1   Religion as the Site of the Colonial Encounter

Sitt Naaify came down and entered the serail about an hour after sunset. It was dark. She called for a lamp. It was brought her. Ordering it to be held up before her, she for a long time feasted her eyes on the ghastly sight. Several hundred mangled corpses lay heaped up over each other before her. "Well done my good and faithful Druzes," she exclaimed; "this is just what I expected from you." The women and some of the Shehab emirs who had hidden in their own harem, now thronged around her. The latter kissed her feet and implored her for pardon and forgiveness. She told them all to follow her. The Turks were all this time seen flitting about like spectres through the court, under the cover of darkness, turning over the dead bodies, if perchance they might grope up some plunder; and wherever life yet lingered, giving the *coup de grâce.*

> Charles H. Churchill, *The Druzes and the Maronites under the Turkish Rule from 1840 to 1860* (1862)

In the hills of Mount Lebanon, a few miles from the scene of this massacre, a Christian man, Salim Shawish, wondered if a similar fate awaited him and his family. For in his own home sat a Druze notable who, sword and musket within easy reach, announced that he had come to "save some persons and kill others." It was nearing the end of the Islamic calendar year 1276, the early summer of 1860 by Christian reckoning. The setting was the prosperous but ill-fated town of Dayr al-Qamar—the "city of the mountain" in local parlance—which lay at the heart of a murderous struggle between the Druzes and Maronites of Mount Lebanon. The war pitted neighbor against neighbor, forcing a sense of communal segregation on a society that had hitherto thrived on everyday contact and mixture. With this multicommunal heritage in mind and with the knowledge of how things were ordinarily meant to be, Salim begged the Druze lord, whose family, the Abu Nakads, had once made (and were now reasserting) undisputed claim to the town under siege, to protect him; he brought the notable coffee, prepared him a meal, and smoked with him, and then offered him

silver inkstands, watches, jewels, and whatever else of value he had, in an effort to keep him in his home. The symbols of prestige and social order in Mount Lebanon, hospitality and the serving of coffee, continued in the house of a wealthy Christian, while outside, Druzes battled Christians and turned their world upside down.[1]

When the war ended toward the end of June, some two hundred of an estimated seven hundred villages were left pillaged, churches and convents had been razed, and Druze religious sanctuaries were desecrated. The Druzes had carried the day, cleansing whole towns of their Christian inhabitants. When Muslims in Damascus rioted soon after to protest increasing European influence in their city, thousands more Christians were slaughtered in the ugliest urban violence of nineteenth-century Syria. The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire was made to hear what one chronicler described as the "sighs of Syria."[2] For unlike natural contagions, unlike the plagues and the locusts, unlike the feuds of old and the palace coups that somehow always fit into the order of things, the events of 1860 entered bloodstained into the history of the Ottoman East, altering it forever.

In the pages that follow, I reconstruct the history of modern sectarian identity in Ottoman Mount Lebanon, which provided the stage on which the cataclysmic violence in 1860 was enacted. The story begins many years earlier, when local Lebanese society was opened, and indeed opened itself, to Ottoman and European discourses of reform that made religion the site of a colonial encounter between a self-styled "Christian" West and what it saw as its perennial adversary, an "Islamic" Ottoman Empire. This encounter profoundly altered the meaning of religion in the multiconfessional society of Mount Lebanon because it emphasized sectarian identity as the only viable marker of political reform and the only authentic basis for political claims. The story is of the symbiosis between indigenous traditions and practices—in which religion was enmeshed in complex social and political relations—and Ottoman modernization, which became paramount in reshaping the political self-definition of each community along religious lines. From the outset, therefore, it is imperative to dispel any illusion that sectarianism is simply or exclusively a native malignancy or a foreign conspiracy. Sectarianism can be narrated only by continually acknowledging and referring to both indigenous and imperial histories, which interacted— both collided and collaborated—to produce a new historical imagination.

