

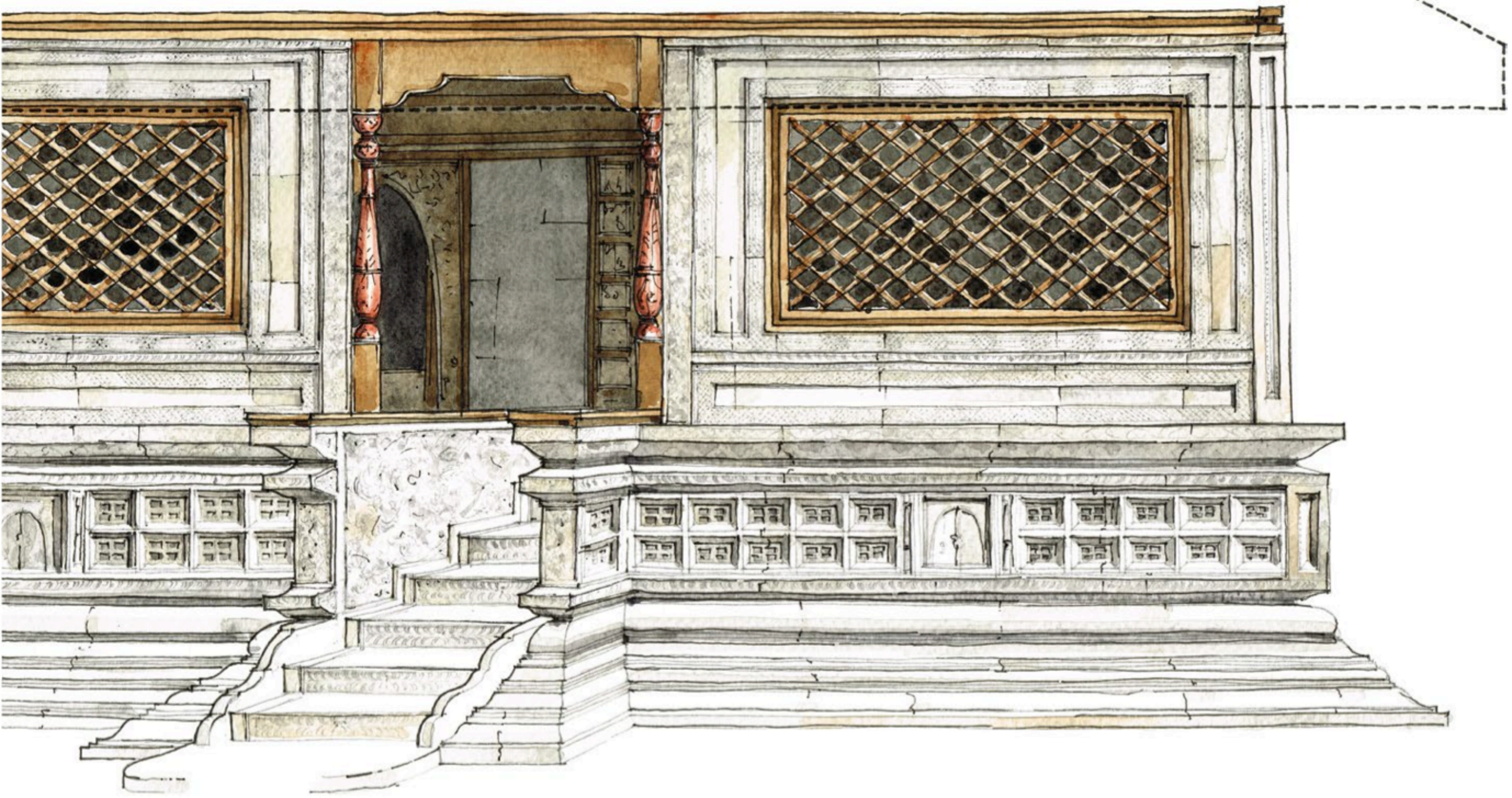
Coral Stone Mosques *of Maldives*

The Vanishing Legacy
of the Indian Ocean

Mauroof Jameel and Yahaya Ahmad

Edited by James Steele

Illustrated by Mauroof Jameel



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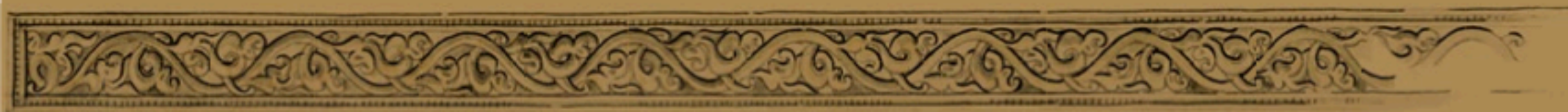
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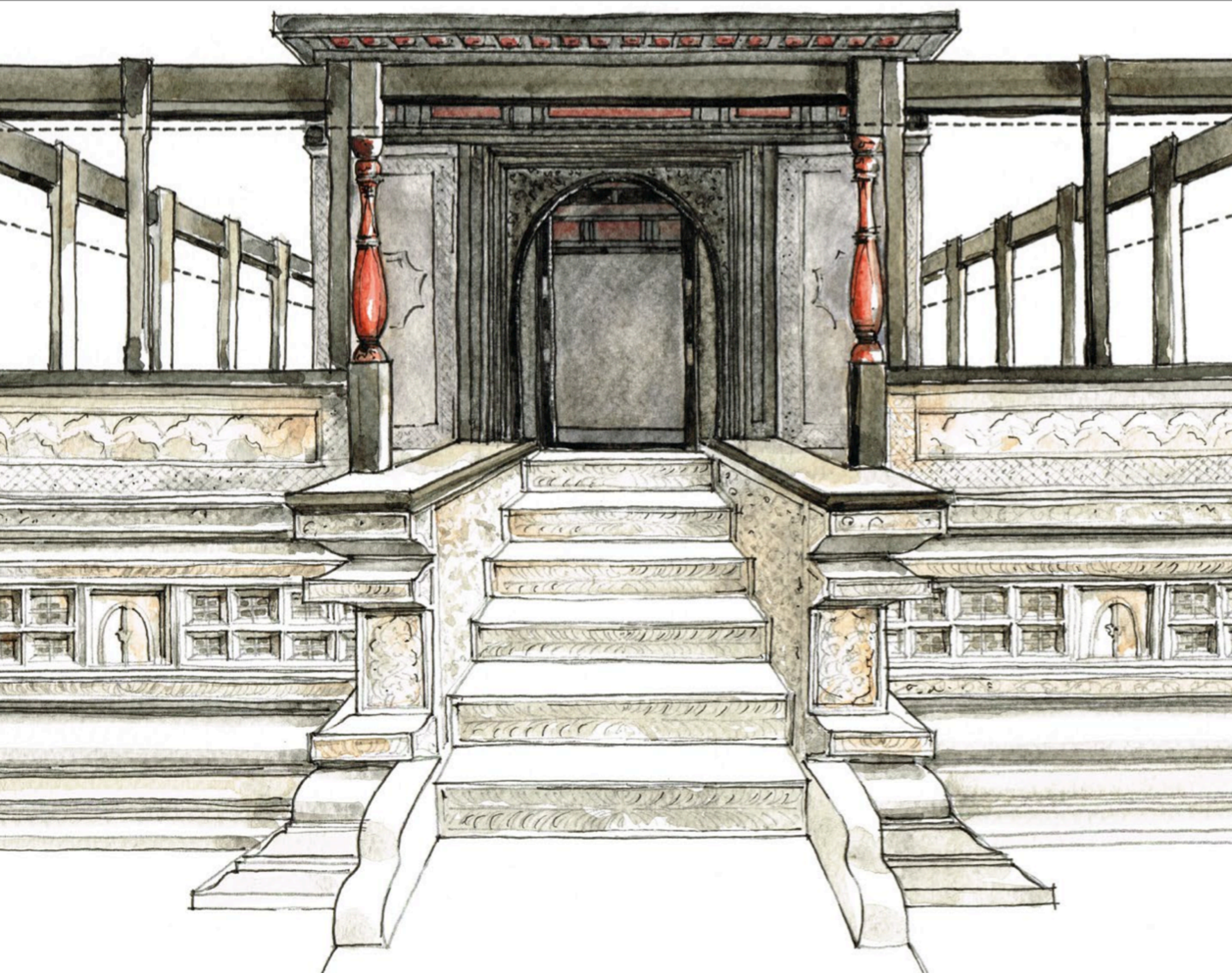
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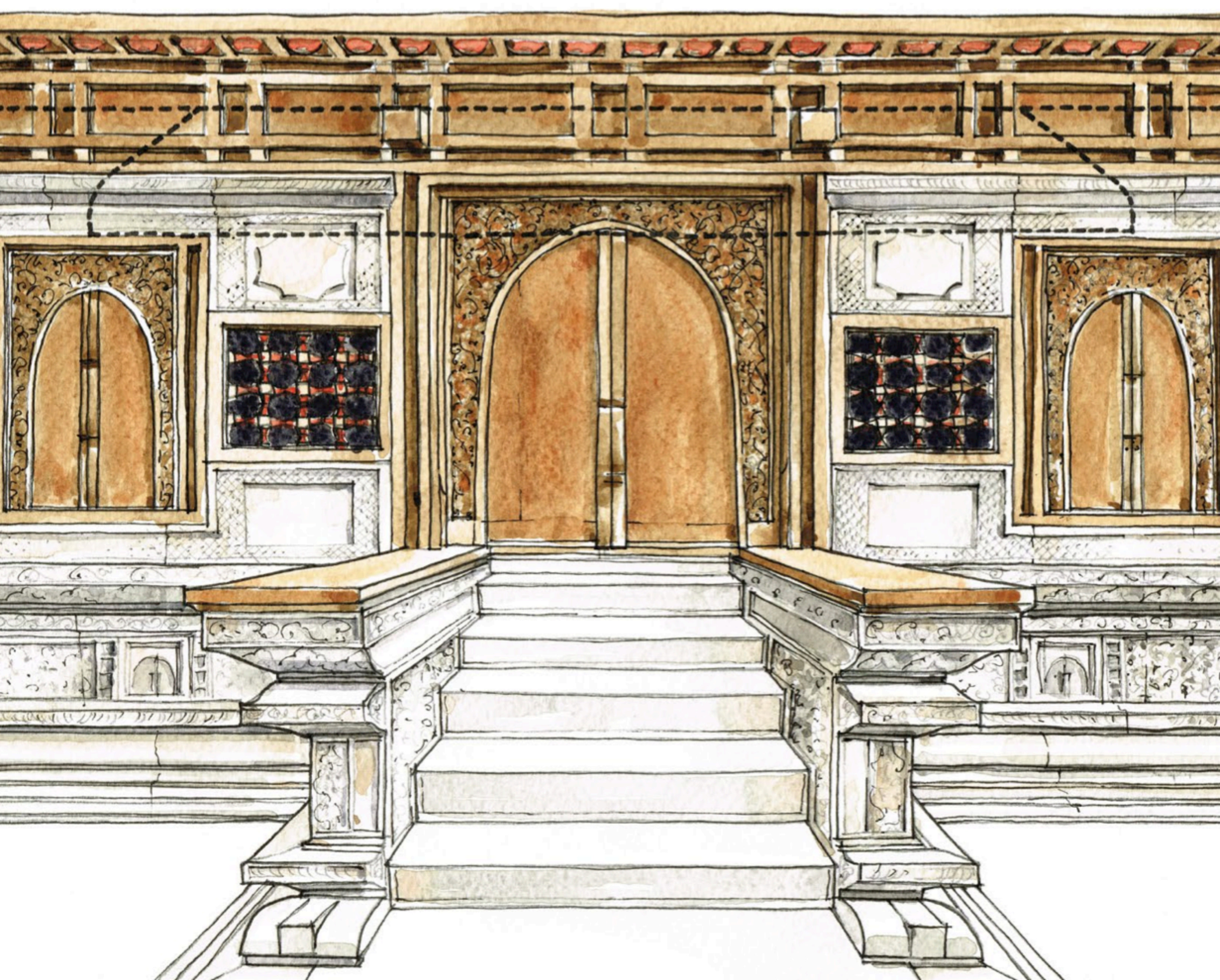
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The coral stone mosques of Maldives are a type of tropical mosque not seen in any other part of the world. The mosques were built using decorated interlocking coral stone from the reef, detailed timber lacquerwork and intricate carvings. The construction method, 'coral stone carpentry', used to create these mosques is no longer possible. Photographs in the book show selected mosques in their present state while illustrations depict their former glory. The coral stone mosques that have survived are the last of their kind and are in need of protection so that they can be appreciated by future generations. The aim of this book is twofold: to act as an accurate work of reference and more importantly to raise awareness of the plight of these imperilled buildings.

