

# Introduction

Justice is a balance set up among mankind.

Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*<sup>1</sup>

Two months after his arrival in Ottoman Syria in September 1860, the Prussian bureaucrat Johann Ludwig Guido von Rehfues (1818–97) and his colleagues set off on a hauntingly memorable journey to Damascus.<sup>2</sup> Leaving Beirut early in the morning, they rode first up Mount Lebanon. From all the heights to which their path took them, they could see the smoke-stained rubble of once flourishing villages in the countryside.<sup>3</sup> The picturesque hills did not hide the grim fact that a civil war had struck there half a year earlier. It was the last day of November and the men on horseback were representatives of the European Powers at the commission they had been tasked with setting up: Pierre Jean Adolphe de Weckbecker (1808–71) was the Austrian plenipotentiary, Leon Philippe Béclard (1819–64) the French, and Evgenii Petrovic Novikow (1826–1903) represented Russia. Since he was unwell, the British commissioner, Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, 1st Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (1826–1902), had stayed in Beirut.

The five commissioners had been dispatched to Syria for what was arguably a ‘humanitarian’ mission to investigate the origins of violence, monitor the retribution and indemnification processes, and reorganize the country’s administration. They were the first men to establish an international security institution in the Levant.<sup>4</sup> After crossing the plains of the Bekaa valley and overcoming the challenges of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, the companions made their entrance into Damascus behind an Ottoman imperial cavalry unit on 1 December. The streets

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, vol. 2, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 145.

<sup>2</sup> In 1860, the term ‘Syria’, or *Bilad al-Sham*, referred to the area that encompasses present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine: Bruce Masters, ‘Syria’, in *Encyclopaedia of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Bruce Masters and Gábor Ágoston (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 550.

<sup>3</sup> Johann Ludwig Guido von Rehfues to Alexander Gustav Adolph Freiherr von Schleinitz, 2 Dec. 1860, GStA, III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7568, f. 385.

<sup>4</sup> By the term ‘Levant’ I refer here not only to the Arab *mashriq* but to the region along the eastern Mediterranean coasts of the late Ottoman Empire that stretched from Alexandria in Egypt to Izmir/Smyrna, the Straits that connect to the Black Sea, the eastern Greek coasts, and their hinterland. The term ‘Levantine’ will be used to denote the inhabitants of these spaces. For a recent study on the concept of ‘Levant’, see Rana Issa and Einar Wigen, ‘Levantine Chronotopes: Prisms for Entangled Histories’, *Contemporary Levant* 5(1) (2020): 1–12.

were filled with a compact crowd attracted by the curious sight.<sup>5</sup> When they arrived at their residence, Rehfues immediately went to the Christian quarter to see for himself the town's condition. During the course of half a day, he conducted a thorough investigation, and visited the locations at which the killings had taken place in July, which resembled, in his words, 'persecutions in the earliest time of the Christian calendar'. He frequently halted in his journey, and only a strong desire to observe the tragic scenes for himself gave him the strength to carry on. Although five months had passed since the events, and the bodies of those murdered had been taken away or at the very least covered with rubble, the manifold remaining traces still painted a disturbing picture of what had happened there. In the hours he spent at the site, it was as if Rehfues had witnessed the horror for himself. The next day, he wrote in a dispatch to Berlin that he would never forget what he had seen in Damascus.<sup>6</sup>

In the lands the European commissioners rode past during those two days, more than 10,000 people had perished and tens of thousands had been displaced between late May and early July 1860. The worst violent outburst in late Ottoman Syria, the Druze–Maronite civil war, later sparked the killing of around 3,000 Damascene Christians on 9–10 July.<sup>7</sup> The news alarmed European capitals, attracted immense public attention, and provoked fury and consternation on the part of the Ottoman government. Even though Sultan Abdülmecid I appointed Fuad Paşa (1814–69), one of his eminent ministers, as special envoy to suppress the 'disturbances' and establish order and tranquillity in the country, the diplomatic manoeuvres of the Sublime Porte<sup>8</sup> would not be enough to prevent the dispatch of a French expeditionary army to 'aid the Sultan' in protecting the Christian populations.<sup>9</sup> Nor would they suffice to avoid the establishment of an international commission which, Ottoman ministers believed, infringed the sovereignty of their empire.

The 1860 intervention was only one of many European interventions in the Levant in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Starting with Napoleon Bonaparte's occupation of Egypt in 1798, the self-defined five Great Powers (in alphabetical order, Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia) had previously assumed responsibility, either individually or collectively, for supplying security in the region. They had staged hitherto unprecedented military occupations 'for the benefit of the locals'. They had drawn lines, partitioned lands, and imposed rules,

<sup>5</sup> Leon Béclard to Antoine Thouvenel, 12 Dec. 1860, AMAE 50MD/139.

<sup>6</sup> Rehfues to Schleinitz, 2 Dec. 1860, GStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7568, 385.

<sup>7</sup> On the Damascene events, see Eugene L. Rogan, 'Sectarianism and Social Conflict in Damascus: The 1860 Events Reconsidered', *Arabica* 51(4) (Oct. 2004): 493–511.

<sup>8</sup> 'The Sublime Porte' or *Bâb-ı Âli* ('the Porte') is a term used by European and Ottoman agents as of the late 18th c. to refer to the Ottoman imperial ministries.

