



Architecture, craft and religious symbolism in rural areas of Baluchistan in Pakistan

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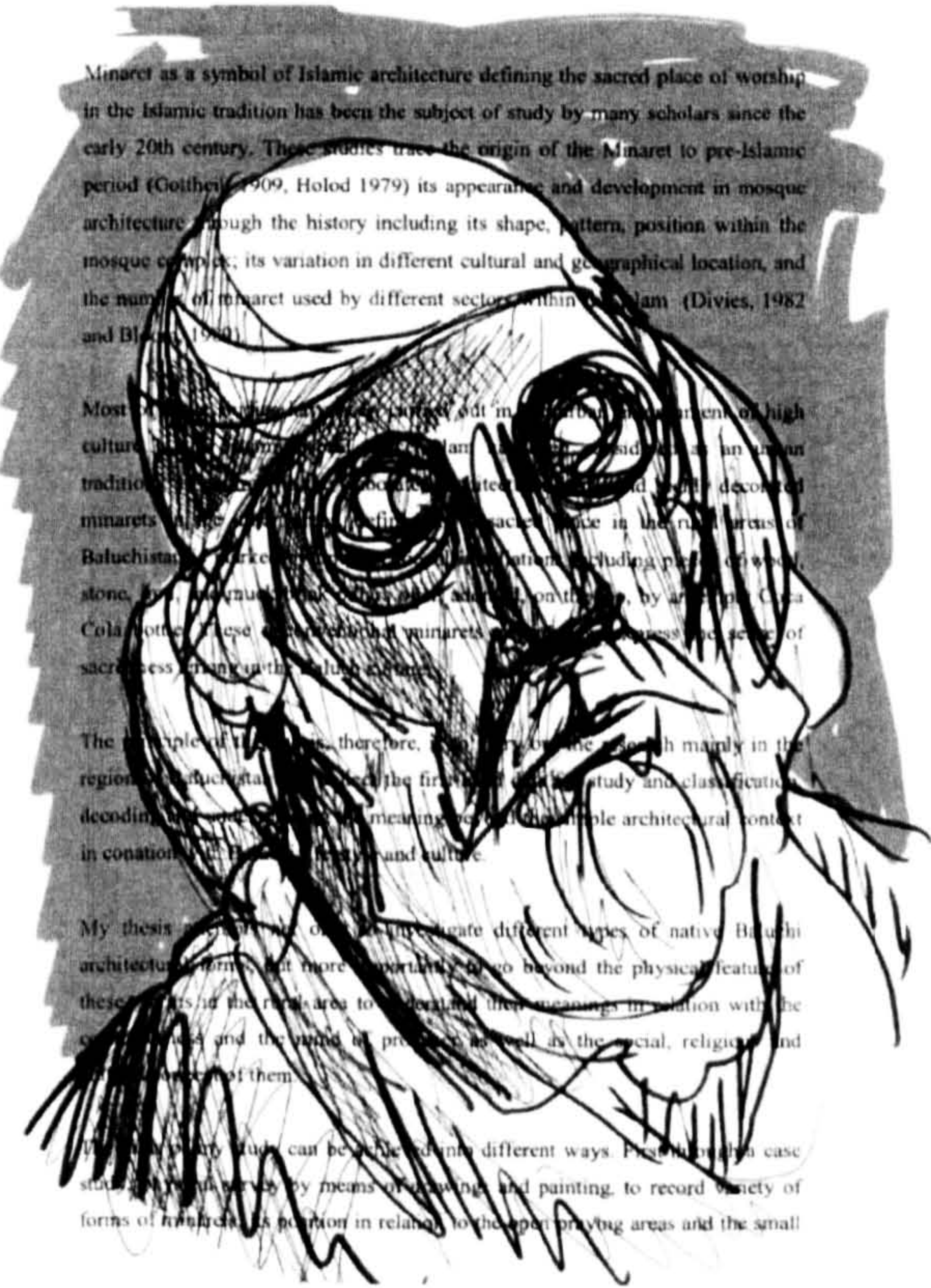
Abstract

The study forms a direct analysis and personal response towards the symbolism and architecture of Baluchistan through three methodological stages of research: literature review, case study, and examination, classification and analysis of results. The research first focuses on the social environment of Baluchistan such as social patterns, languages, local economy and the lifestyle of the nomadic, semi-nomadic and the rural settled people in order to understand the input of local culture and tribo-religious influences of local architecture, in particular the form of mosque, its feature elements such as dome, mihrab, minbar and most importantly the minaret. The fieldwork and collecting data is theoretically contextualised and draws upon a combination of reference points from Islamic architecture as well as anthropology. The Baluchi lifestyle is analysed, taking into account native architecture including mosques and symbolic minarets as key factors, together with their design, characteristics, social contextualisation and methods of production.

Selected architectural forms of normal houses and mosques and the design of their featuring constituent elements are analysed to explain their symbolic meaning and their visual content.

Historical contexts and the relationship between the Baluchi lifestyle, textiles (prayer rugs), local architecture and the design of their mosques is an important part of understanding the social and religious significance of minarets in Baluchistan. Therefore, the principle and functions of minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan, along with their local traditional architecture are compared to the principles of religio-cultural architecture in highly developed Islamic urban areas in order to examine the potential changing patterns of minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan, including the configuration and function towards the understanding of the symbolic meaning of minarets.

As an artist, a personal response involves developing a pictorial assessment to approach and collect the data by studying the native lifestyle, architecture, mosques and identifying the symbolic minarets in a typological arrangement.



Drawing of a Baluchi man.

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Acknowledgements

The journey taken when researching a Ph.D. is often said to be travelled along a lonely road. The incalculable hours the researcher spends alone would seem to corroborate such a feeling. The loneliness is felt even more strongly when you hear your supervisor saying that your thesis is like your own child and you need to know how to bring the child up. Yet in truth the journey of this research has been marked by several people who have assisted, questioned, advised and guided, without whom I would undoubtedly have become disoriented, if not lost altogether.

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Baluchistan and other parts of Pakistan during my case study. And finally my special thanks are reserved for my wife Fatemeh, my lovely daughter Neda and my two little boys Nima and Manni.

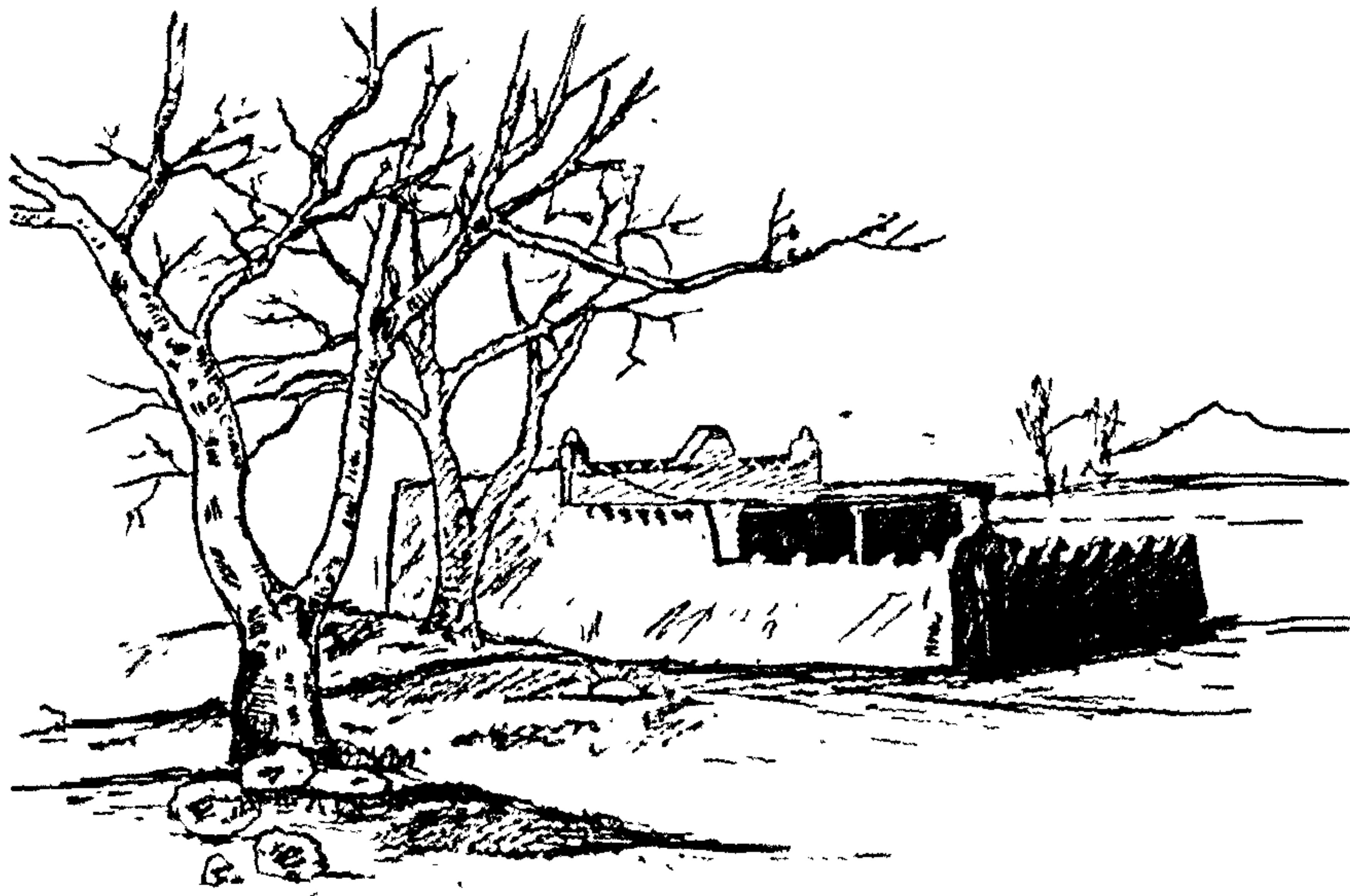
I would also like to mention that the simplicity in the Baluchi lifestyle, their spirituality, hospitality, acceptance, and the warm welcome of the native people of Baluchistan were a continuous source of motivation, encouragement and inspiration for my education and also my art.



Drawing of a native Baluchi

Chapter 1

Introduction



1. Introduction

1.1. Study content

The minaret as a symbol of Islamic architecture defining the sacred place of worship in Islamic tradition has been the subject of study by many scholars since the early 20th century. These studies trace the origin of the Minaret to the pre-Islamic period (Gottheil, 1910; Holod, 1979), its appearance and development in mosque architecture through history including its shape, pattern and position within the mosque complex; its variation in different cultural and geographical locations, and the number of minarets used by different sectors within Islam (Bloom, 1989).

Most of these studies have been carried out in the urban environment of high culture in the Islamic world, since Islam has been considered as an urban tradition. In contrast to the elaborated architectural forms and highly decorated minarets in the urban areas, definition of a sacred place in the rural areas of Baluchistan is marked by unconventional installations including pieces of wood, stone, iron, and mud brick pillars often adorned, on the top, by an empty Coca Cola bottle. These unconventional minarets nevertheless express the sense of sacredness in Baluch culture.

The principle of this thesis, therefore, is to conduct the research mainly in the region of Baluchistan and to collect first hand data for study and classification, decoding and understanding the meaning beyond the simple architectural context in connection with Baluchi lifestyle and culture.

According to Tzonis and Lefaivre (1986), architecture, like any other products of culture, is a social phenomenon. Therefore accepting architecture as a social fact leads to investigation of the generative rules and the poetics of composition of classical architecture and what it shares with classical music, poetry and drama.

Tonna revealed that in the past architects were able to reach a high volume of pleasure within their architectural products only by combining the formal structure of building with a celebrated cultural tradition (Tonna, 1991). Pallasmaa (1994) argues that the enduring mission of architecture is to create alive existential images that concretise and structure man's being in the world. He assumes that the images of architecture are the reflected and externalised ideas and they are images of ideal life. He also stated that:

Buildings and towns enable us to structure, understand, and remember the shapeless flow of reality and, ultimately, to recognise and remember who we are. Architecture enables us to place ourselves in the continuum of culture (Pallasmaa, 1994:31).

Muslim philosophers such as Nasr (1973) have investigated the influences of Islamic spirituality as “the inner meaning” and the term Sufism as “the inner dimension of Islam”; both terms represent a purely religious quest originating in the Quran and the *Hadith* and have dominated Islamic arts including literature, music, architecture, calligraphy, miniature etc. He believes it was spirituality that raised the Islamic arts from local lyric and at the most epic verse to an informative and mystical stage of the most universal dimensions. He states that “*Many of the outstanding Muslim architects have been attached to Sufism though the guilds of masons and builders*” (Nasr, 1973: 20).

Also in connection with spiritual quality of Islamic architecture, Arkoun (2002) states that the concept of spirituality is loaded with meaning and connotation and as result Islamic literature, architecture and arts took possession of this spirituality. Spirituality itself is a complex combination of subjective desires, hopes and it been has projected onto spaces, places, time, and cultural works (Arkoun, 2002). The religio-cultural concepts of Islamic architecture, such as spirituality, tranquillity, philosophy, unity in diversity within a physical context of the building and in connection with cultural identity in harmony with the people and environment, have been widely addressed in many publications.

In a common sense most of these defined qualities were commemorated within Islamic architecture in highly developed urban areas of the past, but not in recent types and rural areas. It is hard to find an identifiable Islamic architecture nowadays which contains the valuable qualities of the past. Undoubtedly, with emerging of globalisation, not only architecture but also Islamic culture is undergoing a transformation.

The loss of Islamic identity in Muslim societies is well described by Martin, who notices that:

Oil wealth, along with social and political change, have threatened Islamic culture and traditions. This identity crisis is readily apparent in architectural design. But in the 20th century, the Islamic concepts of unity, harmony, and continuity often are forgotten in the rush for industrial development (Martin, 2007:15).

Portoghesi has also noticed that the problems of losing the Islamic concept and identity within Islamic societies can be referred to major economic era stemming from exploitation of oil fields, the crisis of western colonialism and the renewal of political fervour, which have heavily affected the arts and architecture (Portoghesi, 1982). However, modernity and globalisation have only affected city life and mainly the major centres of the Islamic world; in a similar way the origins of Islamic architecture spread into centres of civilisation and city life, and was adopted and modified the existing local architectural forms (Horton, 1991).

This thesis suggests that the quality found within Islamic architecture has not disappeared completely from the Islamic lands. However, there are some places, like Baluchistan, which have little or no connection with the outside world and because of this isolation these valuable qualities such as cultural conception, religious and symbolic meanings, that can be found in any prime society, remain untouched. The intention is, therefore, to identify and examine Islamic primitive

architecture which still appears in Baluchistan. It is noticed that neither the high quality of Islamic architecture nor modern architecture have reached Baluchistan yet. Therefore the architecture of Baluchistan can be traced as “primitive Islam” or Islamic primitive architecture. The term primitive Islam was defined by Creswell as a direct transportation from the Arabian Peninsula, unaffected by contact with complex society (Creswell, 1968). While the phase of primitive Islamic architecture may have lasted only a very short time in Arabia, it has been able to continue in the more isolated areas until today (Horton, 1991).

Simplicity is the most significant identity of primitive art and architecture. The simple product of any specific nation might be compared with children’s work and some philosophers such as Hegel considered it as the childhood of nations. The difference between children’s work and the nation’s childhood work is that children are satisfied with the superficiality and their non-intellectual and idle play and amazing combinations, but the nation, even in its childhood, demands more substantial material. It makes it very difficult to find a solution, decode the secrets and understand the meaning beyond these substantial materials (Hegel, 1975). In connection with understanding the primitive works Hegel states:

they [primitive artworks] do not please us or satisfy by their immediate appearance, but by themselves they encourage us to advance beyond them to their meaning which is something wider and deeper than what they are (Hegel, 1975 : 308).

In the case of the spiritual and religious aspect of primitive art work, Cousin (1854) believes that God is the primitive reason of all existence and mankind has always been seeking the truth in their work. He states that “*he is the true original, and that everything is true by relation to his eternal idea, the seeking truth is seeking him, and that finding truth is finding him*” (Cousin, 1854: 308). Strahan (1866) amplifies the religious concept of primitive architecture. He mentions that “*God is the true hero of the primitive epopees. God is the only type and original of the primitive architecture* (Strahan, 1866: 308).

Horton (1991) conducted research to discover more about primitive Islam and architecture in East Africa. He investigated the primitive mosques which mainly belonged to early Islamic times in East African, such as the Swahili coast, Shanga in Zanzibar, Tanzania and some other places. He agrees with the view of Creswell, confirming that Arabia, at the beginning of Islam, did not have anything worthy of being described as architecture.

1.2. The aims and objectives of the study

The cultural environment has to be considered as one of the important factors in decoding any symbols (Richter-Ushanas, 2008). This study takes culture as the process and art and architecture as the product and aims to provide a deeper insight and develop a better understanding of the influence of culture on art and architecture in general and its symbolic religious architecture, in particular in rural areas of Baluchistan. In this context the study takes a broad definition of culture, which includes all humans social, economic and religious activities as well as geographical location, social and tribal structure and values.

To achieve the main concern of the research, which is to explore the dynamic interaction between the cultural process and art products, the following objectives have been established:

1. Explore the concept of symbolism and its significance in human life.
2. Investigate the background history of Baluchistan and its people.
3. Examine the socio-economic and cultural environment.
4. Explore the interrelationship of living pattern, tradition and art.
5. Analyse important elements of Islamic architecture and their variation over time.
6. Analyse the rural and tribal architecture of Baluchistan and how the religio-cultural beliefs of native Baluchi have influenced their architecture.

1.3. Methodological approach

Among five different possible methods, namely experiment, survey, archival analysis, and case study, which are suggested by Yin (1984), the “why” and “how” questions presented in the previous section are appropriate for the case study method. The strategy of this research defines an appropriate case study, and determines the relevant data to be collected and analysed.

As an artist (painter) I have always been interested in studying and recording nomadic and primitive art, architecture, and crafts. My interest in this field began with studying the rural and tribal art and culture represented in 16th century Persian miniatures. I lived for six months with a nomadic tribe (*Qashghai*) in Iran and recorded their contemporary lifestyle, art, and music and compared them with their living pattern in the 16th century. I found that much of the contemporary life style and art of the tribe have remained the same.



Figure 1.1. Example of sketches in my pilot survey and the names of villages where I went in rural areas of Baluchistan.
Source: Author

The above study gave the experience of recording living patterns, traditional art and crafts and cultural customs and habits through sketch drawings. Discussions with tribal people and interviewing key tribal chiefs, artists and craftsmen were then recorded. This information was then partly overlaid on the drawing or included in the annotations and partly presented as analytical writing.

For the survey case study of my research in Baluchistan, I used the same method based on my artistic skills in drawings, sketches and photographs. I conducted a pilot survey in Baluchistan in early 2003, visiting small settlements in the desert area and recording their lifestyle. The visit enabled me to establish contacts with local people and map out the area of my case study. Later I managed to spend several months in the area to study the culture and prepare drawings. The subjects of these drawings include minarets and sacred/religious places. Some of the key drawings also include settlement architecture and people and are used in different parts of my thesis. I conducted a photographic survey and interviewed local people record their lifestyles.



Figure 1.2. A landmark separated by stones and painted in white. Source: author

Several surveys were carried out to address the questions of this study during my case study. There were three journeys to Baluchistan in 2003, 2005 and 2009 and visits to 145 mosques, including 27 mosques in the urban area of Quetta, the capital city of Baluchistan, 93 mosques in the rural area of Baluchistan and 30 mosques in urban and rural areas of Islamabad, Jhelum and Mirpur (Kashmir) for comparison.

There was also a task to discover how local people perceived their mosque. The survey was based on Kevin Lynch's methodological concept of imageability. In applying the basic concepts of imageability Lynch uses two principal methods: interviews with a small sample of local people with regard to the image of their environment, and a systematic examination of the environmental image evoked in trained observers in the field (Lynch, 1960). Seventy eight people of different ages from 7 to 80 year old participated in the survey. The task in the visual survey was to draw a mosque. My aim was to discover how the people visualised the mosque. What feature of the mosque is more important in their drawing?

The native people of Baluchistan were the most important source of collecting data during my case study. I initially planned to distribute a questionnaire, but this was not successful because of the low level of literacy. I therefore changed the method to interviews with the local people. I managed to interview 50 people both in rural and urban areas of Baluchistan as well as in Kashmir, Jhelum, and Islamabad. The interviews mainly concerned the religious and cultural beliefs of local people to understand more about their architectural features, particularly their mosques and symbolic minarets.

Historical photographs are presented along with the survey photography to demonstrate the unchanging architectural characteristics of some of the religious/sacred places.

In the case of the verifying method for the literature review, once the research identified its target, it followed three steps one by one at the practical stage,

namely case study selection, pilot study and case study examination. The first step defines the relevant case study and sample cases to be examined according to the research target. Then, the research developed its assessment tool by using two different methods of data collecting, pictorial and theoretical methods. The photos and drawings of the case study were processed and refined based on the results of the pilot study and were prepared for the actual examination. I went to Pakistan in 2003, crossing the area of Baluchistan all the way back to Afghanistan and Iran as a pilot survey for my case study.

The numerical and visual data from the previous stages, such as pilot study and case study, were transferred in order to be visualised, mapped, analysed and used in most of the chapters. Moreover, several pictures from the past and present are included in order to measure the overtime degree of change in physical complexity of the selected elements of the mosques, such as minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. The comparison of minarets in urban areas and present rural minarets of Baluchistan will reveal the degree of impact that urban and rural interventions have imposed on the physical complexity of the mosque elements, as well as their symbolic meanings.

1.4. The structure of the thesis

The research comprises three main stages, a) the literature review, b) the data collection and examination, and c) the data analysis. The strategy of each stage is to narrow down the research according to its main aims and to focus on the target specified by the research objectives. In this section, the three stages of the investigation are briefly introduced.

Investigation of the historical/theoretical part of the research has been conducted through a literature review and is divided into two parts. Part one covers the socio-historical background of Baluchistan and its people and Islamic architecture. Part two of the literature review investigates the subject of symbolism, its meaning, expression and its relation to culture. The investigation

focuses on the philosophy, symbolism and religion, symbolism expression and language.

In order to achieve the aims of this study it was necessary to introduce the area as a geographic location and its history (Chapter 2), and then to know the inhabitants of Baluchistan through an anthropological, social and cultural study. The study of social patterns in Baluchistan reveals that the people can be separated into three major groups: nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled people. The architectural structure of each group has been studied separately (Chapters 3-5).

The lifestyle of inhabitants, their economic resources, languages (chapter 2), art, textiles (chapter 7) and architecture and their religious beliefs have also been investigated. There is a particular focus on how cultural and religious beliefs have transformed the form of architecture, in particular the forms of mosques in comparison with the same issue in other parts of the Islamic lands. Grabar states that:

Art has been affected by ideological, social, religious, historical or geographical constraints; this explains why individual civilizations have artistic traditions which differ from each other. Islamic culture is, of course, no exception (Grabar, 2000:35).

As previously mentioned, the main intention of the thesis is to identify and examine the symbolic minarets and the various materials which symbolise (Chapter 11) and adorn the minarets. The minaret is one of the five popular elements of the mosque and merely used to signify the mosque as the most important religious building of the Muslim society. For that reason the principle of the mosque as a sacred place for faithful Muslims and its spiritual role as unifying element will be investigated (chapters 6, 8 and 9). The principle of the mosque, its form, the historic appearance and basically what can be defined as a mosque will be questioned and different neutral opinions will be presented. Hillenbrand states:

The mosque lies at the very heart of Islamic architecture. It is an apt symbol of faith which it serves. That symbolic role was understood by Muslims at a very early stage, and played its part in the creation of suitable visual markers for the building: dome, minaret, mihrab and minbar among others (Hillenbrand, 2000:5).

A mosque, however, is described frequently as a domed building with a minaret, a prayer niche (*mihrab*) indicating the direction of Mecca, a platform for preaching (*minbar*), and a place, mainly courtyard, where the water is provided for the obligatory ablutions before prayer (Soanes and Stevenson, 2003). Therefore the history, general structure, function, and the significant meaning of the more common elements of the mosque such as dome, *minbar*, *mihrab* and most importantly minaret have been examined in detail (chapter, 6).

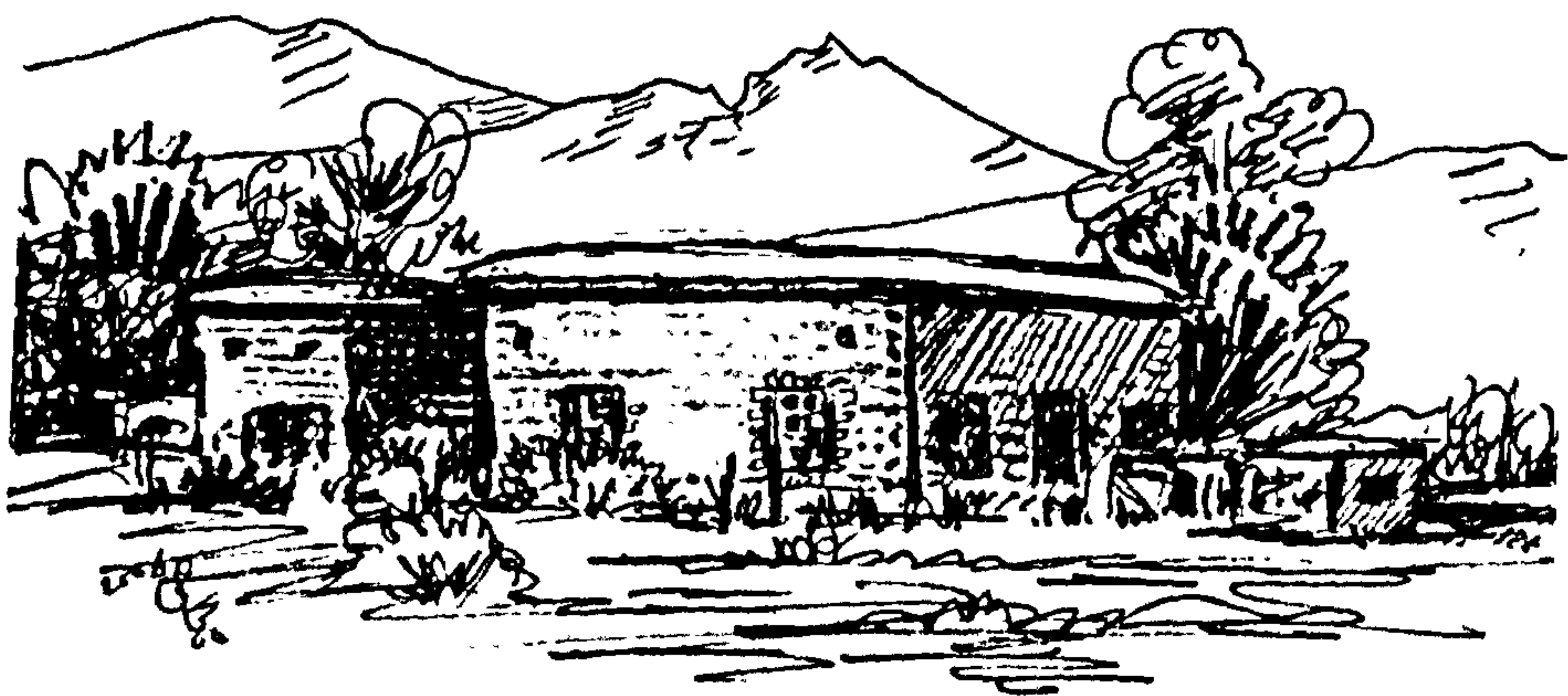
The final achievement of this study is a special focus on the minaret, which includes an historic investigation, development of its physical structure, different functions, and finally its symbolic meaning (chapters, 8 and 9).

Finally, the thesis studies the notion of sign and symbol by discussing the views of philosophers such as Hegel (1975), Reader & Jessup, (1976), Fromm, (1951) de Man (1982) and Armstrong (2002) and many others in connection with decoding the meaning and understanding of the symbolic minarets in Baluchistan. Armstrong confirms that the: “*Symbol perpetrates a mystified, narcissistic culture of identification of form and content, self and sensory world*” (Armstrong, 2000:52). De Man also states that “*The symbol is the mediation between mind and the physical world of which art manifestly partakes, be it as stone, as colour, as sound or as language* (De Man, 1982:763).

Chapter 2

Baluchistan:

Geography, history and language



2. Baluchistan

Baluch is the name of an ethnic group of disputed origin settled in a region called Baluchistan. It is estimated that the Baluchi population is 11,540,000 in southern Asia, with 6,460,000 Baluch and 2,310,000 Brahuis in Pakistan, 1,300,000 in Iran and also 375,000 in Afghanistan (Minahan, 2002).

2.1. Geography

Baluchistan, the homeland of the Baluch people, is located at the eastern edge of the Iranian plateau occupying an area bounded by *Bandar Abbas* and *Bam* in Iran in the west, the Punjab and the Kirthar range of mountains of Pakistan in the east, the Arabian Sea to the South, and in the north the Afghan province of *Chankhansur* (Nimroz) and the Iranian province of Sistan. There are large Baluch settlements in Sind, Western Afghanistan, Khoransan and the Marv district (Konieczny, 1979).

According to Shah (2007), Baluchistan's geographical location makes it a strategic area. It is a mountainous land with vast barren wastelands. It has common borders of 832 km with Iran in the west and northwest and 1,160 km with Afghanistan in the north. Baluchistan is bordered by the provinces of Punjab and NWFP and in the east by the province of Sind. It has 560 km of coast on the Arabian Sea in the south (Shah, 2007).

The majority of the Baluch people live in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, which is considered as Pakistan's largest province and comprises 43% of the total land mass. However, it only provides 8% of the total population of Pakistan (Baloch, 2006). The population of Baluchistan is low due to its geographical location and as it is a harsh, mountainous, desert region suffering from a shortage of water. Makran is the southern region of Baluchistan and Kalat the central region. Quetta, the capital city of Baluchistan, is surrounded by dry mountains (Zafar, 2006).

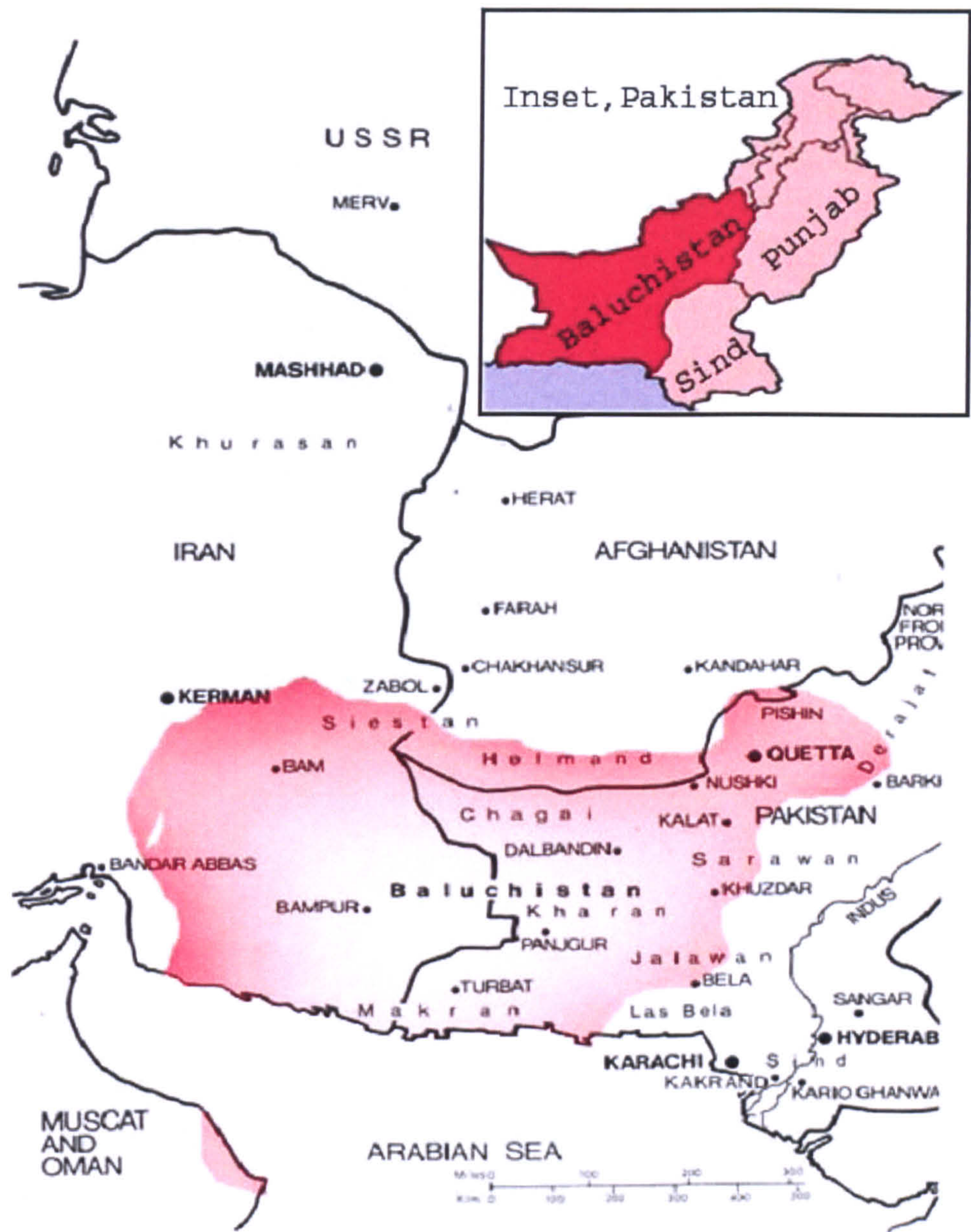


Figure 2.1. The top right map shows geographic location of Baluchistan in Pakistan (not to scaled). Map of Baluchistan showing the settlement of the Baluchi tribes across Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Konieczny, 1979).

About 40% of the total area of Baluchistan is sparse and arid as it is a hot and dry region and receives only a few inches of annual rainfall (Ganguly, 2001). There are some mountain-springs, mountain runnels and brooks, but they remain underground for some distance. There are some seasonal rivers such as the Zhob, Nari, Bolan, Pishinlara, Mula and Hab (Baloch, 1975b).



Figure 2.2. Drawing of a Baluch man in his traditional clothes. Source: Author.

2.2. History

The history of the Baluch is open to question (Mohammad, 1989). Their communal origins remain unclear, but they are broadly classified as Turko-Iranian (Ganguly, 2001). According to Zafar, the history of the settlements in Baluchistan goes back to the beginning of the 6th millennium BC (Zafar, 2006).

According to archaeological discoveries, Baluchistan was inhabited in the Stone Age, and the Neolithic site of Mehrgarh is one of the earliest (7000-3000 B.C.) settlements in the subcontinent. It was a part of the Persian Empire, under the

name of Maka, and it was conquered by Alexander the Great in 325 BC (Ul- Haq, 2005).

Mohammad believes that according to general historical fact the first Baluchi tribes migrated from the Caspian Sea region and settled in northern Persia. He refers to the authority of the Persian poet Firdousi (935-1020 A.D.) as strong historical evidence which assumes that the Baluch were a political and military force during the times of Cyrus and Combyses (Mohammad, 1989). Shah also agrees with the theory that suggests the origin of the Baluchis are in the region of the Caspian Sea. Over time the Baluchi nomadic tribes found their way across Iran to reach the recent area of Baluchistan as their permanent homeland (Shah, 2007).

There are four popular theories according to scholars such Baloch (1975a, 1975b) considering the origin of the Baluch people.

- The first is that they came from the Caspian Sea region which is located to the north of Iran.
- The second is that they are Semites from Aleppo (Halab) in Syria.
- The third claim that has been mentioned in some books suggests that they are Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula.
- The fourth is that they are the native people of Baluchistan and they have been there from the beginning.

Nisan proposes another theory suggesting that the origin of the Baluchi people is related to pre-Christian Chaldean peoples banished eastward who travelled nomadically through different places until they reached the region of Baluchistan which became their homeland (Nisan, 2002). Among the several theories concerning the origins of the Baluch people, the most popular is that which regards them as a group of Indo-European origin. The Baluch people probably

returned in the 11th – 13th centuries from Sistan and Khorasan in Iran to the eastern part of Baluchistan (Fiorani and Redaelli, 2003).

There has been some effort to unite different tribes including the Baluchi and Brahui tribes in Baluchistan. For example, Mir Chakar occupied some part of Baluchistan in 1487 and attempted to unite it by establishing his kingdom in the town of Sibi (Kundi, 2005). However, this 15th century effort of unifying the Baluchi tribes by Mir Chaker Khan failed at Sibi (Nisan, 2002). The Baluchis were successful in overcoming the Brahuīs at that time and the Baluchi tribe still celebrates that victory. Mir Ahmad Khan, from a Brahui tribe, established the Kalat confederacy in 1666 AD (Baloch, 1975b).

In the early 18th century Mir Abdullah Khan of Baluch (1714 – 1734 AD) expanded the principality of Kalat (Baloch, 1975b). Soon after, Baluchistan was put under the authority of the Moguls of India. During the 18th century, the Brahuīs re-established their power in Kalat and the Khans of Kalat dominated the local power, but the Baluch tribes managed to settle in the western and eastern parts of the region. In the 19th Century the chiefs of the Baluchi tribes (Ghazi Khan and Ismail Khan) moved forward into Punjab and Sind, conquered these lands, and tried to establish their authority and permanent kingdoms there (Kundi, 2005).

Mir Nasir Khan (1749 – 1817) united the Baluchi tribes and managed to move forward from chiefdoms to confederacy (Baloch, 1975a). The Brahuīs tribes increasingly became "Baluchified" during his authority. As a result there are only limited numbers of Brahui speakers in Baluchistan now (Ul- Haq, 2005). Nisan (2002) also remarks that the most famous period of Baluchi national unification was led by a Brahui chief called Nasir Khan of Kalat. He proclaimed the independence of Baluchistan from the Afghans in 1758 and succeeded in protecting Baluch autonomy (Nisan, 2002). Baluchistan was conquered from the north by new raiders such as the Persian king Nadir Shah in 1739 and also by Ahmed Shah Durrani from Afghanistan in 1756 and 1761 while they break down

the Indian Empire. As a result they added Baluchistan to the anarchy created by a century of misrule in northern India (Hussain, 2006).

British interest in Baluchistan started with the travels of Lieutenant Henry Pottinger and Captain Charles Christie in 1810. These two were army officers of the East India Company. Their duty was to protect the British Indian territories from other European powers. They carried out a survey through the unknown area of Baluchistan and researched a possible way of passing European armies through the lands that lay beyond Persia (Pottinger, 2003). The British occupied Sind, Punjab and Kalat in 1843 and Quetta in 1877 and established their domination in Baluchistan (Baloch, 1975b).

With ups and downs the khanate of Kalat survived until 1948, but in the meantime during the process of British conquest, the Baluchi and Brahui tribes failed to unite or establish any central organisation (Nisan, 2002). The last chief of Kalat was Mir Ahmad Yar Khan (1902-79) who managed to establish a brief political state. He hesitated to join Pakistan in 1947, and the short period of independence of Kalat finally ended in 1948 when the Khan signed the necessary unification documents to join Pakistan. He was formally removed from power in 1955 (Shah, 2007).

Baluchistan, because of its strategic position, faced different foreign raiders such as the Macedonians, Persian Sassanid, Safavid, Afsharid and Sindhi Brahmins, Arabs, Mughals and finally the English, but none of these powers managed to establish any permanent settlement due to lack of water and the harsh environmental conditions. The invaders were mainly interested in reaching the Indian plains rather than the unproductive and rough mountainous area of Baluchistan. They used Baluchistan as a passage to India (Hameed-Baloch, 2006).

2.3. Tribal structure

In contrast with the urban areas, the Islamic administrations and identities were established on different terms in the rural societies. According to Tariq (2008) there is a three-tier tribal system which functions at the levels of the tribe, the sub-tribe and the community within both Baluchi and Pashtun tribes settled in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Each tribal system is led by its own leader, known as Ameer, Sardar or Khan, and at higher levels by the tribal council called *Jirga*. *Jirga* has financial independence and governmental authority within a geographically defined area (Tariq, 2008). In the Middle East clans, ancestries and village communities have been led independently by their chiefs or the heads of tribes in terms of tribal rituals by accepting the old patterns of tribal culture as the backbone of social order (Ahmad and Hart, 1984).

Baluchistan is inhabited by several tribes and people with different ethnic backgrounds such as Baluchi, Brahiu, and Pashtun or Pashton. These tribes have mixed with each other during history which makes it difficult to recognise them by their features. It is appropriate to study each of them in more detail. Fundamentally, Baluchis and Brahuis came from two separate origins, but they are culturally and historically related peoples. The nomadic people of Baluchistan can be divided into the two main groups of Nharhui Baluch and Brahui Baluch. Nharhui Baluch are formerly nomadic peoples descended from Iranian tribes. Brahui Baluch are a traditionally settled population descended from pre-Aryan Dravidian inhabitants (Minahan, 2002).

2.3.1. Baluchi

The Baluch people as the major group settled in Baluchistan has been covered in the previous section. This part of the study therefore focuses on other minor groups such as the Brahuis and Pashtuns. Baluchi tribes occupy the mountainous regions of Baluchistan and were associated with another race which was known to the Arabs as Qufs and to the Persians as Koch, but it is possible that the identical race was in fact Brahuis (Nijjar, 2008).

The Baluch social system structurally developed as a merger of a number of tribes, each of them with its own hierarchical system with the chief or the sardar at the top. There are a number of concentric circles existing among the Baluchi tribes, signifying their identity, relationships and linkage with the most nearby clan and tribe (Ganguly, 2001).

2.3.2. Brahui

Brahuis are nomadic people living mainly in Pakistani Baluchistan, with tribal groups spread elsewhere in Pakistan and also in southern Afghanistan as well as in Sistan in Iran. 1600 AD was the earliest time that Brahuis were recorded in history. They are profoundly mixed and influenced by their neighbouring tribes such as the Baluchis. The Brahui tribes may have been well settled in Baluchistan for more than 2000 years. It was estimated in 1980 that there were 400,000 Brahui speakers in Baluchistan (Elfenbein, 1983).

Claus, Diamond, and Mills (2002) also remark that Brahui tribes, in a similar way to Baluchi tribes, are thought to have entered the region of Baluchistan as pastoral nomads and consequently for the most part settled into a sedentary and semi-sedentary lifestyle. Brahuis are mostly bilingual and have been absorbed into Baluchi cultures and politics (Claus, Diamond, and Mills, 2002).

Several authors such as Minahan (2002), Claus, Diamond, and Mills (2002) and Elfenbein (1983) claim the Brahuis race is the western borderer of Dravidian of India (Baloch, 1975a). During the past 200 years many Brahui tribes have described themselves as Baluchi and they speak Baluchi either as their first or second language.



Figure 2.3. Sketch of a Brahiu man with a traditional turban. Source: Author

2.3.3. Pashto or Pathun

The Pushtun (Pathan, Pakhtun, Pashtoon, or ethnic Afghan) is regarded as an ethnic/religious group of people living primarily in Afghanistan, Pakistan and some parts of India. The settlement of the Pathuns lies in the north of Pakistan with Afghanistan to its west, Punjab and Kashmir to its east and Baluchistan to its south. It is considered that the Pashtuns are the largest tribal society in the world (Banerjee, 2008). The Pashtuns make up to 8% of the population of Pakistan and 45% of Afghanistan. More than 2 million Pashtuns live in the northeast of Baluchistan and more than 1 million in Karachi. The total population of Pashtuns is estimated at around 42 million (Mohiuddin, 2006).



Figure 2.4. Drawing of a Pashtun man wearing a traditional hat. This type of hat is popular amongst people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, particularly the Pathun and Tajik people. Source: Author

The settlement of Pathuns is defined by a geographic and cultural line dividing the culture of the Middle East from South Asia. The Pashtuns are generally considered as descendants of Aryan nomads from Central Asia settled in the plains and hills of eastern Afghanistan 4000 years ago (Banerjee, 2008). They are also referred to as Semitic tribes; as Singh remarks, some Pathuns claim to be descended from the lost tribes of Israel (Singh, 2008).

The Pathuns consist of more than 20 tribes and clan (*Khel*). Pathuns tribe's classification is associated with land ownership. Any clan or tribe who lose their lands will not be fully treated as a member of the Pathun community. Pashtunwali is considered by Das (2006) as one of the major codes in customary law. It is practiced by Pashtun tribes settled in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pashtunwali is

respected as the tribal code of honour and it is based on notions of justice, loyalty, hospitality and gender boundaries (Das, 2006). Within the Pathun society tribal identity, such as Pashtunwali laws, is given priority over religious identity (Olesen, 1996).



Figure 2.5. Drawing of a Pashtun man in traditional clothes. Source: Author

2.4. Languages in Baluchistan

Philologists and historians use language to classify race. Moyer regards language as the only proficiency which leads us to a greater integration and also as an important factor for social adjustment (Moyer, 2004). Therefore it is important to know more about the local languages spoken in Baluchistan.



Figure 2.6. Illustration of a Baluchi speaker in Baluchistan in traditional clothes. Source: Author

As mentioned, most people of Baluchistan are bilingual and in many cases they speak three or more languages. Regarding bilingualism in Baluchistan, Baloch (1975b) states that:

Bi-lingualism is also quite common in Baluchistan. Those whose principal language is Baluch freely speak subsidiary languages as well. For instance, the Baluch settlers in Punjab, Sind, Multan and the north-western parts very fluently speak Punjabi, Sindhi, Saraki and Pashto languages. Likewise, the native Baluchis, too, have very efficiently adopted regional languages other than their mother-tongues (Baloch, 1975b: 62).

2.4.1. Baluchi

Baluchi is the principal language of the Baluchistan area. Om considers the Baluchi (also Baluci, Balochi) as the language of the Iranian people who live in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. He states that Baluchi belongs to the same Iranian

group of Indo-European languages as Persian and Kurdish and is a north-western Iranian language (Om, 2006).

As Baluchi has a great similarity to modern Persian (Farsi) linguists have found it hard to recognise Baluchi as a distinct language. According to Baloch *“it would be hardly justifiable to class Baluchi as separate language. Grierson classes it as belonging to the Persian branch of the Aryan sub-family of Indo-European languages”* (Baloch, 1975,b: 3).

2.4.2. Brahui

The Brahui language is classified as a branch of the *Dravidian* family, like Tamil and the other languages of south India spoken over a thousand miles away. There are two dozen Dravidian languages, with a total of 145 million speakers around the world. They are mainly found in southern India, but there are a few places separated from the main body of Dravidian speakers in eastern India, such as Malto, Kurux, Kui, and in southern Pakistan, such as Brahui (Ruhlen, 1991).



Figure 2.7. Drawing of a Brahui tribal man in traditional clothes. Source: Author

Brahui is the only Dravidian language that is spoken entirely outside India. There are about 1,580,000 Brahui speakers who live in the Sind and Baluchistan provinces of southern Pakistan (Zvelebil, 2004). While Brahui is spoken chiefly in Pakistani Baluchistan, there are some other communities who consider themselves as Brahuīs, but live in Sind and other parts of Pakistan and in southern Afghanistan as well as in the Sistan area of Iran. Many of these speak other languages such as Persian, Baluchi, or Sindi (Parkin, 1989).

2.4.3. Pashtu

Pashtu, also called Pashtoo, Pashto or Pakhtu, is a language spoken in Afghanistan and in NWFP (Peshawar) and also in some parts of Baluchistan in Pakistan as well. It is classified as the southeastern Iranian branch of the Indo-European languages (Hoiberg and Ramchandani, 2000).



Figure 2.8. Drawing of a Pashtun man wearing a traditional turban. The turban normally is made of silk or wool. Source: Author

The old Pashtu language is very close to Persian and also to the old languages of Northern India to some extent. The convergence of Pashtu with Indian languages began in the third century BC during the domination of the Maurya dynasty (321 to 185 BC) in the upper Kabul River Valley. Around 97 BC the Saka, the Old Iranian nomadic tribes, who came from the same region as the Parthian, defeated the Greco-Bactrian peoples, they established their authority there and moved

towards Gandhara and Sind. The dialect of Saka as an Iranian language was closer to the Pashtu dialect. Both the Saka and Pashtu languages shared many features in common with the ancient language of the Aryans. However, Pashtu has borrowed many words from other languages such as Arabic and modern Persian, as well as more than 5,500 words from Prakrit, Sindhi and Baluchi (Hoiberg and Ramchandani, 2000).

2.4.4. Dari

Dari was derived from the Persian word *Dar* (gate) or *Darbar* (court). It was the name given to a native or local language derived from literary Middle Persian, which was used in the court. By the end of the Sassanid period Dari was not only used at the courts but also across the empire, particularly in north-eastern Iran of Khurasan (Meri, 2006).

Dari, Farsi, Persian, and Tajiki are names for the same language, which is widely used in Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan and also in some parts of Uzbekistan and Pakistan (Baluchistan). It is called Farsi or Persian in Iran, Farsi or Dari in Afghanistan and Tajiki in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Dari is spoken by over 50% of the population in Afghanistan and it is understood by more than 90% of Afghan people (Wahab, 2006).

Dari or Farsi is spoken by a minority of people in modern Baluchistan of Pakistan. According to Wahab (2006), Persian and English were used as official languages in western Baluchistan and also in other parts of Baluchistan which was occupied by the British. Baluchi was proclaimed the official language of Baluchistan during the time when it was an independent khanate (1957-1958). Baluchistan was incorporated into Pakistan in 1958, but its official language remained Baluchi with Urdu as the national language (Om, 2006). However, Dari or Farsi is still spoken in some parts of Baluchistan, particularly by the Baluchi tribes who settled by the Iranian border. Quetta City also hosts a large number of immigrants from Afghanistan, including the Hezarejat who mainly speak Dari or Farsi.



Figure 2.9. Drawing a Dari speaker from the Hezarahjat tribe in Baluchistan. Source: Author

2.5. Socio-economic environment

The area of Baluchistan has been marked by poverty and a high level of illiteracy. It has its own specific social and tribal system. Baluchistan can be considered as a multicultural area since it includes various tribes. Nisan believes that Baluch remained distant from an awareness of efficient urban civilisation because of its nomadic life across barren pastureland. There are only a few cities inhabited by Baluchi people, such as Quetta, Sibi and Kalat in Eastern Baluchistan. The majority of Baluchi live as nomads and manage to survive with their own

traditional lifestyle. As Baluchistan receives little rainfall, Baluchi tribes are constantly seeking water for survival and they occasionally grow a few basic crops like wheat and maize (Nisan, 2002).

Ganguly believes that the poverty in Baluchistan, including the lack of medical facilities, road construction, housing, law, income and illiteracy is the result of the Baluchi tribal socio-economic system (Ganguly, 2001).

The administration system of Baluchistan is a hybrid of formal and informal systems. Within the tribal system existing in Baluchistan, each tribe has its own traditional social structure and justice system which are controlled by the sardar, the chief of the tribe, in most cases. The tribal system has developed a long rule-of-law framework which is irrelevant for most of the population in some cases (Ramesh and Fritzen, 2009). For example, Baluchi tribes subscribe to a very strong social-cultural honour code which emphasises protection of asylums (Singh, 2008). Mohiuddin compares the Baluchi code of honour with the similar code of Pashtunwali which exists in the Pashtun tribe in Baluchistan. Like the Pashtuns, the Baluch tribal code of honour calls for revenge, hospitality and punishment of death for unlawful sex. The difference between the honour code of the Baluch and Pashtuns is that the Pashtunwali is more democratic, as the tribal council or *Jirga* makes the decision, while within the Baluch society the head of the tribe or sardar is very powerful and sometimes his word is law (Mohiuddin, 2006).

Ramesh and Fritzen believe that the tribal system disseminates a high degree of conflict and anxiety for the community and also closes the door on the government of the formal state and also on anyone outside the tribe or community (Ramesh and Fritzen, 2009), but at the same time non-aggression is usually the highest level of communal cooperation achieved among the tribes. Sardar, or the head of the tribes, enjoys authority, power and exercises his role according to traditional responsibilities which are acknowledged by the tribe people (Nisan, 2002).

From the British time in Baluchistan, most chiefs of the tribes or sardars had to stay in their own areas, where they received allowances and grants from the central government. However, while the tribal system still exists in different parts of Baluchistan, the sardari system was formally abolished in 1976 and the tribal chiefs were deprived of their privileges and grants (Ganguly, 2001), yet it is still exists unofficially.

2.5.1. Social Pattern

Many scholars, such as Stone (2004), Om (2006), Baloch (1975a), Khazanov (1994), Ganguly (2001) and Fisher (1985) have acknowledged that the province of Baluchistan is a tribal area and is associated with a nomadic lifestyle. Nisan classifies Baluchi people as settled people who inhabit a few cities such as Quetta, Sibi and Kalat in Eastern Baluchistan and the second group as the majority of Baluchis who live as nomads (Nisan, 2002). According to Baloch (1975b), as a consequence of the nature of the land and also the annual trips or migration of Baluch tribes, the territory of Baluchistan is divided into two groups, nomadic and settled people (Baloch, 1975b). The pure nomadic lifestyle has been classified by their pastoral activity and the absence of agricultural capacity, even as a supplementary activity (Khazanov, 1994).

So far, categorising the people of Baluchistan into two groups of nomads and settled people can be accepted, as it has been endorsed by many scholars. But there is another group of inhabitants who exist in Baluchistan which is referred to as semi-nomadic people. Semi-nomadic people are characterised by their participation in pastoral activity and agriculture as a secondary or supplementary capacity (Khazanov, 1994).

The next chapters of this study investigate the lifestyles of the nomadic, semi-nomadic and the settled people in Baluchistan. These chapters discuss the integration between the culture, lifestyle, and architecture of each specific group.

2.5.2. Economy

The settlement of Baluchi tribes has a nomadic and rural economy based on camel and sheep rearing as their main occupation, while the Pashtun speaking area of Baluchistan has green, fruitful valleys and the main occupations are based on agriculture (Ganguly, 2001).

There are two different economic activities in Baluchistan: the pastoral nomadism in the northern part and agricultural activities in the southern part. The system of tribalism is still very strong in the southern part, where the traditional economy is



based on agricultural activity (Utas and Rabo, 2005). Other economic resources include natural gas in Sui, the tribal area of Sibi, which produces about 45% of the total output of power in Pakistan. The Pakistani inventory of mineral resources mentions that there are about 20 major natural sources in Baluchistan, such as coal, iron, lead, silica, chromites, gypsum, magnetite and marble (Baloch, 1975a).

Figure 2.10. Drawing of a nomadic Baluch man with his goat in traditional clothes and hat. Source: Author

However, as the region of Baluchistan is mountainous and arid very small areas are fit for agriculture. The pasturage in Baluchistan is poor and dispersed, therefore the region is very sparsely populated. The settled live in small towns and villages, particularly in south-eastern Iran, while those of Afghanistan and Pakistan are mainly semi-nomadic or nomadic (Stone, 1997).



Figure 2.11. Drawing of a Baluch woodcutter carrying the dry branches of trees for use as fuel. There are few service facilities like natural gas and electricity in smaller towns and villages of Baluchistan therefore the main source of fuel is firewood. Source: Author

According to local people there are virtually no sources of permanent or seasonal employment in the villages and smaller towns in Baluchistan. Large numbers of people therefore lead a semi-nomadic or nomadic life. The financial resources and economy of the nomadic and semi-nomadic people of Baluchistan depends on herding large flocks of camel, sheep and goats. The nomads and semi-nomads commit themselves to farming for a part of a year but because of the lack of water the available agricultural land is limited to the valleys, mainly in the east and north east of Baluchistan, where level ground and water for irrigation are matched. Cereal crops and fruits produced in Baluchistan are apples, almonds, apricots, mulberries, wheat, *jowar*, gram, barley, rice, *baira*, *makai*, cotton and sugarcane (Baloch, 1975b). In the south and south west of Baluchistan the semi-nomadic people supplement their income by selling wild produce like wild pistachios, resin, and many different herbs and medicinal plants. Dry wood and

tree branches and cow-dung are the main sources of fuel and local communities do not allow any fuel-wood or timber to be sold (Baloch, 1975b).



Figure 2.12. The dry branches of trees are used as fuel by nomadic people. Source: Author



Figure 2.13. A semi-nomadic Baluch man who has collected bushes to use as fuel during the cold winter. Source: Author

Due to the shortage and inadequate supply of gas and its high price, the use of cow dung (also known as *Muitha*, *Muitta*, *Loitta*, *Guitta*, *Bushia* and *Bushi*) as the main source of fuel is popular in rural areas of Baluchistan. According to a local

man, a large number of people are still regularly using cow dung fuel. The demand for cow dung fuel is increasing day by day. Even town inhabitants have turned to using cow dung as fuel to save money. Thatched fuel stores can be



found in different parts of Baluchistan in forms such as round, rectangular, domed, and all other shapes and sizes with all kinds of hand decoration on the sides, but usually thatched.

Figure 2.14. The storage of cow-dung, which is used as fuel in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

From an economic point of view there is a strong connection and a close interdependence between nomadic, semi-nomadic, and sedentary or settled people in any specific region as they form traditional states which depend on local system, their historical situation and ecological condition (Khazanov, 1994). The economic difficulties shared by all groups in Baluchistan include low income, lack or limited access to both social and physical infrastructure and limited availability of land.

2.6. Faith and Beliefs

Islam was brought to India and Pakistan in the early eight century AD by the Arabs. They built a kingdom in Sind and Multan called Al-Mansurah. In 711 Mohammad bin Qasim (695- 715), the governor of Persia, led the Muslim army and conquered Sind, Punjab and Multan in India (now in Pakistan) across the Makran route in Baluchistan (Om, 2006). Islam, particularly the Sufism and Dervishes, spread all over India through the Muslims from Iran, Afghanistan, and Turks from Central Asia. During the Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni period (971- 1030 AD), Lahore became the city of Data Sahib, the second capital City for Muslims

in India. Later in modern Pakistan it became a land of Islamic civilisation (DeRouen and Bellamy 2008; Hasan Dani, 2004).