Sectarianism is a modern story, and, for those intimately involved in its unfolding, it is *the* modern story—a story that has and that continues to

define and dominate their lives. Although this book records a history that transpires in rural Mount Lebanon, it has many parallels in Ayodhya, Kosovo, and Belfast. It is all about location in a modern world, where the margins can become centers. The violence of 1860, as I hope will become clear, took place not only between Maronite and Druze communities but also within these communities in an attempt to define their own respective boundaries in an era of upheaval. I am most interested in this story within the story: namely the struggle over communal representation that was reflected in episodes of intracommunal social violence that constituted a fundamental part of broader religious violence across sectarian communities. In short, I illustrate the contests over the meaning of religion as it entered the political sphere between 1840 and 1860. I elaborate on the contradictions in, and the failure of, the attempt to create uncomplicated and pure sectarian identities that were at once private and public, communal and national, elite and subaltern, modern and traditional.

This task, however, is not easily undertaken precisely because the warfare of 1860 and, of course, the destruction of Lebanon in our own times have given scholars and laypersons alike the distinct impression that the Lebanese problem is fundamentally tribal, that sectarianism is a disease that prevents modernization, that Lebanon is, in the final analysis, a metaphor for a failed nationalism in the non-Western world. What has been studied (with good reason) has been the geopolitics of conflict, which has always assumed inert, unchanging sectarian identities. In the aftermath of the strife of 1860, for example, as news of the events trickled into Istanbul and from there was forwarded to the European capitals, there emerged a general revulsion at the wholesale massacre of Christian inhabitants of the Empire. To a large degree, the reaction of Ottoman statesmen stemmed from the fact that the two decades before the massacres of 1860 had been a period of Ottoman modernization. Aware of the Ottoman Empire's image as the "sick man of Europe," the Sultan and his ministers had decreed in 1839 that all subjects were equal before the law regardless of their religion. This move and other reforms in the administration known collectively as the *Tanzimat* were calculated to satisfy European demands for the protection of the Christian communities and to inculcate a notion of a national and secular subjecthood. The local Christian subjects, in other words, had become yardsticks of the modernization of the Ottoman Empire: their slaughter dealt the imperial reform process a cruel blow. An exasperated Fuad Pasha, the Ottoman minister for foreign affairs sent to investigate the massacres, insisted that the conflict in Mount Lebanon was an "age-old" struggle between tribal communities whose "ignorance" had
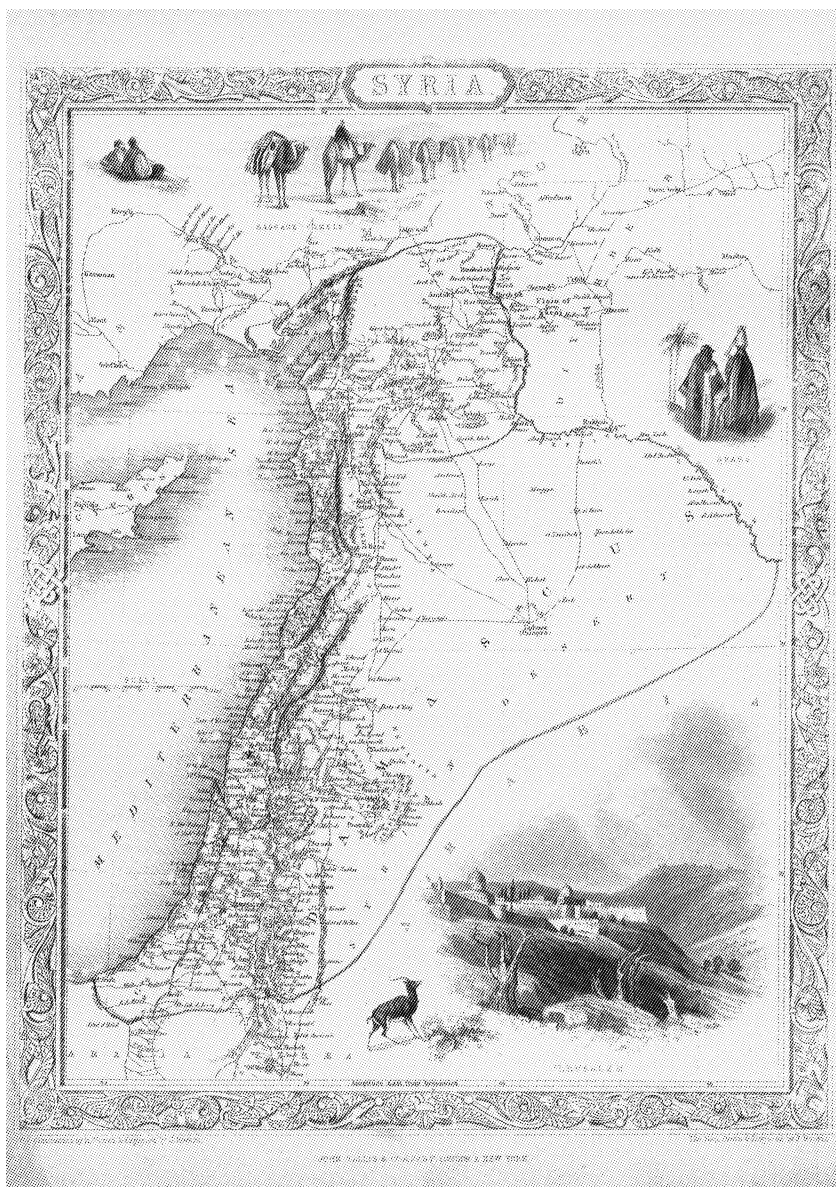
Map 1.   Syria. (From *The Illustrated Atlas, and Modern History of the World,
Geographical, Political, Commercial, and Statistical: Index Gazetteer of the World.*
London: John Tallis and Co., 1851)

