Disability & Society, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2000, pp. 115–134

Signing in the Seraglio: mutes, dwarfs and jestures at the Ottoman Court 1500–1700

M. MILES
4 Princethorpe Road, Birmingham B29 5PX, UK

ABSTRACT *Deaf people, known as 'mutes', worked in the Turkish Ottoman court from the fifteenth to the twentieth century in various roles along with dwarfs and other entertainers. Their signing system became popular, was used regularly by hearing people including successive Sultans, and was reportedly capable of expressing ideas of whatever complexity. The Ottoman court mutes' early achievements, at a time when deaf education and employment was barely considered feasible in Western Europe, have been obscured through literary critics' reactions against later travellers' stereotyping of Middle Eastern countries. Detailed, contemporary sixteenth and seventeenth century accounts of the mutes' activities and signing system are collated and appraised by modern linguistic and historiographical criteria.*

Introduction

'People with difference' have been welcomed at imperial courts at least as far back as the third millennium BC, and among the divinities still earlier, at least in mythological time (Dasen, 1993; Welsford, 1935). Dwarfs or people of notably small stature have been in royal demand worldwide: noticed in the company of Gautama in his pre-enlightened days, greeted at the court of blind Dhritarashtra in the *Mahabharata*, figuring in a thwarted gift from China to Syria, provided with their own palace by Montezuma, entertaining visitors in central Africa (Schweinfurth, 1873; Cowell, 1894, 28; Cortes, transl. 1928; Needham, 1954; Ganguli, 1993). There was no uniformity in the way these people were treated. In a few times and places they seem to have been regarded as personable human beings who could exploit an inherent talent for amusement; elsewhere they were merely exhibited as freaks or made to perform as buffoons. Association with dwarfs was sometimes thought to avert the evil eye or placate capricious spirits. Often, there was some delight in having a 'miniature working model' who could also play with young royals or be the palace 'pet', not taken too seriously, but sometimes allowed ludicrous privileges. The taller people remained confidently in command of the situation—

ISSN 0968-7599 (print)/ISSN 1360-0508 (online)/99/010115-20
© 1999 Taylor & Francis Ltd

when they felt they had been 'delighted sufficiently', they could toss the shorter ones back in the broom cupboard.

Deaf people were generally known as 'Mutes' and will not here be disguised in late twentieth century terminology.[1] They appeared at royal courts less frequently than dwarfs, unless they had something special to offer. A benefit of deaf servants was that they could not be bribed by an enemy to disclose what they could not hear—thus confidential matters of state could be discussed in their presence. A drawback was that instructions could not be given to them by speech and the need to communicate by other means might seem tiresome, especially to royal persons unused to tolerating tiresomeness. Only where silence was at a premium, as at the Turkish Ottoman court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Haga, 1613, p. 9; Bon, 1625; Cantemir, 1734, p. 219), could the 'drawback' become an advantage leading to a prized skill. In that enclosed environment the unique situation arose in which the 'Tongueless' (Turkish *dilsiz*, Persian *bizebani*) minority managed to become the language specialists, whose signing activity was adopted by the 'Tongued' majority. They achieved this on the eastern edge of Europe at a time when the Tongued tribe of the western edge were starting to target the Tongueless and battle lines of 'speech versus sign' were foreshadowed. By the mid-sixteenth century, Ponce de León and other Spanish educators were taking their early steps with deaf children (Plann, 1993). The latter were to spend more than three centuries being argued over, but seldom listened to or learnt from by hearing professionals.

These communication achievements at the Ottoman court have been obscured by the outcomes of two dissimilar European academic discourses. One is the 'anti-Orientalist' dismissal of mostly eighteenth century travellers' reports from the Middle East.[2] Ironically, the exaggerated rejection of 'Orientalist' evidence by literary critics because of the negative bias, plagiarism or fabrication apparent in some of it, has had the spin-off of downgrading or smearing earlier more positive, and complimentary material that could have balanced the picture. The assault on Orientalism has its own critics as an 'unnecessarily polarized and in some ways methodologically impoverished debate' (Halliday, 1993, p. 163), leading to an 'intellectual cul-de-sac' (Ahmed, 1992, p. 185). In such a cul-de-sac, as will be shown, some historical activities by deaf people have been reduced to mere reference points in arguments about the beliefs and prejudices of nineteenth century French intellectuals. The second obscuring discourse is that of special education historiography, in which Western European priority in the formal education of disabled children (i.e. the celebrated work of Ponce de Leon, Jean Itard, Valentin Haüy, Louis Braille) has been assumed without serious study of evidence from other regions. Such ethnocentrism is also now under challenge as evidence begins to be collated of Middle Eastern and Asian disability histories (Miles, 1997, 1998, 1999).

The time is thus ripe to lift the veil on signing in the seraglio. The approach taken below will prioritise the appraisal of activities actually reported from the Ottoman court, rather than speculating about the effects of reports on the beliefs and prejudices of Western Europeans. Literature on the latter will be mentioned,

but the aim of this paper is to appraise evidence of what deaf people and their friends did in Constantinople (Istanbul).

Can of Worms

A jocular designation for the way untrained hearing people wave their hands and arms when demonstrating their notion of sign language is 'The Can of Worms'. This also describes the methodological problems existing or invented by interested parties, in any attempt by Western Europeans to probe the reality of daily activities in the seraglio of the Ottoman Sultans. However, some historiographical disputes may be avoided by omitting speculations about the Sultans' eunuchs, women, parrots and horses, by leaving out all residues of mediaeval Christian reactions to supposedly Muslim practices, and by eschewing theoretical discourses based on evidence now unobtainable. Such omissions leave much interesting material intact, as will be shown. Leaving aside the claims of parrots, the omission of women runs counter to modern interests. Slight evidence does exist that deaf women were active in the closely guarded women's quarters in a secluded part of the seraglio, but whether they did anything different from the male mutes is not now known. The men who wrote records did not enter the women's quarters. No kiss-and-tell literature issued from the latter (Peirce, 1993, pp. 113–118). Concerning Islam, religious specialists at the Ottoman court confronted with an active sign system might have recalled the *Qur'anic sura, Ya Sin* (S. 36, 65), 'We shall seal their lips that day; and their hands will speak ...' (Ahmad Ali, 1992, p. 376), but no such insight was shared with their Western visitors, few of whom cared to acquire an accurate knowledge of Muslim beliefs or literature.[3]

The developing formal structure and staffing of the Ottoman court and government have been described exhaustively by many West-European and Turkish historians from Mouradgea d'Ohsson (1788–1824) through Halil Inalcik (1973). Such description will not be repeated, but it is worth noting that provincial governors were among the very few people allowed mute servants, so the latter's influence reached beyond the capital (d'Ohsson, 1824, VII: 45). The later accounts have benefitted from publication in recent decades of much archival court documentation from the fifteenth century onward, which suggests significant fluctuations in the numbers of particular occupations (e.g. Inalcik, 1965, on *Ghulam*; Peirce, 1993, p. 122, on harem population). Dwarfs, mutes, jesters and other entertainers appear in accounts of payments and uniforms at the court of Mehmed II (regn. 1451–1481), while some historians suggest that the mutes were present as early as the reign of Bayezid I (1389–1402) (Özcan, 1994). Exotic as such entertainers might now appear, they can hardly be dismissed as fevered figments of foreign imagination, since European court histories show that they, too, had their quota of dwarfs and buffoons (Welsford, 1935). However, the daily activities of the Ottoman mutes and dwarfs fell beneath the notice of official court records. Such details appear mostly in foreign contemporary witness reports. Here, the method will be to show what various observers described, to indicate corroboration or contradiction and to appraise the result.

