

## Musical instrument: clapper

Early 18th dynasty, c. 1550 BC

Hippopotamus ivory

H.: 35.4 cm; W.: 7.4 cm

Department of Egyptian Antiquities, Musée du Louvre (N 1479)

This item is decorated with a woman's face, shown frontally, revealing small cow's ears that identify her as the good Hathor. It ends in a hand with very slender fingers and well-defined nails. It is a clapper, a music instrument always used in pairs, as indicated by the hole in the base of the handle, for the cord that held the two parts together. The sound produced by knocking the clappers replaced hand-clapping to accompany music and dance. It would seem that there was a link between clappers decorated with a head or hand and the cult of Hathor, the goddess of joy and love; it would also seem that the Egyptians viewed this item as much more than a mere musical instrument, even though some bear unambiguous signs of wear.



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