interrupted the reform movement.[3] For their part, Europeans who took any interest in the affairs of the Ottomans fused the Damascus outbreak in July and the Lebanese massacres which preceded it in June into a single indication of the primordial passions of the local inhabitants. Karl Marx mused that the Lebanon events were little more than "atrocious outrages of wild tribes," while a French Jesuit publication declared that the events of 1860 were clearly propelled by the Druze "hatred of the Catholic religion and the fanaticism of the Muslims."[4] For both Europeans and Ottomans locked in a struggle over the meaning and direction of the reform and progress of the Ottoman Empire, the events in Syria were in and of themselves outside the realm of rationality and history. Rather, as Lord Dufferin, the British aristocrat charged by his government to investigate the massacres, put it, "Think of what a thousand years have done for England, France, Germany and the rest of Europe. . . . Then turn to the changeless East, and behold the contrast. Time there seems almost to be shorn of his wings, and all things remain as they have ever been."[5]

Since the nineteenth century, historians of many different persuasions have scrutinized these events and have continued to link a rural conflict in Mount Lebanon to the urban riot in Damascus. In varying degrees, and with a difference in emphasis, the root causes of the violence have been delineated by scholars consumed with one overriding question: why has the Middle East failed to modernize, to develop, and most important, to secularize? The foregone conclusion has been that the violence represents the triumph of tradition, manifested as sectarianism, over the modern ideals of coexistence and tolerance; and all efforts have gone toward explaining the conditions under which this so-called tradition could reemerge with such devastating consequences. Even the most nuanced of analyses assumes that sectarian identities and mobilizations operate outside of history, that local inhabitants are either tolerant or intolerant, that there are many social, economic, or political "root causes" which are historical, but that the violence which devastated mid-nineteenth-century Mount Lebanon was only a reaction to these modern historical events, an explosion, a calamity, above all, an anarchical upsurge of ancient loyalties among unthinking subjects.[6]