<sup>9</sup> R. Edwards, *La Syrie, 1840–1860. Histoire, politique, administration, population, religions et mœurs, événements de 1860 d'après des actes officiels et des documents authentiques* (Paris: Amyot, 1862), 164.

laws, administrative systems, and treaties on the locals, usually against their will. They had also ventured on the first so-called ‘humanitarian’ interventions in history, before establishing as-yet-unknown international security institutions, such as the commission on Syria that Rehfues and his companions were tasked with setting up.<sup>10</sup>

My book is about these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century foreign interventions in the Levant—their making, theatres, reception, and repercussions. It traces the genealogy of these unique practices of recent history, asking how it all began—how, from the late eighteenth century, the threat perceptions and interests of the Western Powers and Levantine inhabitants became interwoven, and how and why historical actors, both imperial and peripheral,<sup>11</sup> European and Levantine, unwarily grappled with a vicious and intricate paradox there: an ever-increasing demand for security despite its increasing supply.<sup>12</sup>

After each major European Great Power intervention, i.e. the use of force or pressure by one or more dominant states ‘to interfere with and exert power over the affairs of a weaker sovereign entity’, eastern Mediterranean coasts were further destabilized and became vulnerable to civil wars.<sup>13</sup> First, the strife in Ottoman Egypt (1802–11) that followed the French occupation of 1798–1801 and overlapped with the British intervention of 1801–3; then, following the 1827 Navarino interference, the civil war between the paşa of Egypt, Mehmed Ali, and the Sublime Porte that engulfed the entire Ottoman world (1832–41); and, finally, the hostilities between the Druze and Maronites (1841–60) in Ottoman Syria between the Quadruple Alliance’s intervention in 1840 and the 1860 armed intervention. All these outbreaks of violence had diverse and compound origins rooted in numerous, *predominantly domestic*, factors. Yet, at the same time, they were all fuelled by international dynamics, connections, and interactions, and were then quelled almost always through the filter of global imperial interests.

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There is already a rich and diverse literature on the historical episodes considered in this book. The French invasion of Egypt in 1798, the so-called ‘humanitarian’

<sup>10</sup> For discussions of what makes these interventions in the Ottoman Empire ‘humanitarian’, see esp. Gary J. Bass, *Freedom’s Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Random House, 2008); Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); and Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire (1815–1914)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> I use the term ‘periphery’ as a structural metaphor to demarcate the hierarchical, asymmetrical, and exploitative nature of both the Ottoman and global imperial systems, whereby the main beneficiaries of the asymmetries were the imperial centres (metropolises).

<sup>12</sup> On the notion of ‘security paradox’, see Christopher Daase, ‘On Paradox and Pathologies: A Cultural Approach to Security’, in *Transformations of Security Studies: Dialogues, Diversity and Discipline*, ed. Gabi Schlag, Julian Junk, and Christopher Daase (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 86.

<sup>13</sup> On the definition of ‘foreign intervention’, see Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 3.

interventions in the Ottoman Empire, the conflict between Mehmed Ali Paşa and the Sublime Porte, and the crises in Ottoman Lebanon have all been analysed in numerous fascinating studies.<sup>14</sup> Here I will hinge together, and critically augment and complement, this diverse literature, rather than examining each episode in isolation and omitting their immediate links or the long-standing vectors that connected these episodes.<sup>15</sup> Nor will my focus be on Western perceptions and conceptions of security only.

As Davide Rodogno, one of the leading authorities on the history of humanitarianism, candidly admits, no book in the rich literature on ‘humanitarian’ interventions in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire has historicized the experience of the ‘target state’.<sup>16</sup> The lives, ideas, emotions and threat perceptions, and interests of Levantines themselves have rarely been mentioned or specifically foregrounded in historical analyses of security, with the exception of a few studies that focus on violence in the region episodically.<sup>17</sup> Here I will look to fill these gaps. Without attributing to the so-called peripheral Levantine actors the sole role of ‘bargaining chips’, ‘junior partners in the power game’, or ‘trouble-makers’, I will pay particular attention to the part that the local actors played in enabling interventionism and in the production of violence in the Levant.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See esp. Juan Cole, *Napoleon’s Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha’s Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Gilbert Sinoue, *Le Dernier Pharaon. Méhémet Ali (1770–1849)* (Paris: Pygmalion Gerard Watelet, 1997); Caroline Gaultier-Kurhan, *Méhémet Ali et la France 1805–1849. Histoire singulière du Napoléon de l’Orient* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2005); Marsot A. L. Al-Sayyid, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Vernon J. Puryear, *International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East: A Study of British Commercial Policy in the Levant, 1834–1853* (Stanford, CA: Archon, 1969); Letitia W. Ufford, *The Pasha: How Mehemet Ali Defied the West, 1839–1841* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007); Kamal S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965); Leila T. Fawaz, *An Occasion for War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994); Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830–61* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000); Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Yann Bouyrat, *Devoir d’intervenir. L’intervention humanitaire de la France au Liban, 1860* (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> The few exceptions are: Efraim Karsh and Inari Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789–1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923: A Study in International Relations* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1966); Alexander L. Macfie, *The Eastern Question 1774–1923* (Harlow: Longman, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 2–3. For two recent studies that form, to an extent, the exception here, see Will Smiley, ‘War Without War: The Battle of Navarino, the Ottoman Empire and the Pacific Blockade’, *Journal of the History of International Law* 18(1) (2016): 42–69, and Hakan Erdem, ‘“Do Not Think of the Greeks as Agricultural Labourers”: Ottoman Responses to the Greek War of Independence’, in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, ed. Thalia Dragonas and Faruk Birtek (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 67–84.

<sup>17</sup> Makdisi, *Culture*; Farah, *Politics*. Moreover, owing to the abundance of Great Power interventions in civil wars in the global south since the Second World War, a rich social-scientific literature has long examined how foreign meddling has extended the duration of civil wars and increase the intensity of violence. Some of these studies build their arguments on 19th-c. cases without specifying which cases these were. See e.g. Dylan Balci-Lindsay, Andrew J. Enterline, and Kyle A. Joyce, ‘Third-Party Intervention and the Civil War Process’, *Journal of Peace Research* 45(3) (2008): 345–63.

