

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Aims and methodology	1
The book chapter by chapter	5
Acknowledgements	6
Chapter 1	
Environmental setting	9
Geology and geomorphology	9
Soil types and distribution	12
Water resources	12
Climatic fluctuations and environmental dynamics	13
Vegetation and fauna	14
Chapter 2	
Mapping literary sources: pre-field studies and the location of archaeological evidence	17
Sixteenth to nineteenth century European travellers, missionaries and explorers	17
Archaeological research from the early 20 th century to present time	19
The Deutsche Aksum-Expedition	19
The Italian occupation	21
The Ethiopian Institute of Archaeology	22
The years between 1970 and 1974	23
From the recommencement of archaeological research to date	26
Conclusions	29
Chapter 3	
Acquiring new data: the two survey projects, field strategies and procedures	31
Surveying the landscape: field procedures and data collection	31
The 2005 survey of Bieta Giyorgis and adjacent areas	32
The Ethiopian Cultural Heritage Survey Project	34
Chapter 4	
The archaeological area of Aksum: a reassessment	39
The archaeological area of Aksum: some quantitative analysis	39
Causes of degradation and alteration of the surface exposure of archaeological records in the area of Aksum	42
Taphonomic processes in farming areas	42
Taphonomic processes in forested areas	44
Taphonomic processes in urban areas	44
Taphonomic processes in fallow grounds and pasturelands	45
Conclusions	46
Chapter 5	
Classifying surface archaeological records	47
Site interpretation	47
Chronological classification	52
Conclusions	53
Chapter 6	
Modelling ancient settlement patterns	55
Frequency, dimension and distribution of sites	55
Non-elite residential units and temporary dwellings	55

Elite residential and/or administrative buildings	62
Religious buildings, cemeteries and other ritual places	70
Lithic workshops	71
Infrastructures and landmarks	71
Mestah Werki	76
Chapter 7	
A zoom in on Aksum's ancient city-centre: form and aesthetics of a capital city	77
The monuments of Aksum: an overview	77
Monumental buildings	77
Funerary structures	79
Thrones	80
The urban landscape at Aksum's apogee	81
Conclusions	86
Chapter 8	
Ancient land exploitation strategies and soil erosion dynamics: new evidence from palaeoagricultural and archaeological studies	89
The study-area	89
Palaeoagricultural evidence	90
The contribution of archaeology	91
Abandonment as main cause of soil erosion: historical and ethnographical comparisons	92
Conclusions	94
Chapter 9	
Final overview and future agenda	95
Aksum's development from the early 1 st millennium BCE to the late 1 st millennium CE: a synthesis	95
Beyond Aksum	102
Future agenda and conclusions	103
Appendices	
Appendix 1	
List of the <i>Surface Archaeological Records</i> detected in the area of Aksum during the 2005 survey project of the Italian Archaeological Expedition at Aksum of the University of Naples "L'Orientale"	105
Appendix 2	
Interpretation of the <i>Surface Archaeological Records</i> detected in the area of Aksum during the 2005 survey project of the Italian Archaeological Expedition at Aksum of the University of Naples "L'Orientale"	108
Appendix 3	
Chronological classification of the <i>Surface Archaeological Records</i> detected at Aksum during the 2005 survey project of the Italian Archaeological Expedition at Aksum of the University of Naples "L'Orientale"	111
Appendix 4	
List of the <i>Surface Archaeological Records</i> detected in the area of Aksum during the World Bank Ethiopian Cultural Heritage Project	114
Appendix 5	
Interpretation of the <i>Surface Archaeological Records</i> detected in the area of Aksum during the World Bank Ethiopian Cultural Heritage Project	119
Appendix 6	
Chronological classification of the <i>Surface Archaeological Records</i> detected in the area of Aksum during the World Bank Ethiopian Cultural Heritage Project	124
Bibliography	129