This scholarly presumption of a religious violence devoid of social and cultural meaning is reflected (often urgently in countries on the brink of destruction because of sectarian hostilities) in secular nationalist writing that seeks to distance itself from moments of extreme religious expression.[7] Turkish historiography, for example, has depicted the troubles in Mount Lebanon strictly as a consequence of European political intrigue

against an emerging Turkish (Ottoman) nation.[8] For its part, Lebanese and Arab historiography has blamed Ottoman policies of divide and rule for the consequent religious divisions that continue to haunt the quest for Lebanese and Arab unity.[9] Both historiographies, in fact, view sectarian violence as an unwelcome blemish (even a stain) on the nation's "past" and a temporary setback on the road to national liberation and modernization. Moreover, both historiographies consider intercommunal religious strife to be the ultimate negation of the transhistorical virtues of tolerance, diversity, and coexistence, which are supposedly embodied in Turkish and Arab nationalism. This nationalist approach to sectarianism, which poses a tolerant and secular modernity against a resurgent religious fundamentalism, has itself to be historicized. I do not see the episodes of religious violence between 1840 and 1860 as symptomatic of the failure of a nation or nationalism but as an expression of a new form of local politics and knowledge that arose in a climate of transition and reform in the mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire and that laid the foundations for a (later) discourse of nationalist secularism.

While my work necessarily builds on the abundant scholarship on religious violence and depends on a historical narrative of Ottoman modernization long charted by historians, my goal here is to shift the emphasis away from narratives which transform victimized communities into Girardesque scapegoats, available targets of a Muslim backlash motivated primarily by broad economic and political trends, toward a narrative which returns contingency to a historical process that produced what I call a culture of sectarianism.

In other words, I understand sectarianism to mean two fundamentally related things. First, it is a practice that developed out of, and must be understood in the context of, nineteenth-century Ottoman reform. Second, it is a discourse that is scripted as the Other to various competing Ottoman, European, and Lebanese narratives of modernization. Sectarianism emerged as a practice when Maronite and Druze elites, Europeans and Ottomans struggled to define an equitable relationship of the Druze and Maronite "tribes" and "nations" to a modernizing Ottoman state. It emerged when the old regime of Mount Lebanon, which was dominated by an elite hierarchy in which secular rank rather than religious affiliation defined politics, was discredited in the mid-nineteenth century. The collapse of the old regime opened up the space for a new form of politics and representation based on a language of religious equality. This transformation privileged the religious community rather than elite status as the basis for

any project of modernization, citizenship, and civilization. Concomitantly, sectarianism also developed as a discourse—as the set of assumptions and writings that described this changing subjectivity within a narrative of Ottoman, European, and Lebanese modernization.[10]

Because sectarianism refers to the deployment of religious heritage as a primary marker of modern political identity, it is important to distinguish it from religious confrontations that occurred in the medieval and early modern world (for instance, between Huguenots and Catholics in France).[11] Understood this way, in its modern context, sectarianism can no longer be taken for granted as a self-evident phenomenon, as it has been for too long. It cannot be caused by a single event or person, for it is ultimately an act of interpretation that shapes as well as is shaped by religious mobilizations and violence in the modern world. To appreciate the contingency and complexity of sectarianism as it emerged as both a practice and a discourse we must investigate the connections between, and the contradictions in, sectarian actions and metaphors deployed by Maronites and Druzes, elites and nonelites, Ottomans and Westerners.

Since the publication of Ranajit Guha's seminal essay, "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," and more recently Partha Chatterjee's study of Indian nationalism, scholars have developed a powerful critique of nationalist assumptions by demonstrating how elitist nationalist knowledge, including the depictions of sectarian mobilizations, derive from colonial logic.[12] Yet despite all the focus on the subaltern as a vehicle to criticize the elitism embedded in nationalist discourse, there has been a tendency to discuss colonialism and nationalism as fully formed projects that seem to automatically produce all sorts of resistance.[13] Sectarianism as I see it is not simply a "form of colonialist knowledge" (as Gyanendra Pandey has asserted in the context of the historiography of communalism in India) nor a reality which can be traced to some precolonial past.[14] It is, rather, an intermingling of both precolonial (before the age of Ottoman reform) and postcolonial (during and after the age of reform) understandings, metaphors, and realities that has to be dissected at at least two overlapping and mutually reinforcing levels, of the elite and nonelite. In other words, sectarianism is a modernist knowledge in the sense that it was produced in the context of European hegemony and Ottoman reforms and because its articulators at a colonial (European), imperial (Ottoman), and local (Lebanese) level regarded themselves as moderns who used the historical past to justify present claims and future development. Insofar as sectarianism is indeed a colonialist knowledge, it is also and fundamentally both an

imperial Ottoman knowledge and a local nationalist knowledge that are not produced following or in reaction to colonialism but at the same time as colonialist knowledge.

