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The article introduces bibliographical evidence on deaf men working in palaces and temples of the Hittite Kingdom in Anatolia (now Turkey) during the 13th century BC, with further notes on signing and deaf people's activities in the ancient and medieval Middle East.

## **HITTITE DEAF MEN IN THE 13th CENTURY BC: introductory notes with annotated bibliography**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTORY NOTES**

**1.1** The following references and annotations are collected to facilitate the emergence of Hittite Deaf people from the 13th Century BC, in the modern literature of Deaf History. The present work is tentative, and welcomes critical comment and corrections. (A more formal article in English is likely to be published later). The work is reaching a critical stage of development, as it becomes clear that there were not merely isolated references to a 'deaf man' in the Hittite royal palaces and temples. There are several distinct references to a 'chief deaf man' or 'supervisor of deaf men'. The obvious inference is that deaf men were working as an organised group, with various roles and duties allocated to them. How did they communicate with one another? Modern Deaf people, and linguistic researchers, will not be slow to supply an answer. Yet up to now, the scholars of Hittitology, studying cuneiform script on clay tablets, have not published anything that looks like a reference to Deaf people's formal Sign Language. However, there is evidence of ordinary gestures and physical signals in use by hearing people in the Hittite palaces and temples, of which a few examples are collected below in **section 4.0** 'Sampling Hittite Signs and Signals'. That kind of communication seems to have been acceptable and familiar among the hearing people with whom the deaf men had daily contact.

**1.2** Work on Hittite languages has been developing for more than a century, with increasing speed and depth as modern information technology facilitates scholarly communication, fragmentary sources are more reliably pieced together, and evidence-based dictionary volumes are accumulating. Nevertheless, considerable difficulties remain to be resolved, in discovering the range of meanings in

many Hittite words, and more precise meaning in any specific text. The meaning of the key Sumerogram, represented as **U.HUB** in Hittite texts, was disputed for about 40 years. Jestin (1938) found it obvious that a 'deaf man' would not suddenly appear in the middle of an important religious ceremony -- what on earth would he be doing there? Since the 1980s, the consensus of scholarly opinion has been that the term does mean 'deaf', and it appears in combinations meaning 'deaf man', 'deaf men', 'chief deaf man', even occasionally 'deaf woman'. However, in the absence of a 'Deaf History' perspective, i.e. a knowledge of other ancient or medieval times and places where deaf people played roles in ceremonies, and may have been thought of as omens of 'good luck', the scholars of ancient Hittite literature continue to sound slightly puzzled -- why do these deaf men pop up in the royal palaces and temples, in the 13th century BC, taking some ordinary, domestic servant roles, and also playing a minor part in religious ceremonies? What is the significance, if any, of their deafness? Why were they mentioned at all? Why is the Sumerian term applied to them, when there is another Hittite word meaning 'deaf'?

**1.3** These questions do not, as yet, have firmly assured answers. In 1982, Pecchioli Daddi (q.v.) listed the (then) known occurrences (and duplicates) of U.HUB and its compounds (using Italian). The first serious examination of the relevant texts, by Yasemin Arıkan Soysal (q.v.), appeared in 2001, in a detailed, scholarly article in Turkish, with transliterated Hittite text, in a conference proceedings with a German title, having low circulation in the anglophone world. The present collection gives a brief tour of the specific Hittite evidence available mainly in English and German, and adds a Deaf History viewpoint and some broader Middle Eastern context, moving toward some possible explanations. It is published on the web, because the great majority of people interested in Deaf History have no access to journals or conference proceedings of academic Hittite studies and Assyriology, nor to most of the 20 languages used in those journals. (Work on Hittite literature in the past century has appeared mostly in German, with English and Turkish also making an increasing contribution. German scholars started early in Hittite studies, and took to the field with characteristic seriousness, finding funds to publish their work in great detail and with elaborate apparatus and indexing).

**1.4** The present 'work in progress' bibliography has drawn upon contributions from scholars in many disciplines, in none of which the present compiler is specialised or even knowledgeable. Some technical faults are acknowledged below, i.e. the absence of diacriticals, for technical reasons. Other faults may be discovered by experts from different sides, e.g. in some of the speculative interpretations enclosed in square brackets in some of the annotations below. However, the picture of deaf people's activities that begins to emerge from the combined scholarly work is one of the earliest that has been discovered so far, in the world's Deaf History. Most of the evidence, being inscribed on clay tablets, is unusually durable, apparently original, and capable of fairly close dating. At least, it compares rather well with the more familiar position when seeking historical primary sources, where for example, a single, mutilated, 15th century manuscript may exist, that includes probably a late copy of a weak 10th century translation of a lost 4th century document in an obscure language and script, of which a few fragments are quoted in one or two places, having fleeting mention of a 'dumb' person who may have lived two or three centuries earlier in an unknown location. The Hittite Deaf look comparatively solid, and may have a lot more to say to us, as more cuneiform imprinted tablets are being discovered each year, and more scattered fragments are reunited.

**1.5** One of the most remarkable points about the early Hittite Deaf is their appearance in Anatolia, a few hundred miles from Constantinople (Istanbul), capital of the Ottoman Empire. Evidence of deaf people's sign language exists from the late 15th century CE at Istanbul, and accumulates steadily through 500 years to the present, giving the longest continuous history, so far discovered, of any sign

language. There is a gap of perhaps 2,700 years between the deaf servants in the Hittite palaces and temples, and the deaf servants at the Ottoman court, with modest fragments of regional evidence scattered across that gap. Could it be mere coincidence, that the earliest solidly established 'sign language community' history, should appear around 1500 CE, a few hundred miles from the earliest evidence-based group of deaf people, 2,700 years earlier? Modern Turkish Deaf people will certainly want to throw a bridge back in time, across that gap, and find a continuous history of deaf 'ancestors' stretching back to the antiquity of their homeland. Historians will be more cautious, and wish to find solid evidence, before putting too much weight on any bridge; yet the possibility is worth keeping in mind.

**1.6** To facilitate the bridging work, further materials appear in **section 5.0** "Deaf People in the Middle East, 23rd Century BC to 1400", having possible relevance to the Hittite Deaf. There was clearly a good deal of travel, trade, correspondence and exchange of ideas across the region through many thousands of years, so odd 'spots' of evidence about deaf people and their lives in one place may illuminate earlier or later spots from other places. Broader evidence and incidents from early Deaf History in South and South West Asia appear in: "Signs of Development in Deaf South & South-West Asia: histories, cultural identities, resistance to cultural imperialism", revised, extended and updated, at: <http://www.independentliving.org/docs7/miles200603.html> (and .pdf)

## **2.0 TECHNICAL NOTES & APOLOGIES**

2.1 The references shown below lack the correct diacritical marks on letters, and superscript positions of some words, as will be obvious to anyone involved in Hittite studies. Those marks, symbols and graphic representations are a necessary part of linguistic studies, involving the complicated and ongoing process of transliterating cuneiform script, and translating it to European languages using roman characters. Their inclusion would, however, introduce difficulties in transfer to html files on the web, while not contributing to the present purpose, which is simply to inform people interested in Deaf History, of the range of evidence that exists for deaf men in Anatolia of the 13th century BC, working individually or as a group, in the temples and royal palaces of the Hittite Kingdom.

2.2 The use of **curly brackets** { } indicates a superscript position of a word, or part of a word. The **square brackets** [ ] are used: **i.** within some words or phrases, to indicate some break, discontinuity, difficulty or conjecture in transliteration from the cuneiform original; **ii.** in the annotations, to indicate an explanatory comment, addition or interpretation by the compiler, which does not appear in the book or article itself, and must not be attributed to the author (who might or might not agree with it). Words shown in **capital letters** are Sumerograms, used in the Hittite languages (and capitalised according to convention in Hittite studies).

2.3 Apologies are offered to authors listed below, whose work may have made a casual, passing mention of a deaf person, on which they would not have placed any weight at all, and who find themselves cited in evidence for an hypothesis which they might still not find entirely plausible!

