



Christopher Clarke Antiques

**Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items**

Chinese Export Writing Slope

REF: 82299

Height: 23 cm (9.1") Width: 48 cm (18.9") Depth: 38.5 cm (15.2")

Sold



A China Trade, camphor wood Writing Desk with roll top.

The design, wood and drawer handle all give this away as being made by a Chinese workshop for sale to the European market. The inset brass tramlines and fleur de lys to the top and front corners are also elements associated with Chinese campaign furniture sold to Westerners passing through their ports.

Pulling the drawer out also opens the tambour top to the back of the desk. The drawer will then support the bottom half of the unfolded, black velvet lined writing surface. Thomas Shearer drew the design for a similar box, with the tambour and drawer opening in unison, for *The Cabinet Maker's London Book of Prices* in 1788. This design differs in that the back of the slope has a jack in the box compartment which can be lifted up to be held by sprung wooden plates to each side. The top section has 9 compartments of various sizes and the front has a combination of pigeon holes and drawers.

The drawer has an English Secure Patent lock stamped VR for Victoria. The key hole is surrounded by the drawer's handle. Whereas the popularity of this design seems to have fallen out of favour with most English box makers as the 19th century progressed, it was still used by most Chinese makers. The quality can vary,

dependent on their age but this one is good. The camphor has a rich colour and the use of ebony veneer to border the writing surface is a good detail. Alternate bars of the tambour are also ebonised which is a nice touch. Mid 19th Century.