It follows that the colonial encounter being described here is less a relation of power mediated by various degrees of resistance than a location of cultural interaction—a "contact zone"—consciously exploited by the natives for their own material benefit.[15] Rather than positing a dichotomy between colonizer and colonized, where some of the colonized become labeled *collaborators*, it is more fruitful to study colonialism in the case of the late Ottoman Empire as an arena of exchange, where collaboration is not simply an act of individual betrayal of the "nation" to a colonial power but a much more open-ended affair, the norm at a general level rather than the exception at an individual one. France and Britain did not arrive (in this case at least) in the Ottoman Empire unannounced, gunboats in harbor, to "open" the Levant. Instead, Britain, France, and the Ottomans regulated different aspects of the colonial encounter; this regulation presented the indigenous inhabitants of Mount Lebanon with avenues for reinterpreting their own history, their own communal self-definition, and ultimately their own rigid social order. Power, of course, was crucial because the encounter was never equal; the flow of transformative ideologies and practices headed mostly from Istanbul, Paris, and London to Mount Lebanon, where the consequence of this exchange, sectarianism as both a knowledge and a practice, was produced.

THE CONTEXT OF REFORM

The imperial discourses of reform that encroached on Mount Lebanon sprang from two distinct sources. Generally speaking, the first was European and the second Ottoman; their simultaneous arrival in Mount Lebanon in the mid-nineteenth century heralded the beginnings of its sectarian question. For the European statesmen who pored over maps of the unreformed and unconquered Ottoman Empire, the idea of intervention in the affairs of the Ottomans was integrally linked to the notions of philanthropy, despotism, and freedom that were most forcefully and eloquently formulated in the nineteenth century.[16] In an age when classical Orientalism was giving way to Thomas Macaulay's polemics on India, when Europe's military, economic, and industrial developments were thought to stem from a civilizational and cultural (as well as racial) superiority, it was perhaps inevitable that the Ottoman Empire's vast territories were confronted with what John Stuart Mill characterized as the sacred duty of in-

tervention in "nations which are still barbarous" where it was "likely to be for their own benefit that they should be conquered and held in subjection by foreigners."[17]

To Mill and to other European thinkers of his time, colonial rule offered the most effective method of ensuring the spread of civilization. In their minds, Christian European despotism was strategic and measured, an extension of European civilization, whereas Oriental despotism was understood as fanatical and all-encompassing, not an extension but the essence of Asian civilization. In the enactment of colonial rule in India, as in Egypt, therefore, a "positive" European despotism was summoned to crush the older and more entrenched "Asiatic" despotism. European intervention was progressive in the sense that, as Marx phrased it, England forcibly brought about the "regeneration" of India by destroying its prehistory—that is, the history of endlessly recurring dynastic despotism.[18] The language of reform informed a whole spectrum of European involvement with the non-European world as Europeans attempted to right what they perceived to be wrong, immoral, and injurious to the natural flow of human history.[19]

In the Ottoman Empire, however, the debate over intervention and nonintervention took a most interesting turn. Although the empire was not formally colonized by European powers, colonial ideologies were very much in place, legitimizing the use of overwhelming force (at Navarino in 1827, for instance) to force the Ottomans to comply with European pressure.[20] Not surprisingly, an ample stock of racial and cultural stereotypes clearly demarcated the Ottoman as inferior, premodern, and corrupt, at best a "wily barbarian."[21] But there was also a realization, following what Metternich termed the "frightful catastrophe" at Navarino, that the Ottomans could be pushed only so far, that their sovereignty could be compromised only so much before they were left too weak to defend themselves from foreign invasion.[22] The problem that presented itself, therefore, was how to bring "advancement" to the Empire without disrupting the European balance of power.