<sup>18</sup> Pinar Bilgin, ‘The “Western-Centrism” of Security Studies: “Blind Spot” or Constitutive Practice?’, *Security Dialogue* 41 (2010): 617; Bahgat Korany, ‘Strategic Studies and the Third World:

My argument is that Great Power interventions in the nineteenth-century Levant need to be considered not only in reference to their immediate causes, theatres, and implications. It is essential to take into account the continuity that European *and* Levantine actors saw in regional affairs from the late eighteenth century through until at least the mid-nineteenth. There is a need to foreground the persistent patterns or ‘cultures of security’ within which violence was generated and sustained, and how imperialism—the practices, ideologies, and systems of building or sustaining empire<sup>19</sup>—and security—defined in this book broadly as ‘the anticipated state of being unharmed in the future’<sup>20</sup>—acted as organizing principles of international relations. Here I will place the European and Levantine quests for security in a wider historical context as the driving forces of an entangled history, which offers us new ways to construe the vicious cycles of Great Power interventions and civil wars that enveloped the Levant. This analysis helps us discern the complexity of the situation the historical actors were embroiled in, and identify who spoke authoritatively about security at the time, what the threat and interest perceptions of the diverse historical actors were, which discursive practices they adopted, who were the net beneficiaries and, where applicable, who paid for security—that is, whose financial responsibility it was ultimately.

### Historicizing the Eastern Question

In the eighteenth and long nineteenth centuries, one of the persistent paradigms that causally linked the Great Power interventions in the Levant was ‘the Eastern Question’. A near-perfect historical embodiment of the otherwise abstract and ambivalent imperialism–security nexus, the Eastern Question originated with endeavours in the eighteenth century to deal with the alleged decadence of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>21</sup> Like all security issues, it turned ‘its eye exclusively to the

A Critical Evaluation’, *International Social Science Journal* 38(4) (1986): 547–62; Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, ‘The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies’, *Review of International Studies* 32 (2006): 343–4.

<sup>19</sup> I define the term ‘empire’, relying on the admirable work of Burbank and Cooper, as ‘large political units, expansionist or with a memory of power extended over space, polities that maintain distinction and hierarchy as they [strive to] incorporate new people’. Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 8. For a slightly adjusted definition, see Jennifer Pitts, ‘Political Theory of Empire and Imperialism’, *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 (2010): 213.

<sup>20</sup> Beatrice de Graaf and Cornel Zwierlein, ‘Historicizing Security: Entering the Conspiracy Dispositive’, *Historical Social Research* 38(1) (2013): 52.

<sup>21</sup> Recently, historians have invited us to invoke social-scientific theories, such as securitization theory, i.e. the identification of issues as security threats in order to convince an audience (the decision-makers) to take extraordinary measures against these perceived threats, while historicizing security. De Graaf and Cornel Zwierlein, ‘Historicizing Security’, 49. However, the narrow focus of securitization theory on legitimacy—and for that matter on the nation states and the polities better equipped to voice

future'.<sup>22</sup> According to the mainstream narrative, the major European empires perceived a shared, existential threat in the dreadful prospect of the dominance of one or another of the Great Powers over the strategic, prize morsels of the Ottoman Empire (such as the Straits or the Suez area, the transportation routes to India and Central Asia). They believed that such a geostrategic advantage obtained by one European empire might adversely affect the balance of power among them and threaten the existence of the others.

Historically speaking, the Eastern Question emerged in a period that coincided with the independence of the Americas and the shift of global colonial competition to Asia. It was then, in the nineteenth century, that the Levant became a strategically crucial gateway for the new and now vitally important colonies that supplied Europe with resources and markets, which sustained their economies and permitted political stability in the metropolises. In connection to this, global capitalism increasingly expanded into the Levant—now a strategically and economically central region—where it met with the local owners for profit.

The interlocking of geostrategic and economic undercurrents generated new questions. These included the need for overseas empires to preserve international commerce, ensuring the uneven flow of capital, goods, and resources, and securing the newly acquired territory and property, as well as integrating the sometimes reluctant, or even resistant, local populations into the new economic and financial structures, from a position of power and hierarchy. At the same time, growing Christian missionary activity engendered problems with respect to the protection of denominational agents and establishments. They were increasingly viewed by Levantines, regardless of the religious inclinations of the latter, as both threats to local cultures and instruments for moral empowerment.

In fact, the capitulations—the legal agreements with the Ottoman Empire that granted commercial and legal privileges to European subjects—had allowed the European Powers to interfere in legal security issues in the Ottoman world since the sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup> But these were usually limited to individual experiences. And even though France and Russia had assumed the responsibility of protecting

their threat perceptions and to persuade their audience—brings into serious question its applicability in imperial historical contexts. Benedikt Stuchtey and Andrea Wiegeshoff, '(In-)Securities across European Empires and Beyond', *Journal of Modern European History* 16(3) (2018): 325–6.

<sup>22</sup> De Graaf and Zwierlein, 'Historicising', 52.

<sup>23</sup> For insightful overviews of capitulations and extraterritoriality in the Ottoman Empire, see Edhem Eldem, 'Capitulations and Western Trade: Western Trade in the Ottoman Empire. Questions, Issues and Sources', in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 281–335; Umut Özsü, 'Ottoman Empire', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law*, ed. Bardo Fassbender and Anne Peters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 446; and his 'The Ottoman Empire, the Origins of Extraterritoriality, and International Legal Theory', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Theory of International Law*, ed. Florian Hoffmann and Anne Orford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 123–37; also see Turan Kayaoglu, *Legal Imperialism: Sovereignty and Extraterritoriality in Japan, the Ottoman Empire and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

the Catholic and Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman sultans since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these long remained merely rhetorical gestures. They appeared to serve more to bolster affective ties than to actually produce concrete actions.