## **3. MAIN 'HITTITE DEAF' BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Note.** Three abbreviations used below, but not widely understood, are **KUB**, **KBo** and **CTH**. They

are simply standard reference letters for major series of cuneiform texts. (KUB can be expanded as *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazkoi*, but it serves very well just as KUB).

ARDA, Berna & AKSU, Murat (2004) What [do] the Hittites' tablets tell us? A short historical view of deafness on the basis of genetics. *Turkish J. Medical Science* 34: 357-358.

Briefly mentions some features of the Hittite civilisation, and refers to papers by Soysal (see below) and Arikan-Soysal, for information on blind and deaf people in those times.

BOYSAN-DIETRICH, Nilüfer (1987) *Das hethitische Lehmhaus aus der Sicht der Keilschriftquellen*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag.

In this monograph on the Hittite mud or earth building, chapter 4 (pp. 106-140) concerns 'door and window'. It quotes transliterated text from KBo V 11 IV 13 ff. (KUB XXVI 23 IV 2'), in which a palace servant and a deaf man are shown working together, with translation to German: "Der Page geht auf das Dach hinauf, dabei läuft ihm ein Tauber voran. Der Taube schliesst die Fenster zu. Der Page legt die 'Riegel' vor und geht hinunter. Der Taube schliesst 'd[en Kop]f{?} der Treppe' ab, und der Page legt den 'Riegel' vor." (p. 134) This follows several pages of description and discussion about hinges and locking mechanisms. [The security of the monarch's residence was obviously a matter of great importance, with some ingenuity of design being employed, in this case requiring two people to secure the window frame or shutter: one held the shutter in the correct alignment, the other went up, by stairs or ladder, onto the (flat) roof and lowering the window bolt into the correct hole or securing device, then came down, and the trap door was locked after him. Thus it would be very difficult for anyone climbing up outside, or for an unauthorised person inside, to open a window. A further refinement might be to have two 'security men' who belonged to different groups, and who would be mutually suspicious, or have difficulty communicating with one another, to reduce the possibility that they might plot together to facilitate some breach of security.]

[CHICAGO ASSYRIAN DICTIONARY (CAD)] *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, edited by IJ Gelb, T Jacobsen, B Landsberger, AL Oppenheim; MT Roth, RD Biggs, JA Brinkman, M Civil, W Farber, E Reiner, et al (1956- [?2009]) Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

Numerous disability-related words, and words for bodily or mental abnormalities or some kind of affliction, are found throughout the dictionary, either as entries, or in illustrative texts for unrelated words, and with many variants. Some (more or less) equivalent Sumerograms are shown, where they were adopted in Akkadian. These include: *hummuru* (crippled) KUD.KUD(.DU); *kubbulu* (lame, paralysed, crippled); *lillu* (fool, moron); *pessu*, (crippled, deformed) BA.AN.ZA; *sukkuku* (deaf, obtuse, with four apparently different kinds of meaning) U.HUB.

[CHICAGO HITTITE DICTIONARY (CHD)] *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, edited by HG Güterbock, HA Hoffner & TPJ van den Hout (1989- ) Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

The Dictionary usefully offers texts using or displaying the semantic range of the listed words, phrases, grammatical constructions etc, to make clear their meanings and mechanisms. Most of the available materials (roughly, letters L to S) are open online, so terms related to disability or deafness can be found in some texts, irrespective of the meaning of the dictionary headword. For example, in the L-N volume, on p. 57a, an illustrative passage is quoted about the blind, deaf or lame man, while the entry itself is about a "categorical negative", *le-e*. In the P volume, the 'deaf man' appears incidentally on pp. 26b-27a, 211b, 309a. In the S (Sh)1 material, there is blind or deaf material on pp.

55, 65-66, 68, 73-75, 119a, 128a, 141b; and in Sh2, on pp. 217a, 258b. [When the dictionary is complete, some entries specifically on deafness and allied terms may be expected...]

GOEDEGEBUURE, Petra M (2007) "Let only Nesa become populous!", and more philological notes on Old Hittite. In: D Groddek & M Zorman (eds) *Tabularia Hethaeorum: Hethitologische Beiträge Silvin Kosak zum 65. Geburtstag*, 305-312. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

The second item treated here is the purification ritual for the Royal Couple, earlier transliterated and translated to German by OTTEN & SOUCEK 1969 (q.v.), following KBo 17.3, with participation by a deaf man. The relevant parts are translated to English here (pp. 307-308). There is no difference to the deaf man: "But when it dawns, a deaf man and I enter {the royal sleeping quarters} to pick them {the ritual materials} up"; but some points are clarified by Goedegebuure in the curious ceremony, which is intended to remove "woe, pain and worries" from the king and queen, by their symbolic transfer to various ritual materials.

[The ritual is described 'in the first person' by the chief actor, who does not mention anything that the deaf man does. Elsewhere a deaf man is described as taking part in palace security, i.e. shutting windows, barring the staircase (see BOYSAN-DIETRICH 1987; PUHVEL 1983), as part of a two-man operation. In the present case, the deaf man might have a similar security function, in reverse, i.e. the responsibility to unlock the way into the royal sleeping quarters, at first light, and to conduct the ritual practitioner into the presence of the king and queen. As might be expected, some surviving ancient law codes prescribe close control of the presence of male personnel in the vicinity of females in royal palaces, with severe penalties for infringement. (Water-carriers - one of the occupations of deaf men - are specifically mentioned, possibly because some carriers may have come and gone frequently through the day, carrying skins of water from tanks outside the palace buildings and filling large vessels or basins at various convenient points, or conveying water from such containers to wherever it was needed).]

GOETZE, Albrecht (1970) Hittite *shipant-*. *J. Cuneiform Studies* 23 (3) 77-94.

This philological study contains 194 brief translated excerpts illustrating use of different parts of the verb *shipant-* (libate, pour a libation). In one religious ceremony (p.78), "8. The deaf man, [{LU}U.HUB] gives the cup to the king; the king libates. The chief deaf man [GAL U.HUB] libates into the pipe, then performs the sanctifying rite over the king. KUB XX 24 iii 6ff." [Sumerograms have been inserted in these quotations.] Further, "26. The chief deaf man [GAL {LU}U.HUB] gives 2 *t.* vessels of *m.* to the king. The king libates 3 times before the table. X 21 v 15ff." (p. 79) [Location of this second example, X 21 v 15ff., is not shown in the list of passages treated (pp. 93-94); but other scholars cite it as KUB X 21 v 15, or 15-19.] In other examples given by Goetz, where people libate, they are variously specified as: the king (No. 5); a priest (No. 9); the chief of the cup-bearers (13); the palace official (19); the cup-bearer (20); the seer (21); the foreman of the cooks (23); the oconomos (27); the crown prince (28); the anointed one (35); the sacrificer (37); the oracle priest (40); the woman... in her inner chamber (44); a woman, outdoors (63); the 'Old Woman' (64); the nurse (96). (As the purpose of the excerpts is simply to illustrate the uses and grammatical nuances of *shipant-*, Goetze made no comment on the actors or circumstances).

[Pouring a libation to a god or gods was evidently a common Hittite religious practice, in whatever parts of the second millennium BC these various excerpts appeared. Yet the examples involving 'deaf men' have some interesting points: (i) The appearance of a "deaf man" together with a "chief deaf man" might be taken to suggest that there was a cadre of deaf men on the palace staff (with the implication of their possible use of sign language among themselves). (ii) Evidence of the involvement of deaf people in religious ceremonies (of hearing people) is rare; (iii) yet the "chief deaf man" is shown apparently performing "the sanctifying rite over the king", a role which one might

expect to be taken by one of the most senior religious officials, or at least a highly respected person, having a right of close access to the monarch. (More than 2500 years later, in late 15th century Istanbul, some of the Ottoman Sultans - who were also titled as Caliph of Islam, the highest ongoing 'role' in that religion - had deaf servants, who in some cases were their closest companions, and who caused sign language to become a medium of communication also among hearing courtiers, with evidence that this practice extended to the close of the Ottoman period c. 1920. Some senior officials also had deaf servants. The principal reason seems to have been that spoken discussion between the sultan and his chief officials could be held with the deaf servants standing by, without secrets quickly being known and disseminated).]