For European statesmen and historians, the reformation of the Ottoman Empire stemmed almost entirely from Europe's sense of civilizing mission.[23] "Europe is at hand," declared Stratford Canning, one of the self-proclaimed architects of Ottoman reforms, "with its science, its labour, and its capital. The Koran, the harem, and a Babel of languages, are no doubt so many obstacles to advancement in a Western sense."[24] Religion, as I have already mentioned, became the site of the colonial encounter in the Ottoman Empire in that European officials defined the parameters of reform

through a modernization discourse couched in terms of a religious civilizational clash. Both the problem (Islam) and the solution (European Christian rationality) were defined in monolithic religious terms. Furthermore, diplomats like Canning imagined the Empire not so much as a multiethnic and multireligious territory but as a Muslim state with large "minorities" of Christians scattered in various cities and provinces. This understanding of the Empire as a "mosaic" where ethnic and religious groups existed as separate and autonomous cultural and physical units was embedded in Canning's description of the local Christians as the "subjugated classes."[25] To "free" the native Christians, the ambassadors and consuls of the Great Powers spoke on their behalf, plucked them from the obscurity (and complexity) of their everyday existence, and depicted them simply as the victims of unbending Muslim dominion. As a result, and in spite of the fact that European consuls and missionaries bewailed the "degenerate" nature of Oriental Christianity and its bigoted and uneducated priesthood, they nevertheless considered the local Christian populations as barometers by which to measure the success or failure of reform.[26]

Ottoman statesmen broached the problem of reform from an altogether different trajectory. As they were elaborated in 1839 and 1856, the reforms pursued by the Sublime Porte represented a fundamentally imperial project of centralization and an effort to build an avowedly modern state. After the eighteenth century, which had witnessed fragmentation of imperial control, new laws were called for to improve security, end corruption, rationalize taxation, and regularize army service. Following the rise of Mehmed Ali, in fact in direct response to the threat posed to the empire by its rebellious vassal in the 1830s, Sultan Abdülmecid proclaimed the Gülhane edict in 1839.[27] The basic aim of the Gülhane decree and others which followed, known collectively as the *Tanzimat*, was to reform the administration and reorganize the Empire in an effort to maintain its territorial integrity. It stipulated an equitable taxation of subjects according to their means and pledged to ensure their security and property. It also specifically declared the juridical equality of all subjects—hence the equality of Muslims with Christians— but framed this bold declaration within a discourse of a revitalization of Islamic tradition. The underlying assumption of the *Tanzimat* was that reforms could be enacted without any mediation from the outside world, that the Sultan's will was absolute, and that all his subjects did not participate in any decision making but partook of his imperial benevolence. The Gülhane decree of 1839 reinforced the notion of the Sultan as a fair arbitrator for all his subjects. From an Ottoman standpoint the Gülhane proclamation did not herald a negation of the past as

much as it sought to set a new direction by advocating a secular Ottoman subjecthood within a modernized yet extremely hierarchical Islamic state. The *Tanzimat* looked both forward and backward and encompassed both old and new. Thus, even as European statesmen insisted that the *Tanzimat* ushered in a new era of rational government that necessarily abandoned an allegedly archaic, immoral, and stagnant Oriental culture, the Ottomans understood the *Tanzimat* as a vehicle to enter the modern world with a conserved and modernized tradition.[28]

Although reforming Ottoman statesmen tried to redefine their empire as an Islamic state within an orbit of friendly foreign powers (*düvel-i fahime ve mülakat-ı dostane*), they were still confronted with the problem of elaborating a notion of modern Ottoman sovereignty in an age of European hegemony. At no point in its history was the Empire more vulnerable than at this critical moment of transition, when Mehmed Ali's armies threatened the Empire with dismemberment and the Russian armies had marched to the outskirts of Istanbul. And at no point had the European powers ever assembled as much data or as many facts and anecdotes regarding the perceived oppression of the native Christians. The upshot was that just as the Ottomans were moving away from a vaguely defined *millet* system, in which the Sunni Muslims were treated as socially and culturally superior to the other communities of the Empire, and were moving toward a more integrative form of government, the Europeans favored and intervened on behalf of the Christians.[29]

