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Sources and texts are introduced and quoted, identifying deaf men and women through more than 700 years of Turkish history, and sign language through 500 years, continuing to the present.

## **DEAF PEOPLE, SIGN LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION, IN OTTOMAN & MODERN TURKEY: Observations and Excerpts from 1300 to 2009. From sources in English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin and Turkish, with introduction and some annotation.**

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### OVERVIEW and GUIDE

This collection offers many sources and textual excerpts, with some annotation and discussion, identifying deaf men and women through more than 700 years of Turkish history, and sign language through 500 years, up to the present. Most of the excerpts are situated in the regions of Istanbul and Edirne between 1300 and the 1920s, when 'deaf- mute' people worked at the court of the Ottoman sultans. In the past 150 years some other cities of the Ottoman Empire, and of modern Turkey, come into focus. Evidence appears for deaf servants developing a Sign Language probably from the late 15th century onward, and teaching it to younger deaf people, and also to some hearing people. Sign language is seen becoming established in some households, harems and working places of successive sultans, viziers and minor court officials. Deaf people who had retired from service and were living in the cities and towns also returned for social contact with the deaf people currently serving the Ottoman court. The most recent half century has seen more significant development of formal education for deaf children, and the beginnings of a rediscovery and official recognition of the value of sign language. The strengths, weaknesses and contradictions of different kinds of evidence are scrutinised and discussed, and some popular myths are seen to lack any solid basis.

#### **\*Some Ways To Use This Collection\***

**People with a 'Visual' Priority**, who want to see some pictures, images, colour and costumes, can start straight away by hitting the links in the [Online Graphics](#), which are grouped all together. The rest of the material is all textual, in several languages.

**Historical Researchers** may wish to study first the [Introduction](#) and the [Technical Notes](#), to check the likely **quality of the texts** presented. They may be interested mainly in texts from a particular historical period: sections [3.0](#) and [4.0](#) appear approximately in date order, so they can find items in the period of choice. Or they may wish to go straight to the [References](#), to see whether there are any new sources there.

Some **Deaf people** and **Sign Linguists**, also **Teachers** of many subjects, may like a **Quick Tour** around some of the 'best bits' on **deaf people and sign language**. Then they can decide whether to go back and start at the beginning, or read the surrounding context of a particular historical period. To pick out the 'best bits' is not at all easy, because people have their own preferences about where to start, when looking at a jigsaw puzzle; and these pieces are in several languages and spaced out across 500 years. Everyone is likely to construct a different picture. One quick tour around the big picture can be made with the following links:

#### **Quick Tour**

[1470s, Koçu](#); [1559, Lorichs](#); [1599, Dallam](#); [1608, Bon](#);

[1630s, Evliya](#); [1660s, Bobovius](#); [\[1750s?\], Peirce](#); [1789, Dikici](#);

[1829, Slade](#); [1870s, Gaden](#); [1909-10, Silent Worker \(two similar items\)](#);

[Roe, 1917](#) [1930s-1950s, Gök](#); [2003, Yüksel](#).

**Women...** are represented much less often than men in the texts and illustrations offered in this collection, though they are sometimes seen in the background. This is a common problem with historical records across the world. Women do appear in the links shown above to [1660s Bobovius](#), [\[1750s?\], Peirce](#), [1789, Dikici](#). In the modern era, several of the early foreign teachers of deaf children were women (see below e.g. [1914, Greene](#); [1915, Gage](#), [1951-1953, Girgin](#). One modern reference, [2003, Yüksel](#) shows deaf women and men serving in Turkey's National Assembly in the 21st century.

**Adventurers into Deep History** may wish to plunge in to the evidence for deaf people among the Hittites [around 1250 BC](#), in the central region of Turkey.

### Some Online Graphics of the Ottoman 'Deaf Mutes'

**Please take care** with the graphic illustrations that are found at the following links. Most of them have some **copyright restriction** on their use. They can be viewed by clicking on the links. But do not copy any pictures onto your blog, or your website, without first checking the legal position!

1. Some illustrations of deaf people in full uniform, at the Ottoman court:

<http://www.baarnhielm.net/~gorbaa/draktbok/eng/35.htm>  
'Imperial mute', from Ralamb Costume Book, no. 35

<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/> **Search** for: 1239191 Dilsis  
(picture can be enlarged)

<http://www.baarnhielm.net/~gorbaa/draktbok/eng/94.htm>  
Deaf messenger. Ralamb Costume Book, no. 94

<http://www.potaforum.com/showthread.php?t=19206>  
"Sarayı dili, dilsiz dili..." A deaf mute man in costume.

From Gallica, e.g. number 19 in a set of 21 palace photos:

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/> Select 'Advanced search'

For 'Text', enter: Muet de Palais

Select Document type: Image

Search through to No. 19 of "Costumes Turcs"

Enlarge to "Full Screen"

2. The deaf school building, Istanbul, in the 1890s.

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b28781>

(Click to enlarge)

3. Some images of deaf-mute people in Turkey at various times may be found by search of Google "Images". Some books also have pictures or drawings of costumes and their users. For example Emin Cenkmén (1948) *Osmanlı Sarayı ve Kıyafetleri*, Türkiye Yayınevi, pp. 117, 208-215, 298, (see also end-page with corrections), compiles information (in Turkish) from various sources, and drawings of ornamental court costumes and equipment worn by 'bizeban' and 'dilsiz' and also dwarfs, among the

members of the Seferli Oda. Similarly, see Baykal (1953, pp. 24 {caption}, 26 {ftn. 5}, 50, 62-65).

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Evidence is shown below of deaf and/or 'mute' people in Ottoman and modern Turkish history, with a major focus on the employment of trained deaf(-mute) people at the Ottoman court probably from the 1470s onward, certainly from the mid-16th century. Specific evidence is given for the development of a complex system of signed communication (which may be called 'Ottoman Sign Language'), which was formally taught by experienced deaf users to younger deaf people, at a specific location in the Topkapı Palace, as well as being less formally 'handed on' in everyday use. That language was also learnt and used by some hearing courtiers and some Sultans, in the vicinity of Istanbul, Edirne, and some other major seats of government, through a period of four to five hundred years. Sign languages of deaf people also had some use in other major cities of the Ottoman empire.

There is evidence for the adoption of the Ottoman Sign Language by hearing users because of its practical usefulness, and the perpetuation of the Ottoman Sign Language over several centuries. At present, no historical parallel is known, anywhere in the world, for a sign language continuing through five hundred years or more (Zeshan 2006). Yet the continuation of Ottoman Sign Language might actually reflect some of the ill-defined and incremental home- and street- level processes that are much more widespread, in the 'handing-on' of signed communication to the next generation, wherever there have been large urban or suburban populations among whom were significant numbers of people born deaf or who lost their hearing early in life. One reason for producing this collection is that an earlier journal article (Miles 2000a) that is also open online, "[Signing in the Seraglio](#)", concentrated on the period between 1500 and 1700, and may inadvertently have given the impression that the Ottoman Sign Language was confined to that period, and was used only in the palaces at Istanbul. That impression is incorrect, as will be seen in the texts shown below.

A further reason is that deaf people and sign linguists would like to know whether Ottoman Sign Language (OSL) was the historical forerunner of 'Türk İşaret Dili' (Turkish Sign Language) as used now. This collection cannot provide a final answer to that, but it will certainly provide background material on which interested people may make up their minds. The compiler's own view, as the evidence began to accumulate year upon year, is that the question may now be reversed: can anyone show evidence that TID/TSL is not a direct descendant of OSL? Ottoman SL can now be shown to have had an impact beyond the confines of a few royal palaces, and it was a language with a lot of prestige attached. It seems reasonable to expect that it was a major contributor to TID/TSL, unless evidence is found that contradicts such an expectation. Comparative studies of sign languages in Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Iraq and Syria may also shed some light on the question.

### 1.1 Some Strong Cautions

Historians seldom display an online collection of the 'evidence texts' or 'pièces justificatives' that underpin their work. This reticence of historians has several reasons, some more compelling than others. Most of what passes for 'history' actually contains very large elements of guesswork, emendation, myth, embroidery and spin. The available contemporary evidence is often mutually contradictory, and often derives from one or two poorly preserved manuscripts, dated some years after the events. Even when nine sources say X (and X sounds likely), and one source says Y (and Y looks unlikely), and the truth is actually something more like Z, it may easily happen that Y is nearer the truth than X. (Of course, 'the truth' may well appear to be something different, as told a week later by five different eyewitnesses of any event). Some level of deliberate or unconscious bias or spin probably enters almost everything we say or write today. There is no reason to think that earlier recorders were any less subject to these deviations. Later compilers and analysts often add further bias

by selecting only the sources they find attractive. Handwritten textual evidence is subject to many hazards, such as errors in copying, illegible words, haphazard spellings, deliberate alterations, mistranslations, and other problems. The meaning of words often changed significantly over centuries, or even within decades, and varied from one geographical place to another. At any of these (and many other) barriers, turning points or hazards, the historian may have to choose one source or meaning, and mention others in footnotes or omit them altogether.

Compiling an historical account is thus a messy business, usually done in a private 'workshop'. Later, it is offered to the public with a coating of varnish to cover the cracks and gaps. With some years of practice, many historians probably do become better craftspeople, with a wider knowledge of languages, of their own specialist period, of how people in that period thought about their lives, and of the frailty of all human knowledge. One danger of offering a collection of textual 'evidence' online, is that people with no training or experience in handling historical texts, but with a strong modern agenda of activism or of campaigning for particular goals, may seize on some particular text and use it in an attempt to 'prove' a modern argument, even though the original context may have been quite different, or the text is doubtful. (For similar reasons, the custodians of religious texts have often been reluctant to let 'ordinary people' read them or attempt to interpret them).

However, the internet already makes public a considerable number of texts and interpretations about the Ottoman 'mutes'. Many of those texts have no historical basis, or depend on very doubtful evidence, or give a (probably unjustified) prominence to particular aspects of the evidence. For readers with a serious interest in this topic, and who are willing to face the difficulties of texts in several different languages (in which ordinary words and names were often spelled in various ways in earlier centuries), and to weigh up the apparent contradictions between different witnesses, this collection is offered. The original idea was to put the excerpts of text online without any notes or comments. Then it was realised that to do so would place them beyond the reach of anyone lacking experience in historical research and interpretation, or anyone who had not spent some years in study of Turkish social history, or anyone who had made no study of deafness and sign language. So some notes and comments have been added (with the risk that these may impose the compiler's own fallible judgement and framework on the texts).

The compiler's notes and comments have been clearly marked by bold, square brackets [ ]. **Users are cautioned** that (i) the original texts may be mistaken in what they assert; and (ii) the compiler's notes and comments may sometimes be mistaken in what they suggest; (iii) much more primary source evidence probably exists, particularly in Ottoman Turkish, in Arabic, and in the Balkan languages, which might throw a different light on what appears in the evidence shown below. The addition of new evidence will be very welcome. It will not necessarily make the overall picture much clearer; but it may enrich our understanding of the complexity of the field.

The present collection, arranged in order of date, has the merit (and also the problem) of making clear that most European sources almost certainly copied or edited material from earlier authors, usually without acknowledgement, sometimes with imaginative additions and exaggerations, and sometimes with a strong 'orientalist' bias. Some later sources apparently had no actual experience with deaf and mute people in Turkey, or had only slight contact which they then padded out with material from others, to give an authentic sound. Such borrowing, and even fabrication, is a problem in every century of 'travel' writing, so **every text needs careful and critical scrutiny**. Modern writers are also inclined to select among the available evidence and to 'read back' modern wishes and agendas into the past, to construct a picture of history that suits their own taste or agenda or prejudice. It is tempting to insert interpretations, based on how 'we' think events 'must have' happened, even though it is very likely that people living centuries earlier did not think or act exactly in the ways that most people act or think now. The present compiler is not immune from such temptations, but has tried to be careful and cautious, and to present as much primary evidence as possible, not smoothing out or neglecting

the contradictions, issues, arguments and loose ends. This work is a preliminary and preparatory phase, before well-informed sketches can begin to be made of the history of deaf people and their sign languages in Turkey, and of the hearing people who sometimes took an interest in them.

One positive factor, when the reader is trying to evaluate evidence on the history of deaf people and sign language, is that most of it has little or no implication for political or religious issues. So it may have been less liable to distortion or spin. It very seldom made any political difference, whether a ruler had a deaf servant, or several deaf servants, or none at all. Only in one case, i.e. the brief periods during which Sultan Mustafa I was on the throne (1617-18, 1622-23), did some historians record that his inability to use sign language was one of the reasons for his removal from power (along with his general weakness of intellect and other abilities). The majority of historians have had no more interest in the 'deaf-mute' servants than they had in the horse the sultan or vizir might happen to be riding.

**Dates, periods.** In general, texts have been presented in 'apparent' order of the date or period in which observations were made - the year or period shown in *bold italics* - rather than by the date of report or of publication. This has the disadvantage of some **mixing of primary sources with secondary sources** - but the intelligent reader is expected to bear in mind the differences, and to maintain his or her sceptical scrutiny of all sources. Two periods have been particularly in focus: from the 1470s to 1700 (during which deaf people and their communications apparently became well established at the Ottoman Court); and from the 1820s to 1920s, a period of slowly increasing change and modernisation, leading to the modern Turkish Republic. A few observations of other impairments, disabilities or differences are included for context and comparison. Some 'mutes' continued to work at the Court from 1700 onward, but there is a period of perhaps 70 or 80 years that seems to offer less description or comment on them from sources within Turkey, while strongly biased comments continued within Western Europe. This was followed by an apparent upswing of attention during the 19th century, from European visitors to Istanbul, with a new focus from the 1890s on the first formal schools for deaf children. A remarkable closing note shows deaf assistants still working in the Turkish National Assembly in 2003, for the better security and secrecy of high-level deliberations.

**20th century.** The histories of deaf people in Turkey during the 20th century are waiting for Turkish historians and interested deaf people to take up and examine more seriously on a basis of textual and graphical evidence, personal memories, and calm reflection. The latest upswing of European interest, during the past 20 years, unfortunately has tended more to reinforce prejudices than to produce enlightenment. In 'historical' or pseudo-historical novels set in the Ottoman period, some authors seem to have found it almost obligatory to have a muscular set of 'mutes' lurking behind the curtains, avidly awaiting the signal to leap upon their trembling victim and strangle him with a bowstring. This reinforces a familiar western fantasy of the 'oriental strangeness' of the court, the brutality of (some of) the Sultans, the (imagined) 'barely-controlled animal' side of the mutes, while sketching a dismal and distorted 'Islamic' background. Such a focus on fantasy and prejudice tends to eliminate or suppress the **more interesting scenes** in which there is good evidence that some deaf people spent years of their lives serving the highest officials of a vast empire, and made their sign language a viable means of communication for both deaf and hearing people. Historical novels on the Ottomans were being written from the 18th century onward, reaching a small, literate public. The modern equivalents are read by vastly greater numbers across the world, among whom only a tiny minority has any access to primary sources or an interest in historical accuracy. It is to be hoped that some of the more intelligent novelists will begin to add to the interest and realism of their work by a more careful and nuanced portrayal of deaf characters in the context of Ottoman history.

**Relevance to the 21st century.** The processes of development in the past century formed a part of the worldwide movement, by deaf people and their hearing friends and colleagues, to value Deaf lives and languages and cultures. The experience of Turkish deaf people over several centuries also has a

wider relevance to the 21st century world, where between 7 and 10 billion people with different cultures and languages will need to find ways of living together and sharing resources with peace and justice in an increasingly fragile environment. Historical studies suggest that the traditional power and wealth of kings and armies, as exhibited in the Ottoman Empire (and the other major empires), will be very hard to use wisely for the benefit of billions of people spread across the world. Other methods of governance must be found that will make better use of communication and example, and depend less on threats of destruction to compel population groups to comply with the wishes of distant rulers, or engineers, or marketing personnel. Starting at the other end, what can be learnt from the 'survival skills' of people who were deaf and mute, most of whom had very little power and were perceived by the public as being 'defective'? By developing a different kind of power, or adapting themselves to using a little power in more effective ways, some of those deaf people built worthwhile lives and influenced powerful men at the highest level. They survived, served and taught their method of communication to rulers, in a multinational environment of considerable risk and complex power struggles. Those capacities for **adaptability**, **service** and **communication**, by people who carried messages between the great and powerful, will be needed in the present century too.

**Pre-Ottoman notes.** Deafness and deaf people in Asia Minor certainly appear in some sources before the start of the Ottoman period, mainly in Byzantine ecclesiastical literature. For example, in the 9th century "Life of Saint Eustratius", the saint was twice reported to have healed 'deaf and dumb' children at Kursunlu and at Constantinople (Mango, 1968). Some 'healing' stories have more interest in the casual details of deaf people's lives (e.g. the knife-grinder mentioned below under "late 6th century?", by Georgios) or in possible contributions to otolaryngological history (e.g. Lascaratos 1996; Lascaratos & Assimakopoulos 1999; Lascaratos, Poulacou-Rebelacou & Yiotakis 1998). In 1319, Jean Glykys, Patriarch of the Orthodox Christians at Constantinople was seriously ill and paralysed, so was allowed to resign his post. His successor was G erasime, an elderly priest and monk, "an old man with white hair and nearly deaf", who became Patriarch in 1320 but died within a year (Rohrbacher, 1858, volume 19, pp. 434-435). Byzantine philanthropy and social welfare has been studied in detail, e.g. by Constantelos (1968) and others, with material on blind, mentally disabled and physically disabled people; but deafness is noticeably absent. Mitler (1979) mentions that church buildings were constructed in Galata (near Constantinople) in 1420 for Benedictine monks. Editing the work of Domenico Hierosolimitano (c. 1580-1590), M.J.L. Austin (p. 71) has the church of St. Benedict founded by Benedictines in 1427). It is possible that a standardised and limited Benedictine 'gestural system' had some use within that monastery; but no evidence has been published showing contact or influence between that sub-linguistic form of communication and the sign language used by deaf people in Constantinople/Istanbul.

## 1.2 'Deaf'? 'Mute'?

The words 'deaf' and 'mute' have already been used above without any discussion, as though they have a clear and universally agreed meaning, which is not so. In many old languages, the same word could mean 'deaf' (in the case of being unable to hear) or could mean 'mute' (in the sense of being unable to speak), and historically there has been a popular assumption that someone born deaf (or losing their hearing very early in life) will be unable to speak -- so a single word meaning 'deaf and mute' could be used, combining the two features or incapacities. (See discussion by Scalenghe, 2005, for the terms in Ottoman Syria). Some careful observers in the ancient world knew that there were different levels of deafness or 'hearing loss', as described in the 9th century CE by Arabic commentator al-Jahiz (transl. 1967), whose works were known by well-educated people throughout the Ottoman period. Observers were also aware that some deaf people communicated fluently using sign language, giving evidence of a lively intelligence, as described late in the 4th century CE by the North African theologian Augustine (transl. Russell 1968, p. 13) whose works were known in Byzantium. Complex languages of bodily gesture and sign were described in literature of Indian antiquity, being used by hearing people in various situations (Miles 2000b). So there was not necessarily any 'problem' about deaf

people using a sign language of their own, where there were enough of them together in one time and place to make it feasible.

In the present compilation, there are textual excerpts across several centuries, referring to people as 'deaf' or 'mute', 'sourd' and 'muet', 'sagir', 'kulaksiz', 'bizeban', 'dilsiz', and so on. In no case is there any audiological report indicating the measured 'hearing loss'. In no case is there a professional report about a person's incapacity to speak, or their possible ability to learn to speak. The sole evidence available is about people who learnt to use sign language. Examining the texts, it appears that many people were **known in their local community** by a name meaning 'deaf' or 'mute', and their family and neighbours may have **known from daily experience** that those individuals were both deaf and mute; or in some cases, had a loss of hearing but were not mute, or were mute without being deaf. It is difficult, now, to go beyond that 'knowledge', as recorded by the words used in the context of the record. The Turkish word 'dilsiz' literally means 'without tongue' or 'without language'; but many of the people known as Dilsiz did have a language of sign and gesture, and it is highly likely that every one of them had a tongue. No evidence has been found that any of them had been born without a tongue, or had their tongue amputated or mutilated. Some were known as 'Sagir' (deaf). Others were known as 'Kulaksiz' ('ear-less'); but there was no evidence that they had been born without ears, or had had their ears cut off. Those people were understood, in their time, to be without the capacity of hearing. With modern medical knowledge, readers now may wish to bring a more nuanced understanding to these issues; but the texts shown below will be discussed almost entirely **within the knowledge-world of the writers in earlier centuries**. For that reason, such terms as 'mute' and 'deaf-mute', which no longer sound correct in modern English, will be employed here. Another reason for using them could be that confident, modern, deaf people may prefer the old terms. Levent Beşkardeş, a well known deaf Turkish actor and artist, interviewed in *Hurriyet* in December 2008, reportedly stated that he was "against the expression 'hearing impaired', just as he is against people whose speech is bad being called 'speaking impaired.' He prefers to be called a deaf mute."

### 1.3 Sign Language History and Scepticism

The main problem, in actually demonstrating that a sign language was being used before 1900, is that Sign Language is essentially a mental, physical, spatial and kinetic set of activities. The only complete 'proof' of a sign language would be a detailed and expert analysis of several hours of moving pictures, i.e. film or video. That proof has not been found (though it not impossible that some film of sign language might still exist, in a cupboard or storeroom somewhere in Istanbul, from the final years of the Ottomans, i.e. the 1910s and 1920s, if serious searches were made for it). Before film, there was not much more than a limited number of verbal descriptions of vocabularies, mostly of sublinguistic finger codes used in some monastic communities of Europe. Even that level of description has not yet been found for Ottoman Sign Language.

Anyone adopting a fully sceptical position could therefore say: "Show me the action! Show the movement! Until I see film of the hands, heads, eyes, mouths, arms, and body, moving in the 'signing space' between two or more people, you will not convince me that it was taking place more than a hundred years ago. At present, you can show nothing that moves, earlier than the 20th century. You have reports from people who were not themselves users of sign language, saying that there are 'mutes' who are able to communicate about anything. But the reports are all third or fourth hand, through interpreters, or through palace servants who probably told the same hocus-pocus to a long list of foreigners wanting to take home some amazing stories about their foreign trip. I can show you a group of dog-owners today, who will assure you that their dog knows and understands whatever they say. The dog even knows what they are going to say or do before they have said it or done it! But if you take them into a laboratory, and get them to discuss some philosophical question, there's no evidence that the dog understands a word they are saying. You discuss Plato, and maybe the dog hopes it will get a Plate of food! But the dog won't really get interested until it is back home, and it



sees and hears a series of tiny body signals, at the right time of day, which its owner usually makes before getting up to give the dog its dinner, or take it for a walk."

These objections have some strength - but on that basis, much of what happens in the world today, and most of what happened in the past, can also be dismissed. Two important points can be made:

(1). Nobody claims that deaf people in historical Turkey could fly through the air, or pass invisibly through solid walls! The suggestion is that 'deaf-mute' people engaged in signed communication, a human phenomenon that has been studied in increasingly fine detail during the past 40 years, using analysis of film and video. Signed communication has been shown to exist in a wide variety of forms: everything along a range from simple gestures to complex and fully grammatical languages. It is only in the past 30 years that the range and complexity of motion in time and space, and interaction of movements between two or more people, has begun to be researched in a scientific way, by analysis of video evidence, in the light of a vast range of modern linguistic knowledge and theory. (Ordinary members of the public remain mostly unaware of this research. If asked to show what is meant by 'sign language', they would still today normally wave their hands and wiggle their fingers; or make a few of the iconic gestures normally used by hearing people).

(2). None of the reported historical observations from Istanbul and other cities gives an adequate description of the actual complexity of movement and body parts in Sign Language. Yet it is interesting to notice, over two or three centuries, the cumulative total, which supplies an impressive range of movements and body parts. From different witnesses shown below, the following are reported, taking place in a large space around the signing persons: nods and signs, movement of feet, lips, heads, arms, both right and left hands, touching various parts of the body, clacking or grinding of teeth, winking, motion of eyes and eyebrows, 'mouthing', lip-reading, spitting on the ground, and hooting noises. None of the witnesses reported the full list of actions. A few actions are reported by only one person, and were not repeated later. The present collection is the first place in which all these actions or activities are assembled and listed together, from the Ottoman court. (The list even includes an action that has rarely appeared in formal sign language research literature -- but 'spitting' as a part of communication is known to anthropologists).

The point is that, until very recently, the variety and complexity of actions and movements and use of space was not 'public knowledge'. If people in the past had falsely claimed to have witnessed sign language being used, they would have been most unlikely to give so much detail. It is quite possible that some false claims were made, and then copied by later writers. Yet in the long run, it is not at all easy to fabricate a series of false reports continuing over several hundred years, in which all the details are possible, and the cumulative sum of the details is credible by modern linguistic research standards. The historical case is not thereby 'proven'; but the suggestion does have a cumulative credibility, that over several centuries, some non-specialist reporters were indeed witnessing deaf people using an elaborated and grammatically effective sign language.

**The texts listed below, covering about five hundred years, are by far the longest continuous series of evidence for the use of a Sign Language in particular locations and regions, i.e. Istanbul and its suburbs, Edirne, and many other urban and rural places to which deaf people travelled, or returned after living and working in Istanbul.**

#### **1.4 Deaf people (640 - 1928), Names and Dates**

Through a period of roughly 1300 years (**640s-1928**), about 40 deaf (and/or) mute people in, near, or visiting Istanbul, or other Turkish cities or towns, and having a personal name and some known dates, can be found in the works or quotations below. Those details make them stand out with a little more colour, personality or activity from the group of 'mutes' at court and in their living quarters, or the earlier crowds of people seeking healing at the shrines of saints, or the thousands of deaf people living

ordinary lives in rural villages. Their level of 'public notice' ranges from having a passing mention in a single list, to having a series of mentions and details across 80 years. (For example, the deaf eunuch Dilsiz Süleyman Aga, or Süleyman Aga Bizeban, was a trusted servant of Sultana Safiye in the 1580s and 1590s. He had celebratory fountains named after him, and in his native Kosovo he founded a Waqf with mosque and school, which carried his name onward in historical records to the 1670s, and his mosque still stands today).

**DATE (CE) NAME (and some detail)**

640	Theodosios (deaf son of Emperor Heraclius)
1048	Asan (or Hasan) the Deaf (military commander)
1320	Gerasimos (Patriarch of Orthodox Christians)
c. 1400	Dilsiz Muhammed
c. 1425-1515	Ilyas Sücaeddin ibn Ilyas (deaf in later life)
1450s-1471	Sheikh al-Bistami (author, deaf from middle age)
1478	Dilsiz Yahya (servant at court of Fatih Mehmed) Dilsiz Yusuf Dilsiz Ismail Dilsiz Balaban
1505	Zati (the poet)
1573	Koca dilsiz
1574-76	Sagır Behram Paşa (Governor of Diyarbekir)
1580s-1600s	Dilzis Süleyman Aga (favourite of Sultana Safiye)
1590s-1630s	Riyadi al-Asamm (Kadi of Aleppo)
1603	Dilsiz Kili (Killi, Kuli or Kullili)
1620	Dilsiz Ali Aga
1630	Deaf David (Daud) (chief of the imperial sword makers)
1630s ?	[Dilsiz Saqueda ? (favourite of Murad IV ?)]
1635	Dilsiz Civan Dilsiz Tavşan (Aga)
1646	Buzagi Dilsiz
1660s ?	Dilsiz Ali Dede
1691	Dilsiz Mahomet Aga or Mehmed Aga
1706	Dilsiz Mohammed [? same as 1691 ?]
18th century	Sakallı Dilsiz Ali (artist, engraver in bone)
1748	Ahmed Bizeban (father of poet Esrâr Dede)

1789	Dilsiz Rukiye (female servant in harem of Selim III)
1813-1814	Dilsiz Hüseyin (accidentally drowned during sports)
1830-1831	Başdilsiz Bargir (Beygir) dilsiz
1830s	Dr John Kitto (visiting scholar, deafened as teenager)
1847	Hüseyin Aga (?)
c. 1890	Ali Galip (studied in Grati's school?)
1892	M. Pekmezian (deaf teacher in France, then Istanbul)
late 1890s	Sheikh Fayyad ibn Abdullah (visited Istanbul from Lebanon)
[1880s-1920s]	Jacques Faraggi (helped found Salonica deaf school)
[1890s-1920s]	Edgard Faraggi, Istanbul (educated at Paris)
[1901-1960s?]	Süleyman Sirri Gök (founded Deaf Association)
[1900s-1973]	Ismet İnönü (born 1884, deafened in his 20s, Prime Minister of Turkey)
1915	deaf Samuel (student at Merzifon) Theodorus (student at Merzifon)
1923	Alber[t] Karmona [Carmona] (founded Izmir school)
1928	Deaf Hamdi (primary school teacher at Nusaybin)

Some notes appear on the internet of further historical deaf/mute people, for whom dates and details are not quite clear to the present compiler, such as '**Zenci**' [**Negro**] **Dilsiz Mehmed**, in a legal case from Ottoman archives (Batur et al, 2002, p. 84); also **Dilsiz Ibrahim**; and no doubt many others. There are of course hundreds of people in Turkey now who have the surname 'Dilsiz', without any impairment of hearing -- it is merely a family name, with a meaning in the distant past. There may also have been some people in earlier times who acquired a nickname of 'The Deaf', for some reason other than an actual serious hearing impairment.

For the first fifty years of the 20th century, it should not be difficult to find 100 deaf people with names, dates and places. Even for an earlier 500 years, a diligent search should bring out a much wider prosopographical account, giving more depth and quality to the available knowledge of deaf people's lives.

## 1.5 Appreciation

Useful information, comments, suggestions and criticism were received at various times over ten years, from: L. Bragg; E. Demirbas; I. Demircioglu; A.E. Dikici; M. Essex; C. Finkel; N. Halici; E. Kara; C. Miles; R. Murphey; M. Petal; M. Plackett; P. Raswant; K. Sprick; and U. Zeshan. None of these informants bears responsibility for any errors in the present version.

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The facilitative role played by the **Independent Living Institute** in hosting this material on its site, the friendly correspondence with the Director, A. Ratzka, and the meticulous attention of webmaster M. Goldstick, continue to be very warmly appreciated.

## 2.0 TECHNICAL NOTES on the Quotations

**Online Materials.** Many of the older (pre-1900) items are **available full text online**, either with **open access**, or with **restricted access** (e.g. available by membership of an institution with a big library budget). The number of such online texts is increasing every month. Serious researchers who wish to verify each text for themselves are strongly recommended to use Google and particularly Google Books, or other search engines of their choice; and to use national union library catalogues to get an idea of some of the differences in spelling of author names, to widen their search.

Some texts that were available online earlier may be reformatted with different URLs, and the date and edition used may be different from the one shown below, and the author's name may have a slightly different spelling. For those reasons, most of the online texts have not been shown with URLs or hotlinks, in the collection below. However, the URLs that are shown below were working in June 2009 (unless stated otherwise).

**Nicknames.** During the Ottoman period, as in most of the world's history, it was customary for people to have nicknames indicating some bodily feature. Such nicknames were given to people of the highest social status, as well as to ordinary people. For example, a list of titles and nicknames of the Ottoman sultans and their relatives and senior officers, by Alderson (1956, pp. 112-120), includes important people known by nicknames such as Deli (mad); Egri (crooked); Hadım (eunuch); Hantal (clumsy); Kanbur (hunch-backed); Kel (bald); Mest (sot); Sarhoş (drunkard); Semen / Semiz (fat); Tavaşi (eunuch); Topal (lame). At the other end of the social scale, a city register in South Eastern Anatolia in 1518 (Ilhan, 2000, pp. 191-225), shows similar names such as `Arec (possibly for A`rec, lame); Ahres ("probably meaning dump" [=dumb]); Dilsuz; Divāne (Persian: foolish, insane); Maḥrum (deprived, destitute, disappointed); Muṣammet (Arabic: 'made silent or speechless, silenced'); Remed (having ophthalmia); Seyda (Persian: mad with love).

**Quotes, Brackets, Dots.** Material enclosed in quotation marks " ... " represents **direct quotations** from the authors cited; but where one quotation appears within another quotation, the inside one is usually given in single apostrophes '.....' Elsewhere, single apostrophes are used to draw attention to a particular word, for example: 'mute' is used historically as a noun, representing someone who did not speak, usually someone who was deaf and mute; but this word is not considered polite in modern English, so sometimes it is shown in 'warning' apostrophes.

Square brackets in **Bold** type [ ] appear within some quotations to indicate a brief explanatory word or words **inserted by the present compiler / annotator**. As noted above, bold square brackets also mark **longer explanatory remarks or commentary by the compiler / annotator**. The aim is to make a very clear distinction between the compiler's 21st century annotations and the direct quotations from primary or secondary sources. Earlier editorial insertions appear 'as found' in editions, often in parentheses ( ), but where they originally used square brackets [ ] those brackets have been changed to curly brackets { } to avoid confusion. Superscript numerals indicating editorial footnotes have been omitted, and the footnote is usually shown by some other means. Spelling, capitalization

of nouns, punctuation and accentuation, or lack of it, are given 'as found' in texts, mostly without 'sic' or other concessions to modern practice; but see note below on 'Transliteration and Diacriticals'.

Several dots ... appearing in a text indicate that **material has been omitted** by the present compiler. In most cases, some explanatory information has been provided around quotations where 'mutes' appeared in historical texts, to assist in contextualising them, or to indicate the status of the writer. In some cases, less clearly relevant material has been included from one author, for its possible pertinence to another author's observations -- these have mostly not been cross-referenced; but, as in the case of some quotations from modern historians, they may appear adjacent to the primary sources.

## 2.1 Notes on translation, transliteration

In various historical periods, textual translators have had different ideas about the extent to which they should translate literally, or should give a dynamic paraphrase of the meaning (so far as they have understood it), or might even deliberately insert their own view of what the text 'should have' said. Apart from what they actually thought they were doing, the possibility of unconscious bias may also play some part. Readers of the texts below that have been translated (some more than once) should bear in mind that, even with the best of skills and intentions, they are already a little removed from what the original author may have wanted to say. (See Bernard Lewis, 1999, "From Babel to Dragomans", for an entertaining account of these processes of translation and interpretation). The Turkish word 'çevirme', for 'translation', obtains a lot more colour in the Turkish-English dictionary by Hony & Iz (2nd edn. 1957), with the following definitions: "Piece of meat roasted on a spit or skewer; kebab; a kind of thick jam; turning movement (*military*); translation. Translated." This was presumably not intended to be humorous; but these different meanings give a fine representation of the twists and turns in cooking up a 'translation'.

For the same reason, the present compiler has mostly not given his own translation to English from Latin, French, German etc (which could add one more jump away from what was originally written), but sometimes indicates the (probable) meaning in the course of the annotation. (Ideally, all text and notes would also appear in translation to Turkish, to be more accessible to the people who are likely to be most interested. But that remains to be done by those who are capable of it, who might approach the subject with a completely different set of ideas!) Probably some (perhaps most) of the foreign visitors who reported what they 'saw and heard' at Istanbul, actually 'saw' less than they reported, and what they did 'see' was coloured by explanations given to them by interpreters at the Court, with some (small?) changes of meaning between one language and another. The more intelligent travellers would have cross-questioned their interpreters, and also tried to obtain confirmation or rebuttal from other local sources and by discussion with other foreign observers, until they had made up their minds about the truth and meaning of what they had seen and heard. The less careful travellers probably just copied what others had reported earlier, adding a little spin and embroidery, so as to appear 'original'. Yet even the intelligent and careful observer can sometimes be misinformed. And occasionally the careless or fraudulent reporter happens to get something right, that nobody else noticed.

**Transliteration and diacriticals.** Over several centuries, different methods of transliteration and spelling have arisen, whether from the Arabic script in which Turkish was originally written, or from the Roman script adopted by the Turkey government early in the 20th century. No attempt has been made to harmonise the different spellings, in what appears below. Most of them are given 'as found' in the various quotations, but in some cases accents or diacritical marks have been omitted because they are not uniformly represented in computer software, whether in text-processing or screen drivers or printers. For example, the accent placed under 's', denoting the English 'sh' sound, has here been omitted, or shown with underlining, 's', or sometimes shown as 'sh'. The accent that may be placed above the 'g' in Turkish, known as '*yumushak ge*' or 'soft g', has been omitted from words and names because some computer systems will represent it by a peculiar non-alphabetic symbol, while others will simply leave a gap where it occurs. Either fault may leave the reader without any means to look

up the word in a dictionary; whereas using the plain 'g' in that word or name will give the reader enough information to go forward, even though it is not quite correct. In most cases below it is represented by underlining: 'g' (yet this too can get lost when printing out in fonts where 'g' has a big loop below the line). Apologies are offered for all such flaws, inaccuracies or substitutions. Further, some diacriticals that would now be used in French were not used in earlier centuries. The spelling and punctuation of earlier English and German also had many differences, which may be puzzling at first sight. The transliteration of Greek here makes some use of capital letters to represent long vowels such as Eeta and Omega, while omitting some accents.

## **2.2 RESPECTING COPYRIGHT**

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## **3.0 EARLIER POINTS (c. 1250 BC to 1295 CE)**

A few items at the start come **before the Ottoman period** began, to give a deeper historical context. These include some deaf people working as individuals or in a group, in the royal palaces and temples of the Hittite Empire more than 3200 years ago; the early Byzantine Empire when a theologian used sign communication during a vow of silence; a glance at courtly practices in the neighbouring Sassanid Empire; the deaf son of a 7th century Emperor of Byzantium; an early Turkish Sufi teacher who seems to mention sign language in one of his poems around 1300 CE; and other points of possible relevance. (In this earlier material, a lot of 'explanatory material' is given for a very small amount of primary text, so some patience is required!)

### ***c. 1250 BC***

SOYSAL, Yasemin [Arikan] (2001) Hitit din ve sosyal hayatında {LU/MUNUS}U.HUB "sagır". In: G. Wilhelm (editor) *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 deaf man or supervisor of deaf men) are found, and gives transliteration of them, with translation to Turkish. Soysal discusses and lists the various 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. Deaf women also appear briefly in two texts.]

MILES, M. (2008) Hittite Deaf Men in the 13th century B.C.: introductory notes with annotated bibliography. <http://www.independentliving.org/docs7/miles200809.html>

[This web article lists slightly more texts than Soysal's article (see previous item), with annotation in English; and also sets the Hittite deaf people in the wider context of deafness and deaf people in the

early Middle East, between about 2200 BC and 1400 CE.]

### **3rd to 7th century CE (?)**

AL-JAHIZ (attributed). *Le Livre de la Couronne. Kitâb at-Taj (fi ahlâq al-Mulûk)* transl. Charles Pellat (1954) Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres".

[The Sassanian empire (dynasty ruling c. 224-636 CE) at its height pushed back the borders of the Eastern Roman Empire and threatened Byzantium. Reportedly, Sassanian monarchs had a custom of silence at meals. If anyone needed to communicate, he used signs and gestures instead of speaking. Pellat translated the Arabic as follows (pp. 46-47):]

"{Conversation à table}. À table, il convient de ne tenir aucun propos, ni sérieux, ni badin. Si le Roi engage la conversation, il n'y a pas lieu de l'imiter, mais on doit simplement l'écouter en baissant les yeux.

C'est bien pour quelque chose que les Souverains sassanides, quand les tables étaient avancées, se bornaient à 'marmotter' {1}, et personne ne prononçait une parole tant qu'elles n'étaient pas retirées. S'ils étaient contraints d'exprimer un désir, au lieu de parler, ils faisaient des gestes et des signes suffisamment clairs pour indiquer ce qu'ils désiraient ou recherchaient." (p. 46)

Footnote {1} "D'après les dictionnaires arabes, la *zamzama* désigne des sons gutturaux (formés dans le gosier sans le secours de la langue) que les Zoroastriens font entendre quand ils font leurs prières en commençant à manger; v. Buḥalâ, à l'index." [Buḥalâ = The Book of Misers, by al-Jahiz.]

"Dans cette nourriture, disaient-ils, réside la vie en ce monde. Il convient donc que l'homme applique sa pensée et occupe son esprit et ses membres à ce qu'il mange, afin que chaque organe prenne sa part de nourriture; ainsi, le corps, l'esprit animal qui siège dans le coeur et le tempérament naturel qui réside dans le foie sont parfaitement alimentés et l'organisme reçoit complètement cette nourriture.'

Le silence observé pendant les repas comporte de nombreux avantages qui sont énumérés dans l'*Ayin* {1} des Persans; nous nous abstenons de les mentionner ici car ils n'ont aucun rapport avec notre sujet." (p. 47)

{1} [Refers to Introduction, p. 16.:] "...l'*Ayin*namè 'le Livre de règlements' {#} dont F. Gabrieli {##} a signalé les vestiges conservés par Ibn Qotaiba, avait également été traduit par Ibn al-Moqafa`.

{#} A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd edn, Copenhagen, 1944. {##} F. Gabrieli, l'*Opera di Ibn al-Muqaffa`*, dans la *Rivista degli studi orientali*, vol. XIII, fasc. III (1932) 197-247."

[For the possible relevance of this reported Sassanian practice to the later Ottoman Sign Language, a further passage in the *Kitab at-Taj* may be noted on the status of different court servants (Pellat, transl. p. 52:]

"c) La troisième classe, à dix coudées de la deuxième, comprenait les bouffons, les amuseurs, et les bateleurs. Mais, de cette troisième classe, étaient exclus les gens de basse extraction, et d'humble origine, les infirmes, les géants, les nains, les difformes, les invertis, les enfants de parents inconnus, les fils de vulgaires artisans -- disons de tisserands ou de barbiers -- même si, par exemple, ils étaient devins."

[The reason reportedly given by Ardechir I for this exclusion, was that nothing is more likely to lower the royal soul than "la compagnie d'un sot" or the conversation of the common people. Thus, while the troupe of (well-born?) buffoons, tumblers and clowns was perhaps similar to what the 16th and 17th century Ottoman rulers had at their courts (as at many other royal courts), the Sassanids excluded people of the lower classes and people with various sorts of disability. Their meal-time signs might have been more like the limited gestural codes that evolved later in monasteries.]

[The *Kitab al-Taj* is not the most reliable of sources. It tends to be quoted because it gives extensive detail, it sounds plausible (at least, in Pellat's translation), and there are not many other sources on the Sassanid court. Charles Pellat, the leading 20th century specialist on Jahiz, did not regard it as a genuine work of Jahiz (who lived c. 776-868 CE, and was thus writing 600 years after

the founding Sassanid monarch, Ardechir I, and 200 years after the Sassanid empire fell); but some other scholars were willing to believe that it came from Jahiz. Pellat (p. 14) dated it in the middle of the 9th century CE. Another critic suggests the 11th century. No special reason is offered, why the Ottoman rulers should have adopted any practices described in the *Kitab at-Taj* -- but it was part of the known 'etiquette' literature, if any Ottoman ruler was looking for a more dignified or exclusive image, and wished to find historical precedents. It appears that Sultan Mehmed II (reigned 1444-1446; 1451-1481) did seek such an image and distance, later in his reign. In the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks conquered and occupied territory similar to that held earlier by the Sassanids, including much of Anatolia. In the 14th century Timur Lang ('the Lame'), also having Turkish roots, extended his power across much the same area, temporarily checking the rise of Ottoman power. As the waves of power and dynasty swept back and forth across South West Asia, the courtly counsellors and 'spin-doctors' of each century probably did what they could to promote the dignity and majesty of each successive ruler, picking up fragments of religion, tradition and custom from earlier empires. See also Gülru Necipoglu (1991) *Architecture, ceremonial and power*, pp. 251-257, summarising other possible influences on the Ottoman sultans' early move toward silence and seclusion, in some contrast with contemporary rulers; and noting also some later movement away from the 'straitjacket' of seclusion and rigid formality (257-258).]