What changed in the late eighteenth and particularly the nineteenth century was that, as Buzan and Lawson have shown, with the global transformation that resulted from the uneven and combined development of societies worldwide, unprecedented differentials in the modes of political, economic, military, and technological power gradually emerged between a small group of so-called 'leading-edge' European empires and the rest.<sup>24</sup> These disparities were time and again proved by easy victories won by the superordinates in wars and through territorial annexations and uneven commercial treaties. They engendered the creation of new hierarchies in world politics whereby internationalized controversies were almost exclusively addressed with the interference of the dominant Powers.<sup>25</sup>

It was in the age of global transformation and the emergence of hierarchies that generations of European and Levantine actors (statesmen, bureaucrats, diplomats, military and naval officers, secret agents, journalists, merchants, missionaries, bankers, feudal or oligarchical lords, etc.) established new transimperial networks amid the shared threat posed by the Eastern Question. These agents looked to further their common interests in maintaining the Ottoman Empire or procuring benefits from her alleged weakness, if not total destruction. To these ends, they mobilized their resources (armies, navies, weapons, technologies, norms, funds, etc.) across, between, and beyond imperial borders.<sup>26</sup> They developed diverse, sometimes unprecedented repertoires of power: military occupations conducted for the 'benefit of the locals', the so-called 'humanitarian' interventions, slow evacuation of occupying armies, surrogate or proxy wars, pacific naval blockades, the establishment of international and extraterritorial security institutions, transimperially mediated local administrative structures, partitions by international agreements or treaties, or the dispatch of military, naval, and civilian advisers, etc. These discursive practices<sup>27</sup> were (self-)justified by means of the deployment of

<sup>24</sup> Barry Buzan and George Lawson, *The Global Transformation: History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Hierarchy is considered here as a 'system through which actors are organized into vertical relations of super- and subordination': Ayşe Zarakol, 'Theorising Hierarchies: An Introduction', in *Hierarchies in World Politics* ed. Ayşe Zarakol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel Hedinger and Nadin Hee, 'Transimperial History: Connectivity, Cooperation and Competition', *Journal of Modern European History* 16(4) (2018): 432.

<sup>27</sup> The concept of 'discourse' is used here to refer to linguistic and non-linguistic practices, 'a system of representation that has developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings' and materialized in concrete practices and rituals: Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gasterson, and Raymond Duvall, 'Introduction: Constructing Insecurity', in *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities and the Production of Danger*, ed. Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gasterson, and Raymond Duvall (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 16.

new sets of religiously imbued and Enlightenment norms and principles from which a positivist and universalized international law was spawned.<sup>28</sup> In due course, they turned into recurring behavioural patterns or the *modus operandi* of security in the Levant.<sup>29</sup> A transimperial security culture was thus woven spontaneously around the Eastern Question.

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The French invasion of Egypt was an opening moment of this culture of security. In the beginning, particularly during the global Coalition Wars (1792–1815), the unfolding repertoires of power were characterized by rivalry among the major European and Ottoman empires. For example, the inter-imperial (1798–1801) and proxy (1802–11) wars in Ottoman Egypt were the direct fruits of the Anglo-French/Ottoman struggle for domination along the eastern Mediterranean coasts.

In the 1810s, however, inter-imperial competition in the Levant went through an early metamorphosis. When the Coalition Wars came to a definitive end, during the peace talks at Paris, Vienna, and later at Aix-la-Chapelle between 1814 and 1818, the (then self-defined) European Great Powers fostered an understanding of security as a public good that could be obtained most effectively through cooperation.<sup>30</sup> Based on an adaptation of the idea of a ‘balance of power’ to meet the the postwar realities of Europe, they forged an exclusive system, the Concert of Europe, to supervise first European and then global affairs, by means of mediation among themselves and in order to inhibit any return to the horrors of a European total war.<sup>31</sup> They endorsed collective action and conference diplomacy, and upheld new principles and codes of conduct such as non-intervention in each other’s affairs or the necessity of approval by the Great Powers for territorial changes.<sup>32</sup> Each time the Eastern Question pressed on the

<sup>28</sup> On the imperialist origins of international law, see Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> For an astute yet West-centric description of the notion of security culture as a tool for studying interventions, see Mary Kaldor and Sabine Selchow, ‘From Military to “Security Interventions”: An Alternative Approach to Contemporary Interventions’, *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4(1) (May 2015): 1–12.

<sup>30</sup> Patrick Cottrell, *The Evolution and Legitimacy of International Security Institutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 68–9. See also Matthias Schulz, *Normen und Praxis. Das europäische Konzert der Grossmächte als Sicherheitsrat, 1815–1860* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Louise Richardson, ‘The Concert of Europe and Security Management in the Nineteenth Century’, in *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space*, ed. Helga Haftendorn, Robert Keohane, and Celeste Wallender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 51; Jennifer Mitzen, *Power in Concert: The Nineteenth Century Origins of Global Governance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 30; Maartje Abbenhuis, *An Age of Neutrals: Great Power Politics, 1815–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 40–41.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Jarret, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 362; Eric D. Weitz, ‘From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Mission’, *American Historical Review* 113(5) (Dec. 2008): 1313–43; Paul W. Schroeder, ‘Did the Vienna

international agenda—such as the Greek crisis (1821–32), the Egyptian question (1832–41), the Syrian question (1841–64), and the Russo-Ottoman wars (1828–9 and 1853–6)—ministerial and ambassadorial conferences were convened (or, at least, proposed) with the ultimate purpose of preventing the Powers from stepping on each other’s toes or fighting with one another in the Levant, as elsewhere in the world.