Such contradictions were most apparent in regions like Mount Lebanon, which was home to a large Christian population. Long neglected by Ottoman officials as a backwater of the imperial domains, Mount Lebanon's biblical landscape appealed to foreign missionaries while its similarity to the Highlands moved British (especially Scottish) travelers, and its allegedly counterrevolutionary spirituality attracted those refugees fleeing from the secularization of France.[30] Perceived by European powers as a mountain refuge in which they had a historical, religious, and increasingly strategic stake, nineteenth-century Mount Lebanon became the location for a host of competing armies and ideologies and for totally contradictory interpretations of the meaning of reform. This context of flux created the conditions for sectarianism to arise not as a coherent force but as a reflection of fractured identities, pulled hither and thither by the enticements and coercions of Ottoman and European power. Mount Lebanon at midcentury was a peripheral region drawn toward multiple metropoles. The European powers promoted their Christianity as a method of access to the indigenous people, while the Ottoman state relied on the tenuous bonds of

loyalty (or such that theoretically existed) of a marginal population that inhabited the fringes of the imperial imagination. In recognition of their sudden elevation to a matter of international concern, the people of Mount Lebanon actively participated in the struggle over modernity. They were as transformed as their surroundings. They took advantage of the presence of the various imperial powers by declaring themselves to be both European protégés and loyal Ottoman subjects. But they were themselves confronted by a latent contradiction in the Gülhane decree that became more apparent as it was translated across the social spectrum and as it traveled from center to periphery: the contradiction between a notion of equality before the law regardless of rank and station that was guaranteed by the state and a rigid adherence to a hierarchical and inviolable social order, without which there could be no state. Because the *Tanzimat* was generated in the nebulous space between an imperial will and the colonial interventions of several European powers, there were several understandings, translations, and fragmentations of imperial discourses of reform as they traveled from center to periphery and back again.[31] The story of sectarianism that I have chosen to tell, therefore, is one of divergent local understandings of the imperial reform process that both reaffirmed local order and subverted it in the years leading up to, and including, 1860.

SOURCES AND STRUCTURE OF ARGUMENT

Like most historians of the nineteenth century, I am faced with a prolific colonial archive which has quite literally dominated the writing of Middle Eastern history. The plethora of missionary accounts, consular reports, travelogues, accounts of scientific expeditions, and personal memoirs constitute an undeniably rich historical record. The question of how to read such sources productively (a task made immeasurably easier following the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*) in order to script a story of sectarianism that their authors would never have countenanced is certainly one goal of this book. But to read Charles Churchill's *The Druze and Maronites under the Turkish Rule* against the grain—to contextualize (and at the same time dispute) the power of his claim "to fathom the pervading mind, as it were, of the two great sects" of Mount Lebanon—recourse must be made to the available indigenous archive.[32] Unlike many historians who study what Hugh Trevor-Roper once mocked as "the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe," I am fortunate to have before me a wealth of largely untapped Ottoman and Lebanese materials.[33] I say untapped because although most

of these sources are known to historians and many of them have been used to great effect, they have been utilized in one of two restricted fashions. Either they are read to produce a "native" account to be examined alongside Churchill's, or they are deployed to counter Churchill's narrative with the aim of replacing it with a more authentic (and often nationalist) rendition of events. Neither of these approaches is satisfactory, for they do not exploit the richness embedded within Churchill's narrative, nor do they even begin to explore the complexity of the local sources. To do both, to read colonial history juxtaposed with its imperial Ottoman and local Lebanese counterparts and to make them together divulge the layers, the contingency, and the contradictions of the modernity of sectarianism is to do them at the same time. Therefore, this book constantly weaves back and forth between a variety of sources, constructing a narrative out of the interplay of their differences.

