



Figure 1: Clappers. Both hands, top view. (Kelly, 2020)

Clappers are an Ancient Egyptian musical instrument. The wooden percussion instrument was used to keep time and a continuous beat in musical and dance performances.

Clappers were used in funerary practices as “*music was everywhere in Ancient Egypt –at civil or funerary banquets...*” (Strudwick, 2006).

Period: Middle Kingdom
◊ Hands first appeared on clappers in the Middle Kingdom

Material: wood

Dimensions:
◊ Left – Length: 40cm, Hand width: 5.5cm
◊ Right – Length: 39.5cm, Hand width: 5.5cm

The hands are carefully carved with cut out nails (fig. 4 and fig. 5). The clappers lack any additional detailing seen in other examples from the same period (see fig. 2 and fig. 3).

Clappers were often made of ivory, shown bellow, and were therefore usually curved (see fig. 3). The fact that the Cyfarthfa clappers are made of wood does not necessarily mean that they predate ivory examples.



Figure 2: Metropolitan Museum, Pair of clappers, c. 1900-1640 BC



Figure 3: Musée du Louvre, Paire de claquoirs : mains, tête de la déesse Hathor



Figure 4: Clapper. Right hand, close up. (Kelly, 2020)

The decorated examples of clappers, like the ivory ones in figures 2 and 3, likely served their ceremonial purpose in funerary practices by their beautiful appearance. The Cyfarthfa clappers on the other hand likely brought beauty and participated in funerary practices through the sound they created.

Figure 5: Clapper. Left hand, close up. (Kelly, 2020)



References

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Figure 1: Lorna Kelly. 2020. Clappers, both hands, top view. Roderic Bowen Library and Archive, Lampeter.

Figure 2: Metropolitan Museum, *Pair of clappers, ca. 1900-1640 B.C.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/546840?searchfield=all&sortby=relevance&ft=egyptianclappers&offset=0&pp=20&pos=1> (Accessed: 17 January 2021)

Figure 3: Musée du Louvre, *Paire de claquoirs : mains, tête de la déesse Hathor* [Online] Available at: <https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/pair-clappers> (Accessed 17 January 2021)

Figure 4: Lorna Kelly. 2020. Clapper, right hand, close up. Roderic Bowen Library and Archive, Lampeter.

Figure 5: Lorna Kelly. 2020. Clapper, left hand, close up. Roderic Bowen Library and Archive, Lampeter.

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