GOETZE A & PEDERSEN H (1934) *Mursilis Sprachlähmung: ein Hethitischer text*. Det Kbl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser, XXI, 1.

[See THURSTON, 2000, below.]

GÜTERBOCK, Hans G (1979) Some stray Boghazköy tablets. In: *Florilegium Anatolicum. Mélanges offerts à Emmanuel Laroche*, 138-144. Paris: Éditions E. de Bocard.

The third tablet here given transliteration, translation and commentary by Güterbock (pp. 142-144) is here titled "A Letter of the Queen to the King", comprising 44 lines, with some damage. It was probably detached from a collection of Hittite letters found on Büyükkale in 1964 (published as KBo XVIII), came to an Ankara dealer, and was seen and copied by H Otten, and later photographed by DI Owen. Lines 29-44 seem to be a kind of additional, explanatory message by a palace official, in which the GAL {LU}U.UHUB "Chief of the deaf men" appears clearly in a damaged section (line 36), then appears again (partly, with damage, line 38) reporting about the supply of part of a provisions order: "Fruit and sesame oil I shall give you, but the sweet(-smelling) oil and linen cloth I shall [take]" (39-42). Güterbock reviews the 'deaf men' texts known to him (p. 144), supplying one (not listed in GOETZE, or OTTEN, q.v.) in KBo V 11 iv 13-17, where "a 'deaf man' assists the palace attendant in closing up windows and staircase." (See BOYSAN-DIETRICH, above). Güterbock asks himself "Who are these men, and why are they called 'deaf'?", and notes that "Here the 'chief of the deaf men' seems to be in charge of provisions, which fits his role in the festivals." Further, he shows how the Queen's letter and the official's addition would link well with letter KBo XVIII 2, with the sender and recipient probably being Queen Mother Puduhepa and her son King Tudhaliya IV [reigned circa 1237-1209 BC ?].

HAAS, Volkert, with BAWANYPECK, Daliah (2003) *Materia Magica et Medica Hethitica. Ein Beitrag zur Heilkunde im Alten Orient*, vol. II. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Section 322.4 'Krüppel', has some discussion of Blinder; Tauber (Hittite *duddumiyant*, Sumerogram U.HUB); and Lahmer; in various texts (vol. II, pp. 549-552). [Many other diseases and disorders are indexed.]

HAZENBOS, Joost (1972) *The Organisation of the Anatolian Local Cults during the Thirteenth Century*. Leiden: Brill.

[The "Thirteenth century" in the title was of course BC, not the Christian Era.] Hazenbos gives transliteration and English translation of some "Cult Inventories", probably collected as part of a royal survey, providing a guide to the local gods, cultic objects and practices, spring or autumn festivals, etc. On p. 35, transliteration of KUB XXV 23, Rev. IV, Left Edge, (a) lines 1 and 3, and (b) line 1 contain {LU}U.HUB, and corresponding translation on p. 40: [Left Edge (a)] "1. Stormgod of the Rain. On the Deaf Man's Tell he stands on a *pashshu*-. [footnote: a kind of elevated or raised structure...] It becomes spring 2. and the Man of the Stormgod [ftn: a kind of priest and magical

expert...] goes down from Hakmish. He carries 3 loaves of bread of an UPNU (and) 1 *haneshshat*(-vessel) of beer 3. from his house. The men of the Deaf Man's Tell deliver 1 black sheep 4. and the man of the Stormgod offers it. They slaughter it at the *huuashi* for him. They put down 5. meat, from the raw (and) from the cooked." [Left Edge (b)] 1. "Bread and beer, the men who (are living) around the Deaf Man's Tell, 2. they too deliver (it). [etc.] Glossary, p. 207: {LU}U.HUB "deaf man". This "Deaf Man's Tell" (i.e. mound, or site of earlier occupation), seems to have been the standard name of the location of this particular cult.

HOFFNER, Harry A (1966) Composite nouns, verbs and adjectives in Hittite. *Orientalia* 35: 377-402. On pp. 397-398, Hoffman (partly following H. Ehelolf) discusses structure and possible etymological basis for Hittite words meaning 'deaf' (*duddummi*) and 'blind' (*dashuwant*), mentioning also the Sumerian terms used in Hittite. "The Sumerogram which means 'blind' in Hittite texts is a good example; IGI.NU.GAL literally means 'having no eye'. The Sumerogram for 'deaf', on the other hand is U.HUB, yet a rare example of GESHTUG.NU.GAL does exist at Hattushash KUB XVIII 16 ii 1). The Hittite adjective 'blind' (*dashuwant*) may also fit into this category."

JESTIN, Raymond (1937) Texte religieux hittite (KUB X No. 21). *Revue d'Assyriologie* 34: 45-58. (KUB X.21 v 15f. is the text translated by GOETZE, 1970, see above): "The chief deaf man [GAL {LU}U.HUB] gives 2 *t.* vessels of *m.* to the king..." Doubts had been raised in the 1930s, about the 'deaf man' [U.HUB] who seemed to appear in some Hittite cultic practices. Jestin noted (p. 58) that PA Deimel [1928-1933] *Sumerisches Lexikon*, 318, 67, gave 'Tauber' for U.HUB (Jestin transliterates 'U.GUB', pp. 49, 58); but thought this was "évidemment impossible à admettre ici", and found it doubtful in other cases also. [A possible alternative explanation was repeated as late as 1980 by Gurney (see annotation to OTTEN, 1971 below); nevertheless, by the late 20th century, scholars had found no other credible meaning for U.HUB, and mostly concluded that deaf people did take part in palace and cultic ceremonies; unless perhaps there was a group of palace functionaries who were nicknamed 'the deaf' (or 'dumb') for some reason now unknown, such as that they were forbidden to speak, or had once been made to wear a helmet that prevented them hearing.]

KLINGER, Jorg (1996) *Untersuchungen zur Rekonstruktion der hattischen Kultschicht*. Studien zu den Boghazköy-Texten, Heft 37. Harrassowitz. xx + 916 pp. In this massive 'reconstruction' of Hattic / Hittite cultic ceremonies, texts, German translation and commentary, some deaf men (with the Sumerogram U.HUB) appear fleetingly in texts on pp. 544-545; 596-597; 610 (fragmentary); from passages in *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazkoi* (KUB) texts 2.13; 56.45; with comments on pp. 573-574, 605, and reference to the remarks by H OTTEN 1971 (see below).

[Further Anatolian U.HUB references appear in KUB XX 24 iii 6ff; and X 21 v 15ff (Klinger gives X 21 V 19)] (see GOETZE); and KUB 13.34 + 40.84 I 21; and KBo XIX 128 V.32; V.7 (citing also Bo 2926 II 4ff., Bo 2843 IV 16f.; KUB II 13 I 8f. {X 20 Z.5f.} (see OTTEN); and in KBo V 11 IV 13-17, and a stray letter (see GÜTERBOCK 1979).]

MELCHERT, H Craig (2007) Hittite *huuapp-*, *huppa(i)-* and *huppiia-*. In: D Groddek & M Zorman (eds) *Tabularia Hethaeorum. Hethitologische Beiträge Silvin Kosak zum 65. geburtsdag*, 513-519. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Melchert's discussion of the meaning of *huppi* and similar includes KUB 43.30 III 16-17: "*memal shemehunan* {UZU}NIG.G[IG ANA UGULA {L/U.MESH}U.HUB *huppi*=*shshi shuhhanz*[i] 'they strew groats, *sh.* and liver onto the pile [of the leader] of the deaf men." (p. 516)

OETTINGER, Norbert (1976) *Die Militärischen Eide der Hethiter*. Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten, Heft 22. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz. vii + 138 pp.

