





ދިވެހިރާއްޖޭގެ ސަރުކާރުގެ ފަރާތުން  
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# Coral Stone Mosques of Maldives

The Vanishing Legacy of The Indian Ocean



ދިވެހިރާއްޖޭގެ ސަރުކާރުގެ ފަރާތުން  
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Exhibition Booklet  
Illustrated and edited by Mauroof Jameel



ދިވެހިރާއްޖޭގެ ޖުމްހޫރިއްޔާ ދެކޮޅަށް

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Male' Eid Mosque entrance

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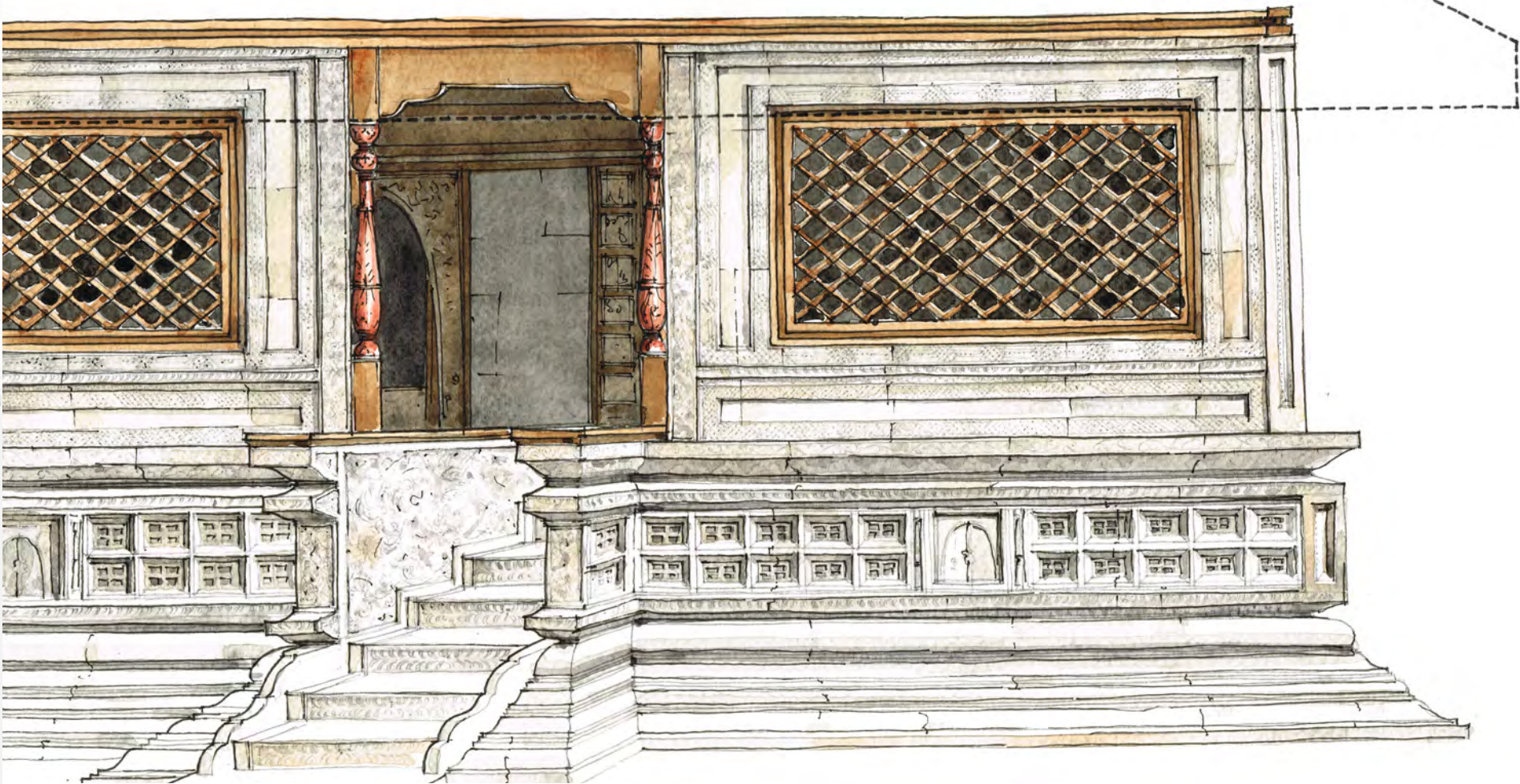


'In each island of theirs [Maldives] there are beautiful Mosques'.

Ibn Battuta, 1355

اِنَّ فِي كُلِّ جَزِيرَةٍ مِنْ جَزَائِرِ مَالْدِيوِصَ عَسْرَةَ مَسْجِدَاتٍ بِيُطْرُقُهَا الْمَلِكُ