An important proviso must be made concerning the signing activities to be described. In a detailed paper splendidly rippling with contained irritation, Lois Bragg (1997) has reviewed 'visual-kinetic communication' in pre-1600 Europe, covering a range of finger alphabets and numerals, gesture systems and monastic sign lexicons. Bragg points out that most mainstream historians know little or nothing of the technical distinctions between 'sublinguistic' sign systems and those properly called 'languages'. 'Deaf history' is mostly written by people having a modern campaign agenda and a tendency to retroject their beliefs to past ages with inadequate evidence. The 'visual-kinetic' systems are poorly documented before the spread of printing, but may have been widely used within limited, sublinguistic spheres. In monasteries where silence at certain hours was desirable (not obligatory), a restricted code of manual signs would be sufficient for most purposes, between hearing people who could, if they so wished, discuss the meaning of life or the finer points of apiculture in ordinary speech at more appropriate times. In her survey, Bragg reserves the word 'language' for

> natural communication systems that (1) have both a lexicon and a grammar, (2) are capable of expressing any thought on any subject, (3) are learned by at least some infants during the normal language-acquisition-threshold age, and (4) are living, growing, changing systems.

These are tougher tests than non-specialists would apply, and constitute a useful standard for evaluating the signing activities at the Ottoman court.

Getting to Grips

Mutes first appear as court killers—physically powerful men, handy with a bowstring, who kept their thoughts to themselves. From time to time the Ottoman ruler wished to remove one or more of his officials or family members, as did many of the crowned heads of Europe and lesser mortals. Sometimes the Sultan obtained legal and religious sanction for the death, which was effected by official executioners who were not mute. In such cases, the victim had at least 5 minutes' notice to become resigned to the will of Allah. When the ruler wished to avoid publicity, it seems that he merely gave the nod to the mutes on duty. They performed with the bowstring, and the victim literally didn't have a prayer. Bowstrings, shedding no blood, were thought particularly apt for royal persons (Heyd, 1973, p. 263).[4] If such Sultanic activities seem tyrannous, despotic or other Orientalising adjective, they were hardly more or less so than the executions, stabbings and poisonings associated with many a European ruler in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The speed and frequency of executions at the Ottoman court is attested by the official annalist Naima (transl. 1832) in his account of 70 years of the empire from Islam's millennium year 1000 (1591–1592 CE). Capital punishment could follow a wide range of activities such as aggravated homicide, arson, habitual theft, persistent sodomy with non-consenting boys, heresy, apostasy and various anti-state activities (Heyd, 1973, pp. 260–262). Sultan Murad IV even banned tobacco smoking and had some military commanders executed for disobeying (Heyd, 1973, p. 262).

An occasional detailed account survives of mute stranglers at work. The diplomat Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1881, pp. 117–118) reported in 1554 the murder of Prince Mustapha in the travelling tents of his father, Sultan Suleiman:

> 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.[5]

Busbecq heard and sifted the accounts soon after the event. Recorders such as Hugh Gough (1570) have a few other details, but the story was practically the same. The strong public reaction against this murder, and the 'virtual torrent of laments or elegies' (Rogers & Ward, 1990, p. 21) make the precision of details more questionable, but the consensus is strong that Mustapha was strangled by several mutes at his father's behest, his brother Jehangir, 'deformed before, & behinde in his backe', dying soon afterwards (Gough, 1570, final section, p. 2).

Anything on which historians are unanimous is automatically suspect since it is their business to doubt one another; so it is unsurprising that the Moldavian nobleman and historian Demetrius Cantemir rejected the idea that court mutes had been stranglers. He knew them only as doorkeepers in the Sultan's audience room. Between 1687 and 1710 he spent at least 15 years in Constantinople, becoming proficient in Turkish, Arabic, Persian and other languages. Cantemir (1734, p. 379) thought the strangling charge came only from Europeans, and could not imagine

> what has occasioned this mistake. For it never was heard in *Constantinople*, that *Mutes*, *Dwarfs*, and *Buffoons*, who are all on the same foot in the palace, were ever employed about any serious business, or sent any where, but out of a jest.

The doubt cast by Cantemir may remain—yet his argument here is weak. Many earlier observers quite clearly gave the mutes a variety of public and private roles, some of them 'serious', some involving martial prowess.[6] If the mutes were, indeed, sometimes secret executioners on the Sultan's nod, Turkish historians valuing their necks had reason to be reticent about it. European diplomats writing home or travellers publishing their tales, had less to fear. The mutes' numbers and activities also probably changed over many decades. Lewis (1965) cites a document from

1703, i.e. Cantemir's time, in which only 21 mutes and five dwarfs are on the clothing list, as compared with 200 reported a century earlier.

Good Companions

In everyday life the mutes probably killed only the time; and a group of favourite mutes accompanied the Sultan for his pleasure. The Venetian Constantino Garzoni (1840) noticed in 1573 that Sultan Selim II (regn. 1566–1574) had a taste for dwarfs and buffoons, and was particularly fond of one of his mutes. French diplomat Philippe du Fresne-Canaye (1573/1897, p. 129) glimpsed the mutes in Selim II's reception room at the seraglio, when he was hurried forward, gripped between two officers, to kiss the hem of the imperial robe. Later, Fresne-Canaye noted that when Selim went for recreation in his gardens, he took no ministers who could discuss serious matters, but 'his young favourites, his buffoons, dwarfs and mutes, and with them he regales himself'. On 24 May 1573, passing nearby in a boat, Fresne-Canaye saw the Sultan on a horse in the gardens accompanied by 'two or three chosen servants, some mutes and two dwarfs, the smallest and handsomest that I ever saw'. Verisimilitude is enhanced by du Fresne-Canaye's note (1897, p. 129) that his oarsmen were well cursed and showered with stones by palace guards to make them keep a more respectful distance.

