In Ghana, justice emanates from the people and is administered in the name of the Republic by the Judiciary, which shall be independent and subject only to the Constitution. At the head of the judiciary is the Supreme Court. The work of the Supreme Court has far reaching implications not only for Ghana law, but also many aspects of national life. The peoples’ constitutionally declared and affirmed commitment to the rule of law, freedom, justice, probity, accountability and the protection and preservation of human rights will come to nothing without a strong judiciary and, a fortiori, the Supreme Court. There have been disparate articles examining various cases decided by the Supreme Court, and one book focused specifically on the role of the Supreme Court in the development of constitutional law in Ghana. However, to date, an all encompassing and global assessment of the court and its jurisprudence has been lacking. It is against this background that Justice Samuel Date-Bah’s book, Reflections on the Supreme Court of Ghana, is timely and important. It is particularly refreshing that, in addition to his outstanding academic career, the author was also for 10 years a Justice of the Supreme Court. Thus, he brings a very unique and personal perspective to the book.

Chapter one deals with the Supreme Court’s position within Ghana’s judicial system. The author outlines the purpose of the book in the introduction to this chapter, namely ‘to throw light on Ghana’s Supreme Court as an important national governance institution and to make a contribution to comparative law’ [1]. The chapter continues on a comparative note, comparing the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to other apex courts in the United Kingdom, USA, Australia and India. What comes out clearly from that discussion is the

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uniqueness of the Supreme Court vis-à-vis other apex courts, especially in terms of its jurisdiction. As the author observes, this has implications for the work of the court and how it is perceived. There is an extensive treatment of the evolution of the Supreme Court to its present form and within the context of other courts in Ghana's judicial system. As the author perceptively observes, ‘change has ... been the dominant feature of Ghana’s judicial history’ [9]. He admonishes this chequered history should inform the outlook of those charged with responsibility of exercising the court’s jurisdiction. The chapter contains an academically stimulating and legally relevant debate on the issue whether the Supreme Court created by the 1992 Constitution is a ‘new court’ or just a successor of previous courts with similar jurisdiction. The jurisprudence of the court is sharply divided on this issue. The debate has implications for how the doctrine of *stare decisis* operates vis-à-vis the Supreme Court, especially regarding pre-1993 decisions. Quite expectedly, the author reiterates his own decisions and view on the subject, which is that it is a new court. Although this debate is stimulating, as the author rightly acknowledges, its practical impact is mediated by the fact that whether or not it is a new court, decisions of its predecessors continue to exert strong persuasive weight. This concession by the author provides us an early glimpse into his jurisprudential leaning, which is functionalist in orientation.

Another interesting issue addressed in chapter one is the impact of legal education on judges and the jurisprudence of the court. Although the discussion is brief and appears not supported by any detailed empirical study, what comes out clearly is that the way judges are trained and appointed – in Ghana they are appointed directly from among the Bar - influence their jurisprudential outlook and inform their decisions. There is a case for further research on this subject.

Unlike other apex courts around the world, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court is diverse and multiple. They are original jurisdiction (including the reference jurisdiction); the appellate jurisdiction (including appeals from the Judicial Committee of the National House of Chiefs); the supervisory jurisdiction; the review jurisdiction, jurisdiction over electoral petitions and two other jurisdictions. Chapters 2–7 provide a thorough and insightful discussion of each of these jurisdictions. The approach is sometimes comparative: it draws on the experiences of other jurisdictions and exploring issues where because of the unique Ghanaian situation (e.g. the supervisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court) reliance on foreign precedents may not be appropriate. More importantly, the author discusses key issues or debates that have arisen in the context of each jurisdiction, and does not shy away from taking a position or suggesting a way forward.