بِالسَّنَةِ ١٣٥٥ هـ

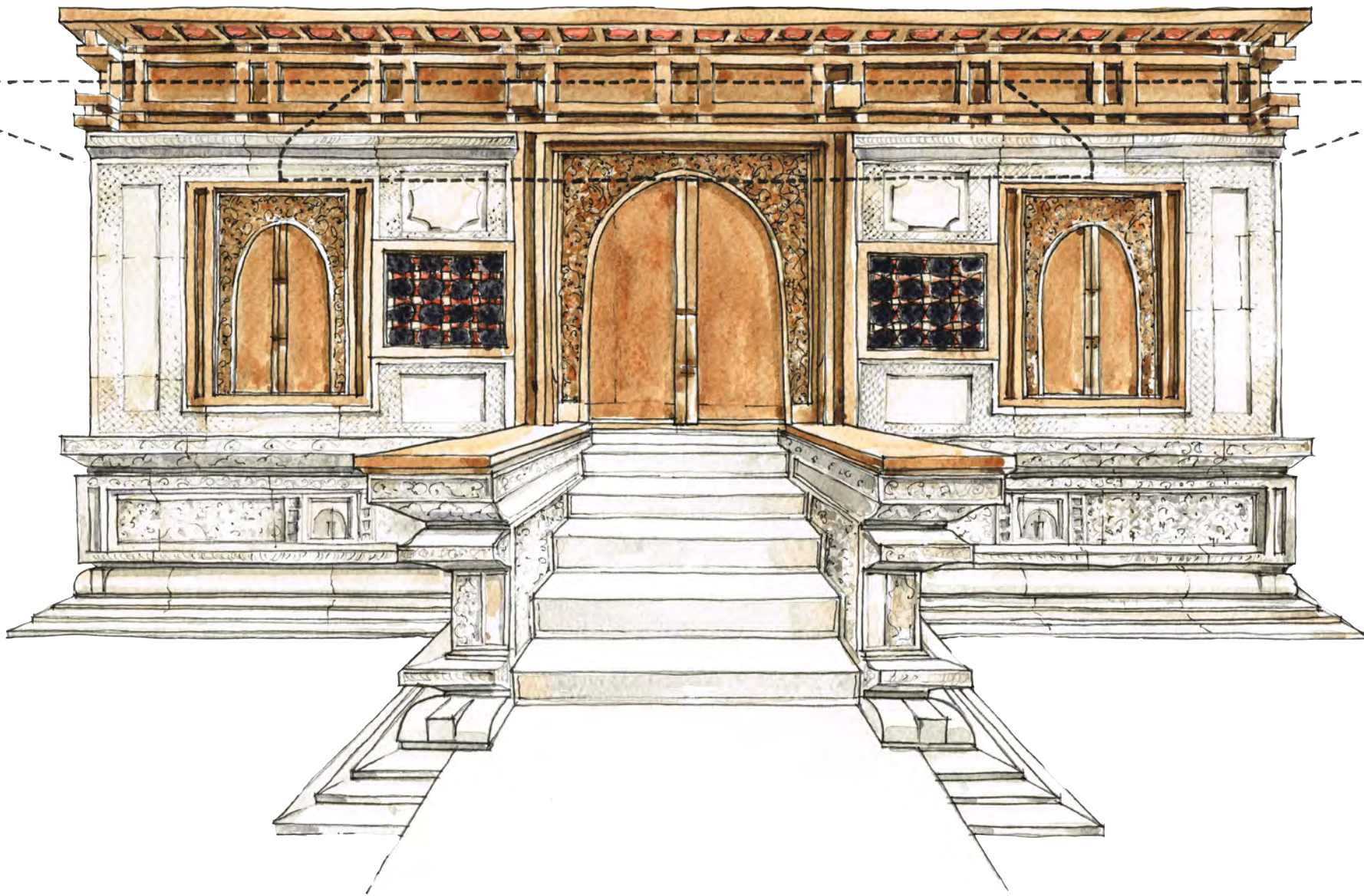


Male' Eid Mosque front without roof,

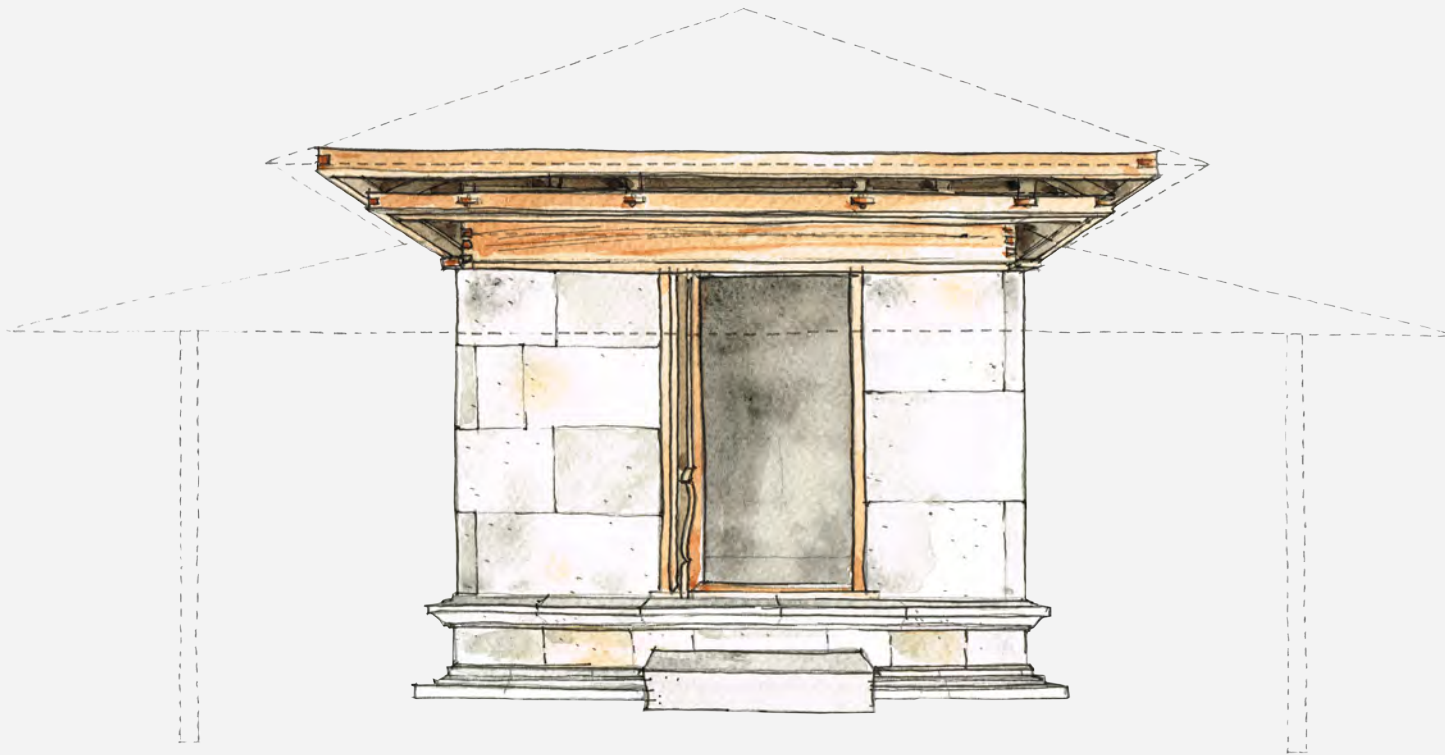
دکھائی میں دروازے کی گھنٹی، اور کھنڈی

Ihavandhoo Old Friday Mosque 'laage' ceiling pattern

پہلو سے دیکھ کر کھنڈی اور کھنڈی کی گھنٹی

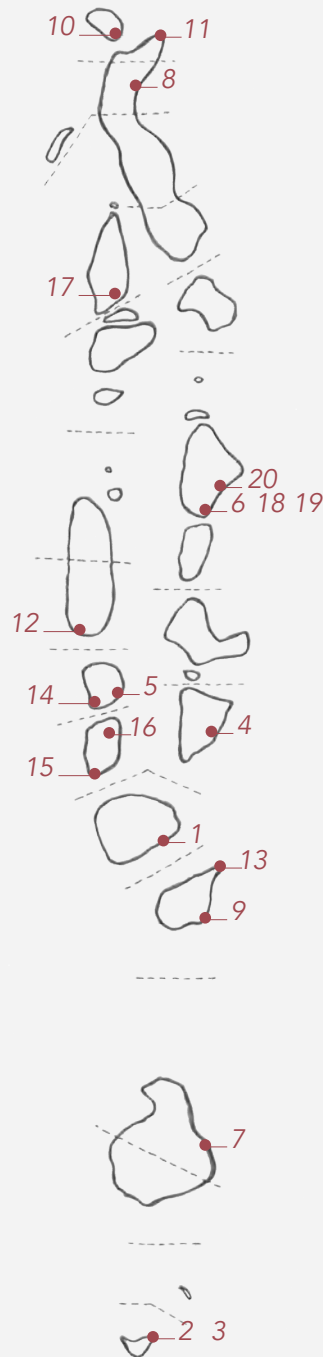






Hulhumeedhoo Fandiyaaru  
Mosque front without roof

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- |                          |    |  |
|--------------------------|----|--|
| 1400 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 1  | Guraidhoo Ziyaaraiy Mosque – c1400     |
| 1403 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 2  | Hulhumeedhoo Boadha Mosque – c1403     |
| 1586 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 3  | Hulhumeedhoo Fandiyaru Mosque – c1586  |
| 1600 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 4  | Veyvah Old Mosque – c1600              |
| 1600 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 5  | Bileddhoo Old Mosque – c1600           |
| 1658 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 6  | Male' Old Friday Mosque – 1658         |
| 1687 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 7  | Kondey Old Mosque – c1687              |
| 1699 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 8  | Nolhivaram Old Friday Mosque – 1699    |
| 1700 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 9  | Fonadhoo Old Friday Mosque – c1700     |
| 1701 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 10 | Ihavandhoo Old Friday Mosque – 1701    |
| 1701 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 11 | Kelaa Old Friday Mosque – 1701         |
| 1701 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 12 | Fenfushi Old Friday Mosque – 1701      |
| 1701 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 13 | Isdhoo Old Mosque – 1701               |
| 1701 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 14 | Nilandhoo Old Friday Mosque – c1701    |
| 1701 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 15 | Kudahuvadhoo Old Friday Mosque – c1701 |
| 1701 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 16 | Bandidhoo Old Mosque – c1701           |
| 1705 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 17 | Meedhoo Old Friday Mosque – c1705      |
| 1789 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 18 | Male' Kalhuvakaru Mosque – 1789        |
| 1815 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 19 | Male' Eid Mosque – 1815                |
| 1925 ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ | 20 | Huraa Old Mosque – c1925               |

ڤڤڤ: 'ا' ڤڤڤ ڤڤڤ

note: 'c' circa

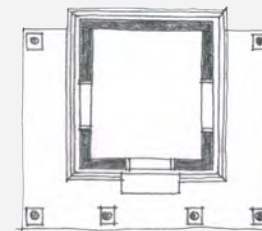


Mosque and compound

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## Hulhumeedhoo Fandiyaru Mosque, c1586

It is the earliest and smallest surviving coral stone mosque that is in good authentic condition. Located in the Koagannu area (the largest and the oldest cemetery in Maldives) on the island of Hulhumeedhoo, Addu City, Hulhumeedhoo Fandiyaru Mosque was probably built around 1586 during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim III also known as Kalaafaanu (1585–1609). It is still in use today. Even though the mosque is basic in terms of artistic sophistication with no coral carvings, it is an important part of the narrative showing the evolution of the mosque design.

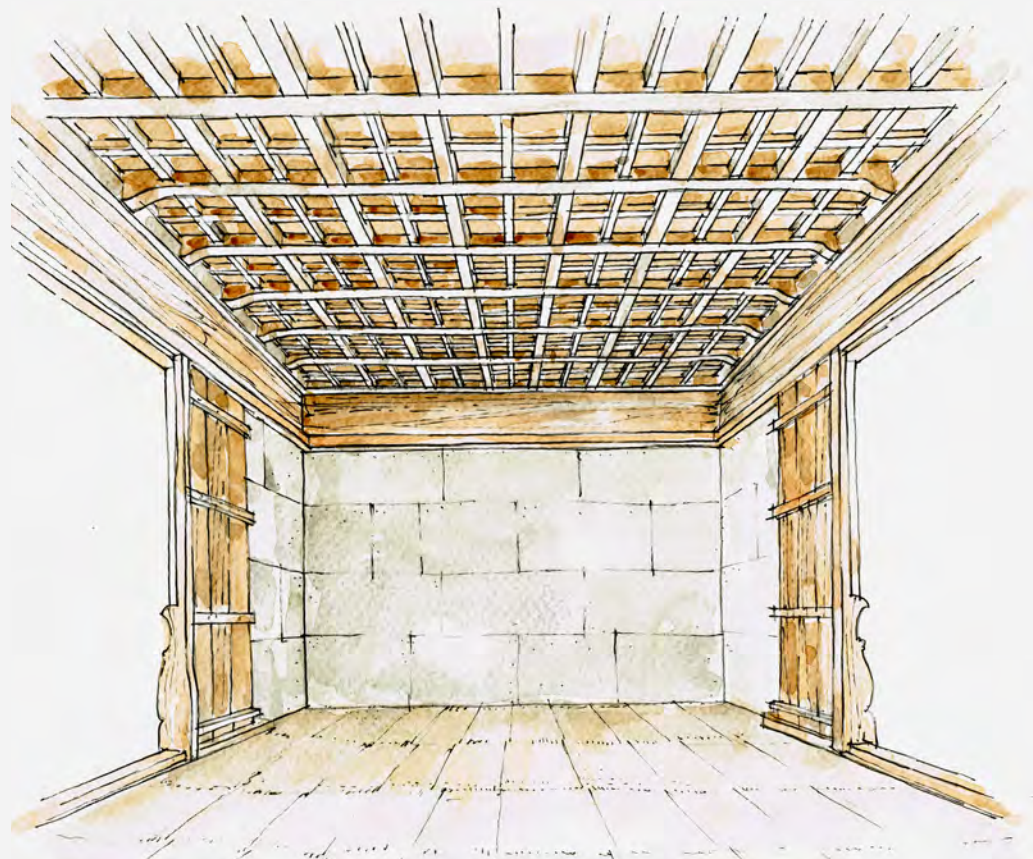


Plan

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رَدِّدَتَّرِ مَسْجِدِ اَكْبَرِ دَسْوَاجِي، 1586ء

در، اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اَرِيحُو، دَسْوَاجِي بَرُو اِسْمُو مَكِّي سَمِي رَسْمِ  
 اِسْمُو قَرُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو رَسْمِي قُو اِسْمُو دَسْوَاجِي. و دَسْوَاجِي  
 رَسْمِ قَرُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو  
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 قَرُو اِسْمُو رَسْمِي رَسْمِي دَسْوَاجِي اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو  
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 (1609) اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو  
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 دَسْوَاجِي اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو اِسْمُو



Mosque interior

دَسْوَاجِي اِسْمُو اِسْمُو



Present Koagannu area مَكِّي سَمِي رَسْمِي رَسْمِي، دَسْمِ



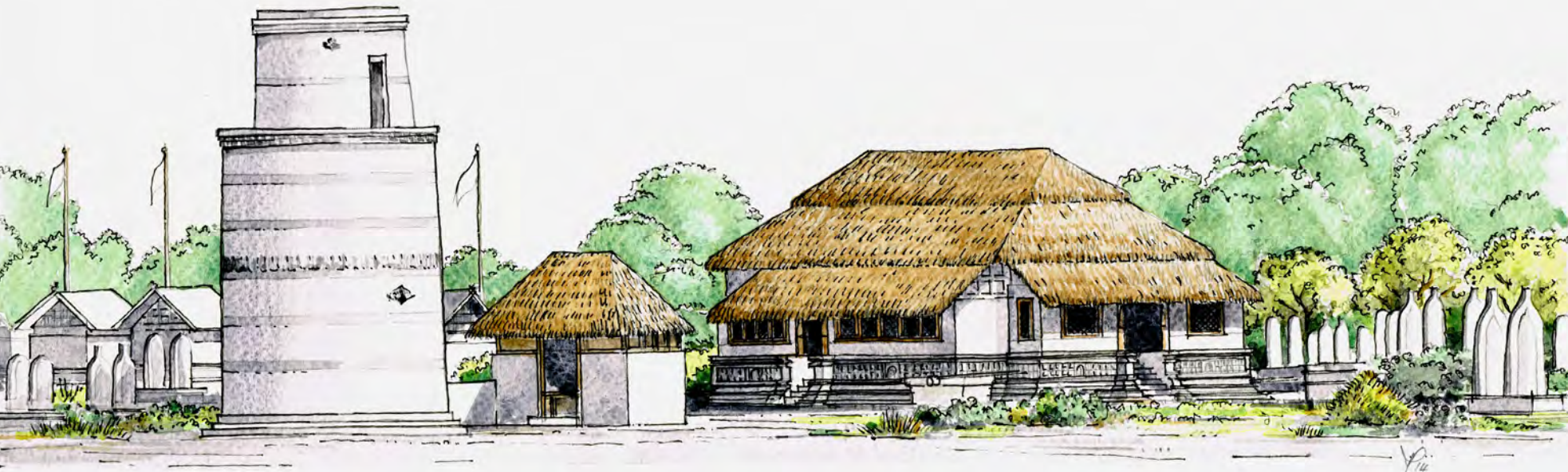
Tombstone in Koagannu مَكِّي سَمِي رَسْمِي رَسْمِي دَسْمِ



Present mosque دَسْوَاجِي، دَسْمِ



Present mosque interior دَسْوَاجِي اِسْمُو اِسْمُو، دَسْمِ

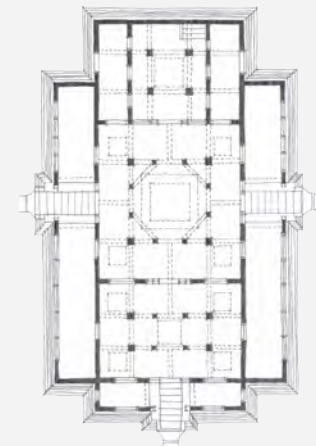


Mosque and compound

جسٹریٹری وید

## Male' Old Friday Mosque, 1658

Male' Old Friday Mosque and its compound comprise the most important heritage site in the country. It is also the biggest and one of the finest coral stone buildings in the world. It represents the best in terms of artistic excellence and the coral stone construction technique termed 'coral stone carpentry'. Male' Old Friday Mosque and its compound have been on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List since 2008. The present mosque was built in 1658 on the old part of Male', during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Iskandhar I. It replaced the original mosque built in 1153 by the first Muslim Sultan of Maldives and continues to serve not only as one of the most important places of worship, but also as a reminder of this country's great ancestral heritage.



Plan

پلان



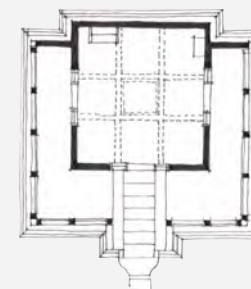


Mosque and compound

مسجد و محوطه

## Ihavandhoo Old Friday Mosque, 1701

It is the finest coral stone mosque in the north of the Maldives in terms of its decoration and workmanship. It is a small mosque with high-quality coral stonework and intricate interior details. The mosque compound has coral stone tombstones with high-quality carvings displaying rare patterns. The old mosque survives in good condition but unfortunately major alterations make it difficult to appreciate its original beauty. Standing at the end of the main road of Ihavandhoo in Haa Alif Atoll, the mosque was completed on 16 December 1701, during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Muzhiruddin (1701–1705). It still serves its community today as a centre for prayer.



Plan

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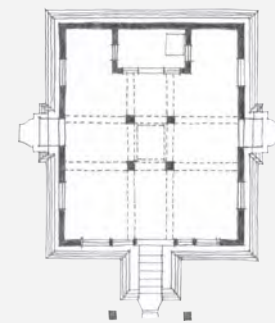


Mosque and compound

جُمُعَةُ فَعْفُشِي

## Fenfushi Old Friday Mosque, 1701

Fenfushi Old Friday Mosque is part of the best-preserved coral stone mosque compound with a unique coral stone bathing tank, coral stone wells, a sundial and a large cemetery with tombstones of a high standard. Fenfushi Old Friday Mosque is another fine example of coral stone architecture in the Maldives, the coral carvings and detailed lacquer work exemplifying the high-quality decoration and workmanship. Situated at the centre of Fenfushi, it was rebuilt during the reign of Sultan Mohamed of Dheevadhu (1692–1701) on the site of an earlier mosque erected by Kalhu Kamana and is still used as a mosque today. Except for the metal roofing on the mosque and over the well and bathing tank, it is in its original condition.



Plan

جُمُعَةُ فَعْفُشِي



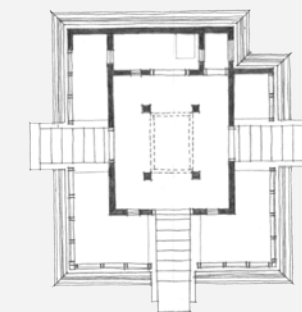


Mosque and compound

جسٹریویری مسجد

## Isdhoo Old Mosque, 1701

Isdhoo Old Mosque is the only mosque with an asymmetric floor plan and a special chamber. The Mosque is a small and beautiful coral stone mosque with mihrab chamber, dhaala on three sides, and three entrances. The mosque is historically significant for the chamber where the ancient royal copper chronicles dating from the 12th century – the Isdhoo Loamaafaanu – were kept. It has no coral carvings on the exterior, but high-quality interior ornament. The mosque was built near the harbour area of Isdhoo in Laamu Atoll, in 1701 during the reign of Sultan Mohamed of Dheevadhu. It is still used as a mosque today and has been restored and well-maintained with minimal changes. The mosque compound contains the mosque, old well and a cemetery with tombstones. There are no boundary walls.