Ten years later, Selim's successor, Murad III (regn. 1574–1595), figured in reports of a more frenzied diversion. Murad used to chase on horseback around his mute companions on slower mounts, and would slash at horses and riders with an oxhide whip. In the summer of 1583, during such a game, he had one of his periodic epileptic fits, *'comitiali morbo, sibi familiari'*, and crashed heavily from his horse (Leunclavius, 1596, p. 91; see also Jeanselme, 1923). Witnesses thought Murad was dead or dying, but Johannes Leunclavius saw him soon afterwards when he rode in public 'with pale, disfigured face' to dispel death rumours. Rendering contemporary Turkish reports into Latin, Leunclavius described the mutes *'qui animi sensa signis quibusdam aperire sollerter norunt, & vicissim intellegere nutibus ac signis indicata'* (p. 91). From this it appears that they were skilled at both communicating and understanding by means of nods and signs; but the various possible translations cannot legitimately yield clearer data for a modern linguistic assessment of their signing system.

Like Fresne-Canaye, the British Ambassador Edward Barton took the sea route for an impromptu contact with Murad III in 1593. Barton adopted the local tradition 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, 1956, p. 56). To Barton's annoyance, after the death of Murad III and the accession of Mehmed III, 'the eunuchs, the dwarfs and the women of the *harem* he had used in his diplomatic game were now swept away to the Old Seraglio like so much lumber' (Mayes, 1956, p. 63). They were not absent long, as will appear below.

Up to the 1580s, it is certain only that there had been some salaried and uniformed mutes and dwarfs closely attached to successive Ottoman Sultans for

more than a century. It is hard to know exactly how many mutes were on the establishment, but if three or four were to be on duty round the clock (night supposedly being prefered for discreet stranglings), there may have been at least 15 or 20 in active service. The period from 1574 to 1609 saw the palace staff rise from around 7000 to 11000 (Aziz Efendi, transl. 1985, p. 46) and the mutes were now more plentiful. Mutes and dwarfs had their own quarter in the seraglio of the 1580s (Hierosolimitano, cited by Penzer, 1965, p. 30). The capacity and limits of the mutes' signing system in this period remain uncertain, but the whole tenor of the seraglio and the prolonged and painful training of its 'Inside' staff would suggest that both mutes and dwarfs underwent a substantial training period. Some of each were attached to various departments of the Sultan's household, acting as message carriers, apart from the favourites who attended the Sultan's person. Mistakes in the communication process earned vigorous beatings and managers would undoubtedly have been punished if a failure resulted from their having sent a mute messenger without being sure that he understood his task.

The close of the sixteenth century brought to the Ottoman court an English organ-builder, Thomas Dallam, a witness with a different viewpoint from that of the courtiers and diplomats. What Dallam saw and wrote in his diary casts light backward on the training of the mutes and dwarfs in earlier years, and foreshadows the more detailed descriptions of signing in the seraglio in the seventeenth century. Dallam reached Constantinople accompanying an organ with chiming clock and mobile figures, which he and his team had designed on the orders of Queen Elizabeth. The gift was presented to Mehmed III on 25 September 1599, Dallam and team eavesdropping outside the hall. The organ was set to chime and play tunes automatically, and the mobile figures duly went through their routines, including a bushful of birds that sang and opened their wings.[7] Mehmed was pleased, and Dallam was summoned to demonstrate the keyboard, but first he spent some minutes being dazzled by the courtly array of some 400 pages. Half of them seemed to be 'all verrie proper men', but then,

> The thirde hundrethe weare Dum men, that could nether heare nore speake, and theye weare likwyse in gouns of riche Clothe of gould and Cordivan buskins; ... Som of them had haukes in theire 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 theire perfitt sins (signs) all thinges that they had sene the presente dow by its motions. (Dallam, 1893.)

Dallam's is the first clear eyewitness description found in the present study, of the mutes and dwarfs 'on parade'. It supports an estimate in 1594 by John Sanderson (1931, p. 82) that there were 300 'Falconers, dwarfs, and dome men' in the city. Sanderson also mentioned in 1600 that when the Sultan travelled by state barge or *qayiq*, 'His court of dwarfs and dum men always folowe (except the very principall, who ar with him) in another caike' (Sanderson, 1931, p. 89). The

size and sumptuous apparel of the retinue seen by Dallam explains Sanderson's allusion to a 'court' of mutes and dwarfs. Dallam gave a useful if brief account of the mutes' facility in communication. It is not absolutely clear whether they actually signalled to Dallam, knowing that he was the organ builder or he merely saw them discussing between one another the mobile figures they had seen. Since presumably they could not hear the organ playing, the visible performance would for them have been the main point of the instrument.

If Dallam was an honest, but naive craftsman, perhaps too easily dazzled and thus liable to exaggerate what he thought he saw, the next witness was a hardboiled diplomat who, by cultivating a senior courtier, was able to tour some inner parts of the seraglio when the Sultan (now Ahmed I, regn. 1603–1617) was absent. Ottaviano Bon lived in Constantinople from 1604 to 1607, with ample time to observe and cross-question.[8] He recorded some details of the new Sultan's horseplay with his mutes and dwarfs at an artificial lake within the seraglio, where 'many times as he walked with them above upon the sides of the Lake, he would throw them downe into it, and plunge them over head and eares' (Bon, 1625). More pertinent are Bon's comments in 1608 on communication with the 'many dumbe men both old and young', who were free to enter and leave the seraglio.

> 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. (Bon, 1625.)

This was the situation described independently by Dallam and Bon between 1599 and 1608, with over 100 people involved and the reference by Bon to 'ancient custome'. It seems reasonable in the light of Leunclavius's account *c.* 1583 to suppose that the use of an organised sign system had been building up over at least 30 years and possibly much longer. The process probably developed faster under Sultans who remained in the capital, rather than going on campaigns. The first to do so was Selim II (1566–1574). His successor Murad III 'filled his palace with clowns, dwarfs and mutes' (De Groot, 1993). Mehmed III, at Dallam's estimate, had 200 mutes and dwarfs. The fact that 'the six sultans who came to the throne in the first half of the seventeenth century were, at the time of their accession, either children or mentally incompetent' (Peirce, 1993, p. 101; Jeanselme, 1923) may have promoted an environment where mutes, dwarfs and buffoonery flourished.

Bon had more to say about Ahmed I and his companions, not adding much to

the remarkable scope of the statement above, but giving the sort of circumstantial detail that can either convince, or be used to disprove a case:

> All the while that [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 alwayes furnished. (Purchas, 1905, IX: 374–375.)