### 382 CE

GREGORY of Nazianzus. *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze. Lettres*, volume II, edited and translated by 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 seems to have 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.]

"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) Eulalius, in W. Smith & H. Wace (editors) *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. II, London, suggests that, during the visit, Gregory's "sighs [*sic*] and gestures were so correctly interpreted by Eulalius that the visit was one of great mutual edification." Venables might have had some further ancient source for this.]

### *late 6th century ?*

GEORGIOS [of Sykéon; early 7th century] *Vie de Théodore de Sykéon. I. Texte grec. II. Traduction, commentaire et appendice*, by André-Jean Festugière (1970) Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes.

[Byzantine religious literature has many reports of deaf or mute people being healed by holy men. Some people may read these reports as historical accounts, others may see them as exhortations to faith, in which the physical details are not intended to be read as 'scientifically' precise. Here, one account is extracted for its detail of a deaf man's occupation and method of communication. Sykeon, the birthplace of St. Theodorus, was near Anastasiopolis, in the region of Ancyre (Ankara) (II: pp. 7, 168). Theodorus was born in the reign of Justinian (527-565 CE), and died in 613. The vita was compiled by his disciple Georgios (II: 22, 156-157, 164-165), and is full of severe ascetic practices, and reported healings of people with disabilities or serious illness. In chapter 156a, a man who was a knife grinder, born deaf and mute, reportedly received healing, when the holy man prayed over him and blew into his mouth and ears. Festugière's translation begins:]

"Une autre fois, ce fut un rémouleur sourd et muet, qui ne répondait, dans les rencontres, qu'avec des cailloux et par signes, qui vint au saint" (vol. II, pp. 134-135). [*Greek*: "'Allos tis,



'akonEtEs, kOphos kai 'alalos huparchOn, 'apo psEphou kai dia neumatOn didous 'apokrisin tois paratugchanousin 'autOi paregeneto pros ton hosion.'" (Vol. I, p. 129).

[The Greek description seems to contain a little more of interest than the rather terse French translation shows. Festugière omitted the 'huparchOn' which indicates the man was deaf from birth. He used the impersonal 'rencontres', (encounters, chance meetings) to represent the human beings who came by, to whom the knifegrinder gave answer or response. He also used 'des cailloux' (small stones or pebbles, plural) where the Greek word is singular, probably because Festugière thought 'a stone or pebble' would make little sense as an aid to communication with 'people who happened to be present with him' (*tois paratugchanousin*). The initial impression could be that one of the man's responses was 'throwing small stones' at other people. Yet the passage might make better sense if *psEphou* is the genitive of *psEphas*, ' juggler' (or the activities of a juggler, with the emphasis on the rapid hand and arm movements), or of *psEphos* not as a pebble but meaning 'reckoning, numbering', either with rapid hand movements on the abacus, or the finger movements of people accustomed to digital calculation. (Another well-known meaning of *psEphos* was as a vote cast, i.e. the gesture of throwing a voting pebble into the ballot urn). (Cf. GWH Lampe, 1961, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon, pp. 1541-42.) Communication with head, finger, hand or arm movements is what one might expect from a man born deaf, who had grown up to earn his living with a practical, digital skill.

Among people with various impairments whose treatment by Theodorus was recorded, some more who were 'mute' appear in vol. II, pp. 54-55 (small boy, from Ancyre); p. 59 (young man); p. 63; pp. 80-81 (slave named Theodora); p. 81 (girl aged 8); p. 134 (deaf and blind baby).]

### c. 623-641 CE

NIKEPHORUS I, Patriarch. *Nicephori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opuscula Historica, edidit Carolus de Boor, accedit Ignatii Diaconi Vita Nicephori*. Lipsiae, 1880.

JOHN, Bishop of Nikiu [late 7th century CE] *Chronique de Jean, Evêque de Nikiou. Texte Ethiopien, publié et traduit par H. Zotenberg (1883)*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.

KAEGI, Walter E (2003) *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*. Cambridge University Press.

[Flavius Heraclius (c. 575-641) became Emperor in October 610, and married Eudokia, with whom he had two children. Eudokia, who had epilepsy, died in 612. In 622 or 623, Heraclius married his niece Martina and had further children (Kaegi, pp. 106-107, 266-68), the second being **Theodosius**, who was deaf {and mute}. After a few years, Heraclius arranged for the marriage of Theodosius with Nike, daughter of the Persian ruler Shahrbaraz (Nikephorus, p. 21, lines 19-21). Kaegi comments (p. 188) that this marriage of "the very young (five or six years old at the time), deaf-mute Theodosius" had great implications for Byzantine power in Persia. (While his deaf son was growing up, Heraclius was busy fighting the Sassanids).

The 'Short History' by Nikephorus (750-828), Patriarch of Constantinople, mentioned the impairments of the first two sons of Heraklius and Martina, i.e. Flavios {or Fabius} had a 'wry neck' which restricted turning his head, while Theodore was deaf {and mute}. These features were portrayed by Nikephorus as a divine judgement in the form of a 'visible public disgrace' for their scandalous marriage:]

"{*Greek transliterated*} kai dE duo huieis 'ex 'autEs tiktei, hOn tov men Phlauion ton de Theodosion prosEgoreusen. hE dikE de 'ethriambeue to 'athemiton, kai tou men presbuterou pareimenon 'edeiknu ton 'auchena hOs mEd' heterOthi 'epistrephesthai hoion te 'einai, tou d' 'au neOterou tEn 'akoustikEn 'aphEirEto 'aisthEsin kai kOphon 'EdE 'apephaine.'" (Nikephorus, p. 14, lines 17-23. The Latin index has Theodosius as the "filius surdus" of the royal couple, p. 243).

[The two facts, that this deaf boy was the Emperor's son, and that it was possible for a 'geopolitically strategic' marriage to be arranged for him while he was still very young, make it highly likely that some care and attention was given to the upbringing of Theodosius, with provision for his training and education, probably at Byzantium (Constantinople). At the very least, some servants would regularly have taken care of his safety and wellbeing, and an informal system of 'home sign' communication would probably have developed over months and years, with such servants, and some

of Theodosius's brothers and sisters. It is even possible that a few deaf youths might have been collected as companions for Theodosius, but no record has been seen of his education. The focus of historical attention has been on the public disapproval of the Emperor's consanguineous marriage, and on the boys' physical impairments.]

[Bishop John of Nikiu was a leader in the Jacobite church of Egypt in the second half of the 7th century, whose Chronicle survived in an Ethiopian version written in 1602 on the basis of an old Arabic paraphrase (p. 6). Bishop John recorded that after the death of Heraclius in 641, Martina and her surviving sons were seized and mutilated by her enemies, so that the young men would be disqualified from the throne; but Theodosius was spared the cutting, because he was already disqualified:]

"On ne fit aucun mal à un autre de ses fils qui, étant sourd-muet, n'était pas apte au trône."  
(Bishop John, transl. Zotenberg, pp. 460-461).

### **9th century (probably second half)**

PHOTIUS. *Ctésias: La Perse, L'Inde: les sommaires de Photius*, edited and translated by R. Henry (1947). Brussels.

CTESIAS. *Ctésias de Cnide. La Perse, l'Inde, autres fragments. Texte établi, traduit et commenté* by D. Lenfant (2004) Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

[PHOTIUS (born between 810 and 827; died 897), scholar and patriarch of Constantinople, made excerpts from the *Indica* of Ctesias, who had spent several years as a physician at the court of Artaxerxes II, around 400 BC. Photius thus recorded a text in which Ctesias described a 'Dog-headed' (*Cynocephaloi*) people, in the vicinity of the Indus river. These people were in contact with other Indians, whose language they understood, but with whom they could not speak. They reportedly made themselves understood thus:]

"by barking, and by signals with hands and fingers, as do the deaf and mute" [*Greek*: "kai tais chersi kai tois dactulois sEmainousin, hOspēr hoi kOphoi kai 'alaloi." (Ctesias, 2004, double-page 180; with notes by Lenfant on pp. 313-314 speculating, to little purpose, about who these people might have been).

[The point, of course, is not whether Ctesias or Photius actually believed in 'dog-headed' barking people -- they probably did not -- but that Ctesias mentioned the use of hand and finger signs as a method of communication, giving 'the deaf and mute' as a known reference to explain his point; and Photius, at Constantinople in the 9th century, transcribed this brief description of Sign Language while making his excerpts from Ctesias.]

[An encounter with barking, dog-headed people would hardly have surprised Turkey's greatest traveller, Evliya Çelebi, whose famous *Seyahâtname* in the 17th century includes a description of the Ettels and the Kaiták people near the border between Daghistan and Persia. "Ettel signifies in the Mogolic language, tongue of dogs; they take this name from their war-cry, which is a kind of howling. ... The Kaitáks are ... a strange race of men like the beast of the day of judgement, with heads in the form of kettles, brows two fingers broad, shoulders so square that a man may easily stand upon them, thin limbs, round eyes, large heels, and red faces." (Evliya, transl. Von Hammer, vol. II, p. 157). Evliya travelled to this border region, met these people, noted some of their customs and some words of their 'Mogolic' language, and gave his report with plenty of circumstantial detail. All that is required is a little imagination, on the part of the reader.]

### **1048**

SKYLITZES. *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum. Editio Princeps*, edited by Ioannes Thurn (1973). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

JACOB, Xavier (ed) (1990) *Les Turcs au Moyen Age. Textes-Byzantins. Traduits du Grec et annotés*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.

[In 1048, the Seljuk ruler Tughrul Beg, occupied with besieging Pasar, sent his nephew, known as Asan the Deaf {*Greek*: "'Asan ton legomenon kOphon"}), sometimes represented as Hasan the Deaf, at the head of a Turkish army of 20,000 men to fight the Roman {Byzantine} troops and to occupy Media. Near the river Stragna, Asan came upon the Roman camp apparently abandoned, and allowed his troops to disperse for booty. Later the Romans emerged from hiding, and attacked strongly. Asan died fighting in the front line, and his army was defeated. (Skylites, pp. 447-449; Jacob (1990, pp. 80-82).]

### *c. 1295*

CODEX CUMANICUS. See: Peter Golden [1992] Codex Cumanicus. At:

<http://eurasia-research.com/erc/002cam.htm>

[The *Codex Cumanicus*, probably dating c. 1295, includes some details of early Turkic languages (Golden, 1992). It has a short vocabulary of defect and disability, such as *teli*, *aqmaq* for "mad, stupid"; *kzsiz*, *kor* for "blind"; *aqsax* for "lame"; *qulaqsiz* and *tilsiz* for "deaf, mute". After 700 years, the modern Turkish words, *deli*, *ahmak*, *kor*, *aksak* are easily recognisable, as are all those with the suffix *-siz* (-less), *gözsiz*, *kulaksiz*, *dilsiz* (eyeless, earless, tongueless). As in many European languages, there is some historical tendency to use 'deaf and dumb' together, or for the word 'mute' to be understood as including both deafness and the inability to speak. Certainly, observant people in antiquity knew that there could be a range from perfect hearing through hearing impairment, to complete deafness; and that some people with hearing might temporarily or permanently be unable to speak. Yet the simplification of terms can be seen in many of the quotations below. No audiological examination results are recorded for any of the 'mutes' mentioned in historical records shown here. It is assumed that the great majority of them were deaf or had significantly impaired hearing.]

[Some writers of novels or pseudo-historical accounts have assumed that the word 'Dilsiz' (literally 'tongueless') involved the cutting out of the court servants' tongues. Some have further assumed that 'of course' the male Dilsiz must also have been castrated, as part of a package of atrocities and obscenities that the 'mad Eastern despots' were well known (in the fertile Western imagination) to have inflicted on their subjects. Certainly, some cutting or slitting of tongues or other fleshy parts of the body is recorded in Middle Eastern history, as punishment for specific crimes, or in early 'shock and awe' policies to terrify populations into submission (Adamson 1978) or possibly in some religious rituals. (See also Nikephoros, transl. Mango 1990, section 40, where Justinian's tongue and nose are cut off, {*Greek*} "temOn tEn glOttan kai tEn hrina", pp. 96-97). Yet no primary evidence has been produced to show that any ruler's servants in the Ottoman era became mute as a result of such 'mutilation'. There is evidence that a few of the Ottoman sultans suffered serious mental illness during their reigns; but they and their advisors were not so crazy as to have a man's tongue torn out or slit down the middle and then to take that same man as a personal servant or armed guard. When rulers chose to have deaf and mute servants around them, the main reasons seems to have been to reduce the chances of being overheard when discussing vital and secret business with their most senior officials.]

## **4.0 'OTTOMAN' DEAF & MUTE QUOTATIONS and NOTES**

### **4.1 1300 - 1469**

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

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

[A well-known and highly enigmatic poem by the Sufi, Yunus Emre (c. 1240-1320), contains the

following verse (with the Turkish original (transliterated from arabic script to roman) opposite on p. 108.]

"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).

[The verse in Turkish comprises ten words (some being compounds, as it is an agglutinative language), compared with 31 words in English. Terms for the blind, deaf, and mute are easily identified, as are some terms for whisper, hear, call, speech. A term for 'giving hand signals' is not so obvious, and the order of words in Turkish is notoriously different from what might be expected in English. The English translation may involve some paraphrasis, to convey the supposed meaning. Allowing for the poet's ironic reversal of normal expectation -- i.e. signalling to the blind, whispering to the deaf, hearing the dumb speak -- this poem may be considered to contain an early mention of communicating with hand signals in Turkish literature.]

**CAUTION:** The earliest-dated account found in the present study, of some activity of 'mutes' of the Ottoman court, is **attributed** to the 14th century, by an 18th century novelist (next item). That writer clearly had access to some historical sources for the story she told, yet probably inserted the mutes by her own imagination, **without a basis in any primary source**, in her account of Sultan Murad's death in 1389. The account is probably mistaken. It is shown here, as **an example of some of the problems and confusions with which historians have to deal** in handling medieval materials; and also because the dubious source can be viewed, full text online, and therefore is liable to be picked up and repeated by incautious writers, as though it were 'proof', which it is not.

### 1389

GOMEZ, Madeleine-Angéline Poisson (1722) *Anecdotes ou histoire secrète de la maison ottomane*. Amsterdam.

[Madame de Gomez (c. 1684-1770), a talented novelist, wrote a number of stories based on historical events. Here, in volume 1, pp. 34-36, she recounted the death of Sultan Murad I after a battle in Serbia. Prince Bajazet {Bayezid} was on the spot, whereas his brother was represented as being at some distance and the news had not reached him. Bajazet promptly sent a message to his brother, as if from their father, to come immediately to the Sultan's tent. The brother arrived, and was immediately strangled, thus removing Bajazet's sole competitor for the throne:]

"Le Prince [Soliman] arriva en peu de jours sur les frontières de la Servie, où il trouva l'armée rangée en bataille & observant un merveilleux silence. Il demanda où étoit le Sultan. On lui montra la tente de Bajazet; & il n'y fut pas plutôt entré que quatre muets se jetterent sur lui, & l'étranglerent avec la corde d'un arc; de peur qu'en se servant d'un autre genre de mort, ils ne repandissent le sang Imperial & n'en violassent la majesté." (p. 36)

[In the Gomez version, there seems to be some confusion of names: modern historians generally take Bajazet's brother to have been called Yakub, not Soliman. However, the difference is already found in early Byzantine records, in which one source calls the brother Sabucius; another calls him Soliman, and a third Jacob or Yakub. For some, he was the elder brother, for others, the younger. Some state that he was strangled, but one says that his eyes were gouged out. {See works by Johannes Ducas; Laonicus Chalcocondylas, and Johannes Leunclavius; and George Phrantzes; in Migne (ed. 1866) *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 157, pp. 775-776; vol. 159, pp. 66, 763; vol. 156, p. 703.} **No source has been seen that shows involvement of mutes in the strangling.** The mutes may have been a factor that Gomez projected back into the story, from later history (e.g. as an earlier version of Prince Mustafa being strangled by Sultan Suleiman's mutes in 1553), in the belief that they were the 'official' palace executioners (which does not seem to have been the case at any stage of history). Leunclavius further suggested that Turkish historians exonerated Bajazet from responsibility, and believed that the decision was taken by a secret council of leaders on the battlefield. Lamartine (1855, pp. 279-281)

underlined the Turkish account, against the Byzantine historians. Gomez's margin date for her 'anecdote', given as 1372 (running on from earlier pages), is similar to the Byzantine dating, but modern historians (e.g. Alderson 1956, p. 166; Finkel 2005, p. 21) work with the date 1389 for the death of Murad. Most accounts have Yakub nearby, on one wing of the army, rather than arriving a few days later. Thus for several reasons, the story by Madame de Gomez is of **doubtful historical accuracy**, though she incorporated a number of possibly valid points from early sources, and the climactic event is very likely correct, i.e. Bayezid's brother arrived and was promptly killed. More recently, Gibbons (1916, p. 180) had Bayezid busy executing high-ranking Serbian prisoners to avenge the death of Sultan Murad, amidst which he "sent servants to seek out his brother Yakub who had distinguished himself during the battle, and was being acclaimed by his soldiers. Yakub was taken to Bayezid's tent, and was strangled with a bowstring." Sources cited are Chalcocondylas, Ducas, and Phrantzes. (But none of those writers actually specified a bowstring, in Migne's edition. Indeed, Dukas had the prince - whom he calls Sabucium - arriving and being blinded, not strangled.)]

### *c. 1400, or 1451 (?)*

[The Osmanlı or 'Ottoman' rulers began with Osman (c. 1281-1324), and the Ottoman territory expanded across Anatolia and some Balkan states throughout the 14th century, under Orkhan, Murad I, and Bayezid I (1389-1402). Historical encyclopedia articles on the mutes (*dilsizler*, or *bizebanlar*) in English by Bernard Lewis (1965), and in Turkish by Mehmet Zeki Pakalın (1983) and by Abdülkadir Özcan (1994), state that they were present among the court servants in the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmed II (1451-1481), claiming sources in Ottoman court records. There are occasional hints of their presence as far back as Bayezid I (1389-1402). Yet early sources have not been quoted in the encyclopedias to substantiate those claims.]

### *c. 1400*

MUNDY, C.S. (1948) Notes on three Turkish manuscripts. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 12: 533-541.

[One of the three manuscripts, `Ömer b. Mezîd: *Mecmû`atu'n-nazâir* (SOAS, 27, 689), apparently dated 1436, lists 84 authors of poetry, a few known and many "hitherto unknown poets of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries". No. 21 in the list is shown as "Dilsûz Muhammed, 31" (the 31 refers to poem number 31), with footnote by Mundy, "I have written this word with a circumflex, in order to represent the spelling. It may be either the Turkish *dilsûz* (= *dilsiz*) or the Persian *dilsûz*." A further note after "No. 52. Muhammed, 53, 122, 239" gives "{Muhammed -- see also Dilsûz Muhammed.}" ]

### *1431*

KAI KAUS ibn Iskander ibn Qabus. *Le Cabous Namè ou livre de Cabous*, translated by A. QUERRY (1886). Paris: Leroux. (See also: *A Mirror for Princes: the Qabus Nama*, translated by Reuben Levy, 1951, London: Cressel.)

[The Cabous Namè (in English: Kabusnama, Qabus-nama, etc), written in Persian in 1082-1083 CE, was an early example of an 'instruction manual' containing guidance for rulers and princes. According to C.E. Bosworth (1978), "At least three Ottoman Turkish translations were made, the earliest being done for Sultân Murâd II (824-55 / 1421-51) ... The *Ottoman Turkish versions* that have survived are: (a) the translation by Merdjimek Ahmed b. Ilyâs, dated 835/1431, ed. Kazan 1298/1880-1, Istanbul 1941;.." A passage in chapter VII (on "De la Recherche de l'Excellence dans l'art du bien dire") remarks that a child deprived of all language exposure during infancy will grow up mute, giving also the example of congenitally deaf persons. This knowledge, i.e. that spoken language is learnt behaviour, and its absence arises normally from lack of hearing other people's speech, contradicts the widely held belief that the absence of speech arises from a mouth or tongue defect, and should be

remedied by making an incision beneath the tongue.]

"Ne te lasse pas d'être un auditeur attentif, c'est en sachant écouter qu'on acquiert {p. 87} la sagesse et l'art de bien dire; les enfants nous en fournissent la preuve. En effet, supposons un enfant qui, dès sa naissance, serait enfermé dans un caveau, y serait allaité, nourri, auquel sa mère ou sa nourrice n'adresserait jamais une parole ni une caresse, qui n'entendrait aucun son, il est évident que, devenu grand, il resterait muet et incapable d'émettre une parole à moins que, par quelque hasard, il n'eût l'occasion d'entendre et ainsi d'apprendre à parler. Une autre preuve de ce que j'avance est ce fait que tout sourd de naissance est en même temps muet; ne voit on pas que tous les muets sont sourds?" (pp. 86-87)

[Whether Murad II ever did read this work is not known; but it would have been known to some of the Ottoman court savants in the 15th century (or earlier), and may have had some influence on how deafness and muteness were regarded.]

### 1433

DE LA BROQUIERE, Bertrandon (1892) *Le Voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière...*, edited by Charles Schefer. Paris: Leroux.

Viewed at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/>, March 2009.

[Broquière (sometimes Brocquière), an officer of the Duke of Burgundy, visited Jerusalem in 1432, then returned to France overland through Anatolia and the Balkans, at some risk to his life, apparently with a view to gathering information for future crusading forces to travel by land in the opposite direction. He left Constantinople on 31 January 1433, in company with Sir Benedic[t] de Fourlino and his entourage, ambassador of the Duke of Milan, travelling to meet Sultan Murad II at Adrianople (Edirne) (p. 167). They saw Murad briefly at a small town, but he declined to transact any business as he was on a recreational trip and his senior officers were absent (pp. 176-177). The two visitors returned to Edirne and awaited Murad's arrival. Broquière gave some details of what he had learnt about Murad's personal appearance, habits and pleasures, methods of raising forces, personal servants and courtiers (pp. 181-186). Eventually Broquière accompanied the Ambassador to a formal audience with Murad, which he described in some detail (pp. 187-192). The Sultan appeared from his residential quarters accompanied by his group of male pages as far as the entrance to the 'business' court. However, Murad entered the latter with only three people:]

"...et ne sailly avecques luy que ung petit nain et deux autres garçons qui font le fol." (p. 188)

[On this point, Schefer's edition appears very similar to that used earlier by M. Le Grand d'Aussy, as translated by Thomas Johnes in 1807:] "There was nobody with him but a small dwarf, and two young persons who acted the part of fools" (p. 254).

[The detail seems to be omitted in the modern account by Necipoglu ("Architecture, Ceremonial, etc" see under "1480 - 1530"), who has the Sultan "accompanied by two royal pages and a dwarf" (p. 17a) citing Broquière's report from the Schefer 1892 edition (but using the spelling 'Brocquière'). Broquière made further points relevant to considerations of sultanic 'presence or distance' from ordinary human contact with the public world or with visitors. After the ambassador's gifts had been shown to the seated Sultan, the latter got up, stepped toward the ambassador and took his hand, while the ambassador tried to kiss the Sultan's hand. But the Sultan:]

"...ne le souffry point pour l'onneur du duc de Milan et luy demanda comment son bon fradello et voisin le duc de Milan se portoit. Respondy que tresbien." (p. 191) [Upon this friendly gesture, the brief conversation was translated between Turkish and Italian by a Jewish interpreter, as Broquière was told, "comme il me fu dit, car je ne le povois ouyr" (being seated at some distance).]

"Car aussi le seigneur ne mence nulle fois que en son privé et sont peu de gens qui l'ayent veu boire, ne mengier, ne ouyr parler." (p. 192)

[There is thus some evidence that the habit of later Sultans to eat separately, to be accompanied only by dwarfs and buffoons, and seldom to be heard speaking openly, may date at least as far back as 1433. The observation of "garçons qui font le fol" can reasonably be translated 'young men who play the fool', yet one may speculate about what Broquière actually saw them doing. Did he see two men

tumbling around like buffoons, or making ridiculous faces? Did he actually see no odd behaviour, but merely learnt from a courtier that those men were buffoons? Or might he have seen two men silently raising their arms, making signals with their fingers, nodding their heads and signalling with their eyebrows? The later 'dwarfs and mutes' of the Ottoman sultans acted as buffoons and played the fool, as well as communicating by sign language. It is possible that Broquière saw a dwarf and two deaf men with Murad II, and misinterpreted their communicative movements as 'acting the fool'; (yet it is hardly strong evidence.)]

### **1450s-1471**

DE BRUIJN, J.T.P. (1993) Muşannifak. *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd edition), VII: 663. Leiden: Brill. [Brief biography of `Alâ' al-Dîn 'Alî b. Mađid al-Dîn Muḥammad al-Bistâmî (or al-Harawî), known as 'Muşannifak', a Persian scholar and writer, who went to Anatolia in 1444.]

"While he was teaching at Konya, his hearing deteriorated so much that he had to give up his occupation. He went to live in Istanbul on a pension granted by Sultan Meḥemmed II..."

[There he continued theological writing, until his death probably in 1470-71. See below, 'between 1453 and 1466', Babinger, for an anecdote about this man's deafness.]

### **between 1453 and 1466**

BABINGER, Franz (1978) *Mehmed the Conqueror and his time*, translated by Ralph Manheim, edited by William C. Hickman. (Original '*Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit*', 1953; second edition 1959, with revisions).

[Babinger's work was based on lengthy and detailed scholarly research and publication. He intended to publish a complementary volume of notes and references for this book on Mehmed the Conqueror, but died before being able to do so. The story related below involved a deaf person, and was reported in discussion of a member of the el-Fenari family, the somewhat eccentric scholar, Hasan Chelebi.]

"One day he [Hasan] attended a gathering at the house of the grand Vizier Mahmud Pasha. Also present was the well-known author and sheikh Ali al-Bistami, who proudly traced his descent back to the caliph Umar and had written numerous books. In the course of the conversation Hasan Chelebi criticized one of these books, declaring that he could refute any number of passages in it. Had he never met the sheikh? Mahmud Pasha asked him. He replied in the negative, whereupon the grand vizier pointed al-Bistami out to him. Mullah Hasan Chelebi was highly embarrassed, but the master of the house comforted him by telling him the sheikh was deaf and had not heard a word of the conversation." (p. 490)

[The deaf author in this anecdote was very likely `Ala' al-Din `Ali b. Muhammad al-Bistami (see entry above, under 1450s-1471, by De Bruijn) who lost his hearing in middle age. {That one should not be confused with another theological writer, `Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad bin `Ali b. Ahmad al-Hanafî al-Hurufî Al-Bistami (see M. Smith 1960) who reportedly died in 1454, after producing many curious, mystical works}.]

## **4.2 1470s - 1590s**

### **1470s**

KOÇU, Reşad Ekrem (1953) *Fatih Sultan Mehmed (1430-1481)*, Istanbul: Yasaroglu.

SPANDOUNES {Spandugnino}, Theodore [c. 1538] *On the origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, (from the Italian text of 1538 as edited by C.N. Stathas) translated and edited by D.M. Nicol (1997).

Cambridge University Press.

[Towards the end of his historical work in Turkish, R.E. Koçu gives some lists of names of palace servants or administrators in the 1470s from archival sources, some being appointed for particular

duties, others listed with their occupational skill. Four mutes appear, in three different places: "Dilsiz Yahya, Dilsiz Yusuf" are listed together in a team of 22 (but 23 seem to be listed) appointed as personal guards or escorts for the Sultan when on excursions in the vicinity of Istanbul (p. 253). Among the male servants of Mustafa Pasha, there is "Niksarli Dilsiz Ismail" (p. 254). Then in a list of 25 men possessing particular skills and talents, there are two engravers (a master and an apprentice), two bookbinders, three clerks or secretaries, a storyteller, three classical singers, two players of stringed instruments, an astrologer, two winemakers (or suppliers), three swordmakers, an arrowmaker, and three surgeons (pp. 254-255), and among them appear two Nedims (boon companions, or buffoons, of the Sultan or some high ranking courtier): "Nedim ve Dilsiz Balaban, Nedim Ömer". (R.E. Koçu appears as the main editor of the substantial *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, 1966. The articles on 'Dilsiz' by O.N. Ergin, see below, appearing in that historical Encyclopedia of Istanbul, begin with a long quotation about Dilsizler from Koçu's book on the Topkapı Sarayı).]

[Contrary evidence might be the comment on Mehmed II, by Spandounes {Spandugnino, or other variants}, that "He did not waste his money on maintaining buffoons, actors and other useless persons", followed by a story in which Mehmed supposedly told a jester, who had amused him, to collect a large reward from the treasury, but next day told the man it was a joke (Spandounes, transl. Nicol 1997, pp. 51-52). Yet those remarks could be seen as a partial affirmation. Mehmed very likely had no large, permanent troupe of entertainers on the payroll; but a modest number of men with various skills and talents were on hand, as listed above, having their food and a sleeping space in the servants quarters. They might be called in to perform as and when required, and to earn a special reward if the monarch happened to be pleased (and did not change his mind). By the time Spandounes was writing his final version in the 1530s, the court establishment was very considerably greater, and hundreds of men and boys were serving, and more were in training for service. They were located not only at Istanbul but, for example, "300 other such pages are kept in other centres such as Pera or Adrianople, with their own eunuchs and teachers" (p. 110).]

[It appears that the 'Dilsiz' names listed by Koçu are reasonable evidence of the presence of 'mutes' in attendance on the Ottoman Sultan and the Grand Vizier in the 1470s. Even if one or two might have been nicknamed 'Dilsiz' for some other reason, it would be difficult to argue this for all four. Further, it is hard to imagine how these mutes could have performed their duties unless there was some regular means of communication between them and the highest officials. In later centuries, successive Sultans are recorded as using sign language with their mutes, especially the two or three senior mutes who were among their favourites and intimates. It seems likely that the process of developing signed communication was beginning, or had already begun, in the 1470s, when Fatih Sultan Mehmed II was withdrawing from a 'public' life, and cultivating privacy and seclusion.]

#### 1474

Zavilli Mustafalar [2008] Osmanli'nin sanssiz padişahlari ve padişah olamayanlari.

[http://kocpost.ku.edu.tr/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=29](http://kocpost.ku.edu.tr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=29)

[The favourite son of Sultan Mehmed II was Prince Mustafa. One of Mustafa's flaws was his addiction to intimate relations with women, including those already forming part of the harem of other men. Such habits could lead only to hatred and strife. Mustafa died suddenly in 1474. One version of his death, offered in this Turkish web page, was that he had been killed in the hamam of Nigde, by a mute, at the instigation of the Grand Vizier, Mahmud Pasha. (It was rumoured that Prince Mustafa attempted or actually had illicit relations with Mahmud's wife). That version of Mustafa's death is quite likely to be mistaken (see next entry under 1474. Yet the incidental details of such rumours tended to reflect the well-known life of the times, otherwise nobody would believe them at all. For example, if it had been well known that no deaf mute person worked in bath houses at this time, or that such people had never been involved in murderous activities, such a rumour could hardly have been recorded in writing. So the presence of a mute servant, ready to carry out the Vizier's extreme wishes, may be a credible detail, even if, in this case, no such murder necessarily happened).]



### 1474

STAVRIDES, Theoharis (2001) *The Sultan of Vezirs. The life and times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelovic (1453-1474)*. Leiden: Brill.

[Based on primary sources studied for a doctoral dissertation at Harvard, this book gives a detailed account of activities in the Ottoman court during the reign of Mehmed II. 'Mutes' and stories about them are absent. Stavrides offers a lengthy and cautious analysis of the "melange of rumors and speculations" surrounding the dismissal and execution of Mahmud Pasha (pp. 329-355), and of twelve posthumous legends about him, some of which relate to his execution (pp. 370-378). The possibility of confusion or conflation of rumours about the execution of Mahmud Pasha and the execution of Gedik Ahmed Pasha (whose wife was reported, by some sources, to have been raped by Prince Mustafa in a bath-house) is also considered (pp. 344-349). Stavrides notes that:]

"..the Ottoman historians understandably appear to be much more guarded than their Western counterparts in relating certain details about the private lives of the elite, especially the members of the imperial family." (p. 345)

[At the end, the reliable information seems to be only that Mahmud Pasha was strangled by the Sultan's formal order in July 1474, after a short imprisonment at Istanbul (p. 341). The execution was therefore most likely to have been carried out by the official executioner and his assistants, and probably not by any deaf persons. (However, Alderson, 1956, p. 27, writing of fratricide, suggested that mutes were 'usually' involved as assistants of the Chief Executioner.)]

### c. 1480 - 1530

NECIPOGLU, Gülru (1991) *Architecture, ceremonial and power: the Topkapı Palace in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries*, New York: Architectural History Foundation.

[Necipoglu quotes mostly early diplomatic sources to suggest a deliberate and progressive seclusion of the Sultan during the reign of Mehmed II (1451-1481). Seclusion is said to have developed further, early in the reign of Suleyman (1520-1566). European ambassadors were now received coolly by Suleyman, who remained seated and did not deign to speak to them (pp. 18-22, 25, 250-257, 267-268, 303-304). Amidst an immense amount of interesting detail offered by Necipoglu, through several centuries, from a wide range of primary sources, mentions of silence, 'mutes', and sign language occur in occasional corners and endnotes, e.g. pp. 19, 25-29, 90b, 95b-96a, 115, 118a, 125b, 175a, 251a (at Baghdad), 268a, 283ab, Plate 16 text and maps.]

### 1482

Icinci Bayezid (1481-1512). <http://www.tarihogretmeni.net/tarih/ikinci-bayezid-t6326.html>

[This anonymous (or with author not clearly named) web article in Turkish, on Sultan Bayezid II (who succeeded Mehmed II), incidentally reports an occasion when Gedik Ahmet Pasha fell into disfavour with Sultan Bayezid. On the 14th October 1482, after hosting a dinner for his ministers, the Sultan gave each one the gift of a robe. Gedik Ahmet Pasha received a black robe, a symbol of death. The Sultan signalled to a mute to attack the Pasha with a dagger (*hançerle*). (The underlying motive was probably Bayezid's fear that Gedik Ahmet Pasha was plotting against him). However other historical accounts have Gedik Ahmet Pasha assassinated on Bayezid's orders, on the 18th November 1482.]

### 1490s - 1515?

AYVANSARAYI, Hafız H. (c. 1780, transl. 2000) *The Garden of Mosques. Hafız Hüseyin Al-Ayvansarayi's guide to the Muslim monuments of Ottoman Istanbul*, edited and translated by Howard Crane. Leiden: Brill.

"*The Ilyas Efendi Mosque outside the Yeni Kapı*. Its builder was Ilyas Sücaeddin ibn Ilyas. He was a

native of Dimetoka. He became the *müderris* [a religious teacher of some seniority] of the Sahn Medrese in Edirne. He subsequently became deaf during the time he was *müderris* of {the medrese of} Bayezid Khan there and retired. {He died} at the age of ninety. The phrase 'Praising God,' 920 [1514-15], is the date {of his death}." (p. 256).

[The *Türkischer biographischer Index*, Saur 2004, refers 'Ilyas Şucaaddin' to "Derviş Niyazi (Ilyas Şucaaddin) - poet - Bursalî Mehmed Tahir 2 - F.98, 374.]

### **1490s or early 1500s ?**

YILDIZ, Esra (2005) Taşköprü Abdulhasan köyü ve Türk devri mimari eserleri. [*Kasamonu Education Journal*] 13 (2) 583-608. Found April 2009 at <http://www.ksef.gazi.edu.tr/> [navigate] [A detailed account by Yildiz (in Turkish, with English abstract), of historical studies of the shrine and associated remains of Abdalhasan's village, includes a story from the time of Sultan Bayezid II (born 1448; reigned 1481-1512). One of Bayezid's daughters, at the age of 20, was reported to have been unable to speak. To find a solution, the princess was taken to the shrine of Abdal Hasan. By some agency, she found the ability to speak (pp. 591, 593) Reference is made to Uluçay, 1992, *Padışahların Kadınları ve Kızları*, pp. 24-29, Ankara, which lists Bayezid II's daughters, with a little information about each; but no muteness seems to be shown.

Bayezid probably had about 15 daughters, and at least eight sons, by eight or more wives or concubines. Some daughters' names are: Ayşe; Fatma; Gevheri Muluk; Hatice; Aynışa; Hundi; Huma; İlaldi; Selçuk; Sofu; Şah; Kamer; but some of these names may refer to only one daughter. Alderson (1956, Table XXVIII, see also p. 88) gives nine names, plus six more unnamed daughters with named husbands. The vagueness of identity, and the hagiographical nature of the story, tend to reduce its credibility as an historical report; yet it is possible that some genuine impairment and incident or period in the life of one of Bayezid's daughters is represented here. In such a case, there would also be a possibility of mute female servants being employed with the mute princess.]

Details of the story appear also at: 'Taşköprü Menkıbeler'.

<http://taskopru.erolkara.net/menkibe.htm>

### **c. 1501-1546 ?**

GIBB, E.J.W. (1965) *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, volume III, edited by E.G. Browne. London: Luzac, pp. 47-58.

[Among Ottoman poets whose work survived for centuries, the prolific Zati (1471-72 ? to 1546), was the son of a rural shoemaker, and was reportedly deaf and self-taught. He went to Istanbul in the reign of Bayezid II (1481-1512) and made a favourable impression among the literati and the Sultan's Court. His financial position was precariously dependent on the patronage of courtiers, who might easily fall from grace. So Zati opened a fortune-telling booth, later to become a literary rendezvous. It appears that Zati's impaired hearing, plus a measure of obstinacy, precluded more reliable means of income (pp. 49, 50). Some of his less skilful poetry might be attributed to the difficulty of hearing critical review from friends (p. 52). However, literary reviewers over centuries have found much merit in parts of Zati's oeuvre, which was unexpected from a man of humble origins and informal education. See also Andrews, Black & Kalpaklı (2006, pp. 225-227), who suggest that the budding poet's major patron at court was Ali Pasha, who was Grand Vizier in 1501-1503, and 1506-11. They note that Zati was "plagued by a deafness" (p. 225).]

### **1509**

AMBROSEYS, N.N. & FINKEL, C.F. (2007) The Marmara Sea earthquake of 1509. *Terra Nova* 2 (2) 167-174.

[An earthquake (10 September 1509) in the Sea of Marmara caused massive damage, and generated many contemporary reports and correspondence, as well as later references listed and discussed by

Ambraseys & Finkel. From this range of sources, the authors sketch the severity and extent of damage to Istanbul, and to the Topkapı Palace.]

"On the sea side, the walls were ruined as far round as Ishak Pasha Kapusu, and the sea-walls around the Topkapı Saray were breached between Hastalar Kapusu and Kayıklar Kapusu. Houses built adjacent to the sea-walls sunk into the sea." p. 168. [But see below, where a '**Dilsiz Gate**' is listed as showing the extent of the damage.]

[The article includes a map (Fig. 3) showing the more important structures that were damaged, and marking the Kayıklar Kapusu (Boats Gate). That gate had some ongoing importance, as successive Sultans used the kayiks (or caiques), boats propelled by teams of oarsmen, to travel by water from the Palace to other parts of Istanbul. At least in some periods, the palace 'mutes' seem also to have been oarsmen, for convenience and to maintain the secrecy of the Sultan's conversation if he had officials with him on the boat (see e.g. extracts below: under 1600, Sanderson; and 1607, Bon). A panorama from Grelot (1680) reproduced in Penzer (1936/1965, between pp. 48/49; see also plate IV), showing the Serail viewed across the Golden Horn from Galata, labels the sultan's boat sheds, "Caickana ou Remises des Barques du G[rand] S[eigneur]" on the shore, with sea walls continuing to the left, up to the point where the wall turns south toward, and begins to face, the Marmara Sea. Penzer states (66, 86) that one gate was called both the Hastalar Kapi (Hastalar Kapusu, Hospital Gate) and the Degirmen Kapi (Mill Gate), and provides several transliterations of each name. That gate is marked as Dejrmn-kapousi on another map (by Fr. Kauffer, 1776/1786 with later additions, in: Penzer, between pp. 63/64, see also plate IV), with a 'moulin' (mill) adjacent, inside the wall, and a Hastalik-Odasi (hospital) very near, outside the wall. The map shows the Hospital or Mill gate about 500 metres south of the point where the Golden Horn opens to the Bosphorus, while the Kayıklar Gate is about 350 metres west of the point. (A much clearer modern map of Topkapı Sarayı by Müller-Wiener, 1977, p. 497, Abb. 601, labels the Odun (firewood) Kapi and Hastalar Kapi as one and the same gate, with the Degirmen Kapi clearly separate and south of a building labelled Bostancılar Tabhânesi M., which itself appears to be south of where Kauffer shows the Hastalik Odasi).

A recent short web article in Turkish on the earthquake, entitled "10 eylül 1509 büyük istanbul depremi" from <http://www.sourtimes.org/>

contains a very similar statement of the quake damage at Topkapı, probably from a version of the same source, with a small difference. Here, the sea walls around the Topkapı Palace were damaged "between the Dilsiz Kapısı and the Kayıklar Kapısı"; i.e. from the 'Mute Gate' to the Kayiks (or Caicks) Gate. The location of the '**Dilsiz Gate**' is not given. However, the apparent existence of a 'Dilsiz Gate' somewhere on the sea walls around Topkapı Palace, in 1509, perhaps reflects some regular activities of the Sultan's mutes, whether as oarsmen, or as messengers (or possibly even as secret assassins, disposing of bodies in a weighted sack at sea, as some reports have suggested). In fact, earlier work by Ambraseys & Finkel (1995, p. 38; and similarly Ambraseys 2001) also used the 'Dilsiz Gate' alternative: "On the sea side, the walls were ruined as far round as Ishak Paşa Kapısı, and the Sea Walls around the Topkapı Palace were breached between Dilsiz Kapısı and Kayıklar Kapısı", citing Ménage (1976, p. 322, see References). Ménage presented (in modern Turkish) work by the contemporary chronicler Ruhi of Edirne, which gives the phrase, "Dilsüz Kapusu'ndan Kayıklar Kapusu'na denli", showing in footnote 42 other early sources for the gate names.