Plan

پلان



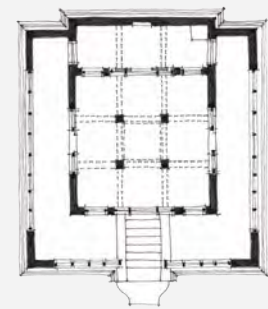


Mosque and compound

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## Meedhoo Old Friday Mosque, c1705

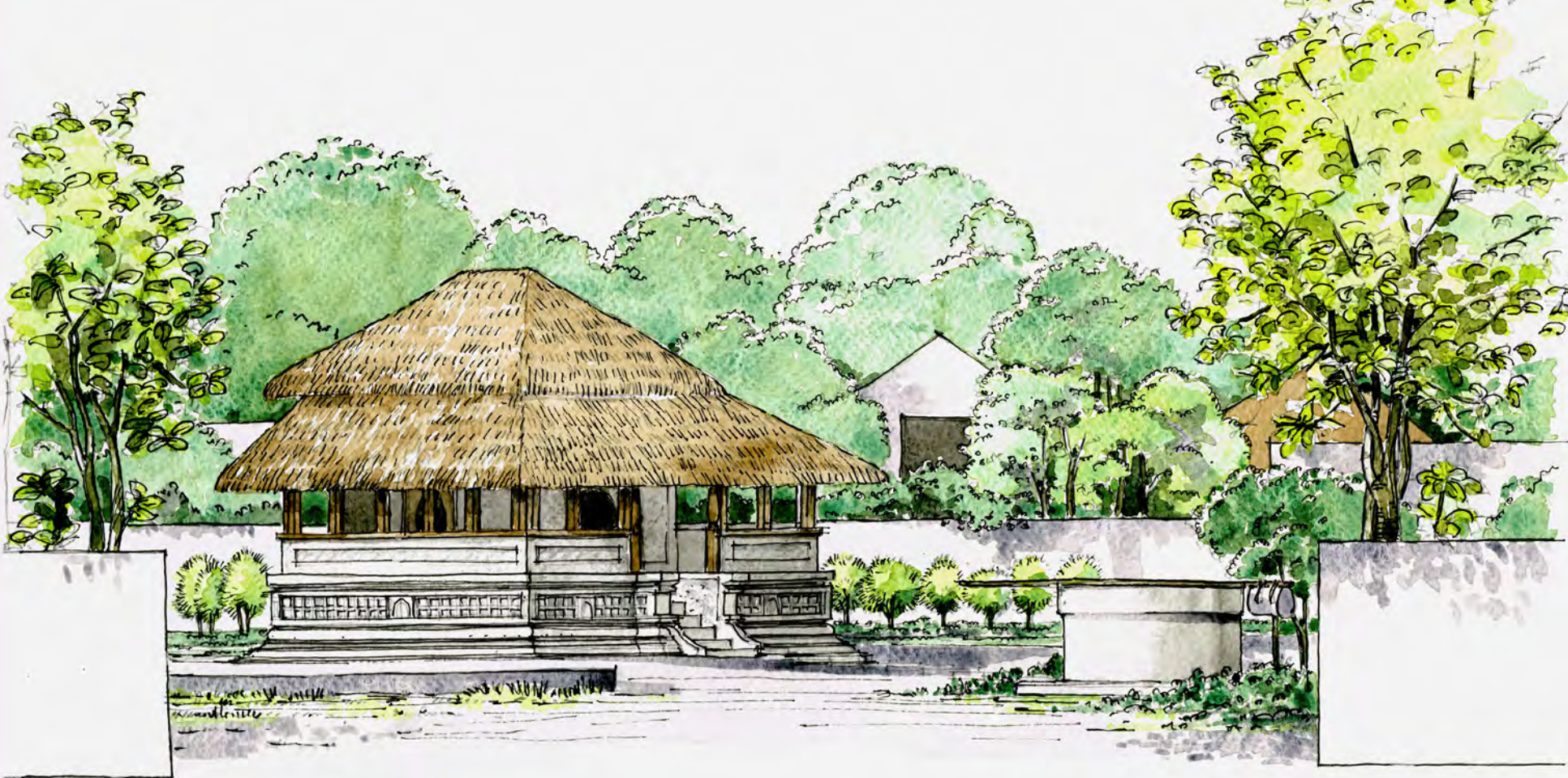
Meedhoo Old Friday Mosque is the only surviving coral stone mosque in the northern central region of the Maldives and the only one remaining with traditional Indian clay roofing tiles. It is a good example of a coral stone mosque with dhaala and a mihrab chamber, but the coral workmanship is simpler than in many other mosques. The cemetery has also survived well and has a collection of coral stone tombs with a high standard of carvings and craftsmanship. The mosque is at the centre of Meedhoo in Raa Atoll. The exact period of construction is unclear but according to local oral history it is around 300 years old and was probably built during the reign of Sultan Muzaffar Mohamed Imaduddin around 1705. It is still in use as a mosque today and is well maintained having experienced few changes since the early 1900s.



Plan

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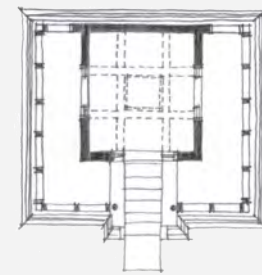


Mosque and compound

دستگاه چاه

## Male' Kalhuvakaru Mosque, 1789

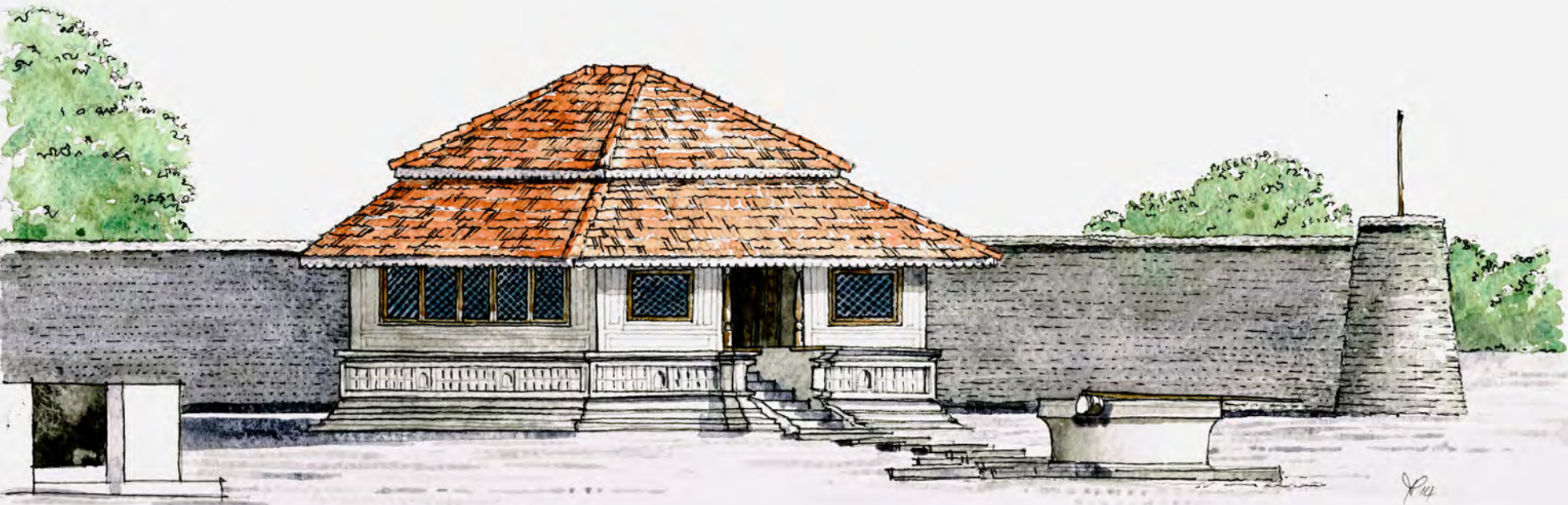
*Male' Kalhuvakaru Mosque is the only mosque where precious ebony timber has been used for construction. The mosque is a beautiful small mosque with high-quality coral stone carvings, timber carvings and a lacquered interior. The mosque and the coral stone well was last relocated to Sultan Park in Male'. It was originally built in 1789 during the reign of Sultan Hassan Nooruddin (1779–1799) and have been relocated a twice in the past. Except for brief periods of intermittence it has remained in use.*



Plan

پلان



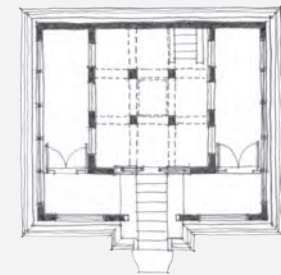


Mosque and compound

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## Male' Eid Mosque, 1815

Male' Eid Mosque is the most recently built coral stone mosque and is one of the most important mosques completing the story of coral stone mosques in Maldives. It is extremely beautiful in terms of ornamentation and workmanship. Its coral stone carvings and decoration are the most elegant among all such work in the world. Unfortunately, over time extensions have been added and the mosque compound has been reduced to simply the mosque and the coral stone well. The old mosque remains in good condition but the original splendour is no longer apparent because of the extensions and urban congestion around it. The mosque was built in 1815 by Sultan Mohamed Muinuddin, at the western end of Male', to replace an older mosque erected during the reign of Sultan Muzaffar Mohamed Imaduddin. Originally built for the Eid prayers, it is no longer the main mosque for Eid prayers but it still serves as one of the most important mosques in Male'.