A provision for retaining the allegiance of Hittite troops, probably dating from the middle of the second millennium BC, has become known as the 'Soldier's Oath', during which there is supposed to have been a dramatic enactment of the woes that would befall any soldier resiling from his undertaking. Oettinger provides text, introduction, translation of the Hittite document into German, with detailed commentary and apparatus. In verse II of the first Soldier's Oath, wax is melted, salt is strewn, there is grinding of barley, to show that the disloyal soldier would be similarly treated; then women's clothes, a spinning wheel and a mirror are placed to suggest that such a man would turn into a woman (pp. 9-11). Verse III begins with the "eine blinde und taube Frau" being brought in (pp. 12-13, also pp. 38, 121, 123) ['blind': IGI NU GAL; 'deaf': U.HUB], and the oath-taking soldiers are warned that this could be their fate if they break the oath. (Other versions translate the passage as 'a blind woman and a deaf man' being exhibited as warning examples).

OTTEN, Heinrich (1971) *Ein Hethitisches Festrival (KBo XIX 128)*. Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten, Heft 13. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

This description of a Hittite religious festival, probably from the second millennium BC, includes mention of deaf (U.HUB) servants of the King, who appear briefly in Rs. V:32 and VI:7 (pp. 14-17) to sweep the floor, sprinkle water, and provide the King with water for hand-washing. "Die Taub(stumm)en fegen (den Boden), Wasser spritzen sie, dem König bringen sie Hand-Wasser herbei." (p. 15) [It has been suggested that in V 32-33, 'sweep' is not correct; the sense is more "the deaf men flush (and) sprinkle water": PUHVEL 1979, below.] Otten mentions the deaf men's part in Hittite ceremonies in his Commentary (p. 43, see also p. 23), without casting much light on it. [Reviewing Otten's book, OR Gurney, 1975, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 32 (5/6), p.385, mentioned the "U.HUB ('deaf'?) men", noting a suggestion by Sommer, 1938, *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 41: 281, "that the graph U.HUB was a confusion with SAI 2404 (= *kalu* 'lamentation priest' Deimel 213b)". Gurney reiterated the point in 1980, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 37 (3/4) p. 198; yet after 70 years, it appears that Sommer's suggestion has not found favour.]

OTTEN H & SOUCEK, Vladimir (1969) *Ein althethitisches Ritual für das Königspaar*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

[See previous item.] Patched together from various fragments (pp. 3-9), this ancient Hittite ceremony for the Royal Couple includes mention of a deaf man {LU}U.HUB (pp. 38-39). It appears that he accompanies another palace servant, taking early morning (?) food and drink in to the King and Queen. On p. 105 the participation of deaf men in other ritual contexts is noted briefly.

PECCHIOLI DADDI, Franca (1982) *Mestieri, Professioni e Dignità nell'Anatolia Ittita*. Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo.

In this extensive listing of the known occupations of the ancient Hittites, LU.U.HUB "sordo" appears on pp. 572-573, with GAL U.HUB, and UGULA LU{MES} U.HUB "sovrintendente dei sordi", indicating textual locations, connections and details (but without translation to Italian).

PUHVEL, Jaan (1979) Some Hittite etymologies. In: *Florilegium Anatolicum. Mélanges offerts à Emmanuel Laroche*, 297-304. Paris: Éditions E. De Bocard.

[See next item.] Mentions KBo XIX 128 v 32-33 "{LU.MESH}U.HUB *sh]anhanzi walar papparsh[a]nz]i* 'the deaf men flush (and) sprinkle water' (p. 299).

PUHVEL J (1983-) *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*, Vols 1/2 & 3 to 7. Berlin: de Gruyter. [Only vols 1/2 and 3 seen.] *Vols 1/2*. Under the entry for "istap(p)-" (p. 471), meaning 'shut', 'close', 'bar' etc, two among the examples given are from KBo V II iv 14 and 16: "the deaf man [{LU}U.HUB] shuts the windows"; "the deaf man bars the staircase". [See BOYSAN-DIETRICH 1987, who gives detail and context of these phrases, in German. Also GÜTERBOCK 1979, who notes that the deaf man assists another palace functionary to carry out these tasks. This kind of responsibility seems to extend a little the other mentioned tasks, concerned with provision of water for cleansing purposes, and provision (and cooking) of food and drink.] Under "iwar" (p. 499), meaning 'in the manner of' or 'like', the example given is "they shall blind him like a blind man, and make him deaf like a deaf man" (KBo VI 34 iii 7-9).

*Vol. 3*. "**hu(r)uppi-** (c.) a kind of dish or bowl, in plural also a kind of bread, ...KUB...(XLIII 30 III 17 ANA UGALA {L/U.MESH}U.HUB *huppi-shshi suhhanz*[i 'they pour [them] into the h. of the chief of the deaf'.]" (p. 407) [See also MELCHERT, above.] "**hu(wa)llis-** 'cone' (of fir, pine or other conifer) ... KBo XI 32 Vs. 22 ... (ibid. 20 {LU}U.HUB {GIS} *irhu(y)az ME-i* 'the deaf man takes cones from the basket')." (p. 423)

RÜSTER, Christel & NEU, Erich (1989) *Hethitisches Zeichenlexikon. Inventar und interpretation der Keilschriftzeichen aus den Bogazköy-Texten*. Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten, Beiheft 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

p. 186, entries for two cuneiform terms having slight visible difference, transliterated {LU}U.HUB (second case without one diacritical), "tauber Mann, Tauber, taub"; and also GAL U.HUB, "Oberster der Tauben", with note below that the {LU}U.HUB entries are from fragmentary sources.

SOYSAL, Yasemin [Arikan] (2001) *Hitit din ve sosyal hayatında {LU/MUNUS}U.HUB "sagir"*. In: G Wilhelm (ed.) *Akten des IV. Internationalen Kongresses für Hethitologie, Würzburg, 4.-8. Oktober 1999*, pp. 652-669. Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten, Band 45. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

This contribution in Turkish collects most of the available locations and constructions in which {LU}U.HUB (deaf man) and GAL{LU} U.HUB (chief / supervisor of deaf men) are found, and gives transliteration of them, with translation to Turkish. Soysal lists and briefly discusses the social activities and roles performed by Hittite deaf men, mostly within the cultic ceremonies performed in or near the royal palaces and temples, in the later half of the second millennium BC. [On p. 668, an instance appears of a deaf woman, {MUNUS}U.HUB, in KUB XVIII 40, in what seems to be a sexual offence, i.e. a man and a deaf woman being together, overnight, inside a temple. The text has some gaps; the attempt to read Turkish, using only a Turkish-English dictionary, has much greater gaps! Yet the problematical situation may be trans-culturally comprehensible...]

TAGGAR-COHEN, Ada (2002) *The EZEN pulas - a Hittite installation rite of a new priest*. In light of the installation of the IM Priestess in Emar. *J. Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 2 (1) 127-159. Based on text KUB 17.35 i 17'-37' (CTH 525), among the cult inventories from the reign of Tudhaliya IV, in the late 13th century BC, discussion of the ceremony involves transliteration of further material, among which is KUB 60.152 9 (pp. 143-146). This fragmentary text, relating to a religious ceremony in the city Zuppura (location unknown), includes fleeting mention of LU {MES} U.HUB, the deaf men... (144, 145) The deaf men appear to play a minor, subsidiary part in the ceremony, located at the temple, providing bread, in the presence of the king and priests. [This is one of the few indications of deaf men apparently located outside the capital city.]

THURSTON S (2000) *The Speech Loss of Mursili II*. [CTH 486]. [www.hittites.info/translations/navigate](http://www.hittites.info/translations/navigate)

Part of a scholarly website by Steve Thurston designed to inform the literate public about Hittite history. The apparent ‘stroke’, facial paralysis and speech difficulty suffered by Murshili II (reigned c. 1317-1293 BC; son of Shuppiluliuma I) has several paragraphs in the general history pages of this Hittite ruler and his times, and refers more specifically to another page where an English translation is given of the prayer in which he described his symptoms and offered ritual sacrifices. "The Storm God brought a storm and then kept thundering frightfully. I was afraid and speech became scarce in my mouth. The matter went up from me as something small, and I put aside that matter entirely. As the years came and went, it came about that that matter began appearing to me in dreams. The hand of a god reached out to me in a dream and my mouth went to one side." (The religious ceremonies followed, in which efforts were made to transfer the ailment to ‘a substitute ox’). [This is referenced to the Hittite text "*Mursilis Sprachlähmung*" edited by GOETZE & PEDERSEN, q.v.] Earlier in his reign (under "The Conquest of Arzawa"), Murshili II and his troops witnessed a thunderbolt hurled by the Storm God, which passed them and "struck the land of Arzawa. It struck Uhha-ziti's (capital) city of Apasha. It settled in Uhaa-ziti's knees, and he became ill. (10 Year Annals, para. 17)" The weakness in Uhha-ziti's knees prevented him from leading his troops in defence of his land.