It is difficult to see how a name such as 'Dilsiz Gate' could have been invented by a contemporary witness, if there had not been a gate that had actually been called by that name for some period of time, however short. As other records showing such a name have not easily been found up to now, perhaps the name was used for only a short period. That is not surprising, in view of the evidence from Necipoglu (1991) of the continuously shifting ways in which considerable numbers of servants flowed in and out and around the Topkapı buildings. There were additions and rearrangements and half-hidden connecting ways between rooms, buildings and open spaces, with inevitable changes in the names and nicknames of all kinds of doors, gates, rooms and corners, some of which were widely known and others only narrowly and briefly known. If the 'Dilsiz Gate' referred to by Ruhi was little known, some people reading or hearing his report would have asked 'Where's that?', and would presumably then have heard of some better-known adjacent landmark. The better

known landmark (in this case, the Hastalar Gate, although that also seems to have had more than one name) would then have been more likely to be used when retelling the story. (Another hypothesis might be that the 'Dilsiz gate' referred to a gate that had temporarily been blocked up, so that 'nothing came out', i.e. it was 'mute'.)]

### [1512-1520]

ÜNVER, A. Süheyl (1948) *Ilim ve Sanat Bakımından Fatih Devri Notları*. Istanbul: Belediye Matbaası, pp. 119-121. Also: ÜNVER, A.S. & KARA, Ismail (1995) *Istanbul risaleri*. Istanbul, pp. 130-131.

[In both these works, Ünver includes the same recursive story from the reign of Yavuz Sultan Selim (1512-1520), about an artist's portrayal of Yavuz's grandfather, Fatih Sultan Mehmed. The portrait caused some critical discussion and debate, apparently about whether the artist had properly represented the appearance of Fatih Sultan Mehmed. One of Yavuz's mutes was involved in the procedure of this debate. The story was sourced in an historical account, *Tacüttevarih* by Hoca Sadeddin (1536-1599), but probably also appeared elsewhere. (Alderson, 1956, Table XXVIII, shows Sultan Selim's birth year as 1470. Thus during his childhood Yavuz had probably seen his grandfather, but perhaps only rarely, as his father Bayezid II had been governor of Amasya while Fatih was alive. The point has some relevance to the story of Fatih's portrait.)]

### 1514-1515

LAMARTINE, Alphonse de (1854) *Histoire de la Turquie*. Paris: Libraire du Constitutionnel.

[After a successful campaign against the Persians, and looting the city of Tabriz, Sultan Selim I wished to extend further his conquests; but the janissaries, exhausted and wearing tattered clothes, signalled their urgent need to return home. Selim was obliged to hide his anger, and comply; but while en route for Erivan, it appears that he decided to humiliate his Grand Vizier for allowing the army to get out of hand, and to use the occasion to dismiss him.]

"Tout à coup Sélim se pencha et dit quelques paroles à voix basse à un des muets qui marchaient à pied, à la tête de son cheval. Le muet, obéissant à l'ordre secret de son maître, s'approche inaperçu du cheval du grand vizir, coupe les sangles de sa selle, et fait rouler Mustafa-Pacha couvert de confusion et de huées dans la poussière." (Vol. 3-4, p. 159)

[Implicit in this anecdote is the idea that the servant could hear Sultan Selim's whispered words. Possibly, in this case, the 'mute' servant was only mute and not also deaf; or was good at lipreading. Alternatively, the 'words spoken in a low voice' may have been merely a metaphor for secretly signing. Selim could also have spoken the words quietly, while covertly miming, under his cloak, the action of cutting the saddle straps, and nodding meaningfully toward the Grand Vizier. Without some independent corroborative evidence, it is hard to know what happened, or whether the incident actually occurred. Could the saddle straps be cut so easily, without the rider noticing what was being done? Did the Grand Vizier have no guards or attendants on the march, who would prevent the trick being played? Lamartine (1790-1869) was a statesman, poet and historian, who can hardly have invented the whole tale 300 years later; but he might have recorded as simple fact an incident that could have begun with the Vizir's horse stumbling, and then attracted creative imagination which saw the Vizir's tumble as symbolic of his loss of favour with the Sultan. It would be useful to find some contemporary or early Turkish reference to this story.

The name given for the unhorsed Grand Vizier, Mustafa Pasha, is also problematical. The battle of Çaldıran, where the Persians under Shah Ismail were routed, is generally dated to August 1514, with Selim's army entering Tabriz in September. The Grand Vizierate of Koca Mustafa Pasha took place a little earlier, from 1511 to 1512, and he was replaced by Hersek Ahmed Pasha, whose fourth period as Grand Vizier ran until November 1514. Hersek Ahmed was replaced by Dukakinzade (or Dukakinoglu) Ahmed Pasha, who lasted until September 1515, and then Hersek Ahmed was called back for a fifth spell, before giving way to Hadim Sinan Pasha in April 1516. (Finkel 2005,

105-107). Thus Lamartine's interesting tale seems to have several flaws.]

### 1518

ILHAN, M. Mehdi (2000) *Amid (Diyarbakır) 1518 Tarihli Defter-i Mufassal*. Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu Basımevi. [Pagination: 1-225 + iii + 1-628 (transcription) + plates 1-201 (the register) + maps.]

[This formidable edition of a "cadastral survey", or detailed official register of population and property, of the district of Diyarbakır (centred on the town formerly known as Amid, or Amida) in South Eastern Anatolia in 1518, is introduced in English (pp. 1-63), and Turkish (pp. 69-137) with several useful appendices. Ilhan notes (Abstract, p. 1) the importance of these detailed records for Ottoman historical studies, but that "few scholars are prepared to work on them because of the difficulties of the Ottoman Treasury cipher [*siyâkat*] in which they are written." He transcribed that style into "a legible Arabic script, rather to transliterate into Latin letters, since the latter method seemed to create more problems than it solved". (pp. 3-4)

Appendices include an "Index of the Personal Names of the *Sancağ* of Amid" (pp. 191-225), from which some disability-related names appear, for example, `Arec (possibly for A`rec, lame); Ahres ("probably meaning dump" [=dumb]); Dilsuz (p. 201); Divane (Persian: foolish, insane); Mahrum (deprived, destitute, disappointed); Muşammet (Arabic: 'made silent or speechless, silenced'); Remed (having ophthalmia); Seyda (Persian: mad with love). A Glossary (pp. 181-190) shows many crafts and professions, including e.g. ophthalmologist, curer of hydrophobia, warden in a lunatic asylum. Discussing 'derelict' lands, Ilhan suggests (p. 49) that some village names with particular adjectives attached, one of which is *sagır*, could indicate a village abandoned at one location and re-established at another place.]

### 1525

BRAGADIN, Pietro (1526) Sommario della relazione di Pietro Bragadin Bailo a Costantinopoli. In: Eugenio Albèri (ed.) (1855) *Le Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato durante il secolo decimosesto*, {volume IX}, (series III, vol. III.), pp. 99-112. Firenze.

[Bragadin was the Venetian *Bailo* (ambassador or senior diplomat) for two years, April 1524 to March 1526, at the court of Sultan Suleiman. He described the qualities and character of Ibrahim Pasha, who was Suleiman's Grand Vizier from 1523 to 1536, and who had already made himself indispensable to Suleiman. Frequent communication between Suleiman and Ibrahim took place via the Sultan's mute servant / messenger.]

"[Ibrahim]... è molto amato dal Signor; nè può star senza di lui; dorme spessissimo nel seraglio col Signor, in un letto che si tocca capo con capo col Signor; e ogni giorno il Signor li scrive qualche polizza di sua man, e la manda per il suo muto; ed Embraim li scrive tutto quello si fa, si che il Signor non può viver senza di lui." (p. 103)

[In this summary, no explanation appears of "il suo muto", which may suggest that it was already sufficiently known (i.e. by the Venetian Senate, to whom he was reporting) that there were deaf and mute personal servants or message-carriers attending the Ottoman Sultan. (Possibly some comment may be given in the full report). His description of Ibrahim Pasha is confirmed by independent sources. It seems reasonable to assume that the Sultan and his deaf mute servants had some reliable means of visual-kinetic communication, so that the Sultan's messages reached the right person, or produced other results which he desired. The idea that a deaf man could be employed in a position of responsibility would have been familiar at least to some of the Venetian Senators. At Verona, a deaf man, described as "astutus vir" - a shrewd guy - was able to engage in the sale of property, "cum signis et cignis intelligentis", as recorded in archives of 1472: (Montenovesi, 1933).]

[1520s ??]

**The "Two Brothers" story.** [The idea that mutes were first employed, and sign language developed, in Suleiman's reign, is mentioned by several 19th and 20th century authors, without 16th century sources being identified, e.g. in A.L. CASTELLAN (1812) *Moeurs, usages, costumes des Othomans...* Paris: Nepveu, 6 volumes, translated to English, as: *Turkey. Being a description of the Manners, Customs, Dresses and other peculiarities characteristic of the inhabitants of the Turkish Empire*, (ed. F. Shobert), London: Ackermann, 1821. Castellan has the following story (amidst several pages on mutes in Ottoman times, Vol. III {of Shobert ed.}, pp. 208-215), of youthful slaves brought before Suleiman.]

"Soleiman observed two brothers, who, as they could not speak in his presence, made signs to one another. The sultan enquired of each of them in private what they had meant to express by their gestures; and they frankly acknowledged, that they had asked each other how they were going to be disposed of, by means of a conventional language which consisted only in signs. {p. 210} This new method of conversing appeared to the sultan extremely ingenious and consistent with the respect due to his person. He gave orders that this mute language should be introduced into the seraglio, where it is so common that scarcely any other is used, especially in the hass-odah and in the presence of the sultan. That prince soon afterwards collected a number of persons really dumb from their birth in the seraglio. These mutes, called by the Turks bazami-dil-siz, men without tongue, are in general presented to his Highness by the pachas or other grandees, who seek after and pay very high prices for them."

[A briefer version is sketched by J. Goodwin (1999) *Lords of the Horizons*, Vintage:]

"Here Sultan Suleyman in the 1520s introduced *ixarette*, the sign language of the deaf and dumb." (p. 53) "Ixarette, sign language, was introduced to the Seraglio by two mute brothers, and Suleyman encouraged its use, believing that silence enhanced the Sultan's dignity." (p. 169).

[Necipoglu (Architecture..., see above, p. 26) also states that:]

"Sign language was first introduced to the palace by two mute brothers during the reign of Suleyman I. Finding this form of communication very respectful, the sultan ordered it to be used by pages attached to his Privy Chambers." [For this, Necipoglu cites François de La Croix, "Le Serrail des Empereurs Turcs ou Othomans. MS {Manuscript} Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Fr.6123, fols. 168ff.", dating from the 1670s, a century after the end of Suleiman's reign. (However, adverse evidence about the competence of La Croix as an historian is noted by Anderson (1989, p. 245).]

[There are some apparent problems with the 'Two Brothers' stories. Suleiman was born late in 1494 (other dates are also given, ranging perhaps up to 18 months later), and presumably had 15 to 20 years during which he should have been old enough to observe, remember and learn cumulatively about the variety of adult behaviour and communication, before becoming sultan in 1520. It is likely that he witnessed some use of sign language during those years, between mutes in the service of Bayezid II (reigned 1481-1512) and Selim I (1512-1520), or in his own education at Trabzon, or subsequent service. It is possible that Suleiman might have met two deaf brothers during that period, and later decided that it would be useful to have more 'mutes' at court when he became Sultan. The evidence for deaf servants being present and active in the Ottoman court from the 1470s, or earlier, makes it difficult to see how Suleiman could have 'initiated' sign language as a 'new method of conversing' as late as the 1520s. It is not likely that two hearing brothers used a developed sign language between themselves, unless they happened to have close relatives who were deaf, and had grown up in a signing environment. These later 'two brothers' stories may reflect a tendency of hearing people to believe that deaf people are not capable of 'inventing' a language of their own, but must need some intervention from a hearing person; and also the tendency to attribute any 'wonderful' invention to the wisdom of some highly respected historical figure, i.e. a Sultan under whom the Ottoman Empire flourished. The stories might have arisen to accommodate a 'need' among hearing people for some explanation about the ambivalent roles of the 'mutes': if they were merely silent and mindless 'stranglers', activated by the sultan's angry signal, how could they also possess something clever and valuable, i.e. a secret language which eventually they would teach to many hearing courtiers? The over-confident repetition of 'Two Brothers' stories, located in Suleiman's reign, may have had the side-effect of discouraging any more vigorous search for earlier deaf people and sign

language.]

[1470s - 1650 ?]

IMBER, Colin (2002) *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650. The Structure of Power*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

[Imber makes an interesting, if somewhat speculative, generalisation about mutes and some others at court being 'legally free', without specifying dates or period. (The idea is intuitively more credible for the trained professionals such as physicians, teachers and religious practitioners, than for the entertainers). If his idea were based on any knowledge of evidence about the mutes, it is unlikely that he was thinking earlier than the 1470s; and his book title ends at 1650.]

"Relatively few members of the imperial household were legally free: the sultan himself, his children and other family members, teachers and religious instructors, prayer leaders, doctors, the mutes, dwarves and wrestlers who served for his entertainment, and a few others. The rest were slaves." (p. 148)

[(Imber then explains that 'slavery' was not necessarily an abject condition; and the service of the Sultan was a prestigious occupation). Presumably Imber's idea was that the 'mutes' would first have been recruited from the several hundred thousand population in the vicinity of Istanbul, when the idea took hold that it would be useful to have servants who could not hear, and so could be present when secret matters were being discussed. The city and suburban population size, while not known with any precision, was probably sufficiently large for there to have been more than one regular meeting point, in a particular market, mosque or bath-house, where deaf men and youths would gather to socialise and exchange news, and could be found by courtiers looking for potential deaf trainees to serve the Sultan. The significant population of existing courtiers and servants and army officers quartered in or near the palace, also probably provided some deaf relatives, once it became known that their facility with sign language could be valuable.]

**1536**

MERRIMAN, Roger B. (1944) *Suleiman the Magnificent 1520-1566*. Cambridge, Mass.

[On the arrival of Mustapha in 1553, (see Lybyer, and Knolles, below)]

"... he found three mutes awaiting him with the bowstring; they are said to have been the same ones who strangled Ibrahim seventeen years before." (p. 187) [i.e. in 1536]

[Against this, Knolles (5th edition, 1638, p. 654; 6th edition, 1687, I: 440a) suggested that the Grand Vizier Ibrahim had his *throat cut* by a Eunuch on 15 March 1536; and that Mustapha was later killed by *seven* mutes.]

**1553**

BUSBECQ (1554 /1555) *The Life and letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, edited and translated by C.T. Forster & F.H.B. Daniell (1881) London: Kegan Paul.

[The envoy Busbecq described the violent death of Sultan Suleiman's son:]

"There was great uneasiness among the soldiers, when Mustapha arrived in the camp. He was brought to his father's tent, and there everything betokened peace. There was not a soldier on guard, no aide-de camp, no policeman, nothing that could possibly alarm him and make him suspect treachery. But there were in the tent certain mutes - a favourite kind of servant among the Turks - strong and sturdy fellows, who had been appointed as his executioners. [#] As soon as he entered the inner tent, they threw themselves upon him, and endeavoured to put the fatal noose around his neck. Mustapha, being a man of considerable strength, made a stout defence, and fought ... Solyman felt how critical the matter was, being only separated by the linen hangings of his tent from the stage, on which this tragedy was being enacted. When he found that there was an unexpected delay in the execution of his scheme, he thrust out his head from the chamber of his tent, and glared on the mutes with fierce and

threatening eyes; at the same time, with signs full of hideous meaning, he sternly rebuked their slackness. Hereon the mutes, gaining fresh strength from the terror he inspired, threw Mustapha down, got the bowstring round his neck, and strangled him." (vol. I, pp. 117-118)

# [Busbecq's Latin behind this sentence reads: "at erant muti aliquot, quos Turcae habent in deliciis, validi & robustii homines, ad caedem ejus destinati." Augeri Gisleni Busbequi (1699) *Epistolae Deque Rebus Turcicis etc.*, Lipsiae. In the translation, the word 'servant' seems to be an insertion based on the known history of service by deaf-mutes at the Ottoman court.]

"Jehangir, the youngest [of Sultan Suleiman's sons] is dead, ... The news of Mustapha's death, when it arrived at Constantinople, overwhelmed the young prince with terror and dismay. The poor lad, whose person was disfigured by a hump, had no strength of mind or body to enable him to resist the shock. ... So great was his misery that it brought on an illness which terminated in his death." (pp. 178-179)

[The manner of Mustafa's murder, and the part played in it by his father and other major figures at court, seems to have caused widespread dismay, and was also widely quoted for long afterwards, to the detriment of Suleiman's reputation, and to the reinforcement of negative views about the deaf mute servants at court.]

### 1553

LEUNCLAVIUS, Joannes (1596) *Annales Sultanorum Othmanidarum, a Turcis sua lingua scripti* [sic]. Francofurdi. [Joannes Leunclavius = Johann Loewenklaw (various spellings), 1533-1593.]

"In castra quum venisset, ad tentorium pateruum recta pergit: vbi patre mutis aliquot robustis, quos Sultani Osmanigae, veluti hic etiam Murates III, in deliciis habere solent, minacites innuente, prosternitur; iniectoque neruo, strangulatur." (p. 56)

[The Turkish sources used by Leunclavius are discussed in work by V.L. Ménage (1964) on Neshrî's 'History of the Ottomans'.]

### 1553

KNOLLES, Richard (orig. 1603, 6th edn 1687) *The Turkish History, etc*, London. [This account draws heavily on that by Hugh Gough (1553) *Ofspring of the House of Ottomano*. London. Mustapha, having been summoned, arrived unarmed at an outer chamber of the tent of his father, the Emperor Suleiman.]

"So when he was come into the more inward roomes of the tent, he was with such honour as belonged to his state cheerfully received by his fathers Eunuchs. But seeing nothing else provided but one Seat whereon to sit himself alone, he perplexed in mind, stood still a while musing; at length asked where the Emperor his Father was? Whereunto they answered, That he should by and by see him; and with that casting his Eye aside, he saw seven Mutes (these are strong Men bereft of their Speech, whom the Turkish Tyrants have always in readiness, the more secretly to execute their bloody Butchery) coming from the other side of the Tent towards him; at whose sight stricken with a sudden terrour, said no more, but *Lo my death*; and with that, arising, was about to have fled; but in vain, for he was caught hold on by the Eunuch and Mutes, and by force drawn to the place appointed for his death; where without further stay, the Mutes cast a Bow-string about his Neck, he poor Wretch still striving, and requesting that he might speak but two words to his Father before he died." (Vol. I, pp. 515b - 516. Or 5th edn, 1638, p. 763, with earlier spellings).

### 1555-1556

ERIZZO, Antonio (1557) Sommario della relazione di Antonio Erizzo bailo a Costantinopoli, letta in Senato nel 1557. In: Eugenio Albèri (ed.) (1855) *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato durante il secolo decimosesto*, {Volume IX}, (series III, vol. III.), pp. 123-144.



[Erizzo was Venetian *bailo* at Constantinople, commissioned in April 1554, and in post until mid-1556. Back in Venice in 1557, he expressed amazement that Sultan Suleiman, in his private quarters, had for company only "eunuchs, mutes, and other men of the most abject varieties, who are his slaves", rather than people with good education and knowledge of public affairs.]

"È stupore intendere con qual sorte di uomini s'intertiene quel tempo che vaca dalli negozj nelle stanze sue, nelle quali non entrano se non eunuchi, muti, e altre qualità abbiettissime di uomini suoi schiavi, perchè li altri grandi mai non vi entrano, nè parlano, con il Signor se non con l'osservanza delle cerimonie sue, e in loco assai pubblico." (p. 138)

### 1559

LORICHS [sometimes LORCK], Melchior (1902) *Konstantinopel unter Sultan Suleiman dem Grossen aufgenommen im Jahre 1559 durch Melchior Lorichs aus Flensburg. Nach der Handzeichnung der Künstlers in der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leiden mit anderen alten Plänen herausgegeben und erläutert von Eugen Oberhummer...* Munich.

[Large, panoramic drawings of Constantinople by Melchior Lorichs (c. 1526-1585) have much handwritten annotation in the margins, most of which can be read, with some difficulty. Eugen Oberhummer provided a printed edition of this manuscript material, as well as the mappings. Brief remarks appear about the mute servants' communication with signs. Some orthography differs from modern German. Some words are illegible. Missing letters and words appear with dots ... or dashes --, and some '*conjectural words*', or parts of words, are in italics.]

" d.. Kayser zu...da stehen gemeiniglich seine stumen die weder | reden *noch* horen können ..e bedeuten Jene mit vil selzamen Zeichen was sy wellen vor In." [Here, Oberhummer's comment links this note with the following:] "Seine des Kaysers Stume Leutte müssen stum vnd vnd hoerloss geboren sein auch nicht schreiben noch | Lesen können, der sein etwa bey 30. Die haben seine Buecher, Brieffe und geheimes schriben in verwarung || Sy bringen Im auch fur, was vnder sein Hoffgesinde und in *der* | Statt ja was in der welt neuwes geschieht. vnd dasselben |----Zeichen | vnd Deutungen mit dem Haupt, Hand vnd Fussen vnd a---- man sich dessen ser hoch zu verwundern hat. Könen Ime *die* | personen, namen vnd gestaltdt des leibes, ob sie kurz oder lang ---- einen gannck haben, vnd niemandt vertraut Inen, es mu ...en, | wie auch die Turcken selbst sagen, der Teuffel mit Inen Redt ---- - s Kinder vnd was seins gebluez ist Todten, wans der *Kayser* haben wil. ||--- I...I niemandt were, zum Kayser zu gehen, weder bey tage noch bey nacht." (pp. 9-10)

[The passage above was kindly *transcribed* by **Katharina Sprick**, who also provided a draft translation.]

[The first sentence indicates that the Sultan's mute servants customarily stood by, who could neither speak nor hear. They communicated with him by many peculiar signs. The second passage suggests that those servants, numbering about 30, *must be* born deaf and dumb, and not able to read or write. (This 'qualification' would be explained by what follows). They have the Sultan's books, letters and private writing in their safekeeping. They bring him news of what is happening among the court servants, in the city or state, and indeed in the world. They make their communication with head, hands and feet. (Some *missing feature* of this is said to be very surprising). They are able to (describe? identify? mimic? indicate by signs?) individuals, names, shape of bodies whether short or long (and some other features?) or by people's gait. Nobody trusts them, because (as the Turks say) the Devil speaks with them (?). There is also mention of the deaf-mute servants' involvement in killing the Sultan's own children, on his orders.]

[The notes by Lorichs are considered by Necipoglu (1991, pp. 26, 28, 268) to be the earliest actual description of sign language in the Seraglio, supposedly "introduced to the palace by two mute brothers during the reign of Suleyman I." See also later references to the mutes and their sign language by Necipoglu (pp. 28-29, 118, 283 {notes 63, 77}, plate 16 with text, plates 25a-f). However, Necipoglu states (p. 118) that the requirement of silence in the Sultan's presence "led to the invention of a sign language that was used in the palace after the middle of the sixteenth century," apparently based on the historian Ata, and Bobovius. In fact, Erizzo (see above) in 1555-1556 noted

the regular communication between the Sultan and his mutes. Thirty years earlier Bragadin (see above) referred to Suleiman's mute messenger. Turkish sources for mutes at court predate Bragadin by a further 50 years, as shown above. From the 1470s, and possibly earlier, the mutes and their masters needed to be able to communicate with some accuracy. Also, if several mutes worked together over a period of time, it would be surprising if they did not develop at least an elementary sign language between them, or used one which they had learnt earlier in a different deaf group.]

### 1566

CANTEMIR (sometimes Kantemir), Demetrius. *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire*. Translated from Latin by N. Tindal, 1734. London.

[Cantemir stayed at Constantinople as a youth from 1687 to 1691 as surety for his father's conduct as Prince of Moldavia, and returned there in 1693 after his father's death. He became proficient in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and knew other languages. From 1700 to 1710 he was in the metropolis studying the history and culture of Turkey. Later he attached himself to the Russian court, and finished writing his *History* in 1716. Here he was describing what he believed to be the situation at the Ottoman court in 1566, 120 years earlier than his own experience, and 150 years before he completed his historical account.]

Footnote 3. "Secret] Both *Christians* and *Turks* unanimously affirm, *Selim's* [= Soliman's] death was conceal'd by the Vizir for forty one days, till *Selim* came to *Belgrade*. This, a Reader, ignorant of the *Turkish* Customs, will be apt to deem impossible to be done among so many thousands of soldiers, but those that know the more than *Pythagoric* silence of the *Othman* inner Court, will not call it in question. No man speaks there unless order'd, no talking to one another, neither doth any person dare so much as to sneeze or cough, whatever occasion he may have. If they have any thing to communicate to one another, 'tis done in the language of the Mutes, by signs. They wear no shoes, and walk only on the tips of their toes, and withal so softly and carefully, that you can hardly perceive the sound of their steps when they are running. For the least noise is attended with a severe correction." (pp. 218-219)

### 1573

DÜNDAR, Recep (2000) The conquest and settlement of Cyprus. In: K. Çiçek et al (eds) *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation*, I: 259-274. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye [?]

[The Ottoman state invaded Cyprus in 1570-1571, and stationed there a civil government, technical staff and volunteer settlers, with families, and 1000 janissaries to enforce the government's dictates. To establish a larger Turkish presence, a policy of enforced settlement by exile was introduced, with exiles from "the relevant areas in Anatolia, Karaman, Rum and Dulkadir. The order stated that one in every ten households would be transferred to the island" (p. 261). Priority would be given to strong, healthy, landless migrants. Also, people from other regions who were "accused of violence and thieving were to be exiled at all costs" (p. 261). Various incentives were offered, including the promise that anyone who was registered for exile, but failed to go, would be hanged. Naturally, great energy was expended by some of the people under threat of exile, to obtain legitimate exemption, or to find some loophole that would not later tighten around their own neck:]

"Some other people were exempted from exile through the mediation or favouritism of some individuals." ... [Details of a professor at a medrese who asked for exemption of his relatives.] "In the decree, dated 21 June 1573, that was sent to the *kadi* of Antalya, it was requested that Hamza and Yusuf, who were the relatives of Koca dilsiz be removed from the exile book. [48]" (p. 263) (Endnote 48, on p. 272: "BOA, MD. 22, p. 73, Decree 151." BOA = The Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives.)

[It is difficult to imagine that such exemption was granted for the relatives of anyone who was simply a deaf or disabled villager - Koca dilsiz was probably a man of some standing, to obtain this decree. Whether he was on active service at Topkapı Sarayı at this time, or had retired with pension in

Istanbul or to his home region, it appears likely that he was a man of some influence, or at least knew where best to place a bribe that would have the desired effect.]

### 1573

GARZONI, Costantino (1573) *Relazione dell'impero Ottomano* del senatore Costantino Garzoni, stato all'ambascieria di Costantinopoli nel 1573. In: *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, raccolte, annotate ed edite* da Eugenio Albèri (1840); {volume III}, (series III, vol. I.), pp. 369-436. Firenze.

"Sultano-Selim, presente imperatore dei Turchi.." (p. 401) [After a short description of Selim II, his leisure activities are listed:] "Scherza volentieri con donne, e giovani, e dispensa la maggior parte del tempo in giuocare a scacchi con la madre di Achmet pascià, donna attempata e già sua balia, diletlandosi di alcune piacevolezze che è solita dirgli. Prende gusto di nani e buffoni, ed accarezza grandemente un suo muto." (p. 402)

### 1573

DU FRESNE-CANAYE, Philippe (1573, printed 1897) *Le Voyage du Levant de Philippe du Fresne-Canaye* (1573). Edited by M.H. Hauser. Paris: Leroux.

[On March 9th, 1573, accompanying ambassador François de Noailles to an audience with Sultan Selim II (reigned 1566-1574), Fresne-Canaye had noted the remarkable silence and frozen immobility of the guards lining the inner courtyard (p. 64; also p. 127) and had kissed the hem of the robe of the Grand Turk (p. 70). Being unable to count the number of mutes waiting in the background, he recorded everything bad that he had read about them:]

"Tout autour de cette chambre étaient cachés je ne sais combien de muets, lesquels sont les plus fidèles et les plus éprouvés exécuteurs des atroces commandements de ce tyran; et entre tous le plus favorisé est celui qui, par ordre de feu Soliman, étrangla avec une corde d'arc son fils aîné Mustafa." *Footnote*: "L'un des sept muets que Soliman chargea d'étrangler son fils aîné, dans sa tente et presque sous ses yeux, à Eregli de Caramanie, en 1553." (p. 70)

[In May, he reported a distant view of the Grand Signor, while passing the Topkapi point, in a boat:] "Mais quand par divertissement, le Grand Seigneur va en quelque jardin ou en quelque île près de Constantinople pour y prendre quelques jours de plaisir, alors il n'est pas accompagné de pachas, de secrétaires ou autres hommes qui puissent lui causer d'affaires importantes, mais seul avec ses jeunes favoris, ses bouffons, nains et muets, et avec eux il mène joyeuse vie. ... Aussi je ne veux oublier que, le 24 mai ... je vis ce Padischah se promener seul à cheval dans son jardin; et bien que les itchoglans, avec force injures et pierres, fissent signe à nos rameurs de passer au large, pourtant nous le vîmes mettre pied à terre près de la pointe de son sérail; et comme la fraîcheur y était grande et, vu la saison, très agréable, il s'y assit sur une petite planche couverte seulement d'un tapis, sans autre appareil. Son bostangi-bachi lui porta aussitôt un grand bouquet de fleurs qu'il prit à la main. // Il était vêtu d'un camelot vert et n'avait pour toute compagnie que deux ou trois esclaves favoris, quelques muets et deux nains, les plus petits et les plus jolis que j'aie vus; et ils avaient chacun un arc turquois à la main." (p. 129)

### 1573-1576

SINCLAIR, T.A. (1989) *Eastern Turkey: an architectural and archaeological survey*. Vol. II. London: Pindar.

[On the city of Sivas, in 'North-Central' Anatolia, Sinclair notes:]

"Behram Paşa Hanı and Kursunlu Hamam. The han was built in 1573 by one of the pashas of the province, Sagır ("Deaf") Behram. ... The hamam, the "Hamam with the Lead Roof", beside the han was built in 1576, also by Behram Paşa. It has a men's and a women's section." (II: 308-309).

[Several web pages give further detail, and pictures of the Han and the large, lead-roofed baths, built

by the deaf Behram Pasha on the dates given, 1573 and 1576, e.g.

<http://www.cumhuriyet.edu.tr/sivas/sivas03.html> and <http://www.arkitera.com/h29357-behram-pasa-hani-bosaltiliyor.html> The deaf pasha seems to have been a well-known ornament of the city's history. Curiously however, at Diyarbekir, about 250 km to the South East of Sivas, two pashas named Behram are found (see next entry), and that name is given to a mosque and a hamam. One of these pashas was deaf. There is also some apparent confusion or overlap of dates. Perhaps the deaf Behram Paşa did his building work at Sivas, then went straight on to become governor of Diyarbekir.]

### 1575-1578 ?

KONYAR, Basri (1936) *Diyarbakir Tarihi - Vol. III Diyarbakir Yıllığı*. Ulus Basımevi.

[Diyarbakir (known as Amida in its early history) is a major city of South Eastern Anatolia. Konyar gives a list of the governors of Diyarbakir in the 16th century (p. 255), showing "Halhalli Behram Paşa" ruling for 3 years {972}/1564, and "Sagır Behram Paşa" {983}/1574 for 3 years.]

[See notes to previous item, Sinclair 1989. There has perhaps been some confusion between two governors, whose principal name is linked with prominent buildings, i.e. Behram Paşa Mosque, Behram Paşa Han, and Behram Paşa Hamam. However, in *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbakir, edited...*, by M. van Bruinessen & H. Boeschoten [et al.] (1988), Leiden: Brill, the issue is addressed clearly:

"Behram Paşa ... Governor of Diyarbakir, builder of a mosque and a hamam there.

Originating from Gaza. Diyarbakir had two governors of this name, with the laqabs of *Halhali* (972-5/1564-68) and *Sagır* (958/1577-8) respectively. ... An inscription on the mosque gives the years 972-80 / 1565-72 as the period of construction (Sözen 1971, 86), so that the builder must have been Halhali Behram Paşa, who died in 980/1572 as the governor of Yemen." (p. 243; see also p. 212, note 79.)

[Van Bruinessen & Boeschoten refer to Behram Paşa on pp. 38, 55-57, 61-62, 136-137, 167-168, 212, 243. (Some of these are by Machiel Kiel, who contributed Chapter 6, on 'The physical aspect of the city', pp. 53-63). They cite four sources relevant to the dates: *Salname-i vilayet[-i Diyarbakir]*, def a 19, Diyarbakir, 1323 [1905], p. 51; Mehmed Süreyya (reprint 1971) *Sicill-i `Osmani yahud Tezkere-i Mesahir-i `Osmaniye* {or ...veyahud tezkire-i mütaahir-i `Osmani}, Istanbul: Matba`a-i `Amire, 1311-[1890-1897], 4 cilt. Reprint, Farnborough: Gregg, II: 32; Metin Sözen (1971) *Diyarbakir'da Türk mimarisi*, Istanbul, p. 86. Şevket Beysanoglu (1963) *Kısaltılmış Diyarbakir tarihi ve âbideleri*, Istanbul, pp. 132-33. They mention A. Gabriel [& J. Sauvaget] *Voyages archéologiques dans la Turquie orientale*, Paris: de Boccard, I: 200. The latter work comments on the "Behram Paşa camii. Bâtie en 980/1572, c'est la plus importantes des mosquées ottomanes de Diyarbakir", and notes a few architectural details, but has no information on Behram Pasha.]

[Different dates for Behram Paşa are offered by Andreas Tietze in a footnote to Mustafa Ali's 'Counsel for Sultans' (see below, under '1581'). `Ali believed that men who had ruled in distant places (where there would be few checks on any misbehaviour) should not then be given posts in the "heartlands of the Prosperous Empire" (Mustafa Ali, p. 80), bringing their outlandish ways closer to the throne. He gave examples of problems arising in this way:]

"One such man was Behrâm Pasha, # the son of Mustafâ Pasha. Coming from the Yemen, he became governor (*hâkim*) of Diyâr-i Bekr." # {Footnote 222 by A. Tietze} "Behrâm Pasha, son of Qara Shâhin Mustafâ Pasha, was *beglerbegi* of Yemen from 977/1569-70 until 983/ 1575-76. He held the office of *beglerbegi* of Erzerum for one year in 1578, but was transferred to the governorship of Aleppo late in 1578. In 1579 he was governor of Diyarbakir."

### 1580s?

AYVANSARAYI, Hafiz H. (c. 1780, transl. 2000) *The Garden of Mosques. Hafiz Hüseyin Al-Ayvansarayi's guide to the Muslim monuments of Ottoman Istanbul*, edited and translated by Howard Crane. Leiden: Brill.

[In notes on the "Congregational Mosque of Sinan Paşa", Ayvansarayî (p. 346) remarks of Sinan, that:]

"He {also} built a *sadirvan* [fountain] and, nearby, in the Kulaksiz Çarsisi, a double hamam, as well as other works."

[See below, under '1640', Evliya, some notes on the Kulaksiz Hamam, and deaf people there. While Evliya stated that the Kulaksiz Mosque was built by Sinan, Ayvansarayî states that "Its builder was Ahmed Reis" (p. 344).]

### 1581

MUSTAFA `ALI [1581] *Nushatu's -Selâtin*, edited and transl. Andreas Tietze (1979) *Mustafâ `Ali's Counsel for Sultans of 1581*. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften, 137 Band.

[Mustafa b. Ahmed of Galipoli (1541-1600) using the pen-name Mustafa Ali, was an Ottoman administrator who was perhaps insufficiently flexible (or bent) to rise beyond a modest career level. He took seriously his own experience of life and finance directorate work, and wrote it up as 'advice for rulers', giving plentiful examples of misbehaviour on the part of others, also implying weakness of supervision in their seniors, and a general decay of administrative practice since some earlier age when Sultans were supposed to have kept a better grip on what was done in their name. He made a few remarks concerned with mutes, and other matters of present interest:]

"They {i.e. worthy men}... should speak out the truth without adding or subtracting {anything} rather than choose to remain silent like the mutes# in the Imperial Palace." #Footnote: "A number of mutes served in the Royal household." (p. 24) [In the transliterated original, "bî-zebânlar" is used (p. 100, line 20)]

[Opening his advice, `Ali recommended (Tietze here translates with a sentence of 240 words...) that the state would run better if rulers could associate with the wise, avoid 'blockheads', control their own behaviour, and:]

"...if fools and eunuchs and mutes and the courtiers, those kindlers of sedition and disintegration, do not take over the affairs of the State..." (p. 41). [Transliterated original, p. 127, lines 10-11, "zümresi *durur-iken nevâqîsu l-`uqûl ve xaşî vu lâl / ve Ye'cûc-i fitne vu ixtilâl*"; with alternative reading "*nâqîsu l-ifhâm nûdemâ-yile*";]

[It sounds as if more categories of 'defective' people are in mind here, and perhaps not the general 'courtiers' but the dwarf-like "Ye'cûc-i" (or other 'boon companions') are present in `Ali's denunciation of human pests and nuisances.]

### 1582

HAUNOLTH, Nicholas von (1590) Particular Verzechnuzs was ceremonien Geprang unnd Pracht das Fest der Beschneidung dezs jetzt regierenden Türckischen Keysers Sultan Murath ditz Namens dritten u Sohns Sultan mehemet Genannt Welches von andern Junii bizs auf den 21. Julii dezs 1582 Jahrs gewehret unnd continuiert hat zu Constantinopel celebriet und gehalten worden, Jaohannes Lewenklaue, *Neuwe Cronica Türckischer Nation*, Frankfurt am Mayn 1590, pp. 468-515, see p. 486. [Original not seen. Reference given in Metin And (2000) *40 days 40 nights. Ottoman weddings, festivities, processions*. Istanbul: Toprak bank.]

[At the celebratory festival in 1582, shadow plays were among the various performance arts. Von Haunolth described one (on p. 210, beneath a somewhat rude picture of Karagöz and Hacivat), in which "two people were talking with their hands like the dumb, and made similar gestures."]

See also: AND, Metin (1980) On the dramatic fertility rituals of Anatolian Turkey. *Asian Folklore Studies* 39 (2) 85-104.

"(I) Victimizing and joking plays and dumb show plays. There are a number of plays of semi-dramatic character victimizing some onlookers by horse play, practical jokes or by frightening them. In some regions there is a special name given to this type of play, for instance in Kars they are called

*henek*. Sometimes there is a scapegoat character to receive blows or torture by practical jokes, or fines are inflicted on him. Some include indecent turns, or a sentence involving a fine paid after a mock trial. Some of these plays are dumb show plays, the name given to them is *Samit* (or *Samut*), or *Lal*, where complete silence is commanded during the ceremony." (p. 103) {Cf. Arabic *asamm*, Persian *summ*, *lal*, for mute, deaf.}

Further: AND, Metin (1979) Some notes on aspects and functions of Turkish Folk Games. *Journal of American Folklore* 92 (no. 363) 44-64, on "silent games which are termed *Dilsiz*, 'dumb games'..." also miming plays, and games known as *Dilsiz* or *Samut-Dilsiz* in different places (p. 50). Also: AND, Metin (1963-1964) *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*. Ankara: Forum Yayınları, pp. 107-108. Here, Metin And notes a recent comedy by Refik Erduran, "Aman Avcı" - {"Have mercy, Hunter"}, in which a supposed future researcher examines some specimen humans to see whether humanity is worth preserving. The outcome is negative; "however his deaf and dumb gardener, representing common sense, makes him change this decision."

### [1580s-1590s ?]

DIKICI, Ayşe Ezgi (2006) *Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? Dwarfs and mutes at the Ottoman court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*. MA thesis, Sabancı University. 135 pp.

<http://digital.sabanciuniv.edu/tezler/etezfulltext/dikiciayseezgi.pdf>

[This useful thesis seems to be the first extended discussion of the place of mutes and dwarfs in the Ottoman courts (also extending beyond the date limits shown in the title), and it benefits from a good number of Turkish sources.]

"..the grand vizier Sinan Pasha's gifts to the crown prince Mehmed (later Mehmed III) on the occasion of his circumcision in 1582 included six slaves one of whom was mute." (p. 39)

[Dikici (p. 40) then quotes two lines of Turkish verse, contrasting the appearance of the five hearing slaves and the one deaf slave, by Gelibolul Mustafa `Ali, *Câmi`u'l-Buhûr der Mecâlis-i Sûr*, Ali Öztekin (ed.) *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, pp. 29, 138, Ankara, 1996.]

[See also references to "Prince Mehmed's mute", under '1585-1590', Pedani, below, and further Dikici extracts under other dates below.]

[Among many factual details such as those given above, Dikici traces some vigorous opposition by contemporaneous Turkish historians such as Selânikî, to the growth of influence on Sultans such as Murad III, of:]

"those who are among the world's harmful creatures, the incomplete specimens of mankind, the dwarfs, mutes, eunuchs and senior concubines, who had a powerful presence during the reign of the late and blessed sultan Murad." {Dikici's translation (p. 77), from Selânikî, Mustafa Efendi.

*Tarih-i Selânikî*, ed. M. İpsirli (1989), Istanbul: Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları.}

[Dikici comments in some detail (intermittently through pp. 78-97), on Selânikî's "unique burst of hatred toward dwarfs and mutes in Ottoman history" (p. 78), or "unique expression of hatred in the writings of Ottoman men of letters ... not fettered by any trace of pity toward the disabled at all" (p. 97), followed by some vigorous complaints by Koçi Bey of the wrongful holding of timars by mutes and dwarfs (pp. 101-105).

The deeply prejudiced outbursts by Selânikî may indeed be considered regrettable, 'by modern standards'. Yet a 20th century enthusiast for Ottoman history remarked on the deaf servants at Topkapı: "Like everyone else, the sultan could watch the deaf mutes among the jesters and the dwarfs idling in the crowd. To these sinister servants we shall return." (pp. 48-49) "Kara Ahmet Pasha left the session of the Divan to report to the sultan ... beyond the Gate of Felicity where he was promptly strangled by deaf mutes ... The deaf mutes, spared last cries and unable to report what had happened, had death as their only duty as if clowning under the mask of life at court." (p. 51) "It is time for us to enter the Harem since no mutes are grimacing near the Carriage Gate." (p. 61) "The executioners were deaf mutes and could not be witnesses either to the courage of the little boys or to their shame at their own actions." (p. 179) These and other comments from Godfrey Goodwin's detailed and expert *Topkapı Palace* (1999), were hardly enlightened, and perhaps were unconscious

of their pejorative bias. Added to Goodwin's derogatory remarks about Murat's epilepsy and melancholy end (p. 35), about Osman III, "ugly and deformed with his head on his shoulders, one of which was higher than the other" (p. 93), and his dismissal of the "pointless alcoholic Ahmet II" (p. 91), they may perhaps mirror the persistent ignorance, dislike and contempt for people with disability, deafness, weakness or other 'difference', that can be documented through most urban civilisations over the past 3000 years. Selânikî was one in a long line of similarly prejudiced men.]

