

# Re-Constructing

Michael Shanks  
and Christopher Tilley

# Re-Constructing Archaeology

How should we view the archaeological past? How can we come to understand it and what procedures are suitable for constructing archaeological knowledge? What indeed is the purpose of archaeology? *Re-Constructing Archaeology* tackles all these issues with wit and vigour. It aims to challenge the disciplinary practices of both traditional and 'new' archaeology and to present a radical alternative - a critically self-conscious archaeology aware of itself as practice in the present, and equally a social archaeology that appreciates artifacts not merely as objects of analysis but as part of a social world of past and present that is charged with meaning.

*Re-Constructing Archaeology* ranges widely across the social and philosophical literature, from philosophy of science to hermeneutics, structuralism and post-structuralism and Marxism. But its concerns are not simply theoretical. The book is fundamentally concerned with overcoming the split between theoretical argument and practical research, be it excavation, artifact analysis or the relationship between professional archaeologists and the public.

When *Re-Constructing Archaeology* was first published, it provoked a storm of controversy on both sides of the Atlantic. The second edition is brought up to date with a new preface and appendix, in which Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley extend their arguments and answer their most vocal critics. It will be essential reading for students of archaeology.

**Michael Shanks** is the author of *Experiencing the Past: On the Character of Archaeology* (1992). **Christopher Tilley**, Lecturer in Archaeology at St David's University College, University of Wales, is the author of *Material Culture and Text: The Art of Ambiguity* (1991). He has recently edited *Reading Material Culture* (1990) and *Interpretative Archaeology* (1992). Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley have also co-authored *Social Theory and Archaeology* (1987).

*MICHAEL SHANKS and CHRISTOPHER TILLEY*

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Theory and Practice

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*For ELIZABETH and KARIN*