#### 4.0 SAMPLING HITTITE SIGNS & SIGNALS

At present, no Hittite references have been found to deaf people using gestures, sign language, or other body signals. However, even a casual search indicates that meaningful signals and gestures were in use in the Hittite palace and religious ceremonies. A few such examples are listed below. Given that deaf men were playing their roles under a ‘chief deaf man’, it would be reasonable to infer that regular communication must have taken place between the chief and the men under his leadership, and probably between the men themselves, whether on duty or off duty. In such situations, where deaf people are regularly in one another's company, an increasingly elaborate sign language normally develops. These men were sometimes participants, working in the buildings and ceremonies in which the examples below show a variety of meaningful signs and gestures being used by hearing people. It is difficult to imagine that the deaf men did not also use some signs and gestures in public, with hearing people, at least at a sub-linguistic level.

ARIKAN, Yasemin (2007) An official in Hittite cult: {LU} tazelli-. In: D Groddek & M Zorman (eds) *Tabularia Hethaeorum: Hethitologische Beiträge Silvin Kosak zum 65. Geburtstag*, 33-58. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

In KBo 30.155 I, on the ceremony of the hunter's bag, "The *hamena*-man gives the priest a signal with (his) eyes. The priest, (and) the *tazzelli*-priest bow." (p. 52)

[CHICAGO HITTITE DICTIONARY (CHD)] *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, edited by HG Güterbock, HA Hoffner & TPJ van den Hout (1989- ) Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.

In the ‘P’ volume, the following phrases occur, from Hittite texts: "the king gives a signal to the guard" (p. 145); "The king ge[stures] with his eyes to the cupbearer ‘of squatting’" (p. 190); "With a wing, he seats them, the king and queen (i.e. he signals them to sit down)" [apparently writing about an unspecified bird, having a part in a ceremony] (p. 199); "the chief of the bodyguards gives a signal with his spear" (p. 354). The ‘S’ volume has many more examples, e.g. on pp. 19, 54, 66, 74-75, 125, 169, 181, as appears by searching for ‘sign’, ‘gesture’, ‘hand’ etc, in the electronic version.

HOFFNER, Harry (1997) *The Laws of the Hittites: a critical edition*. Leiden: Brill.

"For this reason it is at least worth considering if the blow was not part of corporal punishment, but a gesture with some legal significance: striking the spear on its hand-guard or something similar. This archaic gesture was then subsequently eliminated, perhaps because its significance was no longer understood." (p. 198)

HOUWINK Ten CATE, Philo HJ (1987) The sun god of heaven. The assembly of gods and the Hittite king. In: D van der Plas (ed) *Effigies Dei. Essays on the History of Religions*, 13-34. Leiden: Brill.

On p. 13 is a divine figure "clad in the togalike attire of a Hittite King carrying the lituus, held down in his right [hand], and making a 'speaking gesture' with his left hand."

KITTS, Margo (2005) *Sanctified violence in Homeric society*. Cambridge University Press.

"In the Hittite 'Apology of Hattusilis', for instance, taking by the hand appears to be both a guiding gesture and a gesture of solidarity when Hattusilis claims, 'In the hand of Ishtar, my lady, I saw prosperity. My lady Ishtar took me by the hand. She led me along.'" (p. 79; also see ftn 72).

WRIGHT, David P (1986) The gesture of hand placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite literature. *J. American Oriental Society* 106 (3) 433-446.

The Hittite material runs from p. 439b to p. 446, and quotes a good number of examples in transliteration and English translation. The focus is on a gesture of placing the hand on the item that is to be sacrificed, identifying its possession ("this is mine") with the person placing the hand, before the priest actually carries out the sacrifice, e.g. "The AZU-priests hold forth to the king three sour loaves; the king places the hand (on them)" [*StBoT* 13 i 21] (Wright, 440b). In a birth ritual, the heavily pregnant woman "puts forth her hand on the birthstool"; or if she were ritually impure, and keeping her distance, "she puts forth her hand toward the birthstool" (p. 441a). "Hand placement attributes the offering and offering act to the offerer", even though some other person actually enacts the rite. (p. 443b).

## 5.0 DEAF PEOPLE & SIGN IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 23rd Century BC to 1400 CE

These items are listed in approximate date order, starting with the oldest.

### 23rd century BC ?

FRAYNE, Douglas (1993) *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334-2113 BC)*. Volume 2, of *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

[Considerable detail is given below, to indicate that the suggested identification of a deaf woman in the Royal Inscriptions text, while possibly accurate, seems to have a number of unresolved aspects.]

On p. 175, Frayne translates an inscription, collated from a published photograph of a seal that appears to depict princess Tutanapshum (daughter of King Naram-Sin, 2260-2223 BC), seated, with a servant woman, presumably Aman-Eshtar, standing before her. For the woman standing, the suggested English translation (lines 3-5) is: "Aman-Ashtar, the deaf lady, the *prattler*, (is) her female servant." Frayne gives two lexical references for the Sumerian U.HUB, equivalent to Akkadian, *su-uk-ku* 'deaf' ('Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon' vol. XII, ed. M Civil et al, Rome, 1969, p. 142; cf. Von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, II: 1055-56, *sukkuku* and U.HUB; and in greater detail, the

'Chicago Assyrian Dictionary' 15: 362b-363b). To make 'prattler', *sa-bi-ri-im* is taken as a part of *sabaru(m)*, 'to be voluble, to prattle'. [Diacriticals in several quoted words are omitted here.] Unfortunately, the location of the seal itself is no longer known.

[Several details of scene and inscription have been interpreted differently by various authors. Some (including Frayne) suggest that Aman-Eshtar is offering a small harp-like instrument to the princess, while another view is that a 'thread-spinning' apparatus is being worked (WH Ward, 1910, *Seal Cylinders of Western Asia*, Carnegie Institution of Washington, p.81). Photograph of the seal appeared in CJ Ball, 1899, *Light from the East*, p.153; also in D Collon, 1987, *First Impressions*, British Museum, p.126 (no. 530), brief comments p.125, with date c. 2225 BC, (but see # below); and the same (enlarged from CJ Ball) in Aage Westenholz & Joachim Oelsner, 1983, *Zu den Weihplattenfragmenten der Hilprecht-Sammlung Jena*, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 10: 209-216, on p.215. A sketch from the photo, in Ward, p.81, retains details that might distinguish the nature of the apparatus in the servant's hands, though the sketch diminishes the hands and feet of both women depicted. In a drawing by S Beaulieu, "after Frayne 1993: cover illustration", on p.3 of J Stuckey, *Nin-shata-pada... MatriFocus* 7-1, [www.matrifocus.com/SAM07/spotlight.htm](http://www.matrifocus.com/SAM07/spotlight.htm) (downloaded 25 Mar 2008), the apparatus has significant differences from that shown in the photo published by Ball and by Collon.]

