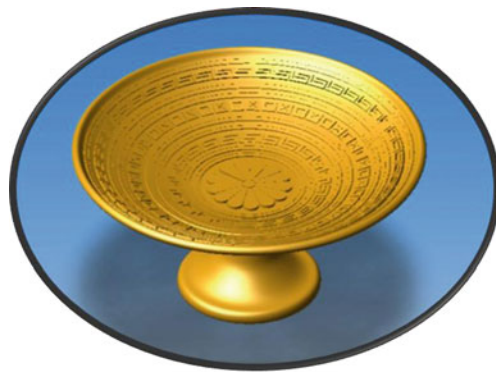


Part I

The Material World

Objects and Structures in Context

The fact that objects and monuments have their own lives and histories has been appreciated by cultural researchers for some considerable time. Malinowski's (1920) work on the objects involved in the Kula Ring is an early, seminal study on how objects acquire significance in an anthropological context and this applies equally to structures and monuments in archaeological and historic situations (Bradley 1998). These may acquire and change form over time and the original meaning of a monument may be lost or evolve over thousands of years. Such qualities, of course, do not change with the incorporation of objects and structures in the modern world, their display in museums or through the representation of objects in digital or other media. Indeed the situation has become even more complex. Whilst in the past museums may have battled with thorny issues of authenticity and the implications of reconstruction; today researchers explore novel forms of data capture and analysis, curators provide innovative means to



display cultural object and the public consumes this information in a novel and, increasingly personal manner. Who owns heritage and the terms on which we engage with that increasingly intangible concept is a contemporary problem. Here we explore some of the technologies that are contributing to this debate and the contexts within which they may operate.

Malinowski, B. (1920). Kula: the circulating exchange of valuables in the archipelagoes of Eastern New Guinea. *Man*, 20, 97–105.

Bradley R. (1998). *The significance of monuments: on the shaping of human experience in neolithic and Bronze Age Europe*. Routledge, New York