Within 2 years of Bon writing this in Italian, but long before it was published, George Sandys (1621), a gentleman of leisure with a shrewd, observant eye, visited the Ottoman court and noted that Ahmed I had 'Fifty Mutes ... 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). The Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga, who reached Constantinople around 1612, went so far as to invite the court mutes to a banquet and, with a sign translator's help, was impressed by their eloquence on many topics (Deusingen, 1660, transl. Sibscota, 1670, pp. 42–43).

On the death of Ahmed I, his brother Mustafa I acceded briefly but 'being very weak-minded, was soon compelled to abdicate' [Evliya, 1834, 1 (i) 115], in favour of his nephew Osman II (regn. 1618–1622). What young lad like Osman, surrounded by scheming adult courtiers and menaced by a rabble of disaffected soldiery (the famous Janissaries), would not have delighted in using a 'secret code'? Not surprisingly Osman 'took so much pleasure in the mutes' language that he learnt it, and had most of his pages and eunuchs learn it' (Des Hayes de Courmenin, 1624, p. 143). It seems that Mustapha I, who again reigned briefly when Osman was overthrown, found ordinary speech hard enough and was unable to learn to sign. His counsellors already regarded him as a fool. They deplored the loss of Sultanic dignity occasioned by his speaking to people in an ordinary way 'more fit for a *Ianizarie* or a Turkish merchant' (Baudier, 1635, pp. 39–40).

Some Turkish Background

Evliya Chelebi, who in his twenties spent a year as a page under Murad IV (1623–1640), left minimal reference to the mutes and dwarfs in his writings. When he first met the Sultan in 1635, the summons came via two mutes, who 'with many curious motions led me into the Khás oda' [Evliya, 1834, I (i) 133]. Pallis (1951, 109–110) translates 'with many quaint signs'. Evliya might not have stayed long enough to learn the system, or perhaps he thought it so familiar as not to be worth recording for Turkish readers. As one of the favourites attending the Sultan, his view of the mutes, dwarfs and buffoons could hardly have been very complimentary—the

inner circle of pages may at times have been forced to see themselves as merely another bunch of freaks in the menagerie. On the death of Murad IV, Evliya regretted that his successor Sultan Ibrahim (1640–1648) 'fell into the hands of all the favourites and associates of the harem, the dwarfs, the mutes, the eunuchs, the women'. Finally this 'Ibrahim the Mad' fell into the hands of the executioner [Evliya, I (i) 149–150].

Evliya's long, detailed description of the procession of a thousand-and-one guilds through Constantinople recorded everyone from artificial palm tree makers, through inspectors of the fishmarkets, to the mimics employed by toy-shops, 'bearded fellows and men of thirty years of age, dressed as children with hoods and pattens, some as children, some as nurses who nurse them, while the bearded babies cry after playthings or amuse themselves with spining gigs and tops, or sound little trumpets'. The begging fraternity was represented by 'some blind, some lame, some paralytic, some epileptic, some having lost a hand or foot, some naked and barefoot, and some mounted on asses' [Evliya, I (ii) 115]. Mad people also processed along under the charge of their keepers. Two noticeably missing categories are the mutes and dwarfs. Presumably, they neither needed to beg for a living, nor were kept in hospitals or other institutions, as there was sufficient demand for them in the seraglio.[9] Evliya did list one deaf man, the highly honoured David, chief of the sword-cutlers [I (ii) 178]. Elsewhere, in a list of bathhouses, he mentioned [I (ii) 145] the deaf attendants at the bath of Kúláksís (meaning 'no ears').

The reminder is useful, that the vast majority of disabled people in sixteenth and seventeenth century Turkey were neither in the Sultan's seraglio, nor in Constantinople. Presumably, almost all lived with their families in the rural areas, making whatever they could of their lives; but the customary sharp divide between urban and rural life was even more pronounced in Turkey of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Gibb & Bowen, 1950, I: 276). Some visitors to Turkey remarked on the absence of disabled beggars. Busbecq noted that

> when a slave has lost the use of his limbs, his master is still bound to maintain him; besides, however feeble a slave may be, they manage to get some service from him. I remember ransoming a Spanish gentleman, who had been an officer in his own army. Though he was completely crippled by his wounds, yet the Turk who had bought him managed to make some profit of him. He took him over to Asia, where flocks of geese are kept, and hired him out as goose-herd, by which he turned a nice little penny. (Busbecq, 1881, pp. 209–210.)

Sir Henry Blount similarly learnt in the 1630s that the Janissaries were never cast off; for 'when old or maimed, they are kept in *Garrison*' (Blount, 1664, p. 116; see also Cantemir, 1734, p. 279). He believed that there were very few beggars in Turkey because food was plentiful. This may have been so, but another explanation would be the existence of a significant number of charitable institutions providing food for poor people, as detailed by Gough (1570) and much later the French diplomat Tournefort (1741, II: 305). Evliya [I (ii) 174–175] listed 'Imarets', i.e. refectories or soup-kitchens, and large, well staffed hospitals at Constantinople. These had be-

come well-established Ottoman provisions (Stillman, 1975; Sari, 1993), following the substantial Byzantine charitable practice.[10] The sustenance offered was admittedly modest, whether to disabled beggars or impecunious students of religion: 'If you are a *medrese* student, you have become mangy and leprous/Drinking the saltless soup of the charity soup-kitchen' (Tietze, 1977, p. 149) A later visitor, Sir Adolphus Slade (1833, II: 471–472) sounded grimmer notes on the lack of surgical aid, which might explain the absence of crippled beggars: 'Bad wounds, fractures, neglected ulcers, gangrenes, &c. almost always prove fatal. One of the rarest objects in Turkey is a person minus a limb: minus an eye is fearfully common'.

Trained, Occupied ... and Dismissed

The Sultan's servants, whether on 'Inside' or 'Outside' service, each learnt a practical craft 'according to his inclination and disposition' as Bon (1625, p. 356) around 1608 put it, 'viz. to make up a Terbent, to shave, to paire nayles, to fold up Apparell handsomely, to keepe Land-spaniels, to keepe Hawkes' and so forth. The mutes and dwarfs did likewise. Dallam noticed some of the mutes carrying hawks, presumably to accompany the Sultan's field sports. They were also responsible for distributing largesse to the crowds, when the Sultan appeared in public (Özcan, 1994). In the 1660s, the traveller Tavernier (1675, p. 119) specified more intimate skills, with which the 'the *Dislis* and the *Geuges*, that is the Mutes and Dwarfs' occupied themselves during the day, in an area near the little Mosque where the Inside servants prayed. 'Some learn to tie a turban, which can be done in more ways than one might believe ...', especially the Sultan's enormous 'public' turban. 'Others learn to shave, to cut fingernails, and similar services'. The location was confirmed by Sir Paul Ricaut (later Rycaut) (1686, pp. 62–64), who gave the mutes and dwarfs a short chapter with full page engraving in his famous work *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*. Writing of some 40 mutes, Ricaut went further:

> in the day time [they] 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* [Qur'an], the name of *Mahomet*, and what else may be capable of being expressed by the Tongue.

