Contents

Acknowledgments	<i>page</i> xi
Note on Transliteration, Personal Names,	
Dates, and Translations	xiii
Introduction	I
Disability and Its Histories in the Arab World	I
Framing This Book	10
I Deafness and Muteness	21
The Mutes of the Seraglio	21
Deaf and Mute: A Note on Terminology	24
Prevalence, Causes, and Remedies	26
Deafness as Lived Experience	30
Does God Hear Silent Prayers? The Mute and Religious	
Ritual	34
Spiritually Sound	39
Marriage and Divorce in Islamic Law	41
Inheritance, Business Transactions, and the Right to Beau	r
Witness	43
A Sign Language?	45
Mute but Not Dumb	48
Conclusion	50
2 Blindness	52
The Noblest Impairment	52
The Nomenclature of Blindness	58

Contents x Prodigious Feats, Voices Like Angels, Unsightly Faces, and Greedy Hands 61 The Question of Sin 67 Blindness in the Qur'an and Hadith 68 In the Eyes of the Law 74 Making a Living 79 Poverty, Begging, and Charity 82 Conclusion 85 Impairments of the Mind 88 3 "Madness Takes Many Forms" 88 Black Bile and the Porous Boundaries between Melancholia and Madness 90 Spirit Possession 99 Holy Folly: A Different Kind of Madness 102 Portraits of Holy Fools 105 Women and Holy Folly III Impostors? 113 The Law and the Limits of State Tolerance 117 Conclusion 122 Intersex 4 124 Disorders of Sex Development in the Contemporary Arab World 125 Premodern Khunthās 129 Medical Approaches to Ambiguous Genitalia 132 The Law in Theory 136 The Law in Practice 142 The Stories of 'Ali/'Aliyya and of Muhammad b. Salama and His Wife 146 The Roots of Sex Difference: Anatomy and Physiology 150 The Cultural Landscape of Sexual Categories, Gender Identities, and Gender Roles 154 Conclusion 160 Conclusion 163 Epilogue 167 Bibliography 171 Index 195