[For the inscription, a slightly different transliteration and translation is given by Westenholz & Oelsner, who do not translate U.HUB (they give the MSL XII lexicon reference, but not the 'deaf' equivalent on p.142; and seem to be thinking of a possible occupational designator or personal name for Aman-Eshtar. An early ruler of Kish bore the name *Uhub*, but it hardly seems common). The *sa-at Za-bi-ri-im* (Frayne) becomes "die (Angehörige / Abhängige) des Zabirum", "belonging to, or dependent on, Zabirum". Yet the use of U.HUB for 'deaf' seems to be accepted as a Sumerian term, used also more widely (e.g. in Hittite, see GOETZE 1971, pp. 78-79, also in a context of palace servants). The modest quantity of scholarly literature making reference to the seal of Aman-Eshtar (-Ashtar, -Ishtar) is almost entirely preoccupied with the identification of Tuta-napshum and details of her life -- the female servant is an incidental. If she were in fact deaf or hearing impaired, Aman-Eshtar might have been found a job at court as a relative or dependent of some other functionary, 'Zabirum'. If the relevant word is in fact related to *sabaru(m)*, it might be a reference to 'indistinct speech, babble', as by someone losing much of their hearing in early childhood, rather than 'prattle' in the sense of an adult domestic who chatters continually without saying anything of significance. An alternative use of U.HUB, to mean 'stupidity, ignorance', might better accommodate 'silly prattling'.] # A further anomaly is that Collon, p.125, describes the photographed seal no. 530, as having the inscription "*Naram-Sin, king of the Four Quarters: Tutanapshum, 'entum'-priestess of Enlil, your daughter.*" The detailed work by Frayne, pp. 122-124, shows those words as one of three other known inscriptions of Tuta-napshum, quite distinct from the seal inscription.]

### 13th-12th Centuries BC

GARDINER AH (1911, reprint 1964) *Egyptian Hieratic Texts, transcribed, translated and annotated. Series I: Literary Texts of the New Kingdom*. Hildesheim: Georg Olms.

An early suggestion of signed or gestural language appears in a series of Egyptian magisterial admonitions to an idle schoolboy or clerk: "Thou art one who is deaf and does not hear, to whom men make (signs) with the hand", in the Papyrus Koller, "dated approximately to the end of the 19th Dynasty" or around 1200 BC (pp. 35-39, 84-86). [Another translation makes the admonition slightly more positive, without appreciable change to the sign or gesture reference: "But thou art not one that is deaf, that cannot hear, and one speaketh unto him with the hand" (Erman A, 1927, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, transl. AM Blackman, London: Methuen, p.292). Aylward Blackman,

translating Professor Erman's work, stated (p. v) that his renderings of the Egyptian texts had "in every instance been made directly from the Egyptian, though strictly in accordance with Professor Erman's interpretation, as set forth in his own German translations." Metaphorical references to deafness were not uncommon in various Egyptian periods, e.g. "he that can hear is deaf", or "plays the deaf man" i.e. chooses not to hear (Erman, pp. 122, 218; cf. pp. 124, 130, 232, 235).

In his introduction to *Die Literatur der Aegypter*, Professor Erman remarked (Blackman's translation, p. xlii) on the variety of possible interpretations resulting from the omission of vowels from the writing and corruption of the textual sources. He demonstrated this with the word for 'hear': "Szm can just as well mean "to hear," as "hears," or "is heard," "may hear," "hearing," "heard," etc., and we are thrown back on guessing from the context what form is meant in the case in question." The choice of example may have been fortuitous, but more likely based on a complicated passage from the 'Instruction of Ptahhotep', that plays on the word "to hear" (Erman, p. 64). Three different hieroglyphic representations of words for 'deaf' or 'deaf person' can readily be located in the Koller text and parallels as given by Gardiner (1964), p. 74 (line 10); pp. 84; 86 (lines 15/16; lines 1/2); and pp. 86 (lines 3/4), using the *Dictionary of Late Egyptian* (Lesko & Lesko, 1982 - 1990, vol. III: p. 92; IV: 136; and III: 82, respectively. See also *Ibid.* II: 88; III: 81. The complexities of possible meanings, around speech, hearing and deafness, are illustrated in a word study by William Ward (1969) The Semitic root HWY in Ugaritic and derived stems in Egyptian, *J. Near Eastern Studies* 28: 265-267. Ward compared roots of words in several regional languages and suggested a different meaning in the above-cited 'idle student' passage (p. 267).

The reference to sign or gesture communication in the text cited (and a parallel text) should also be approached with caution. The German-Egyptian index (in vol. VI) to *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* (Erman & Grapow, edn 1982-) does show under "Zeichen" (sign, signal, indication, mark, etc) two apparent locations for "Zeichen geben mit d. Hand", one being the Koller 2, 5 reference (and parallel in Anastasi IV, 2, 7); and a variety of examples of "zeichnen, figur, gestalt" (vol. V, 239-240). [The rather dismissive context, and the slightly equivocal translations offered, do not suggest that a formal sign language was in use, but more likely the informal gestures and mime commonly used for simple communication between deaf and hearing people, in the absence of a commonly understood more formal sign system. It might yet become possible for language experts to build a credible case for the existence, and some public awareness, of a formal sign language used by deaf people in ancient Egypt, employing various kinds of evidence; but no such case seems to have been published yet.]

### **12th century & 8th century BC**

HARPER, Robert F (1904) Babylonian and Assyrian imprecations. *The Biblical World* 24 (1) 26-30. Among the later imprecatory inscriptions, one of the time of Nebuchadrezzar I (c. 1140 BC) calls for comprehensive ills and woes on any person who tries to damage the inscription, "or who employs a fool, a deaf man, a blind man, or a knave to destroy this tablet with a stone, or to burn it in the fire, or to cast it in the river or to hide it in a field where it cannot be found." A similar fate is wished on anyone in the reign of Merodachbaladan, King of Babylon (721-710 BC) who persuades "an enemy, a deaf person, a fool, a blockhead, a short-sighted (?) ignorant person, a knave" or similar, to damage or remove a tablet.

### **7th Century BC**

FREEDMAN, Sally M (1998) *If a City is Set on a Height. The Akkadian Omen Series Summa Alu in Mele Sakin. Volume 1: Tablets 1-21.* Philadelphia.

The *Summa Alu* omens seem to have accumulated over a period of more than 1,500 years, with the

majority of available tablets dating to the 7th century BC (pp. 13-14). A series of omens about city-dwellers with impairments or abnormalities, has the pattern: 'If X-Y are numerous in a city, that city will be happy / in trouble / in dispersal/ abandonment' "86. If lame women are numerous in a city, [that] city will be happy." On the same pattern, "87. If idiots ... happy. 90. If wise men ... abandonment 91. If men with warts ... dispersal. 94. If deaf [U.HUB] men ... happy. 95. If blind men ... trouble. 98. If cripples ... trouble. 99 If disabled men ... dispersal." (p. 33) [It is not clear whether any real experience or logic is present in these predictions. On the face of it, deaf men seem to be regarded as a lucky omen.]

### 5th Century BC ?

GINZBERG, Louis (1909-1959, reprinted 1968) *The Legends of the Jews*. Translated from German, by H Szold. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America. 7 volumes.

Volume IV: 382-383 (and notes in volume VI: 458-459) tells a story from the Jewish community living in exile in Persia. Among them was the nobleman Mordecai, whose niece Esther reportedly became the wife of King Ahasuerus (probably Xerxes I, reigned 486-465 BC). Of Mordecai it is written that he "knew the language of the deaf mutes." Two examples are given in which Mordecai correctly interpreted important signed (or at least gestural) messages by deaf people. The Book of Esther may have achieved written form in the 2nd or 3rd century BC. The legend concerning Mordecai is hard to date. Lending possible support to signed communication, though by its nature, undated, is the apocryphal story of Moses praying for Judah, in Ginzberg vol. III, p.456:

"The sin for which Moses asked God to forgive Judah was that he never redeemed his promise to bring Benjamin back to his father [Jacob] ... But as soon as Moses prayed to God, saying, 'Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah,' the bones joined together once more, but [Judah's] sin was not quite forgiven, for he was not yet admitted to the heavenly academy. Therefore Moses continued to pray: 'Bring him in unto his people,' and he was admitted. It did not, indeed, benefit him, for in punishment of his sin, God brought it to pass that he could not follow the discussion of the scholars in heaven, much less take part in them, whereupon Moses prayed: **'Let his hands be sufficient for him,' and [then] he no longer sat as one dumb in the heavenly academy.** [Emphasis added.] But still his sin was not quite forgiven, for Judah could not succeed in being victorious in the disputes of the learned, hence Moses prayed, 'And Thou shalt be an help against his adversaries.' It was only then that Judah's sin was quite forgiven, and that he succeeded in disputes with his antagonists in the heavenly academy."

