

Coin Counting Board

This rather extraordinary and rare item is a carved wooden money counting board used in the Kingdom of Travancore to count the local currency, the chukram. Each chukram was a tiny, silver pellet cast roughly with a some motifs and numbers issued by the mint of the princely state of Travancore in southern India. This state no longer exists as a separate entity. It covered most of modern-day Kerala and parts of Tamil Nadu.

This counting board is drilled with 500 small holes in which a one chukram coin will fit (17 holes across the top, then 21 columns and 23 rows) allowing money lenders to quickly count out 500 chukrams and also to readily show a borrower the precise amount they are getting.

The handle is elaborately carved with serrated flouriations in two parts, and the face of the board contains a small panel carved with 'CHS 500' infilled with white ochre. The reverse of the board is plain. The leafy carving is identical to that on an ivory throne and footstool made by ivory carvers from Travancore for the Great Exhibition held in London in 1851