### 1583

LEUNCLAVIUS, Joannes (1596) *Annales Sultanorum Othmanidarvm, a Turcis sua lingua sripti* (sic). Francofurdi.

"Hac etiam aestate anni DCCCCXCI, Sultanus Murates dum se cum mutis suis oblectat, paene periit. Diximus enim supra, mutos Sultanis Osmanidis in deliciis esse, qui animi sensa signis quibusdam aperire sollerter norunt, & vicissim intellegere nutibus ac signis indicata. Solebat hos Murates equis praegrandibus, & ob corporum molem tardis imponere: quum ipse maxime agilibus, ac praesertim Arabicis, vteretur: & modo in hunc, modo in illum prouectus, nerui bubuli (carauazzam ipsi vocant) verberibus tam mutos, quam equos eorum caesos, ad cursum impelleret. In hoc ludo correptus comitali morbo, sibi familiari, tam grauilapsu ex equo decidit ad pauimentum allisus: vt omnino per vrbem veliam moriturus, vel mortuus crederetur." (p. 91) [Margin has date: c. 1584]

"Conualuit tamen Murates, statimque post aduentum nostrum, die quodam Veneris, qui Turcorum hebdomadario festo sacer est, eques e saraio nouo (Genisaraium a Turcis adpellari, deinceps parebit ex annalium declaratione) prodiit, nobis inspectantibus cupide, quemadmodum fieri solet, & sacraesantae Sophiae, siue sapientiae Dei templum, nunc profanatum a barbaris, adiit: vti scilicet nobis & aliis, (erat enim maximus hominum concursus) ostenderet, se necdum mortuum. Ipsa facies adhuc colore lurido deformis conspiciebatur." (p. 91) [See English version in Knolles, next, under '1583'.]

### 1583

KNOLLES, Richard (orig. 1603, 6th edn 1687) *The Turkish History, etc*, London.

[The following is approximately based on the Latin text by Leunclavius (1596) given above.]

"This summer also, *Amurath* disporting himself with his Mutes, was almost dead. These Mutes are lusty strong Fellows, deprived of their Speech; who nevertheless certain by signs can both aptly express their own Conceits; and understand the meaning of others: these men for their Secrecie are the cruel Ministers of the Turkish Tyrants most horrible commands; and therefore of them had in great regard. With these Mutes mounted upon fair and fat, but heavy and unready Horses, was *Amurath*, upon a light and ready Horse, sporting himself (as the manner of the Turkish Emperours is) riding sometime about one, sometime about another; and striking now the Horse, now the Man, at his Pleasure, when suddenly he was taken with a fit of the falling Sickness, his old Disease; and so falling from his Horse, was taken up for dead: ... Nevertheless, *Amurath* shortly after recovered again, and to appease that Rumor of his Death (openly upon their Sabbath, which is the Friday) rid from his Palace to the Temple of *Sophia*; where I with many others saw him (saith *Leunclavius*) his Countenance yet all pale and discoloured."

### 1580s

DOMENICO HIEROSOLIMITANO (c. 1580-1590). *Relatione della gran città di Constantinopoli ... {narrata da Domenico Hierosolimitano già Medico della persona di Sultan Murath Avo del presente Gran Turco che regna hora nell'anno 1611.}* Harleian MS, No. 3408, ff. 83-141. Translated as: *Domenico's Istanbul*, with introduction and commentary by Michael J.L. Austin, edited by Geoffrey Lewis (2001). Warminster: EJW Gibb Memorial Trust.

[Domenico, c. 1552-1622, was an Italian Jewish rabbi and physician, who spent ten or more years as one of Sultan Murad III's physicians, apparently between about 1578 and 1589, and wrote his account

some 20 years later.]

"In that section of the rooms where he [the Grand Turk] is served by men, there are, at a distance apart, the rooms of the mutes, thirty in number, all shut up in a court in which there is every convenience for them, to wit, baths, fountains and gardens. Often the Turk amuses himself alone with them, and sometimes he lets them walk through the great garden, and to some of them he gives the convenience of a room next to his (and) of a female mute for (their) use for a certain time." (p. 19) [Commenting (p. 92) on this passage, Austin is dismissive: "We do not know where the mutes lived, but it was certainly not in a special court. Bobovius has them living with the pages of lower rank." In his notes, Austin (writing more than 400 years later) often seems certain that he knows better than Domenico (who worked in the palace in the 1580s). Austin admits that he does not actually know where the mutes lived. He knows that Bobovius (70 years later), had them living somewhere else. It is possible that Domenico may have been mistaken in some or all of his remarks about the mutes' quarters during the 1580s; but his account cannot successfully be refuted merely by asserting that the mutes (or some of them) *could not have* lived somewhere 'at a distance' in an enclosure with amenities and access to the Sultan at this period. When it came to their own convenience and pleasure, the Ottoman Sultans in the 16th century were not completely helpless. Some of the deaf mutes might have lived in a special enclosure, if Sultan Murad III had wished them to do so, and had ordered the arrangements to be made. It is interesting that Penzer (1965, pp. 19, 29-31, 235), who was a formidable linguist and read Domenico's work in the British Library manuscript presumably in the 1930s, noted his "unique advantages" (as a physician) of access to female quarters otherwise visited only by eunuchs, and found his material "well worth publishing".]

[Writing of 'subterranean cisterns' dug beneath the men's rooms and the women's rooms:]

"That treasury on the women's side was made by Selim I, who began the custom of melting down all the gold which came from the revenues of the kingdoms, and making it into a great ball, which he had rolled along the ground in this cistern by mutes, since they could reveal nothing." (p. 20)

[Commenting on this, Austin is again sceptical of Domenico's data and sources, but admits that the reference might be to an enlargement of the Privy Treasury of Mehmet II. Of the ball of gold, he thinks that it "may be taken at its face value, while we note that, after all, the mutes revealed everything" (p. 20) - the latter remark being sadly an exaggerated estimate.]

### 1585

MOROSINI, Gianfrancesco (1585) *Relazione di Gianfrancesco Morosini, Bailo a Costantinopoli*. In: Eugenio Albèri (ed.) (1855) *Le Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato durante il secolo decimosesto*, volume VI, (series III, vol. III.) pp. 251-322. Firenze.

[Morosini offered curious estimates of the Sultan's wealth, and the distribution of gifts:]

"In quello di dentro poi si può facilmente considerar che non ci sia nemmeno quella quantità di denari che i turchi vogliono fra credere, perchè d'entrate ordinarie in quello non entra altro che 500,000 zecchini che si cavano dal Cairo, che servono alla scarsella del Gran Signore, e poi li presenti straordinarj; li quali, sebbene non si può sapere quanti siano, nondimeno non possono esser molti, perchè la somma dei presenti per il più non consiste in denari contanti, ma in gioie, in vesti e altre cose simili; in modo che si può appresso a poco considerare quello che si possa avanzare un principe così grande, che ha tante donne e tanti garzoni a cui di continuo dona, che ha tanti appetiti e di fabbriche e di comprar gioje, donar a buffoni, a nani, a muti, e far molte altre spese simili, oltre quello che bene spesso gli convien somministrar per li bisogni della guerra. Onde pare a me che con gran ragione si possa credere, che non abbia il Signor Turco quella quantità di denari che il volgo crede." (p. 278) [Further brief mention of the mutes appears on pp. 281, 282.]



### **1585-1590s**

PEDANI, Maria Pia (2000) Safiye's household and Venetian diplomacy. *Turcica* 32: 9-32.

[{This useful reference was found from Dikici (2006).} The article uses materials from the late 16th century, in the Venetian State Archives {VSA}, '*Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli*', reported by Venetian diplomats at the Ottoman court in correspondence (i.e. beyond the Bailos' regular reports, cited above). Safiye had been an Albanian presented to Prince Murad in 1563 as a slave aged 13, who later became his favourite concubine when he was Sultan Murad III (reigned 1574-1595), and she was also mother of Mehmed III (reigned 1595-1603) (Pedani, p. 11). (It appears that in 1585 Murad did formally marry her, though this is disputed, pp. 17-19). Sultana Safiye was one of the most powerful people at court. Pedani describes some of the 'inside contacts' of the Venetian Baylo around 1588-89, among whom were:]

"...Esther [Handali]'s son, the sultana's mute, the Venetian merchant Pietro Bragadin son of Giovanni in addition to another eunuch, Ömer... // The Sultana's mute, Süleyman *aga*, was more reliable, and many times visited the baylo's house, sometimes accompanied by Prince Mehmed's mute." {*footnote 39*: "Süleyman had another mute as his own *kahya*." [= his own steward, secretary or assistant.] Pedani's footnote then cites seven or eight letters with VSA references, noting their dates in 1585 and 1590, containing references to activities of the mute Süleyman *aga*, e.g. "Süleyman's discussion with the baylo about politics"; "Prince Mehmed's mute, who is Süleyman's friend, goes and sees the baylo"; "two letters by Safiye and Süleyman; they send gifts".} [See also next entry, 1586, 1592; and [1596] Hammer, below, reference to "L'aga des muets..." and "Souleïman-Aga, le muet favori de la sultane Walidé"; also references below, under '1642', to Süleyman Aga Bizebani, and the Waqf he founded at Djakova.]

### **1586, 1592**

TANIŞIK, Ibrahim H. (1943) *Istanbul Çesmeleri*. Istanbul: Maarif Matbaasi.

[In this detailed and illustrated inventory of the fountains of Istanbul, Numbers 34 (pp. 36-37, with photograph) and 36 (p. 48) are titled "Dilsiz Süleyman Aga Çesmesi", with dates respectively in 1586 and 1592, giving the inscriptions in Ottoman Turkish and roman transliteration. (See also p. 66, Dilsiz Ali Aga Çesmesi, '1619', listed below).

Photos appear online, at an Istanbul website, of "Dilsiz Süleyman Aga Çesmesi Galerisi" with caption showing the location and date (1586); and of "Samatya Dilsiz Süleyman Aga Çesmesi Galerisi" with caption (1592). Both appear with background apparently of large modern housing or office buildings. The later photo shows trees or large bushes immediately behind the fountain, which appears to be in a hospital garden. In the earlier one, at Eyup, three satellite dishes clearly appear, indicating that the photos are fairly recent.

### **1590**

MORO, Giovanni (1590) *Relazione di Giovanni Moro*. In: Eugenio Albèri (ed.) (1855) *Le Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato durante il secolo decimosesto*, {volume VI}, (series III, vol. III.), pp. 323-380. Firenze.

[On Sultan Murad III (reigned 1574-1595), Moro made brief remarks about his arrogant manner towards ambassadors and other visitors, and his use of sign language:]

"E di qui nasce la barbara ed arrogante maniera con che scrive in ogni occasione a tutti i principi; e per sostentar quella pazza superbia costuma, secondo l'uso degl'imperatori ottomani, di farsi servire più con cenni che con parole, essendo tre soli, fra tutti quelli che servono, che abbiano libertà di parlargli, che viene usata anche da essi rare volte, per riverenza." (p. 330)

[The idea that only three of the Sultan's servants were normally permitted to address him with words or use speech in his presence, while the others used signs, may have been a rule enforced in some periods. A number of foreign visitors reported that large numbers of servants, guards and attendants maintained silence in the public spaces of inner courtyards to which the visitors had access. However,

one or two modern students have tried to suggest that silence and the use of signing was enforced not only in proximity to the Sultan and in some public places, but throughout the Topkapı Palace. That is a considerable extension and exaggeration, which would have been extremely difficult to impose or to enforce, given that the vast majority of people living or working at the Palace were hearing people, accustomed to communicating by speech, and mostly having little opportunity to pick up more than a smattering of sign. No primary source makes such a claim, and there is plenty of evidence that ordinary speech communication was in everyday use among the thousands (see lists in Inalcik 1973, p. 83) of people working at Topkapı, and other royal locations, in all periods.]

### 1592

BERNARDO, Lorenzo [1592] *Relazione di Lorenzo Bernardo*. In: Eugenio Albèri (ed.) (1855) *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneziani al Senato durante il secolo decimosesto*, volume VI, (series III, vol. II.), pp. 321-426. Firenze.

[The Venetian bailo Lorenzo Bernardo reported on Sultan Murad III, much as earlier bailos at Constantinople had done.]

"Le sue ricreazioni sono le donne, li nani e li muti, con li quali ha grandissimo piacere parlare a cenni." (p. 352)

### 1593

WRAGG, Richard. [Secretary to Edward Barton. His report was the basis of the following passages by Stanley MAYES (1956) *An Organ for the Sultan*. London: Putnam, pp. 54-59.]

(September.) [Barton, Ambassador of Queen Elizabeth to the Ottoman Court, felt he had been insulted by the acting Grand Vizier Ferhad Pasha. To bring this to the attention of Sultan Murad III, Barton adopted the local expedient of standing up in a boat near the seaside mosque where the Sultan went to pray.]

"Presently a dwarf who had helped Barton on other occasions beckoned to him to come to the shore.." (Mayes, p. 56) [Later, when the Queen's presents to the Sultan were displayed], "The courtyard was crowded with dumb men and dwarfs". [Barton and his retinue] "moved slowly through the exotic crowd of eunuchs, dwarfs and mutes till they came level with the kiosk" where the Sultan was seated. (Mayes p. 58)

### 1592-93, or 1594-95

ArchNet Digital Library: "Hadim Suleiman Aga Mosque".

[http://www.archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site\\_id=3300](http://www.archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=3300)

[Author not clear.] [Dilsiz Süleyman Aga, or Suleyman Aga Bizeban, a deaf-mute eunuch who served in the harem of Murad III (see 1585-1590s, Pedani, above) built a mosque in his native town in the Balkans, variously spelt or transliterated Yakova, Djakovica, Gjakove, etc. The mosque date is given as 1592-93, or 1594-95, in different sources.]

"Hadum or Hadim Mosque, which means a servant, eunuch, was built at the end of the 16th century by Hadum Sulejman aga Bizeban, a servant in the imperial harem at the time of Sultan Murad III, born in the village of Guska near Djakovica. A closer year of its building [w]as 1592/1593..." [The mosque seems to have been the central building of a Waqf foundation, see below, under '1642'.]

### 1590s-1990s?

SAMARDZIC, Radovan, & BABIC, Dejan M. (1990) *Le Kosovo-Metohija dans l'histoire serbe*.

[France]: L'Age d'Homme. (Translated from Serbian to French by D.M. Babić.)

[The mosque, madrasa and Waqf foundation of Dilsiz Süleyman Aga (see previous item) at Djakovica seems to have had a significant impact in the area. A modern Serbian historical view of the Islamic penetration of Kosovo under the Ottomans, and its effects on the struggle between the Greek

Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches, suggests that:]

"Après Prizren, 'la ville principale de la Serbie' et 'la plus belle localité de Serbie', dont le tissu urbain a été le plus profondément transformé par Sinan pacha, son protégé Jemisci Hassan pacha (grand vizir en 1601, exécuté en 1603) a fait élever une mosquée dans le village de Rogovo. Mere Hussein pacha, un peu plus jeune que lui (il fut grand vizir en 1622 et 1623) a laissé une mosquée à Peç. Le plus grand mérite pour l'islamisation de l'ancien district d'Altin revient au 'fameux' Dilsiz Suleiman aga ('le Muet'), dont les fils gouvernaient en 1638 ces régions ensemble avec le sandjak-bey de Skadar, Berganji Mehmet bey. Par ses fondations pieuses à Djakovica, Suleiman aga a fait en sorte que ce village, où, en 1683, un missionnaire 'savait commander aux Albanais sauvages qui étaient descendues dans la douce Metohija', par une islamisation accélérée des (p. 96) immigrés, devienne un bourg qui, selon les termes du bien informé archevêque de Bar, Vicente Zmajević, en 1707, 'a toujours donné des hommes de valeur à l'administration turque.'" (pp. 95-96)

[Several things are not entirely clear, without a deeper sweep through Kosovan religious history (which cannot be attempted here). Another puzzle is how anyone ruling in 1638 could have been the 'sons' of Dilsiz Süleyman Aga, given that one of his titles was Hadım, 'eunuch'. He was evidently familiar with senior ladies in the harem, so it is highly likely that he had indeed been fully castrated. Perhaps he entered court service later than usual, after starting a family, and had then undergone the operation; or perhaps he had adopted some boys after retiring from service; or there may have been some mis-identification in this historical report. The main point of interest is that Dilsiz Süleyman Aga's 'pious foundation' pursued its aims over a long period, producing educated Muslim young men who would support the ongoing Turkish domination of the country.]

#### 1594-1595

ROSEDALE, H.G. (ed.) (1904) *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Company: a diplomatic and literary episode of the establishment of our trade with Turkey*. London: Henry Frowde.

[In his Preface to this collection of documents, and in comments on pp. 34-36, Rosedale found it curious that a poorly translated account by a foreign Jewish rabbi, concerning the death of Sultan Murad III, should be found among English diplomatic papers on this event. Looking more closely into it, he concluded that the account might have been "a piece of 'doctored' or spurious historical literature" intended to exaggerate the importance to England of the diplomatic relationship with the Ottoman court. In a contemporary account (pp. 7-16) of the second present sent from Queen Elizabeth in March 1593, with her ambassador Edward Barton to Sultan Murad, during the presentation ceremony:]

"Presently after the present followed the ambassador with his gentlemen; at the gate of which court stode 20 or 30 Agaus which be eunuchs. Within the court yard were the Turks Dwarfes and Dumbe men, being most of them youths." (p. 14)

[The account titled "A narrative of the events which occurred in Constantinople on the death of Sultan Murat and the accession of the new Sultan Mehemet by Salamone the Jewish man" (pp. 19-33 in Rosedale), includes:]

"All the nurses and the tutors of his dead brothers were also sent away together with a large number of eunuchs, and a great crowd of mutes and dwarfs who were there for the diversion of the Sultan's father. It is understood that they are sent off from the Seraglio, because the king has not much liking for any such folk." (p. 29)

"On Saturday and Sunday he sent away from the Seraglio more than a thousand young people, from all parts of the world, who were being kept there with their paid governors. He also sent away all mutes and dwarfs and cleared the grand Seraglio of such riff raff." [Footnote quotes from Dallam's description, and then from Ricaut's, of the mutes and dwarfs.] (p. 32)

[Rosedale pointed out some peculiarities in the document attributed to Salamone, then on pp. 37-40 gave a translation of letters that he considered more authentic, from "Marco Venier, Venetian Ambassador at Constantinople to the Doge and Senate of Venice" dated 27th and 31st January 159[5]. In the first, he insisted that the death of Murad was triggered by serious epileptic fits on successive

days. In the second, he noted that:]

"His Majesty has made great changes in the Seraglio. He has expelled all the buffoons, the dwarfs, the Eunuchs and the women. They were all sent to the old Seraglio."

[In texts shown below, from the following years, it is clear that some mutes, dwarfs and eunuchs were back in business not too long after this initial expulsion.]

[1590s - 1630s?]

BABINGER, Franz (reprinted 1987) Riyâdi. In: *E.J. Brill's First Encyclopedia of Islam*, edited by M.T. Houtsma, A.J. Wensinck, et al. (1913-1936), Leiden: Brill.

[Molla Mehmed, known as Riyâdi, and also known as *Al-Asamm* (the Deaf, Mute) was born in 1572, probably in a village south-east of Smyrna. He worked as a teacher of Islam, and later became Kadi of Aleppo.]

"His chief work is his *Riyâd al-Shu`arâ'*, a biographical dictionary of poets containing 384 names. It is known to have been finished by 1018 (1609). He also wrote an abbreviated translation into Turkish of the *Wafayât al A`yan* of Ibn Khallikân." (vol. IV: p. 1161)

[No further data has been found, about when this man acquired the title 'Al-Asamm' or the effect on his life. He died in April 1644. For a deaf or mute man to hold the post of Kadi in a major city would be unusual, but not impossible. Mohammed Ghaly (2008, pp. 157-159, discusses the nature of the post, and notes that the majority legal view was against such an appointment, but some exceptions did exist; see also Scalenghe 2005. The biographer Ibn Khallikan was Kadi of Damascus, but was removed in 1280, and replaced by Ibn Sani ad-Daula; however, while Ibn Khallikan was packing his books, a message was received from Sultan Kalavun (in Egypt), "disapproving of Ibn Sani ad-Daula's nomination, in as much as he was deaf". (Ibn Khallikhan, transl. 1871, vol. IV, p. xiv). Yet such appointments and removals were often made with political or personal motives, and when a change of plan was needed some other reason might be given, to make the vacillation appear less irrational).]

**1595**

HAMMER, Joseph von (1837) *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman depuis son origine jusqu'a nos jours*, translated from German by J.-J. Hellert. Paris: Bellizard et al. [NB A version published 1841, Paris: Parent-Desbarres, contains the same passages somewhat revised, or by a different translator.]

[After the death of Murad III and the accession of Sultan Mehmet III (1595-1603), the new ruler's 19 brothers were killed, and 27 sisters were removed to the Old Seraglio.]

(Book 7, p. 293f.) "L'exécution des princes fut confiée à des muets, afin que leur résistance désespérée et que leurs malédictions contre leur meurtrier restassent ensevelies dans le plus profond mys- {p. 294} tère. ... Les vingt-sept filles de Mourad, toutes les esclaves et les gouvernantes du harem, la sultane Kasseki, la surintendante Djanfeda, les nains, les muets, dont l'influence avait été si pernicieuse pendant le cours du règne précédent, durent quitter le nouveau serai pour être relégués dans l'ancien. ... {p. 295} Huit jours après son avènement, le Sultan se rendit, accompagné de tous les hauts fonctionnaires civils et des chefs de l'armée, à la mosquée pour assister à la prière publique. Depuis deux ans, cette cérémonie n'avait pas eu lieu, parce que les muets et les femmes du serai avaient constamment détourné Mourad de paraître en public, de peur qu'il ne fût insulté par les troupes."

[1596]

von HAMMER (see 1595, above), Book 7: 324. [Mehmed III was in the field with his army, when a military victory was won at Erlau, by the initiative of Cicala.]

"L'aga des muets fut chargé de porter à Constantinople les dépêches et la célèbre kassidé dans lesquelles Seadeddin annonçait pompeusement la prise d'Erlau."

"Mohammed [i.e. Mehmed III] retourna à Constantinople ... A son arrivée a Khirmenli, il reçut, étant encore en voiture, par l'entremise de Souleïman-Aga, le muet favori de la sultane Walidé,

des lettres de celle-ci qui le félicitaient de sa victoire et désapprouvaient le choix de Cicala." (p. 332)  
[Rather too hastily, Mehmed had made Cicala his Grand Vizir.]

[1596]

NAIMA, Mustafa [17th century] *Annals of the Turkish Empire from 1591 to 1659 of the Christian Era*. Translated from Turkish by Charles Fraser (1832). London: for the Oriental Translation Fund.  
[The scholar Mustafa Naima gave more detail of the victory:]

"Dilsiz Aghá was sent off to Constantinople with tidings of the fall of Agria. [\*] On the 23d provisions were distributed among the various troops. The guns in the trenches were all conveyed into the fortress. On the 25th, being the day of assembly (Friday), the emperor and his suite converted the large churches of Agria into mosques, in which public devotion was performed."

(transl. Fraser, vol. I, p. 77)

[{\*] The city was known in German as 'Erlau', in Latin as 'Agria', and in regional languages as 'Jegar', 'Jager', etc.]

1594 -1600

SANDERSON, John [1584-1602] *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584-1602, with his Autobiography and Selections from his Correspondence*. Edited by Sir William Foster (1931). London: Hakluyt Society. (Series II, volume LXVII)

[John Sanderson (1560-1627), "an English merchant of Shakespeare's day" (p. x) reached Constantinople in March 1585 and returned to London three years later (pp. 38, 54); his second visit lasted from March 1592 to September 1597 (pp. 57, 62), and during this period he wrote a "Description of Constantinople" in some detail (pp. 65-83), ending with a list of categories of people in Constantinople, of whom there were about 81,000 attached to the court, and roughly 1,150,000 other people in the city (pp. 82-83). Three adjacent categories are shown:]

"In Constantinople ar resident:

...

Solacks { <i>solaq</i> }, his footemen	300
Falconers, dwarfs, and dome {i.e. dumb} men	300
Whores of all sorts, at least	1000

...

{Total} 1,231,207 "

SANDERSON. [In a letter to John Eldred, dated 25 January 1595.]

"...to send you the newes; which is that Sultan Murad deceased the 7th of this moneth and was buryed the same day his sonne Sultan Mahemett arived, which was the 17th. That day his 19 sonns weare strangled in thier brothers presence, and should have also bine caried to buryall with thier father, but time would not permitt to finish thier serimonies of washinge etc. ... The 4 muti (thoughe by commandement) which murderd them weare also strangled;" (p. 141)

[The four deaf mute servants had been ordered to kill the young princes, and had carried out their orders. Yet it seems that the uneasiness of Mehmed III, about this slaughter of his brothers, required that the mutes in turn should be sacrificed.]

SANDERSON. [Describing the Grand Signior, the Bustanji bashi, and transport on State barges (qayiq, kayik, or caike)] "This Bustangiebassi is a man of accompt about the Turke, and the great (but not the common) executioner; for the Turke imploy{s} him in stranglinge viceroyes, throwinge by night rebellious soldiers into the sea, and sutchlike. Chefe gardner is his office, havinge thowsands {of} jamoglaines and thier governers at his commaund. He kepethe the caikes, and alwayes steereth when the Great Turke goeth uppon the water; ... To rowe him he hath 80 chosen men, two and two at an ower [oar], 20 owers one a side, all in white shirts and redd capps, who often in thier rowinge barke like doggs. The reason I knowe not, except it be when they heare him talke (to

the Bustangiebassi, who sits at the rudder) that they dare not harken to his talke. His court of dwarfs and dum men alwayes folowe (except the very principall, who ar with him) in another caike; and many times also his women." (p. 89)

### 1599

DALLAM, Thomas (1599-1600) Diary for 1599: Account of an Organ Carryed to the Grand Seignor and Other Curious Matter. In: J. Theodore Bent (ed.) (1893) *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant. I.- The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599-1600, etc.* London: Hakluyt Society.

[The organ with chiming clock and mobile figures, designed and assembled by Thomas Dallam and his team on the orders of Queen Elizabeth, and shipped out to Constantinople, was shown to the Sultan and his courtiers for the first time, on 25 September 1599. Just before the Sultan's arrival, Dallam and his team had been told to leave the hall. On doing so, they had heard a different door open, which:]

"did sett at libertie four hundrethe persons which weare locked up all the time of the Grand Sinyore's absence, and juste at his cominge in theye weare sett at libertie, and at the firste sighte of the presente, with greate admyration did make a wonderinge noyes." (p. 67)

[Dallam was outside, but he had set the organ to start chiming and playing automatically after 15 minutes. The mobile figures also went through their programmed movements, including a bushful of birds that sang and opened their wings. (pp. 67-68) The Sultan was pleased. He asked the Capiigi (gatekeeper or senior guard) why the organ keys moved though nobody was playing them. He was told that the organ could be played by means of these keys, and Dallam was then brought in to demonstrate. Dallam spent some minutes being dazzled by the array of courtiers, pages and servants, whom he had heard pouring into the hall just before the Sultan had arrived:]

"The Grand Sinyor satt still, behouldinge the presente which was befor him, and I stood daslinge my eyes with loukinge upon his people that stood behinde him, the which was four hundrethe persons in number."

"Tow hundrethe of them weare his princepall padgis, the yongest of them 16 yeares of age, som 20, and som 30. They weare apparled in ritche clothe of goulde made in gowns to the mydlegge; ... Those 200 weare all verrie proper men, and Christians borne." [They were boys taken from Christian families of the empire, during a periodic levy or official press-gang, called *devsirme* to be trained for service at the Ottoman court. Some had become Muslims.]

"The thirde hundrethe weare Dum men, that could nether heare nor speake, and they weare likwyse in gouns of riche Clothe of gould and Cordivan buskins; bute their Caps weare of violett velvett, the croune of them made like a lether bottell, the brims devided into five picked (peaked) corneres. Som of them had haukes in their fistes."

"The fourthe hundrethe weare all dwarffs, bige-bodied men, but verrie low of stature. Everie Dwarfe did weare a simmeterrie (scimitar) by his side, and they weare also apareled in gowns of Clothe of gould.

I did moste of all wonder at those dumb men, for they lett me understande by their perfitt sins (signs) all thinges that they had sene the presente dow by its motions." (pp. 69-70)

[Here, Dallam gave perhaps the earliest description, by a well-attested European eyewitness at the Ottoman court, of signed communication in a group of deaf servants. He could follow the more iconic or gestural parts, because the subject was the machine he had designed and assembled, and the deaf men were indicating (to him, or to one another, or both) the movements it had been making. Presumably they had been unable to hear the music, so the programmed sequence of movements by the different figures was, for them, the sole purpose of the organ presented to their Master.]

## 4.3 1600 - 1699

### c. 1600

BIDDULPH, William [c. 1600] Part of a letter of Master William Biddulph from Aleppo. In: S. Purchas (ed.) (reprinted 1905) *Hakluytus Posthumus*, vol. VIII, pp. 248-304. Glasgow: MacLehose. [The traveller and chaplain William Biddulph remarked that the Turks had various ways of naming one another, sometimes by impairment, or personal appearance.]

"They call one another diversly, and not alwayes by their names, but sometimes by their fathers Calling, Trade, or Degree: as Eben Sultan, that is, The sonne of a King: Eben Terzi, The sonne of a Taylor. And sometimes by their fathers qualities, as Eben Sacran, that is, The sonne of a Drunkard. And sometimes by their Marks, as Colac cis [= Kulaksiz], that is, A man without eares..." (p. 268)

"...And there is no man amongst them of any degree, will refuse to answer to any of these names. But if Nature have marked them either with goggle eyes, bunch backs, lame legs, or any other infirmitie or deformitie, as they are knowne by it, so they are content to bee called by it." (p. 269) [Biddulph had earlier commented that the Turks "also account fooles, dumbe men, and mad men, Santones, that is, Saints", though the examples he then gave were not of 'dumbe and deaf' men but of 'mad men': "...for they hold that mad mens soules are in Heaven talking with God, and that hee revealeth secrets unto them." (pp. 263-64).]

### 1603

HAMMER, Joseph von (1837) *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, translated by J.-J. Hellert. Paris: Bellizard et al.

"Le sceau de l'empire fut envoyé par le muet Killi au nouveau grand-vizir en Egypte: Yaouz Ali laissa dans cette province Piribeg pour son remplaçant, traversa la Syrie et l'Asie-Mineure à la tête d'une armée égyptienne, justifiant pendant toute sa marche, par des exécutions et d'autres mesures vigoureuses, son surnom de *Sévère*." (Book 8, p. 33).

[Mehmed III died on 22 Dec. 1603. Hammer suggested that his reign was a critical period initiating the decline of the Ottoman empire, citing the views of the historian Kotschibeg (Koçi Bey). The country's ability to fight wars depended on a local militia system. Land and benefits were granted to capable men who, in return, undertook the responsibility of collecting a fighting force and having it ready to march in ten days. Under Mehmed III, the government had lost its grip on this system, which was now being used to hand out rewards to people who had no ability, experience or intention to raise troops in time of need.]

"..les petits et les grands fiefs (timar et siamet) n'étaient accordé qu'aux fils de sipahis, et seulement lorsqu'ils avaient prouvé leur descendance légitime par le témoignage de deux grands et de dix petits feudataires; les nains, les muets et autre serviteurs de la cour et du harem ne recevaient jamais de fiefs;" (Bk 8: 45).

[Yet from Mehmed III's time, some dwarfs and some mutes did obtain this benefit. Similar complaint is made of government posts being sold, which previously had been awarded on merit and educational achievement. See note below, under '[1600-1800?]', Traian Stoianovitch.]

### [1603]

NAIMA, transl. Fraser (1832) (see above, under 1596)

[The version by Naima, of the presentation of the seal of office to Yavuz (see previous item) has some useful points:]

"Yávuz Ali Páchá having been recalled from the government of Egypt, he appointed the oldest of the emirs of that province to act as his deputy, and immediately commenced his journey toward Constantinople. His near approach to that city was no sooner ascertained, than the seals of the grand vezirship were sent him by the hands of Kuli Dilsiz, a relation of his own. This took place in Jemadi II., about the time the late vezir was assassinated." (vol. I, p. 240)

[Naima clarifies the order of events, in which Yavuz Ali Pasha was recalled to Constantinople (presumably knowing very well the reason) but received the seal of office only as he was approaching the capital. That Kili was related to this most powerful man is interesting. It is reasonable to suppose

that some of the mutes joined the Ottoman court on a 'fast track' to promotion, by the influence of relatives in high positions. Those relatives, while managing their own risky ascent of more orthodox career ladders, would have benefitted from having an inside source, who had ready access to the Sultan and carried private messages between the most powerful men.]

### **[1600-1800 ?]**

[Traian Stoianovitch (1953), discussing changes in land tenure in the Ottoman Empire, noted that at some not very specific period between 1600 and 1800, "Timars or benefices are thus extended to chamberlains, imperial secretaries, viziers, sultanas, women of the seraglio, imperial dwarfs and mutes, townspeople and farmers, hardly any of whom engage in military pursuits", (citing as authorities, Gibb & Bowen; Braudel; Hammer-Purgstall - for the latter, see 1603, above). Thus, some of the Sultan's mute servants seem to have retired from his service with significant wealth and land, which presumably conferred on them a continuing social status.] T. Stoianovitch, 1953, Land tenure and related sectors of the Balkan economy, 1600-1800. *J. Economic History* 13 (4) 398-411.

[A.E. Dikici (2006, pp. 103-104) quotes several passages from editions of *Koçi Bey Risâlesi* in which Koçi Bey (in a treatise written for Murad IV in 1631-32), "mentions dwarfs and mutes specifically as he complains about allocation of *timar* lands to them", and also to others; and would later reiterate his criticism of inappropriate levels of reward to mutes, dwarfs and others of weak status (in advice to Sultan Ibrahim, c. 1640-41).]

### **1603-1617**

DIKICI, Ayşe Ezgi (2006) *Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? ...* MA thesis, Sabancı University. [From the reign of Ahmed I (1603-1617), Dikici recounts from an Ottoman source:]

"An interesting anecdote that confirms the use of sign language among the sultan and his companions". [Ahmed I had set his companions to chasing and catching one another, and took some part himself. Addressing one of the companions:] "Ahmed ... reminding of his previous behaviour, told him in sign language, 'Perhaps he saw your refusal on that day in Çatalca, and learnt from you!' ... The story attests both to the use of sign language in such gatherings and to its possibilities of expression." (pp. 54-55)

[Citing Mustafa Sâfi, *Zübdetü't-Tevârîh*, in an edition by Dr I.H. Çuhadar (2003) vol. 1, pp. 68-69, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu; this Safi was the Sultan's imam, and seems to have insider information.]

### **1604**

HAMMER (1837, transl. Hellert, see above) [The new Sultan Ahmed I (reigned 1603-1617) sent Grand Vizir Yaouz Ali out on a military expedition, and then cancelled a shuffle of senior posts made by Yaouz just before he left. One of the appointees, Hafiz-Pascha, while pleased to retain his post as Kaïmakam, anticipated the wrath of Yaouz on learning that the young Sultan had switched the posts back. He therefore delayed visiting the Grand Vizir.]

"...mais peu après un muet du nom de Kili vint lui faire savoir qu'il se rendait au camp ottoman avec une lettre dans la- {p. 65} quelle le Sultan disait au grand-vizir que sa tête lui répondait de tout ce qui pourrait arriver au kaïmakam. Hafiz ne craignit plus alors de partir; il trouva le grand-vizir à Tschataldjé, et revint le jour suivant à Constantinople." (Book 8, pp. 64-65).

### **1604**

NAIMA. *Annals...* transl. Frazer.

[See previous item, 1604, Hammer. An account by Naima of the same story has slight variation, which suggests the more active intervention by Killi or 'Kullili' Dilsiz in the affairs of state:]

"...one Kullili Dilsiz soon afterward called on Háfiz, and told him that he was carrying letters to the grand vezir from the emperor, which had some reference to him, and advised him to take an



opportunity of following him. He did so; had an interview with the grand vezir at Chatálíjeh; and returned in time sufficient to attend the diván the following morning." (transl. Fraser, vol. I, p. 269) {The different transliterations of Kili, Killi, Kuli or Kullili Dilsiz are not surprising}.

### 1608

BON, Ottaviano [1604-1608 ?] [1] *Il serraglio del gran signore descritto a Costantinopoli nel 1608, con notizie sul Bon di Gugl. Berchet* (Venezia, 1865). [2] *Descrizione del serraglio del Gransignore.- Massime essenziali dell'Impero Ottomano.* {From: *Relazioni degli stati europei ... degli ambasciatori veneti.* ser. 5. vol.1. pt. 1.} In: Contarini (F.) Doge of Venice. *Legazioni a Costantinopoli dei Bacli F. Contarini ed O. Bon, etc.* 1866. [3] *Descrizione del Serraglio del Gransignore fatta del Bailo Ottaviano Bon [1608].* In: N. Barozzi & G. Berchet (eds) (1871) *Le Relazioni degli Stati Europei lette al senato degli ambasciatori Veneziani nel secolo decimosettimo, Turchia*, Venice, pp. 59-115. BON, Ottaviano. (Translations to English, 1625, 1650) [4] [*The Grand Signiors Serraglio: written by Master Robert Withers.*] In: S. Purchas (ed.) (1625) *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, volume II, ix, [pp. 1580 to 1611?] London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone. [5] *A description of the Grand Signor's seraglio, or Turkish emperours court*, edited by John Greaves. London printed for Jo. Martin, and Jo. Ridley, 1650. [In the dedication, the work is attributed to the translator Robert Withers.]

[Ottaviano Bon's reports on several years at the Ottoman court (c. 1604-1607), as titled above [1, 2, 3] were not seen by the present compiler. According to N.M. Penzer's evidence (1936/1965, pp. 34-37), Bon's manuscripts were said to be preserved in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, reference: "Cl. vii, cod. 578, 923". Presumably the above titles [1, 2, 3] are editions of those manuscripts. The first is quoted from the British Library catalogue via COPAC; the second from Penzer; the third from Necipoglu (1991, pp. 309-310). Penzer noted that a manuscript of Bon's work was translated and published in London in 1650 as "the work of Robert Withers", [see 5], and had some reprinting. Withers' translation had been discovered by John Greaves, who edited and published it, apparently unaware that it had already been published in the collection of travel accounts by Purchas: *Pilgrims* (1625) volume II, lib. ix, [pp.] 1580-1611. [see 4]. Items below are quoted from the reprinted translation: Samuel Purchas (ed.) (1905) *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, volume IX, pp. 322-406, Glasgow: MacLehose & Sons.]

[Some fresh complications have arisen through a recent publication: Ottaviano Bon (1996) *The Sultan's Seraglio. An intimate portrait of life at the Ottoman court. (From the Seventeenth-Century edition of John [sic] Withers)*, introduced and annotated by Godfrey Goodwin, London: Saqi Books. The subtitle appearance of a new player, 'John Withers', seems to be an unintended conflation of 'Robert Withers' (translator) with 'John Greaves' (editor). Goodwin (1921-2005) was a schoolmaster with a considerable knowledge and taste for art and architecture, who lived in Istanbul for several years and wrote on various aspects of Ottoman culture and history. He introduced Bon's work (pp. 6, 9, 11-19), noting some apparent deceptions by young Robert Withers, who had lived for some time with Sir Paul Pindar, English ambassador at Istanbul (1611-1620). Little is known about Withers (other than that his first name was Robert). Apparently he obtained Bon's ambassadorial report(s) to Venice and made an English translation, adding material from his own experience (increasing the length by 10%, according to Goodwin, p. 17), and had the result published as his own work, first in Purchas (1625), then again by John Greaves (1650). Goodwin states that (in his own 1996 version) "Withers' additions to Bon's text are set in square brackets, while curly brackets indicate parts of Bon's account omitted by Withers but restored in the present edition" (p. 9). Curiously, neither in his introductory remarks, nor in his annotations (pp. 145-154), did Goodwin show which manuscripts or editions of Bon he used to identify the additions or restore the omissions by Withers. Thus, while usefully increasing the modern accessibility of the material, Goodwin's 'Bon' is somewhat deficient as a contribution to scholarship; but one short passage from it is shown below (in double {{ }} curly brackets), adding a little information on the mutes that does not appear in the

Purchas edition (MacLehose 1905 reprint). (The Goodwin 1996 page numbers of a few other passages are shown, for the convenience of readers who may not have access to earlier editions. Spellings have often been modernised - despite Goodwin's contrary assertion on p. 9).]

[By cultivating a senior court official, Bon was able to tour some interior parts of the seraglio, when the Sultan was absent.]

"And in the Lake there was a little Boat, the which (as I was enformed) the Grand Signior did oftentimes goe into with his Mutes and Buffones, to make them row up and downe, and to sport with them, making them leape into the water; and many times as he walked with them above the sides of the Lake, he would throw them downe into it, and plunge them over head and eares." (IX: p. 328) [cf. Goodwin, pp. 30-31.]

[In a passage describing the first stage of the education of the chosen Agiamoglans:] "Now, for the most part, they all stay at the least six yeeres in this Schoole, and such as are dull and hard of apprehension stay longer." (p. 355)

"Moreover, every one of them (according to his inclination and disposition) shall learne a Trade, necessary for the Service of the Kings person, viz. to make up a Terbent, to shave, to paire nayles, to fold up Apparell handsomely, to keepe Land-spaniels, to keepe Hawkes, to be Sewers, to be Quiries of the Stable, to be Target-bearers, and to waite at the Grand Signiors Table, and the like Services, as it is also used in the Courts of other Kings and Emperours." (p. 356)

"Besides the Women, and Ajamoglans of this Seraglio, and the aforesaid Youths last spoken of; there are many and divers Ministers for all manner of necessarie services, and particular functions: there are also Buffons of all sorts, and such as shew trickes, Musicians, Wrestlers, many dumbe men both old and young, who have libertie to goe in and out with leave of the Capee Agha; And this is worthie the observation, that in the Serraglio, both the King and others can reason and discourse of any thing as well and as distinctly, alla mutesca, by nods and signes, as they can with words: a thing well befitting the gravitie of the better sort of Turkes, who care not for much babling. The same is also used amongst the Sultanaes, and other the Kings Women: for with them likewise there are divers dumbe women, both old and young. And this hath beene an ancient custome in the Serraglio: wherefore they get as many Mutes as they can possibly find: and chiefly for this one reason; that they hold it [#] not a thing befitting the Grand Signior. Neither stands it with his greatnesse, to speake to any about him familiarly: but he may in that manner more tractably and domestically jest and sport with the Mutes, then with other that are about him." (pp. 362-363). [cf. Goodwin, pp. 79-80.]  
[ # 'it' = the use of ordinary speech]

[Goodwin, p. 80, shows an additional comment by Withers:] {{"But that which, in my opinion, is admirable in these *Mutes* (who being born deaf, and so of necessity must remain dumb) is, that many of them can write, and that very sensibly and well: now how they should learn without the sense of hearing, I leave to others judgements; but I am sure I have seen it, and have myself made answer to them in writing."}}

"All the while that he [the Sultan] is at Table, he very seldome or never speakes to any man, albeit there stand afore him divers Mutes and Jesters, to make him merrie, playing trickes and sporting one with another Alla Mutescha, which the King understands very well, for by signes their meaning is easily conceived. ... Now whilst the Agha's are eating, the King passeth away the time with his Mutes and Buffones, not speaking (as I said) at all with his Tongue, but only by signes: and now and then he kicks and buffeteth them in sport, but forth-with makes them amends by giving them Money; for which purpose his pockets are always furnished." (pp. 374-375) [cf. Goodwin, pp. 95, 96.]