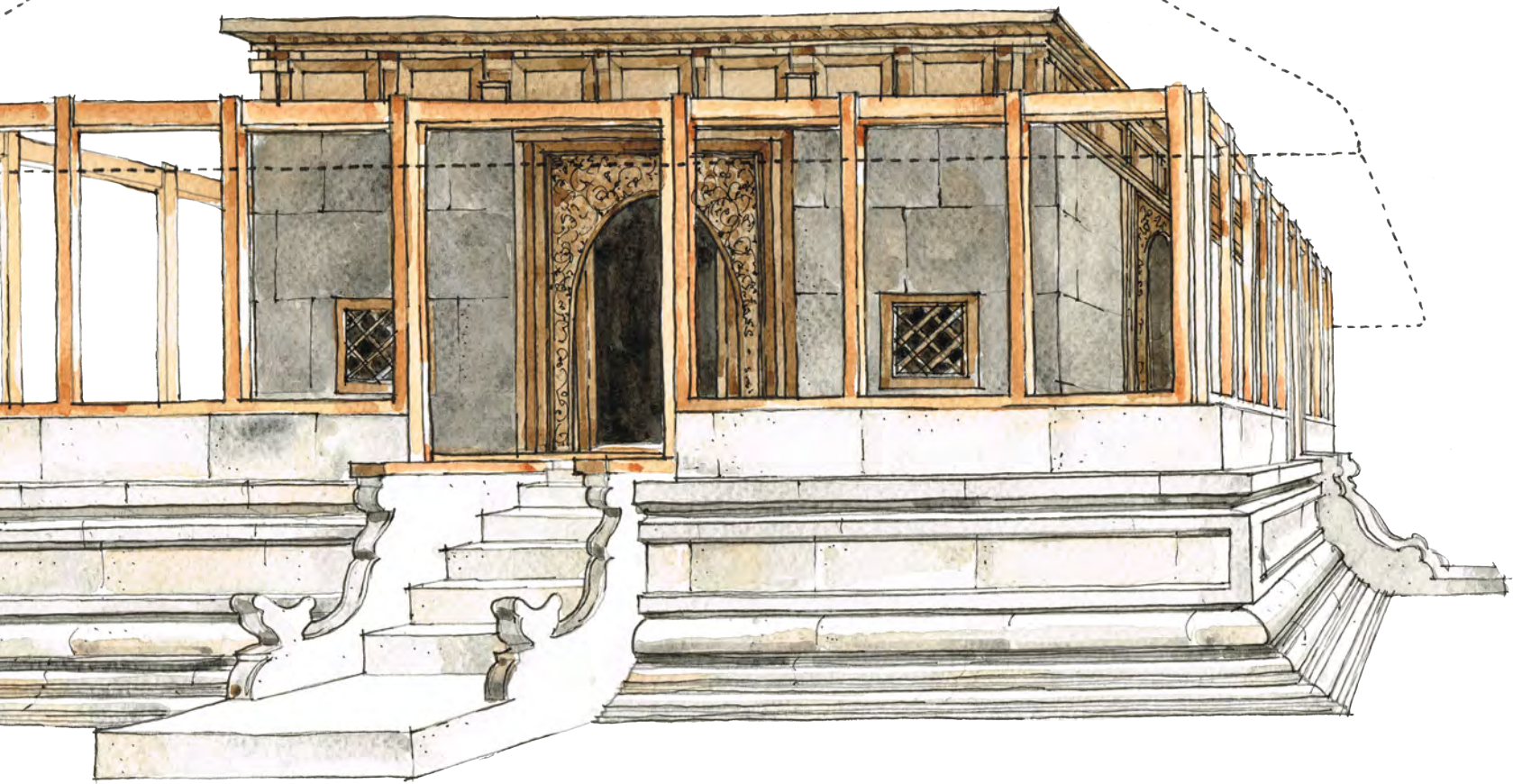


Plan

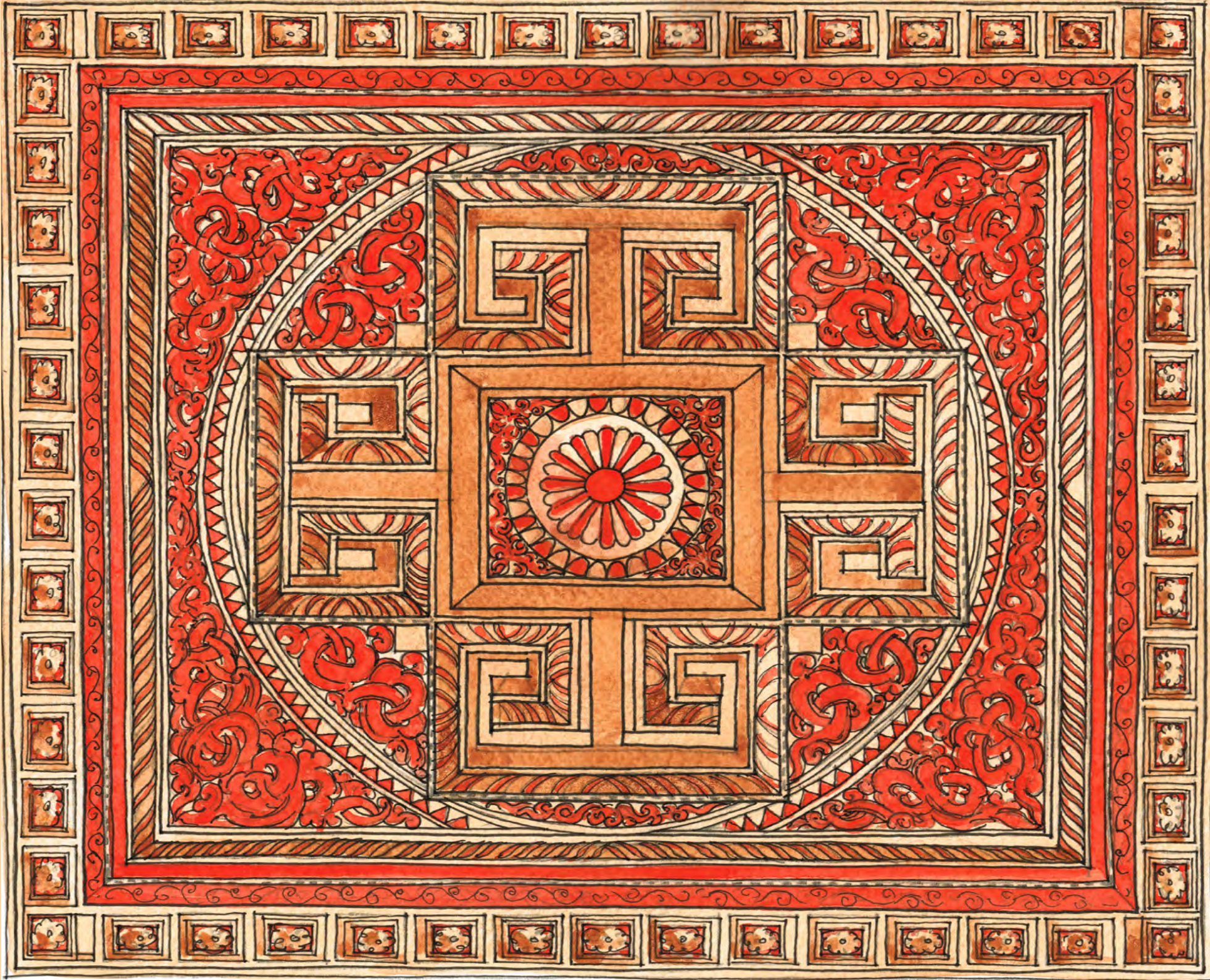
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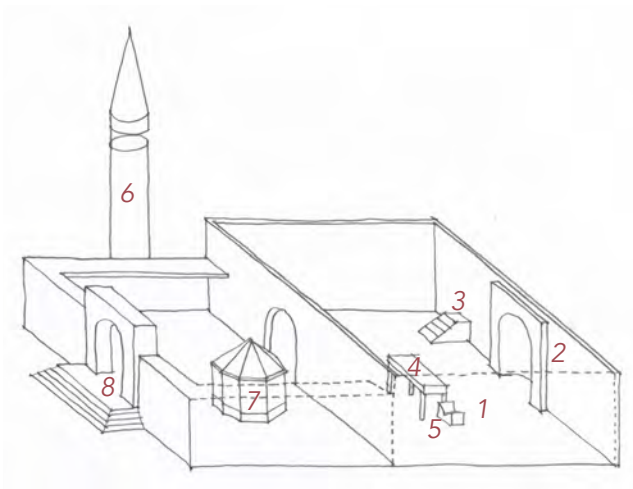






Typical Architectural features of a mosque

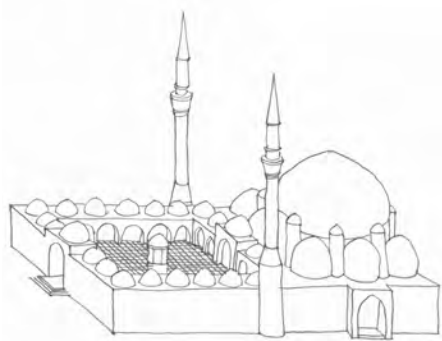
تسويات معمارية للمسجد:



Mosques do not have a specific architectural style but as Islam spread throughout the world, different styles of mosque architecture evolved from the following regions:

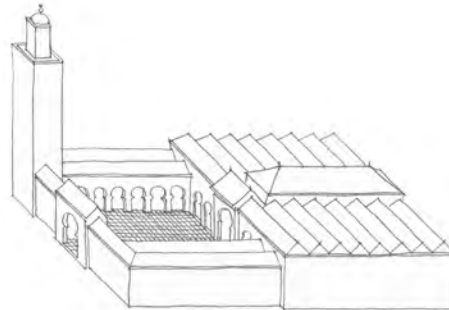
تختلف المساجد في تصميمها وأسلوبها المعماري باختلاف المناطق والبيئات الجغرافية. فقد نشأت في كل من بلاد الشام، مصر، المغرب، إيران، الهند، الصين، وغيرها من المناطق المختلفة. وتتميز كل منطقة بخصائصها المعمارية الفريدة التي تعكس ثقافتها وتاريخها.

