Although the Muslims of Sub-Saharan Africa have never been strictly isolated from the broader world of Islam, contacts in recent years have been increasing more rapidly than at any time in the past. It is very much a two-way process. Muslim states, especially Arab states and Iran, as well as international Islamic organisations, show their interest in building relationships and influencing the course of Islamisation. At the same time, growing numbers of African Muslims embrace Middle Eastern types of Islamic education, learn Arabic as a language of religious scholarship and are affected by the rising tide of Islamism. Yet many Muslims in Africa do not welcome the Islamists, preferring to adhere to older, localised expressions of Islam, mainly associated with Sufism.

The first of the books under review, a collection of papers edited by David Westerlund and Eva Evers Rosander and entitled African Islam and Islam in Africa, is primarily concerned with these changing patterns produced by the influx and upsurge of Islamism and this is reflected in the book's subtitle Encounters between Sufis and Islamists. The editors are using the term 'African Islam' to designate the predominantly Sufi understandings, while identifying the Islamist tendencies as 'Islam in
Africa'. This works up to a point, but, as Eva Evers Rosander has to admit in her introduction, Islamism is also influencing certain elements within the Sufi orders. One might also add that some prominent Middle Eastern Islamists who have been influential on the African Islamic scene are also identifiable as Sufis or favourable to Sufism, the late Ayatollah Khomeini providing the most eminent example. For some of the papers the subtitle offers an appropriate description, as they are focused on 'encounters' between Sufis with traditions deeply rooted in their African context and more outward-looking Islamists seeking the purification of Islam from African (and Western) beliefs and practices to meet the normative demands of Islamic law, the Shari'a. Other papers are less specifically concerned with encounter, although they do address facets of Sufism or Islamism, mostly in North and West Africa.

Allowing for the difficulties in finding titles which will cover adequately the broad range of papers in this book, the collection as a whole offers a stimulating investigation of the transmutations in Islam taking place in Africa. The appearance of this book at this time is to be warmly welcomed, since it draws attention to the African dimensions of issues which are causing concern throughout the Islamic world and have as yet been insufficiently studied by comparison with the intensive concentration on the relationship between Islamism and the West. The interdisciplinary nature of the book is generally beneficial, its contributors including anthropologists, historians of religion, Arabists and a human rights lawyer.

John Hunwick's opening paper provides a valuable historical and contemporary overview of interactions between the Muslims of Sub-Saharan Africa (mainly Sudan and West Africa) and those of other regions, particularly the Middle East. (The paper had previously appeared in a modified version in this journal in 1996.) Hunwick notes that the Horn and East Africa have been excluded due to insufficient information, and he could have said the same of South Africa. He stresses to good effect the impact of the revolution in information technology, which is opening up Africa to the Islamists, although he also notes that some traditional Sufi leaders have benefited from it. He could, however, have added that it is the Islamists, including Sufi-inclined Islamists, who have the advantage in promoting their cause, since their leaderships more often include educated technocrats who are consciously seeking to extend the scope of their call to the faith (da'wa). The paper is especially helpful as a reference on the activities of the international Islamic organisations operating in Africa with special support from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Libya and Sudan, commonly in competition with one another. The rivalries between Saudi Arabia and Iran for the soul of