Ricaut mentioned buffoonery with Mehmed IV, in which eight or nine favourite mutes took part. Then he reverted to communication:

> But this language of 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.

Ricaut was one of very few reporters who both served for several years at the

Ottoman court (1661–1665) and took pains to state his sources for matters that he had not personally witnessed.[11] One of his most valued sources was Albert Bobowski (Bobovius, or Ali Bey), a polyglot Pole who served for 19 years in the seraglio as a musician and eventually the Sultan's chief interpreter. Bobovius evidently took a professional interest in the 'language of the Mutes', and his report of it was later published in Italian (Bobovius, 1679). Ricaut's account above is close to, but not an exact translation of, Bobovius's Italian text, which Ricaut probably saw in manuscript. A slightly fuller account by Bobovius survives in a French manuscript, translated from an Italian manuscript of c.1657, now missing. The French text has recently been translated by Fisher & Fisher (1987), providing a further subtle and important piece of information regarding 'fifty or sixty' mutes:

> They are expert in sign language and know the significance of everything by sign. They visit and converse with the young and help them to perfect their sign language by telling fables and histories, sayings and scriptures in sign. (p. 23)

The published Italian text by Bobovius (1679), specifying some 40 mutes ('*in numero di quaranta in circa*'), was a slightly different version of his report. It stated in passing that the mutes taught the young(er) ones to express themselves with many varied signs ('*insegnano a giouani esprimersi con infinità di cenni strauaganti*'), but in Ricaut's paraphrase the deliberate process of transmission to the young was obscured. Via the French translation of the earlier Italian manuscript, the process and even the place becomes definite. Referring to a map of the Seraglio, the text points out

> the corner nook of the mutes, where they remain during the day with their elders. This is where one may come to learn the beauties of their language. (Fisher & Fisher, 1987, p. 75.)

Ricaut must in fact have seen some of the mutes in action and he can hardly be blamed for losing a few words that might not have seemed significant to him. In fact, he took care to advise his readers of a point about the mutes that had barely begun to be recognised in his century, that they were 'men naturally born deaf, and so consequently for want of receiving the sounds of words are dumb'—a point still unappreciated in much of the world three centuries later.

Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1741, II: 246–247) gave a further account of the mutes and their communication around 1700. By this period, visitors were more likely to come primed with the increasing number of publications by earlier writers, which they were inclined to plagiarise and possibly to embroider upon. Tournefort, following Des Hayes de Courmenin (1624), made a curious point about the tactile adaptation of signing, for night use:

> 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 latter and other passages by Tournefort and later French writers provide handles for Alain Grosrichard (1979, transl. 1998) to construct a book-length fantasy about what he believes eighteenth century French readers believed about what Tournefort and others believed about what their sources believed about the enticingly forbidden world of the Sultan's harem. (In good post-modern style, Grosrichard adds an epilogue to ensure that his readers don't imagine that he believes the make-believe of what the others believed). Grosrichard at least consulted seventeenth and eighteenth century sources, from which he picks items about the mutes and dwarfs that seem to support the fantasy he reconstructs, but he insists that, in this fantasy world, 'the material accuracy of what the travellers record was of little importance' (p. 185). What mattered was that they or their readers believed it. Similarly, Nicholas Mirzoeff (1995) briefly and inaccurately notices 'the deaf in the harem', in order to discourse lengthily on his own reconstruction of some 19th century Western European beliefs and images 'irrespective of the actual state of affairs in Istanbul' (p. 52). Sadly, the make-believe muddles its way onward. Jean-René Presneau (1993), who does care about the reality of the mutes, but has read Grosrichard without studying the earlier sources, thinks that the language of the mutes in the seraglio 'was despised because used by terrifying men'. Presneau then repeats a number of erroneous beliefs about the seraglio and its inhabitants—beliefs similar to those which Grosrichard went to such trouble to exaggerate and criticise—before concluding that the 'sign language' of the seraglio was

> only known in Europe to the readers of travel books, but its use in the seraglio was a pretext for saying that this language was a bad one, for saying too, that those who made signs were beasts.

So readily does the voice of the Ottoman court mutes risk being strangled, or 'trans-muted' into an argument about Western European popular and intellectual images and prejudices. Fortunately, their language lasted long enough to be witnessed in the twentieth century. Roe (1917, pp. 237–239) even provided a photograph of signing by 'two deaf-mute attendants at the Sublime Porte'. Ironically, the courtly advantage of the mutes' *silent* communication had by then already been lost to view. Roe's argument was that these men had not been taught on the oral system, 'hence their inability to lip-read what is said by others.' This idea had much earlier been rebutted by Cantemir's report (1734, p. 379) of a mute, one with a name and identity, who at the start of Ahmad II's reign, c. 1691, saved Vizier Köprülü by reading lips and body-language:

> While *Kyslar agasi* is speciously suggesting these things to the Sultan, *Dilsiz Mahomet aga* a mute, 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.

Verdict on the Court

Substantial evidence has been presented that mutes and dwarfs worked at the Ottoman court and its modern relics for over four centuries starting earlier than 1500. The mutes used a signing system that was already well developed in 1583, and was literally handed down from older to younger people. By 1610, and probably earlier, the usefulness of this system was recognised by hearing courtiers numbering in their hundreds, many of whom became proficient in its use; and the belief among some careful observers and enquirers was that this system, at least from the first decade of the seventeenth century, was capable of communicating matters of whatever complexity. All the evidence should of course continue to be scrutinised critically, but it cannot be made to disappear merely because some writers copied others or exhibited Western European prejudices; nor can it legitimately be dismissed merely because some later Western Europeans may have used it to bolster their fantasies about the harem or their concept of the 'oriental despot'.