- 1 صلاة 1 Prayer hall
- 2 جدار القبلة والتميز 2 Qibla wall and the Mihrab
- 3 المنبر 3 Mimbar
- 4 المنبر المرفوع 4 Dikka or raised tribune
- 5 الكرسي 5 Kursi or stand for Quran
- 6 المئذنة 6 Minaret
- 7 حوض الوضوء 7 Ablution area or pool
- 8 البوابة الرئيسية 8 Portal or main entrance



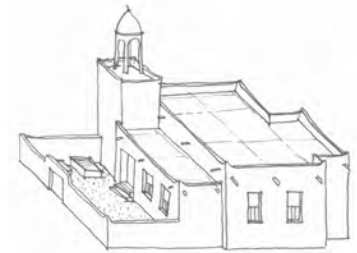
Anatolia and the Ottoman region

مَسْجِدٌ فِي أَنْطَلِيَا وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ



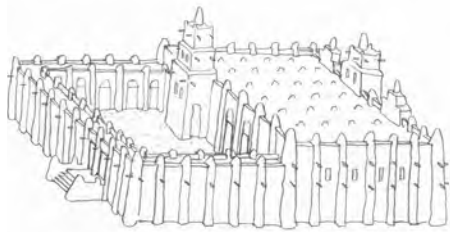
Spain and North Africa

مَسْجِدٌ فِي سَبْتِةَ وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ



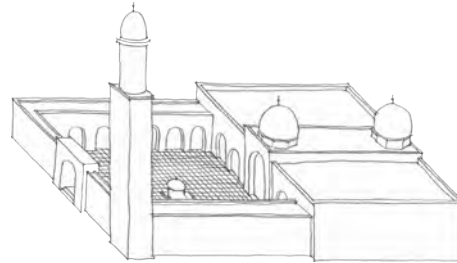
East Africa and East Arab lands

مَسْجِدٌ فِي كَنْزِيَّةَ وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ



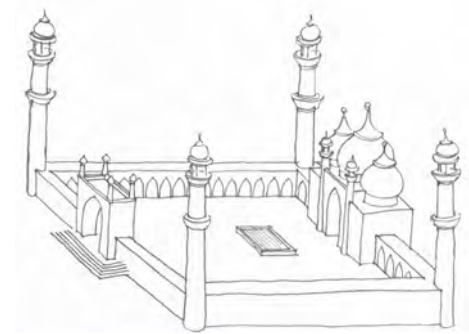
West Africa and the Sub-Saharan region

مَسْجِدٌ فِي كَنْزِيَّةَ وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ



The Central Arab lands

مَسْجِدٌ فِي كَنْزِيَّةَ وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ



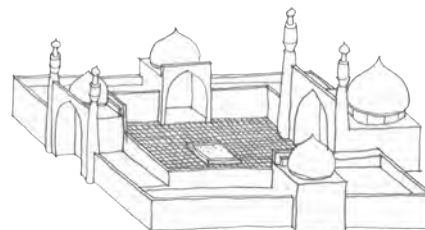
The Indian subcontinent

مَسْجِدٌ فِي كَنْزِيَّةَ وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ



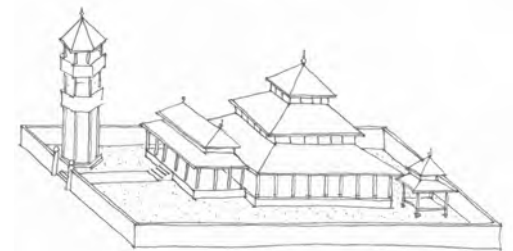
The Chinese region

مَسْجِدٌ فِي كَنْزِيَّةَ وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ



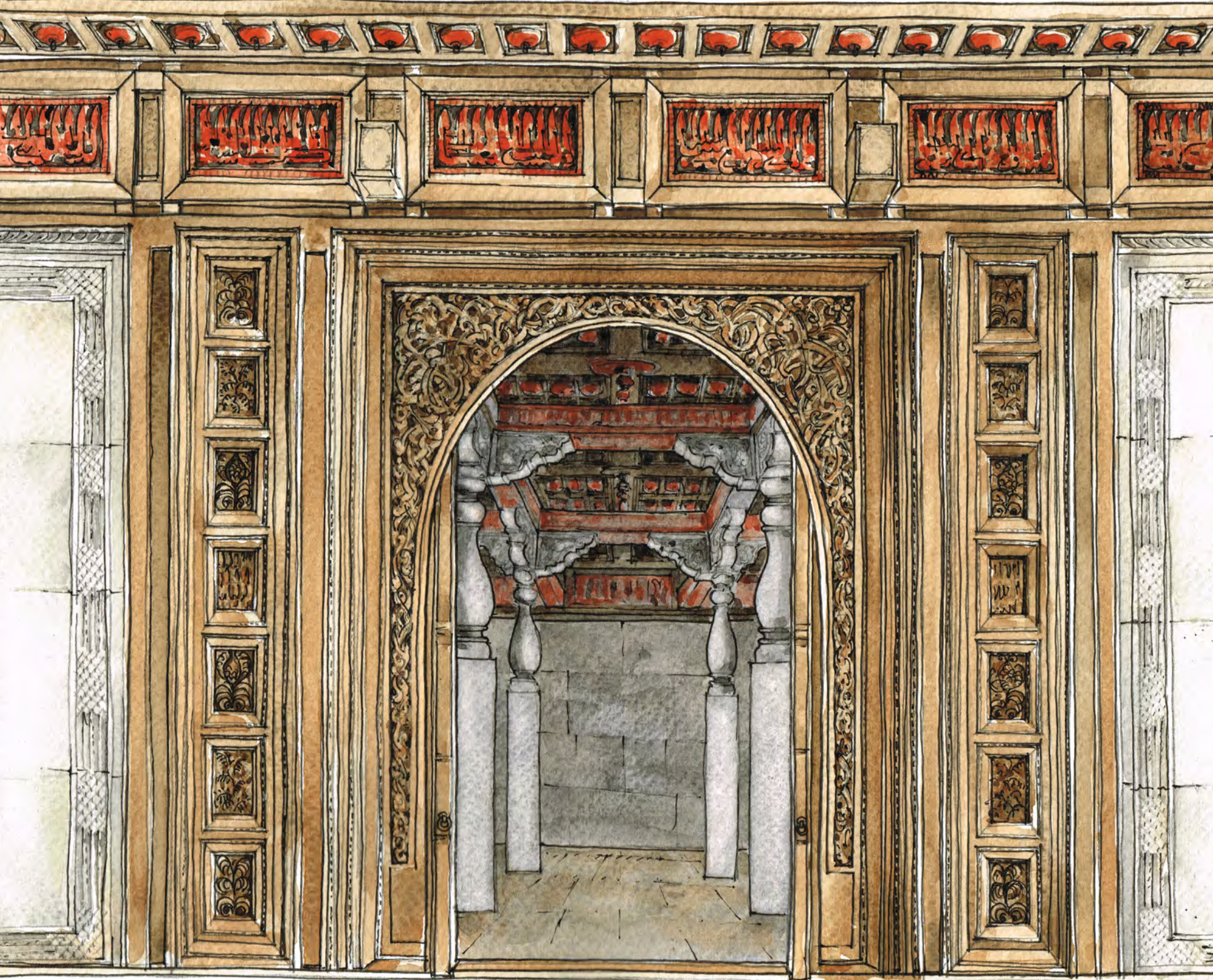
Iran and Central Asia

مَسْجِدٌ فِي كَنْزِيَّةَ وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ



South East Asia

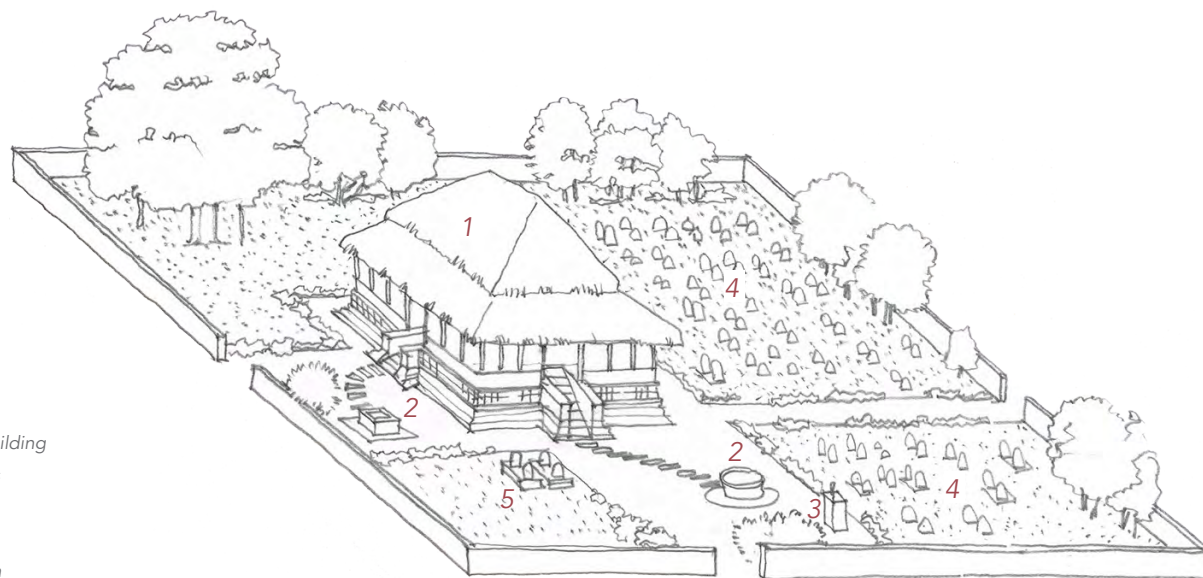
مَسْجِدٌ فِي كَنْزِيَّةَ وَرِجَالُهُ سَمَوَاتِيَّةٌ