Thenceforth, the major European Powers came to consider cooperation as the ultimate instrument for containing the potentially destructive implications of their enduring competition. Put another way, convergence among the Powers (the evolution towards strategic cooperation) proved not to be the binary opposite of divergence (their differing interests and rivalries), but its logical completion: the only means to ensure European security while maximizing global imperial interests was to act together, making concessions for a greater good.

While the emergence of the Eastern Question in the late eighteenth century and the French invasion of Egypt symbolized a new beginning and intensified inter-imperial rivalries in the Levant until the early twentieth century, the Vienna order held these rivalries in check by urging concerted action among the Powers. It thus changed the nature of European dialogue to a considerable extent. In most cases, the new international order reined in bellicose unilateral action. But, as we will see in this book time and again, it also facilitated interventions by the Great Powers by means of placing them on a quasi-legal platform, the Concert of Europe.

This became a pattern in nearly every episode of the Eastern Question. Along the way, like most security issues, the Eastern Question itself took on different meanings at different historical moments.<sup>33</sup> It was never a static paradigm.<sup>34</sup> In the late eighteenth century, even before the term was coined, it pertained mostly to (inhibiting) the Russian plans for the partition of the Ottoman Empire and, after the 1789 revolution, French expansionism in the Levant. In the 1810s, it was a matter of placing the sultan’s empire under the guarantee of European public law in order to address Russo-Ottoman differences.<sup>35</sup> In the 1820s, it referred to the diplomatic quandary over the ‘Greek crisis’. A decade later, it was about

Settlement Rest on a Balance of Power?, *American Historical Review* 97(3) (June 1992): 683–706; Brian E. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Beatrice de Graaf, Brian Vick and Ido De Haan, *Securing Europe After Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), ‘Introduction’; esp. Beatrice de Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon: How Europe Became Secure after 1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

<sup>33</sup> Lucia Zedner, ‘The Concept of Security: An Agenda for Comparative Analysis’, *Legal Studies* 1 (153) (2003): 154.

<sup>34</sup> This has been shown in recent scholarship; Macfie, *The Eastern Question*; Lucien J. Frary and Mara Kozelsky, ‘Introduction’, in *Russian–Ottoman Borderlands: The Eastern Question Reconsidered*, ed. Lucien J. Frary and Mara Kozelsky (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> In the 1810s, the so-called ‘Polish question’ was also discussed under the heading of the Eastern Question. Hüseyin Yılmaz, ‘The Eastern Question and the Ottoman Empire: The Genesis of the Near and Middle East in the Nineteenth Century’, in *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*, ed. Michael E. Bonine (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 12.

suppressing a civil war in the Ottoman world that had enabled Russia to establish dominant control over the Porte. And then, in the 1840s, it was repurposed as an issue of ‘civilization’ to be dealt with globally.

The French author, conservative politician, and prominent advocate of democracy Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in 1840–41 that the events unfolding in Asia from India to the Black Sea were demonstrating the disorganization, depopulation, and anarchy of the East, where ‘societies are shaken’ and ‘religions are weakened’. ‘Civilized’ Europe had to remain dominant and active in the name of humanity. It had to ‘puncture, envelop, and tame the fallen beast that was Asia’.<sup>36</sup> It had to consider the Eastern Question not as a divisive factor among the Powers, but as one that united them in a condominium.

From 1840–41 onward, as far as supplying security in the Levant was concerned, the position and influence of the Powers steadily grew stronger. Despite the Crimean War of 1853–6, which undermined the Concert of Europe, they came together and collectively intervened again in Syria in 1860. Yet, in all this, the agency of the Levantine actors was in fact far more central than has been documented to this day.

### Silence, Civil Wars, and Lives

Behind the Eastern Question lay an imagined bifurcation between East and West which viewed the oriental world as a homogeneous entity, the ‘weak’ and ‘uncivilized’ ‘other’, in a state of degradation. The East was repeatedly likened to a ‘woman’ and ‘the flesh’, while the ‘civilized’ West was the ‘superior’ and abler man, possessed with ‘the spirit . . . of industry and science’.<sup>37</sup>

As is well known, Edward Said was one of the first to point out this dichotomy and underscore the ‘agency’ problem. He discussed how ‘the Oriental woman’ in Western literature, who in fact represented the entire East, ‘never spoke of herself, . . . never represented her emotions, presence, or history . . . [F]oreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and [dominant], [the Western actors] spoke for and represented her.’<sup>38</sup> This epistemic exclusion or the ‘Oriental silence’ has permeated much of the literature on the Eastern Question.

<sup>36</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Écrits et discours politiques*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 270, 280, 315.

<sup>37</sup> Pamela Pilbeam, *Saint-Simonians in the Nineteenth Century France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 108–9.

<sup>38</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 14. Said’s postulations on ‘silence’ have been picked up by the social scientific literature on security. See esp. Lene Hansen, ‘The Little Mermaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29(2) (2000): 285–306; Sarah Bertrand, ‘Can the Subaltern Securitize? Postcolonial Perspectives on Securitization Theory and Its Critics’, *European Journal of International Security* 3(3) (2018): 281–99.