[Bon remarks on the sale of fruit from the Royal gardens. The gardeners:]

"bring the money weekely to the Bustangee Bashee who afterwards gives it to his Majestie,

and it is called the Kings Pocket-money; for he gives it away by handfuls, as he sees occasion, to his Mutes and Buffons." (p. 380) [cf. Goodwin, p. 103.]

[While being conveyed by boat:]

"Now the Bustangee Bashee, by reason the King talkes much with him in the Barge, (at which time, least any one should heare what they say, the Mutes fall a howling like little Dogs) may benefit or prejudice whom he pleaseth;" (p. 385). [cf. Goodwin, p. 110.]

### 1608

BEAUVAU, Henri (Baron de) (1608) *Relation journaliere du voyage du Leuant fait et descrit par messire Henry De Beauuau*. Toul: François Du Bois.

[In a description of various orders of servants.]

"...avec le Roy à la fin du repas ne demeurent, que les Enfans de la chambre favorite avec quelques muetz & nains, qu'ils ayment plus que les aultres, lesquels parlent & gaussent par signe, mais non avec {p. 64} ceux de la chambre;" (pp. 63-64)

[Beauvau's description continues. After the 10th order, the sweet-makers, come the deaf servants.]

"Des Muetz. Les Muetz, qui s'appellent *Dilzsis*, c'est à dire sans langues, c'est cho- {p. 68} ses merueilleuses de veoir discourir ces muetz, d'aultant qu'il ny à chose au monde si naturelle, que celle icy artificielle, de telle sorte qu'ilz se font entendre par signe du corps des mains gauches & droictes, du crachat, & avec d'aultres signes l'un à l'aultre, ce qu'ils veulent, & mesme à ceux de la Cour, qui pour praticquer ordinairement avec eux, ont ce muet langage, ce qui est plus à admirer en cecy, c'est qu'ils ne se font pas seulement entendre de iour, mais encor de nuict, sans bruit aucun de voix, mais simplement par le toucher des mains, & aultres parties du corps, ave qu'oy ils ont fait un nouveau langage entre eux, chose presque impossible à l'esprit de l'homme, & se monstre mesme aux grandz Seigneurs, & plusieurs aultres, qui l'apprennent, comme on fait les aultres langues, ce langage s'appelle *Ixarette*." [= Arabic *isharet*, sign] (pp. 67-68)

[Beauvau here gives an early mention of details such as the use of both right and left hand, of spitting as part of signing, and also the night-time use of Sign Language by touch. His apparent delight in the human achievement of these deaf servants, creating a new, many-faceted language of their own, and teaching it to others, contrasts sharply with some other European witnesses who, failing to see beyond their prejudices, reported the mutes as if they were merely murderous zombies.]

### 1610

SANDYS, George (1621) *A relation of a journey begun An: Dom: 1610*. London.

"Fifty Mutes he [the Sultan] hath borne deafe and dumbe, whereof some few be his daily companions; the rest are his Pages. It is a wonderfull thing to see how readily they can apprehend, and relate by signes, even matters of great difficultie." (p. 74)

### [1612-1639]

DEUSINGEN, Anthony (1660) *Dissertatio de surdis*, in: *Fasciculus Dissertationum Selectarum*, pp. 147-230, translated [with some additions] by G. SIBSCOTA (1670) *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse*, reprinted 1967 (Menston: Scholar Press).

"48. The Emperour of the Turk maintains many such Mutes in his Court ; who do express the {p. 42} Conceptions of their minds one to another, and as it were exchange mutual discourse, by gesticulations, and variety of external significations, no otherways than we that have the faculty of signifying our own thoughts, and conceiving of those of other Persons by outward Speech. Nay the Turkish Emperour himself, and his Courtiers, take great delight with this kind of Speech shadowed out by gestures, and use to employ themselves very much in the exercise hereof, to make them perfect

in it.

49. *Cornelius Haga* Embassadour to the Emperour of the Turks sent thither by the States of the United Provinces [i.e. the Netherlands] did once invite all those Mutes to a Banquet (as I observed from the relation given me by the most Noble and Worthy Dr. *Brinkins* Senator of *Hardervick*) where though there was not a syllable heard yet they did exchange several discourses, as is usual at other Treats, which the Embassadour understood by an Interpreter on both sides {p. 43} by whose assistance he himself did discourse with the Mutes upon all subjects.

50. But those very significations of things, which Mutes make use of, proceed not from nature, but from their own institution no more, than our speech ; Therefore they attain unto them by Study and exercise." (pp. 41-43)

[The first paragraph above was probably constructed from reports by actual visitors to the Ottoman court. The second was heard not from Haga himself but from a third party, Dr. Brinkins, Senator (later described as Burgomaster, p. 67) of Hardervick, probably some years later. Neither paragraph is a strong historical source, though it is possible that they were accurately transmitted. Cornelis Haga (1578-1654) had represented the Netherlands at Stockholm, and was then sent as the first ambassador to the Ottoman court. He reached Constantinople in 1612, and remained ambassador there until 1639, facilitating lucrative trade between his country and the major cities of the Ottoman empire. It is not clear when the banquet for the mutes took place. There is nothing inherently implausible in the idea of Haga giving a banquet to a group of mutes. Ambassadors were expected to spend liberally on gift giving, and certainly there were periods when petitions to the Sultan might conveniently be conveyed by the most favoured of the deaf servants. Thus, it would have been a good policy to maintain friendly relations with them.

At least one biographical work in Dutch exists on Ambassador Haga; and it appears that some or all of his despatches to the Netherlands are archived at the "ARA-General Record Office, The Hague", being quoted as such (for dates in 1626, 1628, and 1633) by A.H. de Groot (1993) writing on Murad IV. This signals the possibility that more details of the history of the Ottoman mutes may emerge from Dutch sources. (ARA = Algemeen Rijksarchief.)]

### **1617-1623**

BAUDIER, Michel (1624) *Histoire générale du serrail, et de la cour de grand seigneur, empereur des Turcs*. Paris. Translated [without apparent acknowledgement] as: Edward Grimeston (1635) *The History of the Imperiall Estate of the Grand Seigneurs etc*. London. [Baudier's work drew heavily on other writers.]

"Other men which are of his [the Sultan's] Family, speake not unto him but by signes, and this dumbe language is practised, and understood as readily in the *Serrail*, as a distinct and articulate voice among us. For which cause they use the service of as many dumbe men as they can find; who having accustomed others to their signes and gestures make them to learne their Language. The *Sultana's* doe the like. The gravitie of his person, and the custome of the Empire forbids him to speake to any. The *Sultana's* his women practise it, they have many dumbe slaves in their *serrail*."

"*Sultan Mustapha* Uncle to *Osman*, who in the end of the yeare 1617 held the scepter of the Turkish Empire, for that he could not accustome himselfe to this silent gravitie, gave occasion to the Councill of State to complaine of him, and to say that to speake freely unto his people as *Mustapha* did, was more fit for a *Ianizarie* or a Turkish Merchant, then for their Emperour. They contemned him, and held his freedome and familiaritie {p. 40} unworthy of the Empire. To play the *Sultan* in state, he must not speake, but by an extraordinary gravitie make men tremble with the twinkling of his eye:" (pp. 39-40)

[Mustafa I (born 1592, died 1639), son of Mehmed III, was made Sultan on 22 November 1617, and was deposed and confined after three months (26 Feb 1618) to make way for his nephew Osman II (b. 1604, d. 1622), who occupied the post as a teenager (Alderson 1956, p. 171). Osman lost his life in an uprising of soldiers and citizens in May 1622, which saw Mustafa restored for a further period of 16 months, before being again deposed and confined, this time in favour of another teenager, Murad IV

(b. 1609, d. 1640), in September 1623. (Alderson 1956, p. 171, and Table XXXVI; Finkel 2005, 196-205).]

### 1619

TANIŞIK, Ibrahim H. (1943) *Istanbul Çesmeleri*. Istanbul: Maarif Matbaasi.

[The inventory of fountains (see also under 1586) includes Number 62 (p. 66) titled "Dilsiz Ali Aga Çesmesi", dated 1619, and inscription. (See also fountains on pp. 36, 48, listed above under '1592').]

### 1621

DESHAYES DE COURMENIN, Louis (1624) *Voyage de Levant fait par le commandement du Roy en l'année 1621*. Paris: Taupinart.

"Outre tous ceux-là qui sont destinez pour le service du Prince, il y en a plusieurs autres qui servent à luy faire passer le temps, dont les uns s'appellent *Dilzis*, c'est à dire *sans langues*; car ils son muets. Il n'y a rien qu'ils ne fassent entendre par signes beaucoup plus facilement & plus promptement que s'ils parloient: Et ce qui est encores davantage à admirer est, que non seulement ils se font entendre de iour, mais encores de nuit par le simple atouchement des mains & des autres parties du corps. Le feu *Sultan Osman* prenoit si grand plaisir à ce langage muet, qu'il l'avoit appris, & l'avoit fait apprendre à la pluspart de ses *Ichoglans* & de ses *Eunuques*. Il y a encores plusieurs nains qui font mille bouffonneries avec les muets, pour donner du contentement à ce Prince." (p. 143)

[De Courmenin seems to quote Beauvau, for the night time signing. Such a practice is rare, but not unknown elsewhere. A form of alphabet signed by touching parts of the head and body is reported from South Asian antiquity, with some detail: Wijesekera, N.D. (1945) Sign language in ancient Ceylon. *Man* 45: (No. 33) 46-47.]

[Describing the audience room]

"Il n'y a personne avec luy en ceste chambre que le *Capiaga*, l'*Hasnadarbaschi*, & les trois *muets* qui sont derriere la porte, pour faire mourir ceux qu'il plaist à ce Prince." [Each Aga makes his report to the Sultan...] "Que si le grand Seigneur trouve qu'il ayt fait quelque chose contre son service, en frappant du pied contre terre, les trois *muets* se iettent sur le pauvre *Aga*, & l'estranglent, sans autre forme de procès: ce qui arrive si souvent, que ie m'estonne qu'il s'en rencontre qui vueillent accepter ces charges." (pp. 133-134)

"Pendant que ce Prince mange, l'on lit ordinairement les Histoires de ses predecesseurs, ou bien celles d'*Alexandre le Grand*, qui sont en leur langue." (p. 155)

[When the Sultan goes outside Constantinople.]

"Mes lors que les *Sultannes* y sont, il les renvoye: & afin que personne ne se rencontre sur le chemin, il y a vint-cinq ou trente *muets* qui courent devant à toute bride avec l'arc à la main, pour faire retirer tout le monde. Que s'il y a quelqu'un qui par mesgarde ne s'oste pas du chemin avant que les *muets* soient à luy, il court fortune de sa vie." (p. 161)

### [1623-1640]

TUGLACI, Pars (1989) *Tarih Boyunca Istanbul Adalari*. Istanbul: Cem Yayinevi.

[(Reconstruction from email communication with Neslihan Halici, Caroline Finkel and others in 2004). The monastery of Aya Jorgi, or Ayios Yorgios Coudonas (St George Koudounas, St George of the Bells) at the southern end of Büyük Ada, the largest of the Princes' Islands, in the Marmara Sea, 12-15 miles south east of Istanbul, is believed to have been founded in 963 CE, and was rebuilt in the reign of Sultan Murad IV (1623-1640). The reputation of St George as a healer continues to attract pilgrims of many nationalities and religions, from a wide area. One legend of the shrine tells the story

that a janissery had a deaf daughter. One day this deaf girl lay down and believed she could hear something, under the earth. Men dug into the earth at that spot, and found an icon of St George. The monastery is supposed to have been reconstructed, at that place. A different legend tells that a shepherd, who believed he could hear the sound of bells underground, dug up the icon (Freely 1987, p. 333); or found it in some bushes. Some of the information was available in the monastery's published brochure (reported by Neslihan Halici). Dr Finkel reported that dates and two versions of the legend (one being of the deaf girl) appear in the book by Tuglaci listed above, p. 168. Apparently the legend of the deaf girl 'hearing' the icon, leading to its discovery, is known to some deaf Turkish people, who visit the shrine as a group, on the saint's feast day in April. This was a matter of some debate, between modernisers who wish to discard 'superstitious' views of deafness, and to concentrate on improving deaf people's education and securing national recognition of deaf people's language and culture, and others who consider that stories of deaf people in the past, together with those (such as healers) who were believed to bless them, are a valuable feature of deaf history and culture, which should not lightly be cast aside.

Whether a person does, or does not, believe in the reality of some kind of 'healing experience' in connection with a journey to a shrine, it is an historical fact that many people with various ailments or impairments used to make, and continue to make, such journeys, often accompanied by family members. In earlier centuries, when most people lived in villages or small towns, a family having a baby who was deaf, or had an impairment that produced strange behaviour or an odd appearance, might not know anyone else with such a condition. If they journeyed to a shrine and spent a few days there, they were more likely to meet some other families who had such a child. (It might also be one of the few occasions when an isolated deaf person could meet other deaf people, especially at a shrine reputed to 'do something' for those who were deaf or mute). The shrine custodian, priest or holy man usually had accumulated experience of seeing a wide variety of people with impairments, disabilities, peculiar conditions or odd behaviour. Some of the custodians simply recited prayers or performed a religious ceremony, and collected the fees or donations; others probably gave useful advice to some of the pilgrims; other practitioners at shrines reportedly gave therapeutic treatments for some forms of muteness and deafness, of a kind recognisable by modern otology and laryngology (Lascaratos 1996; Lascaratos et al, 1998, 1999). In modern times, many families still report a feeling of relief when they realise that they are not alone, there are other families who have a child with some physical or mental 'difference', it is a common human experience, it can be shared and understood and accepted, and life can go on.

A further legend of the monastery describes in some detail the icon of "St. George of the Bells", and tells how it was dug up by a devout monk in the 15th century who (under instruction from a vision of the saint) had been led to it, across land and sea, by the sound of a ringing bell. The author, Demetra Vaka (1877-1946) devoted a chapter ("How I was sold to St. George", pp. 119-133), from her childhood on Büyükada, to the healing ministry of the shrine, particularly among people with mental illness. Demetra Vaka (1914) *A Child of the Orient*. London: John Lane.]

#### 1634

HAMMER, Joseph de (1837) *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman depuis son origine jusqu'a nos jours. Tome Neuvième. Depuis l'avènement de Mourad IV jusqu'à sa mort. 1623-1640*. Translated from German by J.-J. Hellert. Paris: Bellizard et al.

[Murad IV, in a state of murderous fury, arrived at Constantinople with his bostanjibashi Doudjé. He sent Doudjé into the palace in disguise, to pass an order secretly to the grand vizier to kill certain people.]

"Doudjé s'éloigna, changea de vêtemens avec un soldat de Roumilie qu'il rencontra et qu'il plaça sous bonne garde, se fit écrire à la hâte une supplique, et entra dans le diwan sous les habits du soldat, sa pétition à la main. {#} Beiram-Pascha, qui avait parfaitement reconnu le bostandji-baschi, prit la supplique d'un air indifférent, et la remit au maître-des-requêtes; tandis que celui-ci en faisait la lecture, il demanda au messenger, dans le langage des muets du serai, avec un regard rapide du coin de

l'oeil: 'Qu'y a-t-il de nouveau?' Doudjé lui répondit de la même manière, en serrant les dents, ce qui signifiait: 'Grand courroux du maître.' Alors le grand-vizir ordonna au prétendu soldat de s'avancer vers lui, et Doudjé lui rendit compte à voix basse de son sanglant message." (Vol. 9, p. 251).

[Immediately following was the execution of Abaza Mehmed Pasha, 24 August 1634, p. 252.]

[German original: {#} "Beirampascha, der den verkappten Bostandschibaschi sogleich erkannte, that nicht dessgleichen, nahm die Bittschrift, gab sie dem Bittschriftmeister, und während dieser sie las, fragte er in der Sprache der Stummen des Serai, mit einem Blicke aus dem Winkel des Auges: 'Was gibt's?' Dudsche biss die Zähne übereinander, zu sagen: 'Zorngericht.'" Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. *Geschichte des Osmanlichen Reiches*. Bande 5. (edition 1963). Graz, Austria. Akademische Druck- U. Verlagsanstalt, (p. 191).]

HAMMER. "De même qu'à l'approche de l'orage les oiseaux se taisent et se cachent sous le feuillage, de même tout faisait silence et prenait la fuite à sa terrible approche. La nécessité de ne s'exprimer que par signes en présence de Mourad porta la langue des muets à son plus haut point de développement; les clignemens d'yeux, le mouvement des lèvres, le craquement des dents avaient remplacé la parole." (9, p. 385).

German original: "Wie bey nahendem Sturme die Vögel verstummen und flüchten, so verstummte und flüchtete Alles vor seiner Gegenwart. Durch die Nothwendigkeit, sich in des Tyrannen Gegenwart nur durch Zeichen verständlich zu machen, erreichte unter ihm die Sprache der Stummen durch Winke des Auges, Bewegen der Lippen, und Blöcken oder Grinzen der Zähne irh höchste Ausbildung;" (p. 287).

### 1630s

EVLIYA EFENDI [sometimes Evliya Çelebi] (original Turkish text compiled in the 1670s-80s ?) *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the Seventeenth Century*. [Abbreviated from Evliya's *Seyahatnâme*.] Translated by Joseph von Hammer (vol. 1 {i} and vol. 2, 1834; vol. 1 {ii} 1846). Reprinted 1968, New York & London: Johnson Reprint.

[Hardly any editorial information is offered on the text(s) available to von Hammer. In Vol. 1 {ii} pp. 255-256, he mentions getting a sight of Evliya's Egyptian travels in 1799, in Sultan Abdulhamid's library, "which is wanting in the copy from which this translation is made", and which he was unable to find thereafter, despite many enquiries. Apparently there has been considerable difficulty, up to the early 21st century, in establishing authentic and reliable editions of Evliya's very substantial literary output. Some material translated by Hammer, as shown below, does not necessarily appear in scholarly editions of Evliya's writing, transliterated in modern Turkish. Von Hammer seems to have published his Vol. 1 {i}, comprising sections I to XXX in 1834, along with his Volume 2, journeys to Bursa, Nicomedia, Batum, Trebizonde, the Crimea, etc; then after a dozen years produced Vol. 1 {ii} with sections XXXI to LXXX of Constantinople and its environs. This may be further evidence of the unsatisfactory sources he had to wrestle with. (See also Lybyer 1917, for a review of Evliya's travels in von Hammer's version; and Dankoff 2004, on Evliya as seen in modern scholarship).]

[A long section will follow, mainly about bath-houses, which Evliya visited when he was living at Istanbul, and about a suburb of Istanbul called Kasim (or Kassim) Paşa on the north side of the Golden Horn. It is given in detail, because it leads up to the 'bath of Kulaksiz' with 'deaf attendants'. If there was a bath-house known to have deaf attendants, in an area known as Kulaksiz ('without ears'), it is quite likely that it would have become a meeting-place for deaf people of the city, and also for deaf people who had retired from service in Topkapi Palace. Anyone who studies the 'Deaf World' will understand the importance of the 'deaf club' or 'social centre', for Deaf culture and the strengthening of Sign Language. Did the Kulaksiz bath-house become a deaf social centre? That remains unclear, but some evidence will be examined.]

[After lengthy lists of particular kinds of buildings in Constantinople (I {i} 164-179), Evliya states in Section XXX that he has:]

"preferred assigning each of the principal baths to a certain class of men in the following amusing way" (von Hammer's translation, vol. I (i) 179-180).

[So each of the bath names has some verbal connection (simple, witty, or perhaps obscure) with the group of people supposedly using it; thus...] "for the Bostanjis, the garden-bath (*bostan*); ...for the women, the *khatun* (lady); ... for the surgeons, the Jerrah Ali Pasha; ...for cruel tyrants, that of Zinjirli-kapu (chained-gate); ...for astronomers, the Yeldiz-hamman (star bath);" [Towards the end of a long list, there appear:] ..."for the infirm (Maatuh), that of Kojá Mohammed Páshá; for buffoons, that of Shengel [a famous mimic]; ... for dwarfs, that of Little Aghá;" (I (i) p. 180). [Ma`tuh is a term historically used in Islamic Civil Law in Turkey to mean "a person of unsound mind", sometimes "feeble-minded".]

[In that list, no bath-house was allotted for 'deaf-mutes', whether jokingly or not. The Palace *dilsizler* would presumably have used a palace servants' bath-house -- and it is not known whether deaf people in Istanbul at this time were sufficiently visible or numerous to appear as an 'identity group'. Evliya continues:] "In the same manner we allotted the baths in the suburbs, which, with those within, amount to one hundred and fifty-one, all of which I have visited." [Yet in what follows, at least in von Hammer's version, there is no more 'humorous allocation' of identified groups to particular hamams. Evliya closed Section XXX with some further notes on baths, especially the imperial bath; then continued with descriptions of mausoleums (Section XXXI onward, vol. 1 {ii} pp. 1-20), and some fine tales of Saints, and of "Saint-Fools, Idiots and Ecstatic, or Inspired Men", (pp. 20-29). Then he described some major suburbs of Constantinople, Sections XLV - LXXVII (pp. 30-89), including a few passing mentions of baths, and few more detailed notes on public bath houses of Galata (p. 53), Top-khanah (p. 61), and Scutari (p. 81), as baths were a feature in which Evliya was always interested, and ready to be critical or complimentary. There is no attempt in these to joke about particular groups of hamam users. There are, however, some interesting comments below on **deaf attendants** at the bath-house of Kulaksis ('without ears'), after other remarks on Kassim Pasha and Kulaksis.]

[EVLIYA, *Narrative of Travels*, Section LV (55). In a list of mosques in the suburb of Constantinople called "Kassim Pasha":]

"The mosque of Kúláksis (without ears) built by Sinán." {volume I (ii) p. 44.} [Sinan's career as an architect and builder at Istanbul lasted from c. 1539 to 1588. But see annotation under 1580s Ayyansarayi, above.]

[Within Section LV, the district of Kúláksis is mentioned five times, for its mosque (p. 44); its convent of Khalveti Dervishes, and its bath house (p. 45); in a list of quarters or districts (p. 47); and in a list of monuments and tombs (p. 48); see also Sect. LVIII, p. 65. Evliya stated that his father, two grandparents, a great-grandparent and "innumerable relations" were buried at Kassim Pasha, supporting the idea that he knew the area well. The Introduction to Evliya's great work tells of a dream or religious vision, at the end of which he learns that he will become a great traveller. On waking, he says his prayers, then: "I crossed over from Constantinople to the suburb of Kásim-páshá, and consulted the interpreter of dreams, Ibráhím Efendi, about my vision". For further guidance, he went "to Abdu-llah Dedeh, Sheikh of the convent of Mevlevi Dervishes in the same suburb (Kásim-páshá)". {volume I (i) p. 5.}]

[In a list of baths in Kassim Pasha:]

"The bath of Kassim Páshá is well built and provided with pure water. The bath of Hekím-báshı is small, but with very good water. The bath of Kúláksis with good servants, nice waiters, who however are deaf as is implied by the name (Kúláksıs, no ears)." (volume I (ii) 45).

[That 'bath of Kúláksis', with deaf attendants, remains in need of further corroborative evidence,



and discussion by textual specialists. It seems that there are some variations in the available texts of Evliya's description, and there may be several possible translations or interpretations. He used the word 'sagır', not 'dilsiz', for the attendants. Text from different locations in Evliya's work is shown by Yüksel Y. Demircanlı (1989) *Istanbul mimarisi için kaynak olarak Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü, p. 402, in romanised Ottoman Turkish, based on a modern scholarly edition:]

[A] "Kulaksız Hamamı sagırlara [1] çift taraflıdır [2]."

[B] "Kaşımpaşa Hamamları: Kulaksız Hamamı: Aletleri, Örtüleri, temiz dellâkları hareketli bir hamamdır. Fakat Kulaksız hamamı olduğundan çoğu hademeleri sagırdır [3]."

Footnote [1] Z.D. "Ev. Çel." C.2.s.35. [2] Z.D. "Ev. Çel." C.2.s.37. [3] "Ev. Çel." C.2.s.120. [Z.D. = edition of Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* by Zuhuri Danişman, 1970-1971.]

[Excerpt [B] seems fairly close to what Von Hammer translated - it is complimentary about the Kulaksız bath attendants, who were deaf. The precise details are perhaps not so clear, and seem to require both a good grasp of the meanings of Ottoman Turkish words in the mid-17th century, and of what features one might expect, or wish for, in a good bath attendant. Certainly, they should be clean and hard-working. There was perhaps some variation in how far the attendants' own bodies were 'clothed', and how far it was considered decent and proper for them to be clothed, partly clothed, or practically naked. How active or lively they should be, e.g. in shampooing and pummelling the client's body, might also be a matter of personal taste. In the Kulaksız hamam, excerpt [B] seems to have 'most of' the attendants being deaf, a useful modification for the credibility of the comment.]

[Bath-houses were great social centres in Ottoman Turkey, and often they would attract clientele with particular interests or profession. The Kulaksız bath-house may have been a meeting-point of deaf people, even if Evliya, in this report, might also have been having a little joke about the name (which he did, about the users of some other bath-houses as noticed earlier). If there were in fact deaf attendants (which is quite possible) it is all the more likely that there would have been deaf clientele, and then the bath-house would probably have served as a hub of information among deaf people, and a place where sign language would be in daily use. But the presence of 'deaf attendants', over a significant period of time, is perhaps not firmly established by a single source with variant readings.]

[It is interesting to note that, in the Topkapı palace, the bath attendants and the mutes belonged to the same servants' hall, the *Seferli Oda*, Campaign or Expeditionary Chamber, which had been instituted by Ahmed I (1603-1617): "This dormitory housed miscellaneous servants; falconers, bath attendants, teachers, clowns, mutes, musicians, singers, and the like." (Bayerle 1997, 133, see also pp. 37, 69, 113, 132; and Inalcik 1965, p. 1088b; 1973, pp. 80-83). Among various skills learnt by different mutes, it is quite possible that some were trained in the vigorous 'rubbing down' that was part of the Turkish bath experience. In his vast description of the parade of the guilds, Evliya gave a description of "The Men of the Bath" in Constantinople, with (roughly) two thousand "Rubbers of the Bath (Dellák)", and one thousand "Bath-servants (Nátirán)" (vol. I (ii), pp. 216-271). The 'tellak' worked in the male baths, the 'natır' in the female baths.]

[In Section LXXIX, Evliya writes of the:] "Description of Constantinople, made in the Year 1048 (1638), by order of Sultán Murád IV., containing the summary of Buildings of every kind." (volume I (ii) pp. 100-104). [He copied the summary, from which the number of "Baths public and private (Hamám)" appears as 14,536 (p. 103). However, Evliya had earlier given an account, in Section XXX, "Of the Principal Baths" (volume I (i) pp. 179-181), in Constantinople and the suburbs, and claimed to have visited all the main ones, being 151 in total (p. 181). He further stated that:]

"If to the great public baths we add the smaller ones, the number would exceed three

hundred; and if the private ones are reckoned, they will amount to the number of four thousand five hundred and thirty-six." (p. 181).

[As the earlier and later figures, 14,536 and 4,536, differ by exactly 10,000, some error of manuscript, transcription or translation is very likely. For the 15th century, Müller-Wiener (1977, pp. 324-325) mapped 78 (major) baths of Istanbul. In 1589, a Fugger correspondent reported "895 public baths" (And, 1994, p. 32).]

[The suburban location known as "Kulaksiz" (or Kulaksis), on the edge of Kassim Pasha, roughly between Pera (now Beyoğlu) and Hasköy, may have acquired that name some time in the 16th century. A guidebook in modern Greek entitled "Ancient and Modern Constantinople", by Constantius, patriarch of Constantinople, dated 1824, of which an English version appeared in 1868, stated that:]

"Next comes the arsenal of the imperial fleet. All of this locality was formerly cemetery; and it was only in 1515 that, by order of Selim I., it was cleared, and the bones collected and thrown into deep ditches. ... After the arsenal comes the suburb of Kassim Pacha. The spot was formerly a waste, and it was only in 1525, under Soliman the Great, that the Vizier Kassim Pacha peopled it and gave it his own name." (pp. 118-119).

[Kulaksiz is still shown in several current [2009] road names. "Kulaksiz Hamami Sokak" can be found on Google Maps, at the junction of Kulaksiz Caddesi and Kasimpasa Kabristani Sokak, at the top right-hand corner (looking from the Golden Horn inland) of the large Kulaksiz Graveyard or Cemetery. Kulaksiz is also found on the large map by Kauffer & Lechevalier (1776, 1786) with further information (on Mahallas) by Barbié de Bocage (1831), folded at the back of Volume 10 of J. von Hammer-Purgstall's *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*. Kulaksiz is listed under "III. Mahalle von Kassim Pascha" and is designated on the map by the letter 'd', which can be found (by looking closely) under the 'ch' in "Kapudan dschamisi", to the west of Kassim Pasha. The only well-known historical figure bearing the name Kulaksiz (or Qulaqsiz) was an Ottoman military leader, best known for his lack of success, as in May 1468:]

"...the Egyptian army under Commander-in-Chief Janibak Kulaksiz left Cairo and joined forces with the Syrian army, but again suffered a terrible defeat. Kulaksiz was taken captive, a great number of amirs were slain, and the remnants of the army returned to Aleppo on 7 Zu-l-Ka`da/30 May 'without camels, clothing and Mamluks'." (Har-El, 1995, p. 89)

[From Evliya's description of the procession of the guilds or fraternities of Constantinople:]

"(48) The Sheikhs of the beggars (Dilenji), number seven thousand. ... some blind, some lame, some paralytic, some epileptic, some having lost a hand or foot, some naked and bare-foot, and some mounted on asses." (volume I (ii) 115) [No deaf or mute beggars are listed as such.]

"(254) The Sword-cutlers ... The most celebrated sword cutler is deaf David. Sultán Murád IV., who so well understood the worth and use of the sword, never used any but blades of Isfahán, or of deaf David. He made him by an Imperial rescript Chief of the sword-cutlers." (volume I (ii) 178). [A biographical sketch of Evliya, at the start of Von Hammer's translation of the *Seyahatnâme*, pp. iii - xiv, notes that "His uncle Melek Ahmed was at that time (i.e. 1635) sword-bearer to the Sultán." This would account for Evliya's 'inside knowledge' about Murad IV's sword preference, and about 'deaf David'.]

### **1635-1644**

[During Evliya's brief period of service in the Seraglio, under the Sultan Murad IV (reigned 1623-1640).]

"On the day I was dressed as above related, with the splendid turban, two mutes came, and with many curious motions led me into the Khás oda (inner chamber), to Melek Ahmed Aghá and his predecessor Mustafá." (Volume I (i) 133).

[Other textual versions and interpretations of the key phrase also appear, e.g. in Alexander Pallis (1951) *In the Days of the Janissaries*, London: Hutchinson, pp. 109-110:] "two mutes came and, with

many quaint signs, led me to the Privy Chamber..." [Pallis dated this in 1636. The passage has further detail and a different spin in Dankoff's fresh translation:]

"Two mutes, named Cuvan-i Dil-sera ('Heart-beguiling Youth') and Tavşan ('Rabbit') arrived and conducted me, dancing and jostling, to the apartments of the imperial sword-bearer Melek Aga and of the royal companion and former sword-bearer Mustafa Aga." Robert Dankoff (2004) *An Ottoman Mentality. The world of Evliya Çelebi*, Leiden: Brill, p. 35.

[It seems that Evliya was not familiar with the sign language of the court, as he had entered service by a special arrangement, without spending years in the Palace school; but presumably he was aware that signing was used by the deaf mute servants, the sultan, and some of the courtiers.]

"Kara Mustafá Páshá, the brave and sagacious vezír, being put to death [in 1644], the Sultan [Deli Ibrahim, reigned 1640-1648] fell into the hands of all the favourites and associates of the harem, the dwarfs, the mutes, the eunuchs, the women, particularly Jinjí Khoájeh," (volume I (i) 149).

[1639? or 1665?]

TAVERNIER, Jean-Baptiste (1675) *Nouvelle relation de l'interieur du serrail du Grand Seigneur contenant plusieurs singularitez qui jusqu'icy n'ont point esté mises en lumiere*. Paris: Olivier de Varennes.

[Tavernier (1605-1689) tells a story about Amurat (Murad IV, 1623-1640) to illustrate the strictness with which the female quarters were guarded against male intrusion, at the sultan's residence at Andrinople / Edirne (pp. 246-250).]

"...une chose qui arriva à Andrinople en 1639."

[(Other sources date a very similar story to 1665, in the reign of Mehmed IV, 1648-87, see below\*). A page of the Treasury, named Tocateli (or Tokatli), who was the Chief Wrestler, heard that a champion Muscovite wrestler had come to Adrinople / Edirne, and this man had beaten other wrestlers across the empire. Tocateli was very keen to have a bout with this man, in the Sultan's presence; but he thought that, before mentioning this to the Sultan, it would be wise to have a private wrestling match and see how it would turn out. When the Sultan was out hunting, Tocateli arranged for the other wrestler to be smuggled in, dressed as a palace gardener. They wrestled, and Tocateli got the better of the Muscovite (or perhaps the latter allowed Tocateli to win, for his own reasons) with some mutes and many pages watching. When the Sultan returned, the Treasury Chief suggested to him that the Muscovite champion be invited to the serail for a wrestling match, and so it was arranged. Next day the match took place before the Sultan, and continued for a long time without a clear winner. Then (pp. 248-249):]

"...un Muet fit entendre par signe à un de ses compagnons, qu'il s'étonnoit de ce que le Page à qui la presence du Grand Seigneur devoit donner de nouvelles forces, avoit tant de peine à venir à bout du Moscovite qu'il avoit si aisément vaincu le jour de devant. Le langage par signe des Muets est aussi intelligible dans le Serrail que s'ils avoient la parole libre, & le Grand Seigneur qui l'entend mieux qu'aucun autre pour s'y estre accoûtumé dès son enfance, & s'entretenant le plus souvent avec eux, fut étrangement surpris d'apprendre que le Moscovite avoit esté le jour précédent dans la mesme place."

[Realising, from the deaf servant's signed remark, that the foreign wrestler had been admitted to the Serail in his absence, the Sultan erupted in rage, halted the match and questioned the page. Both wrestlers promptly received a crippling bastinado and were then hanged. Two senior officials were dismissed with penalties. It appears to be a striking demonstration that, if spoken secrets risked being overheard, signed secrets also risked being 'overseen' by anyone knowing the language well.

\* A short account of what seems to be the same story is given from Turkish sources, by Atif Kahraman (1995) *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Spor*, pp. 131-132. T.C. Kültür Bakanlıđı. There, the event is dated precisely, on 18th June 1665 (4 Dhu'l Hijja 1075).]

1638

[MARANA, Giovanni Paolo.] *Letters Writ By A Turkish Spy: Who Lived Five and Forty Years Undiscovered at Paris: giving an impartial account to the Divan at Constantinople, of the most remarkable Transactions of Europe: And discovering several Intrigues and Secrets of the Christian Courts (especially of that of France). Continued from the Year 1637, to the Year 1682. Written originally in Arabick, translated into Italian, from thence into English, and now published with a large Historical Preface and Index to illustrate the Whole, by the Translator of the First Volume.* Volume I. The Twenty-Sixth Edition. London: Printed for A. Wilde (et al.), 1770.

[By its nature, purporting to be the work of an 'undiscovered' spy, and thus not easily subject to verification and authentication, this work should be approached with caution. It might be wholly or partly genuine, or it might be a cleverly constructed fiction, taking reported observations by other authors and weaving them into imaginatively created 'letters'. The original, supposedly written "in Arabick", might in fact have been Ottoman Turkish (which used the Arabic script, and would have looked like 'Arabic' to most Englishmen). A web reprint (2007) has the note: "By Giovanni Paolo Marana, William Bradshaw, & Robert Midgley. Authorities agree that the first part of the work, published in Paris in 1648, was written by Marana. The remainder has been ascribed to several Englishmen, among them Dr. Robert Midgley and William Bradshaw. It is probable however that Midgley simply edited the English translation, made by Bradshaw, of the original Italian manuscript. cf. Gentleman's Magazine, 1840-41; Dictionary of National Biography. volume 6, p. 185; volume 37, p. 366."]

(p. 99) **Letter VIII, to Melech Amet.**

"I have heard here a confused discourse of the disgrace of Stridyda Bey; but thy letters have satisfied me. ..."

(p. 100) [Writing about a mutual friend, Zagabarasci, who died on the wedding day of his son, Caragurli:]

"But thou does not inform me, whether the excessive joy he had to see his son married to a Greek, rich with the goods of fortune, endowed with great virtue, and a mute, has not caused his death. ..." {p. 101} "Didst thou think it a matter of small satisfaction to a father, that is a wise and sober man, to obtain for his son a woman that is a mute? For what greater pleasure can a husband have, than to have a wife that is not talkative? The Christians understand not the wisdom of the Turks, when they laugh at our Sultans, who find the greatest part of their pleasure in the conversation of mutes. Is there any thing more delightful than to hear a man that does not speak; and to see one, that has no tongue, reason on all things? Thou knowest how many things these mutes of the Seraglio do give one to understand; and what eloquence there is in their signs and gestures. Thou rememberest, that when [the Sultan] Amurath would give thanks to the sovereign Moderator of all the world, in that he had escaped death, when the lightning fell on his bed, and burnt to his very shirt; he seemed to offer him a great sacrifice, in putting a mute out of the Seraglio, which he dearly loved by reason of her tricks and gestures. ..." [p. 102.] "Paris, 25th of the last Moon, of the Year 1638."

[In a French version, "*L'espion dans les cours des princes chrétiens ou mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de ce siècle depuis 1637 jusqu'en 1697. Nouvelle édition...*", published 1756, at Amsterdam, volume 1, the same letter of 1638 (but numbered 36 in this edition) appears on pp. 150-155. The final sentence about Murad's much loved mute ends:]

"...crut lui faire un grand sacrifice de faire sortir du Serrail un Muet qu'il aimoit tendrement, à cause des jeux & des postures qu'il sçavoit faire." [It may be merely a quirk of translation, but the female mute of the English version above seems to have changed gender. A much loved mute is mentioned in another letter, no. 82, to a physician of Constantinople, translated to French, with margin date of 1645, and published in London in 1742. Between two other stories, one about a remarkable blind man, the other about a talented deaf and mute African, Murad's mute appears:]

"Je me souviens que du tems d'Amurath il y avoit un Muet auquel le Sultan prenoit un plaisir infini. Outre plusieurs gestes & tours agréables qu'il faisoit pour divertir le Prince, le Sultan s'en

servoit souvent [p. 259] de Secretaire, & l'employoit à écrire des letters aux Bachas & autres, à mesure qu'il les lui dictoit par signes. Quoiqu'il ne pût recevoir le son des paroles, ni rien dire d'articulé, je lui ai vû copier tout un Chapitre de l'*Alcoran*, composé de cent-soixante versets, & en aussi beau caractère que le plus célèbre Ecrivain de l'Empire eût pû faire; & quand il avoit achevé, il expliquoit ce qu'il avoit écrit, & le faisoit par des signes qui montroient évidemment, qu'il entendoit l'*Alcoran* en perfection.

Ce sont véritablement des dons rares, mon cher Ami: cependant si tous les Muets étoient élevez avec autant de diligence & de soin, que le fut *Saqueda* (car c'est ainsi que se nommoit celui dont je viens de parler) il n'est pas impossible qu'ils parvinssent à une plus grande perfection. J'ai entendu dire que son Gouverneur, l'un des plus sçavans hommes d'*Arabie*, employa vingt ans à lui apprendre à lire, à entendre, & à écrire de cette manière." (*L'Espion Turc dans les Cours de Prince Chrétiens...* 15th edition, volume II, pp. 258-259. London, 1742.)

[Here the mute acquires a name, and an educational history. A version of the same letter in English, is addressed to "Cara Hali, a physician at Constantinople", is dated 1645, and is published as letter VIII in volume III of the edition. The passage given above in French appears in English with slight changes (e.g. 170, not 160, verses in the Koran chapter copied by Saqueda). Yet she is clearly female throughout; e.g. the last few lines are:]

"..yet were all the *Mutes* educated with as much Diligence and Care, as was *Saqueda*, (so she was called) 'tis possible they would attain to greater Perfection. I have been told, that her *Tutor*, one of the learned'st Men in *Arabia*, bestow'd many Years in teaching her this Method of Reading, Understanding and Writing." (*The Eight Volumes of Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy, who liv'd five and forty years a spy at Paris...* by Giovanni Paolo Marana, Lucius Lee Hubbard, translated by William Bradshaw, Published by G. Strahan, S. Ballard, 1741, vol. 3, p. 30).

[Even if the letters could be shown to be bogus, the portrayal of deaf and mute persons is refreshingly different and includes considerable education and talent in the deaf people. Someone must have had these thoughts, and considered it worth getting them published.]

### 1640s

DU LOIR, Sieur (1654) *Les voyages du sieur Du Loir: contenus en plusieurs lettres écrites du Levant*. Paris: Clouzier.

"Il ne reste plus rien que les Muets, & les femmes avec leurs Enuques dans l'appartement du Grand Seigneur, mais ie ne sçaurois vous en entretenir, parce que les vnes ne se voyant iamais, on ne peut en parler avec certitude, & qu'il faudroit ne rien dire pour bien représenter les autres; mais les describe par les signes qu'ils font pour se faire entendre & que ie ne sçay pas. Vous admirerez seulement avec moy la secrette intelligence de ces hommes qui a esté inuentée pour ne pas troubler le respect qu'on doit à la maison du Prince, & qui est si admirable que la nuict mesme ils se font entendre en se tatonnant."

[The Sieur du Loir was honest, pertinent and witty: if the Sultan's women were never seen, and therefore nothing accurate could be known about them, and if the mutes would best be described using their own sign language, which he did not know, there really wasn't much that he could write! But unlike some others, Du Loir disdained either to invent stories, or to copy other travellers' tales.]

### 1642

RADUSHEV, E., IVANOVA, S. & KOVACHEV, R. (2003) *Inventory of Ottoman Turkish Documents about Waqf Preserved in the Oriental Department at the St St Cyril and Methodius National Library. Part 1 - Registers*. Sofia.

[See above, 1586, 1592-93 or 1594-95, on Bizeban {or Dilsiz} Süleyman Aga.]

