

## **Landscape change, social change: market-driven dynamics and glocalized landscapes in pre- to post-colonial Sri Lanka**

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Landscapes are not just palimpsests, they are also hybrids, transformed in a more profound sense than the notion of "cumulative change" might imply. Plantation landscapes in the tropics can be understood as "glocalized" in the sense that the establishment of an alien production system always must take local conditions into consideration, and vice versa, in order to be operational. In this respect, landscape transformations resemble technology transfer. Individual agency is one of several crucial factors to be considered in this process, as both external and local agents have to adapt to unanticipated contingencies when pursuing their respective agendas. In a colonial context, the empire can be understood as a framework of constraints and opportunities. Whether the transforming agents are external or local is not given, but rather an empirical problem to investigate in each case. Moreover, the agents themselves become transformed, or "glocalized". As individuals and as groups they can only be understood within a globalizing and glocalizing framework. The transformations of the colonial landscape are intimately linked to the social transformations in the colony. However, cash-crop production per se cannot be regarded as an entirely colonial innovation. The pre-colonial world market had already triggered societal and landscape transformations. This paper draws on an investigation of Sri Lanka's various plantation landscapes, attempting to elucidate these dynamics by utilizing historical, artefactual, and palaeo-ecological data, channelled through the nexus of an historical archaeological perspective.

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