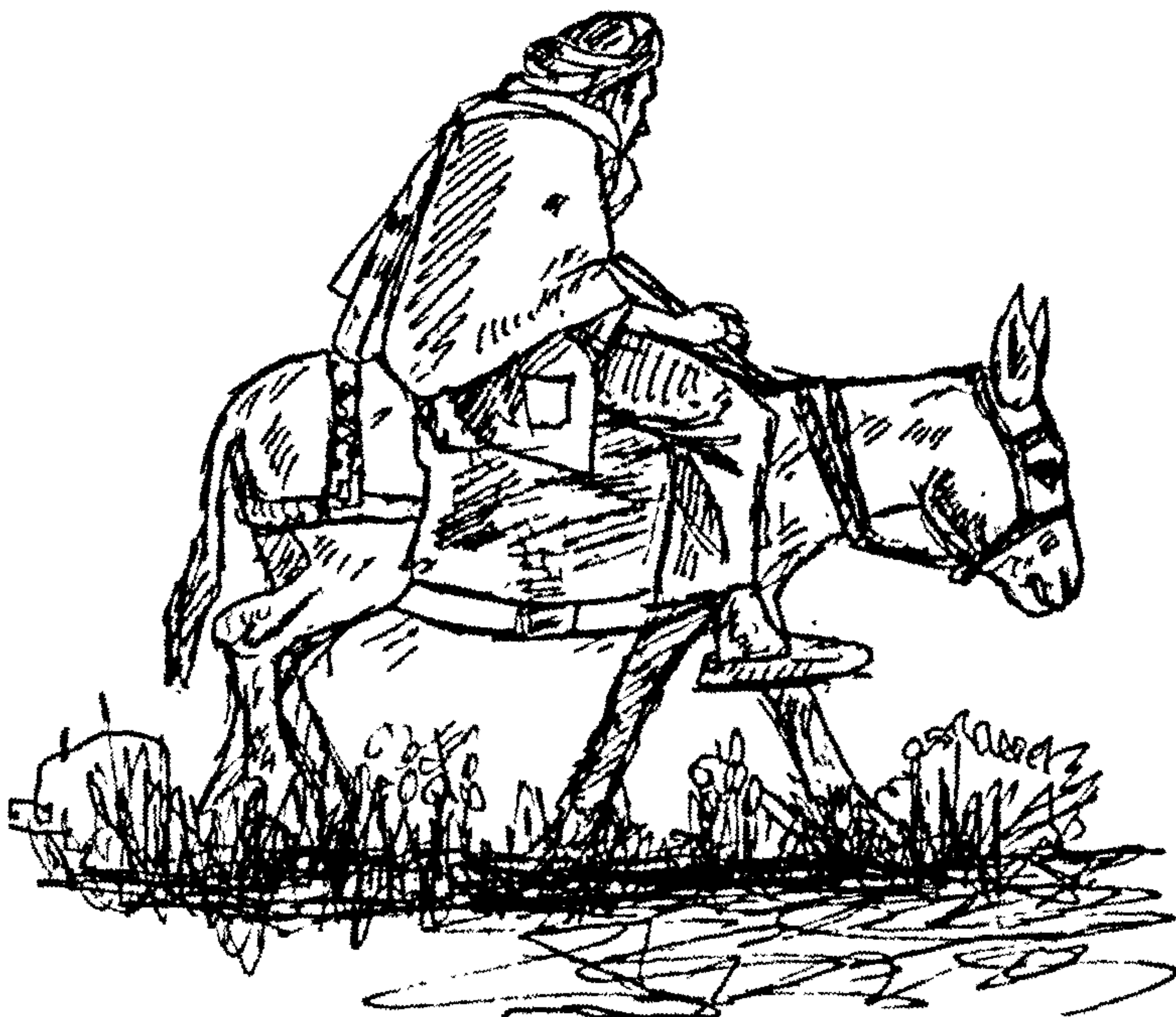
There are a number of Islamic religious denominations, each having significant theological and legal differences from each other. The major branches are Shi’a and Sunni Islam. The people in Baluchistan are Muslims and the majority of them adhere to the Hanafi rite of the Sunni branch of Islam. There are minorities of Shi’a Muslims and Zikri as well (Minahan, 2002).



Figure 2.15. A Baluch man prays in the courtyard of a mud mosque on a prayer mat made of reeds. Source: Author

Chapter 3

Nomadic lifestyle in Baluchistan



3. Nomadic lifestyle in Baluchistan

The Oxford Dictionary describes nomads as a race or tribe of a people continually moving from place to place to find fresh pasture for their animals and having no permanent home, also someone who lives a wandering life (Little, 1984). The nomads are called *Khaanah Badosh*, *Aawaarah Gard*, *Pahwal*, *Bukerwal* and *Kochi people* in Pakistan and Baluchistan.

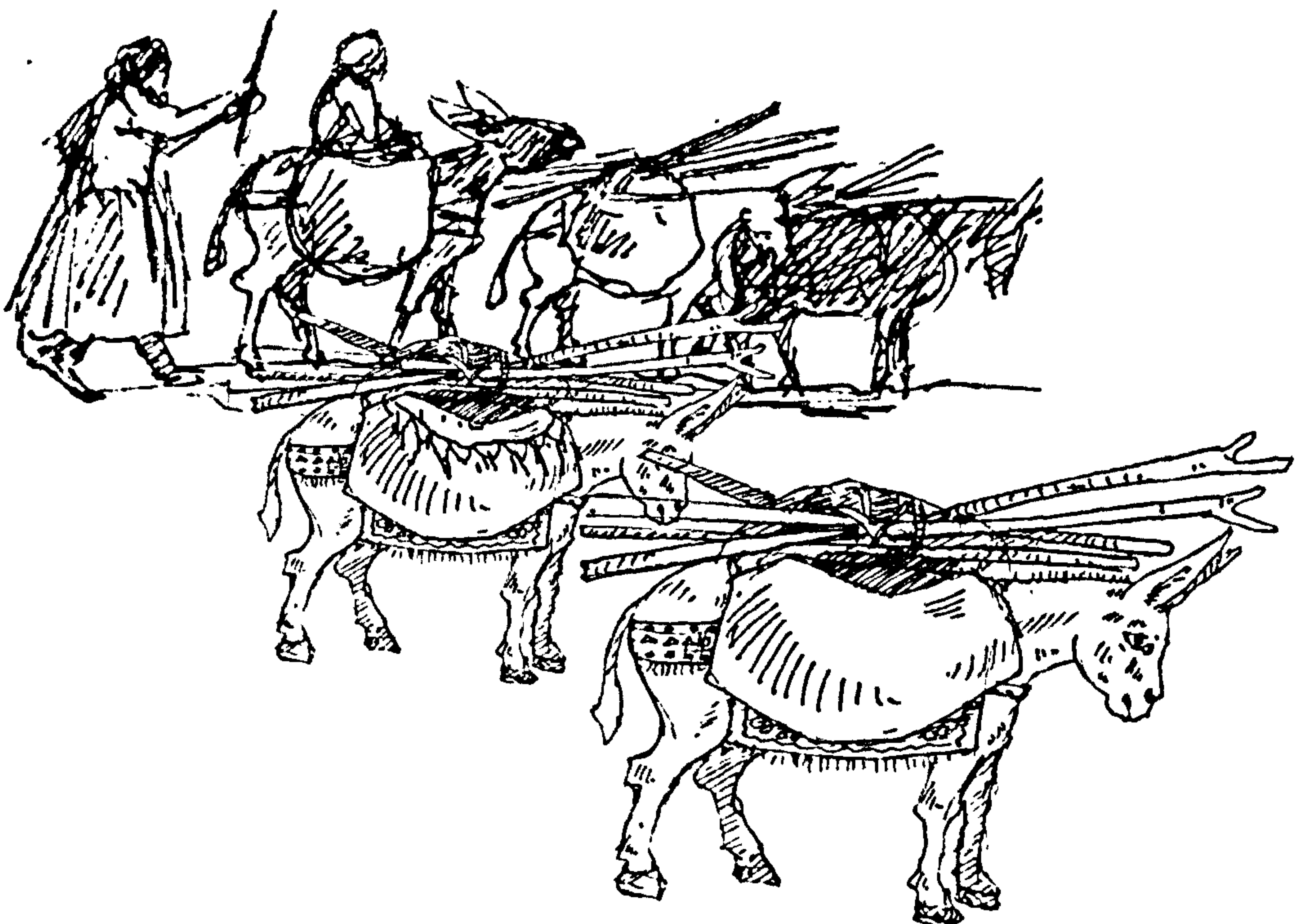


Figure 3.1. Drawing of nomad people in Baluchistan. The nomads carry all their belongings and travel with their animals from one place to another. Source: Author

The Baluchi term for nomad is *Pahwal*, meaning migratory, and their encampment is called *halk*. The Pashtun calls them *Mosiyani* or *Kochi*, meaning travellers. Ethnically the nomads belong to the Baluch and Pathan communities and speak the same languages. Traditionally, nomad people did not keep documentary records of their history. Accordingly, many references to their history have come down through oral tradition. Their lifestyle, language and

culture in general provide some clues as to their origins, and suggest that they moved from West of the Iranian Plateau. The nomadic life in Baluchistan is very similar to the nomadic tribes in Iran such as the Ghashque, Bakhtiyari Lur and the Kurds. According to Minns the nomad people look like a ready-made army, easily marshalled, capable and self-supporting in case of any sudden attacks. In order to find pastures the nomads are always in opposition to other tribes or even with the settled people (Minns, 1942). For the nomads the highest priorities are simple, fast, and long distance mobility. These factors are important for the nomads in order to save their cattle from the harmful droughts or, in another words, lack of grass and water. Whatever the nomadic people do is for the sake of survival, protection and the well-being of their cattle (Bovin, 2001). The nomads have no choice but to move regularly between the wide areas which offer fodder

during the spring and early summer, and restricted pastures to which they can retreat to spend the winter. They need a highly developed technique in managing different kinds of animals along with their family in their movement. As the nomads tamed more animals they learned different modes of life adapted to the special condition of the place where they lived (Minns, 1942).



Figure 3.2. Drawing of a Pashtun nomad with his special headwear. This kind of pattered turban is also common in Afghanistan as well, particularly, amongst Pashtun and Hezareh tribes in Baluchistan. Source: Author

3.1. Nomadic architecture

Faeger believes there is no architectural design to surpass nomadic architecture for its beauty or cleverness of design. The flexibility, portability, lightness, simplicity, economy and variety in design and colour are some of the astonishing qualities of nomadic architecture (Faegre, 1979). Bovin regard sedentary architecture as mainly a male aesthetic, but nomadic architecture as female. He states that: *“The nomadic architecture and aesthetic that goes with it is mainly women’s aesthetic as women and girls build the camp and furnish it”* (Bovin, 2001:66). Bahamon found a link between nomadic culture and their architecture. He says that the rapid construction that ties traditionally with the natural elements, easy dismantling and transporting of tents is also closely associated with the nomadic cultures (Bahamon, 2004).

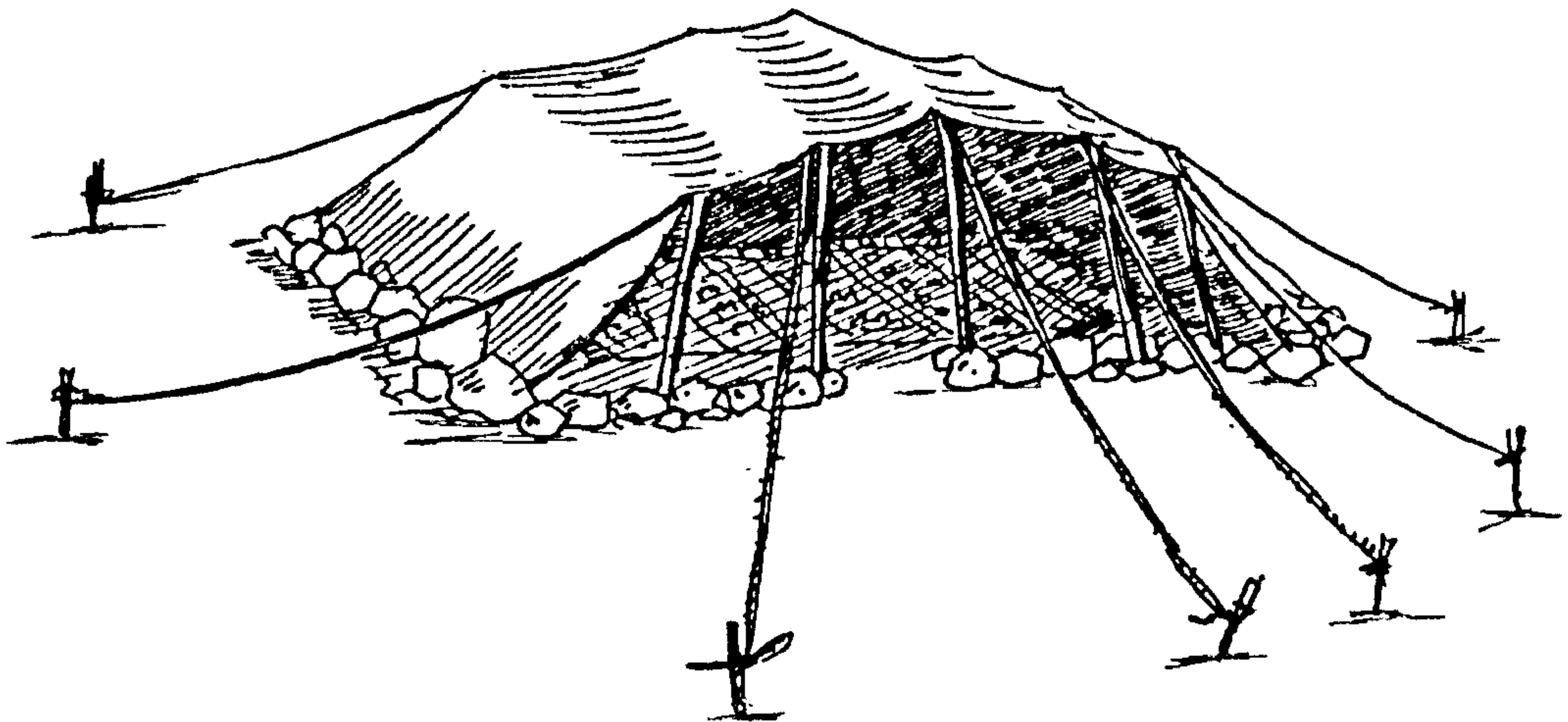


Figure 3.3. Drawing of a nomadic black tent in Baluchistan. This type of black tent can be seen in any part of the Middle East. Source: Author

3.1.1. Tents

Nomadic architecture is mainly associated with various forms of tents. According to the Oxford dictionary a tent is a shelter made of a large sheet of canvas, nylon, etc supported by poles and guy ropes fixed to the ground by pegs. The tents are

used especially for camping. Nomadic people all over the world have made their home in different types of tents using various local materials (Hatton, 1979). The origin of the tent goes back to the beginning of mankind and is associated with most primitive and natural architecture, has long been part of human history and still plays an important role in our lives (Bahamon, 2004). Even nowadays hunters, army troops, and other people use tents for camping and to provide temporary shelters. The temporary use of the tent for camping cannot be regarded as true nomadism (Hatton, 1979).

The tent as an early shelter is not only important because it reveals the roots of our architecture, but it is also still useful today, being practical, inexpensive, and simple to construct (Faegre, 1979). The tent has been used wherever two conditions were present: first, a shortage of suitable building material and second, a need for mobility. An ideal tent is shaped to protect human beings from winds and precipitation and to vent indoor fires (Hatton, 1979).



Figure 3.4. Drawing of a nomadic woman baking bread outside of the tent. It is a woman's daily job to bake bread for the family every morning before sunrise, to bring fresh water, and to collect dry wood for making fires. Source: Author

A nomad does not spend his time living in his tent as much as he does in the desert or steppe working under the open sky and herding. A tent for a nomad is important as a shelter especially for children, but not in the same way as our houses. Clothing can be a much more important factor for the nomadic people as they spend more time outside. Nomadic shepherds usually spend their time in the desert or steppe without having any shelter for several months.

For the nomad a tent does not define a clear boundary between inside and outside, as we know it in our houses. The wind blows in and brings dust and sand in bad weather, and rain and snow leaks from the roof through any open parts of the tents. Yet nomads feel at home whenever they get inside the tents, even with these conditions.



Figure 3.5. Drawing of a Baluch nomadic shepherd with his goats. I met him when I was travelling to Noshki. Source: Author

The space of an ordinary nomad's tent is not large and so is carefully organized. The size of a tent depends on the size of the nomadic family and the period of time that the nomad tribe or family stays in one place. Pitching and organising the tent is a woman's job. There is always a line between male and female (gender segregation) in a nomadic tent. In some tribes, this division is very strict and not everyone can cross it easily. The division is also a separation of different type of works and tools of nomadic men and women in the tent. For example, the looms and cooking stuff are in the woman's side and weapons, saddles, and harnesses are in the men's side.

The segregation between the genders is practised more strictly by the Arab Bedouin. The Arab Bedouin's tent is comparable to the Baluchi one, especially in the south of Baluchistan by the Arabian Sea. The Bedouin's tent is divided into two sections by a piece of rug or any other type of fabric hung from the roof pole. As the Bedouins are culturally very strict about mixing visitors or strangers with their family, this division in the tent allows the women and children to sleep and cook in one part of the tent and the boys and men or visitors to be in the other part. It is here where all the males are entertained. There is no furniture apart from pieces of hand-made carpet or rugs that the Bedouin sleep and sit on. The women mainly roll up the tents and then collect all the poles, rugs and cloth when the time comes to move on (Hogarth, 1977).

The most popular type of nomadic tent is known as the black tent, not only in Baluchistan but also elsewhere in the Middle East. The nomadic tribes who live in the desert, such as the Bedouins, Berbers, Moors, Baluch and Kurds, developed the "black tents". The black tent gets its name from the black goat hair used to weave its covering (Hogarth, 1977). According to May and Bruce, the Jews, Arabs and a hundreds other tribes that were spread over Africa and Asia have been using the black tents for centuries (May and Bruce, 1973).

The black tent moved out of its homeland as far as the Atlantic coast on one side and the border of Tibet on the other side. As it spread widely and was adopted by

different tribes, its shape was also changed to fit the different environments. The black tent with a flat roof can be found in the desert to shield the nomads from the sun and sandstorms. In the mountains, where there is more rainfall, the roof of the tent is steep and funnel shaped to repel the rain (Faegre, 1979).

3.2. The structure of the black tent in Baluchistan

It is difficult to collect and analyse all the materials used in the structure of nomadic tents in Baluchistan. This is because the nomad uses different material according to their needs in their tents. For example, the cloth in the tent is not always the black cloth that has been woven by them, but it is also old and worn out carpets, plastic sacks, pieces of fabric or a mixture of these.

There are, however, some popular elements in the black tent which can be generalised. The history of these common elements that structure a tent goes back thousands of years. The structure of a black tent can clearly be observed in the Bible, which mentions *“The curtains of the courtyard with its posts and bases, and the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard; the ropes and tent pegs for the courtyard; all the furnishings for the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting”* (Exodus, 39:40, and also May and Bruce , 1973). Faegre describes the geographical-cultural and construction methods of the black tents and classifies them into two different groups: the Persian or Eastern type and the Arab or Western type. The Persian type, which has the simplest construction, is found in the eastern part of the black tent territory running from Persia (Iran) to Tibet, which also includes Baluchistan. It is made of a few cloth widths sewn side by side with the loops at the edges for the rope. So the pull will be in the direction of the seams of cloths in the Persian type of black tent. The Persian type of black tent has been used by Irano-Afghan groups of related people as well as the Tibetans at the easternmost extension territory of the black tent (Faegre, 1979).



Figure 3.6. This picture shows a Persian type of a black tent from the Qashghai nomadic tribe in Iran. The Persian type is found in the eastern part of the black tent territory, running from Persia (Iran) to Tibet. Source: Author

The Arabian type of black tent has been used by the Bedouin tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Syria and any other tribe in the west of these countries, as far as the North African tribes who adopted this type of black tent. The construction of this type of tent is much the same as the Persian type as they use the basic cloth widths, but it has the additional use of tension bands sewn across the cloth. The ropes are normally attached to the tension bands. The main pull of the tent will be across the seams of the cloth, exactly opposite to the Persian type (Faegre, 1979).

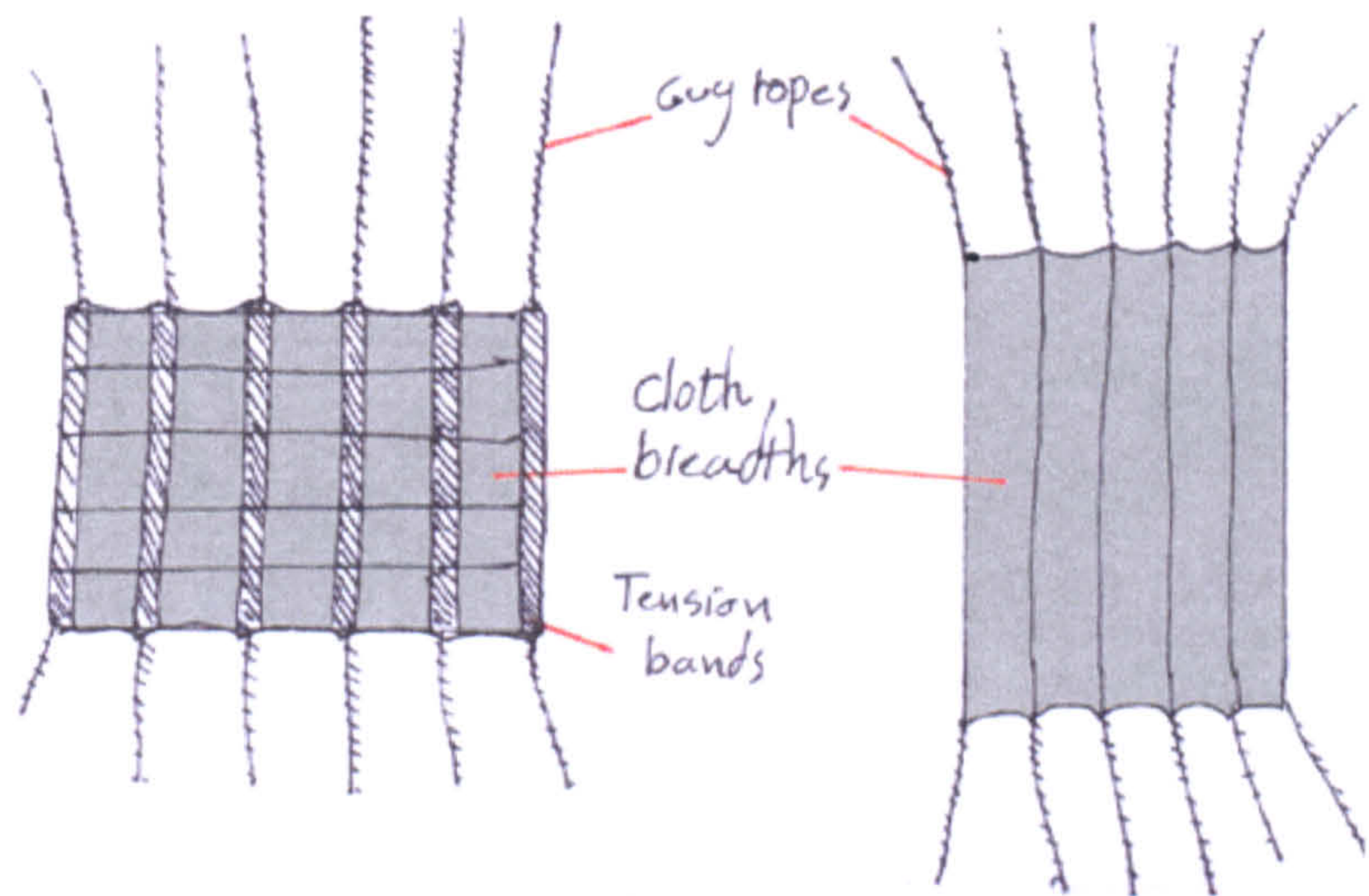


Figure 3.7. (Right) Drawing of the Arabian type of black tent. The tension bands in this type of black tent are sewn across the cloth breadths and the guy ropes are attached to the end of the tension bands. So, the pull will be on opposite of the seams of the cloths. (Left) Drawing of the Persian type of black tent. It has no tension bands. The guy ropes are attached to the edges of the cloth, so the pull will be in the direction of the seams of the cloth breadths. Source: Author

This part of the study analyses the popular elements which are used commonly in structures of the black tent in Baluchistan, such as cloth, flap, peg, guy rope, post or pole and different types of fastener.

3.2.1. Cloth

According to Faegre, nomadism and weaving have been tied together from the beginning. The black tent dwellers are mainly weavers. They make their own looms as well. The nomads not only weave the cloths of their tent, but also different types of carpets like the Kelim, Ghabeh and Jajim, and rugs with hundreds of different designs. Spindling bags, carpet bags, pile carpet, saddles and packsaddle and headstall for animals are their other products. The nomadic women are mainly responsible for the weaving of different objects that they need in their nomadic life. It is true that many of the nomad's crafts with rich colours, pattern and designs, have reached many famous museums and art galleries, but in fact the nomad does not make and manufacture any kind of crafts for the sake of the market (Faegre, 1979).

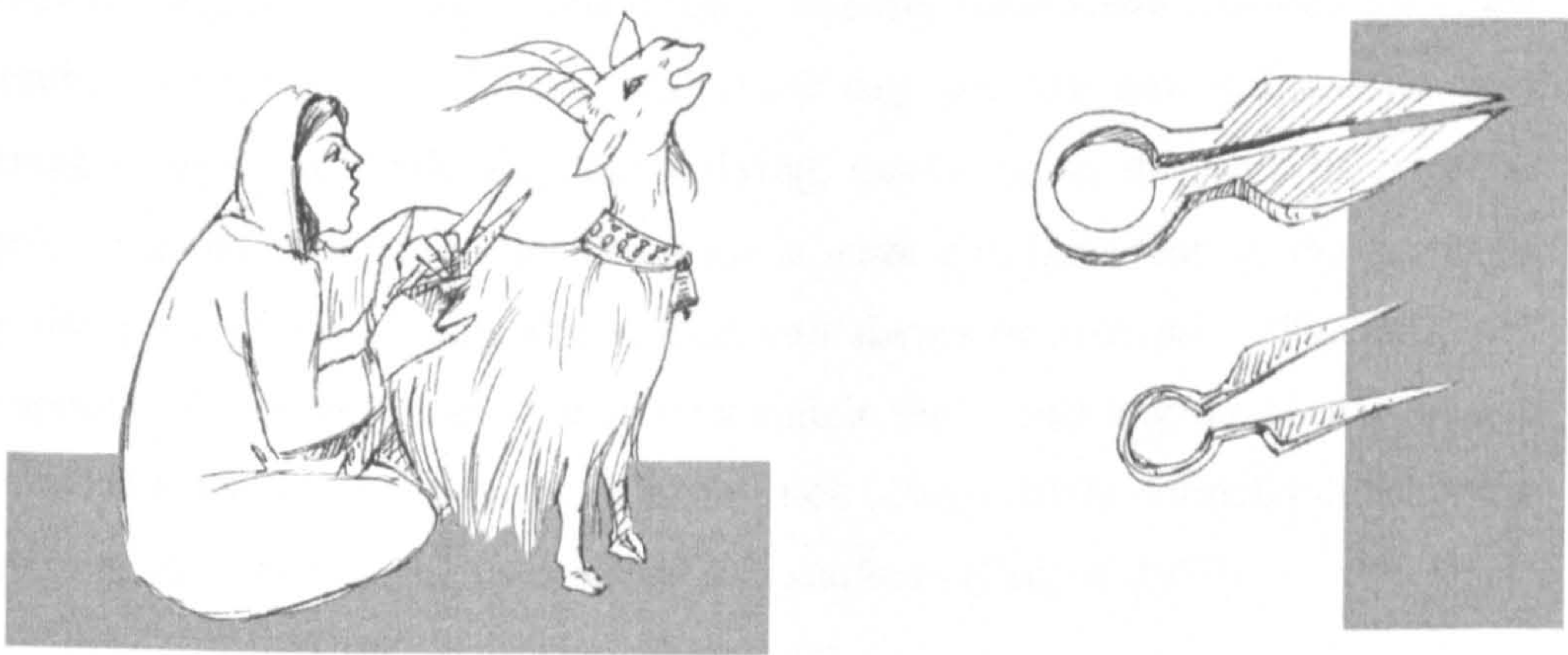


Figure 3.8. (Left) Sketch of a nomadic woman shearing a goat. The hair of the goats is used in the black tent. The nomads skillfully halter the animals and shear them at the same time. One way of doing this is to hold the goat's lower leg by the shearer's feet. (Right) A drawing of shears that the nomads use in Baluchistan for shearing the goat and sheep. It needs a lot of skill and experience to use this kind of equipment. Source: Author

Cloth is the most important part of a black tent. The preferred fibre for the cloth in the black tents is usually pure goat's hair. This is because only this fibre has the right strength and length and it gives the black tent its distinctive form. Often, sheep or camel wool or plant fibres are added, but these materials cannot be used on their own because the sheep wool stretches too much and the camel wool is too short and weak. Therefore, a percentage of the goat hair is always needed for the cloth of the black tent. The black tent got its name because of its black cloth. The black cloth of the tent obtains its blackness from the natural jet-black colour of the goat's hair (Faegre, 1979).

There are several steps in making the cloth. These steps include shearing the animal, washing the wool and hair, spinning, normally with a handmade spindle, dying the thread if needed and finally weaving. Each of these steps requires a specific time of the year. For example, shearing the animal can be done in summer or spring. This is because the animals, mainly goats and sheep, should have plenty of hair to protect them from the cold weather in winter or autumn. Washing the wool or hair normally happens in the river and whenever the sun is shining to dry it.

Weaving begins when the nomadic tribes encamp somewhere and stay for a few months, but spinning is the nomads' every day job. The nomadic women spin almost everywhere while they are walking, travelling on the back of a camel, horse or donkey, looking after the animals, sitting in their tent, in the desert or climbing mountains. A nomadic woman can always be seen with different types of spindle. The wool or hair is spun on a simple tool called a spindle (*Dihk, Jallak or Perreh*). The spindle consists of a thin stick (*Dero*) that is normally metal and a flywheel; the whorl is mainly made of the goat horn (Faegre, 1979).

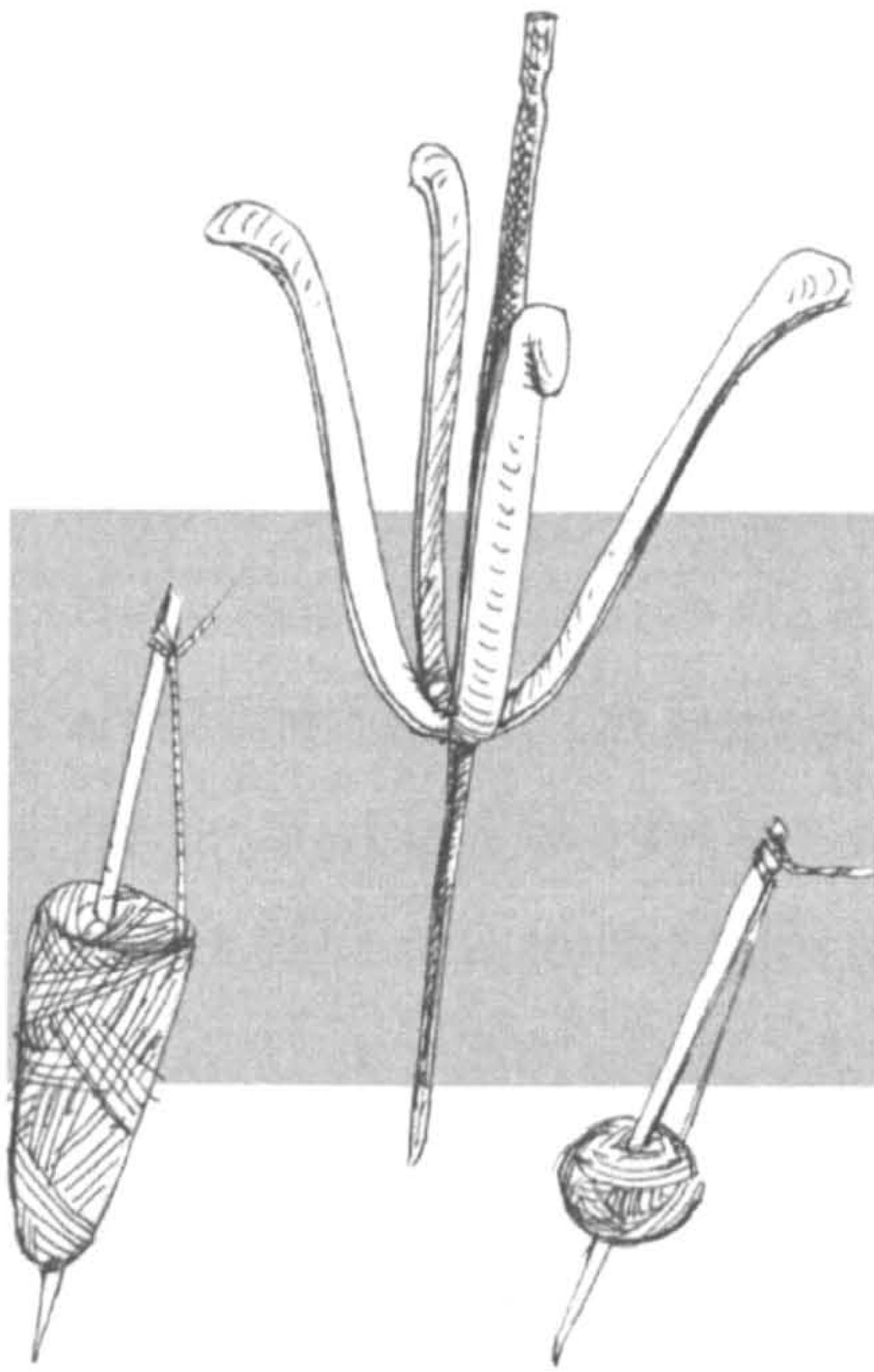


Figure 3.9. Different types of drop spindles that have been used by Baluch and Pashtun tribes in Baluchistan. These spindles are usually made of an iron rod and goat horn for the flywheel. This is a basic but very important tool for spinning. Source: Author

Figure 3.10. Drawing of a nomadic woman spinning with a drop spindle. This kind of spindle can be found in Qashghai nomadic tribes in Iran as well as in Baluchi and Pashtun tribes. Source: Author

It is the earliest method of spinning that is known. It has some advantages over the more complicated spinning wheel because it can move about and spin at the same time, as well as being light and portable. A nomadic spinner pulls out a bunch of wool or hair and keeps it under her arm, in the folds of her traditional clothing or up a sleeve. Then, she ties the wool to the end of the spindle, hoops it under the hook and simply gives it a spin. The yarn twists to where it is held, and the spindle falls. The spun yarn is then wound around the spindle and looped under the hook to begin again. The cloth is woven by a horizontal ground loom in nomadic tribes. This loom is easy to construct, has few moving parts and



it can roll up with any unfinished work when it is time to move. The cloth breadths are sewn side to side to form a bigger rectangle to use for the tent. Although the rectangle is made in different sizes and variations and could be slightly wider at the front or back, the basic form for the tent is always rectangular. The cloth in the Baluchi tent is also made of goat hair, with widths of around one metre. On average the Baluchi black tent contains five breadths; three for the roof and two for the side walls or flaps. Sometime they use old cloth or pieces of carpets for the flaps (Faegre, 1979).

3.2.2. Tent flaps

The flaps at the sides of the black tents were traditionally made of the same black cloth as the roof. This can still be seen among the nomadic tribes of Qashghai and Bakhtiyary in Iran, the Arab Bedouins as well as the Baluch and Pashtuns tribes in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The height of the flap depends on the environment and the weather where the nomads are living. In the desert sandstorms and also in the cold, especially snowy times, the flaps are low and sometimes they put half of the flaps inside the ground so the tent is almost enclosed. In sunny and warm weather the flaps act as cross-ventilation for the tent. The nomad lift the flaps up as much needed to allow the wind to blow through the tent (Faegre, 1979).

The function of the flaps has also been described by Peters (2003), who states that the nomads in Baluchistan mainly use black cloth for the roof and most of the time for the sides of the tent. Under the warm summer sun the warm air can circulate by lifting the flaps at the sides and the tent gives cool shade inside. In the rain, the fibres of the hand spun goat hair swell and the tent becomes a waterproof shelter (Peters, 2003).

In Baluchistan the flaps of the black tents are made either of goat's hair or twigs of dwarf palm trees. During the cold season, the woolly black tents afford better protection from the biting cold. In summer, these are replaced by shelters covered

with mattresses. In the winter, painted mats plastered with straw are helpful to protect the dweller from the winds and cold. The mats are usually attached to the stay fasteners of the tent.

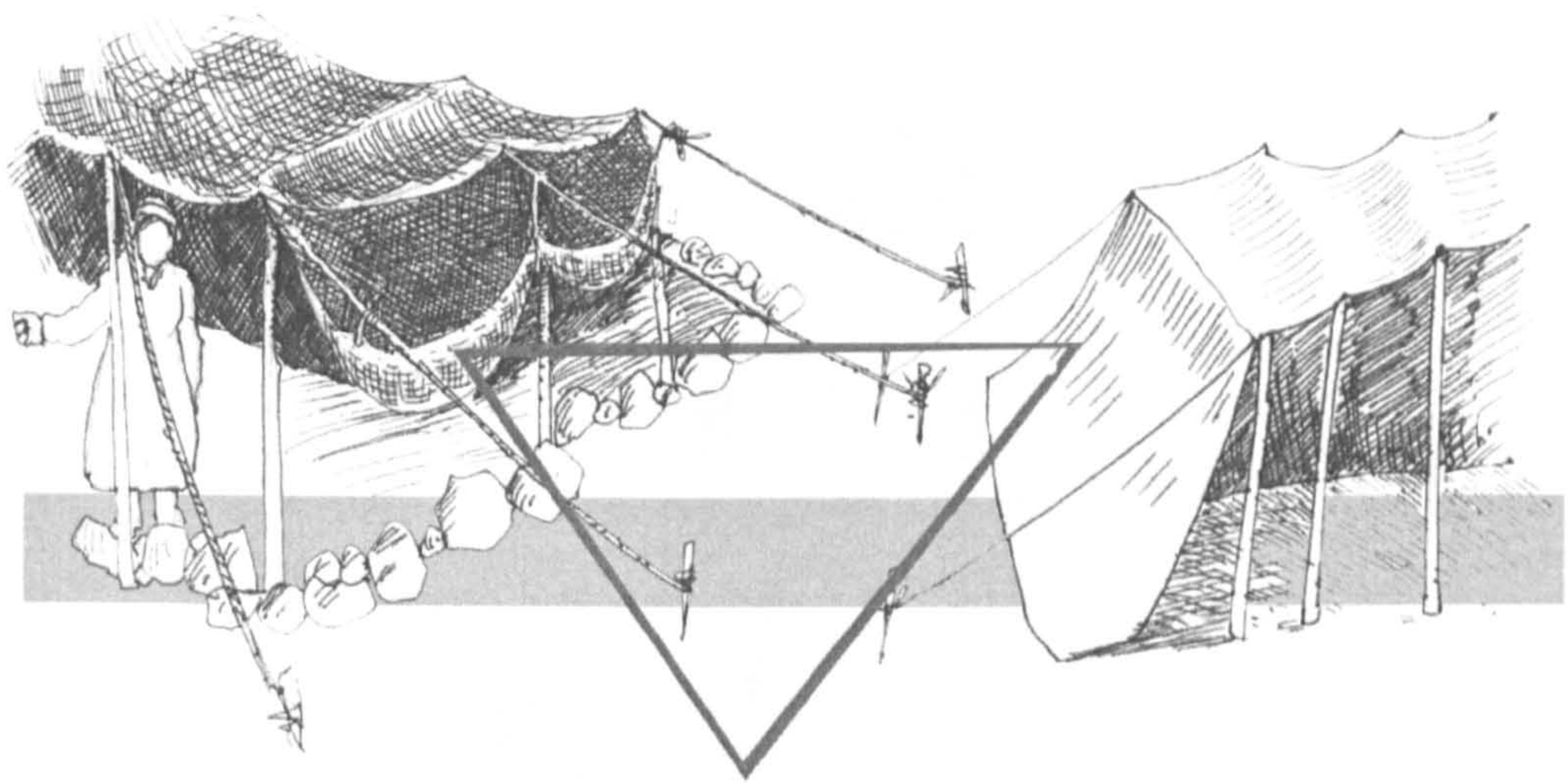


Figure 3.11. The flaps at the sides of the black tent. This kind of flap is made of the same cloth as the roof. In the left hand picture the flaps are lifted up for ventilation. The nomad weaves them from goat hair. As the tent cloth is not made for the market it is not one of the popular nomadic crafts. They only make them occasionally every ten years for themselves, whenever they need them. Source: Author

3.2.3. Guy ropes

According to the Cobuild Collins dictionary, a guy rope is simply a rope or wire that has one end fastened to a pole or a tent and the other end fixed to the ground, so that it keeps the tent or pole in position (Cobuild Collins dictionary, 1995). There is evidence of rope being made from 17,000 BC. The earliest indication of any type of mechanical advantage in making rope comes from early Egyptian evidence relating to the craft (Teeter, 1987).

Teeter assumes that Egyptians used a weighted rope tied to a stick to make rope. The rope to be made was tied to the weighted rope that was spun around the stick. The spinning imparted a twist to the strand. Three twisted strands would then be

twisted together in the opposite direction. The idea that the ropes were made using a weighted rope came from inscriptions. In reality, this type of a system will not work. It is likely that the inscriptions described a static material such as a weighted wooden dowel, paddle, etc. The dowels may have been carved to represent rope. A static method does work well, although it will not make long rope. This is very similar to the method used by the Southwest Indians in America around 1,000 AD (Teeter, 1987).

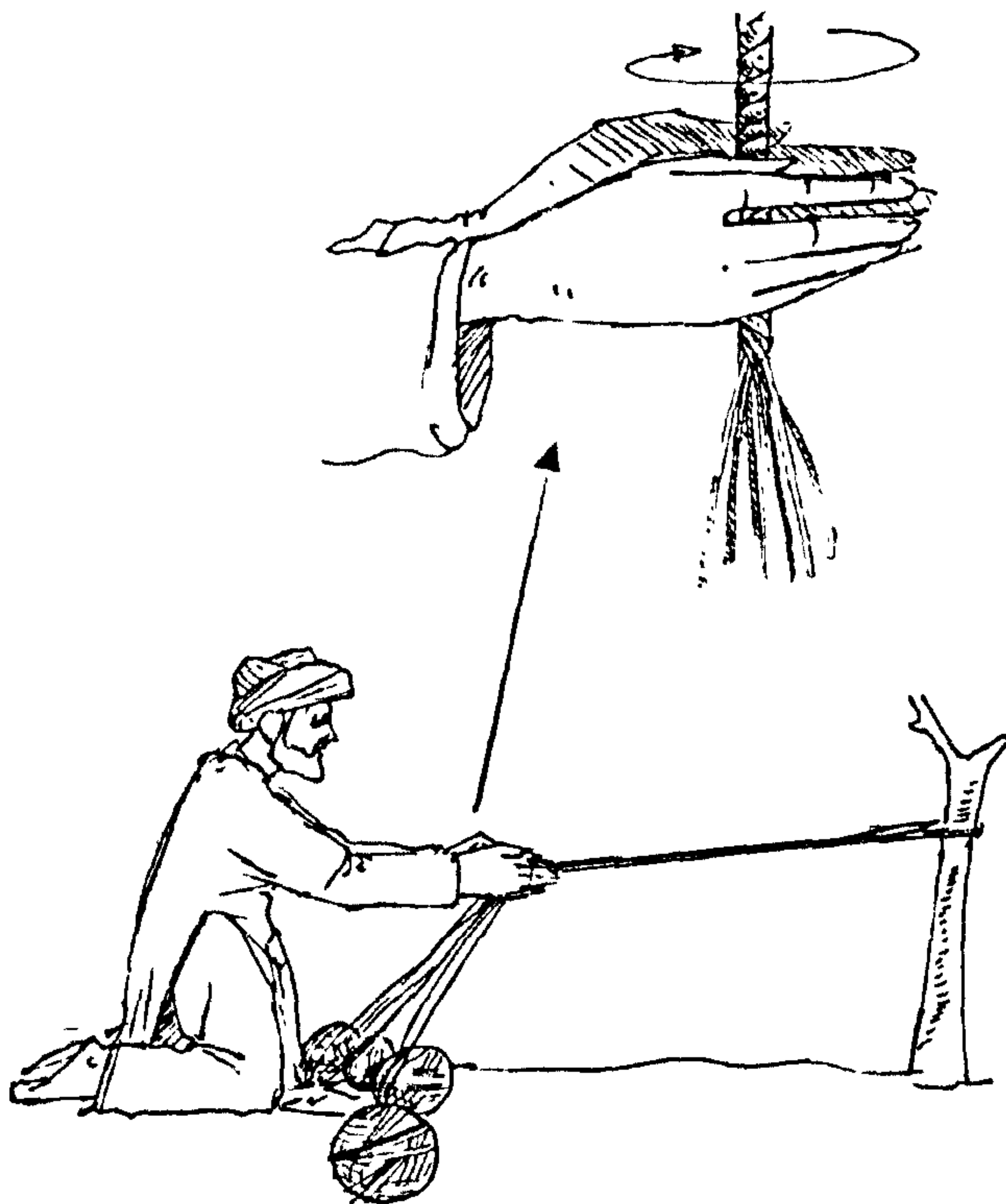


Figure 3.12. Drawing of a nomadic Baluchi man making a guy rope for the black tent. It is their traditional way to make a guy rope by plying the yarn and twisting the thread by hand. Source: Author

A black tent in Baluchistan is made by the connection of five to eight breadths of cloth. At the end of each seam line a rope loop is sewn to the cloth with a piece of felt as reinforcement. The guy rope is attached to the loop often by fastener as well. These early ropes were twisted by hand or braided (Faegre, 1979).

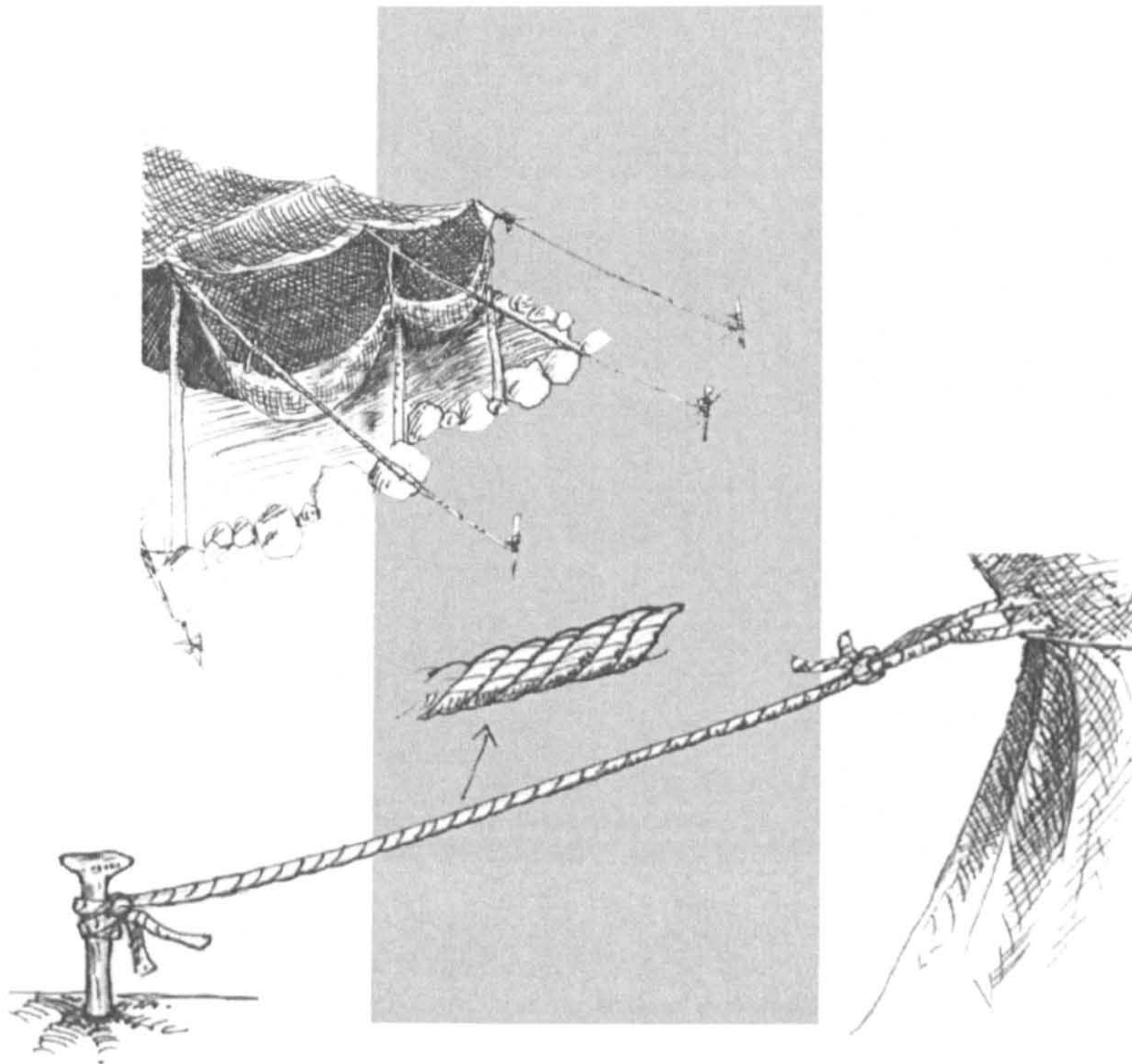


Figure 3.13. Drawing of the guy rope of a black tent. This picture illustrates the position of the guy rope and how it is attached at one end to the cloth, with the other end tied to the peg. Source: Author

The guy ropes used by the nomadic tribes in Baluchistan are mainly made of goat hair and are known as *Rez*. The nomads traditionally braid the rope by hand or with simple tools, just as they weave other textiles such as tent cloth, carpets, or kilims. The rope made by goat hair has many advantages, such as strength, elasticity, lightness, portability and harmony with the black cloth of the tent; indeed, they are very attractive, especially when they are decorated by colourful tassels.

3.2.4. Fasteners

Traditionally a fastener is a device such as a button or hook that fastens something, especially cloth (Cobuild Collins dictionary, 1995).

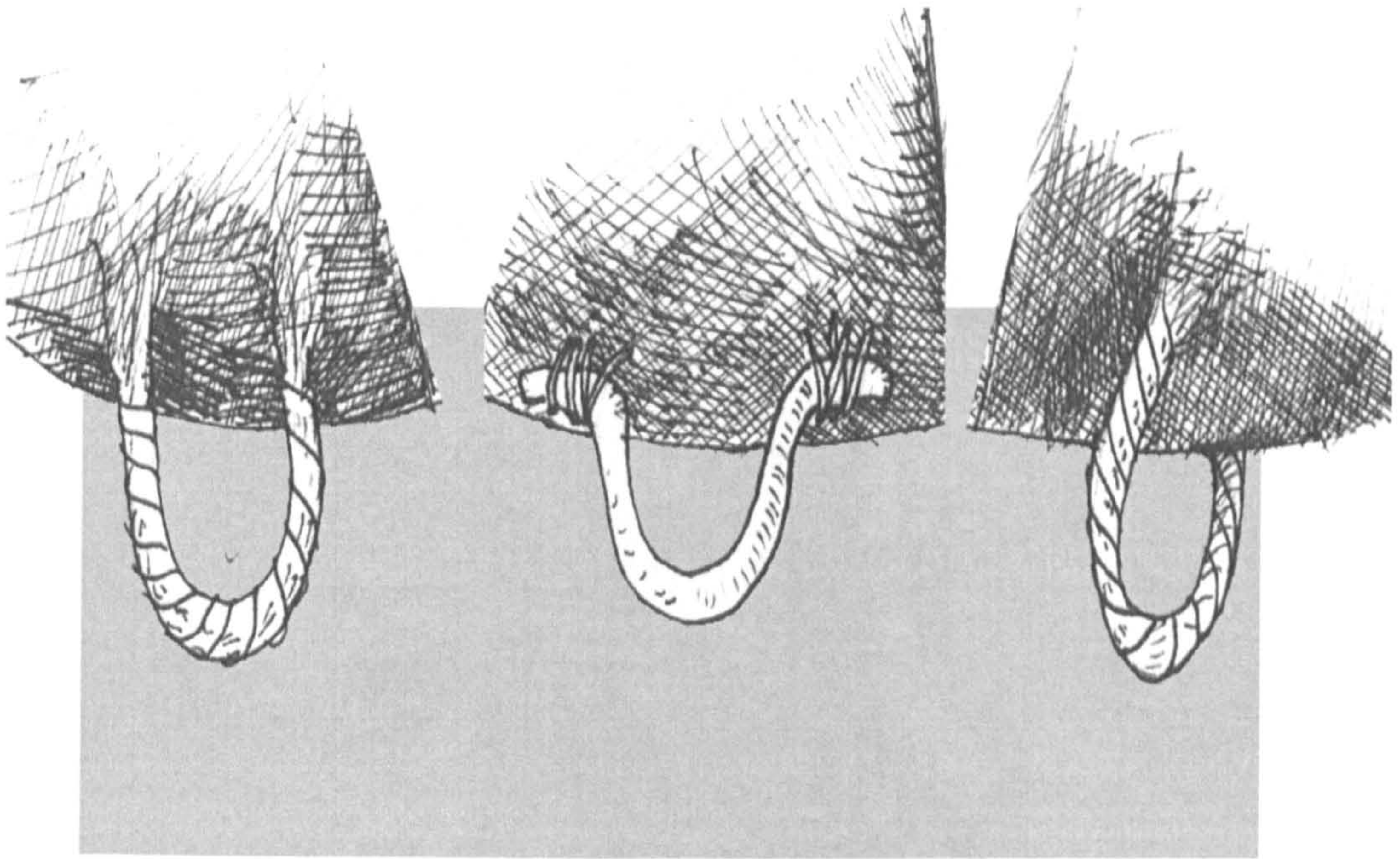


Figure 3.14. Drawing illustrating different kinds of hoops used in the black tent of Baluchistan. The drawing shows how the hoop is attached to the cloth. There is no any particular way to make the hoops; the nomads use wood, horn and rope. The guy rope attaches to the hoop. Source: Author

The stay fastener is a handmade piece of equipment made of wood, horn and metal by the nomadic tribes. It works as a connector between the hoop of the cloth and the guy rope in a black tent. The stay fasteners come in different shapes and sizes. There are several advantages of using the fasteners between the hoop of the cloth and the guy ropes. For example, the black tent is normally exposed to the wind and allows movement; in this case, the stay fastener helps to avoid friction in the guy ropes and hoops. It also makes the guy rope adjustable and it is easier to take the guy rope off when the time comes to pack the black tent and move on. The nomad hangs the plaited mats plastered with straw on the fasteners in the winter to keep the wind and cold out of the tent. The loops are attached to a variety of different types of stay fasteners. The hoops that make up the frame are made up of two pieces of bent wood that are lashed together when the tent is put up. The number of hoops depends on the size of the tent (Faegre, 1979).

