

Turkish castanets, or should that be 'the bones' – a correction to Comm 2094

It seems that our Comm. 2094 was written in a little too much haste. Not only was one image of mediaeval square-frame drum wrongly indicated as depicting the dance of Miriam when surely it must be the dance of Salome, with Herod holding up a menacing sword, in Limoges MS B.M. 0002 f.182v, a gradual for Notredame de Fontevrault, from 1250-60 . . .



. . . but more importantly, it was suggested that images of the 'Turkish' castanets appear only in Jewish or Levantine sources, not in Christian ones. But in fact here is Salome with hand-held percussion in a Christian carving from the south face of the cloister of Tudela cathedral, from the 12th century (see: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/2255998.pdf>).



Indeed they can be seen too is a water jar by Polignotos (c.450–420 BC) showing the Symposium of Xenophon, now in the archaeological museum in Naples, one of many such images on wine jars and water jars. So evidently they have a long history.



This does not invalidate the point that Praetorius does not depict this instrument, nor that by the time Bonanni wrote in the 18th century it was regarded as ‘Turkish’, nor that it is seen in later Turkish sources.

Yet is this instrument really none other than the ‘bones’? Is it time for mediaeval ensembles to start enlivening *cantigas* and other repertoires with a riff or two on the bones – or even the spoons?