"140. 1-30 Muharrem 1052 / 1.04. - 30.04.1642 Applications (54) to the Grand Vezier's office concerning the appointment of officers to vacant positions at the waqfs of: ..... Bizeban Süleyman Aga in Yakova; ..." (p. 93)

"200. ... 4.07.1666 - 12.06.1668. Register of revenues and expenditures of the mosque and

school at the waqf of Bizeban Süleyman aga in the town of Yakova. Income from rent on *dükkâns* and waqf land, from mills, from the *bac-î bazar*, *cizye*, *ispenc* taxes and from levies on the agricultural produce. Expenditures for salaries of the waqf employees, for the maintenance and repairs of the property." (p. 108)

[A further entry, concerned with appointments at this Waqf, appears on p. 117, dated March 1673. The index of persons shows "Süleyman Aga (Bizeban), founder of a waqf in Yakova" (p. 242). The Preface (by V. Mutafchieva, pp. 7-10) to this 'Inventory' suggests that Waqf charitable foundations were probably a much greater economic feature of the Ottoman empire than has generally been recognised. Study of them had been neglected, compared with studies of 'timar'. The Bulgarian scholars involved in the present studies had published the detailed Inventory and indexing in English, for broader dissemination.]

[The latest chapter in the history of Dilsiz/Bizeban Süleyman Aga's mosque and waqf is found below, under '2001', Zulficar.]

### **1645-1646**

DIKICI, Ayşe Ezgi (2006) Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? ... MA thesis, Sabancı University.

"Three documents from 1644-1645 noted by Çagatay Uluçay record the purchase of jewellery and perfume for the harem by 'Buzagi Dilsiz', 'musahib Halil Aga', and 'Zeyrek Cüce'." (pp. 65-66). Citing Uluçay, *Harem II*, pp. 8-9, footnote 17. Documents in the Topkapı Palace Archive, no. 4155.

### **1655-1656**

THEVENOT, Jean (1664) *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant: dans laquelle il est curieusement traité des estats sujets au Grand Seigneur...* Paris: Bilaine; reprinted (1665) Rouen: Billaien.

[Thévenot reached Constantinople in December 1655, and reported in some detail on the more visible aspects of the Ottoman court. He noted (like the Sieur du Loir, see above '1540s') that very little could be known about the daily life of the Sultan, so he could report very little; but a few things he had learnt from a page who had recently emerged from serving inside the Seraglio. Writing of Mehmed IV:]

"Pendant ses repas il ne parle à personne, mais il se fait entendre par signe, à des muets bouffons, qui sont fort stiles [\*] à cela, en ayans une méthode toute particuliere, & il n'y a rien qu'ils ne puissent exprimer par signes. Ces bouffons sont tousiours occupez à faire entr'eux quelque folie pour le faire rire." (p. 116)

[\* In modern French, "fort stylés" = well trained, well schooled.]

### **1659**

d'ARVIEUX, Laurent (1735) *Mémoire du Chevalier d'Arvieux, Envoye Extraordinaire du Roi à la Porte, consul d'Alep, d'Alger, de Tripoli, & d'autres echelles du Levant: contenant ses voyages à Constantinople, dans l'Asie, la Palestine, l'Egypte etc.* Paris.

[The following scene was located in Palestine, where d'Arvieux and other French dignitaries met the Ottoman ruler. They found him chatting with his mute (presumably in sign language). Over the next two days, the party journeyed with the Pacha, from Rama to Gaza. (This serves as a reminder that some deaf-mute men were spread across the Ottoman empire, serving provincial governors. It was not a feature only of Istanbul and Edirne).]

"Nous allâmes au Sérail sur les sept heures du soir. Cette maison ne paroît pas grande chose en dehors; mais les dedans sont propres & bien distribuez. Nous trouvâmes d'abord une cour assez grande où il y avoit des Orangers, des Citroniers & des Arbustes, avex quelques bassins & des jets d'eau. Les appartemens étoient disposez à peu près comme ceux du Pacha de Seïde, tant pour les meubles que pour le service.

Les Officiers du Pacha nous reçurent à la porte avec beaucoup de civilité; & après nous avoir fait passer par plusieurs pièces de l'appartement, ils nous introduisirent dans une petite chambre où nous trouvâmes le Pacha qui venoit de souper, & qui s'entretenoit avec son muet.

Il nous reçut avec un visage riant. Le Sieur Souribe qui en étoit le plus connu, & qui parle parfaitement la Langue Arabe, entra le premier & lui baisa la main; nous en fîmes de même: il nous fit donner des sieges {p. 36}, & quand nous fûmes assis, le Sieur Souribe lui fit son compliment au nom de la Nation, & l'assura que nous n'oublierions jamais les bontez qu'il avoit euës pour nous, & la maniere généreuse dont il en avoit agi.

... Après ces complimens reciproques, il commanda à ses gens de se retirer & ne garda auprès de lui que son Muet & quelques Pages, pour servir la collation qu'il nous vouloit donner." (Vol. II: 35-36).

**\*\* 1660s - BOBOVIUS** [Text of some similarity is given below by Bobovius in Italian, and also in French; and then RICAUT in English covers much the same ground, because Bobovius was one of his main informants. Readers following the 'Quick Tour' may chose whichever language suits them best...]

### **1660s**

BOBOVIUS, Albertus (or Ali Bey). *Serrai enderum*. In: Cornelius Magnus (1679) *Quanto di più curioso... Turchia*, pp. 502-604. Parma.

"Oltre i Paggi vi sono ancora *Dilsisi*, ouero *Bizebani*, cioè muti di natura in numero di quaranta in circa, li quali la notte dormono nella grande, e picciola camera, mà di giorno stanno sedendo auuanti la Moschea de' Paggi della Gran camera: da questi escono fuori muti stipendiati, e liberati dal Serraglio, che per saper bene comunicare il loro sentimento in mutesco, insegnano a giouani esprimersi con infinità di cenni strauaganti; perfezionando loro in quest'arte col raccontarli fauole, e istorie, predicandoli le scritture, imparandoli i nomi de' Profeti, & altri vocaboli muteschi con grand' arte. I più vecchi in numero di diece in circa abitano in *Hasodà*, & si chiamano *Musaip*, cioè fauoriti, perche giuocano col *Gran Signore*, il quale li dà calci, pugni, li fà gettare nell' acqua della fontane, poi li dispensa *Aspri*, & *Zecchini*, & hà gusto vederli raccogliere, a questi giuochi si fanno venire ancora gli altri muti nouizi, e nani, il numero de' primi è di cinquanta in circa. Li Nani chiamansi *Giugè* ancora essi abitano frà Paggi delle due camere, grande, e picciola, finche siano capaci per stare auuanti il *Gran Signore* con riuerenza, & creanza; poi sono promossi, e quanto più piccoli sono, riescono tanto più cari; Eunuchi, e Nani tutti insieme, e il più gran presente, che si possi fare: al mio tempo ne fù presentato uno di queste qualità da Dervisch Muhamet Pascià; fù subito vestito con drappi prezioso d'oro, & diuentò fauorito del *Gran Signore*, & della Regina madre: caminaua per tutto il Penetrabile liberamente." (pp. 508-510)

### **1660s**

BOBOVIUS, Albertus. *Topkapi. Relation du sérail du Grand Seigneur. Edition présentée et annotée par Annie Berthier et Stéphane Yerasimos* (1999) Sindbad, Actes Sud. isbn 2-7427-2172-X

[Introductory notes on Bobovius precede the text, pp. 9-12. Born in 1610 at Lvov, he was captured by Tatars, and entered the seraglio in the 1630s, and spent 19 years there, working as a musician and interpreter.]

{p. 33} "*Muets du sérail*. Il y aussi dans le sérail environ cinquante ou soixante *dil sise* ou *by zebany*, c'est-à-dire muets de nature, qui couchent dans les grandes et petites chambres, mais sont pendant le jour assis devant la mosquée des pages de la grande chambre où les viennent visiter les autres muets déjà sortis du sérail avec paye et récompense du Grand Seigneur, qui pour être plus experts en la langue muette et sachant dénoter toutes choses par signes, viennent converser avec les jeunes qu'ils perfectionnent par leurs discours en leur contant diverses fables et histoires, leur prêchant les Ecritures, et leur enseignant les noms des prophètes, et toutes sortes d'autres paroles curieuses de leur

langage muet.

*Muets favoris*. Les huit ou neuf plus anciens d'entre ces muets sont logés dans le *hhazodah* et sont appelés *mousahib* ou favoris parce qu'ils jouent et folâtrèrent ordinairement avec le Grand Seigneur... [and further on pp. 34 and 111.]

"*Plan du sérail neuf*." [begins on p. 34, and the map itself is p. 35, with rooms lettered or numbered for reference, used throughout the document. In what follows, reference is made to rooms 'C' and 'D'.]  
"C est la chapelle nommée *mesgid* dans laquelle les pages de la grande chambre vont quatre fois le jour faire l'oraison. D est le réduit des muets où ils demeurent pendant le jour avec leurs anciens qui les viennent visiter pour leur enseigner les beautés de leur langue." (p. 128)

[In the School of the Sultan's Pages, where they were divided into 'houses', and strict discipline was observed.] "...mais ceux d'une chambre n'osent se mêler avec ceux d'une autre, et tout ce qu'ils peuvent faire lorsqu'ils ont des amis ou des camarades dans quelque autre chambre est de leur parler par signe à la muette, sachant tous peu ou prou quelque chose de cette manière de s'expliquer, qui est si commune dans le sérail et si fort en usage que ceux du *hhasodah* sont obligés de la savoir en perfection pour s'en servir lorsqu'ils se veulent parler en présence du Grand Seigneur qui leur commande fort souvent la plupart des choses seulement par gestes et par signes." (p. 136)  
[See also a translation to English, from a French translation of 1686 (manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), based on an Italian manuscript by Bobovius: Fisher, C.G. & Fisher, A.W. (1987) *Topkapi Sarayı* in the mid-Seventeenth century: Bobovi's description. *Archivum Ottomanicum* X (1985 {1987}) 5-81.]

### 1660s

RICAUT [sometimes RYCAUT], Sir Paul (1686) *The history of the present state of the Ottoman Empire*, 6th edition, corrected. London: Clavell, Robinson & Churchill. [First published in August 1666, but dated 1667. Entitled *The present state of the Ottoman Empire*, up to the fourth edition in 1675. See appendix on Ricaut / RycAUT 's publications, in Sonia P. Anderson, 1989, *An English Consul in Turkey. Paul RycAUT at Smyrna, 1667-1678*. Oxford: Clarendon. Ricaut stated that Bobovius was one of his major sources, as may be seen in the following.]  
[Under Sultan Mehmet IV, reigned 1648-1687.]

"Chap. VIII of the Mutes and Dwarfs." "Besides the Pages, there is a sort of Attendants to make up the *Ottoman* Court, called *Bizebani*, or *Mutes*, men naturally born deaf, and so consequently for want of receiving the sound of words are dumb: These are in number about 40, who by night are lodged amongst the Pages in the two Chambers, but in the day time have their stations before the *Mosque* belonging to the Pages, where they learn and perfect themselves in the language of the *Mutes*, which is made up of several signs, in which by custome they can discourse and fully express themselves; not onely to signifie their sense in familiar questions, but to recount Stories, understand the Fables of their own Religion, the Laws and Precepts of the *Alchoran*, the name of *Mahomet*, and what else may be capable of being expressed by the Tongue. The most ancient amongst them, to the number of about eight or nine, are called the Favourite *Mutes*, and are admitted to attendance in the *Haz Oda*; who onely serve in the place of *Buffons* for the Grand Signior to sport with, whom he sometimes kicks, sometimes throws in the Cisterns of Water, sometimes makes fight together like the combat of *Clineas* and *Dametas*. But this language of..."

[p. 63 Engraving showing *A mute* and *A dwarf*. Full figure, standing, adult males, dressed in full length gowns, slippers and hats, the dwarf being depicted as perhaps half height. The dwarf is not directly comparable with the mute, because he is shown standing behind and to one side of the mute. (This illustration does not appear in all editions).]

"...the *Mutes* is so much in fashion in the *Ottoman* Court, that none almost but can deliver his sense in it, and is of much use to those who attend the Presence of the Grand Signior, before whom it is not reverent or seemly so much as to whisper. (pp. 62, 63, 64).



### 1660s

TAVERNIER, Jean-Baptiste (1675) *Nouvelle relation de l'interieur du serrail du Grand Seigneur contenant plusieurs singularitez qui jusqu'icy n'ont point esté mises en lumiere*. Paris.

"..une petite Mosquée qui touche l'appartement du *Seraiket-houdasi*, où tous les Ichoglans vont faire leurs prieres deux fois le jour"... (p. 118)

"De cette Mosquée on passe dans une galerie qui touche les bains, & c'est où les *Dislis* & les *Geuges*, qui sont les Muets & les Nains, vont s'occuper au travail le long du jour. Les uns apprennent à lier un Turban, à quoy il y a plus de façon que l'on ne croit, principalement au Turban du Grand Seigneur quand il va au Divan: car alors il en prend un extraordinairement gros, ce que font tous les Officiers du mesme Divan quand ils entrent au Conseil: ... les autres apprennent à raser, à couper les ongles, & d'autres choses de cette nature. Ils ne se servent point de ciseaux pour les ongles, ny mesme dans toute l'Asie; ... Ils se servent d'un petit outil d'acier de la forme d'un canif, mais il n'y a que le bout qui coupe, & ils se prennent fort adroitement à cet office." (p. 119)

### 1660s ?

IBN SALLUM (Salih ibn Nasr Allah al-Halabi, d. 1669 or 1670) *Ghayat al-itqan fi tadbir badan al-insan*. MS A1044, Dar al-Kutub, Cairo. [Source: S. Scalenghe (2005) *The Deaf in Ottoman Syria, 16th - 18th centuries*. *Arab Studies Journal* 12 (2) - 13 (1) pp. 10-25. Scalenghe notes that this prominent physician of Aleppo "later moved to Istanbul and became court physician to Sultan Mehmet IV (reigned 1648-1687)". A section of Ibn Sallum's medical treatise concerned problems of the ear, and he provided a brief description of two types of deafness, and their aetiologies (see Scalenghe, pp. 13, 23).]

### 1669

URFALIOGLU, Nur (2000) The sebils in the Ottoman architecture. In: K. Çiçek et al (eds) *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation*, 4: 404-409. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye.

[Charitably supplied drinking fountains (sebils) have historically been one solution to Istanbul's chronic water supply problems.] Among lists of "16th and 17th century Istanbul *Sebils* which managed to stand up until now" (p. 407) is listed the "Tavşan Dilsiz Aga Sebili -1669". [See earlier mentions of Tavşan Dilsiz, under 1635.]

### 1674

COVEL, John (c. 1674) Extracts from the Diaries of Dr. John Covel, 1670-1679. In: J.T. Bent (ed.) (1893) *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, pp. 99-305. London: Hakluyt.

[While at Adrianople (Edirne), John Covel (1638-1722) was both chaplain and a sharp observer among the company of the English Ambassador (Sir John Finch) for an audience with Sultan Mehmed IV, and a meal afterward with the Grand Vizir, on 27 July 1675. Two months earlier, Covel had been impressed by the quietness and orderliness of great crowds of Turkish men on public festivals (p. 205). In his description of lascivious dancing by a 10-year old boy and a young man (p. 214), Covel referred briefly to "wriggling the body (a confounded wanton posture, and speakes as much of Eastern treachery as dumb signs can)". After the dinner with the Vizir, described in much detail, Covel reflected again on both silence and signing:]

"The meat which went from our tables was caryed out amongst inferior officers, where was such scrambling as I never saw. I saw much, much better order once at a feast of the Kaimacham's of Stambol. The like was where our servants dined; yet all passed in silence, as the whole business above said was likewise acted even to a miracle, all being done with a nod or a private sign (at which they are the best in the world) to the attendants and waiters, who stand like images with their hands acrossed

before them." (p. 264)

### 1691-1695

CANTEMIR, Demetrius. *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire*. Translated from Latin by N. Tindal, 1734. London.

[A scene in which the mind of Sultan Ahmed II (reigned 1691-1695) was being turned against his Vizir, Kioprili Oglu (= Köprülü Fazıl Mustafa, son of Köprülü Mehmed).]

"While *Kyslar agasi* is speciously suggesting these things to the Sultan, *Dilsiz Mahomet aga* a mute (6), holds the curtain of the door, and discovering by the motions of their lips and hands, that they are concerting to depose the Vizir, hastens immediately from the Sultan's chamber to the Vizir, and gives him by signs an exact account of the whole affair. Before he had concluded his story, *Baltajilar Kichaiasi* comes to the Vizir in haste, and tells him the Sultan would have him come instantly to the palace.

The Vizir finding the mute's account true, immediately orders a horse to be ready for him," [and successfully avoids the plot.]

{Footnote} "(6) a mute] There are many dumb and deaf persons kept in the Sultan's palace, whose only business is to hold up the curtain before the door of the room, where the Sultan is talking in private with the Vizir, *Kyslar aga*, or any of his other great men, and to take care that no body comes nigh. I find, that most of the *Europeans*, who give an account of the *Othman* court, affirm, that these persons are often employed to put those privately to death, whom the Sultan has a mind to dispatch; but I cannot so much as guess what has occasioned this mistake. For it never was heard in *Constantinople*, that *Mutes*, *Dwarfs*, and *Buffoons*, who are all upon the same foot in the palace, were ever employed about any serious business, or sent any where, but out of a jest. Nature having denied these persons the use of speech and of hearing, has, to supply that defect, endowed them with so quick an apprehension, that they can, by the motion of the lips and gestures of persons speaking, understand what they are saying. Besides, they have invented a way of talking by signs, which agreeing with that more than *Pythagorean* silence in the Sultan's court, there is, for that reason, hardly any courtier but what understands it: The Sultan himself must know it too, because he can use no other when he has any orders to give to his mutes, or has a mind to talk with them for diversion." (p. 379)

[The account of the discovery by Dilsiz Mahomet Aga of a plot against the Grand Vizir has been extensively quoted (with variations) in popular literature across the world ever since. Cantemir's caution, about the status of the mutes, dwarfs and buffoons, has seldom been quoted, though it is a useful counterweight to some widespread assumptions. Yet perhaps he may be exaggerating in the opposite direction. The weight of evidence suggests that there were some mutes, in some periods, who very likely did take part in impromptu executions, and who were employed to convey important messages, and were the trusted companions of very powerful men. There were probably some mutes who never took part in 'serious affairs', yet exercised their skill in teaching sign language to younger deaf people and to the many courtiers who wished to learn it. The evidence suggests that they ran a 'Palace Sign Language Class' on a regular basis, at a known location. That seems to have been a unique activity by a group of deaf people, in the history of the world. Similarly, there were a few dwarfs who acquired power and influence much beyond their normal role of playful companions and jokers; but the majority probably remained 'ordinary dwarfs'.]

### 1699

MOTRAYE (or MOTTRAYE), Aubry de la (1723) *Travels through Europe, Asia, and into Parts of Africa...* London: for the Author.

MOTRAYE (1727) *Voyages du Sr. de la Motraye en Europe, en Asia et en Afrique*. 2 volumes. La Haye: T. Johnson & J. van Duren.

[Motraye arrived at Smyrna early in 1699, and stayed more than four years in Turkey. He moved to Constantinople in June 1699, and soon gained entrance to the Seraglio disguised as an assistant to a

French watch and clock technician. Those two were conducted through many rooms by a silent Black Eunuch, to service the clocks (I: 170). Motraye, like many before him, was impressed by the absence of noise in and out of the Palace:]

"they observe so respectful a Silence, not only in the Palace when the *Grand Seignior* is in it, but the Court Yards, (notwithstanding the great Number of People who come there, especially the first, where generally a Number of Servants wait for their Masters, who are either at the *Divan*, or in some other Part of the *Seraglio*,) that if a Blind Man shou'd come in there, and did not know that the most courtly way of speaking among the *Turks* is in a low Voice, and by Signs, like Mutes, which are generally understood by them, he wou'd believe it uninhabited;..." (pp. 170-171)

[On the distant western frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, there was rather more noise, and less respect. Sultan Mustafa II (1695-1703) had been in the field for three seasons of poorly-directed campaigns with over-stretched forces, and during the summer of 1699 his negotiators had been obliged to agree to the Treaty of Karlowitz, relinquishing most of Hungary and fixing clearer territorial boundaries with several European powers (Finkel 2005, 315-323). Naturally, 'back home', each government portrayed the outcome as another great victory. Motraye described in detail the magnificent procession of the Sultan's arrival from Adrianople and entry into Constantinople, in September 1699 enumerating the various categories of officers and staff, and their ceremonial dress, Chapter XIII, pp. 177ff. They included:]

"...68. The *Doghangibachi*, or Chief Falconer, holding a Hawk on his Left Hand, followed by fifty others, who had each of them one. 69. The *Zagargibachi*, or Chief Huntsman, follow'd by a great many Huntsmen, with Dogs in Leashes. 70. Sixty *Disler Birzebans*, or Mutes, both Deaf and Dumb, these were all mounted on fine *Arabian* or *Circassian* Horses, with magnificent Furniture. 71. Several Turbant Bearers. 72. Fifty *Giugeler*, or Dwarfs, upon Camels cover'd with long Housings..." (p. 182)

[Motraye's French version is a little more precise on the terminology of the deaf men, in Ch. XIII (pp. 243-256):]

"LXX. Soixante *Dilsizler* ou *Birzibanés*, Muets qui sont aussi sourds, sur de beaux *Circassiens*." (p. 252)

## 4.4 1700 - 1910s

### c.1700

TOURNEFORT, Joseph Pitton de (1717) *Relation d'un voyage du Levant: Perform'd by Command of the late French King*. Paris. Translation published 1741, *A Voyage into the Levant*. 3 volumes, London: Midwinter et al.

"The Pavilion which is towards the *Bosphorus*, is higher than that of the Port, and built on Arches which support three Salons terminated by gilded Domes. The Prince comes thither to sport with his Women and Mutes." (Volume II, p. 185)

"...the Palace therefore is fill'd only with a Train of Creatures intirely consecrated to him. They may be divided into five Classes; the *Eunuchs*, the *Ichoglans*, the *Azamoglans*, the *Women*, and the *Mutes*; to whom may be added the *Dwarfs* and the *Buffoons*, who deserve not to be accounted a distinct Class by themselves." (II: 235).

"Besides the Officers already mention'd, the Sultans have also in their Palace two {p. 247} sorts of People, who serve to divert them; namely, the *Mutes*, and the *Dwarfs*. The Mutes of the *Seraglio* are a Species of rational Creatures by themselves: for, not to disturb the Prince's Repose, they have invented a Language among themselves, the Characters of which are express'd by Signs alone; and these Signs are understood by Night as well as by Day, by touching certain Parts of their Body. This Language is so much in fashion in the *Seraglio*, that they who would please there, and are oblig'd to be in the Prince's Presence, learn it very carefully: for it would be a want of the deep Respect they owe him, to whisper one another in the Ear before him."

"The Dwarfs are perfect Apes, and make a thousand Grimaces among themselves, or else with the Mutes, to set the Sultan a laughing, who sometimes does them the honour to give them several Kicks with his Foot. Whenever they meet with a Dwarf who is born deaf, and consequently dumb, they esteem him as a very Phenix of the Palace, and admire him beyond the most graceful Man in the World, especially if the Baboon is an Eunuch also. And these three Defects, which ought to render a Man contemptible in the last degree, make him the most compleat of all Creatures in the Eyes and Judgement of the *Turks*." (II: 246-247)

"Upon the Day of the Divan the Emperor generally causes the principal Officers to give him an Account of all that pass'd in the Assembly, and chiefly of the Duty of their Charge. ... He [the Officer] enters alone to undergo the Examination, and if the Prince is satisfy'd with his Conduct, he returns in Peace; if the Sultan finds him to be guilty, he stamps upon the Ground with his Foot, at which Signal the Mutes enter, and strangle the Aga without other Formality. ... The other great Men of the Empire are afraid of falling under the Stroke, or, to speak more properly, under the String of the Mutes. The Justices-general are the only Persons not subject to this melancholy Hazard, because they belong to the Law. Sometimes the Sultan consults the Mufti before he puts his Officers to death; and demands of him in Writing, what Punishment a Slave would deserve, who should commit such Faults. The Mufti, who knows well enough this is merely a Formality, and that the Honour would soon be dispens'd with, if he did not give into his Master's Opinion, seldom scruples to determine it is Death; and very often contrary to his better Sentiments." (II: 263)

#### [1550s -1700]

UZUNÇARSILI, Ismail H. (1988) *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.

[Brief comments on mutes and dwarfs, and their leaders, among the various members and roles of palace staff, linked to several periods between the mid-16th and late 17th centuries, pp. 55, 75, 88, 311, 330.]

#### 1704-1706

HAMMER, Joseph von (1837) *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, translated by J.-J. Hellert. Paris: Bellizard et al.

p. 172. "Baltadji Mohammed, qui n'avait dû qu'à ses intrigues son élévation au grand-vizirat, devait bientôt quitter le pouvoir comme il y était arrivé. ..." {p. 173} [The Grand Vizir's incompetence was drawn to Sultan Ahmed III's notice. Baltadji Mohammed tried sending an anonymous letter to the sultan, denouncing his enemies:]

"Gagné par l'appât d'une récompense de dix bourses d'argent, le muet Mohammed, un des confidens du Sultan, lui remit cette supplique qu'il dit avoir été jetée dans son appartement, et proposa de nommer un baltadji à la place du prétendu coupable. Mais Ahmed III, qui avait surpris le secret de cette intrigue, chassa le muet du serai, força le baltadji à confesser la part qu'il avait prise à cette machination, et destitua le grand-vizir."

[This dismissal took place on 3 May 1706. However, Baltadji Mohammed was called back to the highest office briefly in 1710, to fight the Russians.]

#### 1748

ANDREWS, Walter G., BLACK, Najaat, & KALPAKLI, Mehmet (editors and translators) (2006) *Ottoman Lyric Poetry. An Anthology*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

[An entry on the poet Esrâr Dede (pp. 257-258) records his birth in 1748, in the Sütluçe quarter of Istanbul, and notes that his father, Ahmed, was known as Bizeban, 'the Mute', and was a dervish in the Mevlevi order.]

[1750s ?]

PEIRCE, Leslie P. (1993) *The Imperial Harem: women and sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[Notes from a document of the mid 18th century, listing senior members of the Harem staff, include one female mute:]

"The mistress of the palace (*saray ustasi*), the mistress of the laundry (*çamesuy usta*), and mistress of the pantry (*kiler usta*) all received 100 aspers a day; the head scribe (*bas katibe*) and the 'great mute coiffeur mistress' (*büyük dilsiz berber usta*) received 80 aspers; the second treasurer (*ikinci hazinedar*), the tasting mistress (*casnigir usta*), the coffee mistress (*kahveci usta*), and the mistress of the ablutions ewer (*ibrikdar usta*) received 50 aspers." (Peirce, p. 134).

"As in the third courtyard, a rule of silence prevailed in the harem, where there were female mutes, lending it an air of serious and solemn endeavor." (p. 141)

[1750s]

CAMPBELL, John (1758) *Travels through Egypt, Turkey, Syria and the Holy-Land ... by an English Merchant*. London: Reeve.

"Another part of the grand signior's court consists of dwarfs, and mutes, born deaf, and therefore on course dumb. These latter are about forty in number, who instruct the pages how to talk by signs, and to converse without the use of words. Nine or ten of these mutes are always in waiting upon the emperor; who, with these, and the dwarfs, which are a kind of buffoons, frequently diverts himself." (p. 103)

[This brief passage sounds like a number of earlier accounts; yet it is interesting that Campbell, in the mid-18th century, underlines the teaching function of the court mutes, and makes no mention of the grimmer beliefs about their activities.]

1754 [?]

*Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, edited by Denis Diderot & Jean D'Alembert (1751-1776). Volume IV (1754), p. 1007. Paris.

"DILTSIS, s.m. (Hist. mod. de Turq.) noms des muets mutilés qui accompagnent ordinairement le grand-seigneur quand il va dans les divers appartemens du vieux & du nouveau serrail. Ils sont en particuliers les *gellaks*, c'est-à-dire les *bourreaux* qu'il employe toutes les fois qu'il veut faire périr quelqu'un en secret, comme des freres, ou d'autres parens, des sultanes, des maîtresses, des grands officiers, &c. Alors les *diltsis* ont l'honneur d'être les exécuteurs privilégiés de sa politique, de sa vengeance, de sa colere, ou de sa jalousie. Ils préludent à quelque distance leur exécution par des especes d'hurlemens semblables à ceux du hibou, & s'avancent tout de suite vers le malheureux ou la malheureuse condamnée, tenant leurs cordons de soie à la main, marques funestes d'une mort aussi prompte qu'inaffable. Cet appareil simple, mais par-là encore plus sinistre; le coup mortel imprévu qui en est l'effet; le commencement de la nuit, tems prescrit d'ordinaire pour l'exécution; le silence de ces demi-monstres qui en font les bourreaux, & qui n'ont pour tout usage de la voix qu'un glapissement clair & funeste qu'ils arrachent du gozier en saisissant la victime; tout cela, dis-je, fait dresser les cheveux, & glacer le sang des personnes même qui connoissent ces horreurs que par récit. Article de M. le Chevalier De JAUCOURT."

[Alain GROSRIEUX (1998) *The Sultan's Court*, translated by Liz Heron, London: Verso, p. 217, believes that this article on *diltsis*, attributed to De Jaucourt, "follows Tournefort to the letter". (See c.1700 above). Tournefort died in 1708, and his observations on the mutes reflect more the 17th than the 18th century. His remarks on the mutes in fact extend more widely than the horrific and unbalanced portrayal in the *Encyclopédie*. Much of the information compiled above about the 'mutes' from the 15th to the 17th century was available in France, if the Encyclopedists had cared to use it,

which apparently they did not. They were perhaps less 'Enlightened' than they imagined.]

[18th century]

ZÜBER, Hüsni (1971) *Türk Süsleme Sanati*. TISA Matbaacilik Sanayii.

[In this work on Turkish decorative art and crafts, there is brief mention of 'Bearded {Sakalli} Dilsiz Ali', a skilful carver in bone, or engraver on bone, during the 18th century (p. 16).]

[1770s?]

DIKICI, Ayşe Ezgi (2006) *Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? ...* MA thesis, Sabancı University. [Citing Fikret Sarıcaoglu, 2001, *Kendi Kaleminden Bir Padişahın Portresi: Sultan I Abdülhamid (1774-1789)* Istanbul: Tatav, p. 43.]

"...Abdülhamid I, who was nearly fifty when he ascended the throne, was also amused by watching his mutes throwing each other into water during the trips to various excursion sites out of the palace." (Dikici, p. 53)

c. 1775 ?

BEAUVOISINS, Joseph Eugene (1809) *Account of the Court, & of the Grand Seignior* [reported in *The Critical Review, Or, Annals of Literature*, Series the Third, Vol. XVIII, Article II, pp. 467-478. London. Report with excerpts translated to English, of Beauvoisins' "Notice sur la Cour du Grand Seigneur &c., 1809 edition]

"The mutes were formerly charged with the execution of the orders of death throughout the empire. They set out alone, and presented themselves unarmed before the person whose head was required by the grand seignior. The criminal kissed the fatal warrant with reverence, adjusted the bowstring round his neck with composure, and died in the firm conviction, that, to fall by the mandate of his sovereign, was to expiate all his offences in this world!

Examples of this blind submission, however, are no longer to be met with, and the bearers of these death-warrants have not unfrequently suffered the martyrdom they intended for others. It is a fact of recent occurrence, that *Dgezzar-Pacha*, the last governor of St. Jean d'Acre, blew out the brains of the mute who was sent to seize him, and having cut off his head, sent it to Constantinople in a leathern sack. This spirited governor retained his place for thirty years, in a state of open rebellion, and successfully avoided every attempt made to assassinate him by the numerous emissaries of the Porte." ...

"Of late the Turkish government has never employed mutes in getting rid of refractory subjects; the place and dignities of the rebel chief are promised to the fortunate assassin, who brings his head to the divan." (p. 472)

[It appears that Beauvoisins was in Greece and Turkey from 1799 to 1801. The 'refractory' governor of Acre, Ahmed al-Jazzar ('the butcher'), died in 1804. So if the 'thirty years' referred to by Beauvoisins was fairly accurate, the mute messenger may have delivered the death warrant to al-Jazzar c. 1775.]

1750s - 1770s ?

"HABESCI, Elias" (1784) *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*. London: R. Baldwin.

[This work, under the pseudonym of 'Elias Habesci', also (possibly) known by the anagram 'Sahib el Sicia', or as 'Alexander Ghiga' or Gika, comes with some burden of question marks about its author and authenticity. In the text, the author (hereafter: EH) asserts that he was Greek by birth, brought up since infancy in Constantinople by an uncle who "enjoyed a considerable office of honour and confidence in the Seraglio" (p. iii). EH claims to have been employed as secretary to a Grand Vizier

in the reign of the late Mustapha III (1757-74), and to have travelled widely in the Ottoman Empire, thus having inside knowledge of his subject matter. Material for the book was supposedly derived from notes made in Arabic, and the book was then written in French, and from French was put into English.]

"Of the Mutes and Dwarfs of the Seraglio. That nothing may be wanting to the ostentation and splendour of the Ottoman Emperors, they also maintain a number of mutes and dwarfs in the Seraglio. Men of this description, who, in other courts, serve only to amuse the prince, at the [p. 164] Turkish court are employed not only for the amusement of the monarch, but to instruct the pages in an art that is not in use in other countries. This art consists in expressing and making themselves understood by signs, and this is done from respect to the Grand Signior, that he may not be disturbed by the sound of their voices. There are in the Seraglio 140 men, who are born deaf, and are consequently mutes, who cannot express themselves but by signs. At night, they lie in the great chamber of the pages, and in the day are in their schools; they succeed to make them comprehend very long discourses on different subjects, in this manner. Two or three of the oldest of these mutes are admitted to the Chamber of the Sultan for his amusement. The dwarfs are employed in the same manner as the mutes. If a dwarf happens to be a mute, he is much esteemed; and if likewise a eunuch, they esteem him as a great prodigy, and no pains or expence is spared to procure such a rarity." (pp. 163-164)

[The points made by EH could almost entirely have been assembled from earlier European writers listed above, and it is surprising that someone claiming significant 'inside knowledge' could not add some new observation. However, it is interesting that he wrote nothing about the mutes' role as assassins (though that might also derive from seeing Cantemir's scepticism on this point). The 18th century seems to offer very little by way of reports on the mutes, as compared with the 17th. EH is included here to indicate that the 'mutes' were still a live topic, though there is clearly some doubt about the authenticity of EH and his stories.]

### 1789

DIKICI, Ayşe Ezgi (2006) *Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? ...* MA thesis, Sabancı University. "Moreover, a document dated to the beginning of Selim III's reign (1789-1807) mentions a certain 'Server dilsiz' and 'Küçük dilsiz Rukiye' (the little mute Rukiye) among the women of the imperial harem, who donated silver for war." (p. 36) [Citing Ismail Baykal (ed.) *Selim III... Tarih Vesikalari* volume I, 6, pp. 36-50, Ankara: Maarif Vekâleti, 1941-1942.]

### 1798

OLIVIER, Guillaume Antoine (1801) *Travels in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Persia, undertaken by order of the Government of France, during the first six years of the Republic ... translated from French*. Volumes I and 2. London: Longman et al.

"The want of being continually waited on has, no doubt, suggested to the Turks the idea of being attended by the deaf and dumb, when they have occasion to treat of any important affair. The sultan has, in his palace, forty deaf and dumb persons who wait on him in conjunction with his pages. Most of the great have some also; but there is, in this respect, a great deal of roguery of which men too credulous and too unguarded may be the dupe. I frequently saw at the house of Citizen Descorches, during the first days of his arrival, a man who was reckoned deaf and dumb, with whom conversation was carried on in Turkish, in writing, and who communicated the intrigues of the court and the anecdotes of the town. He lent too attentive an ear to all the discourse which was held, for any person not to be soon persuaded that he knew more than one language, and that his ears served him tolerably well. When he thought himself unmasked, he ceased to act a part no longer useful." (Vol. I: p. 32)

"On the 20th of Germinal year VI (9th of April 1798,) we went with the French legation and

different citizens, to see in this valley [near Istanbul] the filing off of the remainder of the army which sultan Selim was sending against Paswan Oglou." [The general of the army was to kiss the sultan's feet, and receive the pelisse of honour. (Vol. I: p. 126) Sultan Selim arrived and was seated for the ceremony.] ... "we were within twenty paces of him, under the shade of an ash, on the opposite bank of the river." ... [The troops were seen passing by companies ... (p. 127) The general, Hussein-pacha, appeared on horseback, and was conducted by the sultan's pages into his presence.] "He approached his highness, kissed the skirt of his garment, and placed himself at a little distance from him, on his knees, with his hands on his thighs, concealed by the large sleeves of his robe. All the pages left the hall: there remained only three mutes to wait. The conference lasted half an hour; after which Hussein again kissed the skirt of his highness's robe, and was clothed with a superb pelisse by some pages who entered for that purpose."

### 1812

CASTELLAN, A.L. (1812, transl. 1821) *Turkey. Being a description of the Manners, Customs, Dresses and other peculiarities characteristic of the inhabitants of the Turkish Empire*, (Volume III of *The World in Miniature*, edited by Frederic Shobert). London: Ackermann. Castellan's original text (1812) was titled *Moeurs, usages, costumes des Othomans, et abrégé de leur histoire...* Paris: Nepveu. [In a chapter entitled "Bazami-Dil-Siz, or Mutes, and Djudjeh, Dwarfs" matters concerning the mutes appear on pp. 208-216. Almost all the material can be found in 16th or 17th century reports; however, it is well woven together, and makes an interesting contrast, from a French source, with the item in the *Encyclopédie* (above, 1754). (Since 1789, in Republican France, no doubt it was wise to show servants in a more positive light, and to portray the despots as despicable).]

"The employment of mutes as executioners does not appear to us to be {p. 213} sufficiently authenticated; it is inconceivable that mutes, dwarfs or idiots, should now have any hand in a serious business; all of them are on the footing of buffoons in the seraglio. The number of the mutes is forty; there are always ten in the hass-odah; some of them become favourites of the sultan, and others serve him for butts. He has the cruelty to set these last a fighting with one another; he causes them to be thrown into a cistern situated in one of the courts of the hass-odah, or frequently compels them to throw themselves in, to fish up pieces of money from the bottom; exposes them in this manner to the laughter of his principal {p. 214} itch-oglan, and frequently takes delight in subjecting them to the most ignominious treatment.

It is well known that nature, in depriving these unfortunate creatures of hearing and consequently of speech, indemnifies them by an apprehension and penetration so quick and so acute, that they can discover the subject of conversation from the motions of the lips and the gestures of the speakers. They possess the talent of expressing themselves not only by signs but also by touch, so as to communicate their meaning by night as well as by day. Their dumb language is studied by the courtiers and by the sultan himself, who {p. 215} employs it to give certain orders, or when he has a mind to converse with any of his favourite mutes." (pp. 212-215)

### 1813-1814

ILYAS AGA, *Tarih-i Enderun, Letaif-i Enderun (1812-1830)*, edited by C. Kayra (1987), Istanbul: Güneş Yayınları.

[Ilyas Aga's account of court life under sultan Mahmud II (in Turkish) includes a story (pp. 98-100) about an excursion from the palace, during which some sports and buffoonery were arranged by Abdi Bey to entertain the sultan. Unfortunately, by accident Dilsiz Hüseyin met his death by drowning. The story about Dilsiz Hüseyin is retold in a number of later books, e.g. Irtem (1999, pp. 8-10).

A few other notes or incidents concerned with the mutes are recorded. One is concerned with a Başdilsiz (chief deaf mute) called 'Bargir (or Beygir, horse) dilsiz' (p. 347).]



### 1815

PERTUSIER, Charles (1815) *Promenades pittoresques dans Constantinople et sur les rives du Bosphore...* (Tome second), Paris: Nicolle.

"Dans la composition de la maison du Sultan, outre les officiers et les corps dont nous avons déjà fait mention, il entre des muets, des nains, des bouffons, qui ne sont les uns et les autres que d'étiquette. Les muets surtout n'ont point un lacet pour arme, comme on s'est plu à le répéter, et par conséquent ne jouent pas un rôle aussi sérieux que celui qu'on leur a gratuitement prêté. Ils ne sont là que comme l'emblème du silence inviolable qu'on doit garder dans ces lieux, peuplés d'échos qui répètent jusqu'à la pensée; et afin de rappeler sans cesse qu'un secret impénétrable y est compté pour la première des vertus."

### 1816

MARCELLUS, Le Vicomte de (1839) *Souvenirs de l'Orient*. Paris: Debécourt. 2 volumes.

[The young Viscount Marcellus was appointed to the French Embassy at the Ottoman court. Writing his memoirs more than 20 years later, he described in some detail (pp. 63-81) his first visit to the court, accompanying the Ambassador, on the 16th July 1816. After several hours of preliminary activities, the Frenchmen were finally conducted through the third courtyard, passing between two rows (lit. 'hedges') of pages and of black and white mutes:]

"Nous passâmes lentement la troisième cour et le péristyle du palais, entre deux haies de pages et de muets noirs et blancs vêtus de longues robes de soie rose et jaunes. On apercevait au fond de cette cour les jalousies du harem, les bains et le quartier des femmes du sérail; des eunuques blancs, armés de bâtons, défendaient l'entrée de l'appartement impérial..." (Vol. 1, p. 73).

[How did Marcellus know that he was passing between rows not only of pages, but also of mutes? He may have been informed of this beforehand; he may have seen some of the mutes signing to one another (but the pages could also have been signing); or he may have learnt afterwards that the men in the pink and yellow silk uniforms were mutes, and inserted this knowledge into his memory of the event. On the same page (73) he noted that, after the ambassador had made his speech, Sultan Mahmud promptly made his own response, "dérogeant ainsi à l'étiquette qui veut que le Grand Seigneur ne parle pas".]

### [spanning 15th to 18th centuries]

D'OHSSON, M. (1788-1824) *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*. Volume 7. Paris.

[ "Ignatius Mouradgea D'Ohsson, born in Turkey and long a resident there, prepared between 1788 and 1818 his great *Tableau Générale...* he based his work on the *Multeka ol-ebhar*" [a codification of the Sacred Law, by Ibrahim Halebi, for Sultan Suleiman, in the first half of the 16th century.] In the smaller edition, (7 volumes, Paris, 1788-1818) the first six volumes were founded on the *Multeka*; "the seventh contains a full description of the government, including the court, the ministers, the bureaus, the army etc." (Described thus in the Appendix to: Albert Lybyer, 1913, *Government of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 318, 230-21). So D'Ohsson's remarks on the mutes, in volume 7, are not easily located to a particular period.]