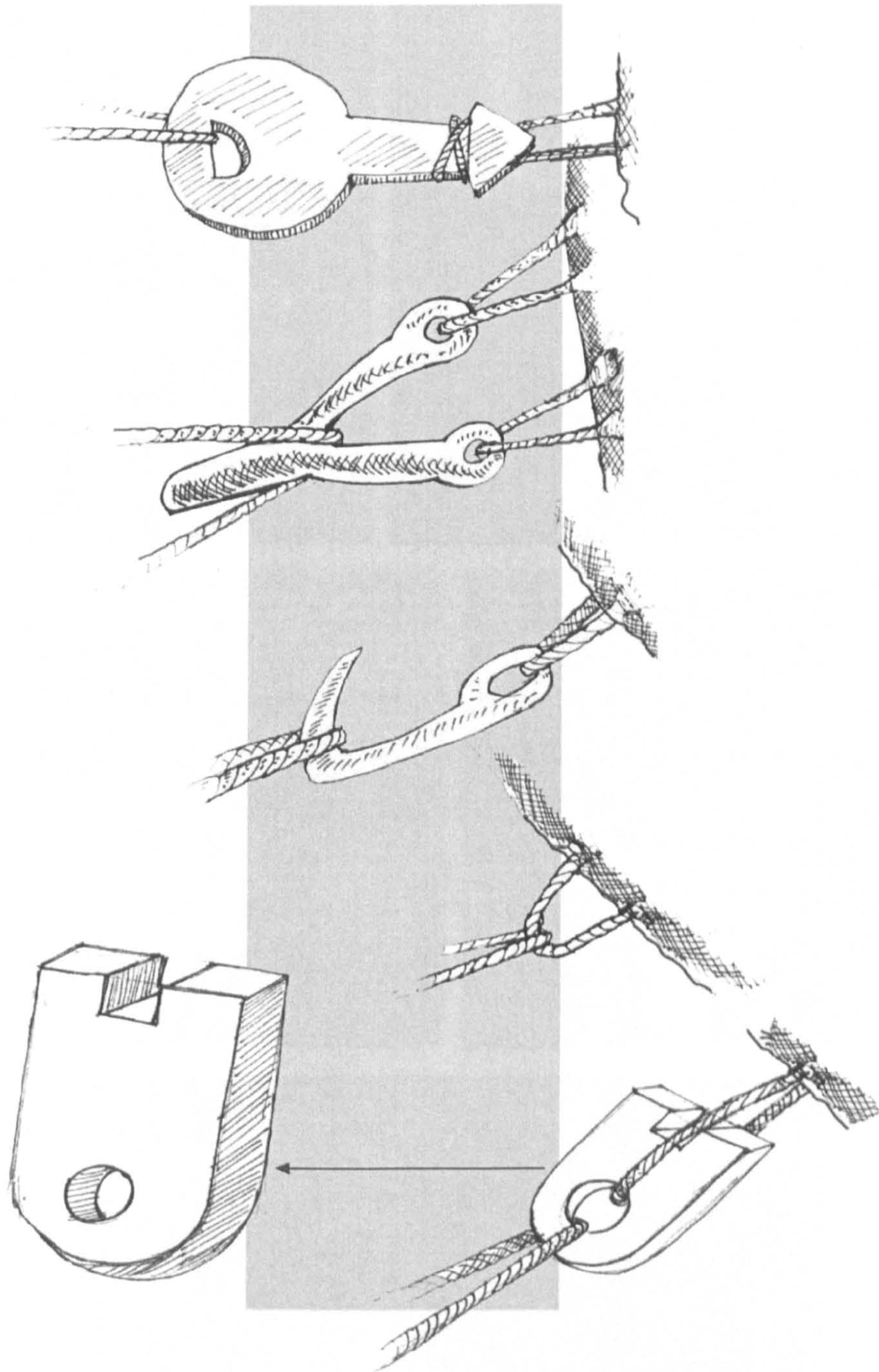


Figure 3.15. Drawing showing some examples of fasteners and hoops used by nomadic tribes, both in Iran and Pakistan. Source: Author

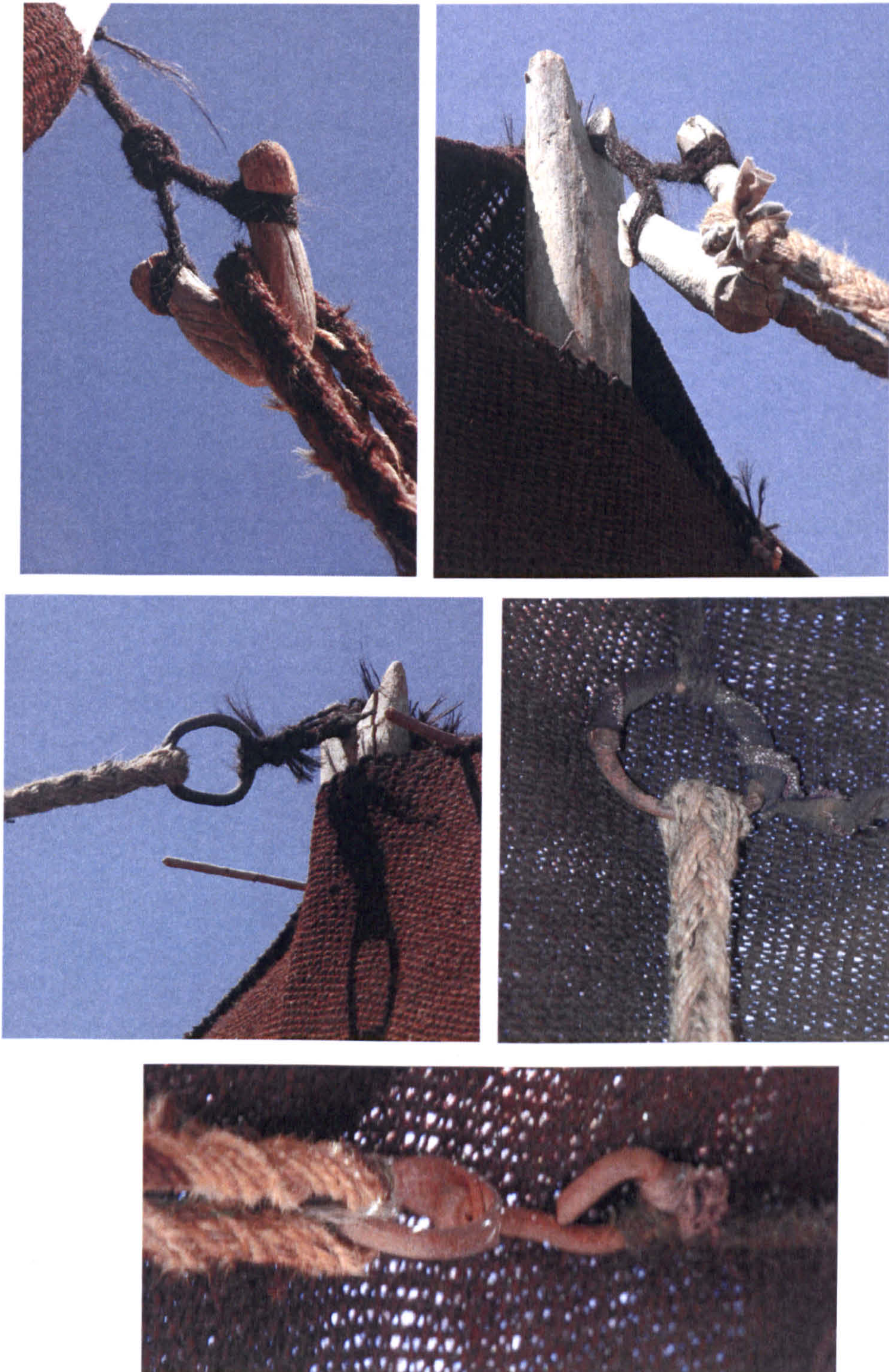


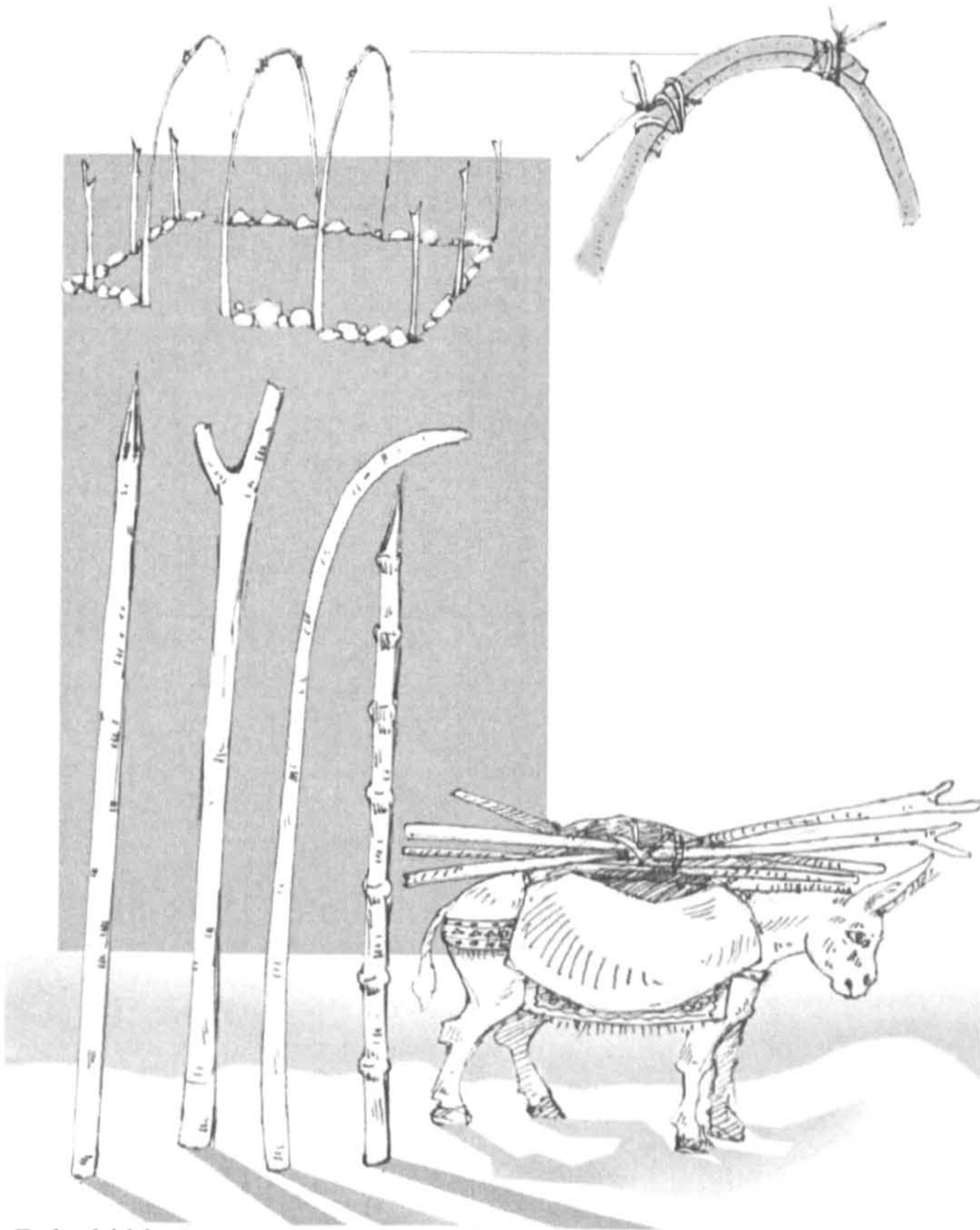
Figure 3.16. Photos showing some examples of fasteners used by nomadic tribes both in Iran and Pakistan. The simple metal ring fasteners are ordered to be made by a village blacksmith. Source: Author

3.2.5. Poles or posts

A pole is a long thin piece of wood or metal, used especially to support things, and a post is a strong upright pole made of metal or wood that is fixed into the ground (Cobuild Collins dictionary, 1995). In Baluchistan the poles (*Payeh*, *Setoon* in Baluchi and Pashtun languages) of the black tents are mainly made of any nearby wild trees such as oak, fig, box or plane, and many others trees including bamboo. The bamboo can be seen in any part of Baluchistan, particularly near the Sind province of Pakistan.

The bamboo plant is a huge grass that grows in great profusion in Asia and Africa. Bamboo makes very good materials to be used in tents and buildings because it is very strong and grows to a great height. Since bamboo stems are hollow they are light and easy to handle and transport. The ends of the tent are normally held up

by forked poles placed under the loops. In China, people also collect the bamboo stems easily, therefore many people in the small villages use them to build their houses and they live in dwellings called bamboo house (Hogarth, 1977).



Baluchi black tents. The poles can be seen in different sizes and shapes. The nomads use branches from trees such as oak, box and plane as well as the stems of bamboos. They use pack animals to carry the poles and the cloth of the black tent when the time comes to move. Source: Author

Figure 3.17. Drawing of different types of poles or posts used in

The number of poles depends on the size of the tent as well as the tribal tradition. There are no particular rules or regulations in using the poles regarding height, thickness, shape or number. The nomadic tribes carry all the poles on the back of the pack animals when they are travelling. Therefore, they choose light wood to make the poles for their tents. In this case bamboo is their favoured wood.

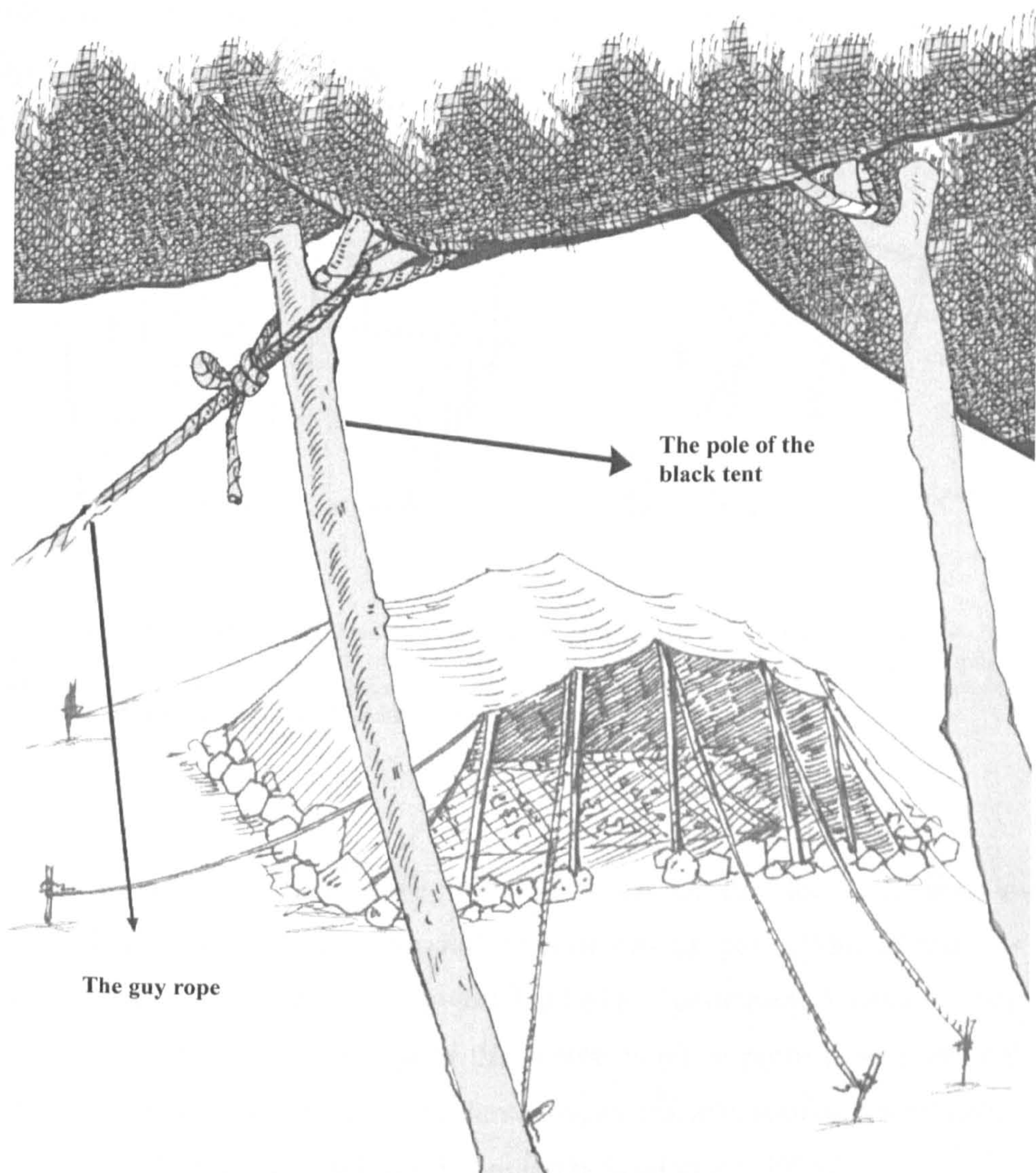


Figure 3.18. Drawing from inside a black tent showing the position of the poles, guy ropes and the fastener in the black tent. Source: Author

According to local nomadic people in Baluchistan, in a basic black tent the poles are used around the cloth and they are normally between 200 and 270 cm high. The pole in the middle front of the black tent is normally bigger than the one in the corner. The nomads use this part of the tent as the main entrance.

The cloth is stretched over poles and then secured by the guy ropes that are tied to stakes or pegs driven into the ground. Bedouin tents are made in different sizes and are normally measured by the number of poles. Where we would say we have a four, five or six bedroom house, the Bedouin say they have a four, five or six pole tent. In Central Asia the nomads have very primitive tents made from yak hair. The cloth is thrown over short poles driven into the ground and tied to them (Hogarth, 1977).

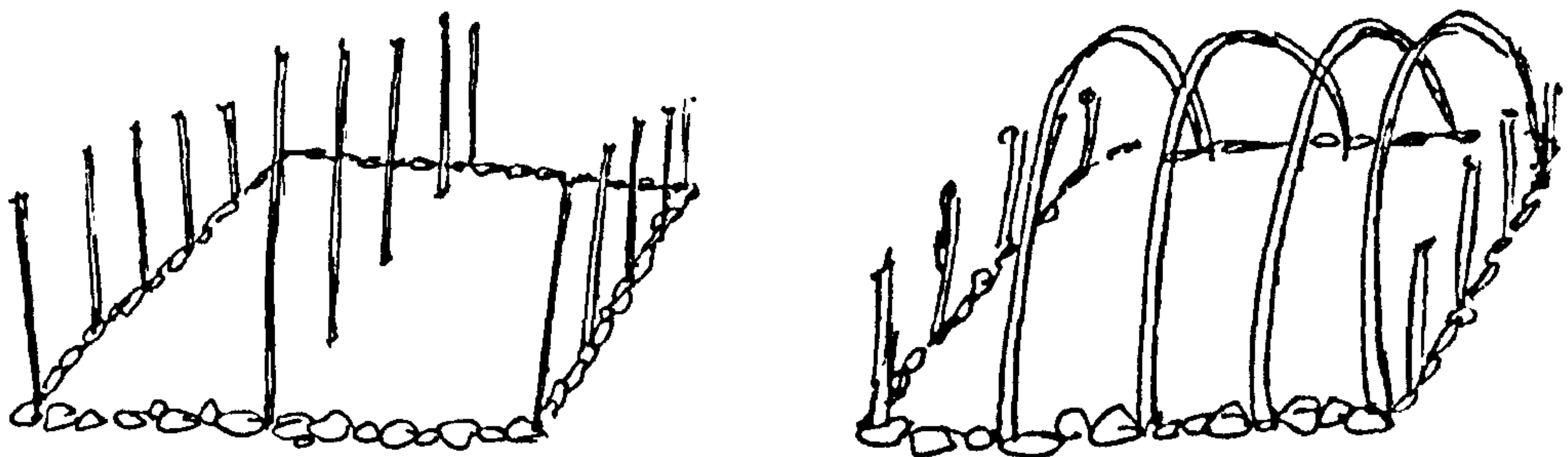


Figure 3.19. (Left) Drawing of the poles in the Ghilzai black tent in Baluchistan. They use three rows of straight poles in their tent. The central row is higher than the other two. (Right) The use of poles in the Baluchi black tent. Mixtures of straight and curved poles are used in this type of barrel- vaulted tent by the nomadic tribes of the Duranni and Baluchi. Source: Author

In Baluchistan the Ghilzai tribe from the Pashtoon division have their own specific black tent with three parallel rows of straight poles. The central row is higher than the other two, which gives a kind of moderate roof. A wooden shoe or pieces of rags are set on the top of the central poles to protect the cloth. Other tribes like the Durrani and Baluchis have black tents with similar black cloth, but with a mixture of straight and barrel- vaulted poles (Faegre, 1979).

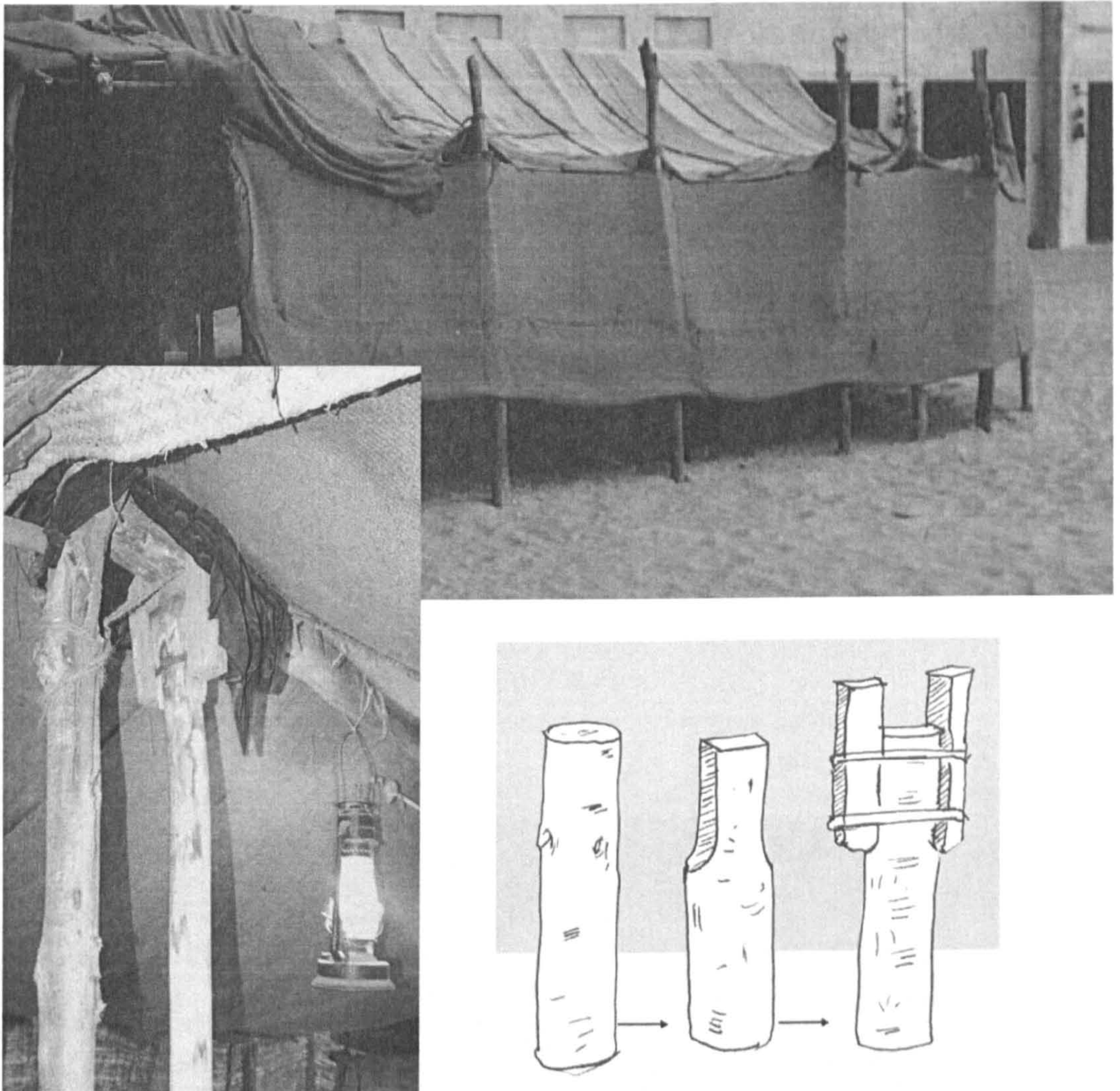


Figure 3.20. The structure of a Bedouin tent can be seen in this picture. How the poles are made is shown in the drawing. These kinds of tents are made in different sizes and are normally measured by the number of poles. Source: Author

3.2.6. Pegs

A peg is a small piece of wood or metal that is used for fastening something to something else (Cobuild Collins dictionary, 1995). The peg is called *Kila* or *Mikh* in Baluchistan. Several types of metal and wood pegs can be found amongst the nomadic tribes of Baluchistan. The metal types are mainly made by the blacksmith and the nomads buy them whenever come across villages or urban areas during the migration. Most of the nomads make their own pegs with hard wood and take them wherever they go.

In the black tent one end of the guy rope is tied to the pegs and another end is attached to the black cloth. The pegs are normally half hammered into the ground. There will be always some exception in using materials in the nomadic tents in Baluchistan. Most of the nomads tie the guy rope to the peg and knock it into the ground to prevent the tent from being blown away. If the ground is too hard to use the peg, they use heavy stones instead of the peg to fix the tent.

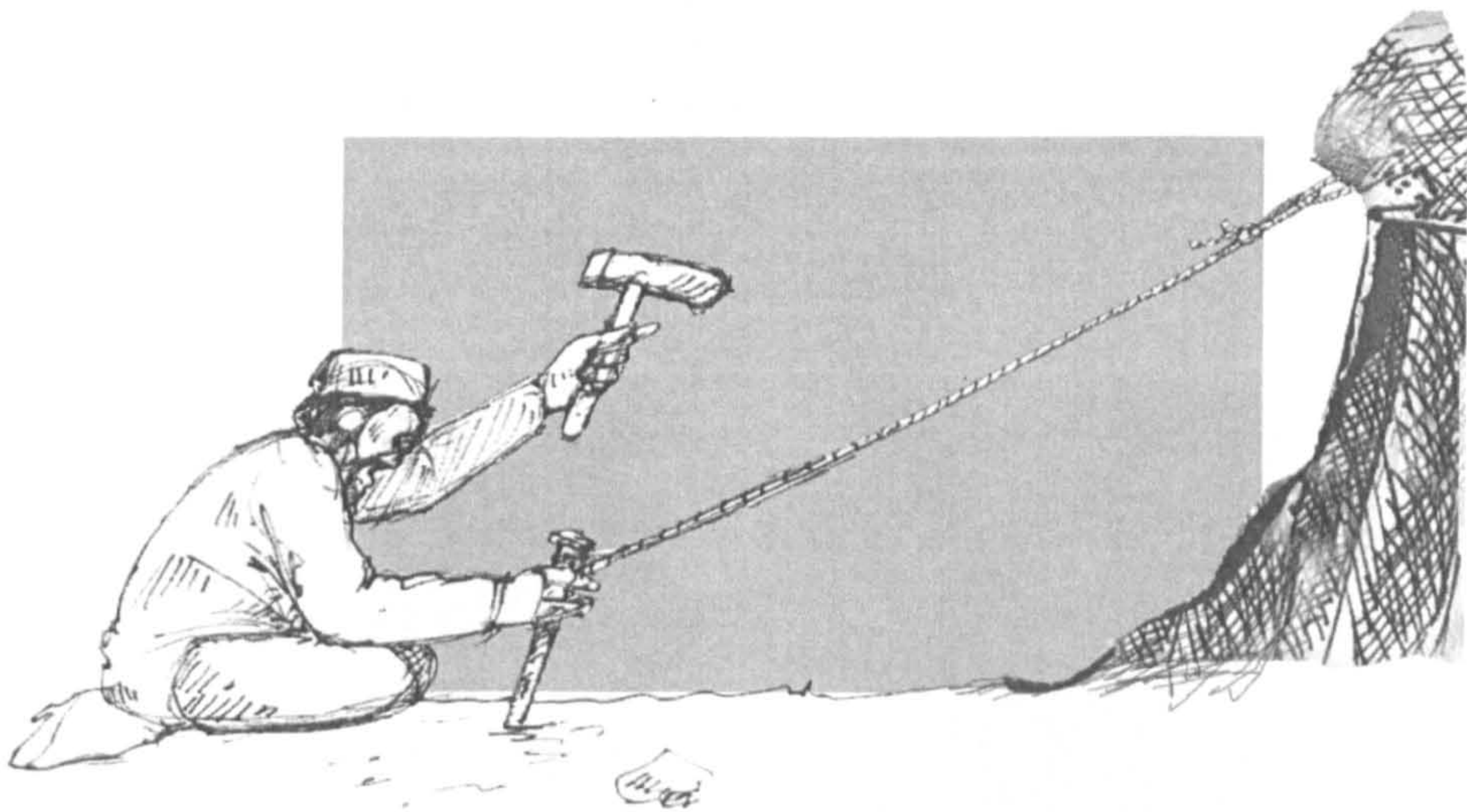


Figure 3.21. Drawing of a nomad of Baluchistan knocking the peg of the black tent into the ground. He hammers the wood peg while pulling the guy rope. Source: Author

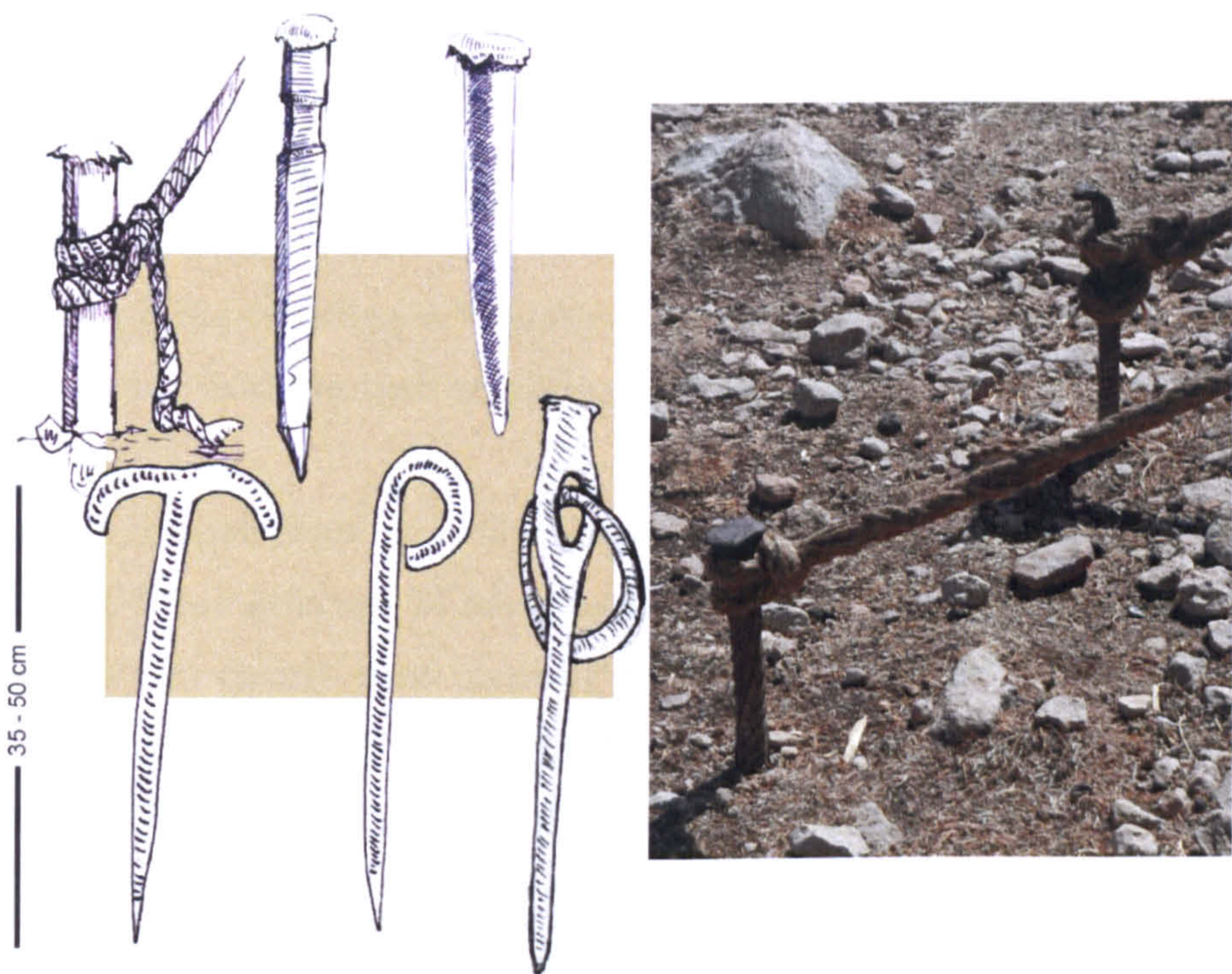


Figure 3.22. Drawing of different types of pegs used in the nomadic tents in Baluchistan. The top three are made of wood and the bottom ones are metal types. These are only some examples of the pegs that I saw during my case study in Baluchistan. Right: photo of two different kind of metal pegs used in nomadic black tents in Baluchistan. Source: Author

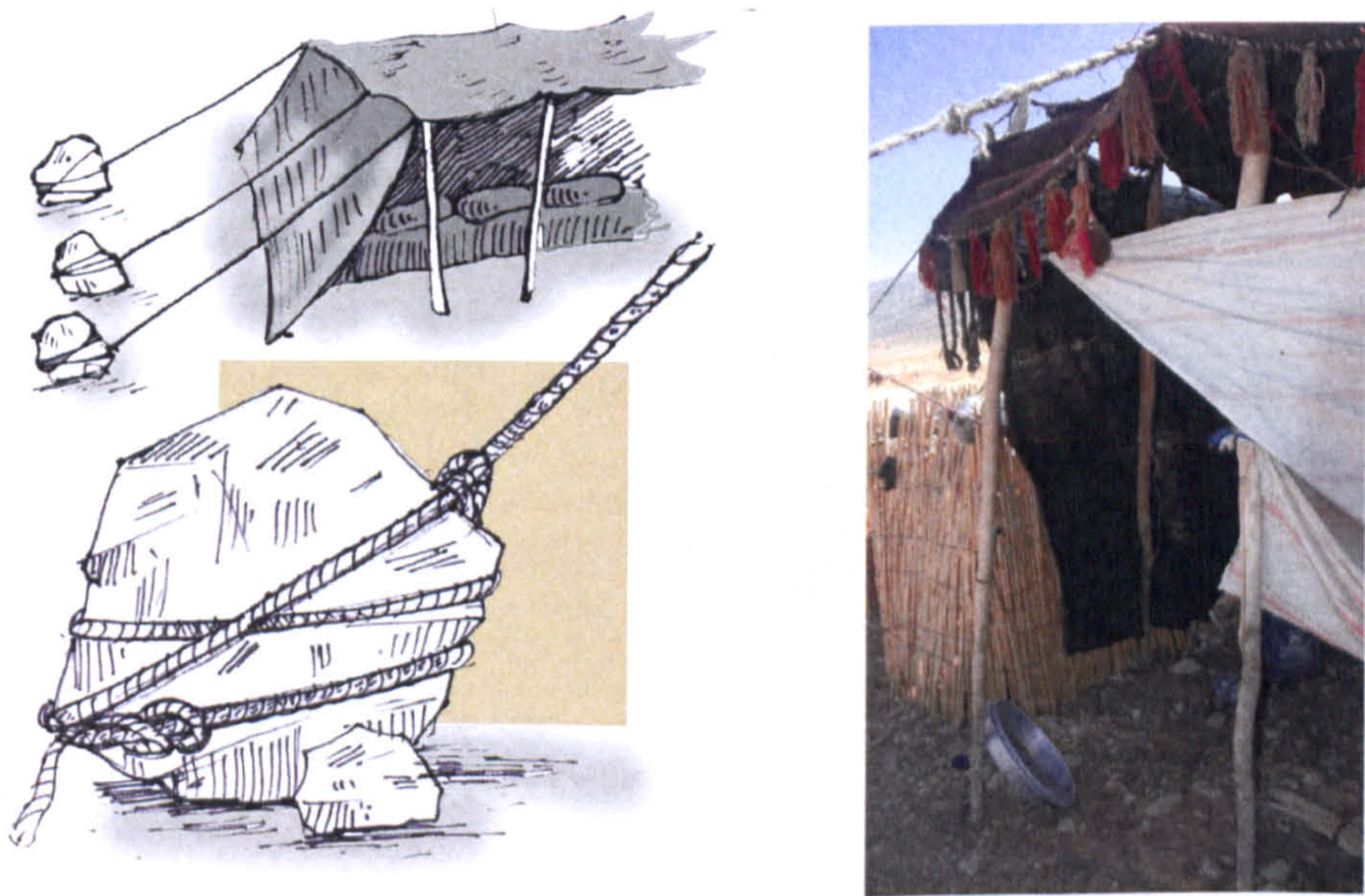


Figure 3.23. Drawing showing how stones have been used instead of the peg. The nomads of Baluchistan use this technique when they find the ground is too hard and it is difficult to use the wood pegs for the black tent. Source: Author

3.3. Encampments

An encampment is defined as a group of tents or other shelters in a particular place. The tents or other shelters can be used by soldiers, refugees, nomads or gypsies (Cobuild Collins dictionary, 1995). It is not difficult to identify a nomadic encampment while travelling in Baluchistan as the nomadic black tents are visible at some distance from the roads according to Kennion, (2005)

A nomadic encampment is called *adagh*, *otak* or *halk* by the people of Baluchistan. It is a gathering of tents pitched at a place belonging to a single kin group led by an elderly male normally known as *Hakim* (Baloch, 1988). The hakim is highly respected as the chief of a family, kinship group and sub-tribe and he has great control over his court of shepherds, farmers and tenant farmers. In Baluchi tradition the hakim offers valuables or property rights in return for support in battle (Singh, 2008). He is in charge of the encampment and is also called *mevo*, *han* or *mul* by Baluchi people. Normally the tribe chief's tent is recognisable from a distance by its different type, colour or decoration and by having several horses around.

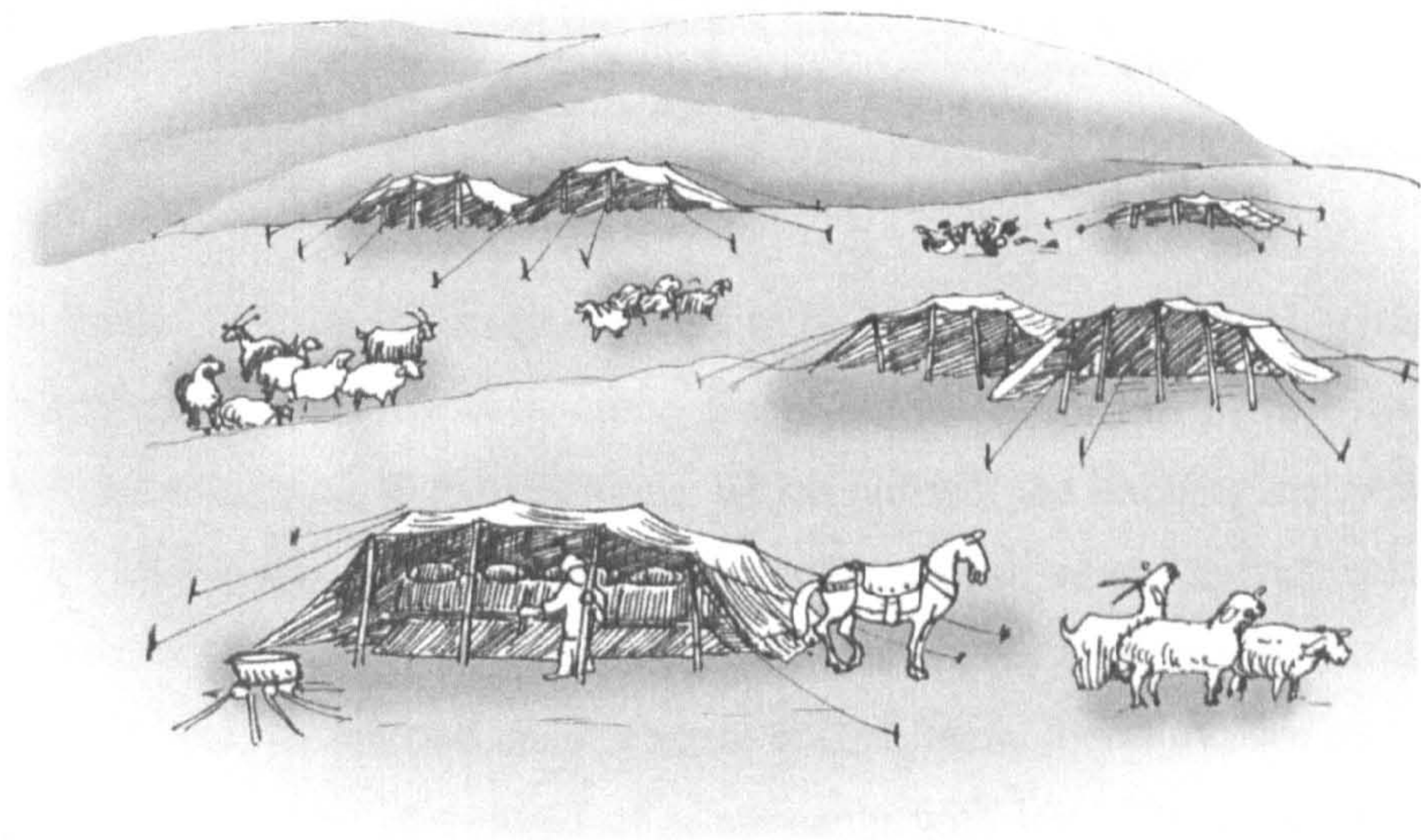


Figure 3.24. Drawing of the encampment site of a Baluchi tribe. The nomads have no particular design for their encampment as the Bedouins have, but there is always a plan where to pitch the tents and which tent should be where. In the Baluchi encampment the closer relatives usually pitch their tents next to each other. Source: Author

In Baluchistan the members of a camp are mostly related to each other by blood or marriage ties. They can trace their affinity with the members of neighbouring camps through a common ancestor, as they all usually use their ancestor's name as their surname. An ordinary camp in Baluchistan consists of about 6 to 12 tents belonging to 3 to 10 families. The members of the camp possess either a joint herd or have more than one flock (*megar or mall*) for which they are liable (Baloch, 1988).

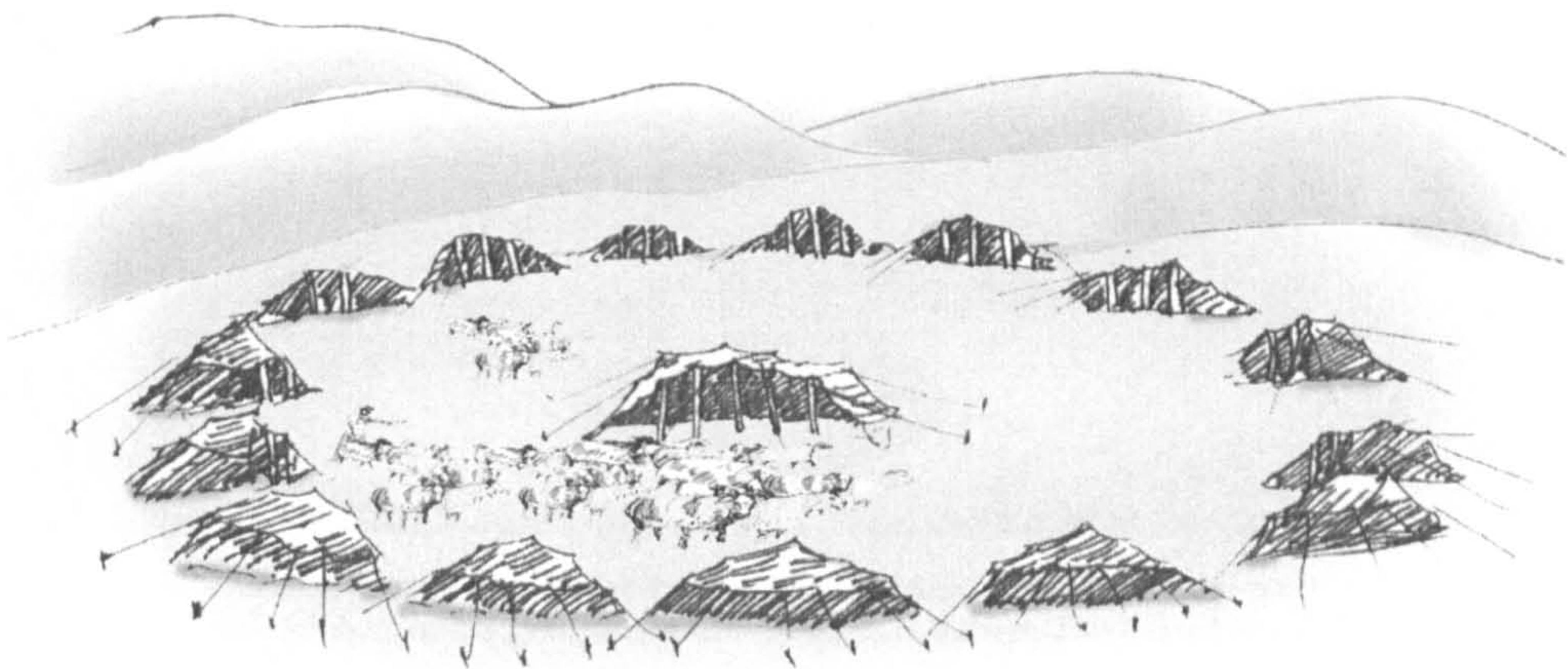


Figure 3.25. Drawing of the encampment site of a Bedouin tribe. The Bedouin nomadic tribes have a particular design for their encampment. They pitch their tent around a circle called a *dour*. They keep their herds in the middle of the *dour* at night. A special tent is always located in the centre of the *dour* and is used as a mosque and school (*madresa*). There is also a plan where to pitch the tents and which tent should be which part of the encampment. Source: Author

The nomadic camp in Baluchistan seems to be bunch of pitched tents, which are accidentally positioned by each other. Every single camp has, in fact, its own arrangement according to the traditions, which concern the pitching and patching of tents. The nomadic chief always follows a fixed plan, where and when settled for a temporary encampment. The tent of the chief is usually located in the middle of the camp and his married sons' next to it. The tents, therefore, are organised around the chief's tent in ordered of relationship with him. The closer relatives such as brothers and sisters are nearby, while uncles or cousins come after that. The poorer relatives mainly work as shepherds for the chief and their tents come a few paces behind the main row of tents. The last space of the encampment

occupies unrelated categories such as strangers, guest, serfs and blacksmiths (Baloch, 1988).

Kennion describes that the Baluchi tent-dwellers as more charming than attractive looking. He admires the fact that their hospitality is great, but their manner of placing the guests at the end or almost outside the encampment is rude (Kennion, 2005). The camp often faces the south, with its back to the north wind that occasionally blows and brings dust (Faegre, 1979).

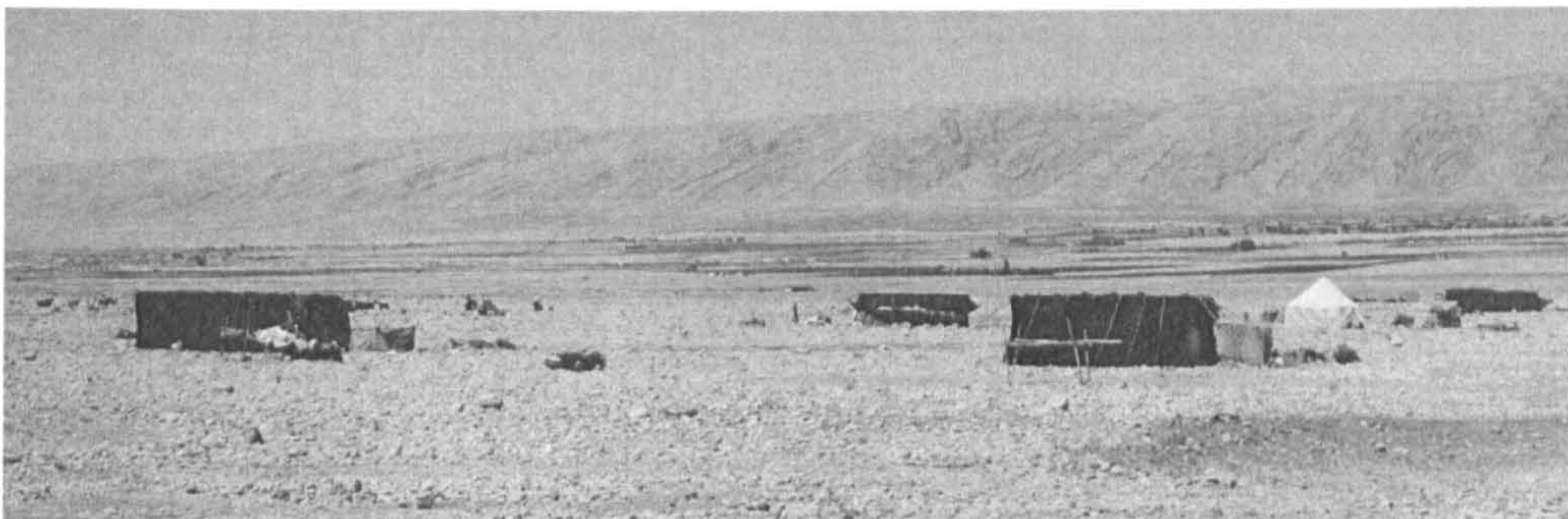


Figure 3.26. The encampment of a nomadic tribe in Baluchistan. The leader of this tribe lives in a white tent and the other members of the tribe, who are normally his relatives, live in traditional black tents.
Source: Author

The encampment of a nomadic Baluchi tribe can be a showcase of their culture and includes displays of nomadic shelters, rugs, crafts, beds, ornaments, clothes, tools and other artefacts. The nomadic tribes in Baluchistan have kept most of their traditional Baluchi culture and strongly consider themselves to be part of wider Baluchi society widespread in urban and rural areas in Baluchistan. In many cases they believe they are superior to settled Baluchi, who have given up the good ways of life which were taught by their ancestors. The absence of agricultural activities and the phenomenon of nomadic lifestyle seem to have religio-cultural roots in Christianity and Judaism as it was mentioned in the Bible that:

Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads (Bible, 35:7).

The nomadic tribes of Baluchistan, in contrast to the Arab Bedouins, have no special tent used as a mosque. They have a tent used as a school for the children but they do not use it as a mosque as well. This is because they believe that the mosque should purely be used as a place for worship, but not mixed with any other activities such as education. Therefore, they normally create their mosques with stones or any other nearby materials. These types of mosque will be discussed in the typology of mosques in Baluchistan.

Chapter 4

Semi-nomadic lifestyle in Baluchistan



4. Semi-nomadic people of Baluchistan

The society of the semi-nomadic people in Baluchistan is regulated through a normative process which revolves around the prime necessity of adapting to the environment and of fulfilling needs. The majority of semi-nomadic people live in temporary shelters and semi-portable dwellings such as tents, reed huts or any other makeshift housing. Arasteh regards semi-nomadic life as a shift from nomadic to a settled life, but also as a result of extreme poverty (Arasteh, 1970). Pruthi argues that reverting to a nomadic and semi-nomadic life in recent Baluchistan is the result of unexpected disasters such as earthquakes which have happened frequently in the region, for instance in 1935 in Quetta (Pruthi, 2004).

The semi-nomadic people are called *Bar-o-ar* in the Baluchi language. They settle for part of the year in an area where there is water and vegetation, and then move on to other areas searching for better opportunities. These semi-nomadic people stay in some places for more than five or six months. In this case they build temporary mud houses (Baloch, 1988). On most occasions, the semi-nomadic people of Baluchistan live together with other settled groups in permanent villages. Most of them have permanent homes within the settlements, where some family members live year-round while others move seasonally with the herds. Almost half of the population in Baluchistan live within 85km of Quetta; many of them are semi-nomadic pastors and shepherds with various ethnic backgrounds (Singh, 2008). They are engaged in agriculture beside the settled people for part of the year. Semi-nomad society is shaped by their mobility. Although the semi-nomadic people have abandoned their nomadic lifestyle, nomadic culture still shapes their thinking, values and social relationships. Like nomads, the semi-nomadic people value their independence from the surrounding society.

One type of semi-nomad is the transhumant who may live part of a year in a tent, but has his base in settled villages and considers himself first a farmer. The transhumants are found in mountain areas where the herds need to be moved to

highland pastures during the hot season (Faegre, 1979). According to Chatty, a semi-nomadic tribe or large family group moves with the flock. Transhumants or semi-settled people are those of whom only part of the group, usually men looking after herds, moves with the livestock during the migration and the rest of the family remains at the home base (Chatty, 2006).

However, the categories of nomads, semi-nomads, transhumants and settled people are never absolute when applied to a particular people in certain areas. This is because some tribes have all types within their ranks, and over the course of time some individual tribes have shifted categories as conditions have changed (Faegre, 1979).

The semi-nomadic life rotates around two seasons, wet and dry, and around a strict division of labour based on gender. During the winter the animals remain at a permanent settlement, where they are herded by the men and boys; women and girls contribute by milking and caring for the animals. During the dry season the younger men take the herds and go off to look for other water supplies until the rainy season approaches. The farming time starts at the beginning of spring and it will be the men's job to plant, tend and harvest the crops. Women manage domestic life and their responsibilities include fetching water, collecting fire wood, preparing food and maintainig the huts, as well as weaving mats, spinning cotton, making soap and caring for the children (Abdel- Ghaffar, 1976).



Figure 4.1. Semi-nomadic tribe family in Baluchistan on their yearly migration. Source: Author

The semi-nomadic people in Baluchistan could, might belong to any tribe, such as the Pashtun, Baluch, Brahui, Hezareh and dozens of other groups. The Pathan tribe mainly live in areas near Afghanistan, speak Pashtu and call themselves Pashtun. Their Persian, Baluch, and Central Asian neighbours refer to them as Afghans and the peoples of the Indian sub-continent and the west know them as Pathans. The Pathan is divided into two principal sub-tribes, the Sanzar Khail and the Sanatya, each then further divided to many sub-tribes. The Sanzar Khail sub-tribe is further divided into the Jalazai, Mardanzai and Abdullazai. The semi-nomadic people could also belong to some of the most important tribes and sub-tribes of Baluchistan, which include the Ali- Ek, Bahlui, Baizidi, Hassanzai, Jan Begi, Kolah-derazi, Jan Mirzai, Rahim Khani and Salar Khani (Stone, 1997).

The culture, language and religion of the semi-nomadic people of the Baluchistan region are the same as those of the people of the neighbouring north and west provinces of Iran and Afghanistan. The people of the north and northeast of Baluchistan are Pathuns of the Kakar tribe and speak Pashtoo languages. Both Pashtun and Baluch are Sunni Muslims and follow their traditional customs, beliefs and values that represent the Pashtunwali and Razmi-Baluch (Fiorani and Redaelli, 2003). The semi-nomadic people practise Islam to appease the spirits and gain their co-operation for the necessities of life. They still believe that it is their God's will that they are travellers and immigrants, therefore they are dependent on him and satisfied with what is sufficient to serve him. God has saved them over time because he is the pastor or shepherd of his travelling people. It seems that the nomadic belief of God appeared in other religions such as Christianity and Judaism; as Faegre states, "*Yahweh was originally a nomad god-the Bedouin god of flock and herds*" (Faegre, 1979:4).

The semi-nomads are versatile people and opportunists in finding various resources to support themselves and for trade. They exploit the differences in the seasons to find pasture, grow crops, or to gather natural produce by travelling. They visit festivals and markets, or find seasonal work in the town and farms. Many of them live in villages, but spend part of the year on the move plying a

trade, or with their herds and flocks. They also travel to villages and towns as traders, entertainers, craftsmen, sellers of all sorts of articles, fortune-tellers, acrobats and as casual workers. They cover the limited demand for services and goods that the surrounding society does not provide for themselves. For a part of a year the semi-nomads commit themselves to farming but because of the lack of water the available agricultural land is limited to the valley floors, mainly in the east and northeast of Baluchistan where the level ground and water for irrigation are found.

4.1. Architecture and construction materials

The harsh environmental conditions of the desert, the scarcity of basic necessities for human survival, food, water, sanitation, shelter, building materials, etc., have imposed great difficulties for people to sustain their living condition. With regard to shelter and building materials, Pearson believes that our health is affected by what we eat, drink, breathe and, surprisingly, by our house and particularly by the materials we use to build our houses. In this context, building materials can be seen as the building blocks of life, as we depend on them for shelter, just as we do on water, air and food for sustenance (Pearson, 1989).

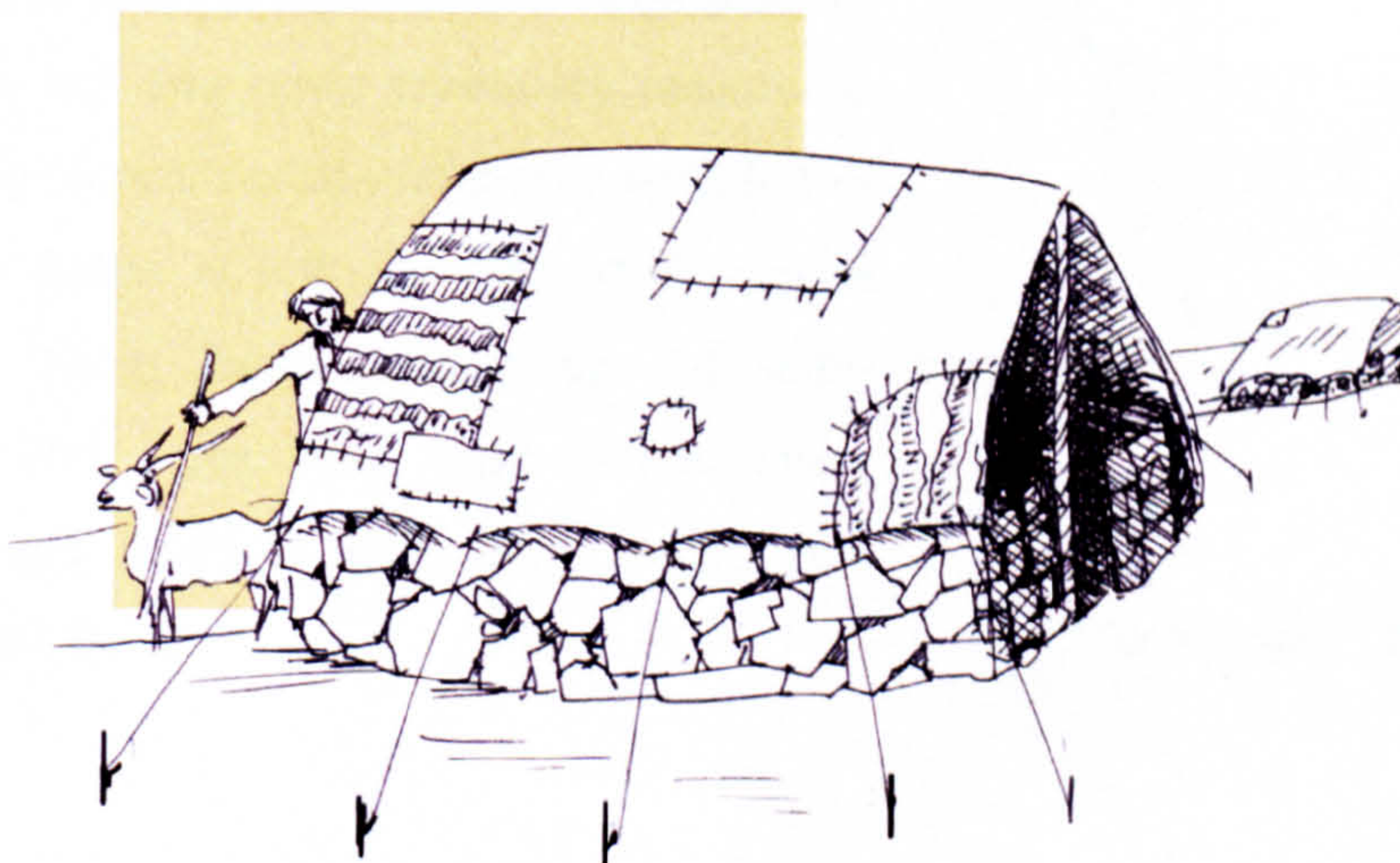


Figure 4.2. Drawing of a semi-nomadic house in Baluchistan in Pakistan. This house is semi-portable and the semi-nomadic people take the timbers or poles and the tent whenever they move to another place. The only part left is a stone wall of less than 1 metre. Source: Author

The house building was traditionally based on the availability of local materials. These conditions still exist in most small settlements around the world since the cost of transportation is not affordable and sometime it costs more than the material. Some materials such as stone in rocky areas and adobe, brick, and tile in clay areas, have a tendency to be more dominant locally. Other materials such as timber and grass were more widespread than stone and brick and lent themselves more to log and timber-framed construction, with reed and straw for thatching (Pearson, 1989).

Most of the semi-nomadic people of Baluchistan live in semi-permanent houses. The term 'semi-permanent' is used to refer to a structure of which part, mostly foundation and wall structure, is permanent and other parts, roof and roof construction, is not. These houses therefore become semi-portable and most of the materials used for these types of shelters are flexible and easy to move. Sometimes it is impossible to draw a clear line between the moveable tent, the stationary hut and other temporary houses. In fact, many tents are semi-portable as well. In this case, the frame is left and only the cover is moved. There are several groups of semi-nomads who leave their solid houses every summer and dwell in tents for a short time (Faegre, 1979).