No case has actually been made that the various witnesses reported above were all frauds, inveterate plagiarists or misguided Orientalists, so their evidence may now be examined by Bragg's criteria, outlined earlier, to see whether the signing activities may be counted as 'sign language'. In the most rigorous appraisal they appear to fail the tests; yet some cautious advocacy may be suggested. No incontrovertible evidence exists of (1) both a lexicon and a grammar; nor that the system was actually (2) capable of expressing any thought on any subject. Several independent observers stated that it could be so used; and if they were right, it would presuppose an advanced lexicon and grammar. However, the observers and recorders were probably not themselves users of the system. At least one and possibly all of them had been told by hearing users that the system was 'good for everything'; but they could not verify this personally, nor can we do so retrospectively. Tournefort's remark, probably based on Des Hayes, about the tactile system at night, suggests a rather restricted code. Yet this is not an insuperable objection. The night system need not have been a full representation of daylight signing, and its reporters probably never witnessed it anyway. No evidence has been found that the system was (3) learned by at least some infants during the normal language-acquisition-threshold age; nor, in the absence of cumulative video evidence, can it be proved that it was (4) a living, growing, changing system. Here, the criteria may reasonably be nudged. In a situation where several hundred courtiers, from youths to elderly people, were making some daily use of the system, where there was a fluctuating entry of new people and departure by travel, retirement or death, and where the focal point, i.e. the Sultan, changed periodically, some growth and development of the system would have been inevitable. The new entrants, whether mute or hearing, may reasonably be counted as *infans*—non-communicators—arriving in a multilingual milieu where the signing system was one of the communication options, one that might sometime have a life-or-death advantage. The informal 'School of Signing' was eye-witnessed and reported at a specific location. All this, of course, differs from the 'normal language-acquisition-threshold age' of young children, but the criteria being considered here were proposed for general situations, rather than the peculiar

circumstances of the Ottoman court. The court's children, whether deaf or hearing, seem almost entirely to have been confined to the women's quarters. Some might there have been taught to sign by deaf women servants, but no evidence of it has come to light.

Ultimately it is not of the highest importance whether this signing system can be shown to meet the criteria of professional linguists or of deaf communities in twentieth century North America. Nora Groce (1985), after studying hereditary deafness on Martha's Vineyard where 'everyone spoke sign language', reported a case that was convincing, while not necessarily meeting the most stringent criteria. For Ottoman court mutes using the system between 1500 and 1700, it was certainly their 'language of communication'. To hearing courtiers, it was clearly a 'language of convenience' which many willingly learnt from its originators. The use of this language, and the training of deaf people *by* deaf people for responsible employment in a highly privileged but risky environment, was evidently developing from the early sixteenth century, at a time when Western Europeans very seldom thought deaf people could be educated or could make any useful contribution to society.

The world of modern disability scholarship must also consider another issue. Documentary evidence for the histories of disabled people seldom if ever comes neatly packaged, sanitised and approved for public consumption. Evidence is often scrappy and may be several translations removed from the original. Almost all of it derives from writers whose perceptions were formed differently from those now 'acceptable in polite society'. Sometimes the enthusiasm for denouncing these different perceptions along with some undoubted exaggerations in such sources, has reached the point of dismissing wholesale everything in them—casually dismantling the only means by which disabled people could now discover evidence-based roots and ancestors. That heritage should not so lightly be discarded, at least until disabled people have had opportunities to examine the evidence for themselves in the light of insider knowledge. 'Serious' historians of the Ottoman empire have given barely a footnote to the mutes, dwarfs and 'jesters/gestures', finding them by definition non-serious; and if they were nonetheless 'interesting', the tide of political correctness has made even this feature hard to mention. Yet when the history of the world comes to be written by the descendants of those mutes and dwarfs, the Ottoman mutes may be seen to have played pioneering roles in teaching hearing emperors, viziers and the world's diplomats some of the merits of signed communication.

Acknowledgements

Useful comments and information were received from L. Bragg, S. Hartley, R. Murphey and M. Plackett. Research historian I. Demircioglu kindly translated the gist of an important article in Turkish.

NOTES

[1] William Biddulph (1905, p. 269) remarked c. 1600 that the Turks had various ways of

naming one another, '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', (similarly, see Cantemir, 1734, p. 239). The later evolution of terminology has its own merits and arguments, but we need not patronise earlier people by retrospectively 'correcting' them. (The titular 'Jesture' plays on the frequent grouping of 'mutes, dwarfs and *jesters*', and the signs or *gestures* they used; the two words sharing common origins and mixed spellings.)

[2] The 'Orientalism debate' has of course been far broader, beginning from the early 1960s in critiques of those European histories, analyses and images of Middle Eastern and Asian peoples, cultures and religions, that began to be formed during periods when several Western European countries were extending economic and military dominance, and eventually so-called 'cultural hegemony' across 'Oriental' regions. Some shift of focus occurred after publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Said examined mostly late eighteenth to early twentieth century western literary portrayals of Islam and Eastern Mediterranean countries, and considered them part of an oppressive discourse of western cultural imperialism. Such a critique much less clearly applies to sixteenth and seventeenth century Western European writings about the Ottoman Empire, which was perceived as very large, powerful and threatening. In fact, 40 years earlier than Said, a more balanced and scholarly critical account of some of these writings was given by Samuel Chew (1937).

[3] The *Hedaya*, a twelth century commentary on the major Muslim schools of law by A1-Marghinani (transl. 1870), stated that 'The intelligible signs of a dumb person suffice to verify his bequests, and render them valid', and the dumb person may also 'execute marriage, divorce, purchase or sale' etc. Provision was made for cases where 'a dumb person is capable of either writing intelligibly, or making intelligible signs', which suggests that the former capacity was not unknown. A late Ottoman law code, promulgated in 1877, but dependent on much earlier experience, held that, 'The well known signs of a dumb man are like an explanation by speech' (*Mejelle*, p. 11), at least where it concerned his own business; but such signs were not generally admissible as evidence (p. 294).

[4] Most victims might have preferred the bowstring to another bloodless method, compression of the scrotum, 'a mode of execution reserved by custom to the Ottoman emperors'. Evliya Chelebi reported that Osman II died thus [Evliya, 1834, pp. I (ii) 11 and II: 87]. In practice, the squeeze may have been largely diversionary, attracting the victim's hands away from defending his neck. Thus, 'It was not until [the Pasha] Davut took Osman's testicles in his butcher's grip that the cord could be tightened round his neck' (Goodwin, 1994, p. 158). Another account has Osman 'diverted' by an axe blow on his head. Evliya, a Turkish writer of the seventeenth century, did not discuss the ethics of scrotum-squeezing, but expressed disgust at the public torture of criminals in Persia, which he detailed for his readers' edification (pp. II: 141–142).

[5] Busbecq's Latin in the first sentence reads: '*at erant muti aliquot, quos Turcae habent in deliciis, validi & robustii homines, ad caedem ejus destinati*' (Busbequi, 1699). 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.

[6] Fleischer (1986, p. 108) describes one dwarf of the Harem, Nasuh Aga, as having 'tremedous influence at the highest levels of government'. Exposure in 1582 of his financial rackets 'led to a major shakeup of the central government apparatus'. Fleischer notes (p. 242) an explosion of 'general histories, Ottoman chronicles', etc., making Murad III's reign one of the best documented; yet Cantemir (p. 235) complained of an absence of detail by Turkish historians about this Emperor.

