MAIN TYPES OF ABORIGINAL SHIELD, THE BLOCKING AND THE PARRYING TYPES, BUT THERE ARE MANY VARIATIONS AMONG THEM. NARROW HARDWOOD SHIELDS, USUALLY ELABORATELY DECORATED ARE USED FOR PARRYING SPEARS AND OTHER WEAPONS, AND ARE MADE THROUGHOUT SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIA. INTERMEDIATE TYPES OF SHIELD OCCUR AS LONG OVAL OR ELLIPTICAL FORMS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND IN VICTORIA. IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND AND NORTHERN TERRITORY A SHORT OVAL AND THICK SOFT WOOD SHIELD PROTECTS WARRIORS AND IN NORTH EASTERN QUEENSLAND A HUGE SLAB OF UP TO 5 FEET LONG CUT OUT OF THE ROOF FLANGE OF A GIANT FIG TREE COMPLETELY PROTECTED COMBATANTS FROM SPEARS OR OTHER MISSILES.

THIS FINE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SHIELD'S DECORATION HAS BEEN GOUGED OUT WITH A POSSUM TOOTH TOOL, WHICH GIVES A DISTINCTLY UNEVEN LINE WHEN EXAMINED CLOSELY.