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While the research for this book began in 2007 during my Ph.D. studies, its preliminary questions germinated when I first started visiting my family in Beirut after the end of the Lebanese Civil War. I had grown up hearing about them and their city, and was confused by the stories of transformations that had taken place. Yet, throughout all those wartime and postwar changes, with their shifting political allegiances and boundary (re)makings, one thing did not change: my family's presence. I once asked my late great-uncle Sarkis why he never moved – even within the space of the city. He looked at me as if he didn't understand my question, and responded in turn with a rhetorical question of his own: 'Why would I?'

By the time I started this work, Sarkis had passed away, but I continued to spend hours at my family's house. By then they had changed neighbourhoods from Zokak al-Blat to nearby Zarif. Their landlord had sold the old Ottoman-style house in which they lived on the top floor to develop a high rise in its place. Although change had come, their move was also a mark of continuity for Beirut. Their new apartment was owned by a Jewish family living in France, a family that had left Beirut, but did not want Beirut to leave them. My family's presence facilitated this bond, and, in turn, their new home enabled my family to remain in a familiar neighbourhood.

And so I came to observe and become a part of their daily life in between Zokak al-Blat and Zarif. I made my own experiences as I moved between Beirut's spaces as well: from the libraries of the American University of Beirut and Haigazian University, to the archives of *Aztag*, *Zartong* and *Ararad*, the Armenian dailies; from the archives of the Prelacy of the Armenian Church in Bourj Hamoud to those housed at the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias. I immersed myself in their daily news, their 'main stories' and behavioural counsels, travel and product advertisements, foreign news, film debuts, telegrams and personal correspondences. And then, I would leave the 1940s and

1950s behind – or so I thought – and enter the world of my family, who had lived through those very years and were part of the ‘news’ I was now studying, and who, in a way, represented its continued relevance and presence in the everyday life of Beirut and its people. Thank you to Shakeh Artin, Mako Oundjian, Seta Hadichian, Serge Artin, Dalida Adjemian, Gassia Artin, Vicken Baghdassarian, Dani Shukri, Sonia Wartanian and to those who have passed on, Sosse and Sarkis Oundjian. Thank you also to Sandra Habchi and Alain Bifani, Lara Anawati, Cynthia Habchi and Mado Anawati.

Wonderfully, luckily, my family is not limited to lineage, or limited by geography and time.

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Finally, I dedicate this book to the one with whom I created our own family: Cyrus Schayegh. You make it all ok. And fun. How we have combined the two, I'm not sure, but I figure Rosdom's resounding 'Ya!' when I tell him that he is a manifestation of our love ('*Tun mer sern es*') affirms we're doing lots of things right. And I'm just sure that Nazani will agree, once she becomes more verbal!

While I stand on the shoulders of so many, any faults of the work are my own.