272 pages, over 250 colour and b/w illustrations







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Front Cover	Male' Eid Mosque without its roof structure
Back Cover	Fenfushi Old Friday Mosque, coral carving on the plinth
Pages 2-3	Fenfushi Old Friday Mosque without its roof structure
Page 4	Isdhoo Old Mosque without its roof structure
Pages 6-7	Male' Kalhuvakaru Mosque without its roof structure
Page 9	Male' Eid Mosque, the timber entrance door to the prayer hall
Page 10	Male' Old Friday Mosque, the central prayer hall
Page 11	Male' Eid Mosque, stair details
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Page 14	Fenfushi Old Friday Mosque, the central prayer hall
Page 15	Fenfushi Old Friday Mosque, <i>Laage'</i>
Page 18	Ihavandhoo Old Friday Mosque without its roof structure
Page 19	Male' Old Friday Mosque, the central prayer hall

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Mauroof Jameel and Yahaya Ahmad

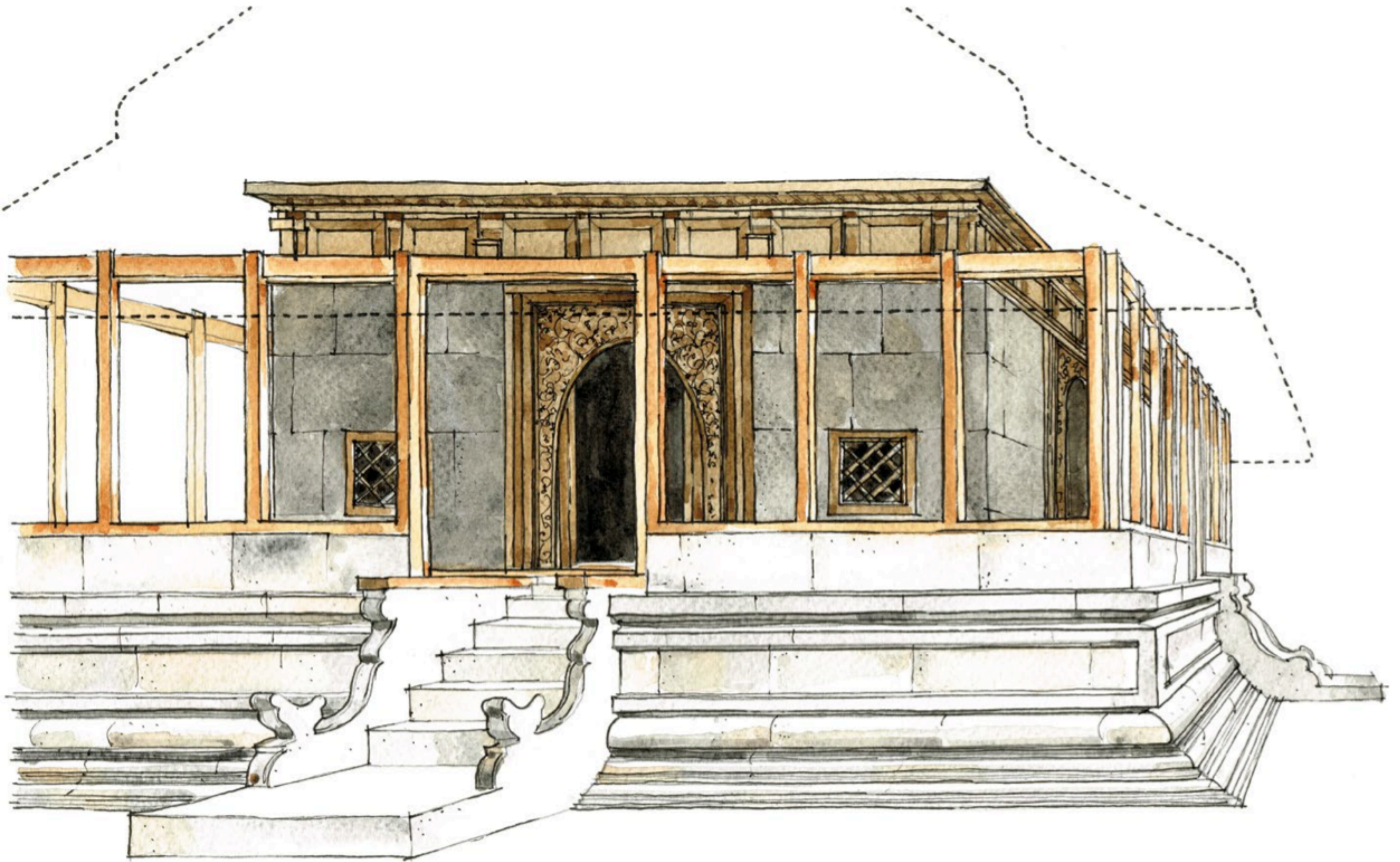
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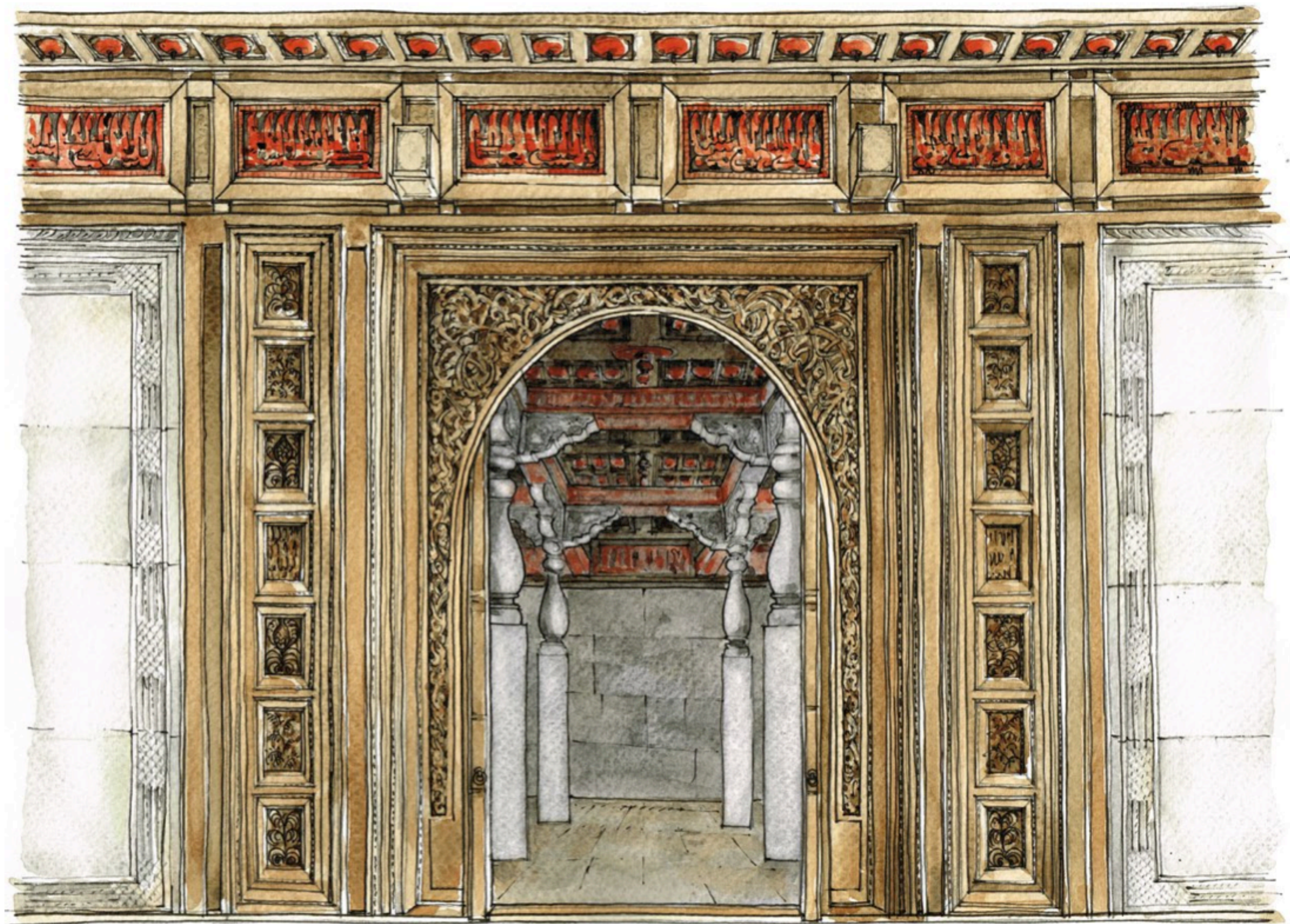
Mauroof Jameel

