Ethiopianists, who have long called for the integration of Ethiopian history into mainstream African history, will be grateful to McCann for demonstrating that Ethiopian history is more meaningful and historiographically relevant within the framework of a broader African history than in its supposedly unique context. As for substantive contribution, McCann offers refreshing interpretations regarding such issues as the origins of the 1974 revolution and the relationship between politics and agricultural decline, and he puts in perspective assumptions about deforestation, specialized agriculture The Plow and Ethiopian Historical Landscapes 4. From Royal Fields to Marginal Lands: Agriculture in Ankober, Shawa, 1840-1990. 109. 5. The Plow in the Forest: Agriculture, Population, and Maize Monoculture in Gera. In my fieldwork I have been able to reconstruct local society and economy using life histories of farmers who could detail, over widely varying lengths of time, individual cropping strategies, livestock ownership, oxen use, and property transfers occurring as much as two generations ago, reaching back in many cases to the period before the 1935-41 Italian occupation.