The next two chapters contrast European perceptions of Mount Lebanon as a mountainous refuge indomitably holding out against an Islamic despotism (Chapter 2) with local understandings of Mount Lebanon's rural world, in which a hierarchy of notables dominated a social order at the periphery of the Ottoman Empire (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 illustrates how conflicting notions of reform, in an era of Eastern Question politics, undermined the traditional order. Then I investigate how Mount Lebanon was reinvented in sectarian terms by rival elites after the Europeans and Ottomans decided to partition it along religious lines in 1842 (Chapter 5), only to suggest an alternative reading of the emerging sectarian landscape (Chapter 6); this chapter examines the role and proclamations of Tanyus Shahin, the leader of a Maronite peasant uprising in 1859, to demonstrate the limits and possibilities of popular interpretations of Ottoman reform. The point is to interpret the sectarian violence in 1860 not as a tribal eruption (as Ottoman and European observers would have it) but as an integral part of the redefinition of new communal and social boundaries (Chapter 7). Chapter 8 analyzes the state-sponsored violence unleashed by Ottoman officials following 1860 with the full support of the European powers as a final (and successful) attempt to reestablish social order and to suppress the popular interpretations of reform, thereby leaving the local elites (and their Ottoman and European guardians) as the only "legitimate" players in formal politics. In the Epilogue, I discuss the relationship between sectarianism and nationalism, underscoring my contention that sectarianism as an idea draws meaning only within a nationalist paradigm and hence that it belongs to our modern world.

Although I use a rough chronological narrative that makes obligatory

stops at the major turning points of the era, including the Egyptian inva-
sion of Syria in 1831, the uprising against the Egyptians in 1839 and the
Ottoman restoration of 1840, the partition of Mount Lebanon in 1842, the
Kisrawan rebellion of 1858–1859, and the war of 1860, the point here is
not to retell what is already a well-known narrative of local history. I do
not delve into many episodes of violence (for example, those of 1845), just
as I do not fully explore many angles (such as the economic). Instead, I
have deliberately chosen to focus on one theme of a complex history, the
construction of sectarianism as an idea and its beginnings as a practice in
Mount Lebanon. For this reason, the argument developed here deliberately
eschews any comparison between the violence in 1860 Mount Lebanon
with other intercommunal hostilities, such as those of Aleppo in 1850 or
even those of Damascus in 1860, primarily because the cases of Aleppo and
Damascus had little relevance to the events in Mount Lebanon, which as an
autonomous rural region enjoyed its own specificities and its own cultural
and historical trajectory.[34] My cutoff date of 1860 is not at all meant to in-
dicate a closure to the question of sectarian identity. Instead, I consider it
the end of the foundational period of a sectarian culture that continued
through the late Ottoman period and into the nationalist era.

My emphasis on Druzes and Maronites, as opposed to Orthodox Chris-
tians or Shiʿa, is done with some trepidation, although it is justified by the
fact that they were the two principal communities of Mount Lebanon in-
volved in sectarian violence. Whenever possible, I have tried to utilize doc-
uments from the period itself. The extremely rich archives of the Maronite
patriarchate proved invaluable, and recourse to the Başbakanlık (Ottoman)
archives, where thousands of Ottoman and Arabic documents on Mount
Lebanon are preserved, as well as to the British and French consular corre-
spondence and a variety of missionary sources helped illuminate the layers
of sectarian identity with which I am centrally concerned.

My greatest disappointment, however, is that I have not been able to
write about the sectarian aspirations of the Druze community. This left-
out account, I must also acknowledge from the beginning, is the crucial as-
pect of the history that must one day be unearthed before the tale of sec-
tarianism can be told in its fullest sense. A relatively poor Druze
historiography has forced me to rely on the Abu Shaqra chronicle *Al-
Harakat fi Lubnan ila ʿahd al-Mutasarrifiyya*, which was narrated, tran-
scribed, and edited several decades after 1860.[35] I have had to choose be-
tween telling an incomplete history and not telling it at all. I have chosen
to tell what I can.