Ahmed Shinan

Ali Wiam

Mariyam Isha Azeez





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Preface

The coral stone mosques of Maldives are a type of tropical mosque built from ornamental interlocking coral stone (*hirigaa*) from the reef, using a construction technique called 'coral stone carpentry'. The mosques have intricately carved coral stone and detailed timber lacquer work not seen in any other part of the world. Today the coral stone carpentry technique is extinct and coral mining is no longer possible for environmental reasons. The mosques that survive are the last of their kind and have become monuments of universal outstanding value that need protection for future generations. Roland Silva's quote opposite remains valid today; we still do not know enough about these mosques and many are in a poor state of conservation. Their beauty and elegance cannot be fully appreciated because most of them have been modified and substantially extended. The legacy of the coral stone mosques of Maldives is seriously endangered and needs appreciation for future protection and conservation.

previous spread

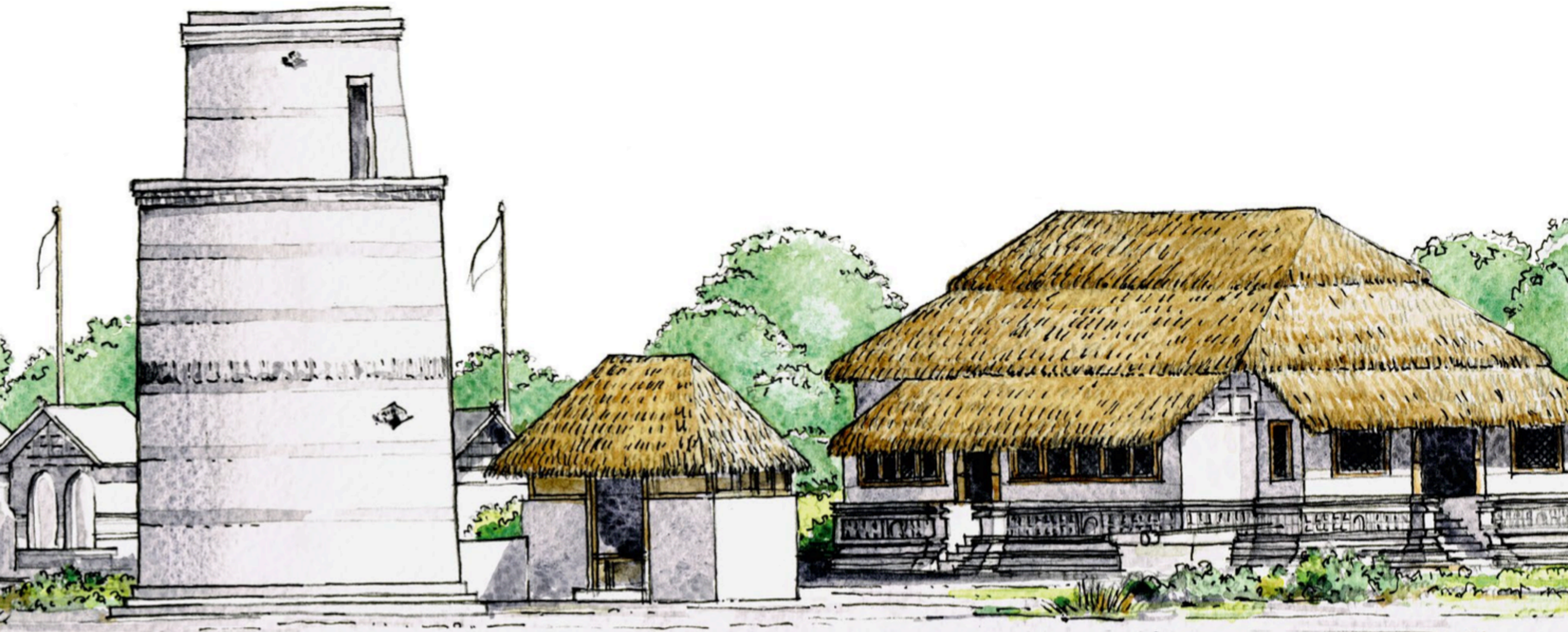
Male' Old Friday Mosque
without its roof structure