Notes to this story (Vol. VI, p.155, no. 922, give several references, including Baba Kamma 916. The latter, in *The Babylonian Talmud*, vol. I, Seder Nezikin transl. I Epstein, 1935, Soncino, p.534, gives much the same story, with the prayer of Moses being "His hands shall contend for him!", a reference to the *Torah*, Deuteronomy 33: 7, a text that in fact underlies each successive part of Judah's rehabilitation. [That reference is a verse in which the phrase under scrutiny yields many variations: The New Jewish Publication Society (1985) gives alternatives: i. "Though his own hands strive for him"; ii. "Make his hands strong for him". The Soncino, ed JH Hertz (1952) repeats the earlier Epstein: "His hands shall contend for him". The New English Bible (1972) makes the Lord the subject: "thou whose hands fight for him"; the New International Version (ed. Kohlenberger, 1979): "With his own hands he defends his cause". The Septuagint, "hai cheires autou diakrinousin autO" (final omega with iota subscript), is perhaps where some translators take the idea of hands that 'contend for him', more assertively than hands which are 'sufficient' (the Hebrew is 'rab') for him. It is certainly unlikely that the original Deuteronomy meaning had anything to do with using hands for communication. Yet the later legend pictures Judah struggling to be admitted to the heavenly academy of sages; and once there, he understands nothing and is "as one dumb" -- until his hands are made to

work for him, and then he is no longer dumb. A Qur'anic text (36: 65) takes up a similar idea, in a Day of Judgement, when the ungodly will be bereft of words, but their hands will speak, and their feet will bear witness, to all that they have done.]

Ginzberg also relates a story of Dan, one of Judah's brothers, who had a deaf son, Hushim (*Legends*, II: 38-39; 106). When the sons of Jacob brought their father's remains back from Egypt, to bury them in Canaan, and their uncle Esau raised a problem and delayed the burial, Hushim demanded to know why there was a delay, because he had not heard the debate that was going on. When it was explained to him, he was indignant, and hit uncle Esau with a club, killing him (II: 153-154). [But a different version has Esau being killed by Judah, VI: 371-372.]

### **circa 530 BC to 70 CE**

FALK, Ze'ev W (1972, 1978) *Introduction to Jewish Law of the Second Commonwealth*. 2 volumes. Leiden: Brill.

The 'Second Commonwealth' of the Jews in Palestine is normally understood to date approximately from 530 BC to 70 CE. Some parts of the legal code concerned deaf people. Part I has a few passing references, e.g. p. 29, "He who sets fire by the hand of a deaf-mute, an imbecile or a minor...", [i.e. who takes advantage of the legal non-liability of people in these categories;] also p. 100; and pp. 123 (legal incapacity of "deaf-mutes, lunatics and minors" to testify in court). Part II has more detail on the legal capacities of "Deaf-mutes, Idiots and Minors" (pp. 256-261), and suggests a progressive removal of the legal 'disability' under which they suffered. Thus, "A deaf-mute may communicate by signs and be communicated with by signs ... in matters concerned with movable property. (M Gittin V 7)".

### **1st Century CE**

HUSSELMAN, Elinor M; BOAK, Arthur ER; & EDGERTON, William F (1944) *Michigan Papyri, Volume V, Papyri from Tebtunis, Part II*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Amidst many papyri transcriptions (with translations from Greek to English) at Tebtunis, Egypt, detailing land deals, tax payments, division of property, etc, a few incidental details show people with disability or deafness. Document 293, the sale of a house and courtyard, some time in the 1st century CE (pp. 202-204), located the property precisely: "The neighbours are on the south, the house of Apynchis, son of Apynchis, on the north the house and court of Apynchis, the so-called deaf mute, [(Greek) "*borra 'Apunchis kophEs legomenEs oikia kai aulE*"] on the west the house of Leontiskos, on the east the royal road." Footnote 4: "*'Apunchis kophEs legomenEs*": '*Apunchis* does not occur elsewhere as a woman's name, but *Punchis* is found as a feminine form in P.Tebt.I, 164, 7." [The householder on the north side thus seems to have been a deaf woman, one of extremely few recorded in antiquity with a name, place and approximate date.]

### **1st Century CE**

ABRAMS, Judith Z (1998) *Judaism and Disability: portrayals in ancient texts from the Tanach through the Bavli*. Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press.

This detailed review of disability and deafness in early texts of Judaism includes discussion on people with serious impairments of hearing, speech and cognition. They were often bracketed, together with minors, as a category of people who could not participate in obeying some parts of Jewish law that required a depth of understanding, and conscious choice, and verbal affirmation. Nevertheless an example was discussed in the literature of the 1st century, concerning the sons [or some suggest the nephews] of Rabbi Yohanan ben Gudgada. They were deaf (*chershim*, plural of *cheresh*), yet had made good progress in studies and understanding of the law, and had a position of considerable

responsibility in supervising the preparation of ritually correct foods in the temple at Jerusalem. Their situation was often cited as a reason why the law should have a broader interpretation, since they gave evidence of a depth of understanding, and this was recognised by their having been entrusted with a high responsibility (pp. 168-176). [The deaf relatives of Yohanan ben Gudgada can also be seen as having some direct parallels with the deaf men preparing and serving food used in religious rituals in the Hittite temples, more than a thousand years earlier.]

### **382 CE**

GREGORY of Nazianzus. *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze. Lettres*, vol. II, ed. and transl. P Gallay (1967). Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres".

[Gregory was briefly Bishop of Constantinople, but resigned in 381 and left for his home town of Nazianzus. He made a vow of silence during the 50 days of Lent, 382. During this period he visited a religious community at Lamis, and communicated with signs and gestures, which apparently some of the monks did not appreciate. He wrote several short letters in Greek (II: pp. 5-11) discussing this visit, including one to his cousin, Eulalios, whom he had visited at Lamis.]

No. CXVI. "A Eulalios. Lamis a été pour moi un lieu de silence et d'entraînement à la philosophie; mais si j'ai contemplé ce lieu en me taisant, je désire aussi le voir en parlant, afin de satisfaire mon affection pour les frères et de me justifier du reproche de taciturnité devant vous, mauvais interprètes de mes signes de tête [*Gk. neumatOn*]."

[E Venables (1880) Eulalios, in W Smith & H Wace (eds) *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. II, London, suggests that, during the visit, Gregory's "sighs [*sic*] and gestures were so correctly interpreted by Eulalios that the visit was one of great mutual edification." Venables may have had some further ancient source for this; or perhaps was simply using his imagination.]

### **3rd to 7th centuries CE**

AL-JAHIZ [attributed]. *Le livre de la couronne. Kitab at-Taj (fi ahlaq al-muluk)*, translated by Charles PELLAT (1954) Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres".

pp. 46-47. The Sassanian monarchs (reigned c. 224-636 CE in Mesopotamia) had the custom of silence at mealtimes, and if they needed to communicate their wishes they used signs and gestures instead of speaking (cf pp. 50, 56, 81, 83, 85, 106, 118). Monarchs also maintained their status and dignity by not being seen by their courtiers, particularly when engaging in amusements (49-50). The 'third rank' of people at court were entertainers, i.e. clowns, jugglers, tumblers, comics and musicians. However, these were not to be drawn from among people of humble origin, the weak or disabled, giants or dwarfs, deformed people, or others of low class (52-53).

### **550 to 650 CE**

CRUM WE & BELL HI (1922) *Wadi Sarga. Coptic and Greek texts from the excavations undertaken by the Byzantine Research Account*. Haunia: Gyldendalske Boghandel-Nordisk forlag.

Excavations in 1913-1914 at the religious settlement at Wadi Sarga, some 15 miles south of Assyut, Egypt, found many ostraca and papyrus or parchment fragments of minor texts in Greek or Coptic, dating from the early 5th to early 7th century (pp. 5, 16, 29). Many of the ostraca, which can be dated between 550 and 650 CE (p. 16), are a kind of waybill, carried by the delivery man and handed over when he made delivery (p. 163). Several were written by a clerk named Horus, and one of these mentions "Enoch the Deaf" [EnOch p-kour] (p. 158, no. 207), as the person delivering a consignment of barley and wheat, on the 26th day of the month Mesore. Enoch was a fairly common name among Coptic Christians of the period - Crum & Bell index other ostraca bearing names such as Enoch the builder, brother Enoch, Apa Enoch, Enoch the steward, Enoch the less, Enoch the camel-driver; so it

would not be surprising if anyone called Enoch might acquire some appropriate nickname, to distinguish him from the others.