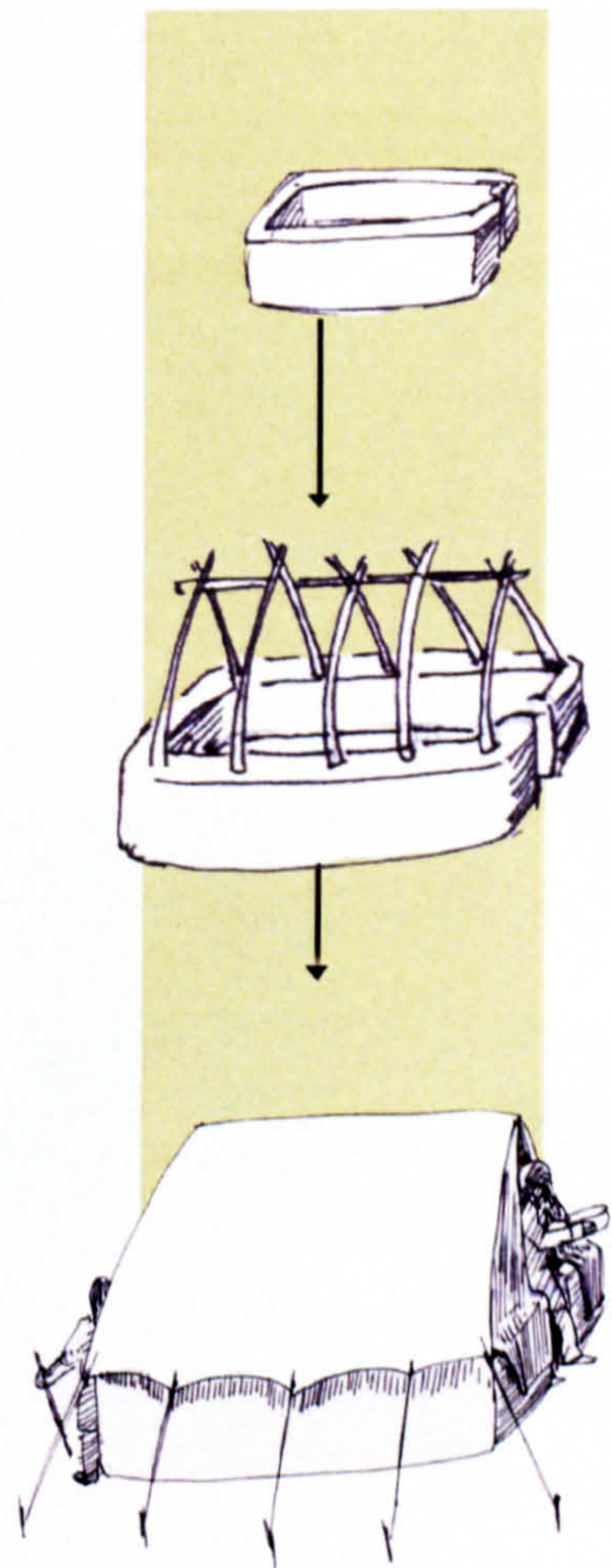


Figure 4.3. Drawing of a semi-nomadic house in Baluchistan. The foundation of this house is built by mud brick and plastered with mud. The framework (poles) and the tent are portable and they are removed whenever the time comes for moving to another place. Source: Author

Some of the most important variations of semi-nomadic temporary shelters are classified and studied by the use of raw materials in their structures.

4.2. Reed, timber, and straw houses

The use of wood products such as timber, reed, straw and leaves are used in different types of shelters and houses by the nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled people of Baluchistan. Semi-nomadic people who have already experienced nomadic life are familiar with the nature of wood products and know how to use them in new ways in temporary houses. The traditional and popular way of using timber in Baluchistan is non- worked poles or round wood which is cheap and readily available in many parts. Use of round wood in semi-nomadic shelters in Baluchistan can be considered as the basic, but most popular, way. The old method of using timber is joining poles by using rope or bark strips, which is cheap and readily available in many parts of the world (Pearson, 1989).

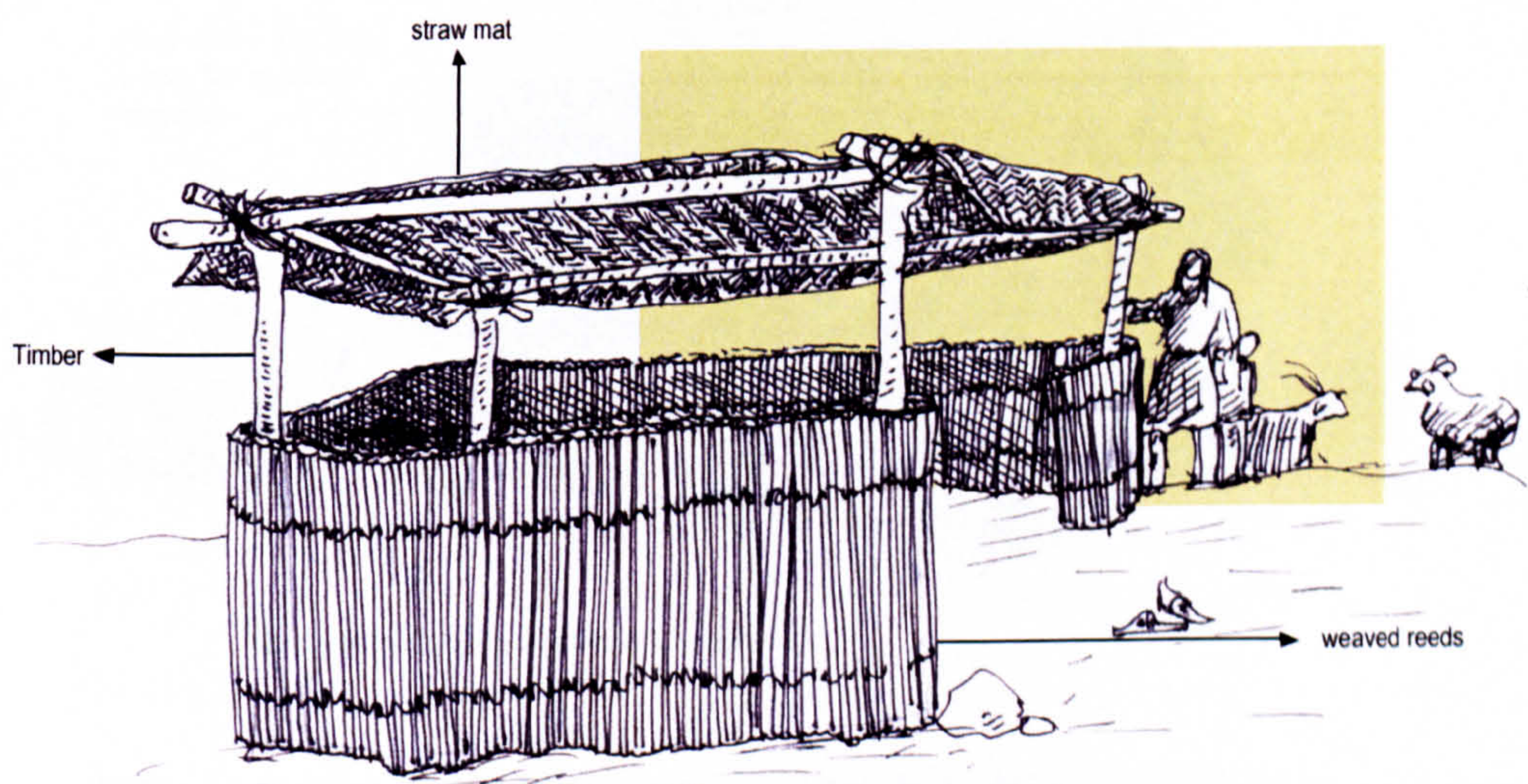


Figure 4.4. Drawing of a semi-nomadic house in the rural area of Jacobabad in Pakistan. The semi-nomadic people mainly work in the farm for 5-6 months and live in this kind of temporary houses for that period of time. There is not much rainfall in this area and these houses are built to protect people from the heat of the sun and to provide privacy. The size of this kind of house depends on the size of the family. Source: Author

There are plenty of trees and grasses in Jacobabad and the semi-nomadic people make almost all the parts of their houses with wood products. The structure of this type of house includes straw mats for the roof and floor and woven reeds for the wall around a few poles or timbers.

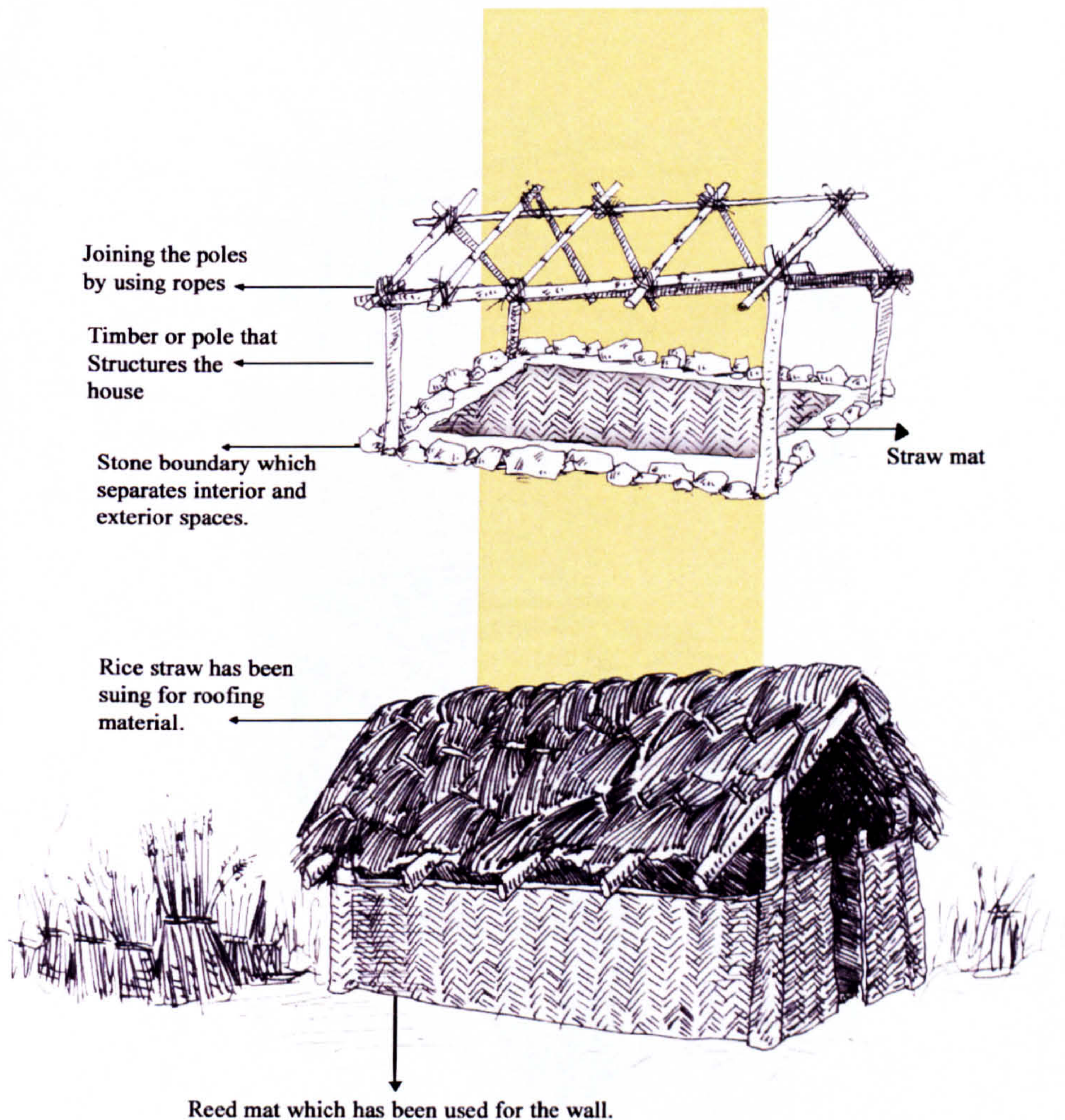


Figure 4.5. Drawing illustrating the structure of a straw house in Baluchistan. It shows the traditional way of using round poles and rope for joining. This temporary house is used by semi-nomadic people in the rural area of Jacobabad. Source: Author

Straw is another popular material used by the semi-nomadic people of Baluchistan. According to a local Baluch man, more than half of the houses in Baluchistan are built by using a reed and straw bale construction. It is easier to

obtain permits for non-load bearing straw bale homes. Sometimes the straw bales and reed are used as in-fill between structural frameworks of conventional building materials, usually wood or mud. The pleasure for many semi-nomadic people who choose to build straw bale homes is the ability to participate directly in the building of their own home.

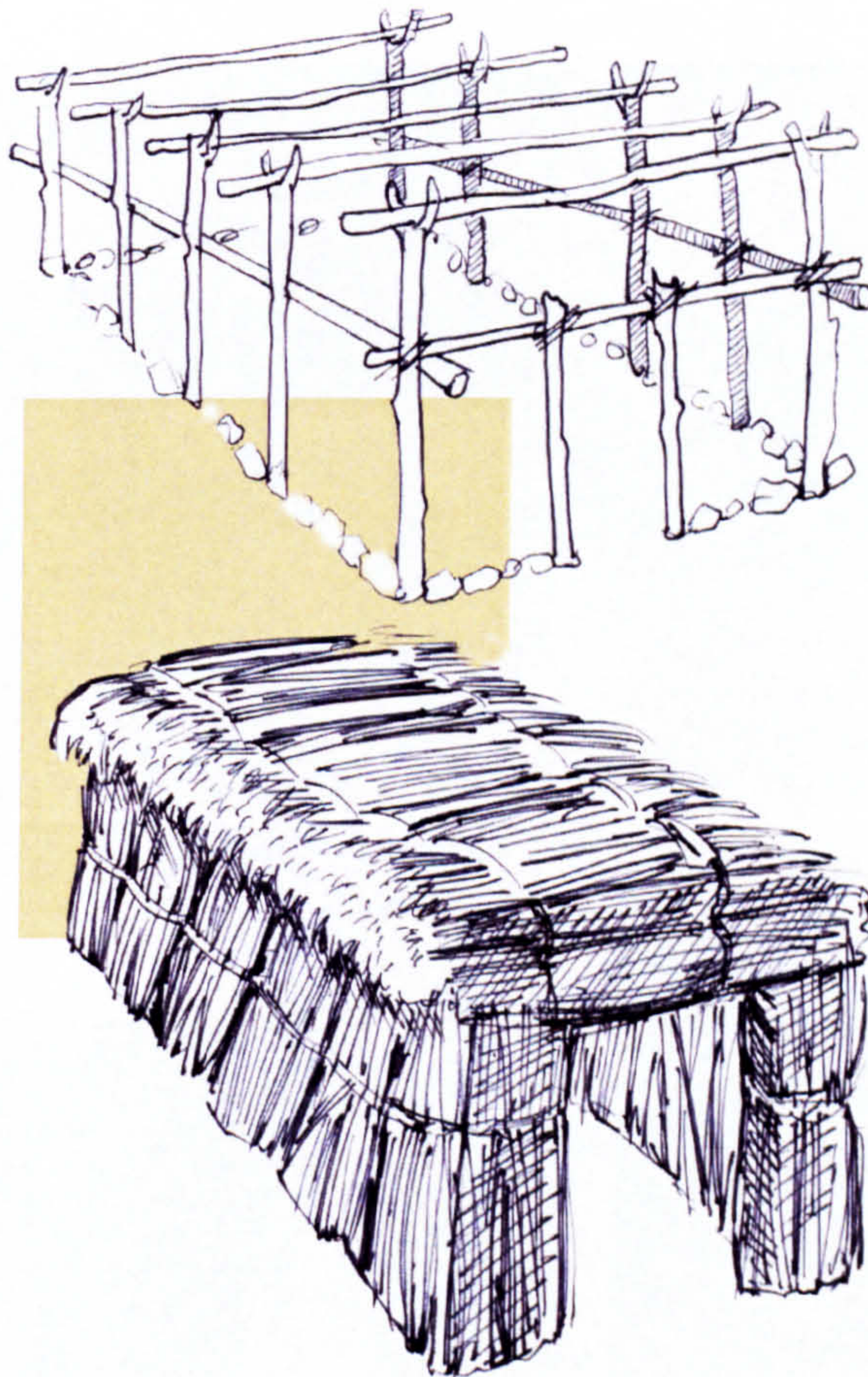


Figure 4.6. Drawing showing the structure of a straw house used by semi-nomadic people in Baluchistan. It is used for 4-5 months while they are farming or working on the farm as labourers. Semi-nomads use different types of wood for the timberwork of the structure of the house and they use reed or straw to cover the roof and walls. The size of this kind of houses depends on the size of the family. It varies from 2 – 3.5 metres in width, 3 – 5 metres in length and between 2 and 2.5 metres in height. These houses are found near the rivers in Baluchistan, particularly the areas of the southeast close to Sind province in Pakistan. Source: Author

I interviewed Mr Amin in 2005, a semi-nomadic man who lives in a straw house in a rural area of Baluchistan. He mentioned some reasons why they had chosen

straw and reed as their main building materials. He believed that the straw bales and reed are very flexible. They are easy to cut to size and easy to stack for walls. Often they use straw bales as in-fill between the columns of a structural framework of wood or mixed with mud. The benefit of this method is that the bales, which can compress under weight, do not bear the weight of the roof. Also, the home receives the benefits of timber's and straw's insulation value.



Figure 4.7. Three photos showing the structure of a semi-nomadic temporary reed house. It shows how the semi-nomadic people weave pouches of reed to make the walls and for the roof as well. This sort of house can be seen in any part of Baluchistan where water is nearby. Source: Author



Figure 4.8. Rice straw is incorporated in the walls of the mosque of Zangi Poor in Jacobabad in Baluchistan. Source: Author



Figure 4.9. Photo of a semi-nomadic temporary reed house in Iran. This house is very similar to the reed house in Baluchistan in Pakistan in structure and use of reeds to cover the walls and roof and of timber for the framework. The semi-nomadic tribes are experienced in using timber as they already used them as poles in their tents when they used to live as nomads. Source: Author



Figure 4.10. Example of a semi-nomadic reed house in Baluchistan near the border of Chaman. Source: Author

The people of Baluchistan also build some unusual tub forms of shelters with a combination of different materials. These tub houses are used as storage rooms to keep their grains and cereals. The same type of construction is also used in Baluchistan for ovens.



Figure 4.11. A shelter used by worker in Sibi in Baluchistan. Source: Author

The interviewee Arif (2005) stated that the beehive or tub form is called *pond* in Pakistan (granary in English) and is mainly used to keep their annual wheat or other cereals. In spring time they cut the fresh branches of the blackberry and willow tree. Then, all the knots will be cut when the branches are still wet. It will be more helpful to form the branch and make the structure of the hut when they are still fresh. The wickerwork starts by using the smaller wicker of the blackberry or willow trees. It is similar to weaving a basket. In the case of smaller sizes up to 2 metres high, they weave the bottom of the granary as well. They normally make some sort of stools with wood or put some stones under the granary to protect it from damp and animals like rats. When the pond is woven they make plaster with a mixture of soil (*meti*), cow manure and the chaff of wheat or rice to thatch the

granary. This plaster will protect the cereal from birds and insects. They often make a hole on the top to fill the granary.

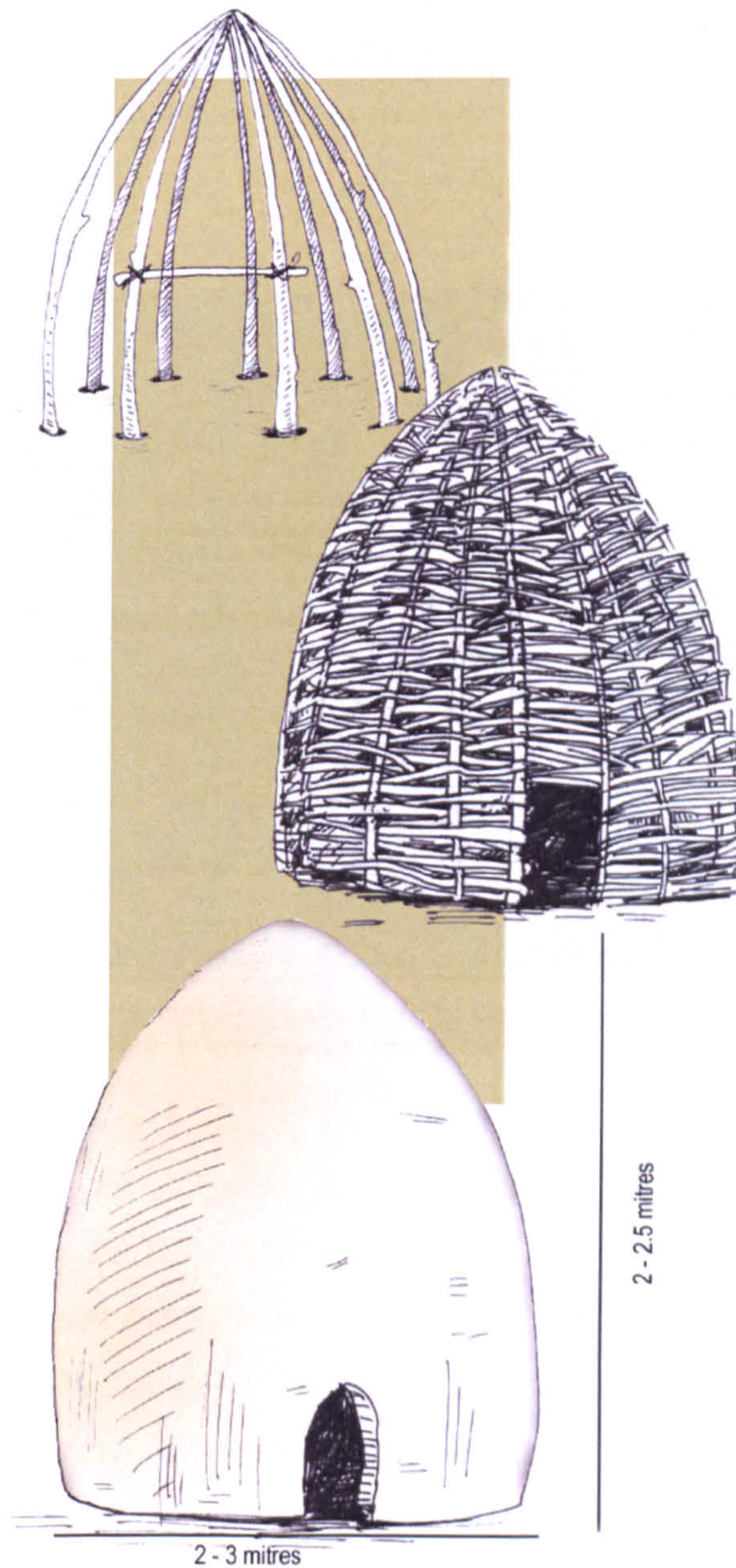


Figure 4.12. Structural method of a *pond*, or granary (in English) according to the description of the local people. The local materials used in this hut include the fresh branches and wickers of the blackberry tree and sometime fresh reeds. For plastering the outside of the hut they use a mixture of soil, chaff of wheat or rice and cow manure. They plaster the outside of the pond to protect the cereal from birds. Source: Author

4.3. Tree shelters

During the hot seasons, semi-nomadic farmers need somewhere to rest, particularly at midday when they have their lunch. The simple structure and availability of materials allows them to build their tree shelters easily and quickly. Tree shelters are built to protect them from the direct rays of the sun, heat, wind, and rain on some occasions.



Figure 4.13. Tree shelter completely made of tree products, used by semi-nomadic people of Iran. This kind of temporary shelter is common amongst semi-nomadic people both in Iran and Pakistan Source: Author.

According to a Baluchi shepherd, the simple structure of a tree shelter can be started by softening the floor, making room for one or more people. They then collect or cut branches and trim them off at the top to be used as thatch or for the sides. The cut or collected dry branches of trees are also used for the poles of the shelter. They finish the framework and use the fresh branches with leaves or wild bushes for the walls and the roof. If using the tree shelters for a longer period, their framework is normally built with stronger trunks and would be used for several years, but they annually replace some branches and leaves. In windy places the native shepherds find an open ended place such as a rock wall or bluff for extra protection.

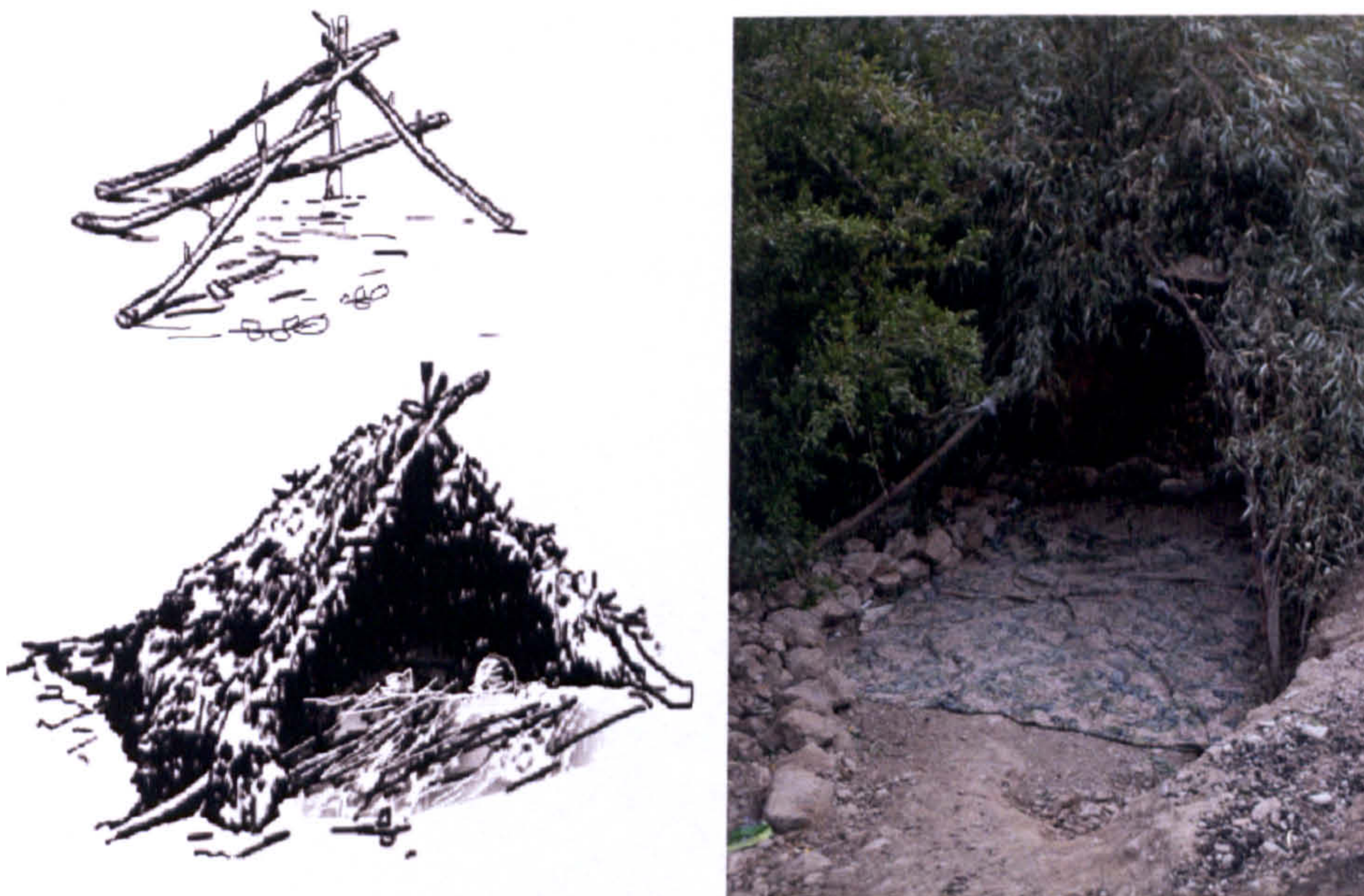


Figure 4.14. The framework of a semi-nomadic tree shelter in Baluchistan which is used by semi-nomadic shepherds. These shelters can be seen by the road near Jacobabad on the border of Baluchistan and the Sind provinces. Source: Author



Figure 4.15. Inside view from a semi-nomadic tree shelter in Baluchistan in Pakistan. Different sizes of tree branches, reed mats and mud have been used in this shelter. Source: Author

4.4. Semi-nomadic stone houses

According to Phillips (1836), the earliest dwellings of mankind were natural caves or holes in the ground. The first structures were also made of wood and clay, then rough stones and finally of mud and burnt bricks.



Figure 4.16. Use of stone in a prehistoric beehive hut in Ireland.
Source: Woodgruss (2007)

Stone as the major building material can be seen in almost every part of Baluchistan, particularly in the rural areas which are close to mountains. The stone method is locally regarded as the most obvious and aesthetically pleasing choice for the native Baluchi people. It is therefore used by semi-nomadic people, along with others groups in Pakistan, particularly for the structure of semi-portable rubble houses.

A local Baluch man said that these shelters are mainly used for hunting birds as they are located in mountainous areas where there is spring water and wild animals and birds come to drink the water. He demonstrated how this typical stone shelter is constructed. I observed how he collected the natural materials such as wild bushes, dry branches of wild trees and suitable stones nearby. He drew a circle with a piece of wood and placed heavier stones on the line of the circle at the bottom of the shelter with lighter stones on the top. The tree branches were

positioned next for the roof and thatching made with wild bushes from the mountain. These typical shelters protect them from wind, cold and wild animals. The same structure has often been observed in other parts of the world.



Figure 4.19. An abandoned stone shelter in Baluchistan. These kinds of shelter are used by semi-nomadic people for part of the year. In farming times semi-nomadic people return, use the same stone basic foundation and repair the roof of the shelter. Source: Author

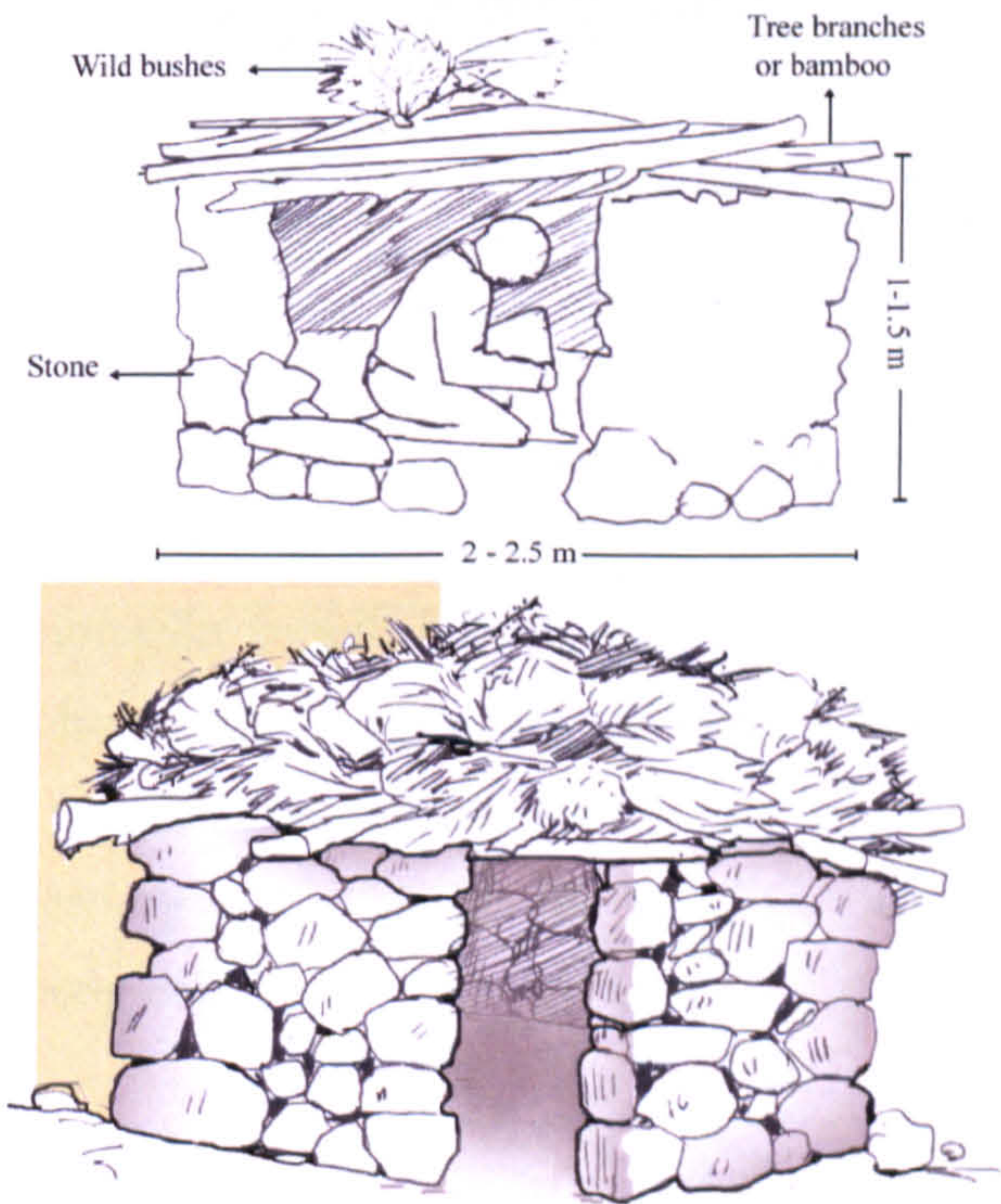


Figure 4.20. Structure of a stone shelter which can be seen in different parts of Baluchistan, particularly in rural mountainous areas. Source: Author

The method of using dry stone is still a very popular way of making walls, shelters, field boundaries and barriers to contain stock by the semi-nomadic people in Baluchistan.



Figure 4.21. This is an example of a semi-portable semi-nomadic stone shelter. This shelter accommodates two semi-nomadic people in Quetta city in Baluchistan. The base of this shelter is made of dry stone and the tent over the poles forms the top part, which is portable. Source: Author

Many semi-nomadic stone shelters are based on temporary usage and they are mainly semi-portable. Two popular methods are used for the structure of stone shelters by semi-nomadic people. These two methods are the dry-stone and mortared stone methods. In most cases the base of the shelter is built by dry stone without using any cement or mortar and the top part is the tent's cloth and poles which can be transported to other places. This way has proved to be more economical in the long run.

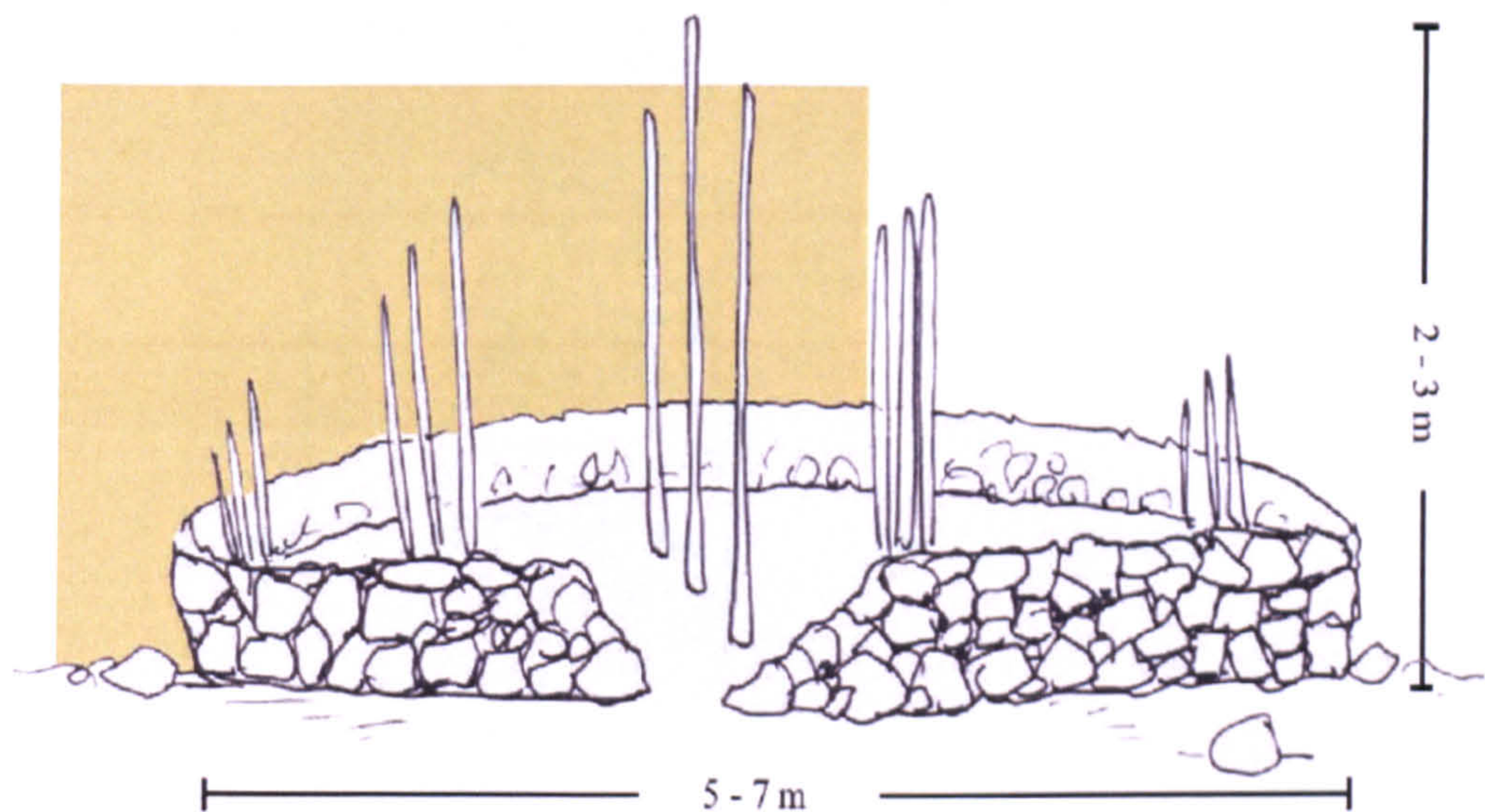


Figure 4.22. Example of a semi-nomadic shelter which accommodates a large semi-nomadic family by the Quetta - Chaman road in Baluchistan. The base of this shelter is made of dry stone and the tent over the poles forms the top part the shelter, which is portable. The drawing illustrates the dry-stone basement of the shelter as well as the size and position of the poles. Source: Author

The semi-nomadic people of Baluchistan also use the mortared stone method to build the base of their shelter. According to a local builder, this method is generally used for more permanent applications by the semi-nomads returning to the same places over the years. A wet retaining wall is similar to a dry wall except for one major difference. In the dry stone method the stability of the wall depends on the weight and friction of one stone on another, but in the wet wall the stability of the wall depends on the mortar that bonds this wall together. Cement mortar is used between stones to secure them together and achieve a monolithic wall.

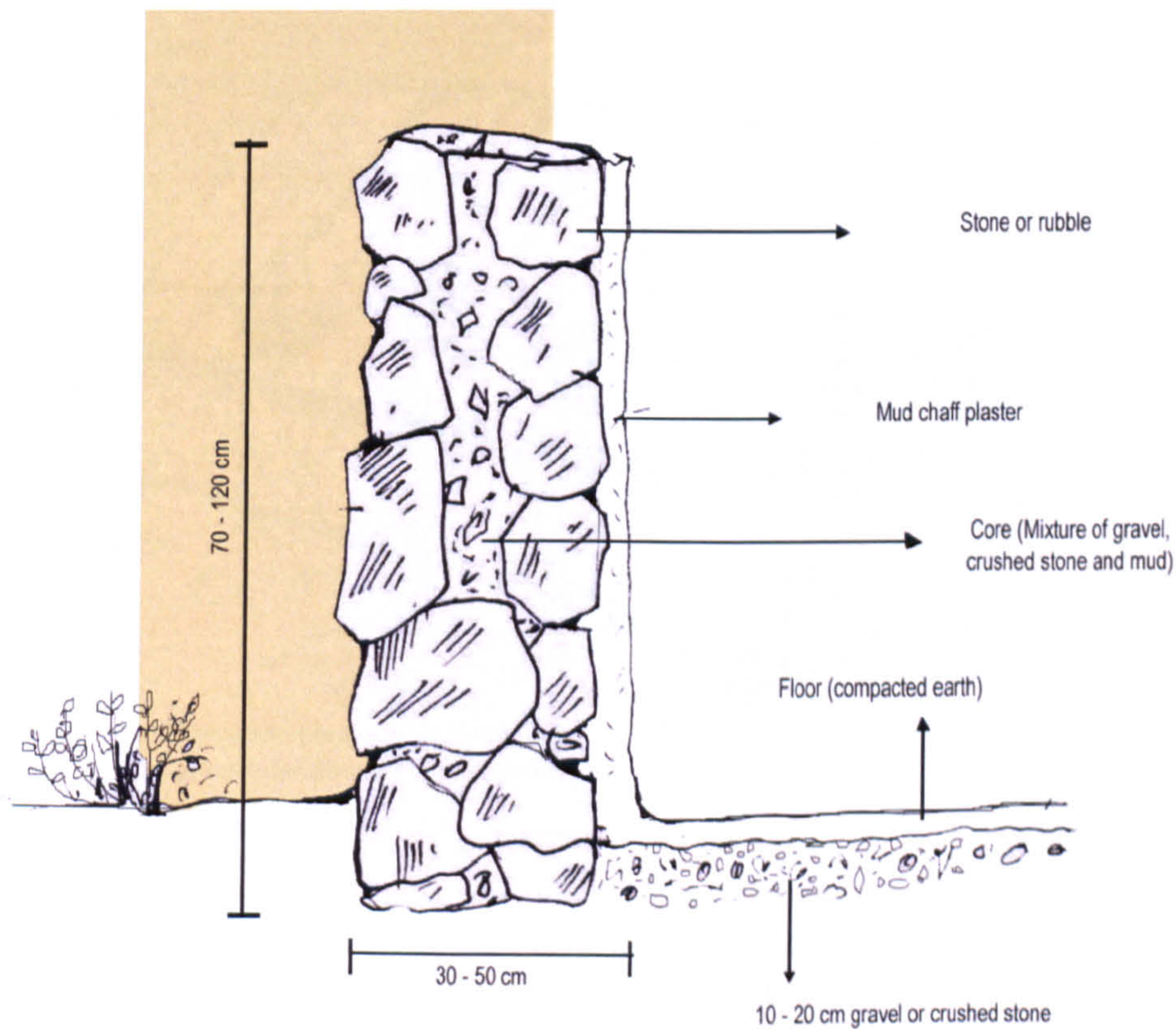


Figure 4.23. Mortared stone method used by semi-nomadic people in the structure of temporary shelters in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

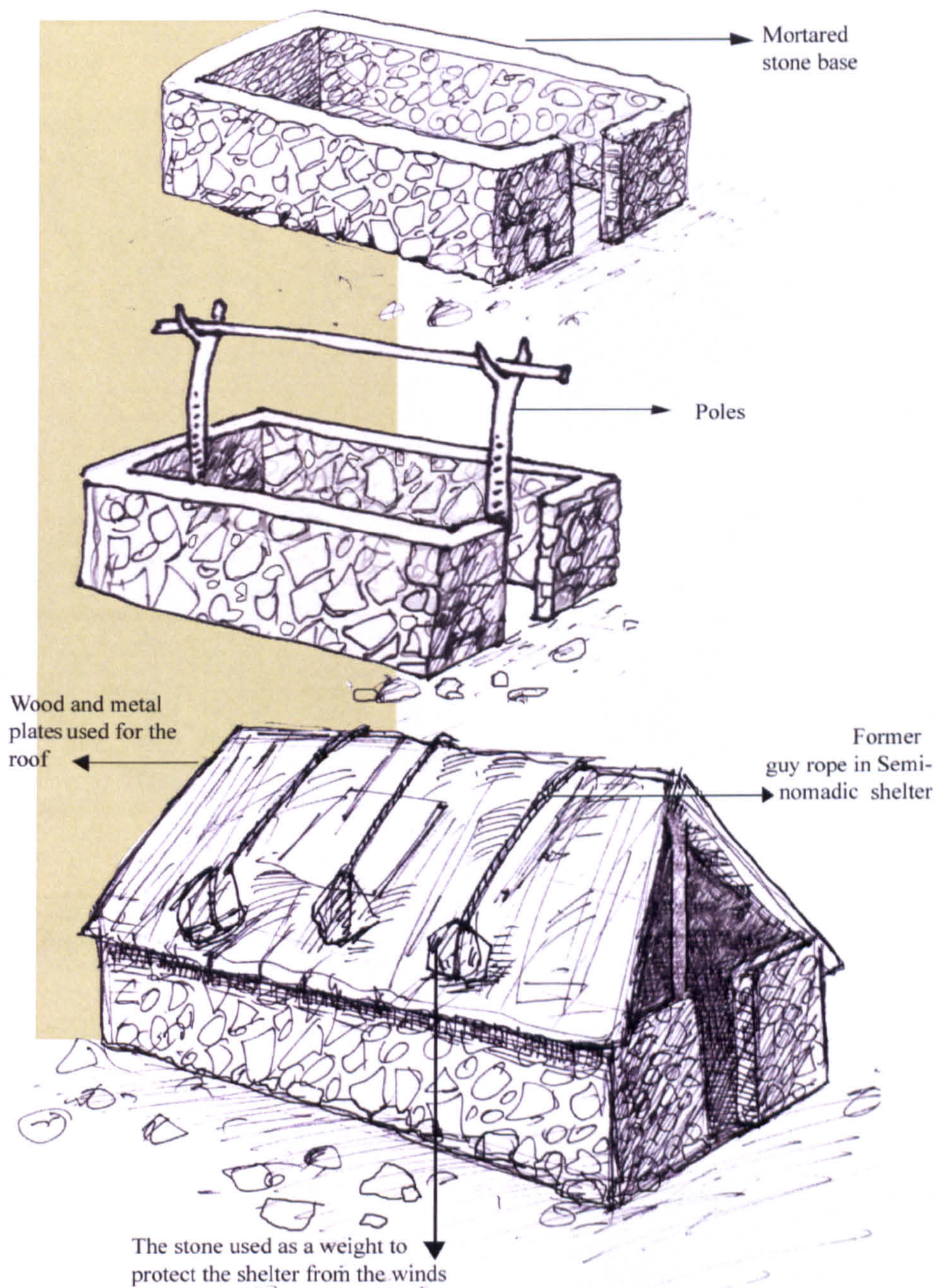


Figure 4.24. Drawing illustrating the use of different materials and the structure of a semi-nomadic stone shelter in the rural area of Quetta in Baluchistan. Source: Author

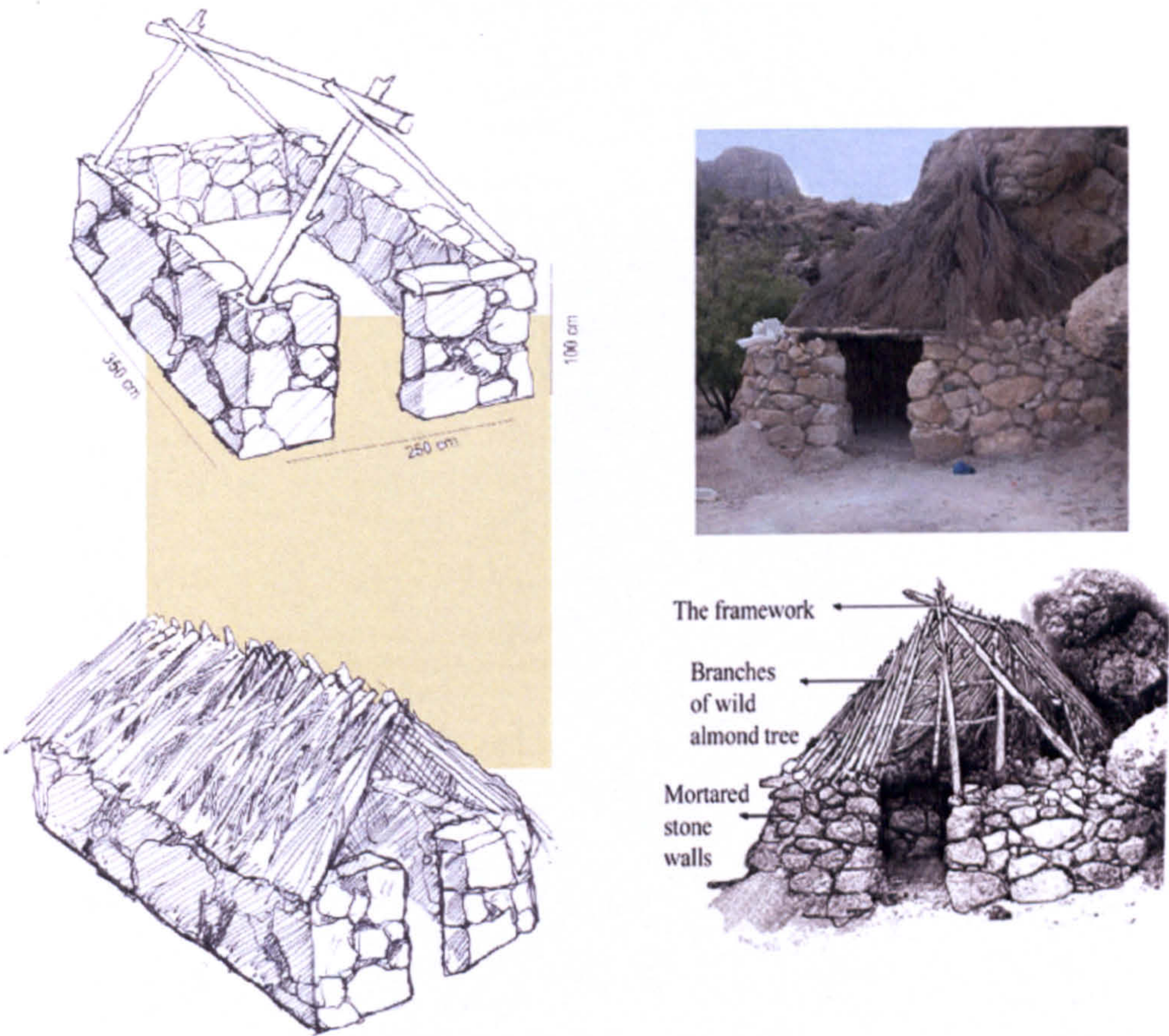


Figure 4.25. Two different types of mortared stone shelters in a rural area of Baluchistan. The structure of these shelters can be observed in the drawing. The foundations of both shelters are built with stone and the top parts with tree branches. Source: Author

Apart from natural materials, wherever poverty appears to be the major problem for the Baluch communities, the poor people use a large number of scrap materials such as oil barrels, plastic pipes, metal plates and many other junk materials in the structure of their shelters.



Figure 4.26. Photo of semi-nomadic temporary houses built with scrap materials. This kind of shelter can be found both in rural and urban areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author



Figure 4.27. Semi-nomadic shelter in Quetta, in the province of Baluchistan. This shelter is made by flowerpots and mud. The dimension of this shelter is 2 x 3 x 2.5 m. Source: Author

4.5. Semi-nomadic mud and earth shelters

Another Baluchi method of building shelters is by using earth and mud bricks as essential building materials. Semi-nomads mainly use earth and mud bricks to build the foundations of their shelters which are more permanent. The base of semi-nomadic temporary houses and semi-portable shelters, therefore, are built with mud bricks, mud or a mixture of mud with straw, chaff or cow dung as plaster and mud mortar, which are all considered as earth or mud shelters.

The construction of a mud brick half- portable shelter normally starts by flattening an area of ground and building a basic rectangular foundation up to 1.5 metres

with mud bricks. Using mud bricks and plastering them with chaff mud makes a reasonably strong connection, like the bricks in a house.

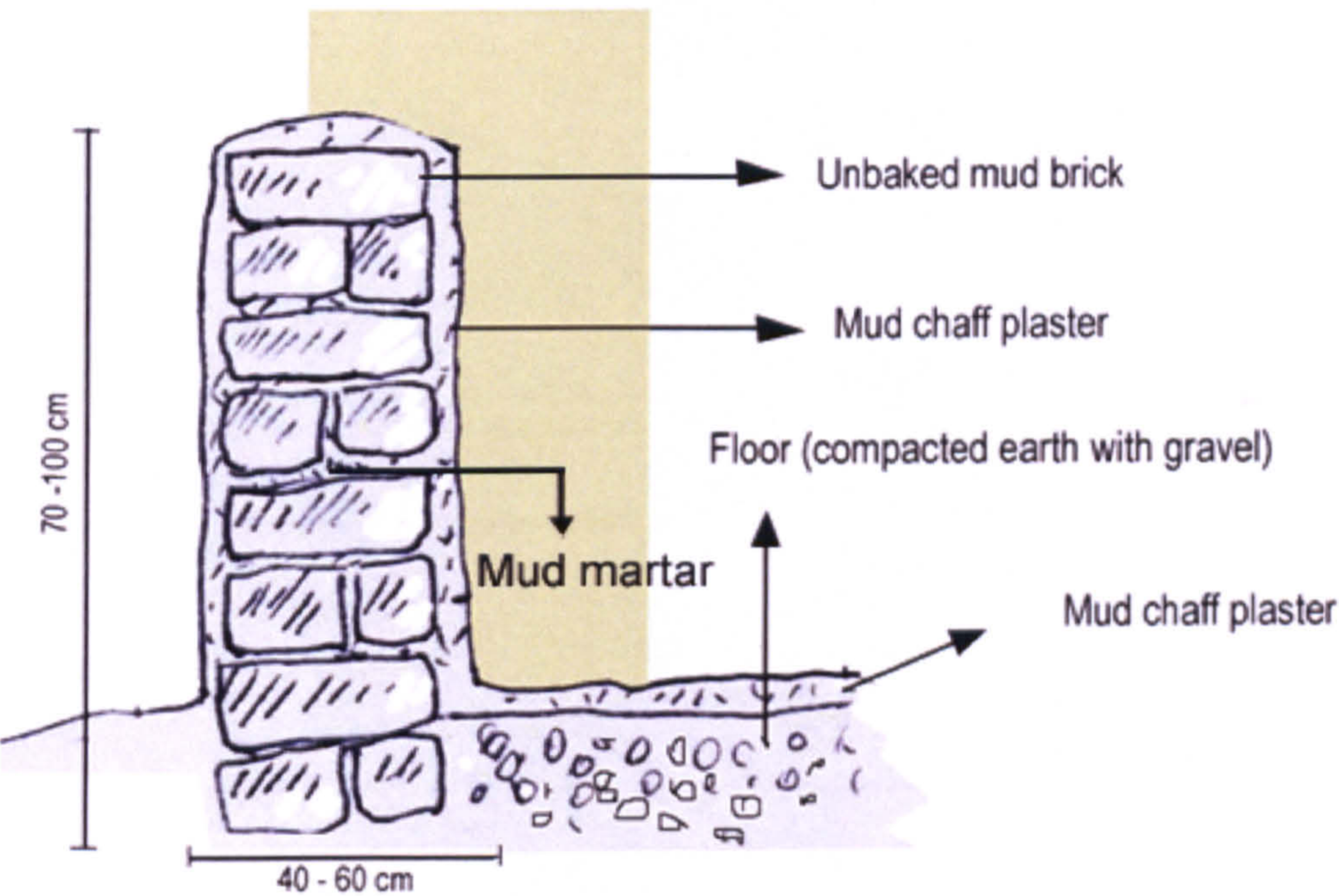


Figure 4.28. Mud brick method used by semi-nomadic people in the structure of temporary shelters in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

The size of the plan depends on the size of the family. They do not hesitate to build a large shelter if they have a big family as they mainly use portable materials like tents for roofing. The larger shelters normally have a lower roof for protection against the wind.

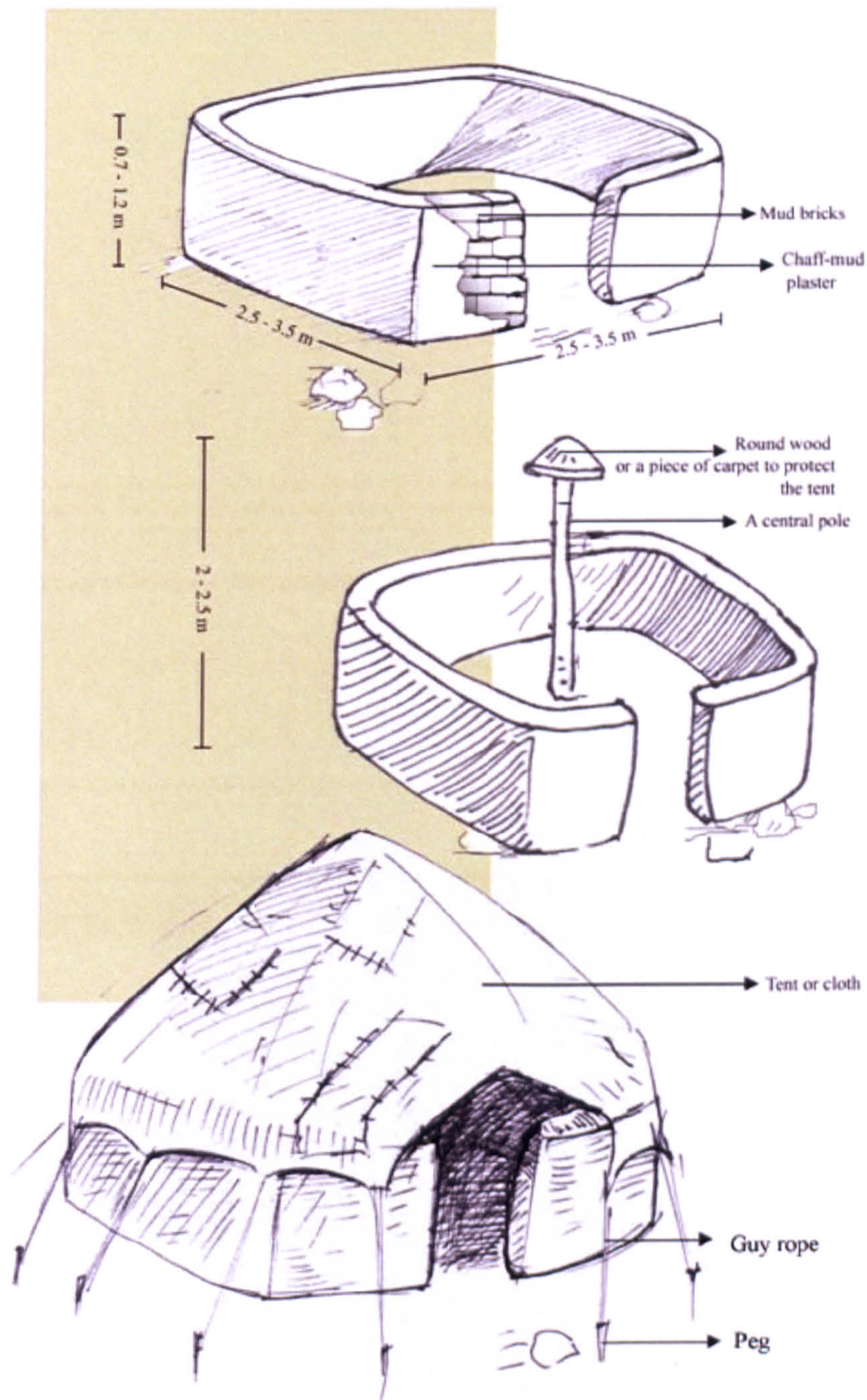


Figure 4.29. The structure of a semi-nomadic house in Baluchistan. This shelter is semi-portable, as the semi-nomadic people take the top part including the cloth, guy ropes, pegs and poles whenever they move. The permanent base of this house is made by mud bricks and plaster with chaff mud. Source: Author

Chapter 5

The settled people of Baluchistan



5. The settled people of Baluchistan

It is hard to define any specific line between urban and rural areas in modern Baluchistan, but the settled people in cities, towns and villages still keep their traditional rural and tribal lifestyle. The history of settlement in newly established cities such as Quetta is the result of British colonisation during the 19th and 20th centuries (Fiorani and Redaelli, 2003). Quetta, with its rural tribo-cultural system, is the most important urban centre in the region of northern Baluchistan. Hezarejat, Pashtun, and Baluch groups are the main settlers in Quetta and they have shown their loyalty to the traditional tribal structure bolstered by the mythical trapping of tribal nomadism (Redaelli, 2003).