Owing in part to logistical and linguistic barriers, but mostly to the belief that the Eastern Question was a ‘European question’ (a belief upheld even by some late Ottoman writers as well as contemporary historians today<sup>39</sup>), scholarship has usually concentrated on the Western ‘great men’, how they dealt with the predicament of the Ottoman Empire, piloted her reforms, and resolved her diplomatic quandaries, usually leaving little (if any) space in their analysis for the discursive practices of the so-called ‘Eastern’ actors, their internal struggles, ambitions, emotions, insecurities, or agency in the widest sense.<sup>40</sup>

My point here is that it is not entirely possible—in fact it is a parochial endeavour—to attempt to historicize and construe the Eastern Question without taking into account the other side of the coin and placing European and (in our case) Levantine conceptions and practices of security within the same analytical framework with a contrapuntal awareness.<sup>41</sup> It is now time to reconceptualize the ‘most complicated . . . and dangerous question’<sup>42</sup> in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century international politics as an inherently intersubjective constellation that formed through at least four relational dynamics: (i) diplomatic and strategic affairs among the Great Powers of the time in their attempts to deal with the alleged weakness of the Ottoman Empire, (ii) the interest relations of the European powers with the Levantines (as well as with the peoples of the Balkans, the Arabian peninsula, Mesopotamia, eastern Anatolia, and the Caucasus), (iii) the intra-imperial power struggles in both Europe and the Ottoman dominions (amongst the imperial elites or between Levantine actors), and, finally, (iv) intersectoral relations or the interplay between strategic, legal, economic, financial, religious, or cultural factors—that is, how one sector affected the other(s) during the decision-making processes. Omitting—or at least not acknowledging—the existence of one or more of these relational dynamics tends to limit our historical understanding; it results in the production of incomplete histories of how the Eastern Question persisted well into the twentieth century.

<sup>39</sup> There is only one study in the English language that places emphasis on the ‘apologetic and defensive’ Ottoman perspective on the Eastern Question in the late 19th c.: Nazan Çiçek, *The Young Ottomans: Turkish Critics of the Eastern Question in the Late Nineteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> Anderson, *The Eastern Question*; Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830–1841: Britain, the Liberal Movement and the Eastern Question* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969); Albert Sorel, *La Question d’Orient au XVIIIe siècle. Le partage de la Pologne et le traité de Kâïnardj* (Paris: Plon, 1902); Edouard Driault, *La Question d’Orient, depuis ses origines jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1905). More recently, Miroslav Šedivý, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question* (Pilsen: TYPOS, 2013).

<sup>41</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 50; Geeta Chowdry, ‘Edward Said and Contrapuntal Reading: Implications for Critical Intervention in International Relations’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 36(1) (2007): 101–16; David Bartine, ‘The Contrapuntal Humanism of Edward Said’, *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 17(1) (2015): 59–85; Pinar Bilgin, ‘“Contrapuntal Reading” as a Method, an Ethos, and a Metaphor for Global IR’, *International Studies Review* (2016): 1–13.

<sup>42</sup> P. W. Schroeder, ‘The 19th-Century International System: Changes in the Structure’, *World Politics* 39(1) (Oct. 1986): 6.

It is true that European imperial elites often strove to secure their interests by (to borrow once more from Said) looking at the distant realities of the Levant and the global 'East', 'subordinating them in their gaze', constructing the regional histories 'from their own point of view', and considering 'its people as subjects whose fate could be decided by what the imperial decision-makers thought was best for them'.<sup>43</sup> Europeans usually imagined the East through an 'imperial gaze', which looked at but usually failed (or chose not) to *see* the people gazed at; which assumed that the power, licence, and responsibility to supply security lay with them.<sup>44</sup>

In reality, however, the situation was much more intricate than Said's account. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the threat perceptions, interests, and discursive practices of the European Powers and local inhabitants of the Levant continuously interacted, transformed each other, and became interwoven in the fabric of the Eastern Question. The Eastern Question was not simply a quandary that European decision-makers imagined, formulated, and dealt with on their own. It also formed a central threat and, on occasion, a well-established trope for Levantines to manipulate.

Ottoman imperial authorities and subject peoples recognized the military, economic, and technological power differentials between Europe and the rest. They also shared the belief that the Ottoman Empire was in decline. They pondered how to deal with her alleged weakness, or how to transmute decline into diplomatic leverage. In doing so, they unmistakably acknowledged the 'European' undertones of the question—how the destruction of the Ottoman Empire might lead to a general war in the world—and tried to adapt inter-imperial competition and cooperation among the Powers to their own ends—at times by inviting the Powers to intervene, at other times by fending off their attempts to intrude.

All the while, like all other major empires of the time, the Sublime Porte was caught in a state of ontological insecurity.<sup>45</sup> Distressed after tragic defeats in battles, territorial losses, domestic riots, and the grim financial situation of their empire, Ottoman ministers looked to define the place of the sultan's dominions in the overall global imperial order 'of which their empire formed a part and upon which [her] fate depended' now.<sup>46</sup> They gradually accepted European public law. They tried to reform their armies, bureaucracies, and laws, and (as we will see) revised their empire's underlying philosophical vocabularies of security such as the 'circle of justice'. Despite their initial rejection during the Congress of Vienna

<sup>43</sup> Edward Said, 'Blind Imperial Arrogance', *Los Angeles Times*, 20 July 2003.

<sup>44</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking at the Other: Feminism, Fame and the Imperial Gaze* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 61–73.

<sup>45</sup> In using the notion 'ontological insecurity', I draw inspiration from Ayşe Zarakol's article 'States and Ontological Security: A Historical Rethinking', *Cooperation and Conflict* 52(1) (2017): 48–68. The term is defined here as questioning 'a consistent sense of self... affirmed by others'.

<sup>46</sup> Feroze A. K. Yasamee, 'European Equilibrium or Asiatic Balance of Power? The Ottoman Search for Security in the Aftermath of the Congress of Berlin', in *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 and the Treaty of Berlin*, ed. Peter Sluglett and Hakan Yavuz (Salt Lake City: Utah University Press, 2011), 61.

(1814–15) of proposals to protect the sultan's European dominions by European public law, just over a decade later the Ottoman Empire even looked to become a member of the Concert of Europe herself.