### **7th century CE**

KASSIS, H.E. (1983) *A Concordance of the Qur'an*. Berkeley: Univ. California Press. xxxix + 1444 pp.

From the 7th century onward, the Qur'an has been a revered text, memorised and read, publicly and privately across the Islamic world. This concordance gives Roman transliteration of Qur'anic vocabulary, with compounds and derivatives. An alphabetical index of words in English provides the roots of relevant Arabic word(s) transliterated. Under the words derived from each root, the citation is given of texts using each word. Examples concerning deafness, muteness and signs:

Root A Y W, used in many references to Signs or revelations from Allah, and for verses of the Qur'an (pp. 203-210).

Root B K M, used in 6 references to 'dumb' (pp. 317-318).

Root R M Z, used when Zakariya should speak only "with signals", in Sura 3: 41 (p. 1020).

Root [S] M M, used in 15 references to 'deaf'. (p. 1194)

Root W [H] Y, used when Zakariya "made signal" to people", in Sura 19: 11. (p. 1265).

Root Y D Y, used for 'hand', when the "hands shall speak", in Suras 24: 24, and 36: 65. (p. 1305)

### **7th to 9th Centuries CE**

IBN KHALLIKAN. *Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary translated from the Arabic*. 4 vols, transl. Baron MAC GUCKIN DE SLANE (1842-1871). Paris, for Oriental Translation Fund.

Vol. I: 83-86. Abu 'l-Abbas Ahmad Ibn Yahya Ibn Zaid Ibn Saiyar, born probably in 815 and known as Thalab, was a deaf scholar and "chief grammarian and philologist among the learned men of Kufa". He died in a traffic accident at Baghdad in April 904: "...some time before he had got a deafness, which prevented him from hearing unless with great difficulty; he was holding a book in his hand and reading it in the street, when a horse knocked against him and threw him into a deep pit..."

Vol. II: 586-89. Muhammad Ibn Sirin (653-4 - 729) of Basra was a highly esteemed law lecturer, and was also valued as an accurate transmitter of sayings of the prophet Muhammad. To students of law, "As-Shabi used to say 'Stick to that deaf man!' meaning thereby Ibn Sirin; because he was dull of hearing."

### **between 813 and 838 CE**

MAS`UDI, translated & edited by P Lunde & C Stone (1989) *The Meadows of Gold. The Abbasids*. London: Kegan Paul International.

The inhabitants of Kufa (in Iraq) chose a deaf man to plead their case before Caliph Ma`mun (813-833), which he did with both subtle wit and effrontery. The Caliph was infuriated, but the deaf man obtained what the Kufa people wanted (pp. 193-94).

### **9th Century CE**

AL-JAHIZ. *Kitab al-Hayawan*. ed. Harun, Cairo. In: C PELLAT (1969) *The Life and Works of Jahiz*, transl. (from French original, 1967) by DM Hawke. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Al-Jahiz (776-868 CE) was a prolific, influential and notably ugly essayist, whose work continues to be read by educated people across the Arab world. He made a number of comments on deafness and deaf people. In the 'Book of Animals' IV: 404-405, Jahiz gives one of the earliest clear descriptions of the different degrees of hearing impairment, and why prelingually deaf people have great difficulty in producing speech:

"Theologians say that your dumb man is deaf: his inability to speak is due not to any malformation of the tongue, but to the fact that having never heard sounds, articulated or otherwise, he does not know how to produce them. Not all deaf people are completely dumb, and there are also degrees of deafness." [Gives examples of loud noises that some deaf people can hear.] "Others can hear words if spoken in their ear, but otherwise they hear nothing, even if the speaker raises his voice; if the speaker positions himself so that the sound goes right into their ear, they understand perfectly, whereas if he speaks just as loudly into the air, the sound of his voice not being concentrated and conducted along a canal into the brain, they do not understand." (p. 164).

AL-JAHIZ. *Kitab al-bayan wa al-tabyin*. ed. Harun, Cairo (1948-50). 4 vols. In: C PELLAT (1969) *The Life and Works of JAHIZ*, transl. DM Hawke. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

From the book on 'Elegance of expression and clarity of exposition' [I: 77-79]:

"As regards gesticulation, the hands, head, eyes, eyebrows and shoulders come into use when a conversation is carried on at a distance, and even a piece of cloth or sword. ... Speech and gesture are partners, and what a precious helpmeet and interpreter gesture is to speech! It often takes its place, or makes writing unnecessary. ... The wink, the movement of the eyebrows and other gestures are priceless adjuncts, and a great help in expressing surreptitious thoughts." (pp. 102-103 of translation)

### **963 CE**

FRANTZ-MURPHY G (1981) Arabic and earlier Egyptian contract formularies. Part I, the Arabic contracts from Egypt. *J. Near Eastern Studies* 40: 203-225.

A house sale contract drawn up in Egypt, early in 963 CE, mentions "the residence of the heirs of Munah the Deaf" [Arabic: *al-Asamm*].

### **1046-1049 CE**

KHOSRAU [KHUSRAW], Nasir [Nassiri]. *Sefer Nameh. Relation du Voyage de Nassiri Khosrau, célèbre poète et philosophe Persan, ca. 1003-1088 A.D., en Syrie, en Palestine, en Égypte, en Arabie et en Perse, pendant les années de l'Hégire 437-44 (A.D. 1045-1052), texte Persan, publié d'après trois manuscrits...* translated and introduced by Charles Schefer (1881, Paris), reprinted 1970, Amsterdam: Philo.

The Persian religious teacher and traveller Khosrau visited Egypt from 1046 to 1049, and his detailed observations are largely confirmed by other sources. One detail concerned the annual rise of the Nile and the important ceremony of opening the major water canal (pp. 136-142). The Caliph led the ceremony and gave the first symbolic blow to the embankment sealing the river; then the crowd piled in with picks and shovels, until the water poured through, and it was possible to launch boats. A vast population then took part in the celebrations. The honour of opening the boating was reserved for deaf-mute people: "La première barque, lancée dans le canal, est remplie de sourds-muets appelés en persan Koung ou Lal. On leur attribue une heureuse influence et le sultan leur fait distribuer des aumônes." (p. 142). [This was one of the rare reports in North Africa and the Middle East in which a group of deaf people gathered and performed an important symbolic role in a public religious ceremony of national importance.] See also AC Hunsberger (2003) *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan. A portrait of the Persian poet, traveller and philosopher*, p.169. London: Tauris.

### **c. 1300 (?)**

YUNUS EMRE. *Selected Poems*, transl. TS Halman (2nd edn, 1993), Ankara: Ministry of Culture,

Turkish Republic.

"To the blind, I gave signals with my hand;  
Whatever I whispered, the deaf man heard.  
The dumb broke into speech, called me out and  
Repeated with me every single word." (p. 109).

[This verse appears in a somewhat enigmatic poem by the Sufi, Yunus EMRE (c. 1240-1320).  
Allowing for the poet's ironic reversal of normal expectation -- i.e. he supposedly signs to the blind,  
and whispers to the deaf -- the verse gives an early mention in Turkish, of communication with hand  
signs.]

**c. 1400 (?)**

ÖZCAN A (1994) Dilsiz (Tarih). *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* Vol. 9, pp. 304-305, Istanbul.

This historical article on deaf people states that they were among the court servants in the reign of  
Fatih Mehmed II (1451-1481); but there is a hint of their possible presence as far back as Bayezid I  
(1389-1402). Ottoman Court records are also cited by B Lewis (1965) Dilsiz, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*,  
new edition, II: 277, with the view that the *dilsiz* or deaf mutes were employed at the Ottoman court  
"from the time of Mehmed II to the end of the Sultanate."