According to a report by the Ministry of Economic Affairs & Statistics of Pakistan (1981) more than 84% of the population of Baluchistan were living in rural areas. This number had decreased to 76% by 1998.

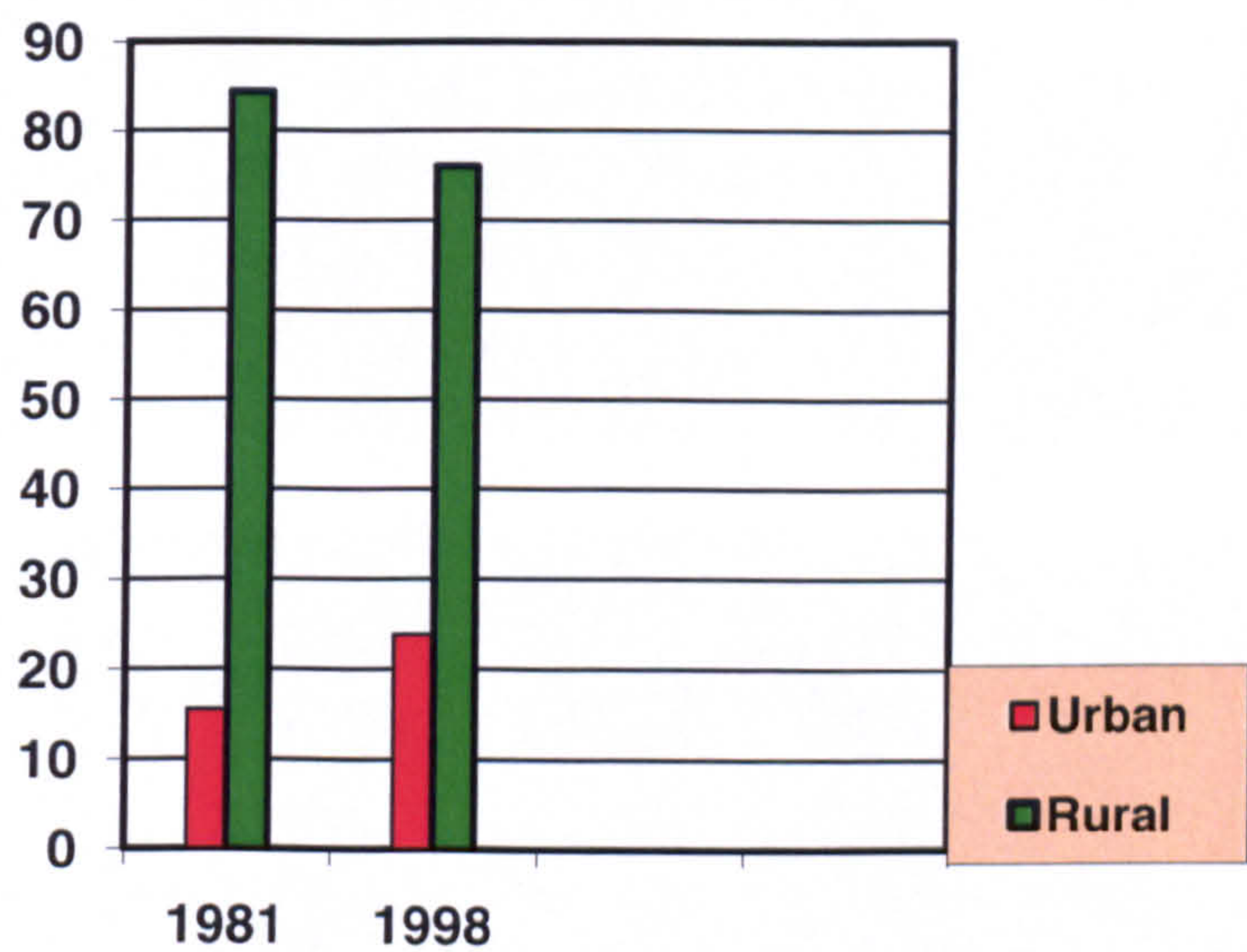


Figure 5.1. Percentage of people living in rural and urban areas in Baluchistan. Source: Author

The tribal system and laws still exist in Baluchistan. According to Fiorani, most villages are still ruled by the traditional model called the village council or *Anjuman-e rustaq* or *anjuman-e deh* by the authority of the village elder, the *mir* (the chief of the tribe) or the *ra'is-e anjuman*, also by the administration of local justice according to their traditional laws and customs (Fiorani 2003).

5.1. Architecture and building materials

Mud building has a historical motivation amongst the rural settlers of Baluchistan. Mud architecture can be found in many parts of the Iranian plateau, including in Baluchistan. The common factors creating mud architecture are climate and availability of building materials. Mud and brick are major materials used for constructing various structures, because the earth can be found everywhere quite easily and inexpensively. The mud is mainly mixed and used with other materials such as chaff, hay, straw, wood sticks, reeds, stone and many others.



Figure 5.2. Two different views of mud architecture in Baluchistan. The top photo shows a mud house in a village by the Quetta-Noshki main road. The bottom photo shows a view of houses in the town of Noshki. Source: Author

5.2. The structure of permanent houses in rural areas of Baluchistan

There are basic common shared elements in the structure of almost all types of permanent houses in Baluchistan, such as foundations, walls and roofing.

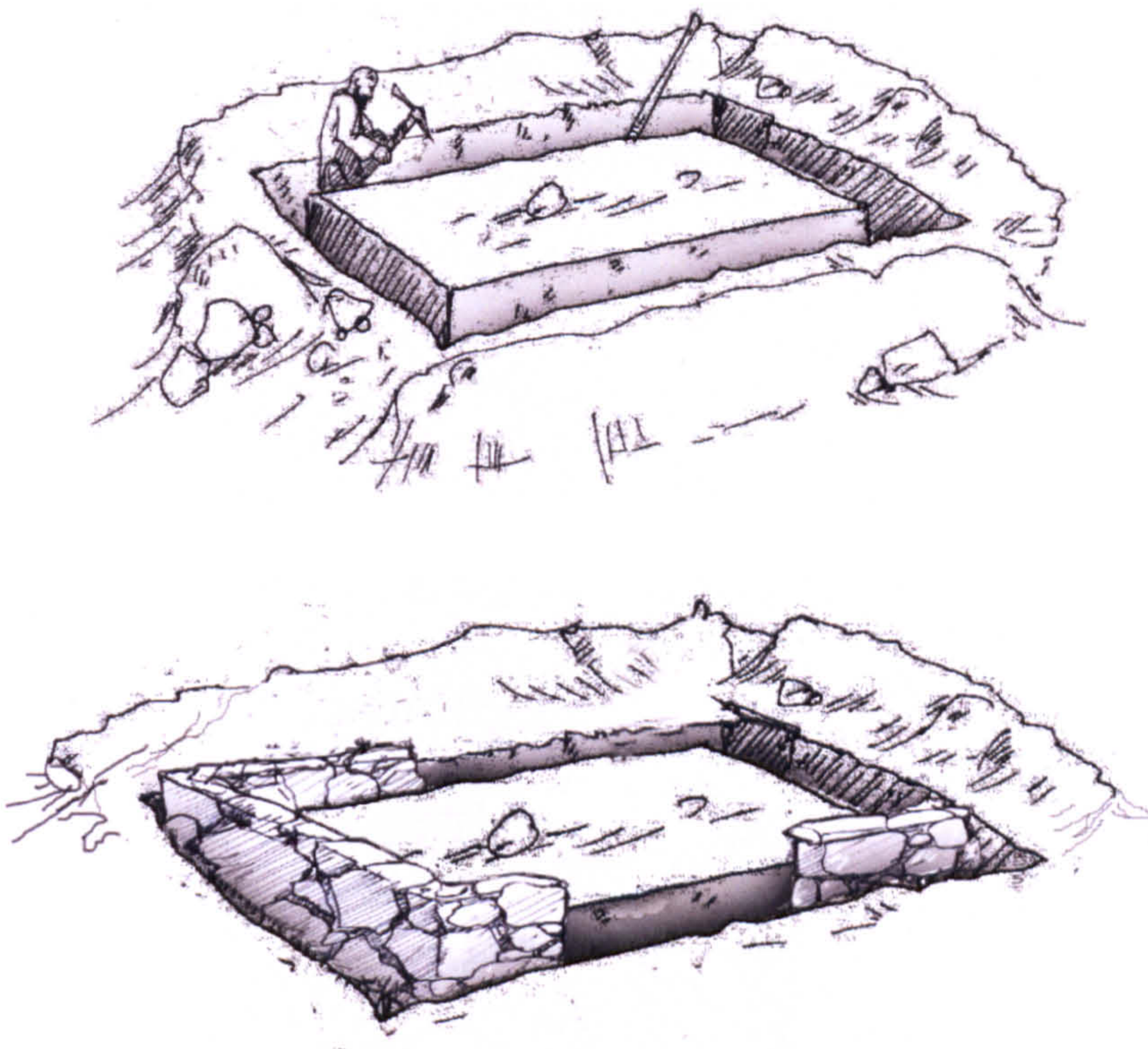


Figure 5.3. Drawing showing how Baluch builders first excavate a wide trench for their buildings. Source: Author

5.2.1. Foundations

There are three popular methods of building the foundation of the houses in rural areas of Baluchistan:

- A. Mud-reed foundation. They use two to four layers of mud and reed on top of each other. This method is used when the soil is too soft and the reeds are available.

- B. Stone foundation is a popular method in Baluchistan. They make the wall of the foundation with stones and use a mixture of soil and rubble to fill the gap between the wall of the trench and the basement wall and put water onto the filling and compact the soil.
- C. The pillar or column foundation can rarely be found in rural areas of Baluchistan. In this method they only dig the trench for the area that they need for the pillars. They normally use stone or cement in this method of foundation.

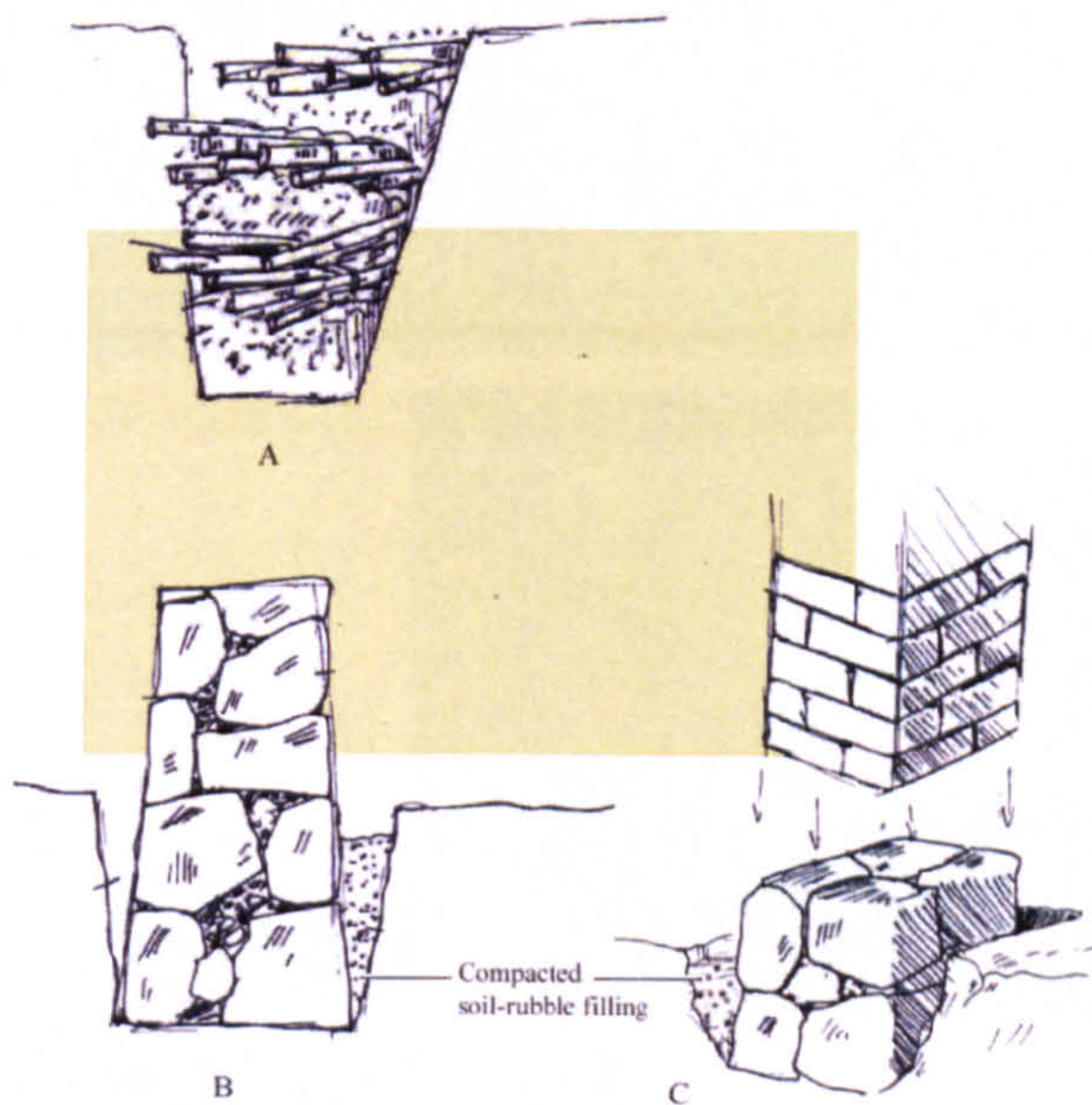


Figure 5.4. Drawing showing three different methods of making the basement or foundation of houses in Baluchistan. Source: Author

5.2.2. Roofing

There are two types of temporary and permanent roofs in rural areas of Baluchistan.

5.2.2.1. Temporary roof

A temporary roof is basically designed for short term covering. Different materials such as reeds, branches of trees, tent cloth, fabrics and plastic sheets are used to cover the shelters on a temporary basis. There are many houses covered with temporary roofs in rural areas of Baluchistan as well as in urban areas of the capital city of Quetta. Although these houses seem to be built for short periods of time, people live there for several years.

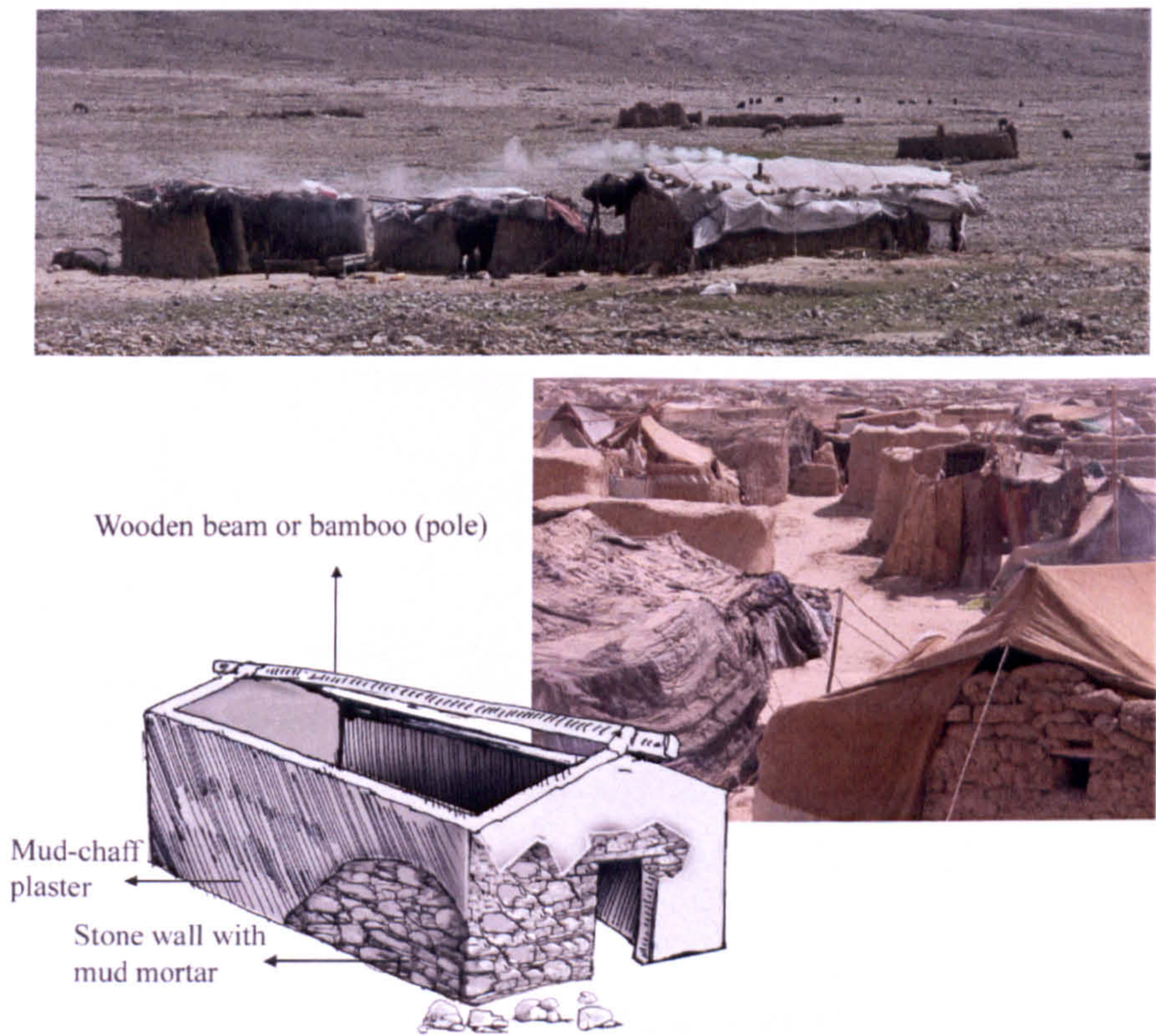


Figure 5.5. Examples of different types of shelters with temporary roofs can be seen in these pictures. The structure and use of materials are illustrated in the drawings. The size of this kind of house varies between 4 – 20 square metres depending on the size of the family. Source: Author

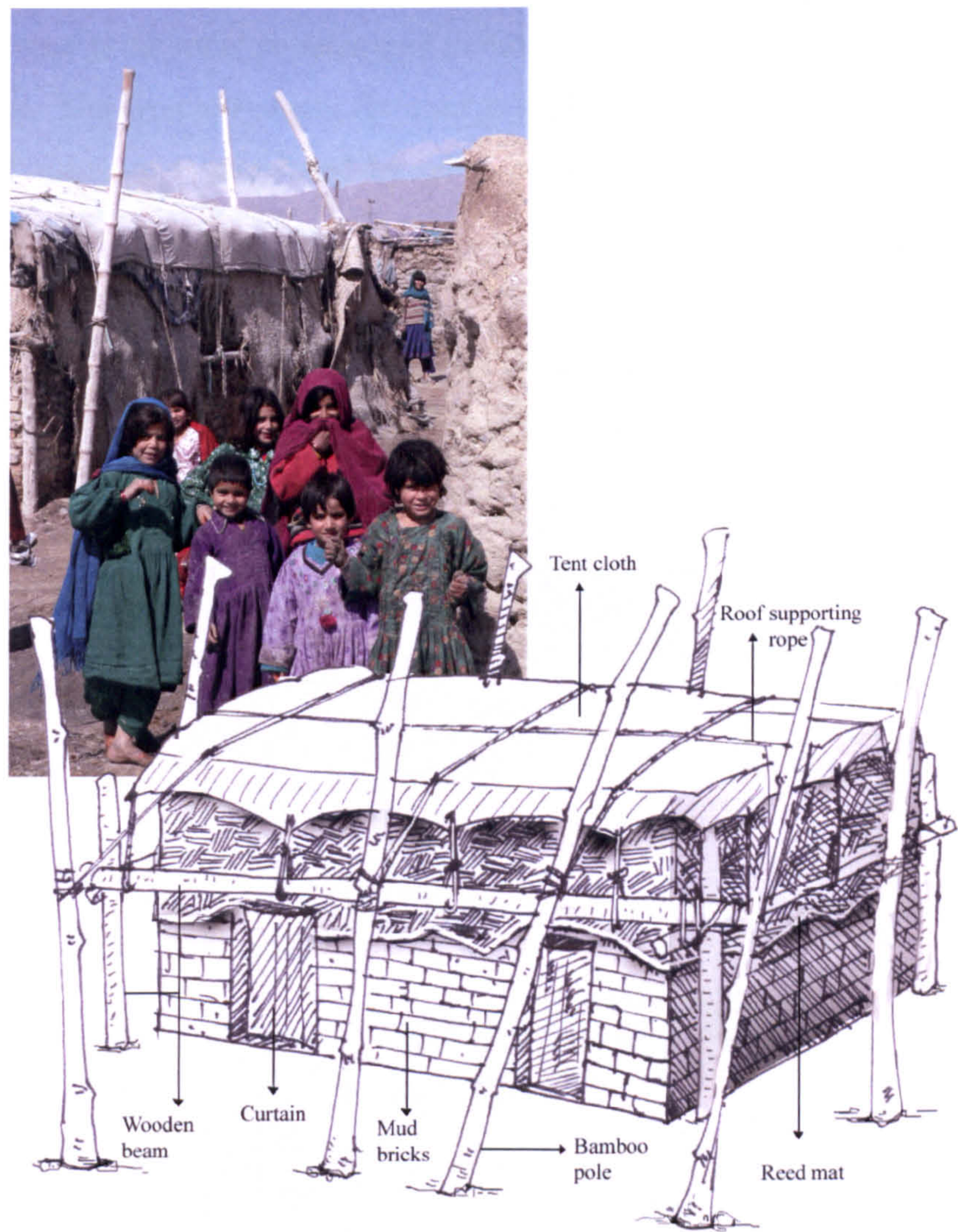


Figure 5.6. Drawing showing the structure of a typical two-room house with temporary roof. This house is built by using local building materials such as wooden beams, reed mats, bamboo poles, plastic sheets, tent cloth and ropes. Source: Author

5.2.2.2. Permanent roofing

Permanent roofing in Baluchistan can be classified into three different methods:

- I. Flat roof
- II. Pitched roof
- III. Vaulted, domed roof

I. Flat Roof

The flat roof is the most popular type in Pakistan and rural areas of Baluchistan in particular. The typical Baluchi flat roof is supported by wood or iron beams and the roof structure is supported by poles or columns within the building or by internal wall.

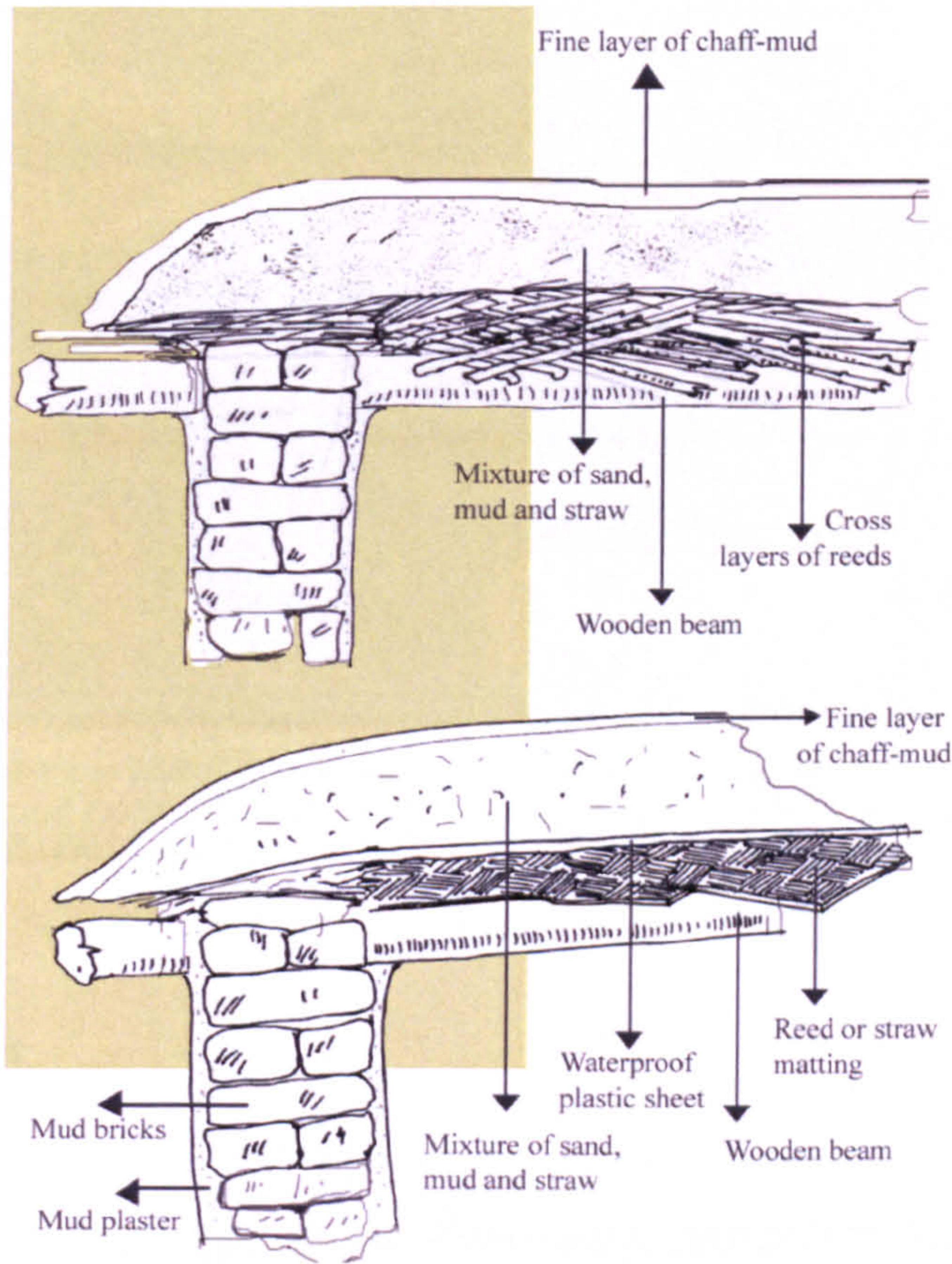


Figure 5.7. The structure of two types of flat roofs in rural areas of Baluchistan. They consist of the supporting beams, reed matting, plastic sheets as insulation and waterproof surfaces. Source: Author

The roof structure in Baluchistan consists of the supporting beams, reed matting, which is mainly made of reeds or straw, insulation and a waterproof surface which is plastic sheeting in most cases. The matting provides a continuous support for the insulation and surface as well as improving the thermal resistance. Almost all the houses with a flat roof are covered with soil. The traditional soil covered roofs have good thermal insulation and high capacity for storing heat, but are subject to

erosion during rain and require steady maintenance to prevent leakage (Bengtsson and Whitaker, 1988).



Figure 5.8. A staircase leads to the flat roof which is used as a sleeping area in Rajasthan on the border of India and Pakistan. The flat roof is considered as a normal area for living and working. Source: Michell (1987:184).

II. Pitched roof

The typical pitched roof in Baluchistan is a thatch or straw roof which can be found in the east or southeast of Baluchistan near Sind province. Straw is a very common roofing material in rural areas of Sind province in Pakistan.

According to Bengtsson and Whitaker, the thatch roof is easy to maintain and straw, which is the main roofing material in Baluchistan, has good thermal insulating qualities and helps to maintain fairly uniform temperatures within the building, even when outside temperatures vary considerably. A number of inexpensive local materials such as grass, reeds, papyrus, palm leaves and banana leaves can be used for thatching roofs (Bengtsson and Whitaker, 1988).



Figure 5.9. Two different kinds of straw roofs can be seen in this picture. The top picture shows a typical straw house in Peer Gali of Kashmir, where ample rice-straw can be found. In the bottom picture the reed mat straw is covering the roof in the desert of Chaghi in Baluchistan. Source: Author

III. Vaulted, domed or three dimensional roofs

A greater variety of buildings with the vaulted and domed methods can be found in Iran, particularly in Baluchistan, where earth and stone are widely available as local building materials. Recently, the use of mud bricks has been replaced by fired brick, but the vaults and domes are still in regular use, particularly in rural area where the mud brick method is still widely used by native people. There is a vaulted roof method in which the mud brick is the major building material and this is the exact method used in rural areas of Baluchistan as well (Bengtsson and Whitaker, 1988).

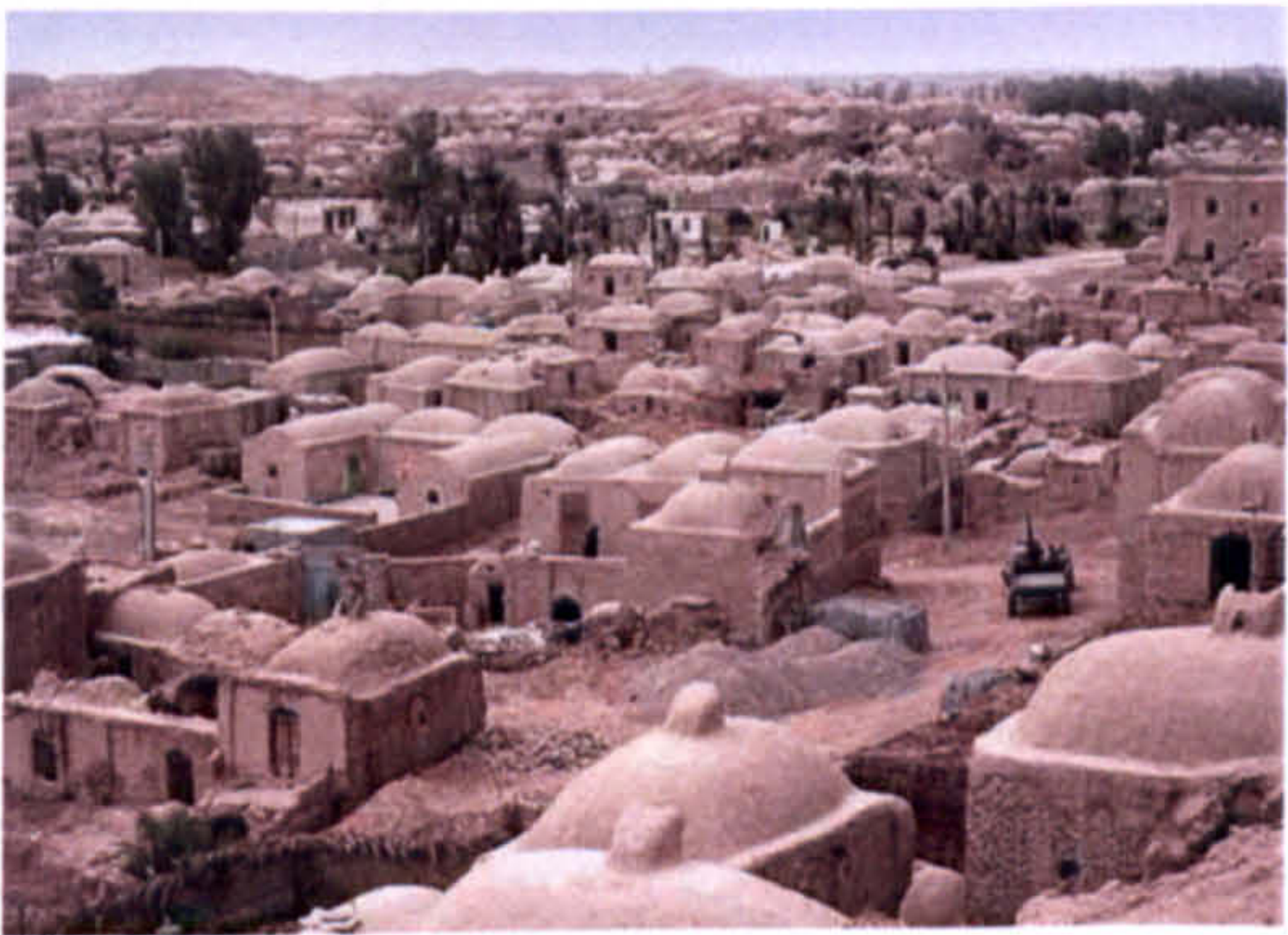


Figure 5.10. Different kinds of vaulted and domed roofs can be seen in this mud village in Baluchistan in Iran. This sort of house is common in Baluchistan, both in Iran and Pakistan, but this photo illustrates the mud houses in Qaleh-Nou village near Zabol in Sistan-Baluchistan, Iran. Source: Naseer (2006).

There are three basic popular types of vaulted roofs which are found in rural areas of Baluchistan, namely tunnel vault or barrel vault, cross vault or groined vault and finally banal vault.

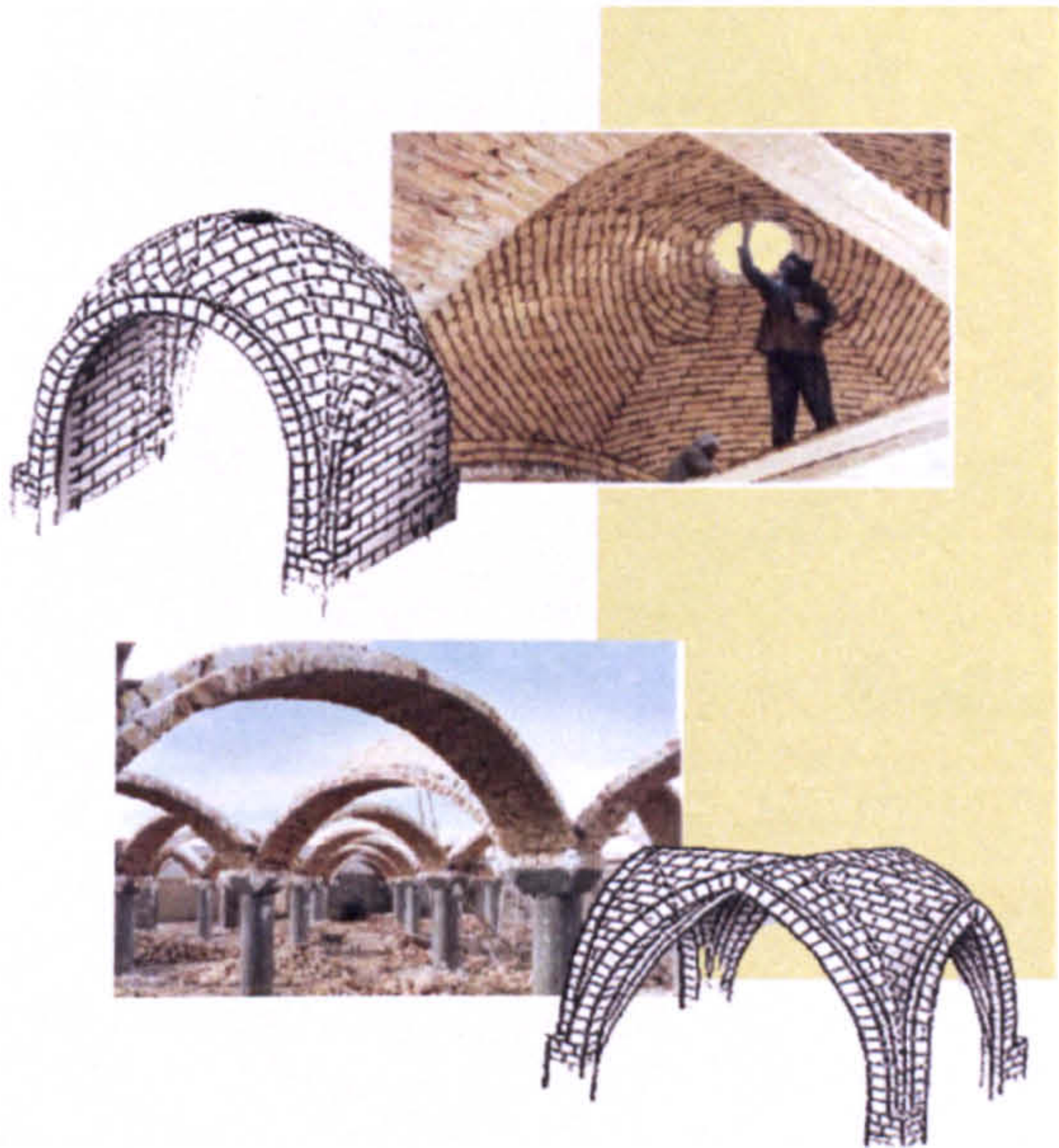


Figure 5.11. Illustration of different methods of vaulted roofs. Source: Author

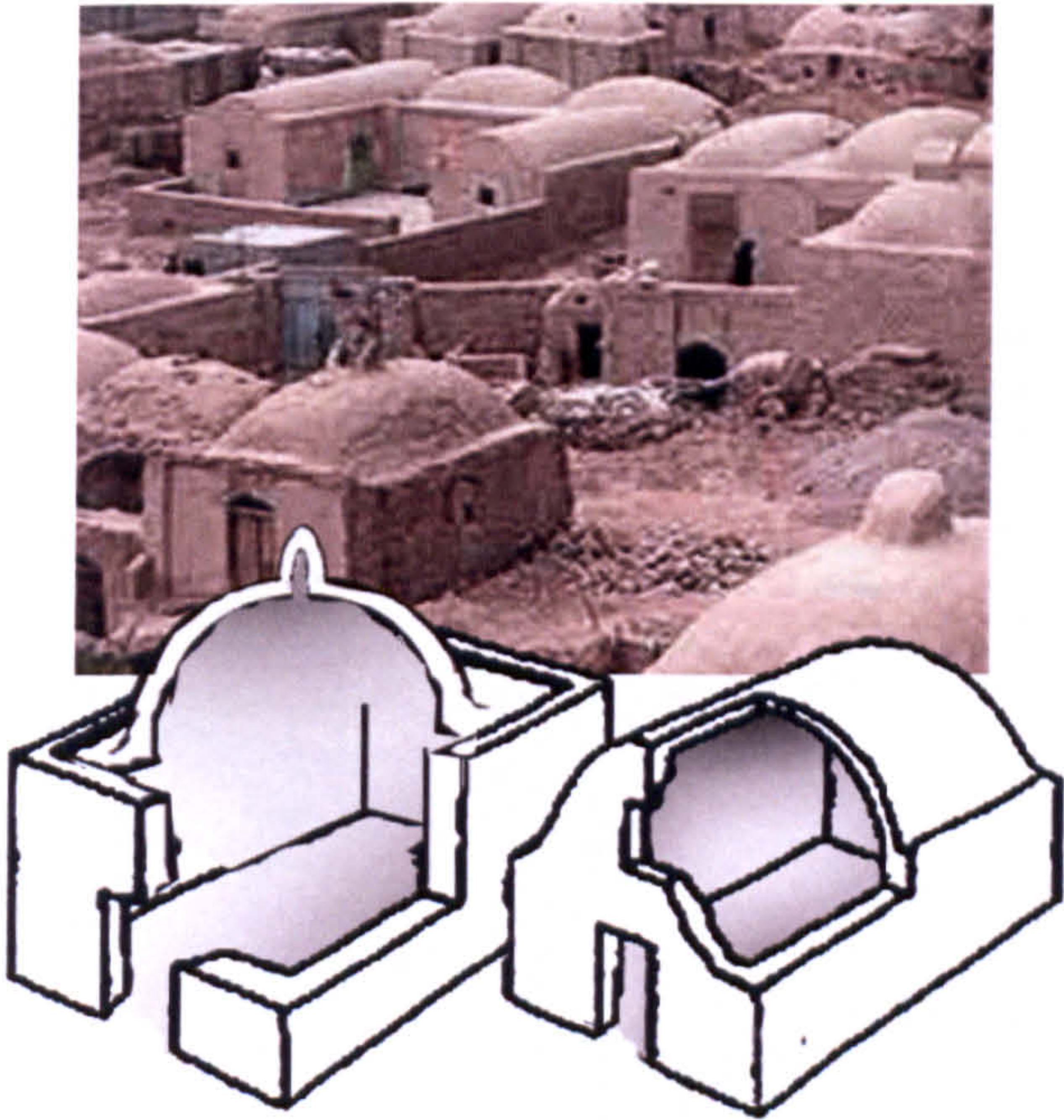


Figure 5.12. Structure of different kinds of vaulted roofs such as cross and barrel can be seen in this picture. The arch has an important role in vaulted roofs. The use of bricks shows how this kind of vaulted roof is built, both in the drawing and the photos. Sources: photo, Naseer (2006); drawing, Author

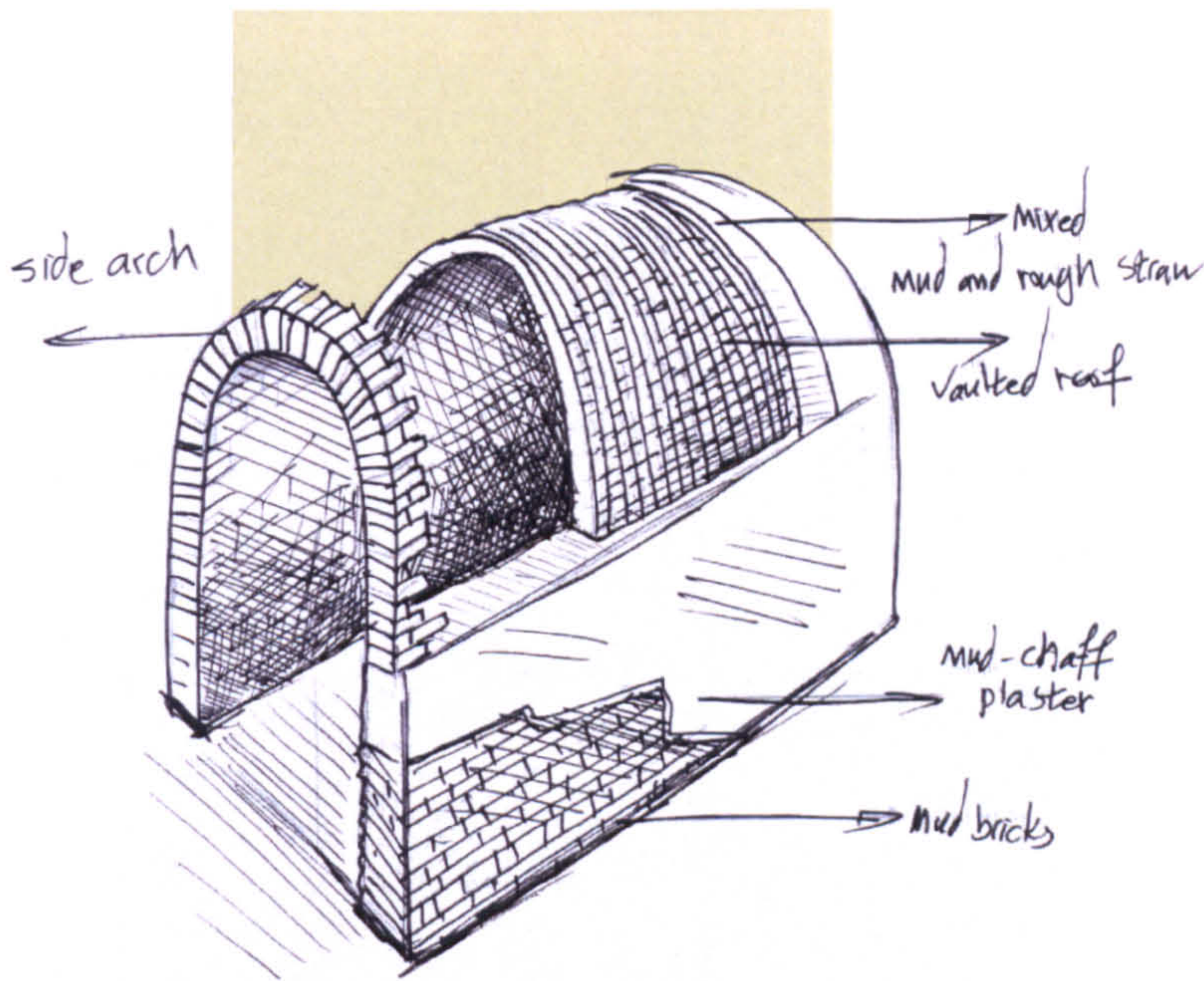


Figure 5.13. Structure of barrel vaulted roof. This type of roof can be seen in Baluchistan by the border of Iran. Mud brick is the most important material in this method. A mixture of straw or chaff and mud is used for plastering in this kind of house. Source: Author

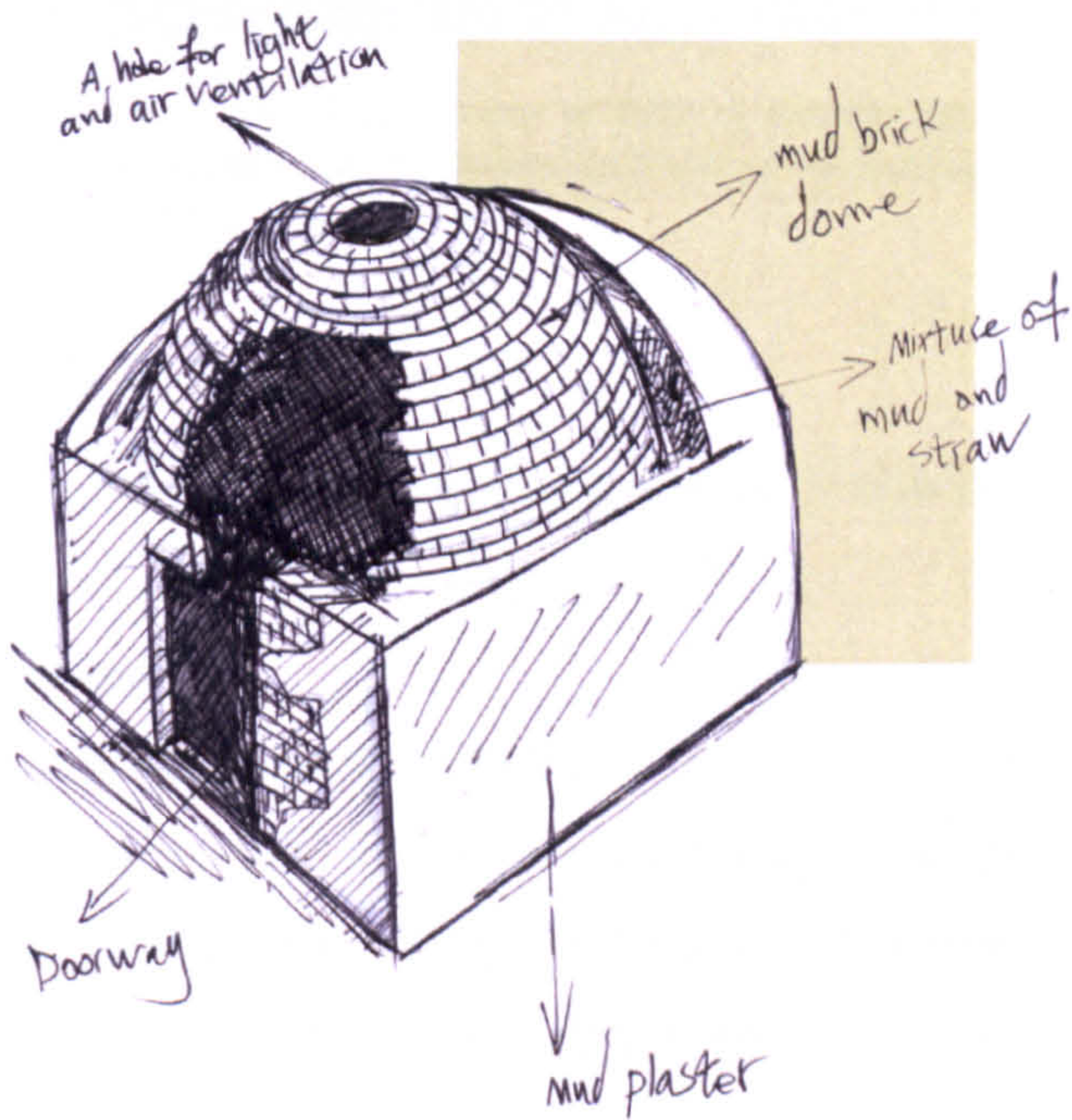


Figure 5.14. Structure of a domed roof house in Baluchistan. This type of roof can be seen near the town of Mirjaveh in Baluchistan near the border of Iran. Mud brick is the most important material in this method. A mixture of straw or chaff and mud is used for plastering in this kind of house. Source: Author

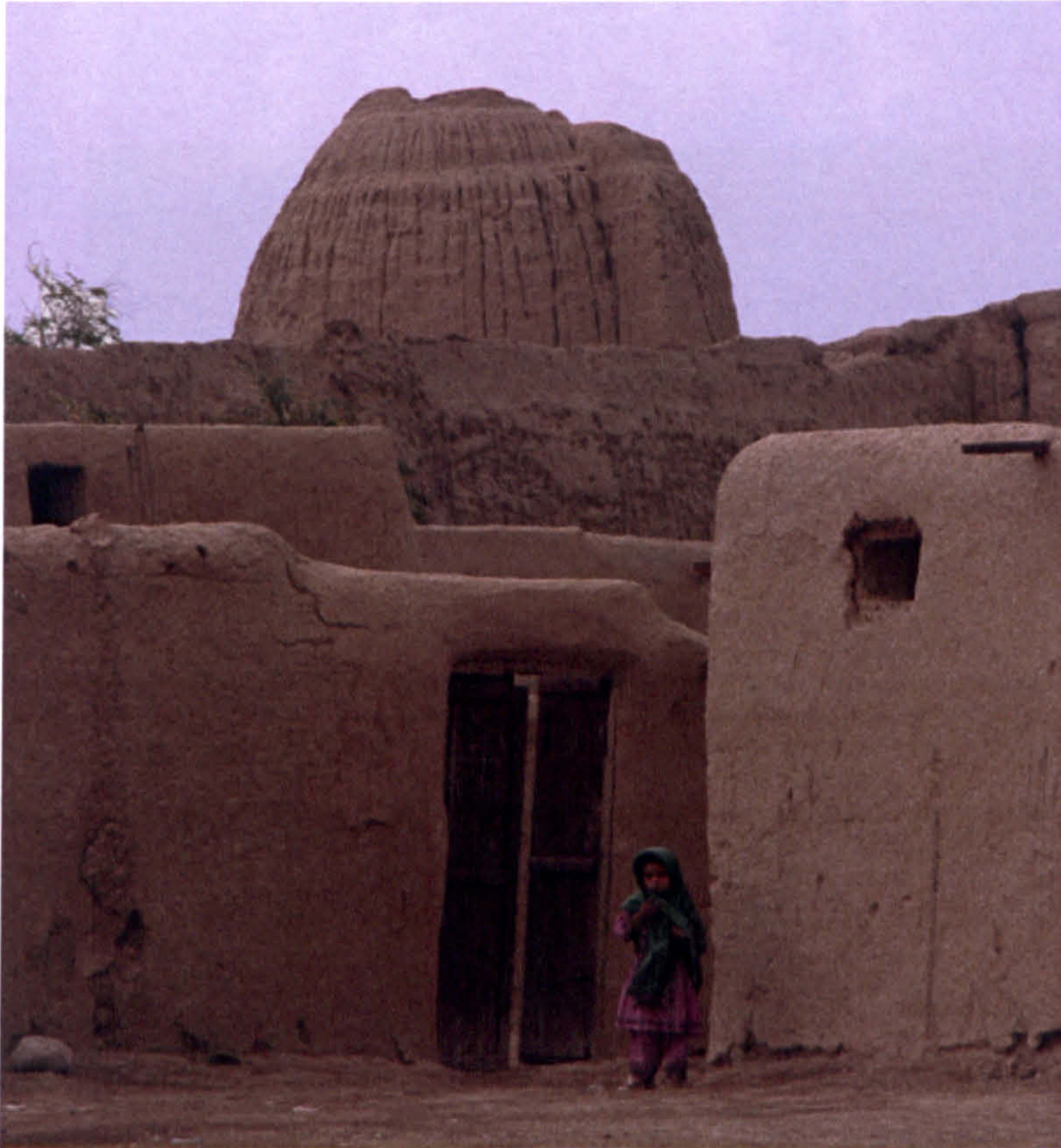


Figure 5.15. An historic mud brick dome in Sibi in Baluchistan. The villagers used the same method of earthen architecture as hundreds of years ago. Source: Author

5.3. Typology of the houses in rural areas of Baluchistan

5.3.1. Courtyard houses

This type of house in Baluchistan, particularly in the rural areas, usually have a small courtyard to the front or side. The courtyard is a private space in the houses, and is used for social and domestic purposes. It has been used for many purposes such as working, weaving carpet, cooking, playing, sleeping, serving food, gardening and keeping animals.

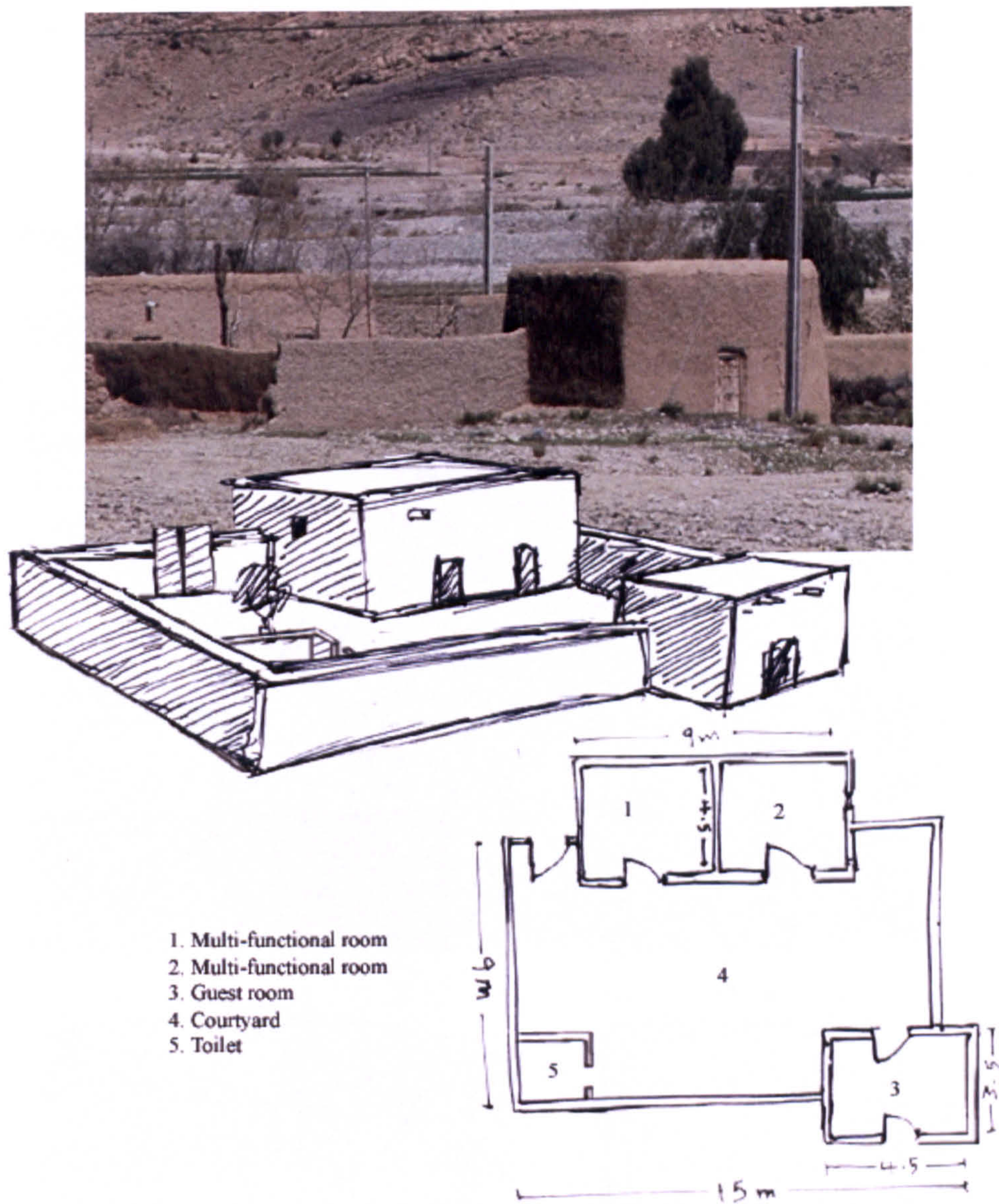


Figure 5.16. Plan of a three-room house in Baluchistan with central courtyard. Three-room houses can be found in a variety of different designs and sizes and the courtyard can be in the centre, to the side or even at the back of the house. Source: Author

5.3.2. One-room houses

One of the most popular type of housing in rural area of Baluchistan is the one-room house. The structure of a few typical one-room houses is illustrated in this part of the study.