Even though numerous orientalist stereotypes regularly featured in the publications of the day as well as in the correspondence of historical actors in Europe, it was the Porte's agents who were the first to describe the sultan's empire in 1833 as 'sick' and in need of foreign 'medicine', not Tsar Nicholas I, who is known to be the first to call the Ottoman Empire the 'Sick Man of Europe'. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, Ottoman ministers adopted European discursive practices such as the bifurcating language of 'civilization', drawing demarcation lines with their own 'other', inaugurating what later commentators have termed 'Ottoman Orientalism' in the critical moments of the Eastern Question—in the first place, to enlist Great Power interventions, not to fend them off.<sup>47</sup> Shortly afterwards, however, the same ministers came to use the very same vocabulary to put an end to the inexorable interference of the Great Powers.

The peripheral actors in the Levant (the so-called peripheries of the periphery) such as the Mamluks of Egypt, the Greeks, the Syrians, or the Lebanese, for their part played an active role in the formation or sustenance of transimperial networks and affective ties with European Powers. Ever since the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the British intervention in 1801, they came to realize that ensuring their security or advancing their political, economic, and religious interests depended on aligning their interests with those of the Powers. While looking to acquire at least partial independence and respite from the draining domination of their Ottoman overlords, they therefore repeatedly resorted to European support.

The asymmetric 'chains of influences' (to cite an early nineteenth-century actor) between European empires and the Levantine subject peoples created new channels for the supply of security by means of the transfer of intelligence, ammunition, provisions, or even manpower.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, these 'chains' paved the way for the intensification of *existing* domestic political, economic, and/or religious (sectarian) conflicts, and their conversion into the first proxy wars in the history of the Levant. More often than not, the peripheral actors became the prime agents of the Eastern Question, while their lives were radically altered by it.

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This study is, then, an 'entangled history' (*histoire croisée*) of European interventions in the Levant in the age of the Eastern Question. It focuses on 'empirical intercrossings', and documents the complex histories of the imperialist and peripheral quests for security and how they inflamed a vicious cycle of civil wars in the region.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Ussama Makdisi, 'Ottoman Orientalism', *American Historical Review* 107(3) (June, 2002): 768–96.

<sup>48</sup> Major General Stuart to Lord Hobart, 28 Feb. 1803, in *LPM* vol. 1, 388.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory* 45 (Feb. 2006): 30–50, at 30.

I must note at the outset that the episodes of violence in question here are categorized as ‘civil wars’ not simply in the interest of sculpting them into an easily intelligible or overgeneralized description.<sup>50</sup> My purpose here is to emphasize the simultaneously domestic and global nature of violence in the Levant. Otherwise, as the British historian David Armitage has shown, there has never been a time ‘when [the definition of civil wars] was settled to everyone’s satisfaction or when it could be used without question or contention’.<sup>51</sup> ‘[T]o call a war “civil” is to acknowledge the familiarity of the enemies as members of the same community: not foreigners but fellow citizens.’ It is ‘a form of framing’.<sup>52</sup>

It is true that the same conflicts—say, the Greek crisis of the 1820s or the clash of Mehmed Ali, the paşa of Egypt, with the Sublime Porte in 1832–41—can be viewed as rebellion, revolutions, independence wars, or civil wars depending on the perceptions of the beholder or the political motives of the narrator. My framing of these episodes of violence as civil wars results from a desire to avoid the reconstruction of their histories from either a state-centric (imperial) or anti-state-centric (peripheral) perspective, but rather to blend these two in one narrative, with the belief that the notion of civil war does not carry a ‘moral connotation’ and does not ‘signal siding with one party to the conflict’.<sup>53</sup>

The episodes in question here were physically violent conflicts between ‘competing social orders’, which historical actors (i.e. contemporaries) labelled civil wars. During each conflict, the physical fighting took place between the subjects/citizens of *one* polity (the Ottoman Empire) and *within* its boundaries. And the parties were politically organized and fought for the monopoly of physical force in a given region, if not the entire country, but not necessarily to overthrow the existing government or its regime.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> As an under-theorized concept, social-scientific definitions of the notion of civil war often suffer from various subjectivities and randomness. According to Gersovitz and Kriger, for example, a civil war is ‘a politically organised, large-scale, sustained, physically violent conflict that occurs within a country principally among large/numerically important groups of its inhabitants or citizens over the monopoly of physical force’: Mark Gersovitz and Norma Kriger, ‘What Is a Civil War? A Critical Review of its Definition and (Econometric) Consequences’, *World Bank Research Observer* 28(2) (Aug. 2013): 160–61. But what ‘large-scale’ or ‘numerically important’ refers to here remains rather ambiguous. In another, frequently cited study, Sambanis deals with this ambiguity to some extent, offering a more quantitative description: a conflict is a civil war, he writes, when it is in ‘an independent state with a population of at least 500,000’, where ‘in the start year there are at least 500 to 1000 deaths’, and where there is an ‘effective resistance’ against the government ‘as represented by at least 100 deaths inflicted’: Nicholas Sambanis, ‘What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(6) (2004): 814–58. For a 19th-c. historian, quantifications of this kind seem arbitrary, since they make the definition of civil wars more obscure given both the absence of numerical data in hand and the demographical differences between past and present.