[7] Rogers & Ward (1990, pp. 34–35) suggest that clocks with mobile figures and suchlike items had often been presented by European monarchs from the time of Suleiman onwards, but they had a short working life for lack of maintenance. Nevertheless, Turkish website pages on Ottoman horology mention the dwarf Hasan, a clockmaker, who presented an almond-shaped clock to Murad III, and was well rewarded. http://ieiris.cc.

boun.edu.tr/stud/ie120–97/yaz97/yilmaz/project/8.htm. Evliya, listing guilds and crafts of Constantinople, does give 'the Organ-makers' [1834, I (ii) 226], but only to assert that such instruments are 'found in the Frank's country'. There were no organ-makers in the famous guilds procession.

[8] Penzer (1965, pp. 35–37) shows that Bon's manuscripts, still preserved at Venice, were translated and published as: Robert Withers (1650) *A Description of the Grand Signor's Seraglio*, in ignorance of the fact that this had already appeared, equally misattributed, in Purchas's 'Pilgrims' (1625) Vol.II, lib. ix, 1580–1611. Quotations here are from Purchas reprinted in 1905. Bon's notes on 'difference' and attitudes went beyond mutes and dwarfs. Negro women doing menial tasks in the Harem were allegedly selected among 'the most ill-favoured, cole-blacke, flat-nosed Girles that may be had', and 'the more uglie and deformed they are, by so much the more they are esteemed of, by the Sultanaes' (Bon, 1625).

[9] Dallam's picture of 'big-bodied men of very low stature' suggests achondroplasic dwarfs. To assemble even fifty of these, in a region and period where child mortality would have been over 50%, probably required an empire-wide 'standing order' for such people to be forwarded to the capital. Both Turkey and Syria have significant iodine-deficiency regions in which clinical cretinism and deafness would have been more common. In a sixteenth century study on the 'science' of physiognomy (*ḳıyāfet*), the Ottoman court poet Seyyid Lokman Çelebi (transl. 1987) noted that 'a protruding neck' denotes 'ignorance and idiocy' (p. 18). The phrase is elsewhere given as '*Yoğun yumru boyunlu kişi* (Person with a puffed up neck)' (p. 45), which actually signifies a goitrous neck (*boyun yumrusu* = goitre, in modern Turkish). The association of goitre and cretinism was clearly known in Turkey at a time when it was beginning to be formally recorded in Western Europe. The degree of deafness in the Ottoman mutes, whether associated with cretinism or any other cause, is now impossible to gauge.

[10] None of the Ottoman emperors or the Sultanas whose philanthropic exploits are noted by Peirce (1993) seems to have catered specifically for disabled people as did the Byzantine Emperor Alexius (1081–1118). He reportedly provided a large, purpose-built township for poor, blind and lame people, with ample wine, bread and care assistants. Details recorded by his daughter, Anna Comnena, of assistance rendered to these disabled men and women seem to suggest a measure of independent living, even in a characteristically top-down welfare environment (Dawes, 1928). Later, under Ottoman rule, people with leprosy were prohibited from wandering at large (Heyd, 1973, pp. 120, 303). Evliya remarked on a leprosarium at Scutari: 'If lepers are found in the town, they are carried to this place, whoever they may be' (I (ii) 81).

[11] Ricaut's biographer, Sonia Anderson (1989), scrutinises in detail his sources, style, accuracy and balance as a historian (pp. 39–41, 232–245), concluding that he was painstaking, reliable and impartial, except when writing about some of his fellow Europeans. Indeed, 'Not infrequently he contrasts a Turkish practice favourably with the European equivalent' (p. 243). However, Ricaut's views about Islam were not well informed.

REFERENCES

AHMAD ALI (transl.) (1992) *Sacred Writings Vol. 3, Islam: The Qur'an* (New York, Quality Paperback Book Club).

AHMED, A.S. (1992) *Postmodernism and Islam* (London, Routledge).

AL-MARGHINANI, transl. C. HAMILTON, edited by S. GRADY (1870) *The Hedaya or Guide*, 2nd edn, reprinted 1975 (Lahore, Premier Book).

ANDERSON, S.P. (1989) *An English Consul in Turkey* (Oxford, Clarendon).

AZIZ EFENDI, edited and transl. R. MURPHEY (1985) *Kanûn-Nâme-i Sultânî Li 'Azîz Efendi* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University).

BAUDIER, M. (1624) *Histoire généralle du serrail* (Paris), transl. E. GRIMSTONE (1635) *The History of the Imperiall Estate, etc* (London).

BIDDULPH, W. (1905) Part of a letter of Master William Biddulph from Aleppo, in: S. PURCHAS (Ed.) *Hakluytus Posthumus* (Glasgow, MacLehose).

BLOUNT, H. (1664) *A Voyage into the Levant*, 5th edn. (London).

BOBOVIUS (1679) Serrai enderum, in: C. MAGNUS (Ed.) *Quanto di più curioso ... Turchia* (Parma).

BON, O. (1625) A Description of the Grand Signor's Seraglio, (misattributed to Robert Withers), in: S. PURCHAS (Ed.) (1905) *Hakluytus Posthumus* vol. IX, (Glasgow, MacLehose).

BRAGG, L. (1997) Visual-kinetic communication in Europe before 1600: a survey of sign lexicons and finger alphabets prior to the rise of deaf education, *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 2, pp. 1–25.

BUSBECQ, edited and transl. C.T. FORSTER & F.H.B. DANIELL (1881), *The Life and letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, two vols (London, Kegan Paul).

BUSBEQUI, A.G. (1699) *Epistolae Deque Rebus Turcicis etc* (Lipsiae).

CANTEMIR, D. transl. N. TINDAL (1734) *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire* (London, Knapton).

CHEW, S.C. (1937) *The Crescent and the Rose. Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York, Oxford University Press).

CORTES, H. transl. J.B. MORRIS (1928) *Five Letters, 1519–1526* (London, Routledge).

COWELL, E.B. (transl.) (1894) *The Buddha-Karita of Asvaghosha* (Oxford).

DALLAM, T. in: J.T. BENT (Ed.) (1893) *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant. I.—The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599–1600, etc.* (London, Hakluyt Society).

DASEN, V. (1993) *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).

DAWES, E.A.S. (transl.) (1928) *The Alexiad of the Princess Anna Comnena* (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner).

DE GROOT, A.H. (1993) Murād III, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, (Leiden, Brill).

DES HAYES DE COURMENIN, L. (1624) *Voiage de Levant fait par le commandement du Roy en l'année 1621* (Paris, Taupinart).

DEUSINGEN, A. (1660) *Fasciculus Dissertationum Selectarum*, pp. 147–230, transl. G. SIBSCOTA (1670) *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse*, reprinted 1967 (Menston: Scolar Press).