"Il y a dans chaque *Oda* trois ou quatre muets (*dilsiz*) qui ont pour chef le plus ancien d'entre eux, appartenant à la seconde chambrée. Il doit se tenir à la porte du cabinet du Sultan, lorsqu'il est en conférence secrète avec son Premier Ministre ou avec le *Mouphiti*. Les muets portent un bonnet brodé en or, différent pour la forme de celui des autres pages. (Pl.163.) Ils s'expriment par des gestes rapides, et ce langage est connu des gens du palais, des dames du *Harém*, du Sultan lui-même, qui d'ailleurs ne fait souvent que des signes de la main pour donner ses ordres à ceux qui l'entourent. Au reste, le Grand-Vésir, le *Kehaya-Bey* et les Paschas, gouverneurs de province, sont les seuls qui puissent avoir des muets à leur service. [\*] On voit aussi dans chaque *Oda* trois ou quatre nains (*djudjé*) qui ont également un costume particulier. Leur ceinture est fermée par deux boucles d'argent, et ils portent un bonnet appelé *yelkén*. Leur chef est de la seconde chambrée. Ils amusent la Cour par

leurs bouffonneries, et en {p. 46} certaines occasions ils les exécutent devant le Sultan, avec une grande licence. Trois ou quatre nains complètement eunuques servent le *Harém*, et sont employés à faire les messages entre le Sultan et ses cadines." (Volume 7: 45-46)

"Trois ou quatre eunuques sont attachés au service du *Harém*, et un égal nombre de muets font partie de la maison du Grand-Vézir; ils se tiennent à la porte de son cabinet, lorsqu'il a une conférence secrète, pour être à portée de recevoir ses ordres." (7: 180)

[ \* The point about governors of provinces being allowed to have mute servants, is worth underlining. Such servants were a mark of high status, making it more likely that those who had this privilege would use it. This probably contributed to spreading some awareness of sign language to the major seats of government across the Ottoman empire, and (at least in some locations) to creating a nucleus of local staff who found it worthwhile to gain at least a basic knowledge of the sign language originating at the Ottoman court. That kind of 'spread' could be seen in incidents at Edirne (under 1639, Tavernier), in Rama and Gaza (under 1659, d'Arvieux) and in Baltaliman valley (under 1852, Rolland). It would also have facilitated the Istanbul deaf servants' news network or 'grapevine', as some of its members travelled between Istanbul and the other major cities, picked up the gossip from local hearing servants (or from deaf people resident in the locality) and would report back to their colleagues in Istanbul, with 'name signs' for all the great people, and graphic descriptions of 'unofficial' incidents. It is not surprising that the mutes gained a reputation for being first with the latest news, "in the city or state, and indeed in the world" from the earlier days under Süleyman (see under 1559, Lorichs) through to the end of the Ottoman period. They themselves were sometimes the official bearer of the news, as for example, Dilsiz Killi carrying the official seal of the Empire to Yaouzi Ali, on the latter's appointment as Grand Vizier, under 1603, von Hammer.]

### 1825

GRASSI, Alfio (1825) *Charte turque, ou Organisation religieuse, civile et militaire de l'Empire Ottoman...* Paris: Mongie.

[Grassi's account is interesting, not in that he seems to report anything new, but that he is the only witness (in the present compilation) to link the educational services of the Ottoman mutes, teaching sign language to the court personnel during their training, with the educational activities of the Abbé Sicard (1742-1822) and his pupil Jean Massieu (c.1773-1846), in France.]

"Indépendamment des eunuques ordinaires, on trouve au sérail quarante sourds et muets de naissance également eunuques, qui servent pour apprendre aux élèves du sérail le langage des sourds et muets qui est connu et pratiqué en ce palais de tout temps. Si les élèves ne sont {p. 254} pas en état de correspondre par écrit avec ceux de feu l'abbé Sicard et de son docte élève l'intéressant Massieu, ils pourraient au moins rivaliser de promptitude dans les gestes et dans l'art de s'entendre les uns et les autres. Les sultans eux-mêmes apprennent dès leur bas âge ce langage muet, et le grand seigneur actuel entame souvent des conversations, et s'explique de cette sorte très-prompement avec les élèves du sérail."

"Si l'on voulait chercher l'origine ou le motif de cette coutume établie très-anciennement au sérail, on pourrait supposer qu'elle a pour but de faciliter par la suite, en des cas importants, la transmission de certains ordres, sans faire courir le risque d'être entendu des individus qui se trouveraient présents."

"Les sourds et muets sont destinés encore à un autre emploi, c'est à servir de bouffons au sultan, aux sultanes, et aux élèves du sérail. Comme il n'y a pas de spectacle c'est un des amusemens de ce lieu: ils exécutent des scènes grotesques, font des gestes et des grimaces inconcevables, ce sont les premiers grimaciers du monde." (Vol. I, pp. 253-254)

### 1827/1828

DIKICI, Ayşe Ezgi (2006) *Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions?* (See above, 1770s).

[Notes from Topkapı Palace Archive, *defter* no. 23, fol. 143, reported by Çagatay Uluçay (1971)]

*Harem II*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, p. 15, footnote 30, cited by Dikici, p. 36.]

"The same register records a belt given 'to the mute concubine' (*dilsiz cariye*) in 1827/1828 - apparently there was only one female mute at the time."

[The final remark is a deduction by Dikici, from the phrase shown. In earlier times there seem to have been rather more female mutes as servants, messengers etc, to the Sultan's ladies.]

### **1829**

SLADE, Adolphus (1833) *Records of travels in Turkey, Greece, etc. ... in the years 1829, 1830, and 1831*. 2 volumes. London.

[Late in May, after an official tour of various parts of the Seraglio.]

"We were next conducted through the sultanas' gardens ... We delayed a few minutes to converse with two regular mutes; they were boys about fourteen years old, very genteel, and good-looking, whereby we were completely undeceived in regard of their species, having previously understood that {p. 240} a mute was a kind of animal between a dwarf and a monkey. The little urchins were exceedingly amused, and laughed and conversed about us with great rapidity, making most expressive language with their eyes and fingers. Their quick wit is proverbial in Turkey, and in the secret deliberations in the seraglio, where they alone are allowed to be present as domestics, nothing escapes their intelligence." (vol. I, ch. 13, pp. 239-240)

[There follows a version of the story given above by Cantemir, 1691, about a mute saving the life of the grand vizir "Kuprogli".]

### **1830s**

ST. JOHN, Bayle (1853) *The Turks in Europe, a sketch of manners and politics in the Ottoman Empire*. London: Chapman & Hall.

"As I am calling witnesses to the bar, I may invoke the testimony of a writer who has published since the accession of Abd-ul-Mejid. He is in general highly favourable to the Turks, and inclined to be severe on all who criticise them." [The cited writer was Ami Boué, a distinguished Austrian geologist who had worked in Turkey, and published his views about government practices.]

"'In the last years of his life,' says M. Ami Boué, 'the late Sultan (Mahmoud) at length opened his eyes to the *great inconvenience* of immolating almost without ceasing his most remarkable officials. ... However, facts which have latterly occurred show that the custom has not entirely been abandoned of terminating without judgement the lives of certain public men ... Nor has the Sultan quite given up the use of the mutes called Dalsis for very secret executions.'" (p. 148)

### **1832-1833?**

KITTO, John (1845) Dr. Kitto, the Deaf Traveller, edited by P. Percy, J. Timbs & J. Limbird, in *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, new series, vol. 8, pp. 379-380.

[One of the few deaf foreign visitors at the Ottoman capital was John Kitto (1804-1854). He was an Englishman who lost his hearing completely in an accident in 1817, and who educated himself assiduously and became a minor scholar. In 1829 he went to Persia as tutor to the sons of another scholar and missionary, and also travelled through the Middle East in 1832-33. Kitto described some of:]

"the inconveniences to which a deaf sojourner in a foreign land is subjected ... in the following history of a day passed in or near the Turkish capital."

[Kitto lodged at Orta Khoi, on the Bosphorus, going often to the city and back by boat. One morning all the boats had already gone, so he decided to walk, and soon had to put up his umbrella against the rain. As he passed behind the "handsome country palace of Dolma Baktche", the gate guard became very angry, shouting something which Kitto could not hear, and signalling in a way that Kitto did not understand. Another walker came up quickly and pulled Kitto's umbrella down. The sentinel was

pacified. The other man explained, by gestures, that an umbrella was an "ensign of royalty". Actually, umbrella use had "crept in at Constantinople", but the Sultan was supposed to remain unaware of this, and ordinary people must never display an umbrella where he might see it. (Returning in the evening, Kitto described a further incident where he ran serious risk of injury, through failing to hear or understand warnings given by friendly Turkish people.)

### **1830s?**

[JESUIT author] (1838) Note sur Constantinople. *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses concernant l'Asie, l'Afrique et l'Amérique*, ed. M.L. Aimé-Martin. Tome I. Paris: Auguste Desrez.

"L'empereur actuel Mahmoud a détruit ces usages; il a tout changé dans l'état. La révolution ne vient point là du peuple; elle descend du trône: ainsi se fait-elle difficilement; le peuple manque de lumière pour apprécier les bienfaits de ces changemens. Déjà les janissaires ont disparu, et les troupes sont armées et habillées à la française. Le sultan sort à pied, sans turban et avec un chapeau sur la tête, une badine à la main. Ses domestiques ne seront plus bientôt ni muets ni eunuques, et ses femmes non-seulement ont la liberté de franchir les portes du sérail, mais encore elles sont obligées de se montrer aux promenades publiques." (p. 97)

[Sultan Mahmud II (born 1785) reigned from 1808 to 1839, and is well known for abolishing the Janissaries, reorganising power structures in the Ottoman empire, and making efforts toward modernisation, mostly along western European lines, at least within the capital. The brief article above was one of many such informative "Lettres" sent to France by Jesuit priests working abroad, and published for the instruction of the public. No precise date is given. This one also suggested that Constantinople "est aussi grande que Paris, mais elle n'a que 5 à 600,000 âmes", a lower guess than some earlier visitors made (p. 96)]

### **1841**

WILKIE, Sir David (1841) Letter to the Countess of Mulgrave, Constantinople, 12th Jan. 1841. In: A. Cunningham (ed.) *The Life of Sir David Wilkie*, Volume III, pp. 363-366. London: Murray.

"In the anteroom of ministers of state, you find official persons settling important business seated upon the floor, and others upon divans, who are served with long pipes and coffee until the moment of audience is announced. The privileged jester is, I am told, still a personage retained in the great houses, and I myself have seen a mute (a deaf and dumb person) as the domestic of a secretary of state, a useful attendant even now at interviews where nothing must be heard and no tales repeated;" (p. 365)

### **1830s-1844 ?**

JUCHEREAU DE SAINT-DENYS, Antoine de (1844) *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman depuis 1792 jusqu'en 1844*. Tome II. Paris.

[This author had been Director of the Army Engineering Corps of the Ottoman Empire.]

"Mécanisme Du Gouvernement. Du Sérail. ... Les muets, sur lesquels on a écrit tant de contes ridicules, ne sont que des pages nés sourds, qui sont em- {p. 26} ployés, à cause du défaut qui les distingue, à servir le Grand-Seigneur durant les délibérations des conseils secrets auxquels ce monarque appelle ses ministres dans l'intérieur du sérail." (pp. 25-26)

### **1844**

WHITE, Charles (1846) *Three Years in Constantinople; or Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844*. Second edition. London: Colburn.

[Listing members of Sultan Mahmud II 's household.]

"Some few mutes, born deaf and dumb, are also extant, but they are old men, relics of former

times and usages." (Vol.II, p. 361, footnote)

[In his introduction (p. viii), the English traveller Charles White stated that he spent three years on the Bosphorus engaged in "conscientious and anxious research", with personal observation and enquiry supplemented by careful reading of authoritative Turkish and foreign sources. His remark here about the "few mutes" being "old men" may be understood in terms of the radical changes initiated by Mahmud II (see notes to 'Jesuit author' item above). It is possible that most of the younger deaf people were paid off and sent home or given other employment in the city, while a smaller number of older deaf men were retained, as they were familiar with the palace routines.]

### 1840s ?

OSCANYAN, Christopher [Hatehik, Hatchik or Hachik] (1857) *The Sultan and His People*. New York: Derby & Jackson.

[Oscanyan was a Turkish Armenian writer, born 1818. In the 1840s he held some minor posts at the Ottoman royal court, then worked in London and New York in the 1850s. He had had personal access to the palace, but when the book was written his information may have been a little out of date. Further, the book was a popular account for the American public, who would expect a somewhat simplified version, without confusing details and nuances.]

"The *mutes* are as indispensable as any of the palace attendants; when the Grand Vezir goes alone, or in company with the Grand Mufty, to the Imperial chamber, all the Mabeyngys {chamberlains} and the Enderoun Agalery {gentlemen of the royal household} withdraw, and the deaf mutes remain in attendance." (p. 186)

"As on no occasion, not even during a grand council, when they deliberate with closed doors, the Osmanlis can dispense with their attendants, mutes are always very necessary appendages to them, both at the palace and the Porte."

"Although they have not the sense of hearing nor the faculty of speech, they possess a remarkable quickness of comprehension, and have a great tact in communicating their ideas, even to the divulging of state secrets to their intimate friends and favorites."

"They were formerly the executioners of the palace; no reason can be assigned for their holding such an office, unless, being deaf and dumb, they were not qualified to hear and pity the unfortunate victims."

"There are also generally one or two dwarfs in the royal retinue, who are a sort of court jesters. There is one now at the palace, who became a very distinguished character during the reign of Mahmoud." (p. 186)

### 1852

ROLLAND, Charles (1854) *La Turquie Contemporaine, hommes et choses. Études sur l'Orient*. Paris: Pagnerre.

[The French diplomat Charles Rolland noted in detail a humorous intervention by a deaf mute servant of the Grand Vizier Rashid. (Presumably this was Koca Mustafa Resit Pasha, then in his third short period of Grand Vizierate). On the 18 July 1852, Rolland visited the Vizier's impressive residence in the Baltaliman valley, about 9 miles north of Istanbul, with his friend Achmet Wefik Efendi who had just been nominated as ambassador to Persia (pp. 149, 155-56). On the journey, the two discussed the reform programme of Sultan Abdul Majid (reigned 1831-1861), and the resistance of some powerful people to the changes, with the result that the Vizier's position was weakening and he would soon be replaced. With this background of reform and modernisation, Rolland was a little surprised to be summoned by a deaf servant of the Vizier, an arrangement which he associated with an earlier era.]

"A peine avions-nous fini de boire, que Reschid nous envoya chercher; et comme si le hasard s'était plu à marquer d'un dernier trait caractéristique le parfait orientalisme de la scène, c'était un muet qui, chargé de nous conduire, nous invite par un signe à l'accompagner." (p. 158)

[Rolland described in detail the scene, the appearance of the Vizier Rashid, and the conversation with

him in French, which after some time was interrupted by the arrival of a more impetuous petitioner named Vogorides, governor of the island of Samos (pp. 158-161). That dignitary diverted the Vizier's attention, addressing him in Turkish and ignored the Vizier's polite effort to involve Rolland and Achmet Wefiq in the conversation. (Presumably this petitioner was Stefan Vogorides, who had been appointed Bey of Samos in 1833, and ruled oppressively until the Samians rose in revolt in 1849. Vogorides was replaced in September 1851, and seems to have been reduced to petitioning viziers and being politely brushed off.)]

"Mais en ce moment intervint le muet, jusqu'alors demeuré immobile, soit qu'il cédât à sa propre fantaisie, soit plutôt qu'il devinât que le causeur se faisait gênant et qu'une diversion serait bien accueillie. Il s'approcha donc de son maître de l'air à la fois câlin et dolent d'un bouffon favori à qui l'on passe ses caprices, montra à sa redingote un large trou, et exposa, -- à ce que me traduisit Achmet, -- que les jeunes beys, les enfants du vizir, l'avaient lutiné la veille de telle sorte qu'il en était résulté cette déchirure, déshonorante pour le muet d'un si grand seigneur. Reschid lui permit en souriant de se faire délivrer par le kiaya le prix d'un habit nouveau; et l'esclave partit enchanté, entraînant après lui M. Vogoridès, forcé de comprendre enfin qu'on voulait lui donner congé." (p. 161)

[After this interruption, and its amusing resolution, Rolland's audience with the Vizier continued. But there would be a further encounter with the mute servant. Leaving the palace, Rolland and Achmet rediscovered the force of ancient custom, as the various servants, who had received them and served coffee, were lined up waiting for their baksheesh.]

"Parmi eux le muet se montrait, encore empressé au milieu des plus ardents. Tous d'ailleurs étaient en gaieté, et mon compagnon m'en communiqua la cause. Avec son inimitable jeu de physionomie narquoise, le silencieux bouffon expliquait qu'il avait bien reçu de quoi s'acheter une redingote; mais que ce serait dommage d'exposer un beau vêtement neuf aux retours de taquineries des jeunes beys. L'ancien convenablement réparé devant lui suffire, il destinait son argent à un plus agréable emploi. Et son geste expressif donnait en même temps à croire qu'il n'attendrait pas le Baïram pour faire largement fête au raki et au mastic." (p. 164)

[This detailed description, with the deaf mute servant's signing to the Vizier, Achmet's interpretation for Rolland, and the mute's further communication with his fellow servants, who presumably were not deaf, suggests that the use of Sign Language among Ottoman courtiers continued to flourish in the period of reform and modernisation. It was not narrowly confined to the Sultan's palaces, but took place also some distance away, in the Grand Vizier's palace; and the story shows a single deaf man well integrated amid his fellow servants, with whom he could share in sign language the joke of pocketing the price of a new coat, and using it for a drinking party. (A few further comments on pp. 278-79 reflect on the apparent cessation of the mutes' earlier role in removing government officers who had ceased to please the sultan).]

### 1870s

*The MEJELLE. Being an English translation of Majallahel-Ahkam-i-Adliya and a Complete Code of Islamic Civil Law*, translated by C.R. Tyser, D.G. Demetriades, & H.I. Effendi (no date shown)  
Reprint. Lahore: Book House. xxv + 327 + xlvi.

[This 'Mejelle' was a translation of an Ottoman law code, compiled during the 1870s, and apparently presented to the Grand Vizir in 1885, as the "Report of the Mejelle Commission" (p. ix). Apparently it continued in force for more than 40 years across the Ottoman lands. Some disability and deafness references appear. An early section gives guidance on philosophical and linguistic issues, i.e. the interpretation of evidence, whether spoken or silent.]

"70. The well known signs of a dumb man are like an explanation by speech. 71. In every case the word of an interpreter is accepted." (p. 11). [It is not clear whether 70 and 71 are intended to have a link, or merely appear in succession without the second relating to the first. There were many spoken languages in the Ottoman Empire, and interpreters were often needed in legal situations.]

"1573. It is a condition that the person who makes the admission should have arrived at years of discretion. Therefore, the admission of an infant, madman or person of unsound mind, male or

female, is not good." (p. 263)

"1586. An admission made by the known signs of a dumb person are held good. But the admission by signs of a person who can speak is not considered. *For example* -- If someone says to a person who can speak 'Has such a one a claim against you for so many piastres' that person does not admit the claim by bowing his head." (p. 266).

"About the description of evidence (shehadet). ...

1686. The evidence of the dumb and blind is not admissible." (p. 294).

[Within the legal framework, provisions 1586 and 1686 need not necessarily be mutually contradictory. A possible explanation is that an "admission" could be the simplest kind of Yes or No to propositions put to a mute person, such as "At midday on September 7th you stood by the East Gate of this town?" {Sign: YES} "You saw this man go out through the East Gate?" {Sign: YES} "He was leading a white donkey?" {Sign: NO} "He was leading a white horse with one black hind leg?" {Sign: YES}. On the other hand, to give "evidence" could be a much heavier legal responsibility, in which the witness took upon himself to describe the whole story in detail, without prompting, and to draw out the moral point (for example, that he saw this unknown man leading the horse away, he recognised the horse as belonging to his neighbour, and he believed that the man leading it out of town had stolen it).

Muslim lawyers, in the main schools of legal tradition, had in fact discussed the validity of mute people's signs for a thousand years before the *Mejelle*. They had accepted signs where the signs were clearly understood, while admitting that in more complicated situations there could be some doubt. The *Hedaya* (Guide) of the 12th century scholar al-Marghinani (translated 1870) was an influential commentary taking account of major legal schools of Islam, used over centuries in the Middle East. It has a section of 'Miscellaneous cases', in which the case of "intelligible signs of a dumb person" is discussed at greater length (Marghinani, translated by Hamilton, 1870), pp. 707-709.]

### 1870s

NACHTIGAL, Gustav. *Sahara and Sudan*, translated by A.G.B. Fisher & H.J. Fisher (1971-1987) (London, Hurst).

[In 1872, Nachtigal learnt that the leading men of Bornu had given gifts, including "ordinary slaves, eunuchs, deaf-mutes and dwarfs", to an emissary of the Ottoman Sultan (volume IV: p. 4). At Kuka (capital of Bornu), west of Lake Chad, he remarked that 'deaf and dumb slave girls' were sold for high prices to serve the wives of businessmen in some Islamic countries (II: p. 218). Bornu had been an independent African kingdom for some centuries (McEvedy 1995, pp. 64-65, 78, 113-115). It is now the north-eastern corner of Nigeria. See also Gaden, next item.]

### 1870s

GADEN, Henri (1907) États musulmans de l'Afrique centrale et leurs rapports avec la Mecque et Constantinople, *Questions diplomatiques et coloniales* 24: 436-47.

[Gaden (p. 444) noted the long reign (1874-1898) of Sultan Yusuf at Wadai (now in the central-Saharan country of Chad). Sultan Yusuf:]

"...sent eunuchs to Constantinople almost yearly. Once, when the Ottoman Sultan Abdul-Hamid [who reigned 1876-1909] asked him particularly for deaf-mutes, he searched his kingdom and sent all whom he could find." (translated from French).

[See Nachtigal's report (previous item) in which deaf African slaves were traded across the Sahara from countries further west than Wadai. As studies of West African and Saharan Sign Languages begin to gather strength, it will be interesting to learn whether there are any traces of influence in modern Turkish Sign Language. Deaf slaves being conveyed on long overland journeys to Cairo or Tripoli, and eventually to Istanbul, either brought with them a local sign language or would probably have worked out some mutually comprehensible temporary mode of communication with one another,

even if wearing chains. Those who reached the capital would have learnt the Ottoman sign language -- but probably contributed some terminology, e.g. of place names, kings, customs, foodstuffs, enlarging the central vocabulary, or perhaps adding some characteristically 'African' method of depiction, which might survive because of its graphic attractiveness.]

### **1870s**

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

[Notes the use of mutes in the Parliament, and especially their activities in the time of the final 'active' Sultan, Abdul Hamid II. They delivered secret messages outside the palace, and liaised with the Sultan's spies.]

### **1881**

MALLERY, Garrick (1881) The gesture speech of man. *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*, 30th meeting (August, 1881). (Digitized from Mallery collection, ms 2372, Smithsonian Institution). <http://sunsite.utk.edu/pisl/docs/gesturespeech.html>

[In the US, Colonel Garrick Mallery had in 1880 produced a lengthy draft report of descriptions and sketches of gestures, signs and signals used by North American Indians, and in 1881 a still more ambitious attempt to compare that collection with verbal and graphic descriptions of gestures and signs from across the world. He spoke of:]

"The collections of signs already obtained by correspondence from among the Turks, Armenians and Koords, the Bushmen of Africa, the Fijians, the Rejangs and Lelongs of Sumatra, the Chinese and the Australians. ... Much interesting material is expected from inquiries recently instituted by Mr. Hyde Clarke, Vice President of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, into the sign language of the mutes of the Seraglio at Constantinople. That they had a system of communication was noticed by Sibscota, in 1670, without his giving away details. It appears not only to be known to the inmates themselves, but to high officials, eunuchs and other persons connected with the Sublime Porte. As it is supposed that the Osmanli Sultans flowed [? followed] the Byzantine emperors in the employment of mutes, and that they adopted them from the Persian kings, it is possible that the signs, now in systematic, though limited, use, have been regularly transmitted from high oriental antiquity."

[Several points require caution here. Sibscota was not 'giving away details' presumably because he had none - he had merely translated the work of Deusingen (see above, under {1612-1639}), who had heard from 'Dr Brinkins of Hardervick' about the banquet given by Cornelius Haga. Evidence of 'mutes' at the Byzantine court may exist, but it has not been found in historical sources during the past ten years by the present compiler. Nor has such evidence been found from Persian courts. The evidence received about signs among the general population of Turkey is shown in the next item. For Hyde Clarke's contribution, or lack of it, from the deaf mute people at the seraglio, see below, under 1884.]

### **1881**

MALLERY, Garrick (1881) *Sign Language among North American Indians compared with that among other peoples and deaf-mutes*. First Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1879-1880. Washington [DC], Government Printing Office, pp. 263-552. (Found at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) in June 2009).

[See notes above on Mallery's work. The following were signs or gestures in common use among the general (hearing) population around Harput (near the modern Elazığ, Turkey) in 1880.]

"Foreign Correspondence. Valuable contributions have been received in 1880-'81 and collated under their proper headings, from the following correspondents in distant countries: ....

Rev. Herman N. Barnum, D.D., of Harpoot, Turkey, furnishes a lists of signs in common use



among Turks, Armenians and Koords in that region." (p. 407)  
 "EXTRACTS FROM DICTIONARY" ... (pp. 409ff.)  
 "KILL, KILLING" ... (p. 437)  
 "*Turkish sign*: Draw finger across the throat like cutting with a knife. (*Barnum.*)" (p. 439)  
 "NO, NOT. (Compare NOTHING.)" ... (p. 440)  
 "*Turkish sign*: Throwing head back or elevating chin and partly shutting the eyes. This also means, 'Be silent.' (*Barnum.*)" (p. 442)  
 "NONE, NOTHING; I HAVE NONE" ... (p. 443)  
 "*Turkish sign*: Blowing across open palm as though blowing off feathers; also means 'Nothing, nothing left.' (*Barnum.*) {Ditto} I have none."  
 "YES, AFFIRMATION; IT IS SO." ... (p. 454)  
 "Wave the hand straight from the face (*Burton.*) This may be compared with the forward nod common over most of the world for assent, but that gesture is not universal, as the New Zealanders elevate the head and chin, and the Turks are reported by several travelers to shake the head somewhat like our negative. Rev. H.N. Barnum denies that report, giving below the gesture observed by him. He, however, describes the Turkish gesture sign for *truth* to be 'gently bowing with head inclined to the right.' This sidewise inclination may be what has been called the shake of the head in affirmation." (p. 455)  
 "*Turkish sign*: One or two nods of the head forward. (*Barnum.*) (p. 457).  
 [The 'non-manual marking' of the negative or negation, with head going back, reported above (p. 442) is confirmed 120 years later by Zeshan (2002, pp. 225-226) both in hearing people and by users of Türk İşaret Dili; and the concurrent feature of eyes partly closing is seen in photographs of a TID user (Zeshan, p. 259).]

#### 1884

SIBREE, J. (1884) Notes on relics of the sign and gesture language among the Malagasy, *J. Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 13: 174-183. [NB pp. 179-182 contain a 'Postscript' with contributions from Mssrs. Houlder, Price, Peill, and Thorne; and on pp. 182-183 there are 'Discussion' notes, from Mr. Hyde Clarke.]

[In reported discussion after Sibree's paper, Mr. Hyde Clarke gave more detail of the sign language used in the Ottoman Seraglio, which he claimed to have witnessed (Sibree, 1884, pp. 182-183). Hyde Clarke (1815-1895) was a railway engineer, financial investor, freemason, and prolific author, who lived at Izmir in the 1860s, became interested in Turkish language and culture, and then threw himself into (amateur) comparative linguistics. Both Sibree and Hyde Clarke were interested in tracing back their observations of gesture language in the 1880s to earlier sources, as far back as the historical texts with which they were familiar, i.e. from ancient Rome and Palestine.]

"...he (Mr. Clarke) had just learned that Captain Stab, acting on his invitation, was preparing for the United States department a paper on the mutes of Constantinople. Unfortunately, like himself, Captain Stab, not having been aware of the value of observations of the mutes, had to depend on his memory, but it was to be hoped he would some day prosecute investigations on the spot. In his own conversation with the mutes it had been established by a conventional and tentative process, such as described by Professor Graham Bell as to his conversations with a French deaf mute at Paris. He himself [Clarke] had not conversed in the regular language of the mutes, and only comprehended its nature generally, and by the results. The mutes of the Seraglio had undoubtedly conventional signs among themselves for the cities and provinces of the empire, for foreign countries, and for individuals, and were fond of communicating with each other political intelligence of which they were reputed to be the earliest possessors. They conversed most rapidly, and to all appearance and probability, more rapidly than by speech. There was this singular circumstance, which he had before stated, that lip-reading was an established institution with them, and in this way those who were deaf acquired their information from the minister when they were supposed not to hear. When a mute was not able to make him understand who was the man referred to by a sign, he endeavoured to

communicate the name by his lips, as Mahmud, for none of them were able to write. One of them was reputed to have made and lost considerable sums of his savings by speculating in Caime paper money."

[Elsewhere, the "Captain Stab" referred to above was described as the Chargé d'Affaires of Guatemala in Turkey; he was also evidently a close colleague, fellow Freemason, and financial collaborator with Hyde Clarke. (Google search for "Captain Stab" generates many hits almost entirely consisting of an indecent meaning of that name; but Google Books is a little more helpful). Further comments appear in: Hyde Clark (1895) Note on Mr. W.G. Aston's "Japanese Onomatopes, and the Origin of Language" (J.A.I. xxiii, p. 332), *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 24: 60-62. On p. 61, Clarke repeated much of what was stated above, i.e. about lip-reading and 'mouthing' names, and that:]

"I saw that they had signs for every public man. The audience in [ancient] Rome knew the language of the pantomimes as many people in Constantinople now do that of the mutes." (p. 61) [Hyde Clarke's remarks have some merit, in that he was interested in languages, had learnt Turkish, and probably did meet some of the mutes, though no report has been found (so far) of any observations made by Clarke (or Stab) on the actual signs they used. (Clarke was 79 or 80 years old, when the last comment above was published in 1895). It is possible that he did meet hearing people in Istanbul who claimed to know the sign language of the deaf mutes, or could show in practice that this was so. Clarke's credibility is weakened by a casual comment about "the mutes of the Seraglio at Constantinople whose tongues are cut out, and who can make no articulate sound." (p. 61) As stated earlier, no historical evidence has been offered for this belief. A later neurologist writing on language and gesture (Crichtley 1939, p. 32, citing Sibscota), noted that "the mutes in the Sultan's seraglio had established a sign-language amongst themselves. Indeed it was on this account that the Osmanlis abandoned the practice of cutting out the tongues of their harem-attendants as being useless in ensuring discretion." This too offered no evidence that earlier mutes at court actually had their tongues cut out -- but at least it pushed the possibility back a few centuries, and noticed the futility of tongue excision, when the 'mutes' supposedly thus created could still communicate with their hands. Mutilating someone's tongue could be an horrific punishment (from which many victims would have been likely to die of haemorrhage, shock and infection), but it was unlikely to prevent overheard secrets from being passed on. Further cutting a deaf mute person's hands off, to prevent him from communicating with signs, would also have made the person defenceless and useless as a carrier of messages. Certainly, some pain and brutality was experienced 'behind the scenes' at the Ottoman court, as continues to be the case in most of the world's 21st century governments; but a policy of senseless, casual mutilation has little evidence in the Ottoman administration. It has more to do with 'Orientalist' misconceptions.]

### 1886

FARAGGI, Jacques & BOUDEVILLE. (1886) [Devoirs d'élèves (non corrigés)] 'Compte-rendu de la journée.' *Revue internationale de l'Enseignement des Sourds-Muets* (deuxième année) No. 1 (Avril 1886), pp. 343-345. [Online, in June 09, at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/> {navigate}]

[In 1886, Jacques Faraggi, who later returned to Salonika and helped start a deaf school there (see below, '1909'), was a 5th year schoolboy at the Paris Institution for Deaf-Mutes. The Paris journal "*Revue internationale de l'Enseignement des Sourds-Muets*" had begun publication a year earlier, and naturally published material on teaching deaf children. But the teachers thought that, "Il ne suffit pas de publier des types de leçons. Encore faut-il prouver que ces leçons ont été assimilées." (p. 343) Some proof of successful teaching could be given by publishing the children's essays, 'as handed in', uncorrected by the teachers. Six brief essays, "compositions d'élèves de cinquième année", were published, without the children's names. The second began:]

"Dimanche dernière, nous sommes allés en promenade à la rue Rivoli; Boudeville et moi, nous sommes allés chez le horloger, parce que ma montre était cassée..."

[The third began:] "Faraggi et moi, nous sommes venus chez l'horloger. Je lui ai dit que le ressort de montre de Faraggi était cassé..." (p. 344).

[One would not need to be l'Inspecteur Maigret, to deduce that the first essay was written by Faraggi, the second by Boudeville. (Other pupils at the Paris Institution were Albert Carmona, who started a deaf school at Izmir c. 1906, and Edgard Faraggi, who did very well at school, and returned to live in Istanbul. Some years earlier, M. Pekmezian had been a deaf student at Paris, and then had become a teacher of the deaf at Nancy, before returning to Istanbul to help Ferdinand Grati run the first deaf school in the early 1890s. See references below). More information about these four men, all connected with Ottoman deafness and education, very likely exists in the Paris deaf archives, as well as Istanbul and Salonica.]

### **1887**

DENIS, Théophile (1895) *Les Muets du Sérail*. In: *Études variées concernant les sourds-muets*. Paris: Imprimerie de la Revue française de l'enseignement des sourds-muets.

[Not seen. Cited by N. Mirzoeff (1995) *Framed. The deaf in the harem*. In: J. Terry & J. Urla (eds) *Deviant Bodies* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press), p. 75, note 47. Mirzoeff (pp. 70-71, 77) also refers to a painting by P.-L. Bouchard, "Les Muets du Serail", which he presumes (p. 77) to have been lost. An image with the same title and description was shown at: <[www.houseofwaterdancer.com/omages/islam/women/mutes-in-the-seraglio-01.JPG](http://www.houseofwaterdancer.com/omages/islam/women/mutes-in-the-seraglio-01.JPG)> accessed 22 March 2005 (no longer available in 2009). The painting was reportedly a great success when exhibited in Paris in 1887. Mirzoeff (p. 71) notes that the mutes, entering the harem and advancing on the terrified women, are shown as muscular black men -- "merging the categories of race and deafness into one multiply deviant body". Mirzoeff believes that this "chilling interaction among deafness, race and sexuality" played a part in the "oralist campaign of the 1880s". (On the evidence of Nachtigal and of Gaden, above, some of the later Ottoman 'mutes' were indeed black African deaf men - they had not been 'darkened' by the artist's supposed racial prejudices). Mirzoeff then cites the Volta Bureau report (below, under '1898', De Grati), making de Grati a Frenchman, with the school "teaching the oral program" (omitting mention of its manual program run by M. Pekmezian). There seems to be some projection of modern preoccupations back onto an historical artefact. However, the item by Denis might in fact be informative. According to Bernard Truffaut (1993, pp. 18-19) the "Musée Universel des Sourds-Muets at the Institut National des Jeunes Sourds in Paris" had been "created in 1889 by Théophile Denis, an official in the Ministry of the Interior who was responsible for deaf issues", and who was also responsible for some useful historical research.]

### **1889-1926**

BUSSE, Ludger (1994) *Ferdi Garati und seine Schule für Gehörlose und Blinde in Istanbul - Die Ursprünge des türkischen Sonderschulwesens*. *Hörgeschädigten Pädagogik* 48: 227-235.

[Describes the opening of a formal deaf school at Istanbul in September 1889, by the Austrian teacher Ferdinand Grati or Garati {elsewhere "F.G. de Grati", or "Grati Efendi" or "Mösyö Grati", the final one having a Turkish transliteration of the French 'Monsieur'}. Grati was already running a Commercial School, but apparently saw the need for some provision for deaf or blind children. Among the early supporters in the government was Aziz Bey. It seems that his own son, Ali Galip, was deaf and was under instruction at the school. However, the school functioned with many difficulties, and was obliged to shift to several different locations, until finally it closed in 1926. (A blind school was added in 1890, but closed after seven years). Busse cites seven articles in Turkish {see four listed immediately below, by Haydar, Ergin, Gök, and Servet-i Funun (the last being a modernising literary journal) which partly address the period from the 1880s to 1920s}. Summaries of the article are given in German and in English (p. 227), which state that the Kommunikationsmittel (means of communication) in the school was Gebärdensprache (sign language). This latter term may be misleading. The article states that, "For communication between teachers and pupils, a Sign Language was used, which Ferdi Garati had slightly adapted from the French, to fit the Ottoman alphabet" (p. 230, transl). Haydar (p. 1251) is quoted as stating that, using the hand alphabet, the

teacher shows each letter of the words, which the pupils then write down. Efforts were made to achieve some uniformity among the teachers, to avoid confusing the pupils.]

[On p. 235 a group photograph is reproduced (from *Servet-i Funun*, 1893) of which Busse (p. 231) comments that members of the group, presumably school pupils, are representing in sign language [hand alphabet] the slogan "Hoch leve mein Sultan" (Long live our Sultan). Another photo shows Hüseyin Sabri Bey (p. 235; source: Haydar, 1250) who initially had had a supervisory role at the Hamid Imperial Commercial School, and had moved to the deaf school as a teacher and later took a more senior position.]

[While admitting that no death date was available, Busse seems to suggest that Ferdi Garati died around 1891, and was succeeded as headmaster by his son Louis {sometimes Lui} Garati {or de Grati}, and that after Garati père's death the government support diminished or was withdrawn. {However, F.G. de Grati's report in 1898, published by the Volta Bureau, see below, certainly indicates that he was alive then, and was still Director of the school. Possibly Ferdinand may have been absent for 6 to 12 months doing a training course in Italy on teaching deaf children, which he mentions in his 1898 report. That may have been the time when Louis was placed temporarily in charge.} The school had to move several times, first because the space in the Hamid Imperial Commercial School was required for a different educational institution, and then the next building occupied by the school was in poor structural condition. There is some evidence that Louis Garati had employment in Istanbul with the Turkish Government, as a censor of European-language newspapers. That occupation drew some irritated comments from foreigners and journalists. There was also a belief that the family name "Grati" had been artificially elevated to a higher social class, as "de Grati", or even "Comte de Grati", by this "fétide employé de la censure ottomane" (De Souhesmes, 1894, pp. 348-350).]

-- ERGIN, Osman (1941 / 1977) *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*. Istanbul. volume 3.

[Not seen. Work on history of Turkish education, cited by Busse. See below, under 1889, ERGIN.]

-- GÖK, Süleyman (1958) *Dünyada ve Türkiyede Sagir, Dilsiz Tarihçesi ve Egitim Sistemi*. Istanbul. [Some diacriticals omitted]

[Not seen. Cited by Busse, and other writers. See some annotation of this work, below under 1920s-1950s, i.e. the period when Gök seems to have been most active .]

-- HAYDAR, Ali (1925) *Sagirlar ve Dilsizler*. In: *Mualimler Mecmuasi* 29: 1237-1260.

[Not seen. Busse (1994) makes much use of Haydar's article (along with Ergin 1941, and Gök 1958). A picture showing 33 characters in the Ottoman Hand Alphabet, given by Busse, p. 234, was sourced in Haydar, p. 1252. Haydar's work is cited by various later writers.]

-- *Servet-i Funun*, 19 August 1309 (= 1893). Sayi 129.

[Not seen. This journal issue carried a picture on p. 388 entitled "Les élèves de l'école des sourds muets", and also a caption in Ottoman Turkish (Arabic script; not easily legible in photocopy), apparently stating that the people in the photo are representing, by hand alphabet, the greeting "Long live the Padshah". Some work was done by Ulrike Zeshan (personal communication) elucidating the hand alphabet words spelled out by the students, which apparently mixed two different systems. As Ottoman Turkish, using Arabic script, was written from right to left, whereas any word-spelling based on French (as suggested in Busse's article) would be from left to right, there was plenty of opportunity for confusion!]

### **1889-1893 ?**

ABDULLAH FRÈRES, photographer[s]. Title: [The school for the deaf] / Abdullah Frères, Constantinople. In: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C. 20540

USA, Abdul-Hamid II Collection, Call number: LOT 9544, no. 9 [item] [P&P]. Reproduction number LC-USZ62-81985 (b&w film copy neg.) Medium: 1 photographic print: albumen. Created/published [between 1880 and 1893]. In album: Schools libraries, student and teacher portraits, Istanbul and environs, Ottoman Empire.

[This item was seen online at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b28781>

It comprises a photograph, within ornamental frame, of the rectangular facade of a substantial building, at least four-storeys high, showing a ground floor unornamented entrance door between two small trees, with two tall windows in the walls either side of the entrance. The next two storeys show five tall windows across, in line with the windows and door of the ground floor. The fourth storey seen may be the highest, having only three smaller windows visible. The four tall windows on the ground floor appear to be barred with metal grilles, whereas the upper windows are unbarred. Beneath the frame is a title in French: "Ecole Imperiale des Sourds et Muets". Above the frame is a title in Ottoman Turkish (Arabic script): 'Dilsiz mektebi'.]

### **1889**

ERGIN, Osman Nuri (1966) [four brief articles in Turkish] Dilsiz, Saray Dilsizleri; Dilsiz Çikmazi; Dilsiz Kızılbaz Hasanin Evi; Dilsizler Mektebi. In: *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 4581-4583. Istanbul. [The first short item appears to describe, from historical sources, the location of the Mutes (and also the dwarfs) in the Ottoman Court. The final item, longer than the others, describes the Deaf school founded by Grati Efendi in 1889, with a note also on a school at Izmir (see below, under '1923').]

### **1892-93**

"LES SOURDS-MUETS EN ORIENT." *Revue internationale de l'enseignement des sourds-muets*, tome VIII (1892-1893) Paris. p. 84.

"On sait que les écoles pour sourds-muets et aveugles font totalement défaut en Orient et que la plupart de ces pauvres déshérités y sont condamnés à mendier. Nous apprenons qu'une grande institution pour les sourds-muets et les aveugles des deux sexes doit s'ouvrir prochainement à Constantinople. L'initiative de cette oeuvre intéressante est due à un sourd-muet, M. Pascal Pekmezian."

[While this note lumps together 'deaf-mute and blind', the suggestion of begging as an activity of most of these 'poor unfortunates' must refer only to the blind.]

### **1895**

Editorial [1895] The Deaf of Turkey. Interview with Mr. H. Pekmezian. *The British Deaf Mute*.

Reproduced in *The Silent Worker* 8 (no. 6, Feb. 1896) p. 12. This also now appears at:

<http://www.aladin.wrlc.org/dl/> [and scroll down].