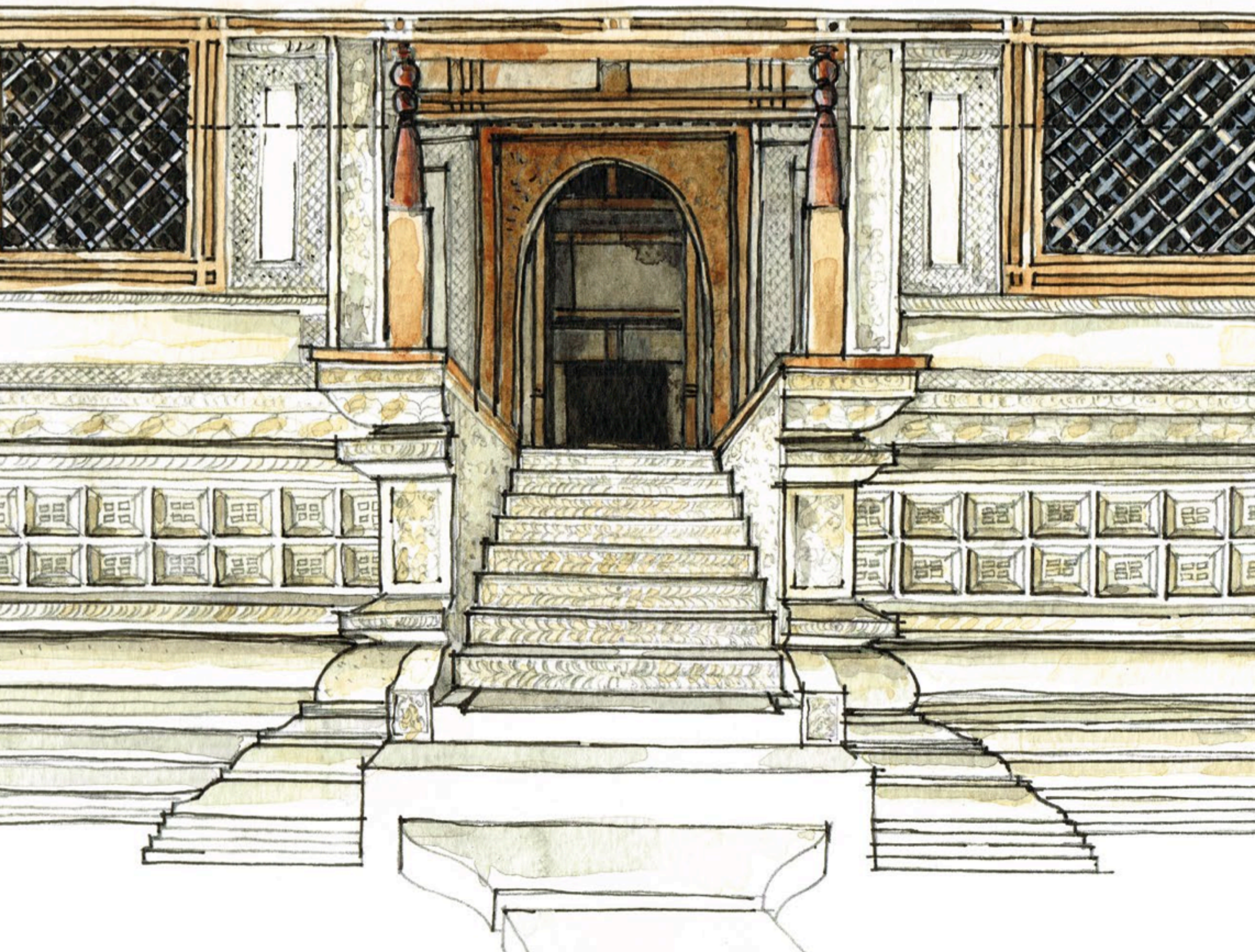
opposite

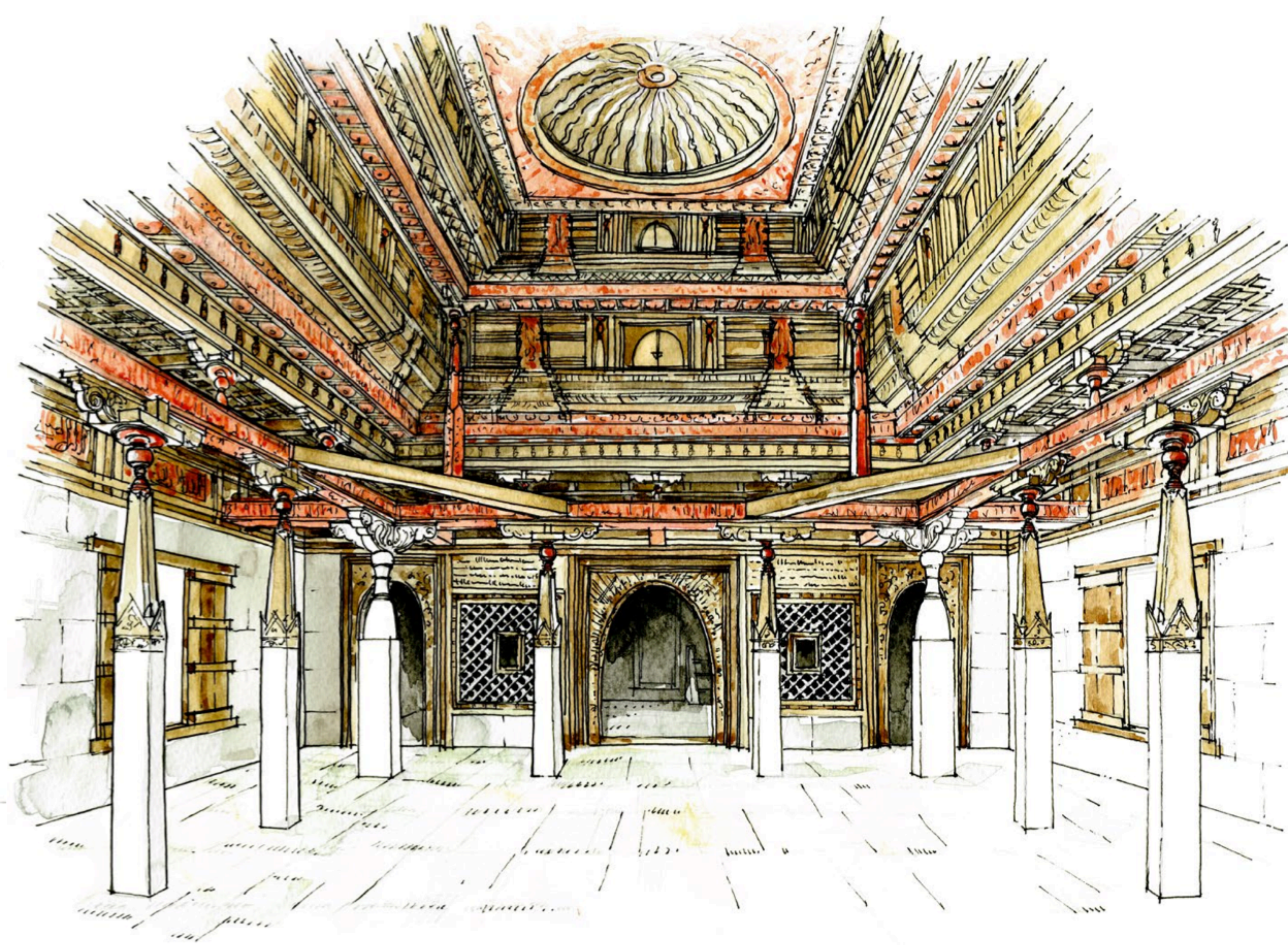
Male' Kalhuvakaru
Mosque, coffered ceiling
and beam