<sup>51</sup> David Armitage, *Civil Wars: A History in Ideas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 12.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>53</sup> Adam Backzo, Gilles Dorosnoro, and Arthur Quesnay, *Civil War in Syria: Mobilization and Competing Social Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 18. Although the notions of ‘conflict’ and ‘war’ and particularly ‘civil war’ can denote different categories, I will use them interchangeably here, especially in view of the fact that the quantitative classifications offered in social-scientific literature are often inapplicable in historical cases in which the number of casualties is often unknown or difficult to confirm. For an excellent

The reason for making *these* episodes of violence the centre of analysis—their number could usefully be augmented given the broad and contested definition of civil wars and the composite context of the Ottoman world—is fourfold. First, they were the earliest examples of inter-imperialized civil wars in the late Ottoman Levant. As Backzo, Dorronsoro, and Quesnay observe, ‘the effects of the international system on civil war[s] can be difficult to isolate for a single case, but they become visible when civil wars are examined in series.’<sup>55</sup> Therefore, second, the aim is to determine the international and global dynamics of these cases by serially contextualizing them. Third, they all followed Great Power interventions and were in a partial cause-and-effect relationship with each other, taking place in the same geographical area (i.e. eastern Mediterranean coasts of the Ottoman Empire), which allows us to consider the continuities between them in relation to the strategic, legal, economic, financial, and religious specificities of the region. And finally, besides geography, these wars were tied together by the lives, ideas, beliefs, and ideals of a number of Levantine and (to a lesser degree) European individuals who lived through them and forged networks and cultures of security at the time. The stories of these historical actors—who range from a lonely sultan to a Caucasian slave, from a swashbuckling gangster to a leading feudal family in Lebanon or international commissioners sent to Syria—serve as an analytical window to ‘see through life’ the connections between what may otherwise be considered as separate episodes of violence taking place in different historical epochs.<sup>56</sup> As ‘connected singularities’, they not only highlight the degree of the complexity of such historical entanglements, but also serve as facilitators that deem these complex histories more intelligible and even relatable.<sup>57</sup>

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The book is divided into three parts which follow a loose chronological order. Part I, ‘*Avant le mot*’, discusses in three chapters the beginnings of Great Power

social-scientific overview of the notions of conflict, war, small war, and civil war, see Jolle Demmers, *Theories of Violent Conflict: An Introduction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> Backzo et al., *Civil War in Syria*, 14.

<sup>56</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris, ‘Why Biography?’, *American Historical Review* 114(3) (June 2009): 625–30, at 626.

<sup>57</sup> In this respect, this book unintentionally follows the ‘biographical turn’ in Middle Eastern historiography, following the compelling works of Philliou, Fortna, and Sajdi: Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Benjamin C. Fortna, *The Circassian: A Life of Eşref Bey, Late Ottoman Insurgent and Special Agent* (London: C. Hurst, 2016); Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013). For a very insightful review of these books, see Metin Atmaca, ‘Biography, Global Microhistory, and the Ottoman Empire in World History’, *Journal of World History* 30(1) (2019): 1–8. This being said, in using life stories as a narrative tool to render complex histories more intelligible, I have found inspiration in the work of Robert Nemes, *Another Hungary: The Nineteenth-Century Provinces in Eight Lives* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016). I would like to thank Christian de Vito and Laura Almagor for inspiring me to think of life stories as connectors between diverse singularities. For a nuanced discussion of the notion of ‘connected singularities,’ see Christian de Vito, ‘History Without Scale: The Micro-Spatial Perspective’, *Past & Present*, Supplement 14 (2019): 348–72.

interventions in the eighteenth century under the shadow of the unfolding Eastern Question. It considers the origins of the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 in relation to changing perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in the European imagination as a source of danger (Chapter 1). It discusses how the occupation was received in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul and how the Napoleonic wars affected Ottoman conceptions of security under Selim III (Chapter 2), before explaining the outbreak of a tripartite civil war in Egypt in 1802–11 that followed the 1798 expedition (Chapter 3).

Part II, ‘The Invention of the Eastern Question’, places under scrutiny the implications of the formation of the Vienna Order in Europe for the Levant at the time when the term ‘Eastern Question’ was coined and gradually became prevalent in international political parlance. It considers the attempts in Vienna and Istanbul in 1814–15 to guarantee the territorial integrity of the sultan’s empire under European public law, and, how, after this attempt failed, the European Powers intervened in the Greek ‘crisis’ in 1827 (Chapter 4). This is followed by an analysis of the influence of the 1827 intervention over the outbreak of another, larger-scale civil war in the Ottoman world, between Cairo and Istanbul (Chapter 5). It charts how this civil war was temporarily quelled by the active intervention of Russia in 1833 and the establishment of her dominant influence in Istanbul (Chapter 6). It continues with the Porte’s efforts to enlist Great Power support to its cause against Cairo and to end Russian control over its politics by means of domestic reform, such as the proclamation of the Gülhane Edict in 1839 and signing free trade treaties with European powers (Chapter 7). The second part concludes with the 1840 intervention of the Quadruple Alliance (Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia), which consisted of instigating a rebellion in Mount Lebanon and launching a military mission in Syria, with the purpose of definitively suppressing Egyptian objectives, though at the risk of a general European war (Chapter 8).

In Part III, ‘The Mountain’, the book shifts its perspective from high politics in the imperial metropolises to Mount Lebanon, which during the 1840 intervention became the epicentre of the Eastern Question. Concentrating on the Jumblatts, a Druze family that had lived through wars and violence in the Levant for centuries, it considers how the intervention changed the lives of the Lebanese themselves. It evaluates the beginnings of class and sectarian violence in Ottoman Lebanon during the early decades of the century (Chapter 9). This final part of the book then details inter-imperial competition in the mountain and the Ottoman efforts to reform, both of which brought the Eastern Question within the feudal manors. The competition provoked a new cycle of civil wars in 1841, 1842, and 1845, years which witnessed legal and administrative interventions from the Great Powers (Chapter 10), and a particularly brutal episode in 1860 (Chapter 11), which, after a

very fierce diplomatic and propaganda tug of war (Chapter 12), prompted another armed intervention that was accompanied by an international commission on Syria (Chapter 13). The book ends as it began, with the experience of the commissioners, of Rehfues and his companions, and how their work embodied the forging of a new culture of security, before concluding with the implications of the genealogy of Great Power interventions in the Levant: what do the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ordeals tell us about the region and the world today?