Typical features of a traditional mosque compound:

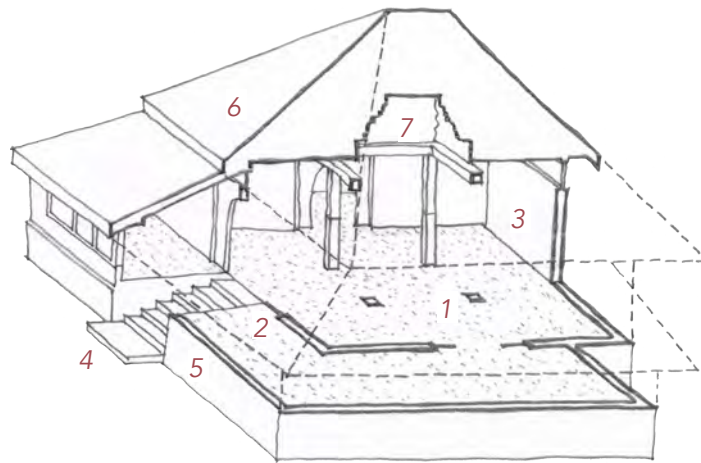
مَسْجِدٌ تَرْتَبُهُ حُجْرَاتٌ مَسْكُونَةٌ وَبِئْرٌ مَاءٍ وَسُورَةٌ وَبَنَاءٌ مَسْجُودٌ وَبَنَاءٌ مَسْجُودٌ.



- 1 مسجد 1 Mosque building
- 2 بئر ماء 2 Water wells
- 3 سور 3 Sundial
- 4 قبور 4 Cemetery
- 5 مقبر 5 Mausoleum

Typical features of a traditional mosque:

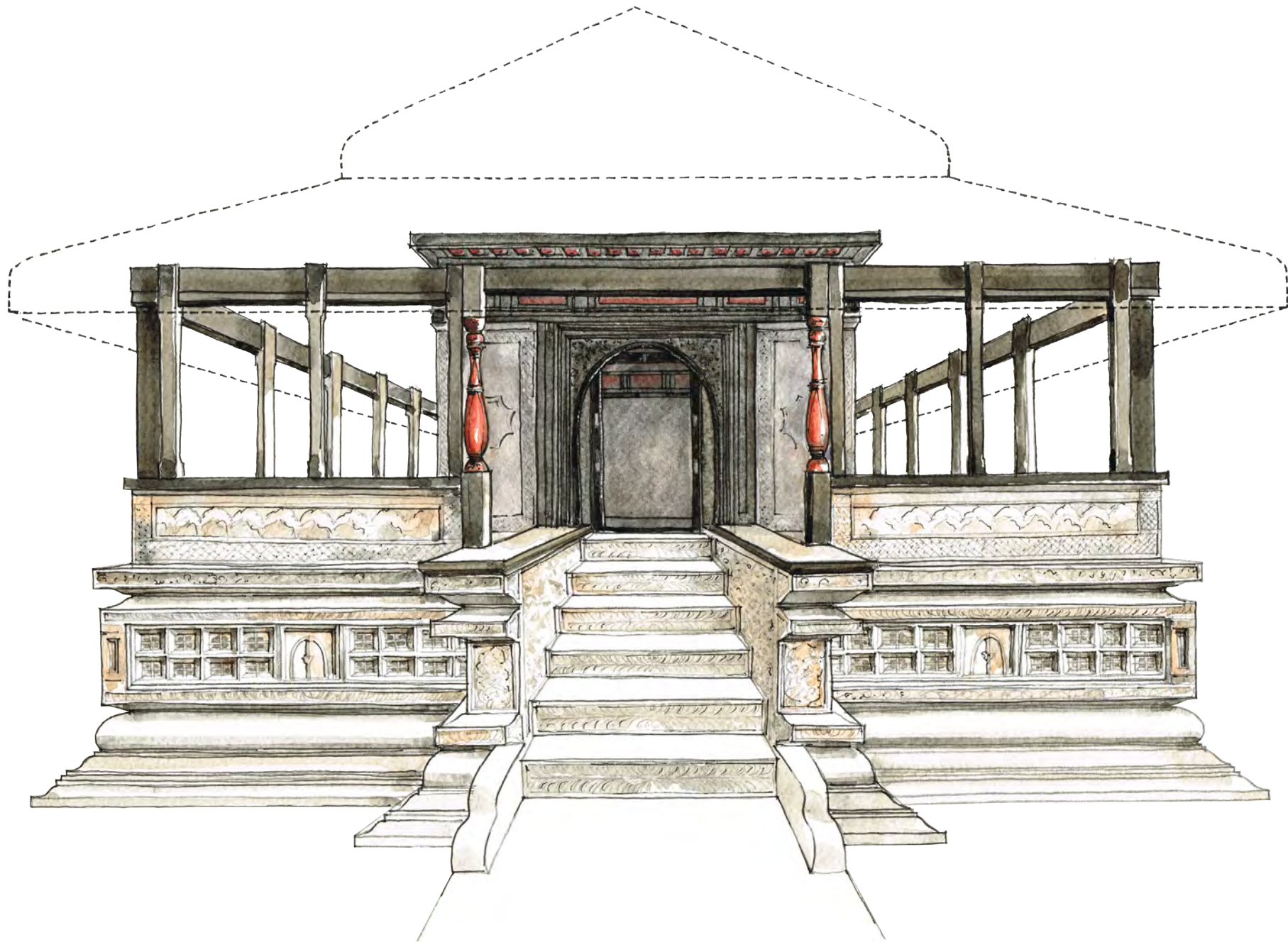
مَسْجِدٍ تَرْتِيبِيٍّ عَادِيٍّ:



- |                                     |   |                             |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| سَرْدَقَاتُ مَسْجِدٍ عَادِيٍّ       | 1 | Prayer hall                 |
| مَسْجِدٍ                            | 2 | Dhaala                      |
| حَائِطُ الْمِحْرَابِ وَالْمِمْبَارِ | 3 | Mihrab wall and mimbar      |
| سُلُكٌ رَاسِعٌ                      | 4 | Rising stairs               |
| مَسْجِدٍ                            | 5 | Raised plinth               |
| سُقُوفٌ مُتَرَتِّبَةٌ               | 6 | Tiered roof form            |
| سَقْفٌ مَسْجِدٍ                     | 7 | Laage' and coffered ceiling |







## Corals from the stony coral family Scleractima were used for construction throughout the coastal settlements of the tropical belt.

## Early use of coral in construction has been found among the Mayan communities of the Central America between 900-1500 BCE and among the coastal communities of the Red Sea between 146-323 BCE.

From the Red Sea the use of coral stone spread to the East African coast where it thrived as the primary building material of monumental buildings for a long time. Early coral construction also existed in the Indian Ocean islands and coastal cities. They were found in ancient Buddhist sites in Jaffna, Maldives and in the Indian subcontinent as far back as the second century, the best examples of coral stone construction in the world are found in Maldives and East Africa.

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Male' Kalhuvakaru Mosque without Roof Structure

Male' Kalhuvakaru Mosque, Maldives





## Types of construction during historic periods.

1153-600

### Classical Hindu-Buddhist period: 600 BCE – 1153

Coral stone construction was probably introduced along with the Buddhist and Hindu cultures during this period. Structures of this period used shaped and decorated coral stone blocks set in mortar.

Example: Kuruhinna Dagaba in Laamu Atoll.



source: Bell, 1940

1940

### Early Medieval Muslim period: 1153-1524

Structures of this period used shaped and decorated veliga and hiriga blocks set in mortar, finished with a lime skim coat. The structures of the early period used veliga and structures of the later medieval Muslim period used a combination of both veliga and hiriga.

Example: Gen Miskiy in Fuvahmulah.



1153-600

1153-1524

**Early Colonial period: 1525 – 1835**

During the early colonial period coral stone construction became refined as a result of increased travel and exchange of ideas and skills throughout the region. Boat building skills and construction techniques of the period fused with the existing techniques of earlier periods leading to a sophisticated interlocking coral stone construction technique without mortar that has intricate carvings and mouldings.

Example: Male' Old Friday Mosque.



**British colonial period: 1835 – 1965**

During the British colonial period of late 19th century new coral stone construction techniques emerged giving way to faster and more cost effective techniques. Masonry techniques using chipped coral with lime mortar and plaster became the favoured type of construction.

Example: Male' Fandiyaaru Mosque.