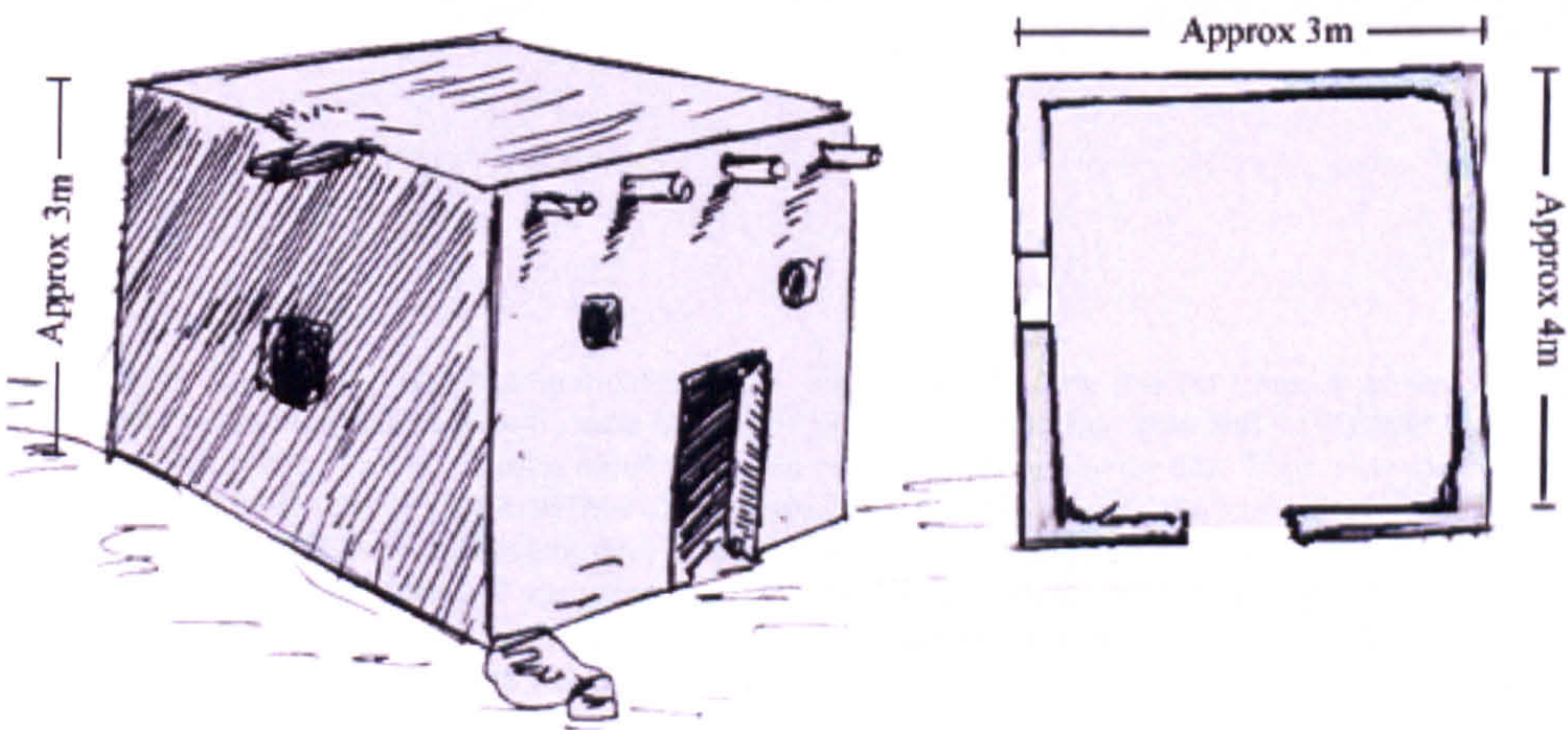


Figure 5.17. Plan of one-room house in a rural area of Quetta in Baluchistan. This kind of one-room house is popular and it can be found in different parts of Baluchistan. Source: Author

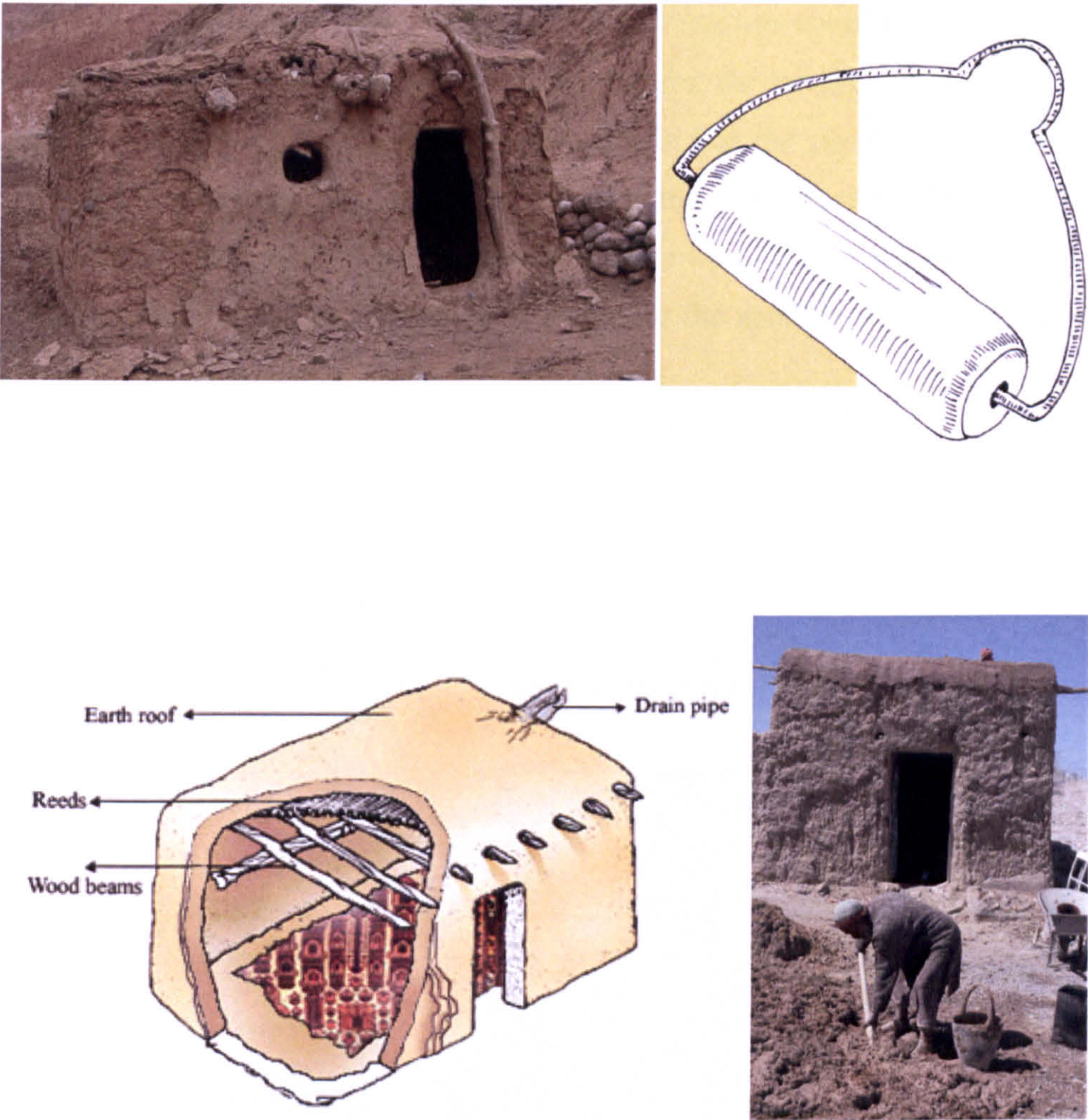
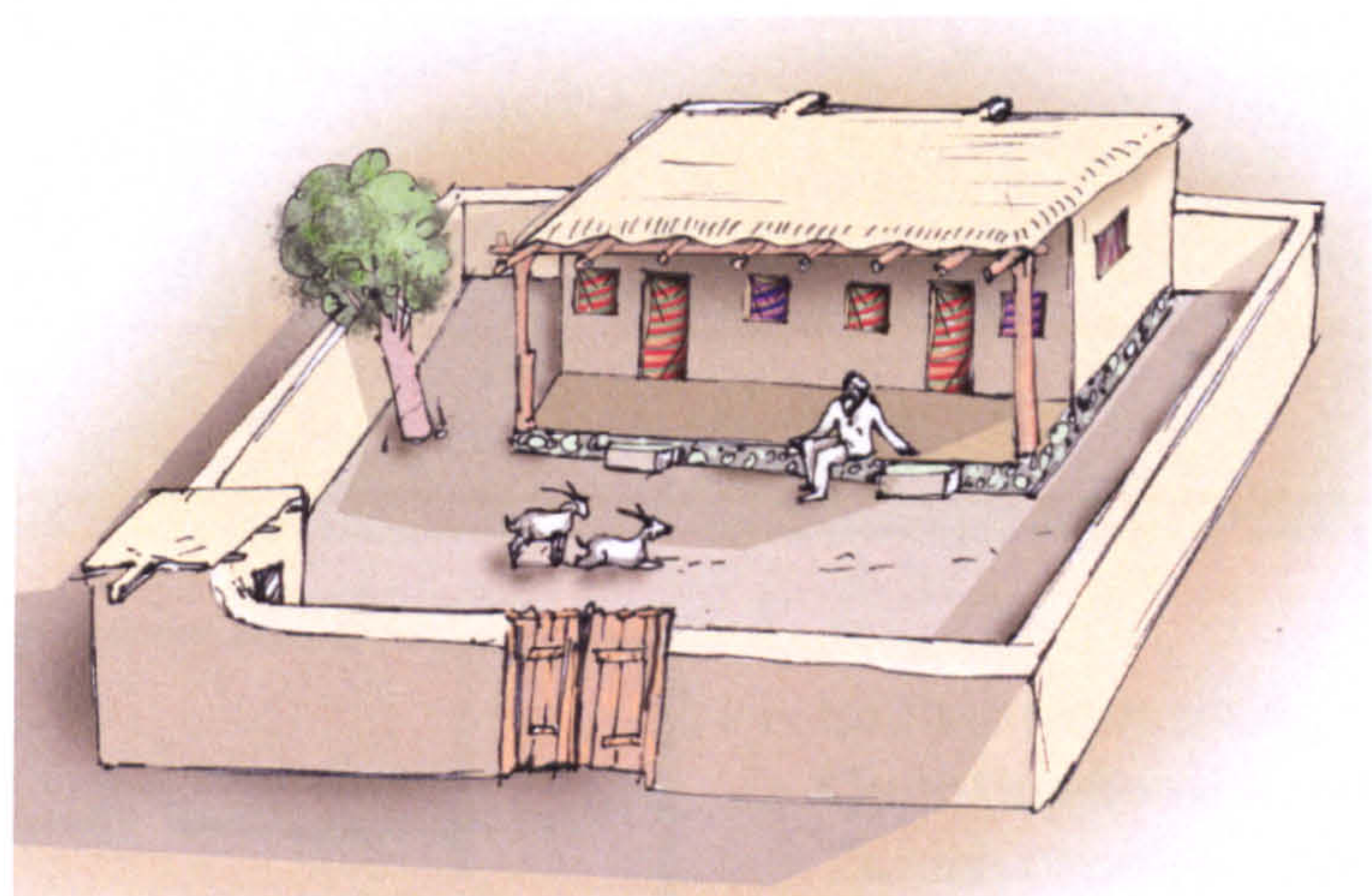


Figure 5.18. A Baluchi rammed-earth house. This kind of house has no foundation and is built from earth. A mixture of soil, sand and chaff is the main building material. Different layers of mud are placed on top of each other when the bottom layer is almost dry. They use wood beams and a layer of reed or thin branches of wild trees and cover them with the same mud. This typical house can be found in different parts of Baluchistan. The drawing shows the stone roller which is used after rain to compact the earthen roofs. This tool is made by a heavy stone and a metal handle. It has two holes each side for placing the handle. The weights of the stone rollers are between 30- 100 kg. Source: Author

5.3.3. Two-room houses

Two-room houses normally have the same structure as one-room houses. The principal of having two rooms in the house is to use one room as the kitchen and storage room and the other room is prepared for the family and guests. When having male visitors at home, all the males, including the guests, sleep in the one room and the females stay in the kitchen. The toilet is separated from the house and built in the corner of the courtyard. Both rooms are connected through an outdoor space known as the courtyard, enabling the activities of the kitchen and living area to spill over as needed.

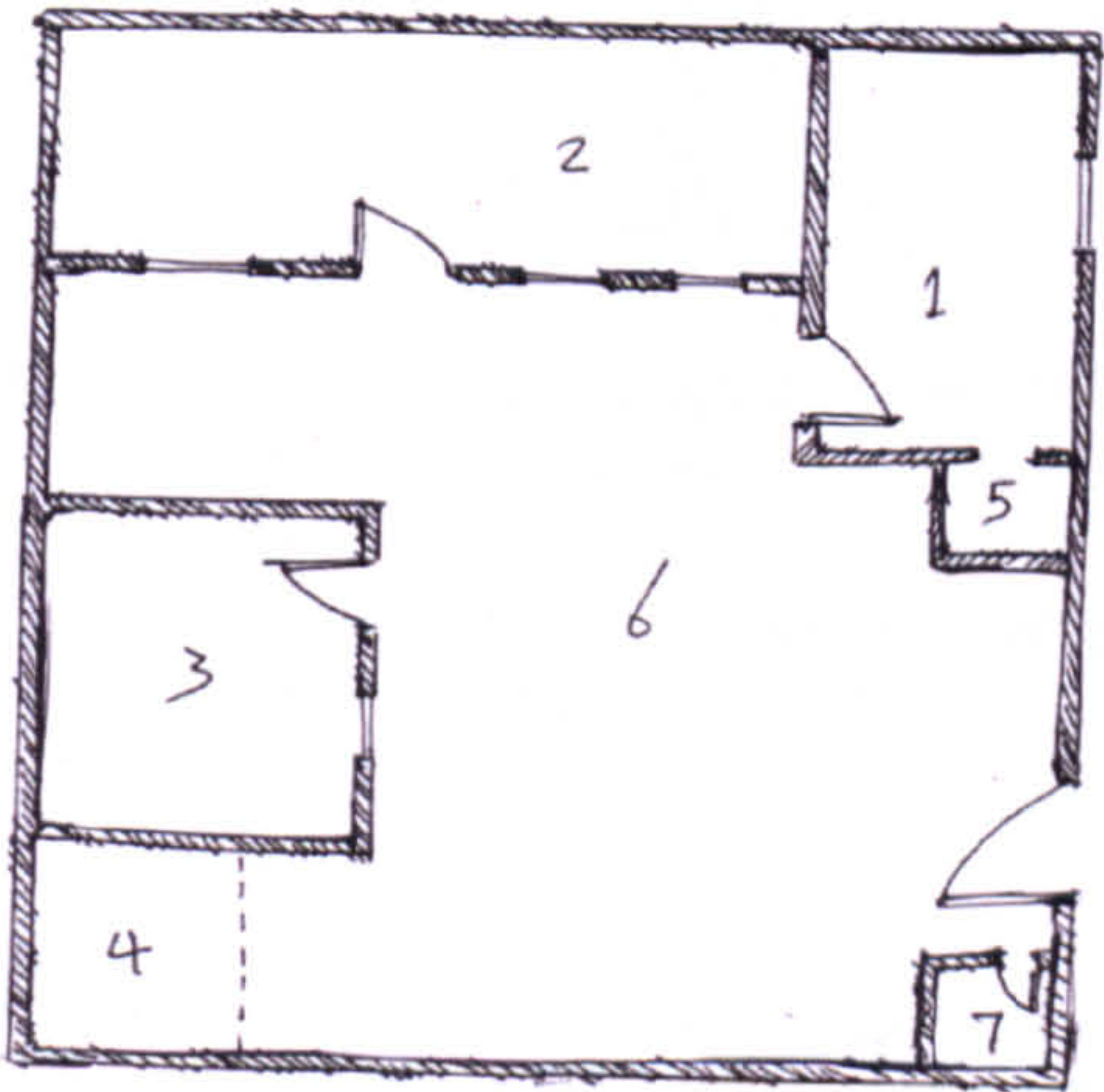


Plan of a two-rooms courtyard mud bricks house in Baluchistan

Figure 5.19. Illustration of a two-room house with front courtyard in Baluchistan. Source: Author

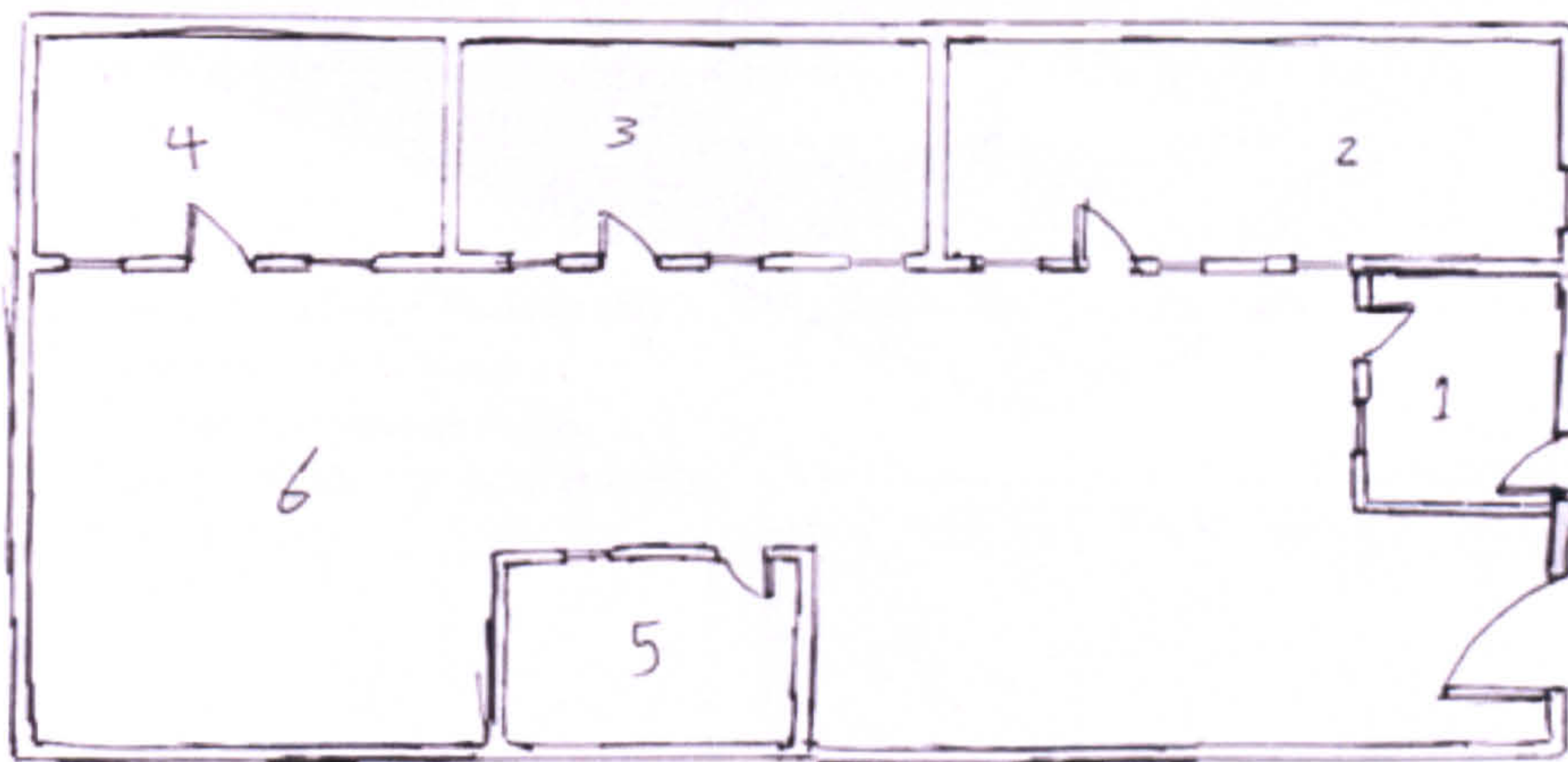
5.3.4. Three or more room houses in Baluchistan

A typical Baluchi house with three or more rooms in rural areas of Baluchistan contains three main areas. First, the main rooms include a women's special room called *harem* or *Purdah*, which is used by female members of family for cooking, sleeping and other purposes. The second area is called the *Baithak* or guest room, which is a sitting area for men. This room has a direct access from the main street. This area can be covered, semi-covered or be an open area. The third area is the courtyard (Khan and Khanom, 1995).



- 1. Baithak (men sitting room)
- 2. Multi-functional room
- 3. Purdah (women sitting room)
- 4. Semi-open kitchen
- 5. Storage for bedding staff
- 6. The courtyard
- 7. Toilet

Figure 5.20. Picture illustrating the structure of a four-room house in Noshki in Baluchistan. The courtyard is used as well as the other rooms multi functionally. Room 1 is used as a guest room or baithak for men and room 3 is used as the purdah for women. Source: Author



1. Baithak (men's sitting room which has a direct access to the main street)
2. Multi-functional room (women's activities takes place in this room)
3. Multi-functional room
4. Purdah (women's sitting room)
5. Kitchen and storage room
6. Courtyard.

Figure 5.21. Picture illustrating the structure of a five-room house in Noshki in Baluchistan. The courtyard is used for different kinds of activities, mainly by women and for keeping animals as well. All the rooms are used multi functionally when needed. When receiving guests and visitors, room 1 is used as a baithak or a living room for men and room 4 used as a purdah for women. Source: Author



1. Guest room (used for visitors)
2. Multi-functional room
3. Kitchen and storage room
4. Courtyard (used to keep animals mainly at night)
5. Toilet

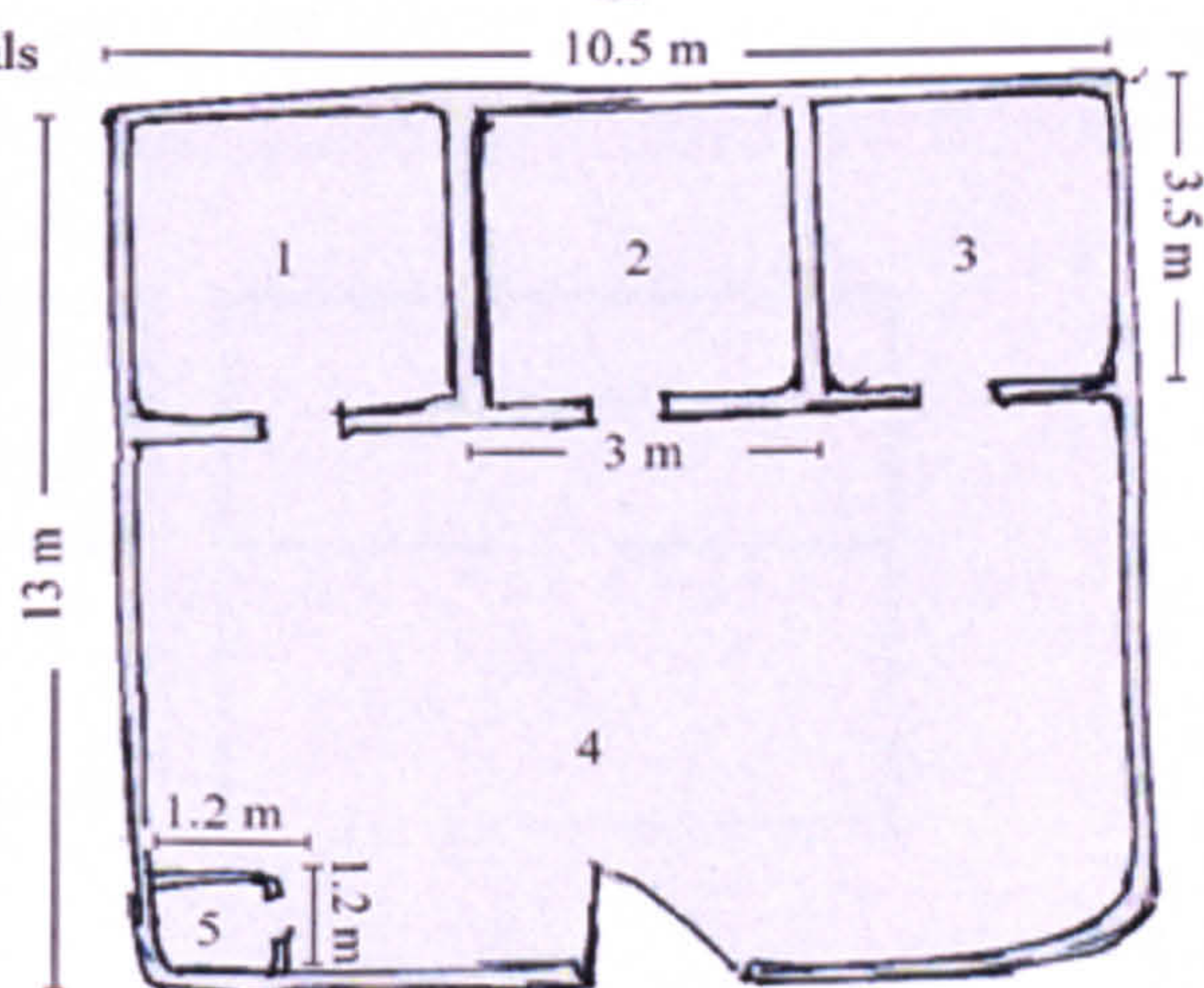


Figure 5.22. Picture illustrating the structure of a three-room house in Noshki in Baluchistan. The courtyard is used for different women's activities and for keeping animals at night. All three rooms are used multi-functionally, but when receiving visitors room 1 is used as a guest room or baithak and room 3 used as a purdah for woman. Source: Author

5.3.5. Two storey houses

Another popular method of housing in rural areas of Baluchistan is two storey houses.

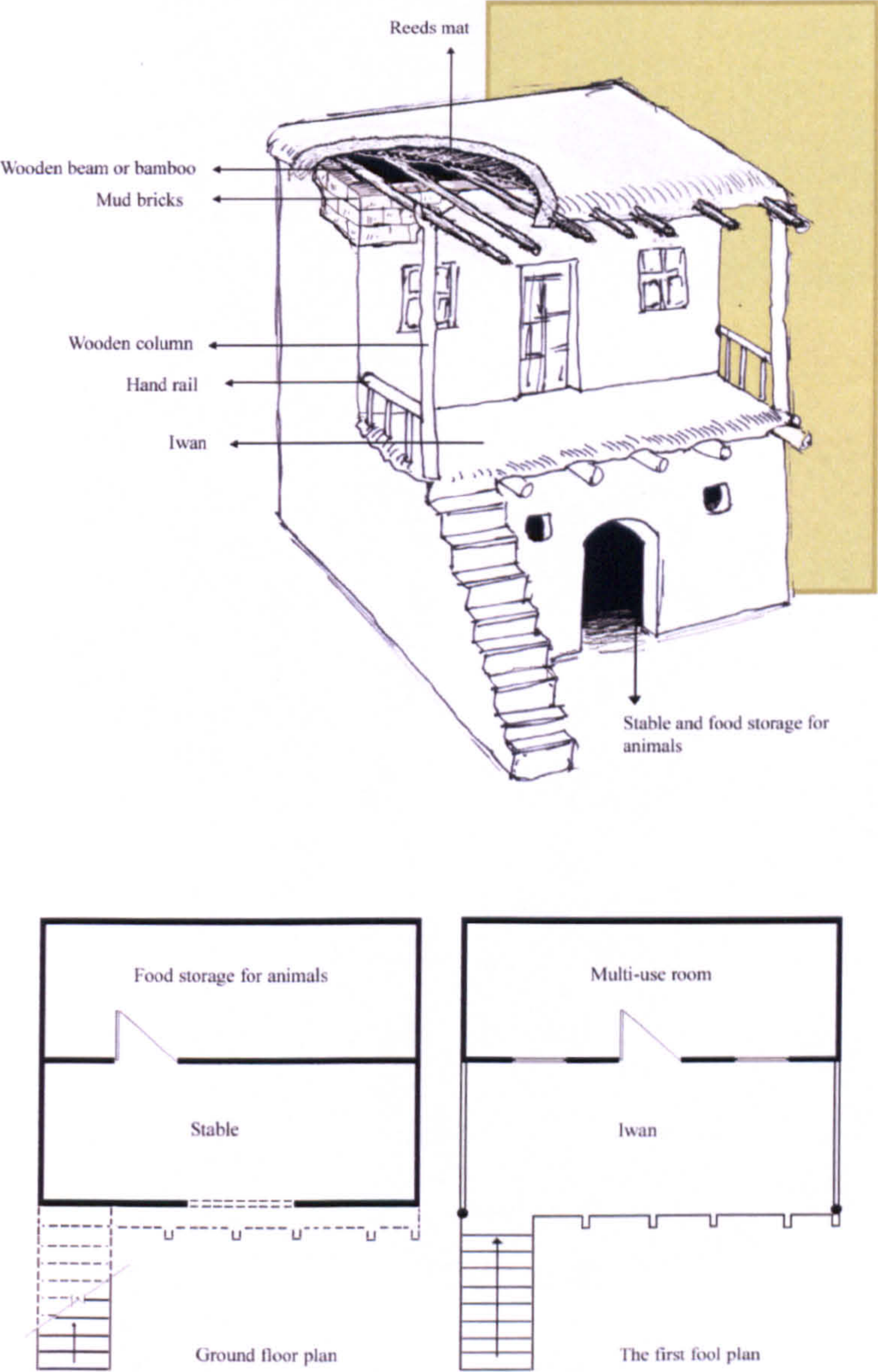


Figure 5.23. Structure of a typical two storey house in the rural area of Baluchistan. This method of housing can be found in different parts of Baluchistan in attached, semi-attached or single forms. In many cases the first floor is mainly used as a storage room for keeping animals, food and stabling. The *iwan* is used for sitting and sleeping in hot seasons and the room is used multi-functionally. Source: Author

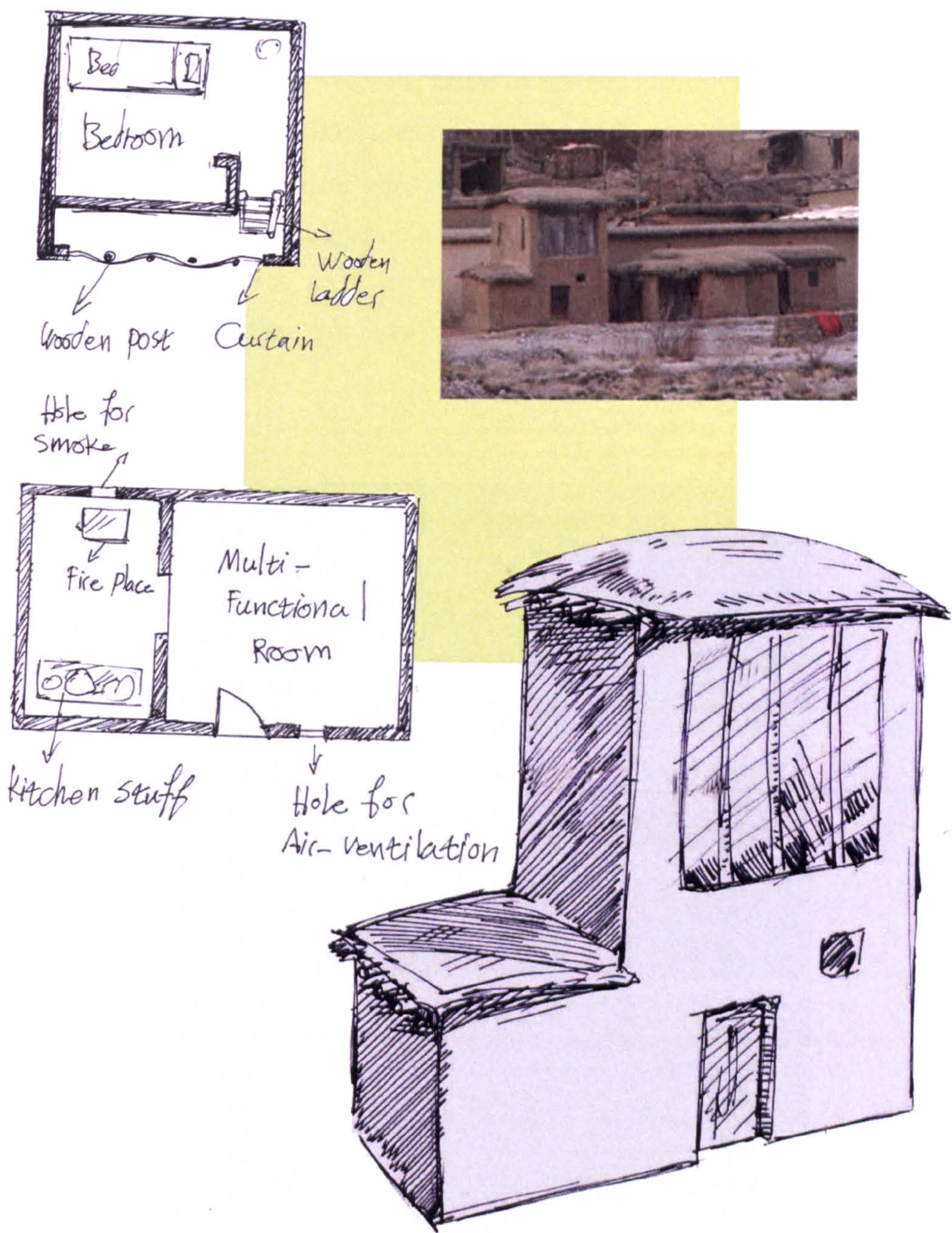


Figure 5.24. Illustration of another two storey house in Ziyarat in Baluchistan. The first floor of this typical house contains a storage room/kitchen and a multi-functional room which is used for sitting, sleeping and serving food. The second floor is used mainly for sleeping and receiving guests. The large window in the upper part of building is made of bamboo posts and is covered with plastic sheeting. Both the kitchen and multi-functional room have a hole for ventilation. Source: Author

5.4. Socio-cultural environment of Baluchistan

The traditional dwelling in Baluchistan has social and religious meanings. It is constructed for the blessing of God to ensure the well-being of the family. However, apart from the religio-cultural factor of privacy, the earth construction is fused with artistic and spiritual creation as well. The spirit of place and community is fully expressed in mud buildings. Fine variations are adapted to specify social, economic, geographical and climatic environments. Mud brick architecture can be seen as an extraordinary range of languages and symbols which expressively proclaim the cultural characteristics of their users (Dethier, 1982).



Figure 5.25. Decorative forms on the walls of these courtyards signify a religious building such as a mosque in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

Traditionally, the walls of the houses were often plastered with raw earth and renewed each year as a ritual and formal procedure. Dethier describes the mud plaster of rural houses as the skin of the buildings which is changed annually with

infinite variation as individuals express their own creative feelings on the facades of the walls. The building skills have been passed from one generation to another over time and the local builders respectfully repeat the traditional way of building. Therefore in many cases the decorations of traditional mud buildings are strongly linked with the culture of their producer. The richness of the soil produces pleasure by forming aesthetic curves. The earthen architecture is regarded as philosophical desires as well as producing physical images of earthly pleasure. The immediacy and urgency of the mud buildings provide familial and collective spaces which contain a powerful dimension and happiness with the enjoyment of creation (Dethier, 1982).



Figure 5.26. The entrance of a rural mosque in Baluchistan. This mosque is made and plastered with mud and painted white. Three curved shapes on the top of the door represent three minarets, which signify the mosque. Source: Author

Local builders get their inspiration from their traditional architects and combine it with their personal ability to contribute to the customs of society in harmony with the cultural heritage and, more importantly, with the spirit of the place (Dethier, 1982). Pearson states that the spiritual world can operate on many different levels: from the cosmic heavens and depths of the earth to the tribal village and family houses (Pearson, 1989).



Figure 5.27. Aspiration and cultural involvement can be observed in native decorative rural mosques of Sibi in Baluchistan. Source: Author

There is a harmonious excellence between Baluchi's rural architectural forms and environment, which can be observed in different parts of rural areas surrounded by mountains, the desert of Chagi or the green zones of Jacobabad. Dethier states that the wonderful harmony between the earthen architectural forms in rural areas and the environment is the result of two important elements. First, the earthen

houses are built with the same materials which can be found in the nearby environment. Second, the nature of the spaces formed, and the architectural rhythms that are dictated by the nature of earth and unbaked bricks. A spiritual and physical consciousness and a healthful sensuality often come out from both interior and exterior sides of earthen architecture (Dethier, 1982).



Figure 5.28. A decorative wall of a mosque in a rural area of Quetta. The soft curved shapes on the wall symbolise and reflect the forms of the sandy hills, the environment where the local mosque is located. Source: Author

Pearson believes that many people are turning to eastern traditions of meditation and are creating space in the home for quiet and spiritual retreat. Most practising religious people of all faiths have always done this. They keep some sacred icon such as a cross, shrine element, statue or lighted lamp in the home. Even the most secular of homes may have its quiet garden or corner, its object of beauty, honouring this fundamental need (Pearson, 1989).

5.5. Gender segregation

Private and public life are strictly separated in Islamic society. Architecturally, the degrees of privacy are expressed in the structure of the houses. The most fundamental division has been between male reception areas and the female areas, or harem. The interior courtyard where the family work and relax represents the concepts of this division (Michell, 1987).

Baluch people are mostly religious and the courtyards have practical functions and symbolic meaning for them. Whenever the space around any house has been signified by any marks such as stone, fences or walls, it would be identified as a private space and the courtyard. The rooms or any other parts of the house which are reserved for the residents, particularly women, are even more private. Only the closest members of a family, such as sisters, mother or father, are allowed to enter the houses. Visitors or distant relatives are not allowed to enter the rooms without permission. This is to protect women from any male's sight, for religious and cultural reasons.



Figure 5.29. Drawing of a Baluchi woman wearing colourful clothes and decorative headwear - hat and scarf. Source: Author

As mentioned, the tribal system is still strong in Baluchistan, particularly in rural areas. In many cases the Islamic religious laws have been mixed with tribal laws such as Ramzi- Baluch and Pashtunwali to create even stronger rules in practice. Two important tribal factors of *Purdah*, or privacy of female, and also *baithak*, a place for males, make a major contribution to living patterns and living environment.



Figure 5.30. Drawing of a veiled woman in Baluchistan. This is a modern type of veil, probably exported to Baluchistan from other Islamic countries around the Persian Gulf. Source: Author

5.5.1. *Purdah*, or privacy of women

Purdah or *Pardaa* is a Persian/Urdu word meaning curtain. It used in different parts of the Islamic world to protect women. Women have traditionally been expected to live under the constraints of *purdah*, particularly in rural areas of Baluchistan and Peshawar. Therefore, an examination of religious influences on rural architecture cannot be conducted without taking into account the crucial importance of *purdah*. Shaheed believes that “In Pakistan *purdah* is such a

critical factor in women's life and one that is normally ignored, particularly in development-related research" (Shaheed, 1989:18).

The gender segregation of women's privacy is practised in two ways in Baluchistan. It first requires women to cover their bodies and hide their form by wearing the *Hejab*. Muslim women cover themselves in different ways with generally loose material such as *chador*, *burqa*, *dupatta*, veil, scarf and many others. Most of the women in Baluchistan traditionally wear the *dupatta* and *burqa*, which are large robes covering the entire body, including the head and face. A net-form material called *mesh* covers the eyes and the wearer can see and breathe through it. The *burqa* is most commonly worn by Pashtun and Baluchi women both in Pakistan and Afghanistan.



Figure 5.31. Left: the drawing shows a Pashtun woman wearing a traditional burqa in Baluchistan. The burqa can be found in different dark colours such as dark blue, dark green and red.

Figure 5.32. Right: drawing of a woman in traditional dupatta in Baluchistan. The dupatta is traditionally worn by Punjabi women but it has been used in Baluchistan as well. Source: Author

Secondly, there is segregation of space, where a space inside the house is allocated for women, particularly when they have male visitors. The female space, which is known as the *zanana* area or *harem* is either a separate room or a space which is separated by using walls, curtains and screens. Zakaria states that the veiling of women and segregation between *na-mahram* (Islamic term used for segregating those not allowed to be alone on their own) within the Islamic societies has been done to shield women from physical contact with men and also to cover the women's sexual attractions from men (Zakaria, 2001).

Women seem to have little or no role in public life, particularly in Baluchistan. Papanek states that segregation and seclusion terms are usually associated with *pardah*. The crucial characteristic of *pardah* defines the limitation of interaction between men and women outside certain well-defined categories (Papanek, 1971). Ibrah also confirms that: *One of the most defining features of Muslim Pardah is that social intercourse between men and women is delimited by the criterion of kinship. In this respect, social access and interaction between men and women is possible only if they are related* (Ibrah, 1993:105).

5.5.2. Baithak, a sitting room for men

Baithak is a Hindi-Urdu word meaning "sitting and place to sit". It is used in Pashto and Hindko of Pakistan and in a general context (Mumtaz, 1987). There is mostly a room in rural houses in Baluchistan for guests or visitors called the *baithak* or *mardana* zone which is located at a distance from the rows of living rooms. This seclusion can be seen as a reflection of a conservative social structure which maintains a kind of privacy for the women of the household. In some villages of Baluchistan and Punjab the *baithak* is a separate house for men by the main roads and market places where they can spend their time (Chowdhury, 1992). In compliance with the religio-cultural law of *pardah* in Baluchistan, the male visitors who are *na-mahram* and do not belong to the inner family circle are not allowed beyond the *baithak* or visitor's room. Therefore, as far as the private area of the houses is concerned, the *pardah* rules for men are much stricter than

for women (Zakaria 2001). The tradition of specifying separated areas for men and women can be found in the north of India as well. Skurdenis investigates some popular houses in Rajasthan and mentions that there is large gateway, with a smaller doorway cut into the building leading into an interior courtyard known as the mardana (Persian word for men) where male visitors are received in the baithak or salon and the men of the household spend much of their day in (Skurdenis, 2003).

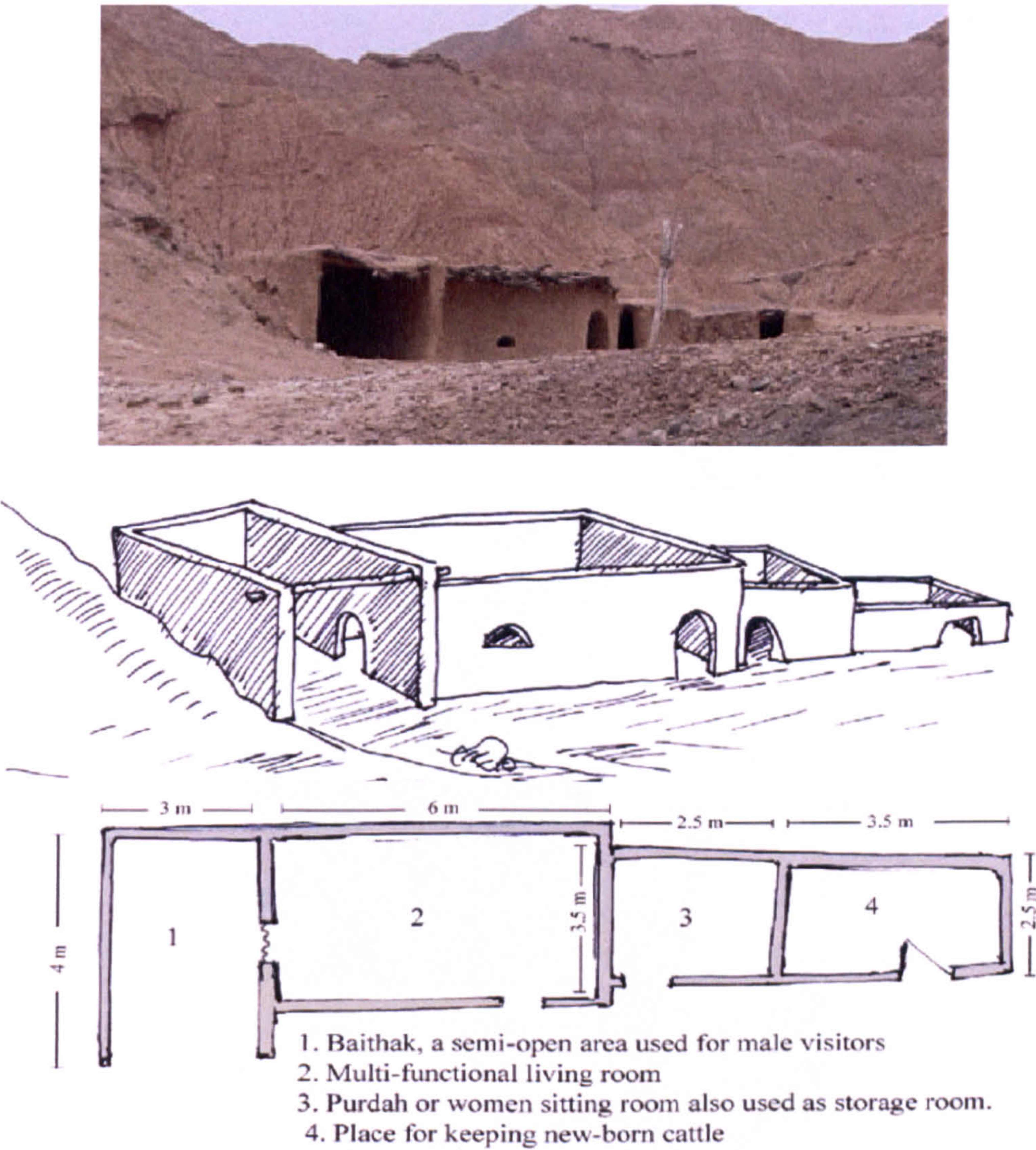


Figure 5.33. Typical Baluchi house in the rural area of Noshki in Baluchistan. The plan shows the position of the baithak and purdah, two separated places for men and women. Source: Author

Chapter 6

Baluchi rugs: functions and meanings



6. Baluchi rugs: functions and meanings

As previously stated, this study takes culture as the process, and art and architecture as the product, aiming to provide a deeper insight and develop a better understanding of the influence of culture on art and architecture in general, and its symbolic religious architecture in particular in rural areas of Baluchistan. Baluchi rugs can be mentioned as one of the best examples of the products of rural people which introduces the cultural process and symbolic and religious consequences of the native people. The design and features of rugs have been considered as the cultural textbook for ancient civilisation, narrating their mythology, ritual, social structures, as well as their pictorial symbols (Serkina, 1999).

The designs of Baluchi rugs provide a window onto the past, an exceptionally graphic reflection of old Baluch traditions (Cole, 1998). The entire life of Baluchi people is reflected in the patterns and images of pictorial carpets. Rug-weaving and embroidery are a domestic tradition of all three major ethnic groups, the Baluchi, Brahui and Pashtun tribes in the rural areas of the province. This chapter investigates the shapes, materials and patterns which are used on Baluchi rugs and it also studies the symbolic meaning of Baluchi pictorial rugs.

Carpet-weaving is also considered as the main source of income for the rural women (Roy, 2006). Baluchi rugs are considered as the tribal types and are normally small in size and mainly have dark, fragile, sombre colours and the motifs are hardly visible in very intense light (Stone, 1997). As the nomadic tribes carry the carpet weaving tools on their journeys, their rugs are generally smaller than those of settled tribes.

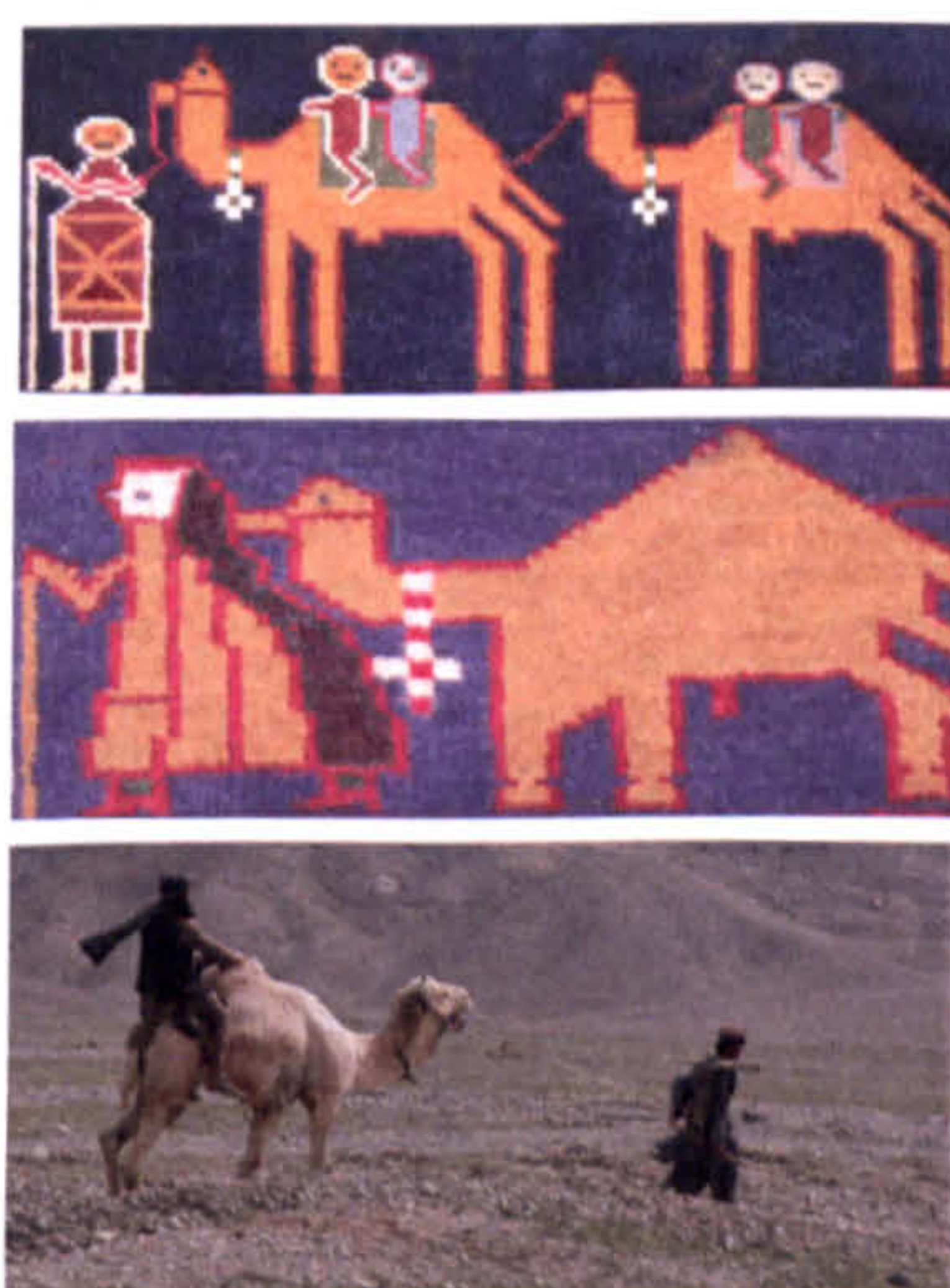


Figure 6.1. Reflection of Baluchi nomadic lifestyle in their tribal rugs. The camel symbolises the wealth of the family in Baluchistan. The shape of the camel appears on carpets in different designs. Source: Author



Figure 6.2. The seasonal migration (*kooch*) of nomadic tribes is reflected in the design of tribal rugs in Baluchistan. The forms of animals along with the nomadic people are the main source of inspiration for tribal women.
Source: Author

The pictorial rugs with images of sheep, goats, camels, horses and donkeys represent the nomadic lifestyle of Baluchi or Pathun people in Baluchistan. The nomadic and rural lifestyle of the people of Baluchistan is much the same as centuries ago, but the environment has changed, particularly during the wars. Nomadic women used to fill the fields of their carpets or rugs with geometric and symbolic patterns of flowers, birds and other animals, symbolising their peaceful life. A tribal woman would have only occasionally seen swordsmen ride through the tribal or rural areas of Baluchistan. Since the Afghan-Soviet war (1979-1989) the images of rugs have changed in their representation of different lifestyles and environments. During the war the daily bombardment, fighter planes, tanks and rifles, and other weaponry hardware, became part of the nomadic lifestyle and appeared on their hand-made products, including prayer rugs.



Figure 6.3. Weaponry images used in different war rugs from Baluchistan in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The drawings show how they were influenced by the actual images. Different types of fighter planes, helicopters, tanks, grenades and light guns like the Kalashnikov, RPG7 and pistols, among with many other weapons, can be observed in the war rugs. Source: Author

Kirk confirms that the Baluchi women, mainly from Afghanistan, soon after the arrival of the Soviets began to weave the violence which they witnessed in their daily lives into sturdy, knotted pile wool rugs instead of the previous peaceful, ordinary symbols like birds and flowers. The first generation of these aggressive

imagery rugs were somewhat hidden as they feared they would put off buyers. Over time, the popularity of the war-weaponry rugs has increased and the images became so prominent that all kinds of guns can be distinguished. Weaving the war rugs was a way for female-weavers to show their hatred of the invasion. Soon after, they commercialised them when they found that buyers were interested (Kirk, 2008).



Figure 6.4. Example of a war rug which reflects the images of an AK 47 Kalashnikov and tanks with seats (BTR-70); a pistol and grenade can be observed in this rug. Source: Barry (1997).

Apart from imagery and pictorial rugs, the classical Baluchi motifs are executed with straight lines. In classical Baluchi rug design medallions are less common than field repeats motifs and curvilinear motifs are rare. There is a strong Persian and Turkmen influence on many Baluchi motifs. Most of the imported motifs have a distinctly Baluchi interpretation, particularly on the prayer rugs (Stone, 1997). However, the motifs in Baluchi textiles are considered to be more abstract. The abstraction and simplification of Baluchi motifs have religious and technological reasons. Both Baluchi mats and rugs are classified as flat weaving (*ikat* and felts) textile and the limitations and constraints of freedom in flat weaving are considered as a technological constraint.



Figure 6.5. The right hand picture is an example of a pictorial rug which is known as *aksi* in Baluchistan. The left hand picture introduces a typical rug woven in Iran in Hamadan for special occasions such as weddings or birthdays. It is a written congratulation or *mobark bad* in Persian, along with different images of girls with candles, animals and birds. The tree of life, is a popular design in Persian, Baluchi, Turkish and Central Asian carpets. Source: Bourdon (n.d).

6.1. Prayer rugs (symbolic meanings and functions)

The prayer rug, which is also known as prayer mat, *janamaz* or in Arabic *sajjada*, is the most important religious craft in Baluchistan. Apart from the religious concept of the prayer rug, it provides a clean surface for prayers. Traditional prayer rugs of Baluchistan can be divided into two popular types; the straw prayer mat and the prayer rug or carpet (*janamaz*).

6.1.1. Straw prayer mat

Hand-made prayer mats are the most popular types used by Muslims, particularly in rural and tribal areas of Baluchistan. Mats traditionally are called the pieces of floor covering which are used by the natives to sleep on and as protection from the heat of the sun. This can be considered as the primary object of producing the

mats. Over time they have been used for other purposes, such as for decoration and also in place of rugs (Escoda, 1953).



Figure 6.6. How a reed mat is made by skilful hands to be used in the construction of houses in rural areas. Similar techniques can be found in different parts of the world. Source: Mirahmdy (n.d)

The straw prayer mats are not only very popular among the Baluch people because of their simplicity and richness of the materials, but they believe that they are *sonnat*, or from the tradition of Prophet Mohammad. Baluchi weavers use bamboo, reed and palm tree leaves to make the prayer mats. Through a complicated working procedure, bamboo and reed leaves are cut into different kinds of strips and pieces. The leaves are then spread out in special places to dry in the sun light. This needs to be done in a professional way, otherwise the leaves may decompose or decolourise during the process.

During the weaving process the strength of each individual leaf will be tested by pulling it before it goes to form part of the whole mat. Weaving the edges and corners of the mat needs specific attention as they hold the whole mat together.

The leaves used on the mat would immediately begin to unravel if the edge or corners are torn (Escoda, 1953).

There are two popular designs of prayer mats in Baluchistan.

a. Head and shoulder design

b. Step design

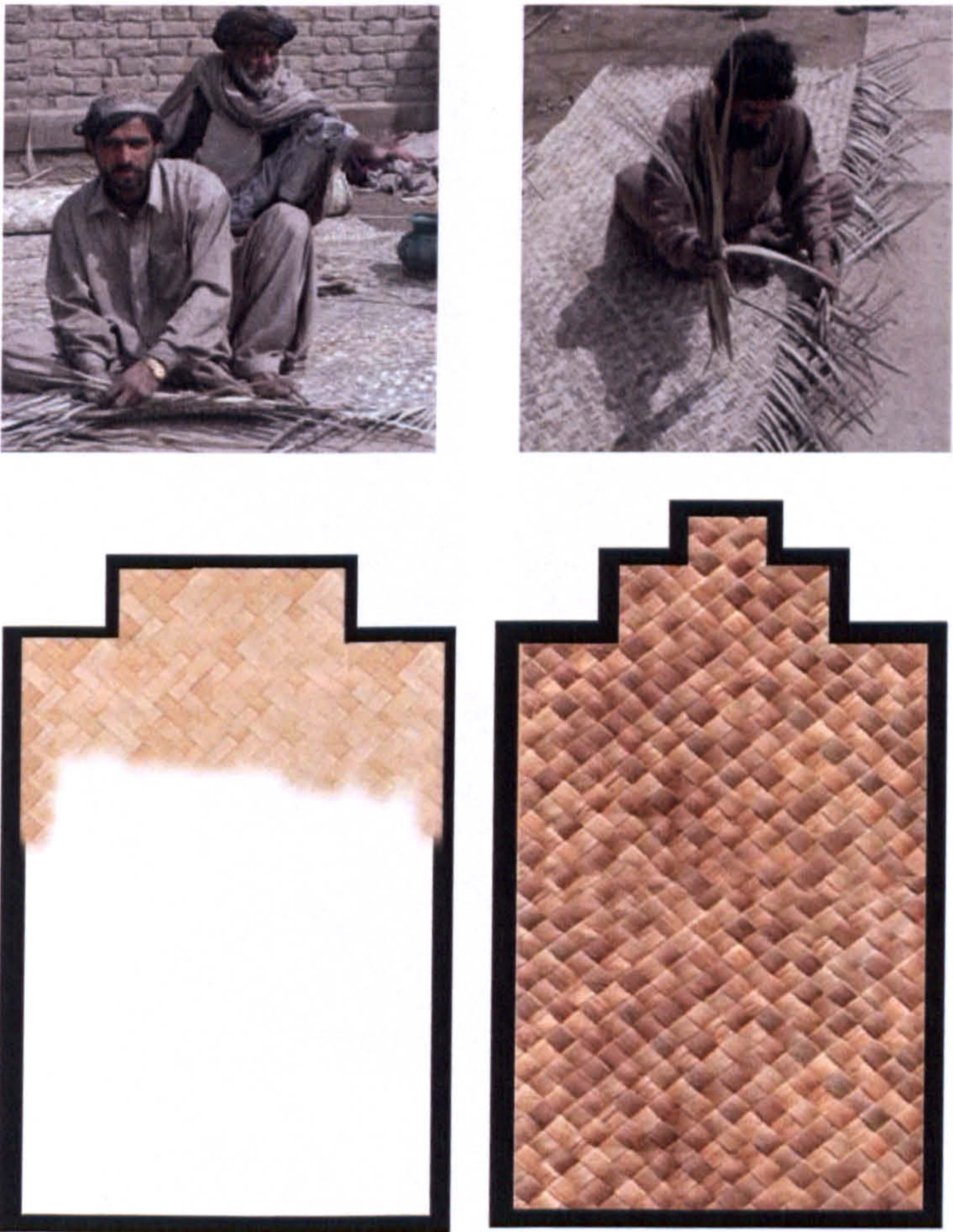


Figure 6.7. The two most popular designs of straw prayer mats used in Baluchistan by the majority of Muslims. Both prayer mats are known as “head and shoulder” designs, but the right hand one is also called the step shape. They are woven on the footpath of some main roads in Quetta. Source: Author

Head and shoulders is a popular design in both Baluchi prayer rugs and mats. The simplicity within the head and shoulder prayer mat which is also represented on

Baluchi prayer rugs has a strong connection and harmony with the form of the prayer niche (*mihrab*). It also looks like the basic plan and foundation of Baluchi mosques, particularly the open types. The step design is less popular but still can be found in many mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan. The function of the step design is to create a place to put one's hands while prostrating during prayers.