[The article, with a small photo of Mr. Pekmezian, stated that he was an Armenian, born at Istanbul 13 November 1857, who lost his hearing at the age of five through an accident. He was sent to a deaf school in Paris, and then to an institution at Nancy. In 1876 he became a tutor to the deaf, and worked in various schools until 1886. The Congress of Teachers of the Deaf at Milan, 1880, made the position of deaf teachers in France difficult. So after 30 years there, Mr. Pekmezian found himself without employment. As a well-read and intelligent man who had visited many deaf schools across the major cities of Europe, and being able to speak French, Italian, Russian, English, and Armenian, Mr. Pekmezian offered his services for the education of deaf people in Turkey, and was touring Europe and the United States to raise funds for a building for the deaf school at Istanbul. During two years, he had raised several thousand pounds, towards the 10,000 pounds needed to start building work, and a similar amount to complete it. Various distinguished people had contributed. Mr. Pekmezian had also received more than 150 applications from parents of poor Turkish deaf children, asking for places in the school when the building opened.]

## 1895

SHAW, Stanford J. & SHAW, Ezal K. (1977) *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Volume II: Reform, Revolution and Republic*. Cambridge University Press.

[The school opened by De Grati appeared in official data on school students:]

"Table 2.3 *Ottoman students in 1895*.

School for deaf mutes : {Muslims} 16 {Total} 16" (p. 113)

{Citation in Endnote 99} "*Istatistik-i Umumi*, pp. 53-87; BVA {*Başveکہâlet Arşivi*}, Irade, Dahiliye 3087." (p. 170)

## 1898

DE GRATI, F.G. (sometimes Grati or Garati) (1898) Turkey. *International Reports of Schools for the Deaf*. Volta Bureau. Washington City p. 27. [The Reports published here were collected at the Volta Bureau by July 1898.]

[Single page report from the "Director of the School for the Deaf, Pera, rue Sousouri 21, Constantinople". De Grati {"Ferdî Garati" - Busse} had been director of the Hamid Imperial Commercial School "under the immediate patronage of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan." He reported that "Neither here in Constantinople nor in any other place of the Levant did schools for the education of deaf-mutes exist 7 years ago." De Grati claimed to have convinced the Imperial Government of the need for a deaf school, which the Sultan had therefore ordered to be started. De Grati stated that he had "taken in Italy a full course of normal training in deaf-mute instruction", and so was appointed to run the new school. "The first school opened, 1891, here in Constantinople, has had an attendance of upwards of fifty pupils, and is still in existence. As it is intended only for day-pupils, it does not meet the wants of many thousands of deaf-mutes who dwell throughout the empire." In preparation for his earlier plan "to establish here in Constantinople an international boarding-school", De Grati had "secured as an associate in this work a distinguished professor of the highest European reputation, M. Pascal Pekmezian, an Armenian, whose parents are deaf-mutes, and who studied at the National Institute in Paris, of which he holds his diploma as professor." {presumably 'professor' = French 'professeur' = teacher} Mr. Pekmezian was "now in Paris engaged in collecting the funds necessary for the endowment of scholarships {for poorer pupils} in our institution." The Patriarch of the Armenian Catholics, Stephen Peter XI, Azarian, was president of the council of administration. De Grati noted that, "I have charge of the oral, and Mr. Pekmezian of the manual department of instruction."]

[A shorter version of the above report appears in *The Silent Worker* (October 1898) volume 11 (2) p. 20, which also appears on the web, at: <http://www.aladin.wrlc.org/dl/> {and navigate} ]

[The question of the starting date of Grati's deaf school, which he reported here as being 1891, while elsewhere it appears as 1889, is a familiar one in the history of special schools. Many of them have three or four 'starting dates'. [See annotation under '1906? 1910?' below.]

[No further mention of the deaf teacher Pekmezian has been found so far, that clearly links him to the deaf school at Istanbul. There are two further historical mentions of this family name, possibly having some connection:

(1). GRUNZEL, Josef (1903) *Bericht über die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse des osmanischen Reiches*. Wien [p. 110] "In Beschiktasch bei Constantinopel besteht eine Fabrik (Pekmezian frères) mit circa 40 Arbeitern, welche Tischlerwaren, Parketen, Thüren und Fenster, Schachteln für Seidensamen, Cartonagen, u.s.w. erzeugt."

(2). In a book by Henry Riggs, about Armenians and their experiences in Harpoot 1915-1917, "the American consular dragoman Haroutioun Pekmezian" is briefly mentioned. Probably the same man and Mrs Pekmezian appear briefly in another book on a similar topic from Marsovan (Merzifon) in 1915 by Bertha Morley, who was involved with deaf girls at the King School for the

Deaf at Marsovan. (It may be noticed that the article above, under "[Editorial] [1895]" gave the name "H. Pekmezian", for the deaf man who was known in France as "M. Pascal Pekmezian". Going to the deaf school in Paris as a boy, he might have acquired an ordinary French first name, as part of the 'integration' process).]

[Some data on the deaf population in the Middle East was included by De Grati, mentioning 800 deaf-mutes in Servia, and 1,000 in Greece. Footnotes to this data mention "A school at Belgrade, having 19 pupils. A school at Corfu, having 14 pupils." (All knowledge of this Corfu school seems to have dropped out of modern Greek records of education for deaf children).]

#### **1904**

HEKIMBAŞIZADE, Dr. Muhiddin (1904 ?) [*Sagır, Dilsiz, Amâ Çocukların Usûl-i Talim ve Terbiyesi.* (?) Istanbul.]

[Not seen. Tanyeri (2005) mentions that Dr Muhiddin first had a book (in Turkish) published in 1898 on "Diseases of the Nose and Nasopharynx", and then another book in 1904, on the education of deaf and mute children. Full citations are given by Yildirim (1997); and of the second book, a complete citation is given by Batır, 2008, pp. 23, 24, with the author's name transliterated as Muhiddin (three times) and Muhittin (five times); but the titles and dates given for Muhiddin's work are not consistent.]

TANYERI, Yücel (2005) The development of ENT in Turkey between 1880 and 1920. [*J. Laryngology & Otology* (Supplement) 30: 113-114.] <http://www.tanyeri.50megs.com/eng2.htm>  
[Presents some pictures of surgeons and medical technicians engaged in ENT (Ear Nose and Throat) work. One paragraph covers the work of "Ferdinand Grati", with establishment of "the first School for Deaf and Mute in the Ottomans" at Istanbul on "September 30th, 1899" [= 1889?]. The school director was named as "Hüseyin Sabri Bey", who retired in 1924 "after working with deaf and mute children for 30 years." Reference cited for this is Yildirim, N. (1997) (see next).]

YILDIRIM, Nuran (1997) Istanbul'da Sagır-Dilsiz ve Âmâlârın Eğitimi. In: *Istanbul Armaganı*, vol. 3, pp. 305-330. Istanbul: [Büyük Şehir Belediyesi Yayınları, Erkam Matbaası.]  
[This chapter (in Turkish) briefly runs through standard points in the development of education of deaf (and of blind) people in Western Europe from the 16th century, then gives some notes on the 'deaf mutes' in the Ottoman period, and traces in greater detail the origins of deaf and blind education at Istanbul, with reference to the school started by Ferdinand Grati, and subsequent activities. The formal development is well sourced in Ottoman archival material, and Turkish secondary sources (as found in the present compilation). On the final page is a hand alphabet, apparently from the Izmir school. It appears to be identical with the one shown at the close of Ludger Busse's article (see above, under '1889-1926', sourced to Haydar 1925, p. 1252).]

#### **? 1898-1909 period?**

SWANSON, Glen W. (1973) The Ottoman Police. *J. Contemporary History* 7 (1/2) 243-260.  
"Abdülhamid II, ruler of the Ottoman empire from 1876 to 1909, received an alarming report one day from police agents who had observed students from the school for the deaf communicating with each other by means of hand signals. The spies thought they saw political danger from this practice, and warned the sultan of the difficulty of eavesdropping on citizens who used such methods of communication. The accommodating sultan reacted by closing down the school for the deaf. {1}"  
"{Footnote 1}. I wish to express my appreciation to Professor İlhan Başgöz for bringing this account to my attention." (p. 243)

[If this was a report of actual activity, rather than merely a funny story about stupid police spies, some

counter-action was presumably taken so that the school was opened again. Perhaps this fit of suspicion lay behind one of the many changes of location.]

### **1906? 1910?**

BATIR, Betül (2008) An historical overview of development of the education of deaf, mute, and blind children in Turkey. *International Review of Turkology* 1 (2): 17-24.

[This recent overview has much material based on secondary sources, with a number of curious translations and variant transliterations or errors of typography; yet it also makes available in English some (possible) details that had not otherwise emerged, from archives and official publications, about the early development, regulation, and statistics of deaf schools, which now need careful verification. For example:]

"In 1906 there was only one school in Izmir for deaf and mutes who were initially founded by a Jewish merchant Alber Karmona and in 1923 it was converted to a public school. Albert Karmona was a mute person who got his education from the Paris School for the mute where he was trained as a tailor." (p. 20). (Citation: Ergin, 1977, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, p. 1172.)

[A starting date of 1910 is suggested by some other writers. It is quite normal to find four or more different dates proposed for the 'start' of special schools across the world. The earliest date may be when the founder (or someone else) first proposed that a school should be started, sometimes impelled by finding one or two deaf children, and starting to teach them informally in the founder's own home. Another date may be noted, when the work becomes more formal, in its own separate room or building, with several children coming daily for schooling. A third date may be when an experienced specialist teacher arrives, and the deaf children really start to show how much they can do. Or the 'founding' of the school may be dated still later, e.g. when it is first visited by some civic dignitary, bishop, or wife of the provincial governor, or when it obtains government recognition in the form of salary support for a teacher, or a room attached to an existing school.]

### **1909**

[FARRAGI {Faraggi}, Jacques. (edited item)] School for the Deaf in Salonica. *The Teacher of the Deaf* (1921), Vol. 19, p. 54. (Edited from an item in the *Revue Générale des Sourds-Muets*, no detail given).

[Salonica {Thessaloniki}, one of the nearest major cities to the Istanbul-Edirne axis, was part of the Turkish Empire in 1909, being recovered by Greece at the close of 1912. The Salonica deaf school closed "as a result of the war", probably early in 1913, but perhaps a little later. There had also been a school for the deaf at Corfu, Greece, having 14 pupils in 1898, according to Ferdinand De Grati (1898). These Greek territories had become independent of Turkey by 1914.]

"M. Jacques Farragi, a former pupil of the Paris Institution for the Deaf, gives a few details of this school, which he helped to found in 1909. Owing to the war, the school had to be closed. Originally, it was subsidised by the Turkish Government, the staff including a hearing professor conversant with both French and Turkish, as well as one experienced in the Turkish language and able to direct the instruction of the children, who numbered about fifty, the greater part being poor children from the districts around Salonica, and boarded and lodged in the school. // M. Farragi, who took much interest in the instruction, says good progress was made in speech, as well as reading and writing in both French and Turkish. Such inspectors as visited them expressed their astonishment and commendation at the progress made."

[In 1886, the earliest date found so far for Jacques, his surname was spelt 'Faraggi', and he was then a schoolboy in 'Cinquième' at the Paris Institute for the Deaf. 'Faraggi' seems to be the correct spelling for his branch of a large clan. (It continues to be used by a modern correspondent, for whom Jacques was "le frère de mon arrière-grand-mère"). Another spelling, 'Farragi', which appears {mistakenly} in the above article, is one of many variants in use by other families.]



### **1909-10**

"*THE SILENT WORKER*" (1910) A Step Farther. Volume 23 (no. 2) p. 30.

"Since the 'Young Turks' sidetracked Abdul Hamid and took charge of the Ottoman Empire, they have been conducting that ancient relic of grandeur {sic} with marvelous smoothness, considering everything, says a writer in *Success Magazine*. Now the secret is out, and it suggests much that other countries might well ponder."

"It seems that when the Turkish cabinet meets no employes {sic} are permitted to be present save deaf and dumb ones. Each has a skilled deaf and dumb secretary, to whom necessary instructions are conveyed by the manual language, so that records may be kept: but of incidental discussion, which consumes most of the time, the secretaries have no knowledge. State secrets are thus kept inviolate, and the opposition party has been unable to break the spell."

[This was reprinted in the American deaf magazine, *Silent Worker* 23 (5) p. 86 (Feb. 1911). Another version of this item appeared (see below) on p. 38 of the *Silent Worker* 23 (2). A run of early volumes of the *Silent Worker* magazine, including these Turkish items, now appears on the web at:

<http://www.aladin.wrlc.org/dl/> {and navigate}]

### **1909-10**

"*THE SILENT WORKER*" (1910) [Untitled news item] volume 23 (no. 2) p. 38.

"Sigmund Muenz, the political essayist, who has just returned from Constantinople, will soon publish a striking account of his odd experiences in the Turkish capital." "During his investigations of conditions in Turkey under the new regime he discovered that at cabinet councils a number of deaf and dumb secretaries are present during deliberations of the Sultan's ministers. Behind the chair of each Cabinet Minister stands also a deaf and dumb domestic. On the inner side of the table sit the mute secretaries."

"Thus the accomplishments of Turkish ministers include an acquaintance with the deaf and dumb alphabet."

"This practice is maintained to prevent important secrets from reaching the outside world. The only guarantee of secrecy in Oriental company is deafness and dumbness." - N.Y. American. [See below, under 2003, YÜKSEL, a news report with photographs of deaf attendants continuing to work in Turkey's National Parliament.]

### **1910**

DANIEL, Robert L (1970) *American Philanthropy in the Near East 1820-1960*. Athens: Oxford University Press.

In 1910, "the Anatolia Girls' School at Marsovan [Merzifon] organized the first class for deaf children" (p. 97). (See GREENE, 1916, below). [During the 1920s, Near East Relief was serving 200 blind and 60 deaf children, and a braille code was developed for use with Armenian children (pp. 191-192, 284). Special schools were transferred to the Greek government in 1930.]

### **1911**

GAILLARD, Henri (1911) "The Failure of the Oral Method" translated from French by F.R.Gray. *The Silent Worker* (March, 1911), vol. 23, no.6, p. 15.

[In the course of this article, Gaillard quoted from an article by a Turkish deaf man, Edgard Faraggi:]

"Consider this article, found in a Constantinople journal, published in French, under the signature of Mr. Edgard Faraggi, a very intelligent Turkish semi-mute, who pursued his studies at the Paris school, where he was classed among the most promising."

[The original article quoted by Gaillard has not been traced, but evidently included examples of the strengths and weaknesses different methods of teaching deaf people, and the efficacy of using sign language while teaching. Edgard Faraggi lived at Istanbul, according to Anne-Marie Faraggi (personal

communication, 2009).

### 1912

ROE, W.R. (1917) *Peeps into the Deaf World*. Derby: Bemrose.

"The Deaf and Dumb of Turkey. ... There is a small institution for them at Merzifoun, in which there are sixteen children, including Armenians, Greeks, and Turks. It was opened in 1912 as an adjunct of the American mission, and was founded by Miss G. Philadelphus, who had previously received two years' training as a teacher of the deaf in America. // She writes: 'As we look back, we feel that our small beginnings have been blessed with a fair amount of success. We have had to meet many peculiar difficulties, and there are many more ahead, but we trust these will be overcome.'" (pp. 237-238) [On p. 237 is a photograph, 100 x 55 mm, titled "Deaf and Dumb Institution, Merzifoun", showing a white, two-storey building, with smaller outbuildings.]

[Glimpses of Galene Philadelphus's career teaching deaf students can be found, via Google Books, e.g. in Annual Reports of the Clarke School for the Deaf, 1901, 1912; the *Association Review* (1909); *American Annals of the Deaf*, 1911, 1915. In the latter, she was "Principal of King School", in Marsovan, Turkey.]

[some years before 1917] "M. Pekmezian, an intelligent deaf-mute, spent a week, some years since, in Derby, studying the methods of teaching there, and said that scores of wealthy families of Turkey paid very heavy fees to the institutions for the deaf in Paris, Berlin, or Vienna, for the education of their children." (p. 238) [A small circular photograph showing head, shoulders and upper body of M. Pekmezian also appears on p. 238, diameter 45 mm. He is wearing a fez, and has a fine moustache.]

### 1914

GREENE, Joseph K (1916) *Leavening the Levant*. Boston: Pilgrim Press.

[Paragraph (p. 166) on "a department for the deaf" opened in 1910 under a Greek woman, Miss Philadelphus (= Philadelphus), at the Anatolia Girls School, Marsovan. This work was named the King Memorial School for the Deaf, after Martha A. King. Teaching methods were imported from America (probably Oralism), and in 1914 there were 15 pupils.]

[A modern work by S.A. Levinsky & D. Steindl-Rast, 1991, *A Bridge of Dreams: the story of Paramananda...*, Steiner Books, p. 228, has a brief description, from the United States, probably c. 1920:]

"Galene Philadelphus, a Greek social worker and teacher of the deaf. Intelligent, efficient, and universally competent, her career had accustomed her to supervising others, a habit not easily unlearned..."

[It appears that, some time after returning to America, Galene spent several years in a religious vocation, but then went back to some form of social work.]

### 1915

GAGE, Frances C. (1915) Teaching the deaf in Turkey. *Volta Review* 17: 302.

[Frances Gage, "acting principal of the Martha A. King School for the Deaf, Marsovan, Turkey in Asia", had written stating some needs of the school for finance and for:]

"an American teacher -- a specialist in oral teaching of the deaf -- to come out for three years and train young women of this country to be permanent teachers in the school."

[In the past year there had been only 16 pupils. Gage believed (mistakenly) that it was at the time the only school for the deaf "in the Turkish Empire or Greece." The pupils were:]

"all taught a trade, so that it is hoped no child will be a resourceless citizen."

[At the time, there were two other deaf schools functioning in Turkey: in Istanbul, and at Izmir (founded by the deaf Jewish merchant Alber Karmona). At Salonica, a school had been founded in

1909, with the assistance of M. Jacques Faraggi, a deaf member of a notable Jewish family (see above, under '1909'). There had also been a school for the deaf at Corfu, Greece, having 14 pupils in 1898, according to Ferdinand De Grati (1898). These Greek territories had become independent of Turkey by 1914.]

WILSON, Elizabeth (1918) *The Road Ahead. Experiences in the life of Frances C. Gage*. New York: The Womens Press. [Full text seen at: <http://openlibrary.org/> (Search)]

[Frances Gage (1863-1917) arrived at the Girls School at Marsovan on 21 September 1893 (p. 27), and worked for five years in Christian education of girls and young women. She returned to the United States in 1898 (p. 46), then again was in Turkey in 1913. There she had

"a winter spent with Miss Willard at Marsovan, in the 'King School for the Deaf,' founded as a memorial to their mutual friend, Marlie King, the only school for deaf mutes in the Ottoman Empire."

[There were, in fact, other schools for deaf children at this time. After spending time in Istanbul, Gage journeyed again to the missionaries' school and college at Marsovan in 1916, in a period of many conflicts.]

"The greater part of their buildings were occupied by soldiers; two thousand sick men were being cared for here. The girls and the deaf children had part-time lessons, being assigned to help in the hospitals, to do sewing and knitting, and all kinds of patriotic service." (p. 104)

[It is interesting that, in this time of colossal disruption and fighting, with sick and wounded people in makeshift accommodation, the older girls and the deaf children had the opportunity to make themselves useful to the adult world, rather than being seen as merely helpless children needing special care and protection. Frances Gage died in July 1917, after being involved in some very stressful events. Parts of Wilson's book display prejudices about Turkish history, culture and religion that some readers would find offensive. However, Miss Gage willingly exposed herself to considerable dangers over several years, for the sake of the education of young women and deaf children in Turkey.]

### 1915

MORLEY, Bertha B. [1915] *Marsovan 1915. The diaries of Bertha B. Morley*, edited by Hilmar Kaiser. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Gomidas Institute.

[Morley and other American missionaries at Mersifoun were caught up in a period of severe conflict between Turks and Armenians and others. Ninety years later those events continue to be controversial, with sharply conflicting interpretations by different historians and campaigning groups. Morley's diaries are listed here because they mention various deaf students in groups (pp. 46, 58, 59), and also at least two individual deaf boys. One of these was "deaf Samuel" (p. 10), who had hidden a gun -- this was a cause for concern, as searches were being made by police. Another was "Annitza Hanum's husband, Sava, and boy, Theodorus, the deaf mute who was first King School pupil", apparently a Greek family (p. 30).]

### 1917

ROE, W.R. (1917) *Peeps into the Deaf World*. Derby: Bemrose.

"The illustration opposite shows two deaf-mutes signing to each other at the Sublime Porte, where it is said nearly all the attendants are deaf-mutes belonging to well-to-do families. None of these men have been taught on the oral system, hence their inability to lip-read what is said by others. The object of the authorities in having these deaf attendants is that, in their view, they secure an effective method of preventing the leakage of State secrets. There are, however, intelligent deaf-mutes who could, if they so desired, give a lot of information, practically known only to themselves." (p. 238).

[On p. 239 appears a photo, 90 x 50 mm, titled "Two deaf-mute attendants at the Sublime Porte."

These are two men, perhaps middle-aged, wearing fez and jacket, facing one another, apparently signing.]

## 4.5 Turkish Republic 1920s - 2003

### 1922-1923

VANDERLIPPE, John M. (2005) *The Politics of Turkish Democracy: Ismet İnönü and the formation of the multi-party system, 1938-1950*. SUNY Press.

[Mustafa Ismet İnönü was born in 1884 at Izmir. He became a soldier and served abroad in several countries before 1914. He lost most of his hearing through illness in his 20s. He worked closely with Kemal Atatürk, and began to make a name for his handling of difficult negotiations.]

"...while in Yemen he contracted scarlet fever, which left him nearly deaf and dependent on his famous hearing aid. ... At the end of the war in 1922, Ismet Pasha, as he was more commonly known throughout his later career, led the nationalist delegation to negotiate first a cease-fire, then a treaty recognizing Turkish independence and sovereignty, which was signed by the great powers at Lausanne, Switzerland. Ismet Pasha subsequently served twelve years as Prime Minister, then twelve more as President. ... After the military coup of 1960 removed the Democrat Party from power, İnönü was asked to return as Prime Minister in 1961. ... He remained an active force in Turkish politics until his death [in 1973]." (p. 4)

[For a period of 50 years, this politician with seriously impaired hearing was one of the most influential men in Turkey. Various foreign diplomats have recorded comments on the subtle or not-so-subtle ways in which Ismet Pasha seemed to use his deafness to brush aside diplomatic conventions, to introduce delays, to speak diplomatic French so badly that his hearers were unsure what he had actually said, and so to obtain advantages in negotiations. The result was that Turkey, which was often in a weak position with few cards to play, would end up with a better deal than might have been expected if the deaf diplomat had not been there.]

"İnönü was famous for his hearing aid, and it is said that he had the habit of simply turning it off whenever he disagreed with someone." (p. 91)

### 1923 - (or 1906? 1910?)

ERGIN, O.N. (1966) Dilsizler Mektebi. In: *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 4582-4583. Istanbul.

[At the close of this article, Engin notes that a deaf school was initiated in 1923 at Izmir, by Alber Karmona, a wealthy Jewish merchant, in connection with the Ministry of Public Health. (It appears that this merchant had himself become deaf and he wished to assist the unfortunate children who had this condition. He had received training in the Paris institution, where tailoring skills were taught). A few other sources mention a deaf school at Izmir, founded by Alber [or Albert] Karmona [or Karamona], starting in 1923. Another view is that Karmona started the deaf school at Izmir in 1910, or as early as 1906 and it was taken over by the Health Department in 1927. (Oguz Arıkanlı, 1973, 174-175; Batır, 2008, 20). Alber Karmona is also mentioned briefly as a visitor, in a study by Kastoryano (1993, p. 43) on a Jewish family of Istanbul between the two world wars. Later work by Ergin, 1977, seems to date the start of Karmona's school back to 1906.]

### 1928

ANTER, Musa [1990] *My Memoirs*, translated by Iskender Ozden. Second instalment.

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~tank/kurdish/htdocs/cult/anter3.html>

[Some political views expressed by the Kurdish writer Musa Anter were quite controversial in Turkey. However, the following note, about a deaf primary school teacher in the 1920s, merely records an observation from Anter's childhood education, and there seems to be no reason to doubt its veracity. A majority of deaf people in the early Republic were probably rural labourers with very little

education; but there were some having education and skills:]

"The following year [1928] I was registered for a primary school in Nusaybin town. It was for five years. The school had two teachers, Tahar Halebiye and Deaf Hamdi. Deaf Hamdi taught classes 1-2 and 3 where the children would be noisy and swear at the teacher and each other, but being deaf, he could not hear what was going on! After two months, I could no longer put up with the situation..."

### **1930s**

ALEMDAROĞLU, Ayça (2005) Politics of the body and eugenic discourse in early Republican Turkey. *Body & Society* 11 (3) 61-76.

[Like most European countries during the 1920s and 1930s, Turkey had some keen advocates of Eugenics. That ideology may have had some adverse effect on the development of educational services for disabled children, and reflected negatively on some deaf individuals. Alemdaroglu (p. 70) provides an example from *Öjenizm*, a book published in 1938:]

"...the medical professor Server Kamil Tokgöz divided society into three categories: the superior, distinguished by their physical ability and morality; the mediocre, the majority of the population; and the cacogenics, which included lunatics, epileptics, the mute, the blind, deaf, criminals, vagabonds, alcohol addicts, the immoral and the insane, that is, people with bad hereditary traits."

[Alemdaroglu suggests that although eugenics "became an element of the Turkish state's progressive discourse in the 1930s" (p. 68), it did so mostly in a positive form, avoiding the disastrous outcomes such as forced sterilization in the US, Scandinavia and Germany, and the subsequent Nazi atrocities. Yet if one thinks of someone like Suleyman Gök (next item), a deaf man in the 1930s searching for funds to run a school for deaf children, his task would not have been made easier by university professors dividing the population into the superior, the mediocre, and the worthless.]

### **1930s-1950s**

GÖK, Süleyman (1940) *Dilsizliğin Telifisi: Sagır Dilsizlerin Tedris Usulleri ve Konuşma Tarzları*. İstanbul: Dilsiz Nesriyat Yurdu. 32 pp.

GÖK, S. (1958) *Dünyada ve Türkiyede Sagır, Dilsiz Okulları Tarihçesi ve Eğitim Sistemi*. İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Matbaası. 32 pp.

[These two short publications by Gök have not been seen, and do not seem to be readily available. The first, in 1940, has a hand alphabet on the front cover (which could be seen indistinctly on the Nadirkitap.com site in June 2009), and the title is about 'Compensating for muteness: ways of educating and communicating with deaf mute people'. The second work concerns the history and education of deaf people in Turkey and more widely, and has been cited in some modern studies of Turkish deaf history. These books evidently emerged from Gök's work and concerns over several decades. Glimpses of Süleyman Sirri Gök's life, educational work, and influence on Turkish Sign Language, are given by Ulrike Zeshan (2002, pp. 244-252; and 2003, p. 46), on the basis of interviews with elderly deaf people who had attended Gök's school at İstanbul, between the 1930s and 1950s. Gök date of birth is believed to have been 1901. He was reportedly:]

"...the person instrumental in both the establishment of a bilingual Deaf school and the formation of the Turkish Federation of the Deaf ... known to and revered by many Deaf people in İstanbul as the 'Father of the Deaf'." (Zeshan, 2003)

[According to the website of the Türkiye İşitme Engilliler Derneği Genel Merkezi, <http://www.beyoglusagirlar.org/> [select Tarihçe], Süleyman Gök founded the society in 1941, and was already running the school in the 1930s, funding it with a legacy from his father. One of Zeshan's informants stated that there was no government funding at that time, but Süleyman:]

"...went out to the shops, the businesses, collected donations from clubs to pay for the food,

the clothes, the hostel. Suleiman toiled and worked and found the money... In former times the financial basis was weak, but the school was good." (Zeshan 2002, p. 246).

### **1944 - 1950s**

BÖNCÜ, Ahmet [2005, personal communication].

[A collection and display of materials on the history of the Istanbul deaf school was made during the 1990s, and information from these sources has been communicated by Mr. Ahmet Böncü, director of the school, and of the small 'museum'. It appears that in 1944 the Deaf Support Association (Sagirkar Tesanüt Cemiyeti) opened the deaf school in Aksaray, Istanbul. Both oral methods and sign language were in use, taught by Dr Kip Gray (apparently a foreign professional visiting Turkey. Gray is also mentioned by Yildirim 1997, p. 322, but no details have been traced). The school then moved to Mevlanakapı. Responsibility for the school was transferred to the Ministry of Education in 1953. It occupied part of the Yıldız Saray (possibly from 1948).]

### **1951-1953**

GIRGIN, M. Cem (2006) History of higher education provision for the deaf in Turkey and current applications at the Anadolu University. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* 5 (3) Article 2.

[Some brief points on history of deaf schools in Turkey are given. Here, the transfer of responsibility, from 'Health & Social Services' to the Ministry of Education, is dated in 1951. Some inservice training was also given by experienced western teachers.]

"In 1952, foreign experts who specialized in the field of special education were recruited and a programme to train native teachers, who either already worked in this field of who would be working in this field, was started. In the first year of this teacher training program Harriot [\*] L. McLaughlin, the Headmaster [\*] of the 47th School [\*] for the Deaf in New York, and in the second year Adolf Fronthaller [#] from Austria were invited to give lectures."

[\* The American trainer was Miss Harriet L. McLaughlin. She was headmistress of Public School 47, or PS47, New York City (not the 47th School for the Deaf). McLaughlin had apparently made arrangements to integrate some deaf children in an ordinary school of New York in the 1940s and 50s. Her presence in Turkey is confirmed by a note in the *United States Congressional Serial Set* (1954), p. 278, stating that: "...Miss Harriet McLaughlin is a member, but as she is in Turkey, substituting for her was Miss Margaret Walsh, assistant principal of PS47 in New York;" Further notes on McLaughlin's trip appear in the *Volta Review* (1954), and (1959, p. 237). Batır, 2008, pp. 23, 24, gives several citations of a work on special education of deaf children, by "Miss Melanghlin", translated to Turkish by Necmi Sari, "Sagirlar Okulları Öğretmenlerine Mahsus El Kitabı" published at Istanbul in 1955. Presumably this was material brought by, or produced by, Miss McLaughlin during her visit c. 1954.

# The Austrian trainer was presumably Professor Adolf Freunthaller, who was director of a deaf institution, and took part in the development of the Austrian national deaf organisation. Some of his work was also translated to Turkish.]

### **1990**

MUNICIPALITY OF DJAKOVICA {GJACOVICA}. [? Municipal Archive of Building Restoration Works? Bilingual adjacent columns. "B/I-00.14 Djakovica Hadum Mosque"]  
[http://www.rastko.net/mnemosyne-2003/14\\_fr\\_destroyed\\_djakovica.pdf](http://www.rastko.net/mnemosyne-2003/14_fr_destroyed_djakovica.pdf)

"Djakovica Hadum Mosque. SK1377. 1955/1990. Extraordinary importance. Position: Djakovica, the District of Peç {Peje}. Owner: Vakuf - Djakovica."

[Three photographs are captioned: "The portico and the minaret during restoration." "The interior with the gallery." Scaffolding can be seen around the exterior.]

"Description: The mosque was built in 1592/1593 by Hadum Süleyman-aga Biseban, a servant in the imperial harem in the time of sultan Murat III, born in the village of Guska near Djakovica. Well-proportioned, domed mosque, with a portico and a minaret, used to dominate the old market-place of Djakovica."

[It is somewhat ironic that, during the passage of four centuries, the official name of the mosque reached the abbreviation 'Hadum Mosque', with the effect that neither 'Süleyman', nor his rank of 'Aga', nor the court position of 'Dilsiz' / 'Bizeban', is named in the present title. However, those names and titles do still appear in the description. The Waqf {Vakuf} ownership was still listed by the Municipality in 1990, and the building continued to be deemed worthy of repair and restoration. (However, the web page bears the date 2003, and appears to be listing items 'destroyed'. See entry below, 2001).]

### **1994-1995**

CLARK, M.H. & TUFEKCIOGLU, U. (1994) Developing a comprehensive service for the hearing impaired in Turkey. *J. British Association of Teachers of the Deaf* 18: 82-85.

DOGAN, O. (1995) Aile merkezli erken eğitim programlarına devam eden işitme engelli çocuklarda anneçocuk etkileşiminin incelenmesi. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Ankara. [Research on mother and child interactions in a family early intervention program for hearing-impaired children.]

### **2001**

ZULFICAR, Saïd (2001) Mosques in the Balkans. *Cairo Times*, 18th March 2001.

[http://www.archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document\\_id=9421](http://www.archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document_id=9421)

[(See also previous entry, under 2001, Municipality). Zulficar notes that "recent conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo have been devastating to their historical and architectural heritages. ... In Gjakova in western Kosovo ... Its most prestigious landmark, the Hadum Mosque, built in 1594, miraculously survived after a grenade-missile shot off the upper third of its minaret. The richly decorated interior of the building remained intact."

[Unfortunately, parts of the Mosque complex suffered damage, and Zulficar reports that demolition took place followed by erection of a thoughtless concrete building, instead of a restoration that could have preserved historic structures. It appears that Dilsiz Süleyman Aga's foundation survived more than four centuries of change and hazard, but it remains uncertain whether it will survive the aesthetic brutality of the 21st century.]

### **2003**

YÜKSEL, Metin (2003) Meclis'in 11 kara kutusu.

<http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/11/08/369041.asp> (Found online in June 2009)

[With a small photograph, this article in Turkish describes deaf men and women, wearing black uniforms, working under tight security at the main Assembly Hall of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, in 2003. They were responsible for room cleanliness, drinking water and food provisions, and taking messages between the lawmakers, when they met in secret session. Some individual details are given, and some deaf people have worked there for 20 years.]

(Reference provided in A.E. DIKICI, 2006, p. 58, who comments, "Even today, as a part of the Ottoman heritage, only mute attendants can work during the confidential meetings at the national parliament of Turkey.")

ALBAYRAK, Mukrem (2003) Hearing-impaired Listen to Friday Sermon in Sign Language. *Zaman*, Saturday May 24, 2003.

<http://www.zaman.com>

[At the Kilic Ali Paşa mosque, Tophane, Istanbul, with interpretation by Ercument Tanriverdi:]

"For the first time in their lives, 20 hearing-impaired members of the congregation understood every word of the Imam's Friday sermon, which was translated into sign language."

[This is a very welcome development in modern Turkey. It is interesting to reflect that, in Istanbul of the 17th century, the deaf mute servants in Topkapi Palace had their daily meeting-place by the Mosque of the Pages, and their training in sign language included the facility to discuss matters of religion; so it is likely that there too, they would have seen passages from the Qur'an interpreted in Sign, and probably also some of the Friday sermons at the mosque.]

## 4.6 Recent Work, in date order

(The following list **from the past decade** is far from comprehensive, being merely some items noticed by the compiler recently, with little or no annotation. These items indicate some of the range of interests, and some of the participants, in this growing field of study).

AKCAMETE, G. (1999) Improving question skills for students with hearing impairment. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 14: 171-177.

[Special needs education in Turkey.]

AKCAMETE, G. (1999) *İşitme güçlüğü olan çocuğuma nasıl yardımcı olabilirim? Anne-babalar için el kitabı*. Ankara: Aydogdu Ofset.

TUFEKCIOĞLU, Umran (2000) When there is a dilemma: inclusive education at the price of quality in education. In: Proceedings of 5th International Special Education Congress, University of Manchester, July 2000. (CD-Rom).

[Study on the outcomes of inclusive education of hearing-impaired children in a Turkish city.]

MILES, M. (2000a) Signing in the Seraglio: mutes, dwarfs & gestures at the Ottoman court 1500-1700. *Disability & Society* (2000) 15 (1) 115-134. Also at:

<http://www.independentliving.org/docs5/mmiles2.html> . Also in German: Gebärden im Serail: Stumme, Zwerge und Faxenmacher am osmanischen Hof 1500-1700. [Translated by T. Flügel] *Das Zeichen. Zeitschrift für Sprache und Kultur Gehörloser* (2000) 14 (No. 53) 352-367.

SOYSAL, Yasemin [Arikan] (2001) Hitit din ve sosyal hayatında {LU/MUNUS}U.HUB "sagır". 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.

AÇAN, A. Zeynep (2001) A study on sign languages and Turkish Sign Language. Unpublished MA dissertation, Ankara, Hacettepe University.

ZESHAN, Ulrike (2002) Sign Language in Turkey: the story of a hidden language. *Turkic Languages* 6 (2) 229-274.

ÖZYÜREK, Aslı & İLKBAŞARAN, Deniz (2003 onward) Türk İşaret Dili website, <http://turkisaretdili.ku.edu.tr>

ZESHAN, U. (2003) Aspects of Türk İşaret Dili (Turkish Sign Language) *Sign Language & Linguistics* 6: 43-75.



- YÜKSEL, Metin (2003, November 8th) Meclis'in 11 kara kutusu. <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/11/08/369041.asp>
- KARGIN, Tevhide (2004) Effectiveness of a family-focused Early Intervention Program in the education of children with hearing impairments living in rural areas. *International Journal of Disability, Development & Education* 51: 401-418.  
[Well referenced report on post-doctoral research in Turkey.]
- ESSEX, Mary C. (2004) Resources for Deaf People in Turkey. <http://www.deafchildworldwide.info/>  
[and search]
- SCALENGHE, Sara (2005) The Deaf in Ottoman Syria, 16th - 18th centuries. *Arab Studies Journal* 12 (2) - 13 (1) pp. 10-25.  
[Part of a doctoral thesis, this article casts useful light on the lives of deaf people in Ottoman Syria, using Arabic manuscript sources. At present it appears to be the only research study that gives an historical view of deaf people in a neighbouring country.]
- SARI, H. (2005) An analysis of the relationship between identity patterns of Turkish deaf adolescents and the communication methods used in special residential schools for the hearing impaired and deaf. *Deafness and Education International* 7: 206-222.
- ZESHAN, U. (2005) Negative and interrogative structures in Türk İşaret Dili (Turkish Sign Language). In: U. Zeshan (ed.) *Interrogative and Negative Constructions in Sign Languages*. Sign Language Typology Series No. 1. Nijmegen: Ishara Press.
- TANYERI, Yücel (2005) Development of otorhinolaryngology (ORL) in Turkey between 1880 and 1920. *Journal of Laryngology & Otology* (Supplement) 30: 113-114.
- ALEMDAROĞLU, Ayça (2005) Politics of the body and eugenic discourse in early Republican Turkey. *Body & Society* 11 (3) 61-76.
- OZTÜRK O., SILAN F., Oghan F., Egeli E., Belli S., Tokmak A., Egeli A., Harputluoğlu U., Onder H.I. & Zafer C. (2005) Evaluation of deaf children in a large series in Turkey. *International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology* 69 (3) 367-373.  
[Study of 840 primary school children having severe to profound hearing loss, by specialised medical team of University of Abant İzzet Baysal, Düzce, Turkey. Genetic causes were found in 51%. A significant proportion of hearing loss was preventable. From Abstract only.]
- DIKICI, Ayşe Ezgi (2006) Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? Dwarfs and mutes at the Ottoman court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. MA thesis, Sabancı University.
- GIRGIN, M. Cem (2006) History of higher education provision for the deaf in Turkey and current applications at the Anadolu University. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* 5 (3) Article 2.
- POLAT, Filiz (2006) The Turkish standardization of the Meadow-Kendall Social-Emotional Assessment Inventories for deaf and hearing-impaired students. In: *American Annals of the Deaf* 151 (1) 32-41.
- SELİM, KUMUR B. (2006) Deaf people at the Ottoman Court. In: G. Albrecht et al (eds) *Encyclopedia of Disability*, I: 353. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.
- TEKİN, Mustafa & ARICI, Zehra S. (2007) Genetic epidemiological studies of congenital/prelingual

deafness in Turkey: population structure and mating type are major determinants of mutation identification. *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part A* 143A: 1583-1591.

[These researchers are aware of the possible value of historical studies in casting light on population groups and factors increasing the incidence of deafness due to recessive genes.]

ARAN O., Ari I., Guvensan A., Haberdar H., Kurr Z., Turkmen I., Uyar A., Akarun L. (2007, June 11-13) A database of non-manual signs in Turkish Sign Language. *Signal Processing and Communications Applications, 2007*. SIU 2007. IEEE 15th. pp. 1-4.

ARIK, Engin & MILKOVIC, M. (2007) Perspective taking strategies in Turkish Sign Language and Croatian Sign Language. In: R. Shields (ed.) *LSO Working Papers in Linguistics 7: Proceedings of WIGL 2007*, 17-31.

DIKYUVA, Hasan & ZESHAN, U. [2007/2008] *Türk İşaret Dili. Birinci Seviye. [Turkish Sign Language, First level]. Video and print package*. Istanbul: Türkiye İşitme Engelliler Milli Federasyonu. Nijmegen: Ishara Press.

MILES, M. (2008) Hittite Deaf Men in the 13th century B.C.: introductory notes with annotated bibliography. <http://www.independentliving.org/docs7/miles200809.html>

ARAN, Oya; ARI, Ismael; Akarun, Lale; Dikici, Erinc; Parlak, Siddika; Saraclar, Murat; Campr, Pavel; Hruz, Marek (2008) Speech and sliding text aided sign retrieval from hearing impaired sign news video. *Journal of Multimodal User Interfaces 2*: 117-131.

ARIK, Engin (2008) Locative constructions in Turkish Sign Language (TID). In: R.M. de Quadros (ed.) *Sign Languages: spinning and unraveling the past, present, and future. TISLR9, the Theoretical Issues in Sign Languages Research Conference*. Editoar Arara Azul: Petropolis/RJ, Brazil.

BATIR, Betül (2008) An historical overview of development of the education of deaf, mute, and blind children in Turkey. *International Review of Turkology* 1 (2): 17-24.

KUBUŞ, Okan (2008) An analysis of Turkish Sign Language phonology and morphology. Diploma Thesis, Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

HOHENBERGER, Annette & KOBUŞ, Okan [2008?] *Linguistic and Cognitive Aspects of Sign Language*.

<http://www.ii.metu.edu.tr/~hohenberger/> [navigate]

[About 25% of the site gives notes concerning Deafness in Ottoman and Modern Turkey.]

PERNISS, Pamela & ÖZYÜREK, Aslı (2008) Constructing action and locating referents: a comparison of German and Turkish Sign Language narratives. In: J. Quer (ed.) *Signs of the time. Selected papers from TISLR 8*. Hamburg: Signum.

SİRMACI A., ÖZTÜRKMEN-AKAY H., Erbek S., Incesulu A., Duman D., Taşır-Yılmaz S., Ozdag H., & Tekin M. (2009, April 28) A founder TMIE mutation is a frequent cause of hearing loss in southeastern Anatolia. *Clinical Genetics* (Epub in advance of print).

[Genetic study with "51 Turkish families including at least three members with either congenital or prelingual autosomal recessive non-syndromic sensorineural hearing loss". Outcomes included estimate for a particular mutation originating "from a common ancestor 1250 years ago (95% Confidence Interval is 650-2500 years)." Noted from abstract only.]

GÖKSEL, A. KELEPIR, M. & ÜNTAK-TARHAN, A. (2009) Interrogatives in Turkish Sign

Language: the specific functions of head tilt, head shake and head nod. Presented at the Workshop on Non-Manuals in Sign Languages, Goethe University, Frankfurt a.M., April 2009.

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