context and for intellectuals to avoid studying Islam through a Western lens and its positivist meta-theoretical commitments.

William Harris. *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*  

In *Lebanon*, William Harris, a recognized scholar of the Levant, provides a nuanced narrative of this often fractious nation. Harris is on particularly strong ground when he traces the evolution of the complex confessional system upon which the modern Lebanese state is based. The maps delineating the locations of the various sectarian groups over several centuries are particularly useful as is the opening glossary and chronology. Harris effectively debunks a number of national myths popularized by many, particularly the Maronites. He concludes that “political sectarianism resulted from European interaction with the Ottomans and local society, disconnected from preceding sectarian identity” (281). This analysis is certain to vex some while pleasing others within the complex Lebanese polity. Harris stresses that although communal political claims only emerged after 1800 sectarian divisions remain firmly entrenched in Lebanese identity even though many Lebanese aver that they want a nonsectarian system. Thus it seems likely that the confessional system will remain entrenched in the Lebanese political system for the foreseeable future.