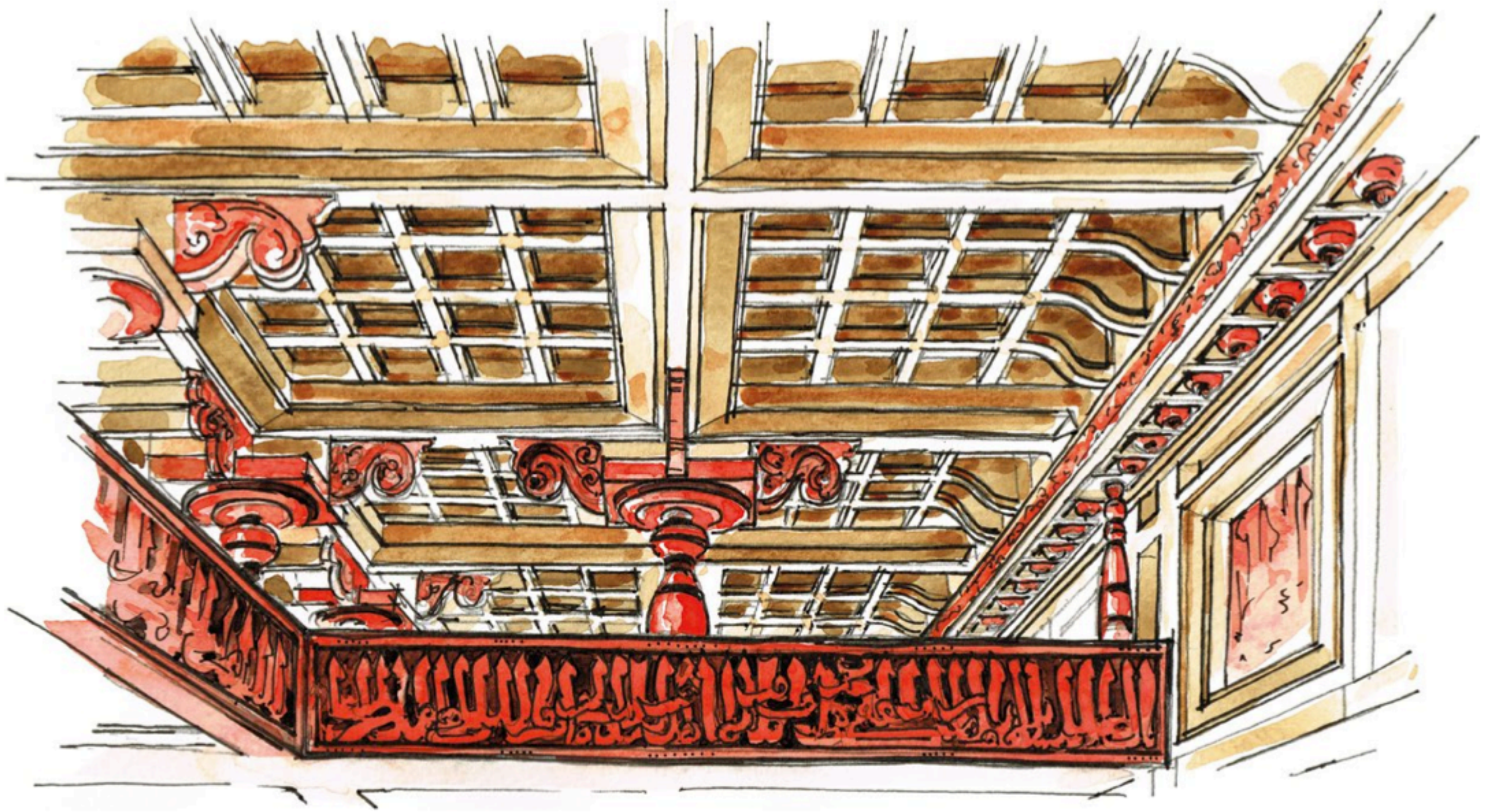
This book is an introduction to coral stone mosques with illustrations of selected mosques in their former glory. It is intended to raise awareness among a variety of users, as a reference work that is simplified without compromising accuracy. This book originated from recent research work at the University of Malaya and a UNESCO World Heritage Nomination Project for the government of Maldives.

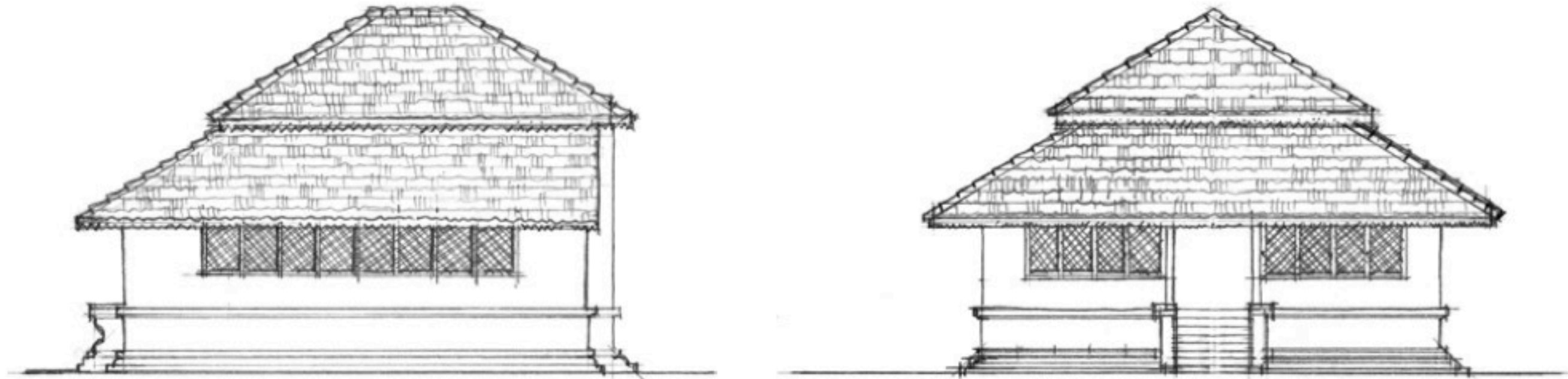
The book is presented in three chapters. The introduction chapter provides a background to the cultural heritage of Maldives, introduces coral stone construction, establishes styles and features of mosques and identifies the cultural and architectural influences from the region on coral stone mosques. The second chapter describes the traditional mosques of Maldives and lists those noted by the authors. The final chapter identifies the typical features, and eight selected mosques, to tell the story of coral stone mosques in their present condition and past splendour. The book concludes with an appendix covering a brief historic background and a historic timeline.