D'OHSSON, L.M. (1788–1824) *Tableau général de l'empire othoman*, 7 vols (Paris, Firmin Didot).

DU FRESNE-CANAYE, P. in: M.H. HAUSER (Ed.) (1897) *Le Voyage du Levant de Philippe du Fresne-Canaye (1573)* (Paris, Leroux).

EVLIYA EFENDI, transl. J. VON HAMMER (1834) *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa*, reprinted 1968, (New York, Johnson Reprint).

FISHER, C.G. & FISHER, A.W. (1987) *Topkapı Sarayı* in the mid-seventeenth century: Bobovi's description, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, X (1985 [1987]) pp. 5–81.

FLEISCHER, C.H. (1986) *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, Princeton University Press).

GANGULI, K.M. (transl.) (1883–1896) *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa*, reprinted 1993 from 1970 edn, (New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal).

GARZONI, C. (1840) Relazione dell' Impero Ottomano, in: E. ALBERI (Ed.) *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato,* 3rd Series, Volume I, pp. 369–436 (Firenze).

GIBB, H.A.R. & BOWEN, H. (1950) *Islamic Society and the West* (London, Oxford University Press).

GOODWIN, G. (1994) *The Janissaries* (London, Saqi Books).

GOUGH, H. (1570) *Ofspring of the House of Ottomano* (London, Marshe).

GROCE, N.E. (1985) *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press).

GROSRICHARD, A., transl. L. HERON (1998) *The Sultan's Court* (London, Verso).

HAGA, C. (1613) *A True Declaration of the Arrivall of C. Haga ... at Constantinople* (London).

HALLIDAY, F. (1993) 'Orientalism' and its critics, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 20, pp. 145–163.

HEYD, U. (1973) *Studies in Old Ottoman Law* (Oxford, Clarendon).

HIEROSOLIMITANO, D. *Relatione della gran cittá di Constantinopoli*, cited by N.M. PENZER (1965) *The Harēm*, 2nd edn (London, Spring Books).

INALCIK, H. (1965) Ghulam, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn (Leiden, Brill).

INALCIK, H., transl. N. ITZKOWITZ & C. IMBER (1973) *The Ottoman Empire: the classical age 1300–1600* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson).

JEANSELME, E. (1923) Goutte et tares nerveuses dans le dynastie des Osmanlis, *Bulletin de la Société française d'histoire de la médicine*, 17, pp. 389–400.

LEUNCLAVIUS, J. (1596) *Annales Sultanorum Othmanidarum* (Francofurdi).

LEWIS, B. (1965) Dilsiz, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edn (Leiden, Brill).

MAYES, S. (1956) *An Organ for the Sultan* (London, Putnam).

MEJELLE. *English translation of Majallahel-Ahkam-i-Adliya*, transl. C.R. TYSER, D.G. DEMETRIADES & H.I. EFFENDI, reprint, n.d. (Lahore, Book House).

MILES, M. (1997) Disabled learners in South Asia: lessons for educational exporters, *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 44, pp. 97–104.

MILES, M. (1998) Historical bibliography on educational & social responses to disabilities & childhood in some Middle Eastern & South Asian countries, from Antiquity to the 1950s, *History of Education website*, www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/mmiles/mesabib1.html

MILES, M. (1999) Educational and social responses to disability in China, Japan & Korea, from antiquity to 1950: a bibliography of European-language materials, with an introduction and some annotation, *History of Education website* [www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/mmiles/e-asiabib.html].

MIRZOEFF, N. (1995) Framed. The deaf in the harem, in: J. TERRY & J. URLA (Eds) *Deviant Bodies* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press).

NAIMA, M., transl. C. FRASER (1832) *Annals of the Turkish Empire, from 1591 to 1659 of the Christian Era* (London, Oriental Translation Fund).

NEEDHAM, J. (1954) *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press).

ÖZCAN, A. (1994) Dilsiz (Tarih), *Islâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul).

PALLIS, A. (1951) *In the Days of the Janissaries* (London, Hutchinson)

PEIRCE, L.P. (1993) *The Imperial Harem* (New York, Oxford University Press).

PENZER, N.M. (1965) *The Harēm*, 2nd edn (London, Spring Books).

PLANN, S. (1993) Pedro Ponce de Léon: myth and reality, in: J.V. VAN CLEVE (Ed.) *Deaf History Unveiled* (Washington, DC, Gallaudet University Press).

PRESNEAU, J-R. (1993) The scholars, the deaf, and the language of signs in France in the 18th century, in: R. FISCHER & H. LANE (Eds) *Looking Back*, (Signum).

PURCHAS, S. (Ed.) (1905) *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (Glasgow, MacLehose).

RICAUT, SIR PAUL (1686) *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 6th edn, corrected (London, Clavell, Robinson & Churchill).

ROE, W.R. (1917) *Peeps into the Deaf World* (Derby, Bemrose).

ROGERS, J.M. & WARD, R.M. (1990) *Süleyman the Magnificent*, (London, British Museum).

SAID, E.W. (1978) *Orientalism* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul).

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

SANDERSON, J., in: SIR WILLIAM FOSTER (Ed.) (1931) *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant 1584–1602* (London, Hakluyt Society).

SARI, N. (1993) A short look on the protection of the disabled in Turkish history until the Republic of Turkey. I., *Tip Tarihi Arastirmalari*, 5, pp. 21–33. [In Turkish, English abstract seen.]

SCHWEINFURTH, G. transl. E.E. FREWER, (1873) *The Heart of Africa* (London, Sampson Low, Marston *et al.*),

SEYYID LOKMAN ÇELEBI, transl. S. ARTEMEL (1987) *Kıyâfetü'l-İnsâniyye fî Şemâili'l-'Osmâniyye* (Istanbul, Historical Research Foundation).

SLADE, SIR ADOLPHUS (1833) Records of travels in Turkey, Greece, etc. ... in the years 1829, 1830 and 1831, 2 vols (London).

STILLMAN, N.A. (1975) Charity and social services in Medieval Islam, *Societas: a review of social history*, 5/2, pp. 105–115.

TAVERNIER, J-B. (1675) *Nouvelle relation de l'interieur du serrail du Grand Seigneur* (Paris, de Varennes).

TIETZE, A. (1977) The poet as critique of society. A 16th century Ottoman poem, *Turcica*, 9 (1), pp. 120–160.

TOURNEFORT, J.P. DE (1741) *A Voyage into the Levant*, 3 vols (London, Midwinter *et al.*).

WELSFORD, E. (1935) *The Fool* (London, Faber & Faber).

Copyright of Disability & Society is the property of Routledge and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.