Figure 6.8. Head and shoulders as a popular design can be observed on prayer rugs and mats as well as in the structure and plan of short-wall mosques. Source: Author

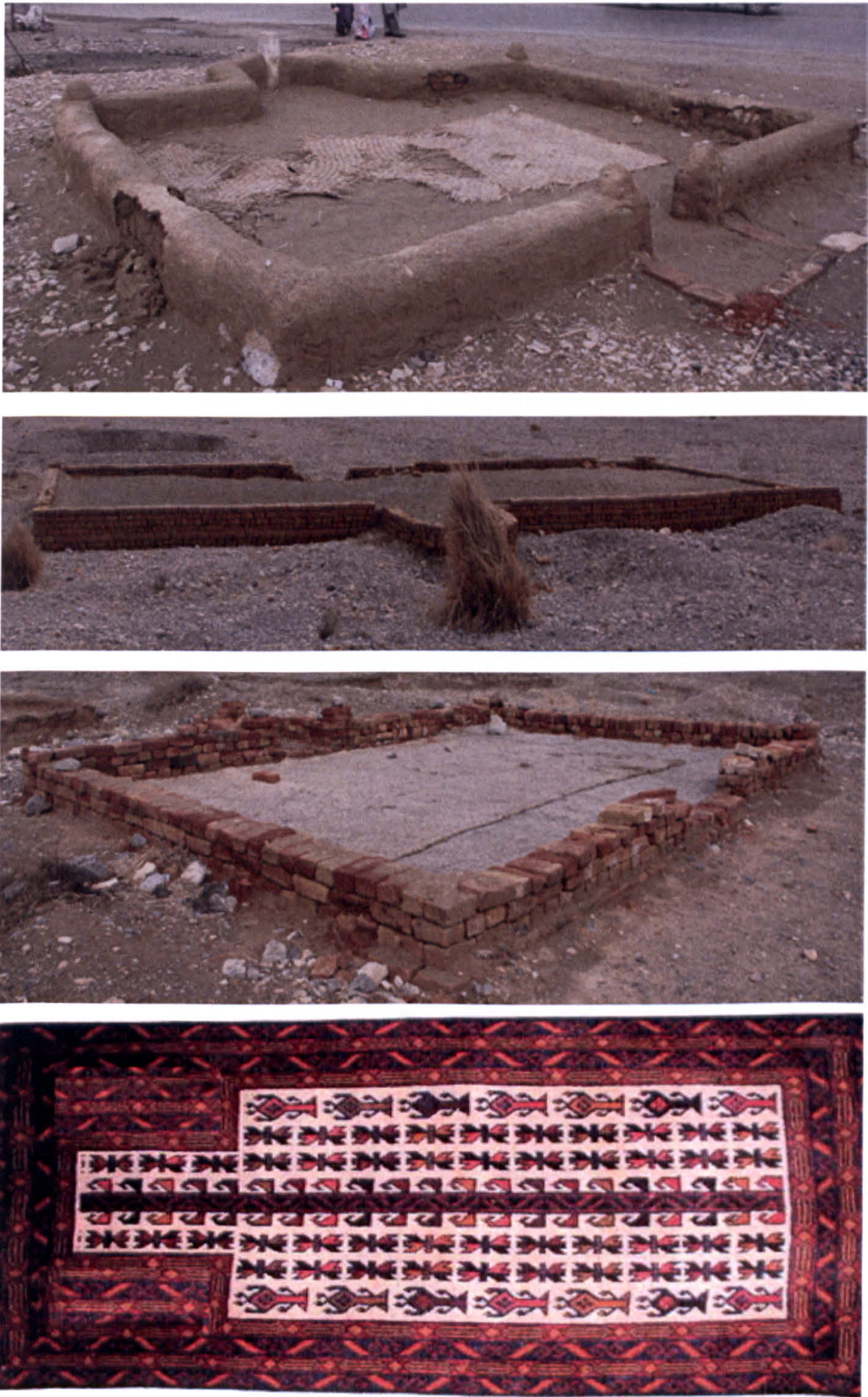


Figure 6.9. The foundation and plan of the open mosque, which is popular in the rural and tribal areas of Baluchistan, can be compared with the form of prayer niches or *mihrab* in Baluchi prayer rugs. Head and shoulder designs can be seen in different textiles and architectural forms in Baluchistan. Source: Author

6.1.2. Prayer rugs or carpets (janamaz)

Some Islamic countries, such as Iran and Turkey, with an immemorial tradition of carpet weaving, decorate their mosques with different types of rugs, particularly the prayer type (Hillenbrand, 2000). The principle of the prayer rug is associated with *sajdeh* or prostration. The prayer rug provides a pure place for daily prayer, particularly in the prostrate position, as is advised in Islam. Prostration is one of the most important parts of Muslim daily prayer, as mentioned in the Quran:

فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا (53:63).

So fall you down in prostration to Allah, and worship Him. (53:62)

Prostration has been mentioned as the closest position of humans to God. In a symbolic way it is associated with humbling, particularly, submission to the will of God in opposition to selfishness. The Quran states: “*Fall prostrate and draw near to Allah!*” (وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ) (Quran 96:19) According to Mujahid, prostration or *sajdah* is truly a humbling experience. Mankind can think about their misdeeds and ask for God's forgiveness and guidance, as well as seeking refuge in God. Prostration is one of the most submissive physical positions and one of the best positions in which to talk to God (Mujahid, 2007).

Pictorial designs for prayer rugs are rejected according to Islamic law as they are mainly used in the mosques.

The Baluchi prayer rugs are mostly made in a rectangular form and consist of different designs of mihrabs similar to the form of straw prayer mats. Acknowledging the Islamic prohibition of pictorial representation of living creature, the entire field of prayer rugs are decorated with geometrical motifs created by a combination of octagons, hexagons and triangles, which produces kaleidoscopic effects (Blair and Bloom, 2000).

According to Denny (1991), the pictorial patterns of prayer rugs are symbolically associated with the arch or mihrab, the gateway to paradise. The tree of life is considered as an example of paradisiacal imagery. The form of mihrab and the lamp on prayer rugs reflect the Light Verse (*Ayat al-nur*) of the Quran which starts with “*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” (Quran, 24:35). It is also a significant imagery sign of “a niche wherein is a lamp” and also a saying of the Blessed Tree in the same verse of the Quran. The blessed tree is associated with the “Lote Tree of the Boundary,” which is located in *janna* or paradise (Denny, 1991).

In connection with symbolic meaning beyond the various forms and designs of trees on Baluchi prayer rugs, Rustomji believes that trees have symbolic functions in Islam. In the Quran there is the representation of a garden or paradise where the symbolic tree of Sidrat al-Muntaha (53:19) can be found and also the “Lote Tree of the Boundary” which is located at the end of paradise near the Garden o Abode, next to Allah himself (Rustomji, 2009). The tree of life also symbolises the *tooba* tree, which is a sacred tree originating in the Quran. Tooba means tree of paradise and it offers shelter and blessings to those in need (Scott, 2002).



Figure 6.10. Baluchi prayer rugs with traditional tree of life central design and multiple borders. The right hand side prayer rugs are known as a classic “head and shoulders” design. Source of right hand photo: Bourdon (n.d).

The tree of life, usually on a camel-ground, is one of the most common designs of Baluchi prayer rugs (Cole, 1998). The tree of life is considered as a universal symbol, as it has been used by other civilisations as well. Emick reveals the universal symbolic meaning of the tree of life by acknowledging that its branches are reaching into the sky and roots deep into the earth. It is located in three different worlds and it links heaven, earth and the underworld. It is in fact unifying above and below. The tree of life symbolises femininity, bearing sustenance and a masculine and visibly phallic other union (Emick, 2008).

The central element of the tree is interpreted as an image of the cosmic axis. The vertical form of the tree joins earth to heaven and it is also the presence of the Celestial Height over the terrestrial plane. This sophisticated form of tree also works as contact between both the contemplative and sacrificial with the Solar Power (Brown, 1953). Emick states that the tree as a symbol of gifts and spiritual wisdom is common amongst different cultures. Buddha received his enlightenment while he was meditating under a Bodhi tree. The tree of heaven is the source of the primordial rivers and it waters the earth in Judeo-Christian mythology. It is similar to the tooba tree which is mentioned in the Quran. The spring milk, honey and wine come from the roots of the tooba tree (Emick, 2008). The garden has been the spiritual centre and part of daily life for Persians for thousands of years (McLennan, 2005).



Figure 6.11. Presentation of the tree of life or heavenly tooba tree on a Baluchi prayer rug (left) and a pictorial rug from Kashan in Iran. Head and shoulder Baluchi rugs with the form of mihrab and geometric tree of life. The Persian design on the right hand side rug is known as *Gol-va-Morgh* (bird and flower). Source: O'Connell (1997).

Generally, prayer rugs are designed as a one-way pattern. The prayer niche or mihrab is the head and an essential feature of prayer rugs. Muslim worshippers place their forehead just under the arch design on prayer rugs and their hands on the sides, facing Mecca. It is considered that the arch form design on prayer rugs symbolises the main entrance of a mosque, where there are normally pillars and a lamp hanging from the centre of the Mihrab as well.

6.2. Symbolic animals on Baluchi rugs

The second most popular pictorial design of rugs in rural areas of Baluchistan consists of various forms of animals. The pictorial carpet with images of animals which mainly have a central medallion are mostly woven by Pashtun and Hezareh tribes who have settled in rural areas of Baluchistan. There are approximately one hundred various classical designs of rugs woven in Baluchistan by different tribes with specific patterns. Individual weavers add different patterns into the original design each time. This part of the study investigates the religio-symbolic consequences of the images of animals on the native rugs of Baluchistan.



Figure 6.12. Images of animals on pictorial rug in Baluchistan. Source: Author

According to Islamic oral tradition there is a water-fountain at the centre of heaven which is called *kothar* (*kouther* or *kousar*) and all the faithful Muslims will receive this water of blessing. The central medallion of carpet symbolises *kothar*.

It can be referred to the chapter of the Quran called Al-Kouthar where God granted Prophet Mohammad a kouthar (Quran,108:1). When the central medallion represents the water fountain on a carpet, various trees, flowers, animals and birds would appear around the *toranj* on the carpets.



Figure 6.13. Central medallion or Persian *toranj* can be observed on a Soumak Kilim from the region of Azerbaijan in the north-west of Iran. The forms of animals and birds have been simplified in a magnificent way but they still can be identified. Source: O'Donovan (2008).



Figure 6.14. Photo showing the characteristic use of a central water fountain at the mosque of Nezal-al-Molk in Shiraz. Source: Author

The diversity of animals which are gathered on nomadic and rural rugs of Baluchistan symbolise the notion of the religious term “peaceable kingdom”. The peaceable kingdom is an ideal place where all creatures live together in peace and

harmony (Bayman, 2003). The peaceable kingdom was introduced into Islamic tradition as “Madinat-al-Faseleh”. It is presented in Judeo-Christian tradition.

Animal gathered on textiles also symbolise the liberation of animals, which, according to Cohn-Sherbok and Leahy, has its spiritual basis in the recovery of moral insights as well as the recovery of ancient fundamental value of conscious life. The notion of a lion lying down by a lamb is the vision of a peaceable kingdom. The freedom of animals also symbolises “*the notion of a world freed from parasitical suffering*” (Cohn-Sherbok and Leahy, 1996).



Figure 6.15. Pictorial Pashtun rug with images of animals along with humans living in an ideal place in peace and harmony. It symbolises the peaceable kingdom as well as the freedom of creatures. Source: Eiland (2008).

Baluchi weavers have reproduced naturalistic profiles or pictorial motifs from generation to generation. These specific motifs include horned quadrupeds, birds such as cocks and peacocks, trees of life and some other designs called *do-guli* (two-flower) and *botteh* (Persian bush). Most of these motifs are, however, common among all Iranian peoples. It is believed that some motifs such as *taus* (peacock) and *khorus* (cock) symbolise fertility (Wegner, 1985).



Figure 6.16. Images of peacocks along with other birds can be observed on Baluchi rugs. The peacock symbolises fertility as well as wealth and happiness. The drawings show different forms of peacock which are used in tribal and rural rugs in Baluchistan. Source: Author

Hillenbrand reveals the symbolic meaning of the birds in Islamic architecture. He states: “*Peacocks or composite birds, the so-called ‘birds of paradise’, may occupy the spandrels of a portal arch in a mosque, simultaneously repelling evil and welcoming the faithful*” (Hillenbrand, 2000:18).

Some of the Baluchi native interviewees talked about their interest in using images of some particular birds and animals and their symbolic meanings. According to the majority of responses, the peacock is a symbol of beauty and happiness and it is a bird from heaven, which is why many Muslims place the peacock's feathers between the leaves of the Quran. The cock or rooster symbolises the male gender and it is the time announcing bird as many Baluchis believe that the cock announce the time for prayer particularly the morning one. The deer signifies beauty and sex, innocence and speed. The lion symbolises power, authority and purposefulness.

There is another theory which argues that the appearance of the images of various animals on products of nomadic societies is associated with shamanistic beliefs. Shamanism as an ancient belief commonly practised by tribal and primitive people in different parts of the world. Shaman as a word means spirit healer and it derives from the Tungus of Siberia where it is believed that shamanism or working with spirits started, but it is found today in many parts of the globe among different people (Turner, 2003).

6.3. Symbolic forms of mosques on Baluchi pictorial textiles

There are large numbers of pictorial textiles which contain architectural subjects, particularly the feature of mosques as the main patterns. Religious pictorial rugs can be found in urban, rural and nomadic areas of Baluchistan. The use of patterns, colours, motifs and the style of weaving are normally used to classify the rugs and the weaver's tribe or homeland.

The tribal rug is classified as something superior to a non-tribal piece because of having a heritage within a particular ethnic group. The city rugs are generally designed by professionals, either creating new forms or borrowing from the past by people who have little or no association with their traditional culture as they consider the market interests more (Eiland, 1989).

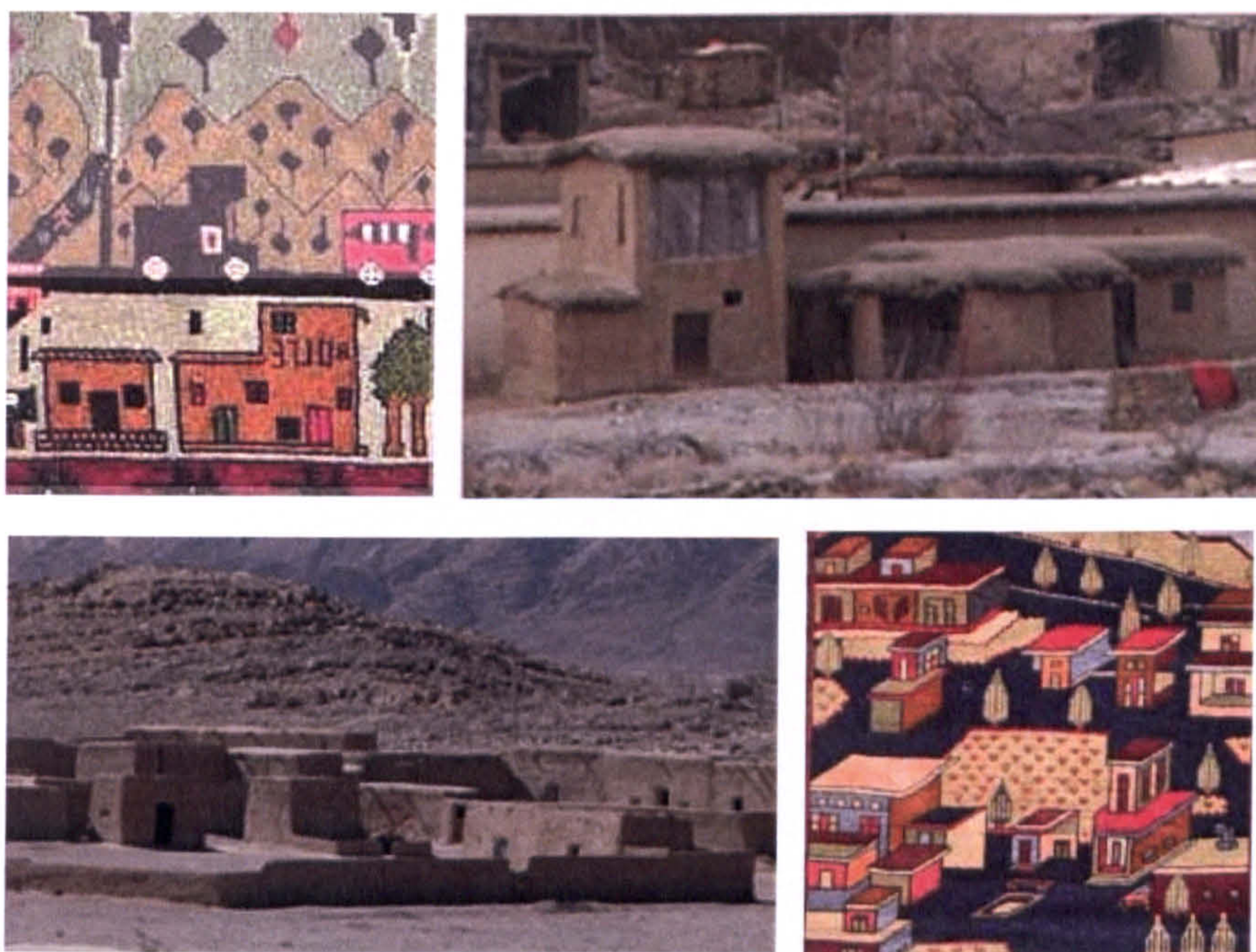


Figure 6.17. The reflection of architecture in rural areas of Baluchistan on their carpets. The images of one-room houses and two-storey houses can be observed in the top picture and the view of a village in the bottom one. Source: Author

According to Myers, textiles are critical for the practice of religious ritual, providing images of deities and markers and adornments for sacred spaces such as mosques for Muslim prayers. Textiles are emblems of qualities like prestige, commodity, wealth, forms of payment and capital, as well as expressions of religious devotion (Myers, 2005).

Parsons reveals some beautiful examples of old Baluchi prayer rugs associated directly with the images of mosques. According his study, the pictorial rugs with architectural designs reveal how the designer freely refers to the architectural details of the mosque to construct the directional structures of a prayer rug. Some of the prayer rugs may begin by referring to a specific mosque. The artist who designs the rugs and the weaver elaborate and emphasise all the characteristic elements of the mosque as a sacred site (Parsons, 1990).

The features of buildings which are accompanied by images of cars as new motifs appear on a new generation of rugs in both rural and urban areas of Baluchistan. The image of the mosque is signified by the weaver and can be identified easily.



Figure 6.18. This pictorial rug illustrates features of a mosque which is believed to be the Friday Mosque of Herat in Afghanistan. The elements of minarets, domes, pointed arches and the gateway characterise the mosque. The form of the light- brown mountain in the background and the trees at the front make a perfect harmony with the shapes of the pointed arches of the mosque. Images of cars and aircraft in the sky signify the urban area where the mosque is located. Source: Parsons (1990).



Figure 6.19. Presentation of an urban area in Baluchi rugs. The image can be regarded as imaginative or representative of a particular area in Baluchistan of Afghanistan. Source: Parsons (1990).

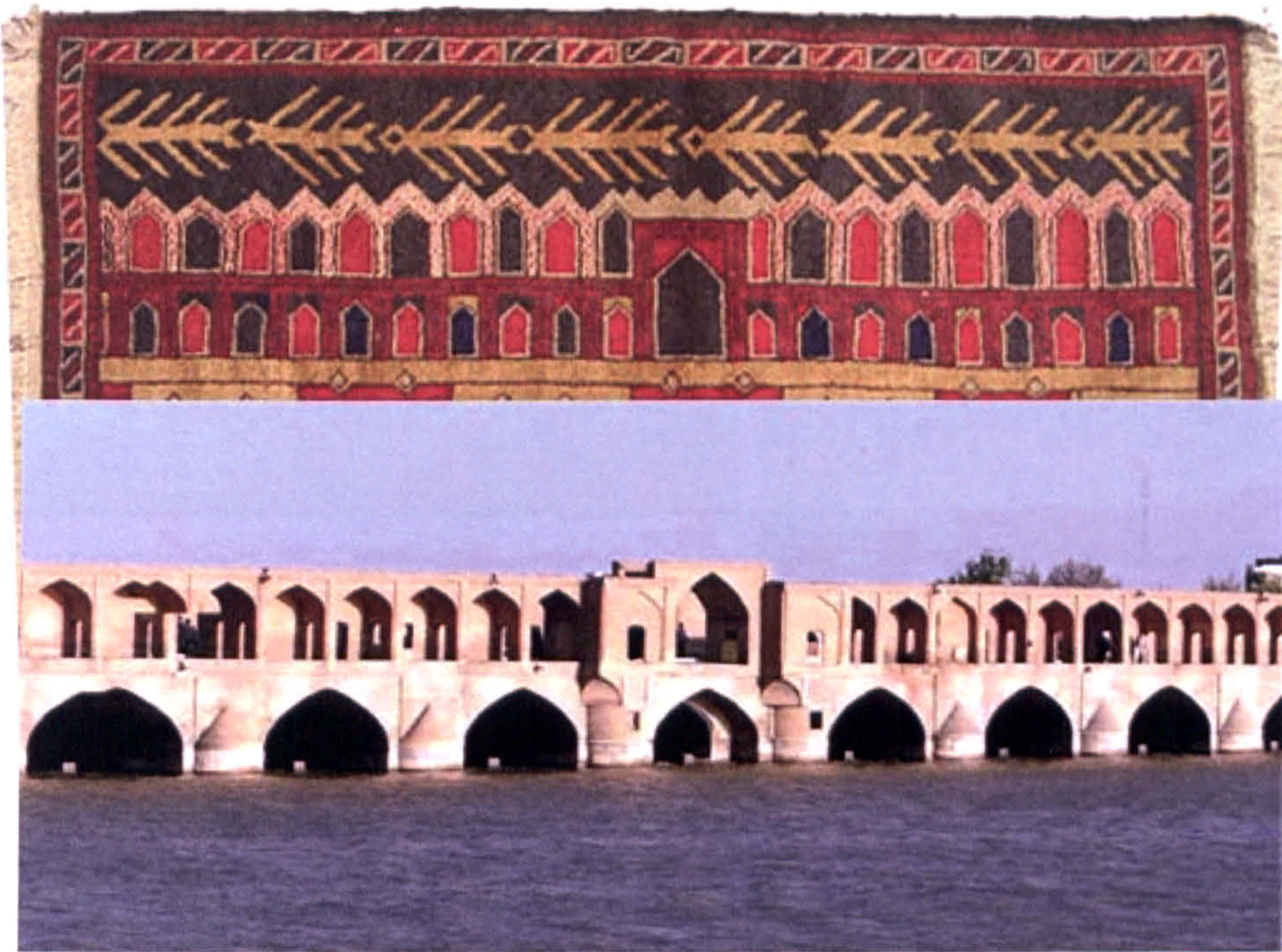


Figure 6.20. It is difficult to identify the architectural monument on the above Baluchi rugs, but it can be compared with the structure of the *Si-o-se Pol* Iranian bridges of Isfahan. The image on the rug might represent the bridge or any other particular mosque. Source: Author

Any architectural subject is allowed on prayer rugs without the representation of human figuration. The characteristic motifs such as multiple minarets, mihrabs, domes, archways, doors and gardens, all confirm and reinforce the sacred aspect of the mosque, which is the space occupied by the Muslim followers. The images of mosques occasionally appear on Baluchi or Afghan prayer rugs while they are under threat or occupation. The war prayer rugs with images of mosques can be an interpretation of religious manner as well as political dimensions (Parsons, 1990).

Some pictorial prayer rugs of Baluchistan with a combination of mosques and weaponry create a substantial contrast between the immediate aesthetic responses to the absolute beautiful depiction of religious motifs for their subject matter. They also evoke the paradoxical elements implicating horror and fear and threat of war. In fact, it can be considered that they symbolise a complex aesthetic response to the combination of beauty and fear (Parsons, 1990).

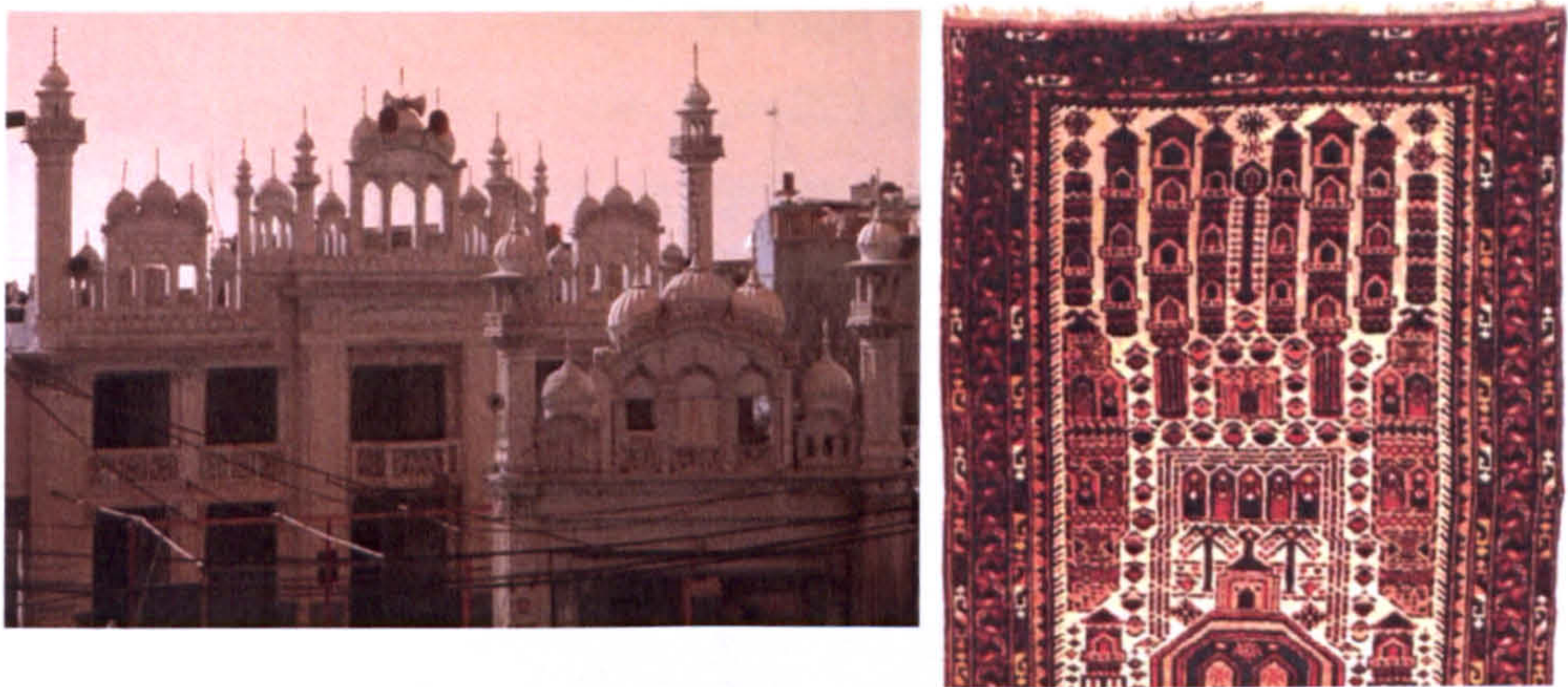


Figure 6.21. Image of pictorial prayer rug with image of mosque. Repeating form of minarets, prayer niches, archways and the ablution space characterise the sacred aspect of the mosque. The images of mosques appearing on the prayer rugs are not recognisable, but similar mosques can be seen in different parts of Baluchistan. The above photo is from the central mosque of Quetta in Baluchistan. Source of right image: Parsons (1990).

The prayer rugs with images of war and mosques are encouraged by political leaders in Baluchistan. At the most spiritual time, when a Muslim is praying, the rugs remind them of war and the situation of their homeland. It tells them that their land is occupied and the religious spaces such as mosques are under threat and surrounded by helicopters and tanks.



Figure 6.22. Examples showing the pictorial prayer rugs of Baluchistan with a combination of both images of mosques and weaponry. Source: O'Connell (1997).

The abstract form of architecture can also be found on embroidered traditional clothes of people in Baluchistan as well. The embroidery mostly appears on the shirts of women, particularly on the long front pockets and on the shoulders and sleeves. Afghan and Sindhi embroideries are used both on men's and women's clothes (Roy, 2006).



Figure 6.23. Traditional embroidered clothes worn in Baluchistan by various tribal people. Embroidery mostly appears on women's clothes but it also used on Afghan and Sindhi male traditional clothes, particularly on their hats. The embroidery designs are made in connection and harmony with the design of the mosque, prayer rugs and prayer mats. Source: Author

The native people of Baluchistan use their traditional embroidering techniques to create religious images and assemble decorations of their sacred places such as

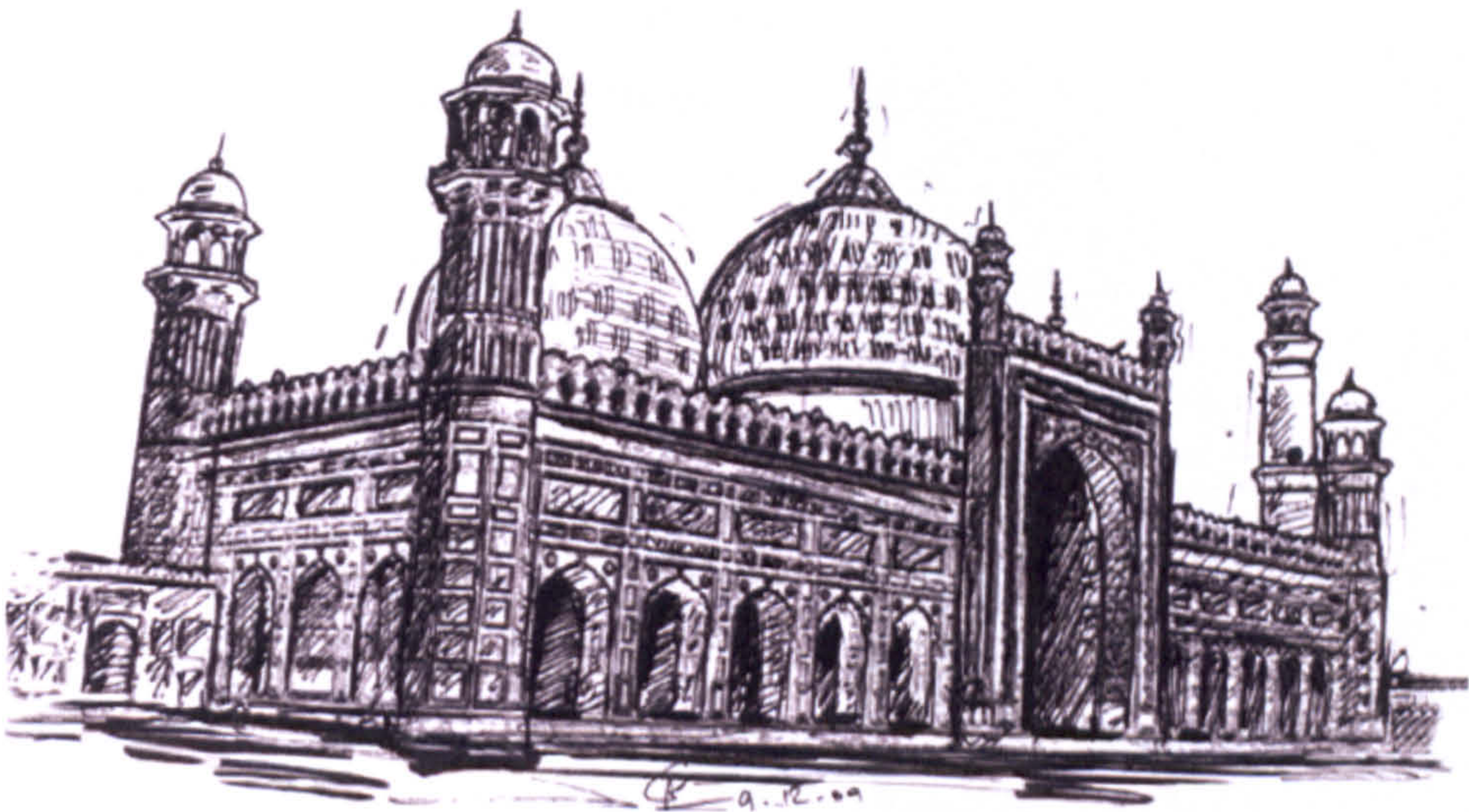
shrines and mosques, but also their personal belongings and clothes. The popular motifs and designs of Baluchi embroidery are associated with the elements used on their textiles as well as the motifs of native architecture and construction of mosques in particular. The abstract forms of prayer niches or mihrabs, minarets and the gateways of mosques, which symbolise the gates of heaven, can be identified on embroidered clothes. The head and shoulders design, which was already introduced as the most popular design of prayer rug and prayer mat, as well as the plan and foundation of Baluchi mosques, can be found as the major designs of embroidered clothes.



Figure 6.24. Two examples of embroidered clothes are shown in the above pictures. The abstract forms of prayer niche or mihrab which also appear on Baluchi prayer rugs and prayer mats as head and shoulder designs can be identified in these patterns. The form of minarets and the gateways of mosques which symbolise the gates of heaven can be identified on embroidered clothes. Source: Author

Chapter 7

Mosque architecture



7. Mosque architecture

Islam as a religion has strongly affected Muslim lifestyle, arts and architecture. The rural mosque in Baluchistan originated in and was inspired by the Islamic principle of creating religious architecture of sacred spaces such as mosques and shrines. This chapter briefly introduces Islam as the main religious source of inspiration for development of the mosque as a sacred place for prayers. It studies the principle of the mosque (*masjid* in Arabic) and also the significant symbolic elements of the mosque such as *mehrab*, *minbar*, dome and minaret.

7.1. Islam

Islam as a religion was brought to life by Prophet Mohammad in the 7th century in Arabia. Around year 610, when Mohammad was aged 40, he received a message from the Lord from angel Gabriel to read (*igra* in Arabic) and he accepted his mission as the messenger of God, which was considered the birth of Islam. The word *Islam* comes from the Arabic word *salama* and means devotion to God or, more specifically, to Allah. The people who practise such devotion and surrender themselves to the will of Allah are Muslims. Believing in one God and in Mohammad as his prophet (*shahada*) has united Muslims throughout the world (Hattstein and Delius, 2000).



Figure 7.1. The seven Arabic words of shahada are one of the most popular motifs used in Islamic calligraphy, art, craft and architecture. This photo is an example of using calligraphy in a mosque in the rural area of Shiraz in Iran. The words are written in Kufi style using ceramics and tiles. Source: Author

Muslims follow the traditions or *sonnat* of Mohammad in their public and private lives and Shahada provides the road map for a Muslim's entire life. According to many Muslims, belief and practice fit together in submission to God and acknowledgement of the example of Prophet Mohammad. Believing in one god and Mohammad as his prophet unites the vertical and the horizontal, the ethical and the spiritual. God or Allah is the central focus of worship and prayer. The individual and the community follow the holy Quran and Mohammad as the role model (George and Braswell, 2000). Muslims believe that the holy Quran was written in heaven at the beginning of time and it has 114 sections called *suras* (Hattstein, 2000).



Figure 7.2. Words from the Quran are the main source of calligraphy in Islamic religious architecture. An elaborate combination of calligraphy and vegetal patterns with stucco techniques shows the important role of Quranic words used in the *mihrab* of Oljaytu (1310) in the Friday mosque of Isfahan in Iran. Source: Author

The Muslim community is socially regarded as *umma*, or the nation of Prophet Mohammad. It was the first time in history that religious faith became the identity of a people instead of genetic accident of birth or nationality. Believing in one God, one prophet, one book and praying toward one direction, as well as being a part of one *umma* or religious nation, were the fundamentals unifying Muslims. This ideology has strongly affected all Muslim products, particularly arts and

architecture, and most particularly mosque architecture (Grube, 1978). Ardalan and Bakhtiar refer to Islam as the religion of unity on all levels such as political, social and ontological. In Islamic cosmology, God has been pointed as the centre of the universe, He only is the real and the rest is contingent being (Ardalan and Bakhtiar, 1973).

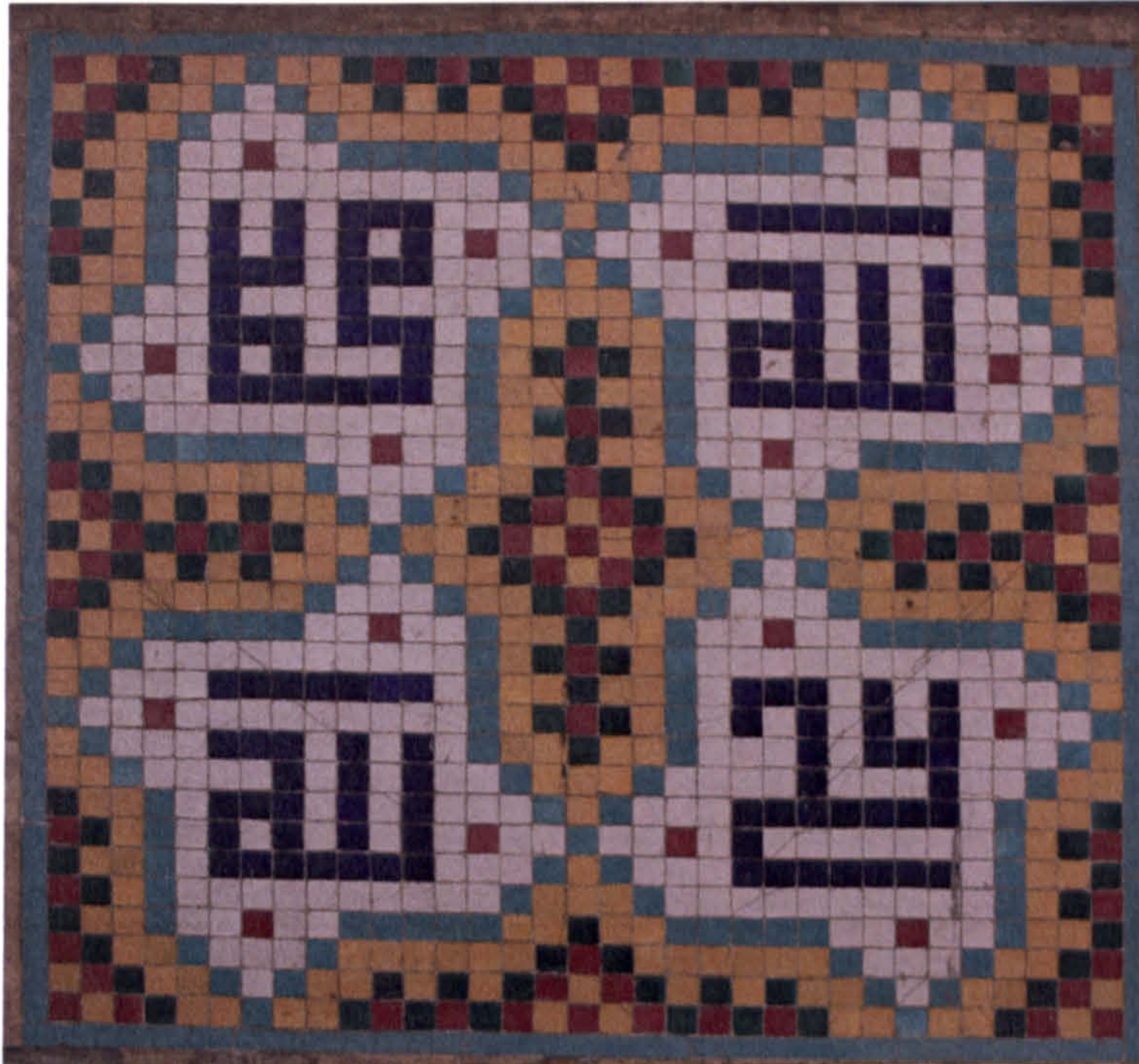


Figure 7.3. The Arabic words for Allah, Mohammad and Ali are mixed with Islamic patterns, calligraphy, art, craft and architecture. This photo is an example of using calligraphy in a mosque in the rural area of Shiraz in Iran. Source: Author

7.2. Islamic architecture

The religious inspiration in art and architecture cannot be denied, as it has helped to produce diversity in arts and architecture in different societies. Grabar states that “*Art has been affected by ideological, social, religious, historical or geographical constraints; this explains why individual civilizations have artistic traditions which differ from each other. Islamic culture is, of course, no exception*” (Grabar, 2000:35). Religion is the most crucial element in traditional

architecture as it carries a universal sense which is understood as a guiding principle idea of a normal society. Religion epitomises the spiritual principles of the entire life of people. The Islamic arts are generally reflected in the world as a spiritual matter in a Quranic form (Nasr, 1972).

Michell believes that architecture is far beyond the history of forms and styles. It is an expression of life as well as a product of the cultural and environmental factors of the people who can you build architecture. Therefore Islamic architecture is the architecture of a range of Muslim people including the rulers and warriors, teachers, saints, travellers, merchants and even the modest family unit (Michell, 1978). The process of Islamic architecture is regarded as inter-cultural transformation. The cultural and specific religious needs of Muslim communities, the political aspiration of the Muslim rulers, and the military successes as much as territorial ambition, even for non-Muslim audiences for technical and practical reasons (Flood, 2000).

Islamic architecture generally aims to hide its principal features behind an unrevealing exterior. Islamic architecture does not change its forms easily according to functional demands, but rather tends to adjust functions into a fixed idea of containing the inner spaces. Therefore it matches the non-directional plan, the tendency to an infinite repetition of individual elements such as bays, cupolas, arches, doorways, columns, courtyards and passages. In many cases, the continuous of using these elements merges the spaces without any specific direction or any specific centre or focus. And if a definite spatial limit such as a terminal wall is reached, the surface is normally designed to stop or slow down the progress of anyone moving through the building throughout the decorative patterns (Grube, 1978).

Some scholars argue that Islamic architecture is a further development of pre-Islamic traditional architecture.

Always and everywhere in the Muslim world, forms of architecture were built that remained basically unaffected by the process of the Islamisation of pre- Islamic cultures; unobserved by Islamic art, these forms were consequently not an expression of Islamic culture but of the cultures from which they were originally derived (Grube, 1978:12)

Grabar mentions some examples of Islamic monuments which are based on pre-Islamic types. He states the *“Ka’ba in Mecca, which became the holiest spot in Islam, the direction (qibla) towards which all Muslims pray and the goal of the pilgrimage (hajj) is a pre-Islamic sanctuary that had been used for centuries by pagan tribes”* (Grabar, 2000:35)

Flood also concurs with the view that most of the architectural elements disseminated in the mosques of Damascus, Medina and restoration of the *haram* in Mecca and probably other parts which were erected in the early eighth century, are from pre-Islamic architecture of Syria and Byzantium (Flood, 2000).

Michell (1978) also remarks that *“Islamic architecture is a true expression of a rich culture that has unified countries as far apart as Spain and Java, Central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, over some thousands years and more”* (Michell, 1978:7).

Believing in one God or *Tawhid* is the core message of Islam, which unifies all Muslims. This unity has been a base element in all aspects of Islamic culture and civilisation. The foundations of Islamic arts and generally of Islamic thought, expression and behaviour, have continuously drawn on this central belief. The study of architectural structures in the Islamic world covers considerable space, dealing with other significant arts and crafts such as calligraphy, textiles, woodworks, ceramics, glassware, metalwork and painting (Ali, 1999).

Madden reveals the symbolic meaning beyond decoration in Islamic arts. He argues that decoration is always symbolic in nature as it is fundamental to all traditional art, but not as something added as an afterthought. The infinite pattern in Islamic art as well as the arabesque and stylized calligraphy all have magnificent symbolic functions. These symbolic functions come to mind in forms of spiritual concepts such as transcendence, infinity and unity. The infinite pattern plays a strong prominent role in Islamic art (Madden, 1976).



Figure 7.4. There are some unique Islamic patterns painted by hand inside the Zangi Poor Mosque in the rural area of Jacobabad in Baluchistan. The artist who created this picture has expressed his religious thoughts and revealed the complete unity in the diversity of Allah. The important fact in this picture is that all individual parts of the patterns are painted differently, although they look similar. They have all been done by hand in a highly professional manner. Source: Author

The essence of infinite unity specifies many forms of Islamic arts. These forms can be found in geometrical patterns, vegetal and floral arabesques which appear in woven crafts or moulded into stucco walls of a mosque. The Islamic unifying forms are also wrought in ceramic tiles and wrapped around the inner and outer sides of the domes of the mosque. The essence of the arabesque, which is a constant repetition of a particular pattern, suggests its infinite continuation. In a spiritual way Muslim artists have emphasised the infinity of Allah and his

complete unity in complexity. Arabesque can be mentioned as a form of Islamic art that exhibits unity in multiplicity, as all the parts are subordinated to the pattern and the individual parts are not accentuated. Therefore, it can be realised that Islamic artists have expressed the fact that their religion is independent of any historical happenings or occasions in other parts of the world and they have revealed the complete unity in the diversity of Allah (Madden, 1975).

7.3. The mosque, the house of God

The Mosque, or in Arabic *masjid*, is defined as a Muslim's place of worship. Masjid as a word is the name of the location (*ism makan* in Arabic) for prostration and it comes from the root word *sa'ja'da*, meaning to prostrate. According to the Oxford English dictionary mosques generally consist of an area reserved for communal prayers (*sala*). A mosque is frequently described as a domed building with a minaret, a niche (*mihrab*) or other structure indicating the direction of Mecca, a platform for preaching (*minbar*), and a place, mainly courtyard, where water is provided for the obligatory ablutions before prayer (Soanes and Stevenson, 2003). Many scholars have commented that a mosque as building indicates the presence of Islam. "*The building known as a mosque is permanently and appropriately associated with the presence of Islam* (Grabar, 2000:40)

Mosque as a noun and the meaning of the place or location of prostration can refer to a place of worship without any religious division, even to non-Islamic shelter. Grabar (2000) states that the Arabic word *masjid* appears in the Quran frequently to describe all kinds of places of prostration (Grabar, 2000).

In the Quran (17:7) God talks about the Children of Israel (*bani Isra'el*) with regard to with destruction of a temple in Jerusalem as a punishment inflicted upon the children of Israel for their tyranny and arrogance by using the exact Arabic word masjid (mosque) for their place of worship or temple.

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِنَفْسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعَذُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوءُوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبِّرُوا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيرًا (17:7)

According to Grabar (2000), *“The special case of the mosque was not technically a requirement of the faith at its inception but which became a constantly evolving requirement and sign of Muslim presence”* (Grabar, 2000:35).

The place of prostration may have a building or not. According to Hillenbrand, The term *masjid* (mosque) *“does not necessarily connote a building of any kind”* (Hillenbrand, 2000: 31). Therefore any building or place can be a mosque for Muslims. The prophet Mohammad said that *“Wherever you pray, that place is a mosque (masjid)”* (Hillenbrand, 2000: 31). The principle function of the mosque is to provide a place for prayer as the second pillar of Muslim religious obligations. Hattstein and Delius confirm that the second pillar of Islam is obligatory liturgical prayer or *salat*, which must be recited in Arabic five times a day. The *salat* can be done wherever a Muslim happens to be, but it is strongly advised that at least some of the faithful prayers should be performed in mosques (Hattstein and Delius, 2000).

The mosque lies at the very heart of Islamic architecture. It is an apt symbol of the faith which it serves. That symbolic role was understood by Muslims at a very early stage, and played its part in the creation of suitable visual markers for the building: dome, minaret, mihrab, and minbar among others. The mosque is of course the principal religious building of Islam (Hillenbrand, 1994:5).



Figure 7.5. View of the royal mosque in Isfahan in Iran which is also called Masjed-e-Shah and Masjed-e Emam. According to Chardin (1927), the mosque was started in 1590, although Shah Abbas I put great pressure on the builders and architects to finish the building, but sadly he died before the mosque was completed (Chardin, 1927). Source: Author

In the bigger towns and cities there is normally a large mosque for reading the Friday or communal prayers. The communal prayer space, ideally dominated by male Muslims, is known as a *masjid al-jami* or the community mosque, which is sometimes expressed as the Friday mosque as well (Grabar, 2000).

Segregation of genders and domination of the mosque by male Muslim prayers, particularly in strict religious areas like Baluchistan, seems to have originated in Islamic early sources. Hughes reports a Hadith of Prophet Mohammad: "*Do not prevent your women from coming to the Masjids, but their homes are better for them*" (Hughes, 1895:330). Mosques also often have an educational function as well. There are normally some places inside the Friday mosque or in the attached buildings called *madrassa* for both learners and teachers (*shaykhs*). The mosque is traditionally used to provide a place for men firstly to perform the obligatory daily prayers, then to rest, socialise and take time out from a busy day in order to meditate and even to eat (Gillette, 2000).

7.4. Development of mosque architecture

It is hard to describe the features of the early mosques and investigate their architectural forms and building materials, as according to Hillenbrand no mosque survives from the early decades in its original state (Hillenbrand, 1994). The

notion of the mosque as a location began when Prophet Mohammad gathered the community into his house in Medina, where it was not so much a religious space as one restricted to the Muslim community (Grabar, 2000).

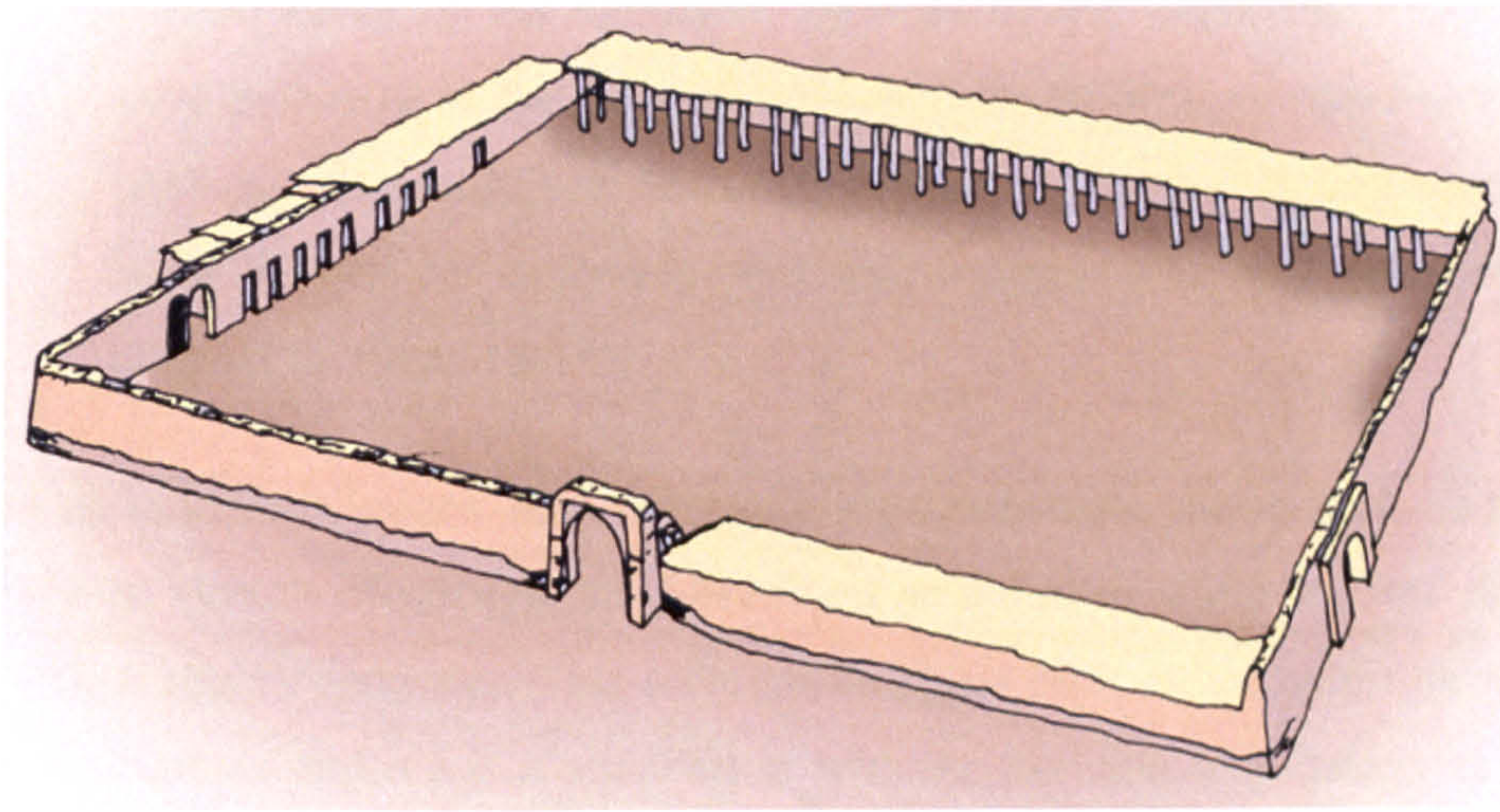


Figure 7.6. This picture illustrates the structure of the Prophet Mohammad's house in Medina. The house has been mentioned in many sources as domestic architecture rather than religious. Source: (illustration based on a drawing by Hillenbrand, 1994:39)

At the beginning of Islam the primary requirement of a mosque was a large enough space to contain the whole population of a Muslim settlement. The walls, or at the beginning simply a ditch, were used to separate the mosque from the surrounding lands or other houses. This space which was dedicated to a mosque was positioned towards the *qibla*, or direction for prayer, towards Mecca, by being provided with a deep covered area on the appropriate side (Grabar, 2000).

Several different types of early mosques are found in the Negev region in southern Israel (Palestine), which were constructed with a few stones arranged to mark the main area for praying and mihrab as the direction of *iqbla* (Avni, 1994). The existence of open mosques clearly indicates the principle of the mosque in the early years of Islam as a simple place where Muslims could prostrate in prayer. There was no need for an elaborate building to be identified as a mosque. These kinds of open mosques still exist today in

different parts of the Islamic world, particularly in rural areas of Baluchistan. A simple rural mosque without a building can be noticed in a statement by Creswell:

The first mosques in the great hires, or half nomadic encampments of the conquest, such as Basra, Kufa and Fustat, were primitive in the extreme, and in Syria the first mosques were churches that had been converted or merely divided. In fact there is no reason for believing that any mosque was built as such (Creswell, 1968: 15-16).

Avni also acknowledges that the early mosques were associated with the widespread system of settlement of Muslim communities which existed during the sixth to eighth centuries. This includes mosques built either within urban or rural settlements and it has a connection with the nomadic population as well (Avni, 1994).



Figure 7.7. An open mosque in Palestine (Nahal Oded region). These open mosques were made from nearby stones. The higher stone in the opposite wall of the doorway works as mihrab, showing the direction of the qibla. Source: Avni (1974: 83-100).

The conversions of existing structures were convenient in the short term as they were not an adequate solution to the need of a rapidly growing religious community. The earliest custom-built mosques, which were based on local

traditional buildings, were built at the same time that the non-Islamic buildings were being converted into mosques (Hillenbrand, 1994).

The formal communal mosque (*masjid – al- Jami*) or the Friday mosque was established by the end of the 7th century (Grabar, 2000). The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque of Damascus are mentioned as the first major Islamic monuments which were built during the Umayyad dynasty (661-750). Damascus, as capital of the first Islamic empire, was deliberately placed to draw inspiration from the other major cultures in the Umayyad time such as Roman or Byzantine culture, Egypt and North Africa, and also from Mesopotamia and Persia, the eastern neighbours, which comprised the accumulated heritage of Babylon and Assyria as well as the Sasanians, Parthians and Achaemenids. Arabia was the source of religious and political inspirations as well (Hillenbrand, 2000). In the case of adaptation of non-Islamic buildings to mosques, Flood states that the Great Mosque of Damascus is a good example of converting a church into a mosque with several changes by order of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid I on the site of the former church of St. John in 715 (Flood, 1997).

The Abbasids (750- 1258) were in control of a vast empire which covered the area between Western Central Asia and North Africa. Baghdad in Iraq was known as the *Medinat al-Salam* (the City of Peace), and was the capital of the Abbasid empire. The Mosque of Abu Dulaf and the Great Mosque were two magnificent mosques which were built in Samara between years 847 and 861. Special techniques were developed in constructing different kinds of new buildings, including mosques, palaces and administrative edifices, with advanced decorations such as ceramics, textiles, metalwork, glass and rocky crystal, painting, calligraphy and music (Ali, 1999).

The Great Mosque of Sana'a can be mentioned as one of the earliest surviving mosques which is based on Yamani traditional architecture. It has been confirmed that this mosque is the oldest surviving Islamic mosque which was laid out by

direct instructions from the Prophet, and since that the mosque has not been substantially modified (Lewcock, 1978).



Figure 7.8. The Great Mosque of Sana'a in Yemen. Source: Germen (1990).

In the Umayyad period the great mosques with antique architectural forms were located in the major cities such as Damascus, Jerusalem and Medina. It seemed that the standard mosque style was spread throughout the Abbasid (750- 1258) domains (Blair and Bloom 2000). Since the Abbasid period mosques have frequently been designed in glorious forms in different parts of Islamic urban lands. Over time some other requirements were introduced, such as a *mihrab* or niche to emphasize the direction of *qibla*, a *minbar*, or stepped pulpit, a stand reserved for the *Imam* or the ruler for giving speeches, and a minaret, which served to denote the Muslim presence and to call the faithful to prayer (Grabar, 2000).

In parallel to urban mosques, the basic open mosque still exists in rural areas such as in Baluchistan. The features of the mosques can be different, but their principle, concept and symbolic meaning are the same.

According to Ali, Islamic architecture encourages us to go beyond the external features and simple structural appearances. Islamic architecture contains various creative methods and aesthetic perceptions. A Muslim architect or a rural builder who designs a mosque has a meaning in mind, more than simply creating a large space, as it contains symbolic or functional features in harmony with its shape and an arrangement intended for a useful order (Ali, 1999).

7.5. Typology of rural mosques in Baluchistan

Mosques in Baluchistan can be understood as the product of rural and tribal culture which is also mixed with religious beliefs. Ahmad and Hart have investigated how the concept of Islamic unity is expressed in tribal societies. They found a strong connection between Pukhtunwali, the tribal law of the Pathun or Pashtoon tribes of Baluchistan, Islamic law and how it has influenced the forms of architecture. As the Pukhtun tribes accepted Islam without any doubts or questions, there was no conflict between their tribal law and Islamic law. Therefore both tribal and Islamic institutions are the focus of life in every settlement and village. Ahmad and Hart state that

the unity of Pukhtunwali (code of the Pukhtuns) and Islam are symbolised and expressed in village social life by the physical juxtaposition of the mosque and the Hujra (village guest-house)
(Ahmad and Hart, 1984:312).