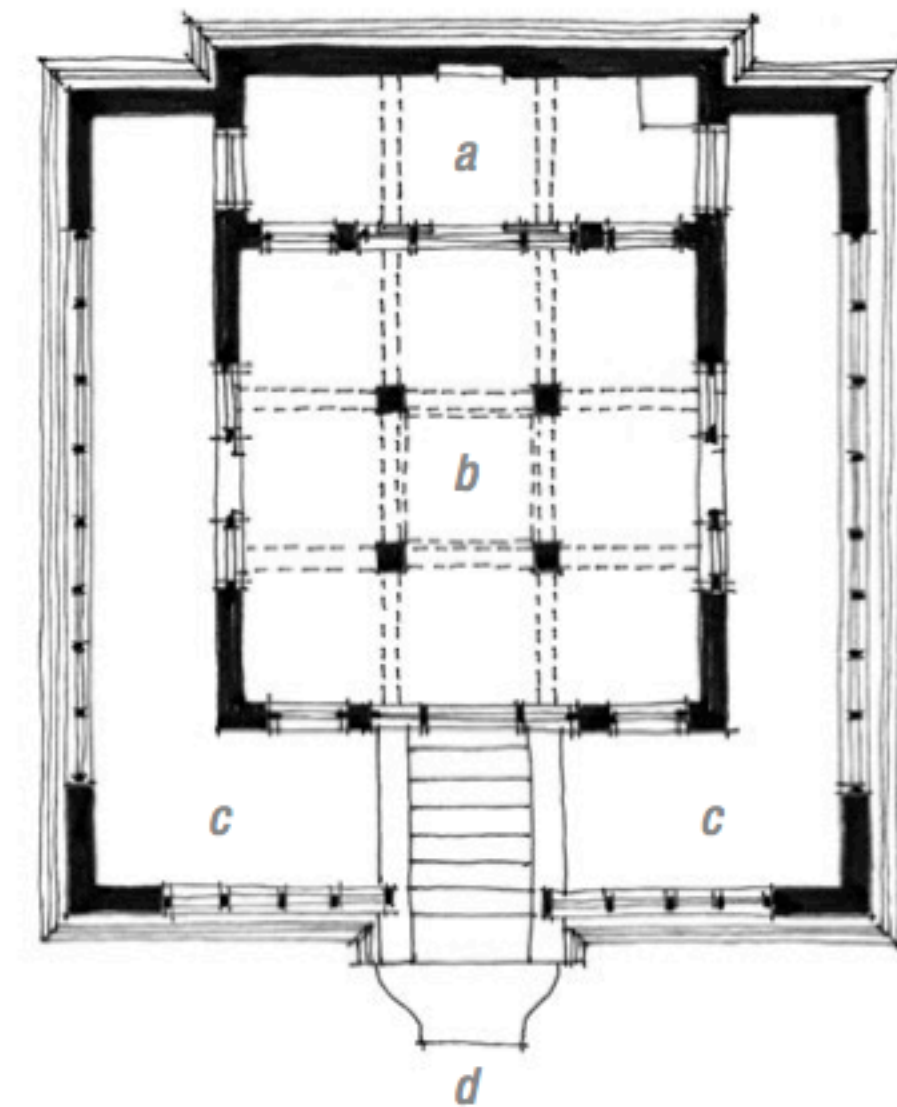


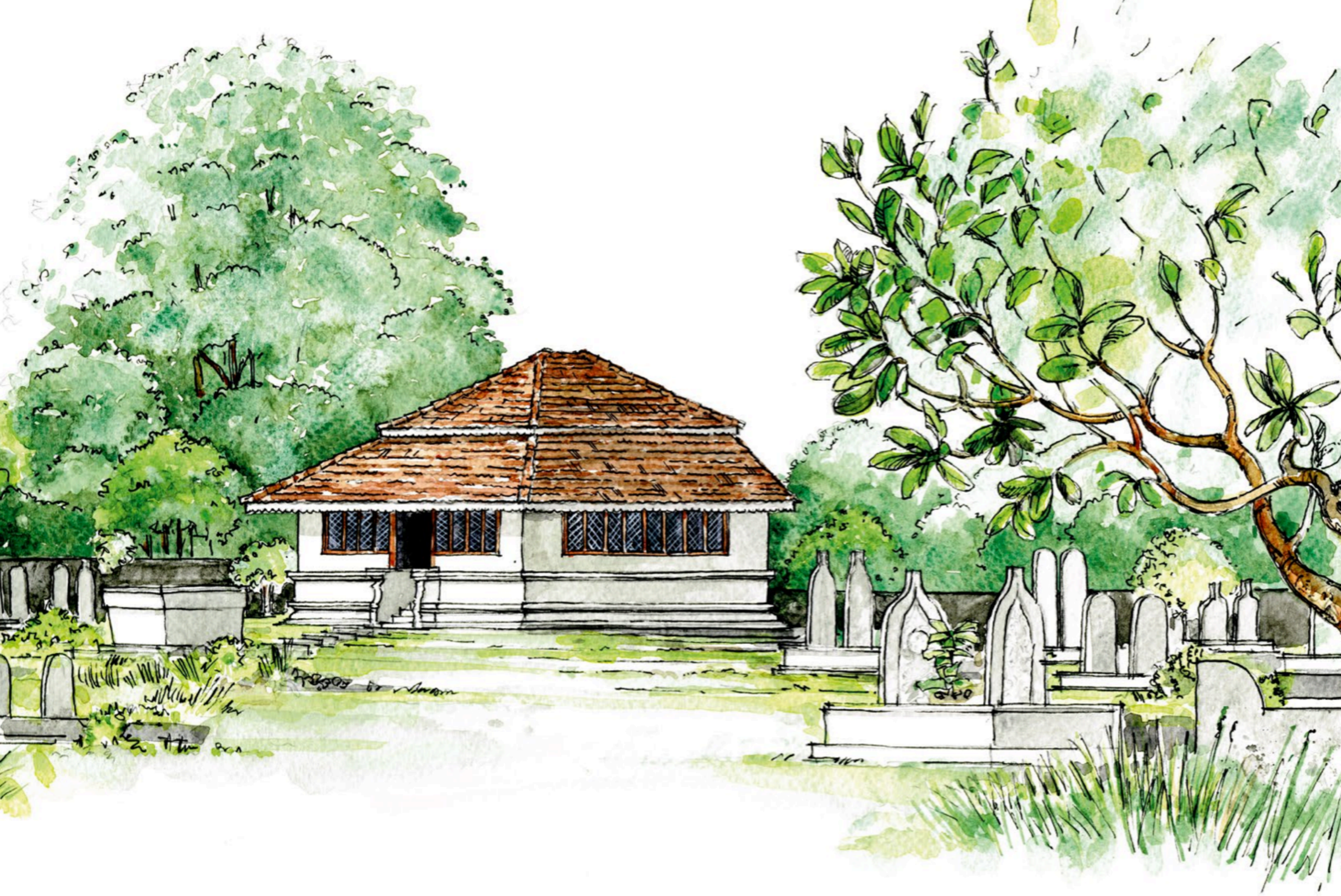




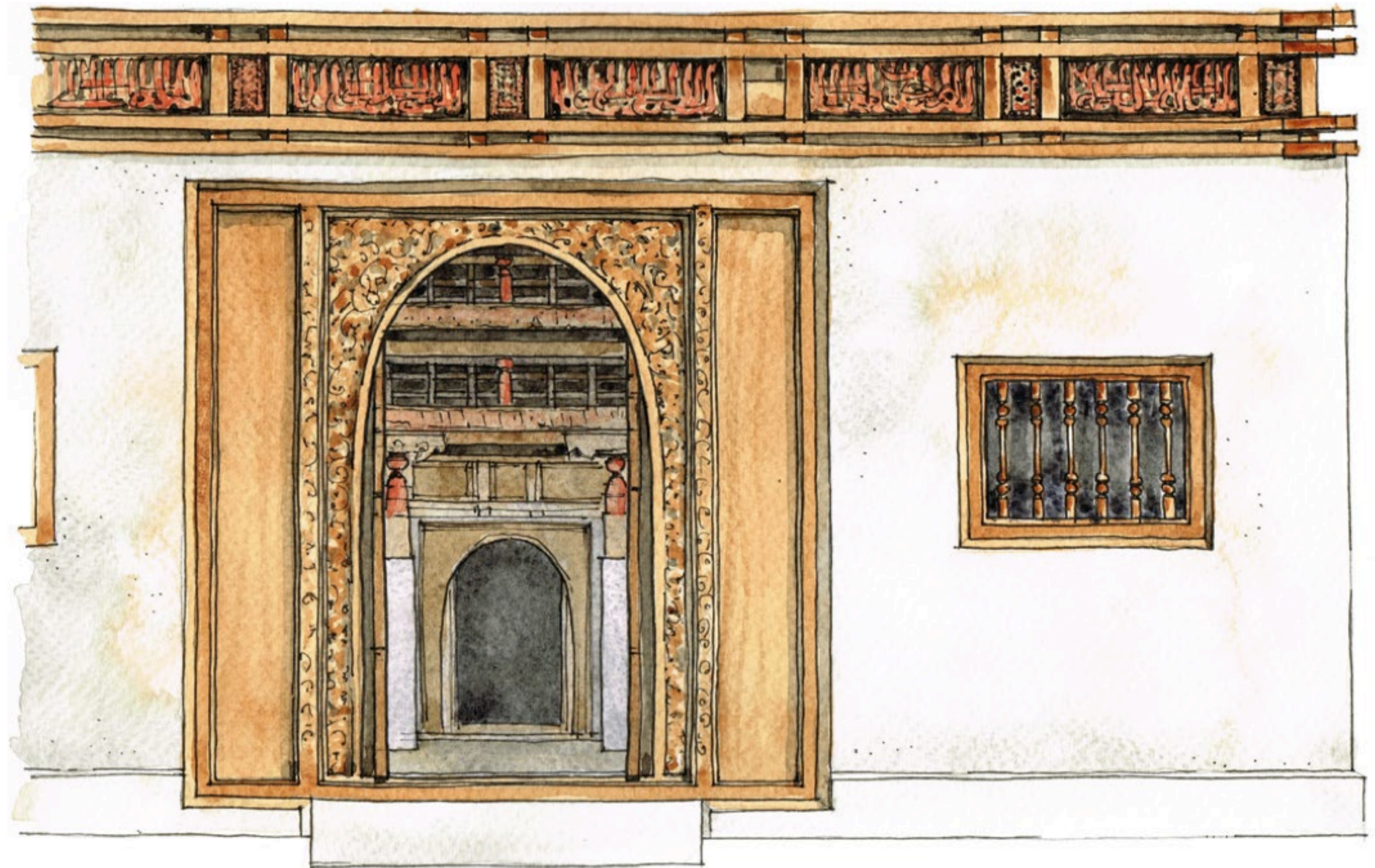
The mosque is one of the few in the country to undergo scarcely any changes since the early 1900s. It is a typical mosque with the prayer hall, mihrab chamber, *dhaala* (antechambers) on three sides and stairs rising to the entrance opposite the mihrab chamber. The mimbar is inside the mihrab chamber. The mosque is built on a coral stone plinth with coral stone walls, timber columns, beams, doors and windows. The roof form is two-tiered and its structure is supported by the integrated walls, columns, beams and doors. The mosque has a timber coffered ceiling with a central recessed *laage*, raised from the main beams using *thona*.

The exterior coral stone ornament does not have the carvings and finesse of other similar mosques, even if the mouldings and form do. The interior ornament is composed of many timber carvings, lacquerwork and calligraphy. The mosque was renovated in the early 1900s when many parts of the interior were replaced, including the four main columns and a lot of the lacquerwork, which was undertaken by the renowned lacquerworkers of Thulhadhoo. This is the only coral stone mosque still standing with original Indian clay roofing tiles.





opposite
Exterior entrance detail
right
Interior entrance detail





opposite

Interior of the prayer hall

right

Lacquered detail of a
timber column head and
main beams

bottom

Detail of a lacquered
beam



Mauroof Jameel

Mohamed Mauroof Jameel, BA (Hons) Arch, Dip Arch, MSc Arch, RIBA is a Maldivian architect and an expert on the architectural heritage of Maldives. He has wide-ranging experience in design and development as well as project and institution management. He has been associated with projects such as Hulhumale', which created a new landmass, resorts and numerous buildings. Mauroof Jameel also served the Maldives government in high-level posts and as a cabinet minister and has contributed to the development of the construction industry. At present he is an architectural consultant and a researcher. He is a keen artist and illustrator.

Yahaya Ahmad

Yahaya Bin Ahmad, PhD, MCIOB, AAHM, ICOMOS is an Associate Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Built Environment at the University of Malaya, Malaysia. His areas of expertise are vernacular architecture, conservation management and conservation of historic buildings. Yahaya Ahmad has extensive experience in both the research and the academic sectors and his work has been widely published. He served the Malaysian government as Deputy Commissioner of Heritage and has acted as a consultant and adviser to local and overseas governments. Apart from teaching and management commitments, Yahaya Bin Ahmad supervises doctoral and research programmes and undertakes consultancy projects.

