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The Afar Volcanic Province within the East African Rift System

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2006
Published by
The Geological Society
London
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Published by The Geological Society from:
The Geological Society Publishing House, Unit 7, Brassmill Enterprise Centre, Brassmill Lane, Bath BA1 3JN, UK

(Orders: Tel. +44 (0)1225 445046, Fax +44 (0)1225 442836)
Online bookshop: www.geolsoc.org.uk/bookshop

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.
ISBN-10 1-86239-196-3
Typeset by Techset Composition, Salisbury, UK
Printed by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, UK.

Distributors

USA
AAPG Bookstore, PO Box 979, Tulsa, OK 74101-0979, USA
Orders: Tel. +1 918 584-2555
Fax +1 918 560-2652
E-mail bookstore@aapg.org

India
Affiliated East-West Press Private Ltd, Marketing Division, G-1/16 Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi 110 002, India
Orders: Tel. +91 11 2327-9113/2326-4180
Fax +91 11 2326-0538
E-mail affiliat@vsnl.com

Japan
Kanda Book Trading Company, Cityhouse Tama 204, Tsurumaki 1-3-10, Tama-shi, Tokyo 206-0034, Japan
Orders: Tel. +81 (0)423 57-7650
Fax +81 (0)423 57-7651
E-mail geokanda@ma.kcom.ne.jp
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Preface

A full understanding of the structure and evolution of the Afar volcanic province requires a number of approaches to be applied, including geophysics, geochemistry, structure, geomorphology and other geoscience disciplines. Adopting this philosophy, we have assembled this collection of papers with the objective of providing an integrated study of the continental rupture processes above asthenospheric upwellings. This special publication of the Geological Society was inspired by an international conference entitled 'The East African Rift System: Geodynamics, Resources and Environment' held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in June 2004. At this meeting, organized by the Ethiopian Geoscience and Mineral Engineering Association, more than 100 geoscientists were treated to 66 presentations on a broad range of topics, including rift geodynamics, geophysics, tectonics, magmatism, sedimentation, environment, geohazards and resources. A number of these papers are included in this volume, which covers various aspects of the deep structure, tectonic and magmatic evolution of the Afar volcanic province (see Introductions to Parts for summaries). The theme reflects a burgeoning interest in the international geoscience concerning the continental rifting and break-up processes associated with a mantle plume. We believe that the papers will help to unify some of the more fragmented aspects of previous research. Also, and in particular, the volume includes research outcomes from the recent Ethiopia Afar Geoscientific Lithospheric Experiment undertaken over the Northern Main Ethiopian Rift, which is believed to represent the transition between continental rifting and seafloor spreading. The results provide details about the structure and physical properties of the crust and upper mantle that have important implications concerning the geodynamics and magmatic evolution of the rift.

We wish to thank all the authors who have submitted manuscripts for their interest and patience in this volume’s production. We would like to gratefully acknowledge reviews by the following colleagues: Massimo D’Antonio, Nicolas Bellahsen, Becky Bendick, Colin Brown, Jon Bull, Eric Calais, Lucy Flesch, Mike Fuller, Tanya Furman, Volker Haak, Zvi Garfunkel, Derek Keir, Randy Keller, Rainer Kind, Bernard LeGall, Sylvie Leroy, Dan Lizarralde, Ray MacDonald, Walter Mooney, Andy Nyblade, Angelo Peccerillo, Tim Redfield, Nick Rogers, Julie Rowland, Andy Saunders, Hans Schouten, Chris Swain, Christel Tiberi, Andrea Tommasi, Trond Torsvik, Christophe Vigny, Dave Wilson, Giday WoldeGabriel, anonymous reviewers, and our series editor, Bob Holdsworth.

The Ethiopian Geoscience and Mineral Engineering Association expresses its gratitude to the following institutions for their collaboration and support in organizing the conference: IGCP 482/489 (International Geological Correlation Program), UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), ILP (International Lithosphere Program), IASPEI (International Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth’s Interior), GSAf (Geological Society of Africa), Project EAGLE (Ethiopian Afar Geoscientific Lithospheric Experiment), The Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission, Addis Ababa University, Midroc Goldmine Plc, Petronas Plc, Si-Tech Plc, Southwest Development Plc, and K and S Plc.

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