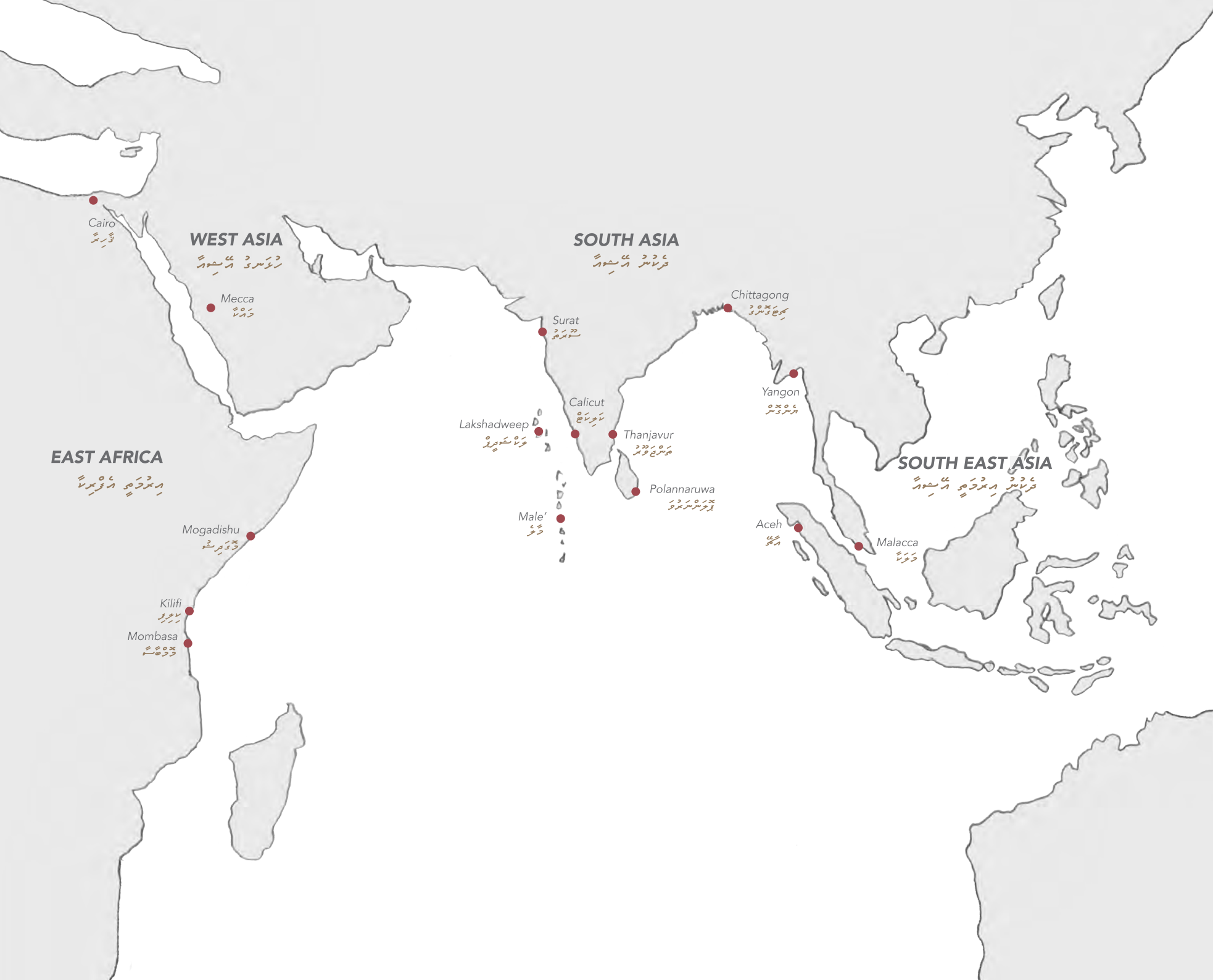


**1525-1835**

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**WEST ASIA**

مَرْكَزِي اَسِيَا

**SOUTH ASIA**

جنوبی ایشیا

**EAST AFRICA**

مَرْكَزِي اَسِيَا

**SOUTH EAST ASIA**

جنوبی ایشیا

Cairo

القاهرة

Mecca

مكة

Mogadishu

مقديشو

Kilifi

كيليفي

Mombasa

مومباسا

Surat

سورت

Calicut

كاليكوت

Thanjavur

ثانجاور

Polannaruwa

پولاناروا

Male'

ماله'

Lakshadweep

لاكشادويب

Chittagong

چيتاغونغ

Yangon

يانغون

Aceh

اچيه

Malacca

مالاكا



The raised plinth, rising steps and exterior mouldings of the mosque are similar to the early stone structures of Maldives, Sri Lanka and India.

مَسْجِدٌ مَرْفُوعٌ عَلَى دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَسْفَلُهُ مَسْبُوحٌ مِثْلُ مَسْبُوحِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْمَلِكِيِّ فِي مَالْدِيفِيسْ. وَتُحِيطُ بِهٖ حَائِطٌ مَسْبُوحٌ مِثْلُ حَائِطِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْمَلِكِيِّ فِي مَالْدِيفِيسْ.



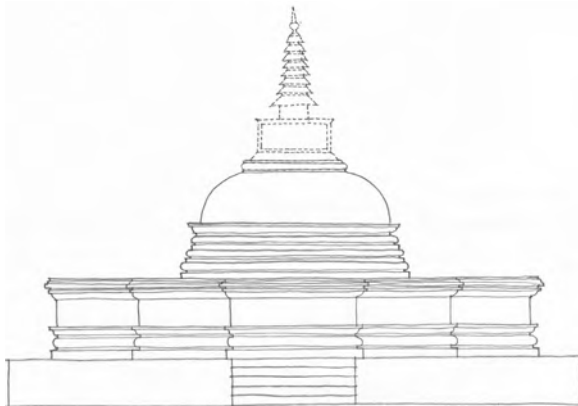
Male' Friday Mosque, Male', Maldives

مَسْجِدُ الْمَلِكِيِّ فِي مَالْدِيفِيسْ، مَرْفُوعٌ عَلَى دَرَجَاتٍ



Temple of Lad Khan, Karnataka, India

مَسْجِدٌ مَرْفُوعٌ عَلَى دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَسْفَلُهُ مَسْبُوحٌ



Kuruhinna Dagaba, Gan, Laamu Atoll, Maldives

مَسْجِدٌ مَرْفُوعٌ عَلَى دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَسْفَلُهُ مَسْبُوحٌ



Thuparamaya, Polunnaruwa, Sri Lanka

مَسْجِدٌ مَرْفُوعٌ عَلَى دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَسْفَلُهُ مَسْبُوحٌ

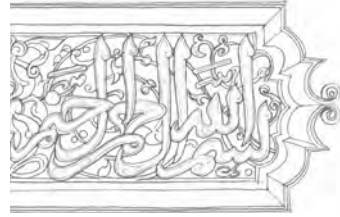


The calligraphic decorations of the mosque are derived from the ancient Jeli Thuluth style from the Arab region.

دست‌نویس‌های کالیگرافی در معماری مسجدهای مالدیو از سبک کالیگرافی جلی ثلوث عربی است که ریشه‌های آن به دوران پیش از اسلام بازمی‌گردد. این سبک کالیگرافی در معماری مسجدهای مالدیو به‌کار رفته است.



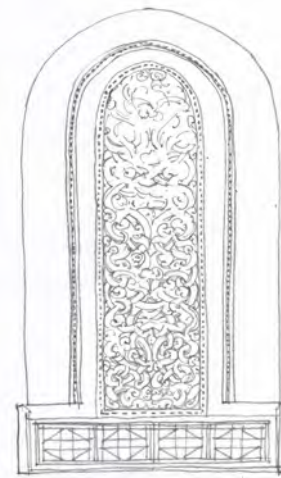
Male' Friday Mosque, Male', Maldives  
مسجد روز پنجشنبه، ماله، مالدیو



Aslam al-Silahdar Complex, Cairo, Egypt  
مجموعه آرامگاه اسلیم السیله‌دار، قاهره، مصر

The exterior coral carvings of the mosque are similar to carvings in India and Swahili Africa.

تراش‌های مرجان بیرونی مسجد شباهت زیادی به تراش‌های موجود در هند و آفریقای سواحیلی دارد.



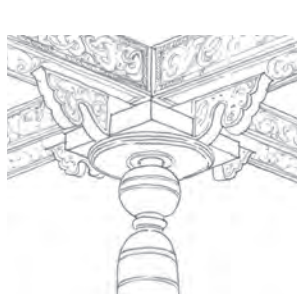
Coral tombstone from Male', Maldives  
تراشه مرجان از ماله، مالدیو



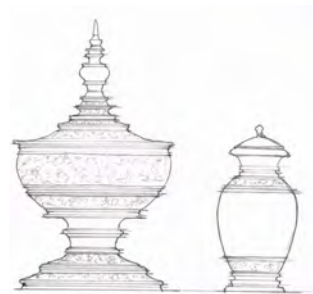
Coral Tombstone from Kilifi, Kenya  
تراشه مرجان از کیلیفی، کنیا

The interior decorations and lacquer work of the mosque are similar to those found in Myanmar and India.

تزیینات داخلی و کارهای لاک‌کاری مسجد مالدیو شباهت زیادی به تزیینات و کارهای لاک‌کاری در میانمار و هند دارد.



Lacquer Work from Male' Eid Mosque  
کارهای لاک‌کاری از مسجد عید ماله، مالدیو



Lacquer Work from Myanmar  
کارهای لاک‌کاری از میانمار



Coral Art and Carvings in Mosques, Maldives  
هنر و تراش‌های مرجان در مسجدهای مالدیو



Mughal Art and Carvings, India  
هنر و تراش‌های مغول از هند



