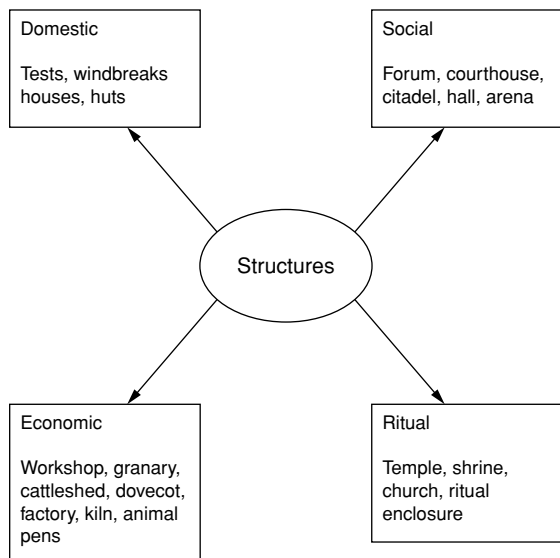


exotic finds are also indicators of status. The Minoan capital Knossos provides a good example of this. Extensive permanent storage and valuable finds from throughout the eastern Mediterranean testify to its importance.

UNDERSTANDING STRUCTURES

Many of the points made in relation to sites and features also apply to structures, but you also need to understand how archaeologists interpret structures from buried traces. Key questions revolve around why particular designs were selected and the technology and materials used to construct them. Structures range from traces of a windbreak around a hearth or stakeholes from a tent through to recent industrial or military buildings. Faced with pits, slots and postholes, archaeologists have to make imaginative leaps to reconstruct buildings from the past. Early examples reflected modern perceptions of people in the past or were drawn from ethnography.



■ **Figure 9.14** Structures in archaeology



KEY SITE

Butser Ancient Farm

Butser is well known as an open-air laboratory for testing ideas about Iron Age technology including farming and the effectiveness of tools. Its buildings are designed according to the floorplans of excavated sites. The walls, beams and roof itself are the product of experimentation based on knowledge of Iron Age carpentry and engineering. Building roundhouses has enabled the exploration of ideas about roof slope, light, efficiency of fires and whether a smoke hole is needed. It has also answered questions about how long a roundhouse might last and the amount of woodland needed to build and maintain it.



■ **Figure 9.15** An Iron Age roundhouse at Butser Ancient Farm. 'Constructs' such as this have been immensely valuable in exploring many aspects of past buildings including roof shape, potential function, construction techniques and useful lifetime



<http://www.butser.org.uk/>