In a common intellect most of these defined qualities were commemorated within traditional Islamic architecture in urban centres. Baluchistan is mostly rural and its architecture could be classified as rural or “primitive architecture”. The term primitive Islam was defined by Creswell as direct transportation from the Arabian Peninsula, unaffected by contact with complex society (Creswell, 1989). Marinos remarks that “*The (sic) Islamic architecture has its origin in primitive beginnings*

of the folk buildings. The idea of the mosque starts from the dwelling house” (Marinos, 2001:3796).

While the phase of primitive Islamic architecture may have lasted in Arabia, it however spread to more isolated areas (Horton, 1991). The simple primitive artworks, according to Hegel (1975), “*encourage us to advance beyond them to their meaning which is something wider and deeper than what they are*” (Hegel, 1975:308) Strahan’s statement brings up the final point of increasing the religious concept of primitive art, as he clearly states that “*God is the true hero of the primitive epopees. God is the only type and original of the primitive architecture*” (Strahan, 1866: 308).

This part of the study, therefore, classifies the architecture of mosques in Baluchistan and then introduces some examples of native symbolic minarets. Mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan can be classified into three main groups:

1. Stone marked mosques
2. Short or low wall mosques
3. Permanently roofed mosques

7.5.1. Stoned marked mosques

In these types of mosques stones are used as the main materials to mark a piece of land which is dedicated to a mosque. Occasionally some other materials such as mud, sand, mud brick or fired brick are also used in the construction of these typical mosques, yet they will also be classified as stone marked mosques because of their similarities. These types of mosque are similar to earlier mosques in Islamic culture. Abideen assumes that the early type of mosques, such as the Nahal Oded Mosque in Palestine, were a clearing of gravel surrounded by rocks and stones, with a large piece of stone which was used to mark the mihrab indicating the direction of the Qibla (Abideen, 2008)

Avani (1994) recently observed 12 different types of stone marked mosques throughout the Negev Highland in Palestine. He describes these 12 types of early mosques associated with the widespread system of settlement of Muslim communities which existed during the 11th to 13th centuries.



Figure 7.9 Stone marked mosque in Yamane. Source: Peterson (1999).

Figure 7.10. Modern Bedouin open mosque in Transjordan. Source: Avni (1994).

The stone marked or temporary mosques of Baluchistan were first documented by Landor in the late 19th century. He defines this typical mosque as a temporary prayer spot where good Baluchi Muslims expressed their religious ideas by saying their prayers at sunrise or sunset at an open-air mosque. He states that Brahuis tribal people have no actual mosques for prayer, but worship in an open hand mosques in connection with the notion of mosque merely as “a place of worship” (Landor, 1902).



Figure 7.11. A late 19th century Baluch man praying in a stone marked mosque. Source: Landor (1902:362).

Baluchi stone marked mosques can still be found in different parts of Baluchistan much the same as they were centuries ago. The stone marked mosques are mainly located by the main roads so as to be visible and to be used by people passing by.



Figure 7.12. A Baluch man praying in a stone marked mosque in Baluchistan. This mosque is located by the main road of Quetta-Chaman. Source: Author

The structure of the recent stone marked mosques in Baluchistan is very similar to what Landor described in the 19th century. He notices that these typical mosques can be found in various sizes and shapes but frequently in circular shapes or regularly curved. He discovered that some of the mosques, possibly made by caravan men, are just big enough for one man to say his prayers, but they are mainly made in bigger sizes to contain several people. Stone is the main material,

but if stones were not obtainable, sand or mud banked up the mosques, according to Landor (1902).

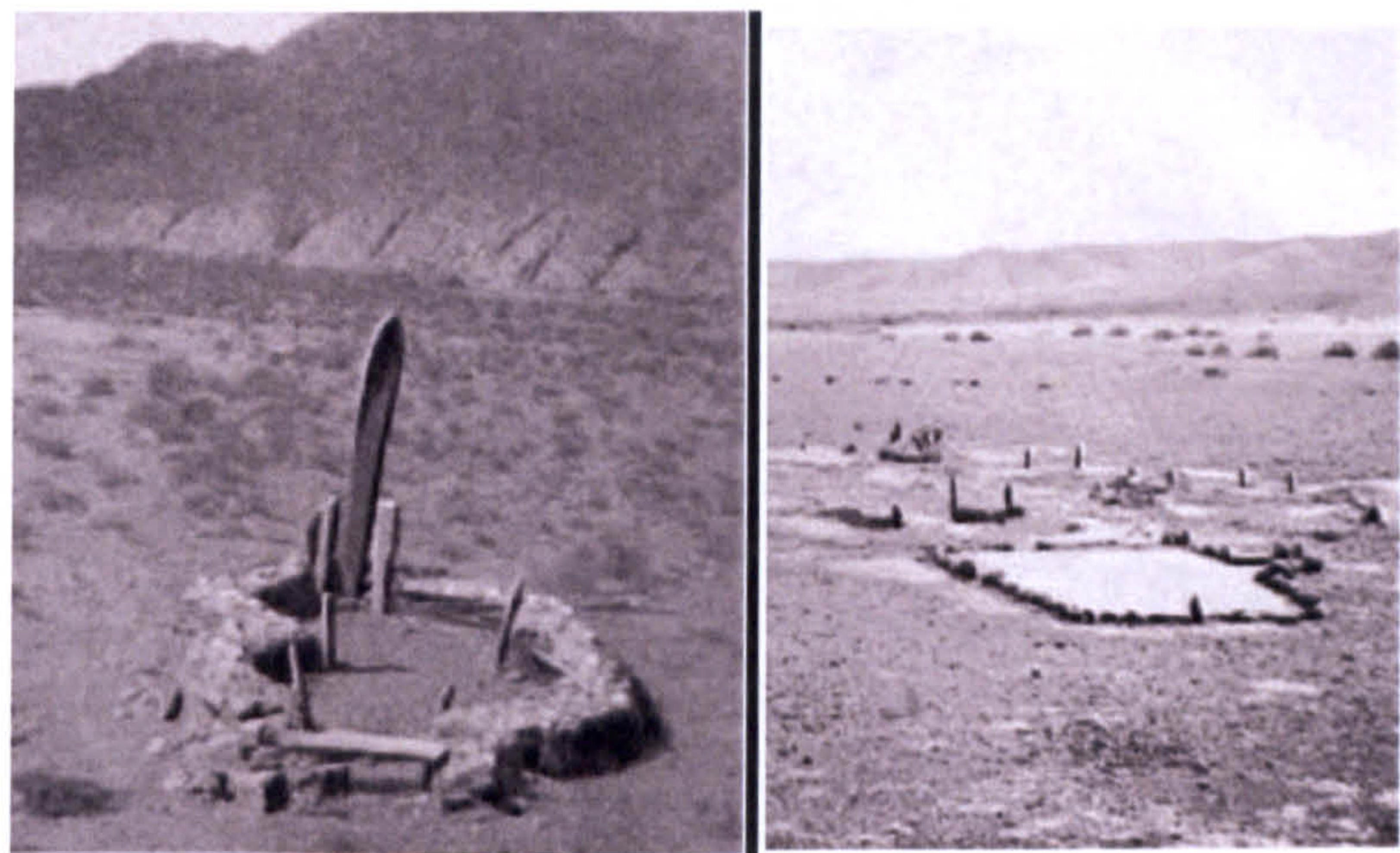


Figure 7.13. Two different stone marked mosques observed in the late 19th century by Landor. Source: Landor (1902:364).

There is normally a piece of stone, rock and in some cases wood, which is higher than the other stones, acting as mihrab. These higher stones are normally located to the west towards Mecca, to mark the exact direction of the Ka’aba. There is a passage to enter the stone marked mosque, which in many cases is marked with a row of stones on the top of each other, representing minarets. The inside of the stone marked mosque is always cleared of all stones and made as smooth as possible.

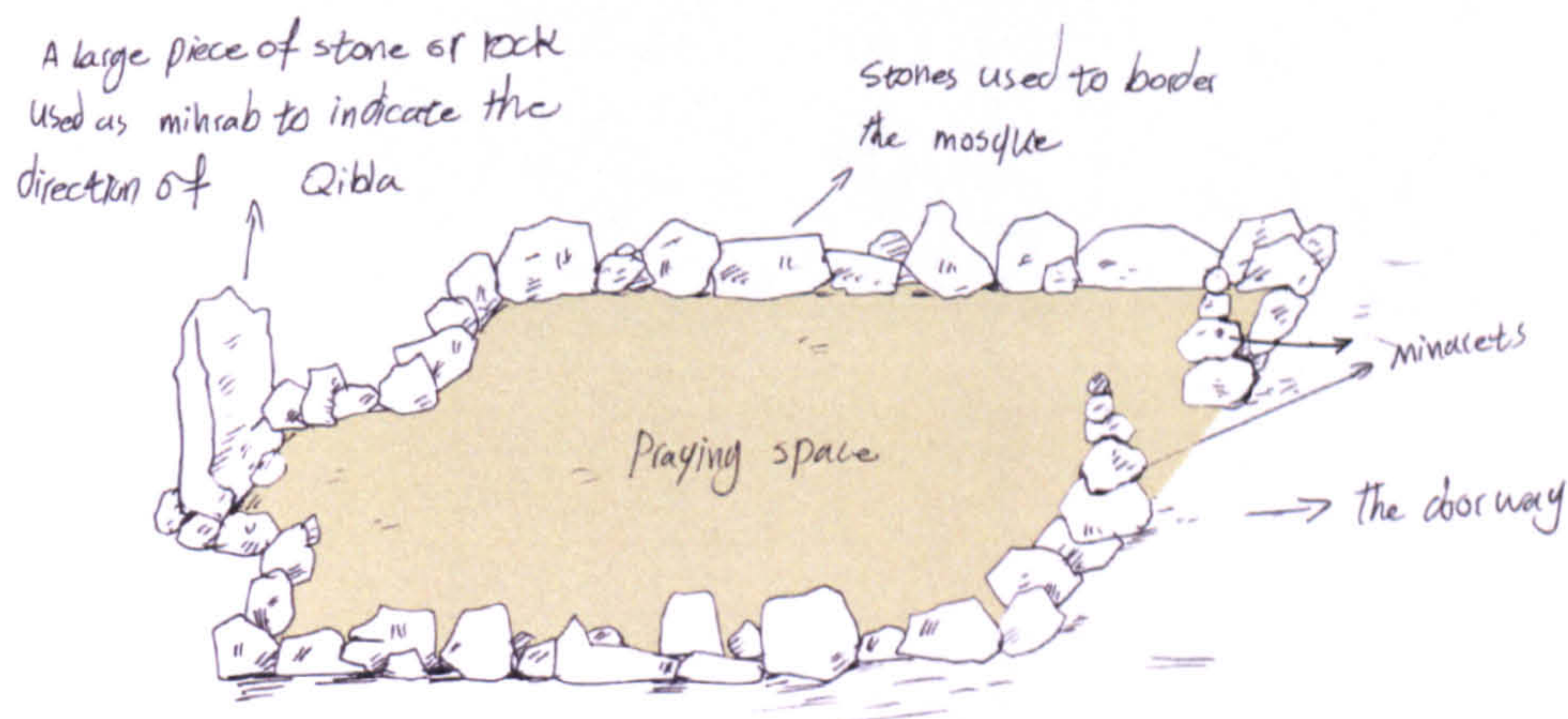


Figure 7.14. Structure of stone marked mosques which are largely found in rural and tribal areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author



Figure 7.15. Stones marked mosque by the main road of Quetta- Chaman in a rural area of Baluchistan. Source: Author



Figure 7.16. Stone marked mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan made with stones. The higher stone opposite the doorway is the mihrab of the mosque, indicating the direction of qibla. Source: Author



Figure 7.17. Marked mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan made with mud. According to local people, if there is nothing in the mosque to signify the mihrab, the qibla is on the side opposite to the doorway. Source: Author



Figure 7.18. Stone marked mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan. The higher stone by the doorway signifies the minaret and the circular form opposite the doorway is the mihrab of the mosque indicating the direction of qibla. Source: Author

7.5.2. Short or low wall mosques

The short or low wall mosque is based on the architecture of the temporary houses or temporary shelters of semi-nomadic people. Short or low wall mosques are generally associated with the existence of the semi-nomadic tribes in Baluchistan. The structure and foundation of short or low wall mosques are very similar to temporary houses, but they are marked with significant symbolic and decorative elements to be recognisable as mosques. The short or low wall is built with materials such mud, fired bricks or stones and they are continuously repaired, plastered or renewed in some cases, whenever the semi-nomadic people move in.

Mihrabs and minarets are two of the most important religious elements in Baluchi short wall mosques. The mihrab is normally made with half-circular or rectangular forms. Minarets normally stand at both sides of the entrance, but can also be found at the four corners of the mosques and sometimes at the centre of the mihrab as well.

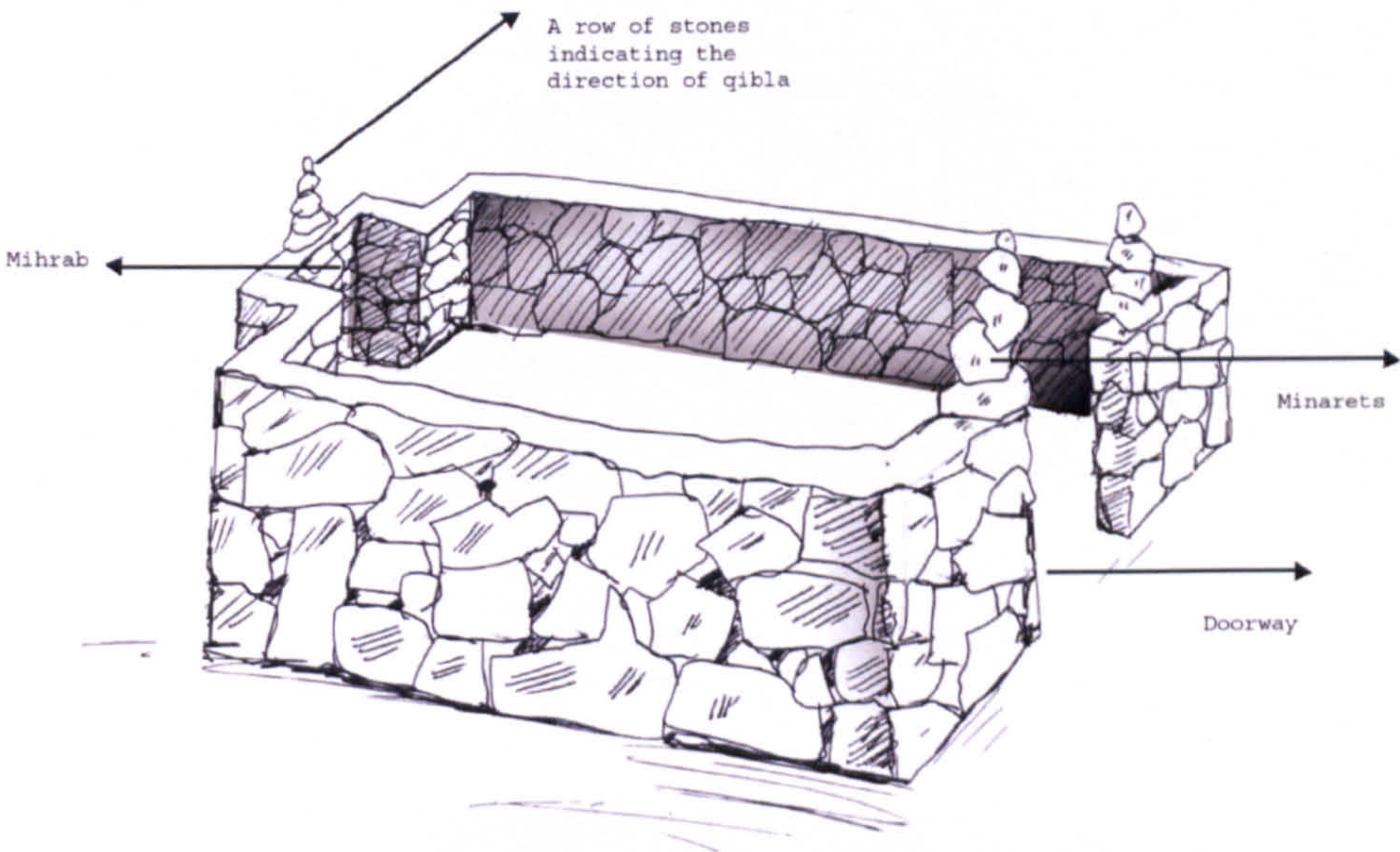


Figure 7.19. Short wall mosque built with stone in a rural area of Baluchistan. Source: Author

Like the stone marked mosque, the short wall mosques are mostly located along the main roads at a distance from the settlements in some cases.



Figure 7.20. Short or low wall mosque located by the main road of Quetta – Sibi. This mosque is made of and plastered with mud. It has minarets and a semi-circular mihrab. The minaret at the centre of the mihrab’s wall is painted white, and it is, in fact, more important than the other four minarets as it shows the direction of qibla axis. Source: Author



Figure 7.21. Short or low wall mosque located by the main road of Quetta- Noshki in a rural area of Baluchistan. This mosque is made of and plastered with mud. It has minarets and a half-circular mihrab. The minaret at the centre of the mihrab is bigger than the other four minarets and is the more important one as it shows the direction of qibla. Source: Author



Figure 7.22. Short or low wall mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan made with stones and sand. This mosque is used by semi-nomadic workers in the rural area of Quetta. There are no minarets or anything indicating the direction of qibla at this mosque. Source: Author



Figure 7.23. Short or low wall mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan made with fired bricks. It has a half-circular mihrab and three minarets located on both sides and at the centre wall of the mihrab. Source: Author



Figure 7.24. Large short or low wall mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan made of fired bricks. It has a fine half-circular mihrab, indicating the direction of qibla, but it has no minarets. Source: Author



Figure 7.25. Short or low wall mosque in a tribal area of Baluchistan made with fired bricks by the main road where water is nearby as well. It has a rectangular mihrab and four manufactured minarets fixed at the four corners of the mosque. Source: Author



Figure 7.26. Large short or low wall mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan made of concrete circular blocks. This mosque is located by the main road of Quetta-Jacobabad. It has a half-circular mihrab, but no minarets. Its fine concrete floor shows that it is built for long term usage. Source: Author

Figure 7.27. Short or low wall mosque located by the main road of Quetta-Nosh in a rural area of Baluchistan. This mosque is made with mud-bricks and plastered with mud as well. It has three minarets and a half-circular mihrab. The minaret at the centre of the mihrab is higher than the other two minarets fixed both sides of the mihrab.



Source: Author



Figure 7.28. Structure of a short or low wall mosque built on a hill in a rural area of Baluchistan. This mosque is made with mud-bricks and is partly plastered with mud as well. It has a unique structure, but three minarets and its rectangular mihrab are recognisable. The minaret at the centre of the mihrab is higher than others minarets fixed on walls around the mosques. Source: Author



Figure 7.29. Short or low wall mosque with a unique circular form built in a rural area of Baluchistan. This mosque is made with mud-bricks and plastered with mud as well. It has a unique structure with ten minarets around the circle. The minaret opposite the doorway is slightly higher than the others, but according to a native man the tree signifies the direction of qibla in this mosque. Source: Author



Figure 7.30. Short or low wall mosque located close to the main road of Dalbandi in a rural area of Baluchistan. This mosque is made with stones and gravel-sand. It has no minaret but the qibla wall is high than the other parts of the mosque. The middle rectangular shape represents the mihrab of the mosque. The candles are occasionally lit inside the mihrab for vows or blessings. Source: Author

7.5.3. Permanent roofed mosques

The structure and the styles of the permanent roofed mosques of Baluchistan are like the stone marked and short wall mosques and are based on local traditional architecture. The building materials used in the construction of permanent roofed mosques are also much the same as the houses. There are two types of roofed mosques; one is a simple structure without iwan and the second type is an elaborate structure with iwan. The type without iwan is the most popular mosque in rural and tribal areas of Baluchistan. The structure of simple roofed mosque, in fact, is the same as the one-room house described in chapter 5.

These typical simple permanent roofed mosques vary in size, and have a front courtyard with flat or thatched roof. Different materials are used in the construction of the simple mosque, including mud bricks and fired bricks, mud, stones, clay tiles, timber and wood. They normally have a packed earth floor covered with straw mats or prayer rugs. In most cases they have no windows; the light and air come from the doorway or from a few holes left for air ventilation in the walls.

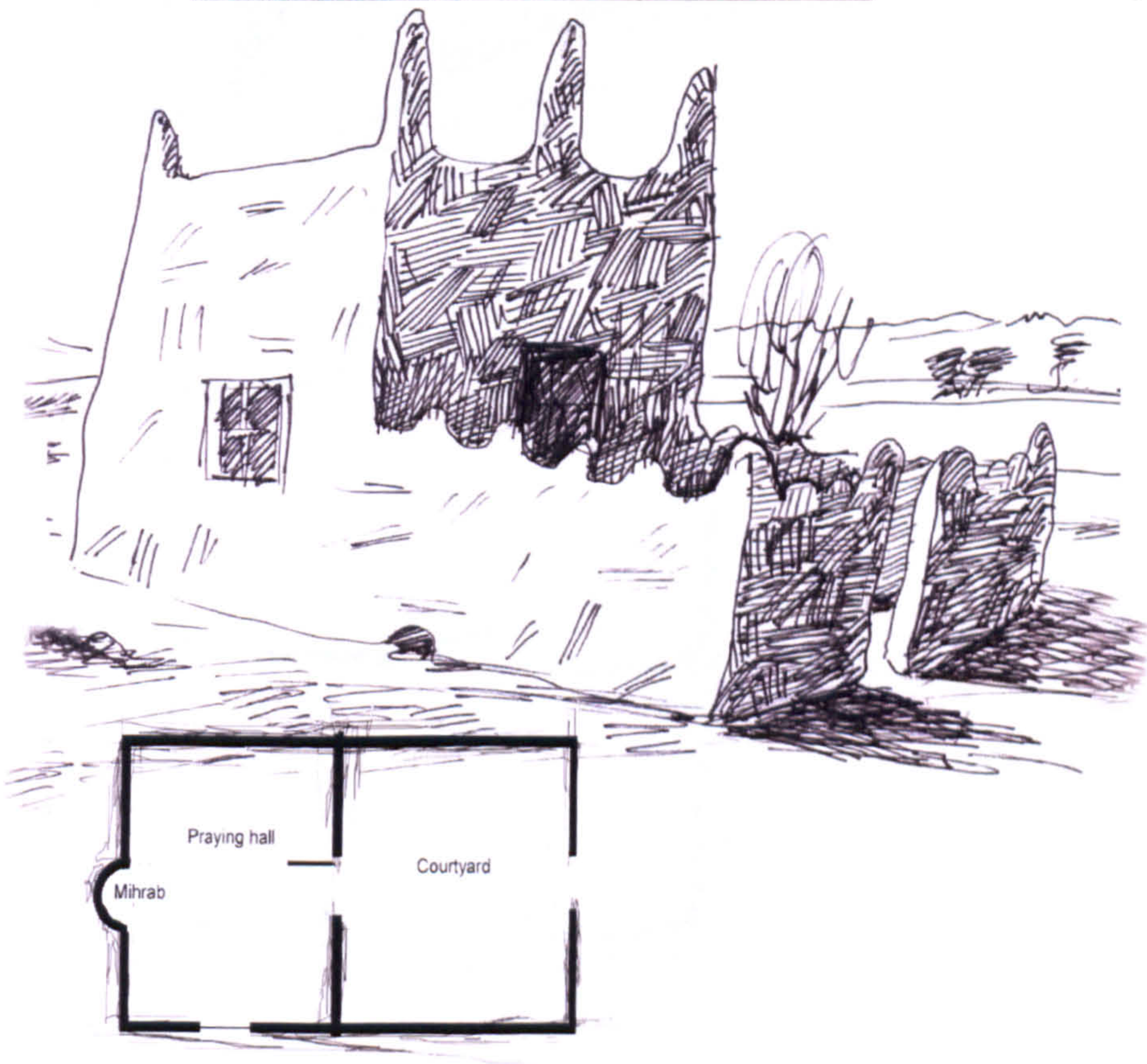
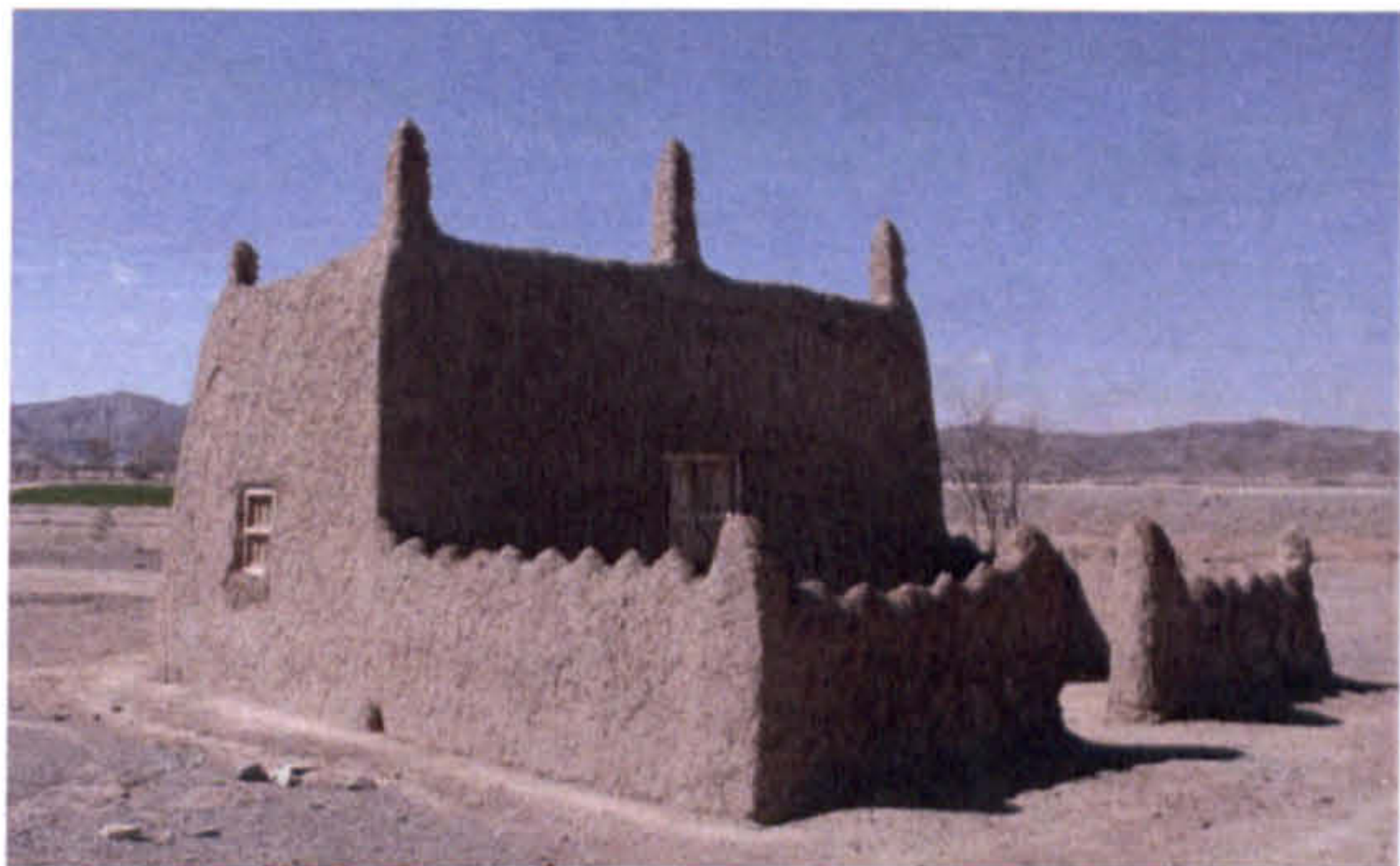


Figure 7.31. Simple permanent roofed mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan. This mosque is built with mud-brick and plaster with chaff-mud. It has five minarets. Four minarets are fixed on the four corners of the roof and one in the middle, on top of the doorway of the mosque. There are also decorative minarets on the short wall of the courtyard. This mosque has a window and a circular mihrab. Source: Author

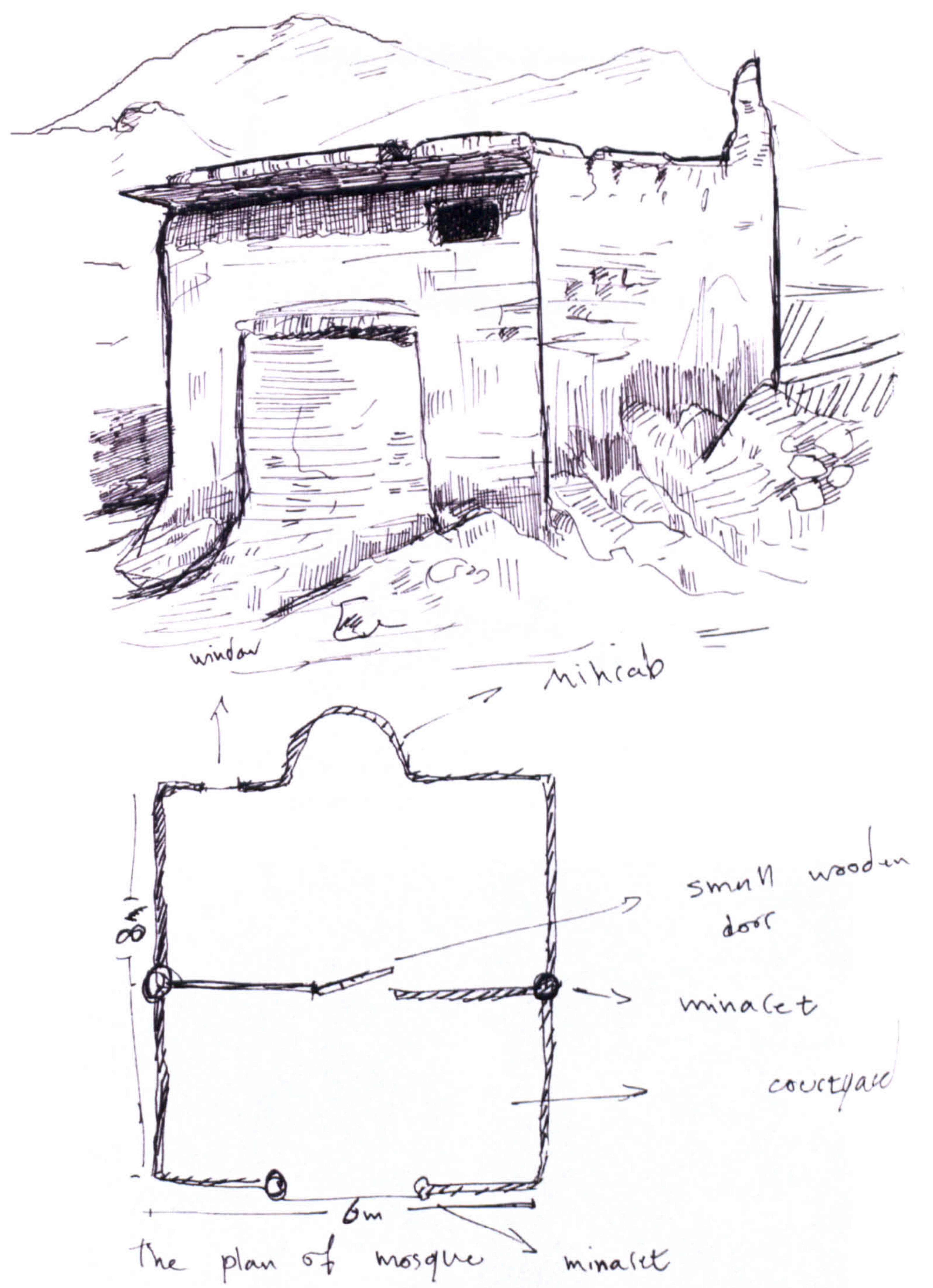


Figure 7.32. Drawing of a permanent roofed mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan. This mosque is built with mud-brick and plastered with chaff-mud. It has one minaret at each corner of the balcony and one small minaret on each side of the doorway. This mosque has a circular mihrab, but it has no window, only a rectangular hole under the roof on the top of the mihrab for air ventilation and light. Source: Author

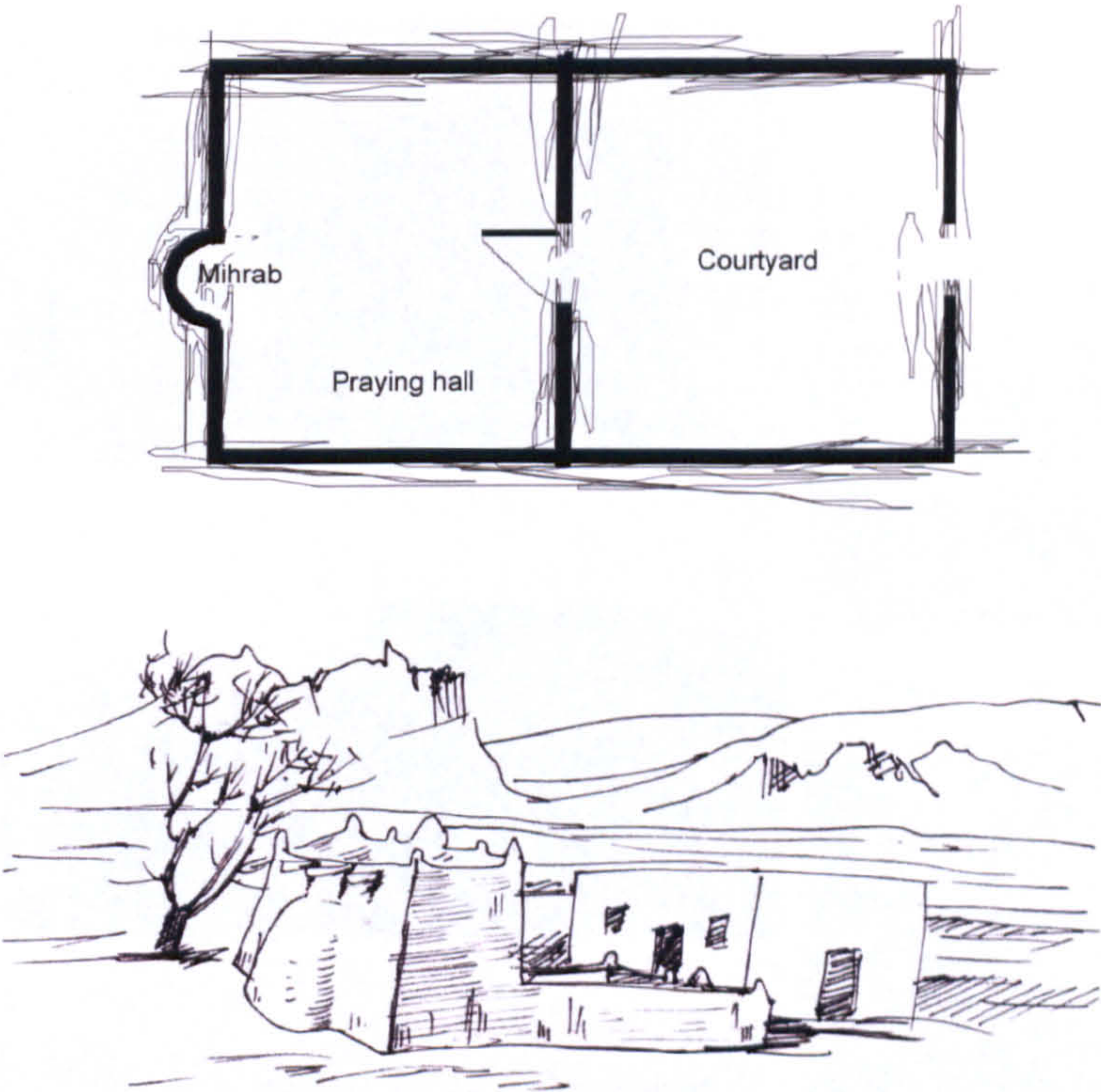


Figure 7.33. Drawing of a permanent roofed mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan. This mosque is built with mud-brick and plastered with chaff-mud. It has six minarets fixed on the roof and four small minarets on the front wall of the courtyard. This mosque has a circular mihrab but it has no windows.



Figure 7.34. Two types of roofed mosques without iwan and courtyards in a rural area of Baluchistan. The right hand side mosque is built with mud-brick and plastered with chaff-mud. It

has three minarets on the roof, and the middle minaret represents the dome of the mosque. It has no courtyard nor windows. The mosque on the left hand side is built with brick, metal beams and is plastered with cement. It has four minarets fixed at the roofline and plastered with cement. The minarets at each corner of the roof are built in different forms and sizes, but the two small minarets in the middle are the same. The triangular form on the top of the doorway represents the dome of the mosque. It also has a courtyard very similar to the stoned marked mosque. Source: Author

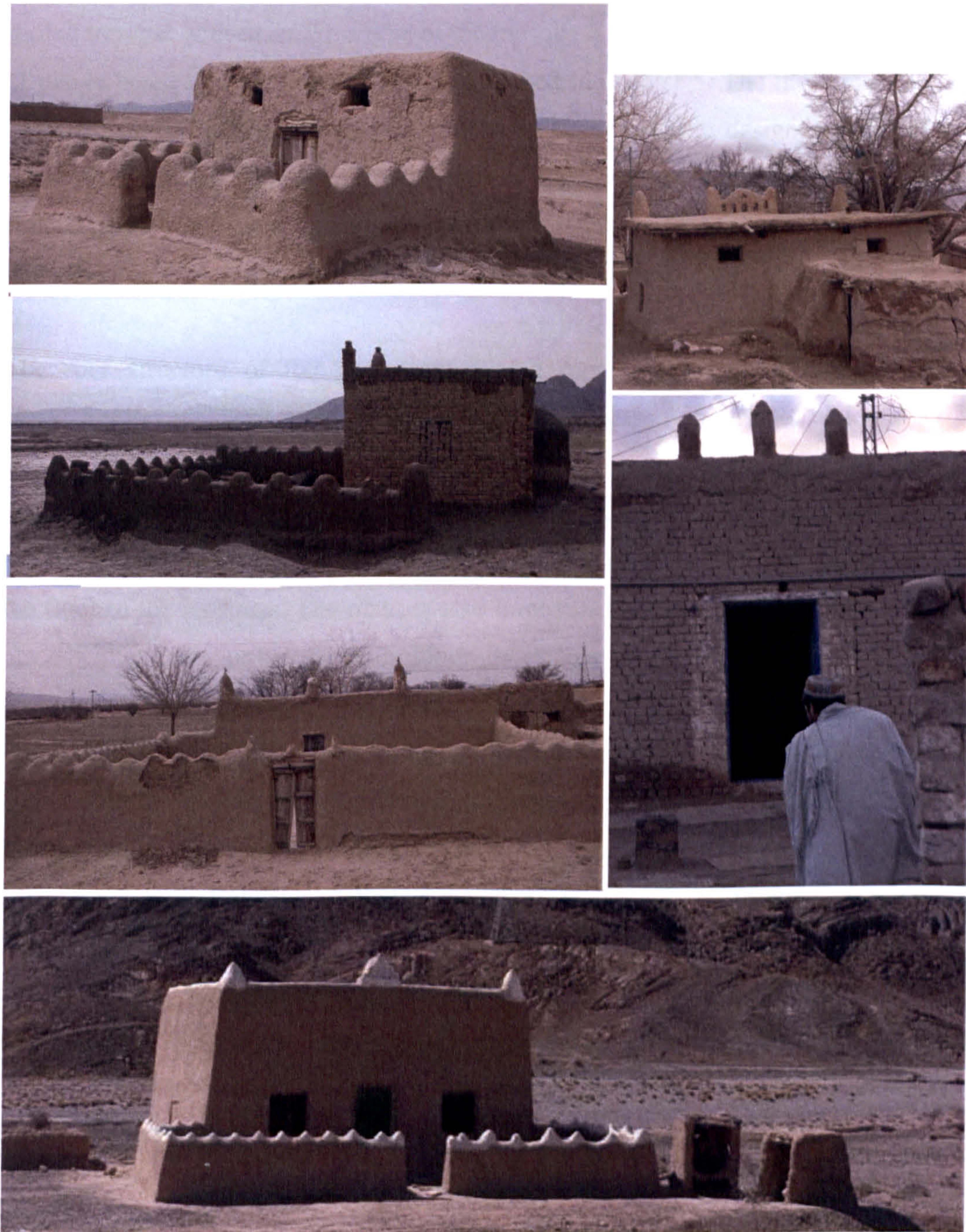


Figure 7.35. Some examples of roofed mosques without iwan in rural areas of Baluchistan. They are mostly built with mud-brick and plastered with chaff-mud and in most cases the mosques have front courtyards. The minarets are fixed on the roofs of these mosques and on the wall of the front courtyard. They mainly have circular mihrabs, but no proper windows. Source: Author

The second type of popular mosque in rural areas of Baluchistan is the permanent roofed mosque with iwan. This type of the mosque is built with the same structure of native houses with iwan which was described in chapter 5. The mosques with iwan are similar to the typical iwan houses in Baluchistan in design and use of materials, but they are full of improvisations and creativeness. It seems that the Baluch people use their imagination to make their mosques sacred places for worship. In many cases there is a lack of actual doors or windows.

The roof structure of the permanent roofed mosque with iwan consists of supporting beams, reed matting, insulation and a waterproof surface, which is a plastic sheet in most cases. The matting provides continuous support for the insulation and surface as well. The mats are mainly made of reeds or straw and are not only used in the structure of the roof but also used as prayer mats to furnish the floor of the mosques. The matting also improves the thermal resistance and is placed either above or below the decking.

Bier (1986) refers to the iwan as an architectural element of Persian Sassanid which became an Abbasid favourite and was soon adopted in different parts of the Muslim lands. The permanent mosques with iwan can be found in rural and tribal area within both Baluch and Pathun people's settlements in different parts of Baluchistan. It is not difficult to distinguish a permanent mosque belonging to a specific tribe in Baluchistan. Baluchi tribes are generally interested in decorating their mosques by fitting a number of minarets around the mosques, particularly on the front roofline as well as by the main entrance to the mosque. The Pashtoon tribes keep their mosques very simple, with fewer decorations (Bier, 1986).

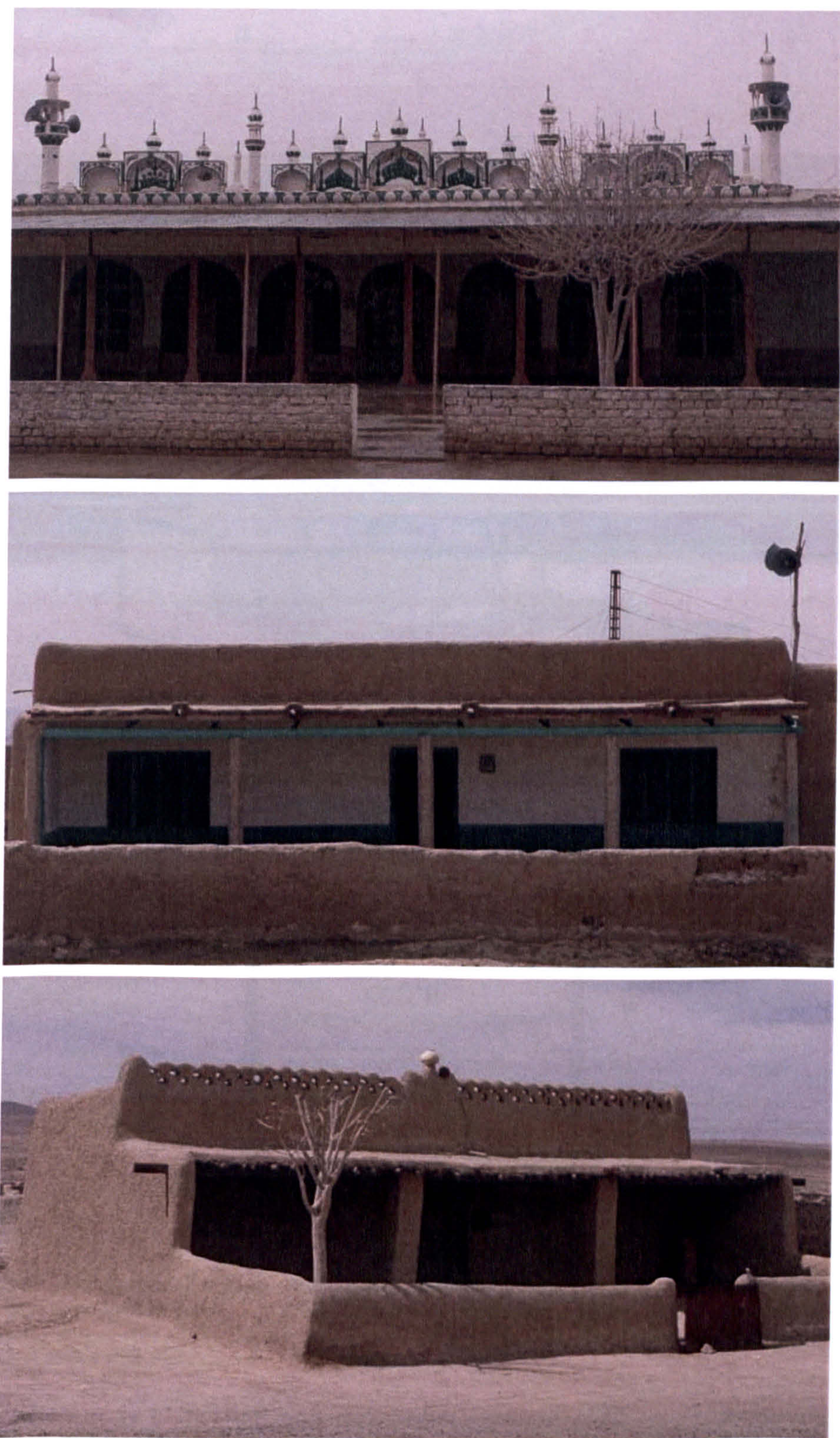


Figure 7.36. Three types of permanent mosque with iwans and courtyards in rural areas of Mastung in Baluchistan. These mosques have a semi-open iwan area and a front courtyard with short wall 1 metre in height. The iwan is supported by various pillars. Source: Author

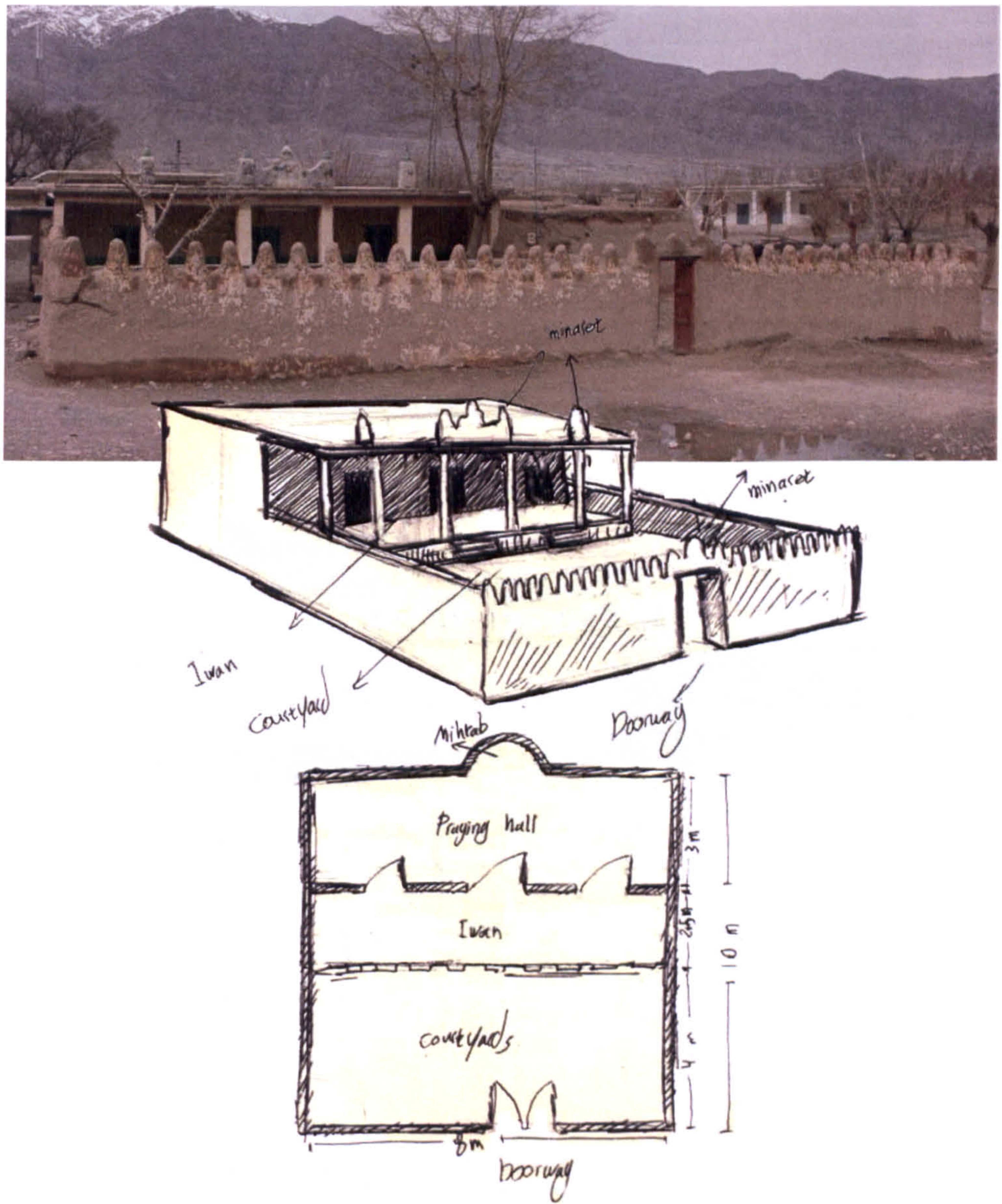


Figure 7.37. Permanent roofed mosque with iwan in the Bluchi rural area of Baluchistan. The structure of this mosque is much the same as the mud-brick houses. The minarets on the front roofline are made with cement and painted white. The magnificent wall of the courtyard of this mosque is also made with mud but plastered with white clay. Source: Author

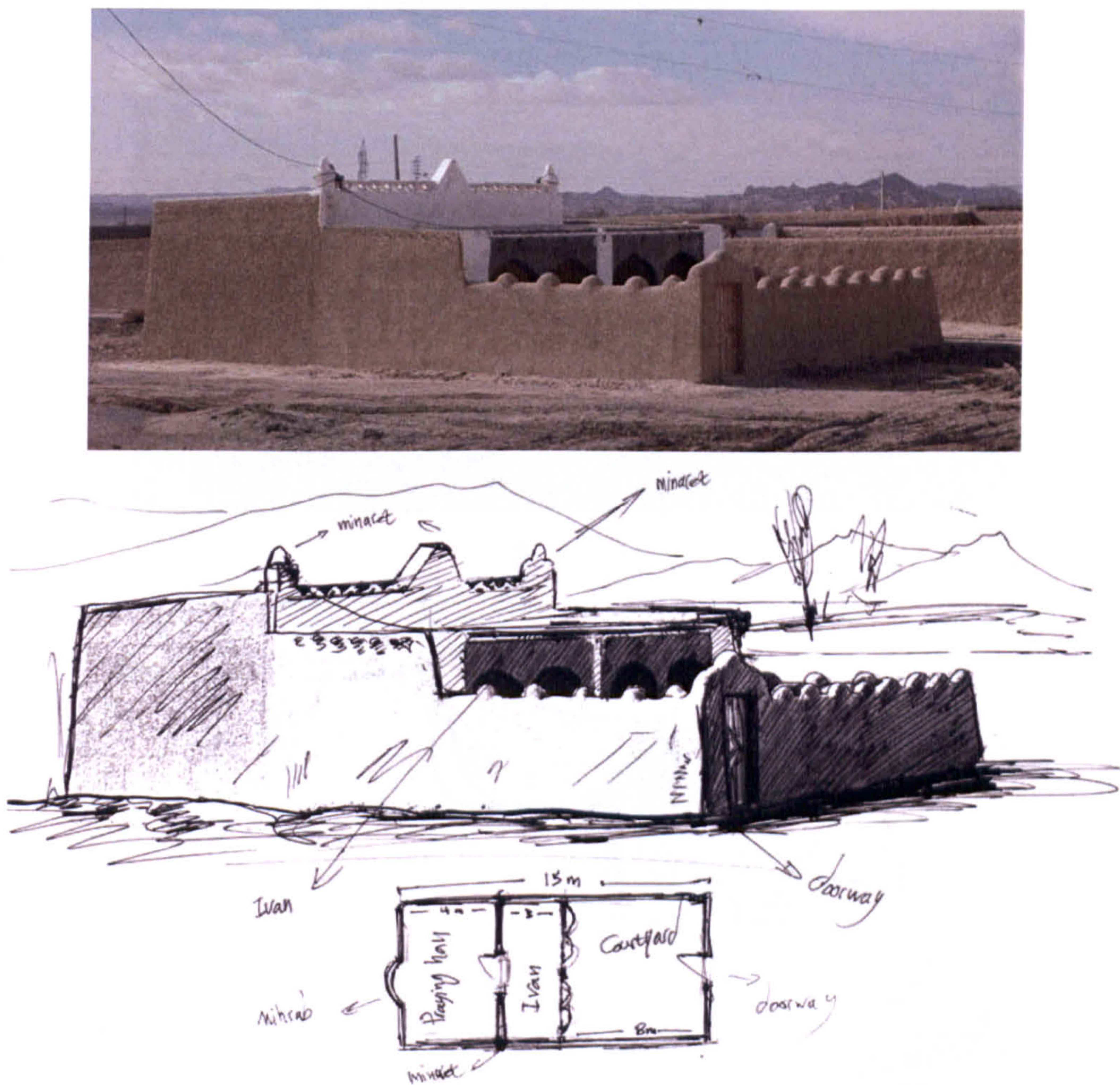


Figure 7.38. Permanent roofed mosque with iwan in the Bluchi rural area of Mastung in Baluchistan. The structure of this mosque is very similar to the structure of the mud-brick houses. This mosque is built of mud brick and plastered with chaff-mud as well, but the minarets on the front of roofline are made with mud brick and plastered with stucco. Two minarets are fixed at each corner of the front roofline and the triangular form in the middle represents the dome. The magnificent wall of the courtyard of this mosque is also made with mud but plastered with white clay. Source: Author

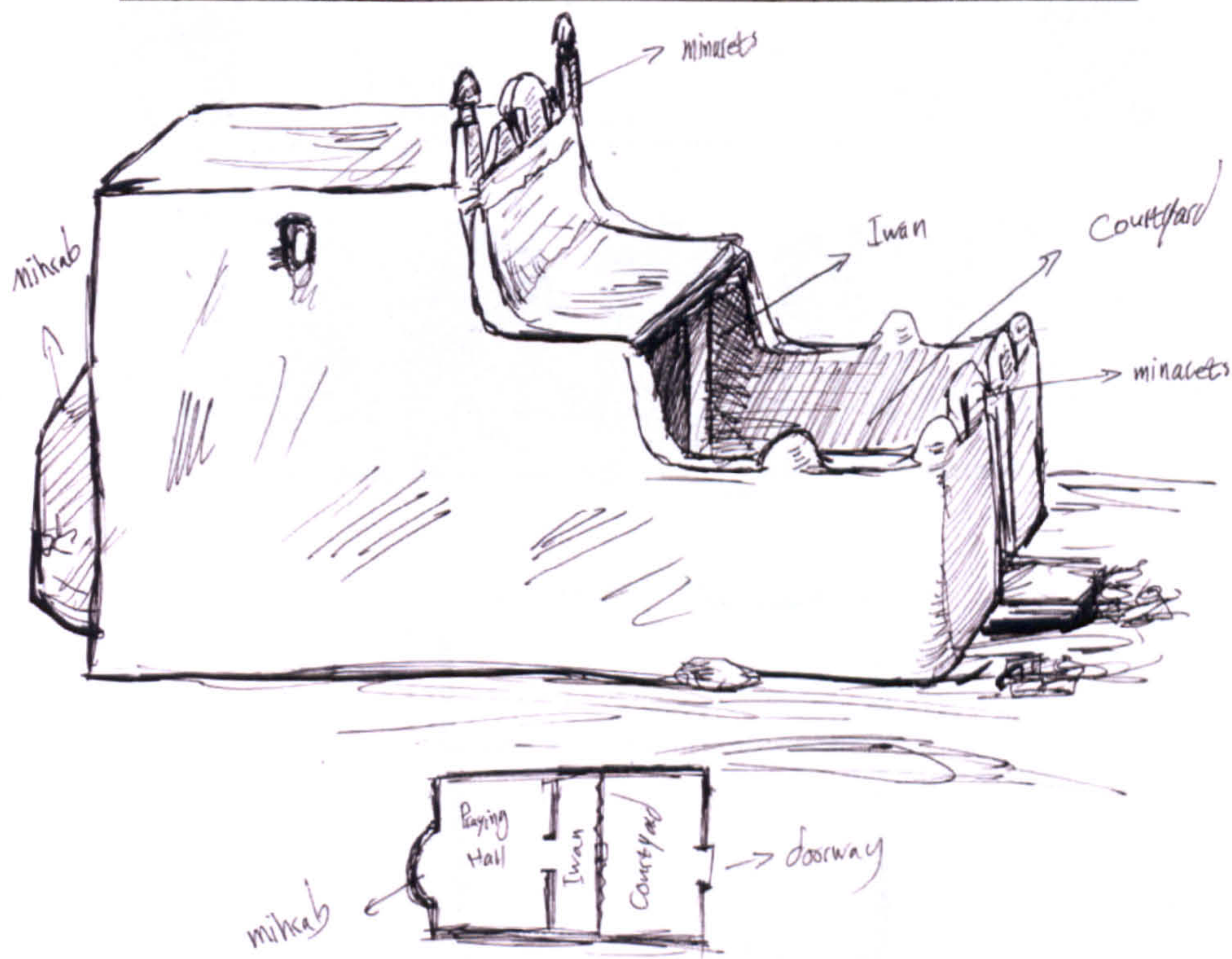


Figure 7.39. Permanent roofed mosque with iwan in the Bluchi rural area of Khuzdar. This mosque is the smallest mosque (5m x 3m including the prayer hall, courtyard, and iwan) that I saw in Baluchistan as it was initially built only for the five to six houses of the Baluchi settlement near the mosque. It is built with mud brick and plastered with a mixture of sand, chaff and mud. It has four minarets fixed on each corner of the roofline and both sides of the doorway. The minarets are made with fired brick and plastered with stucco. The half-circular shape in the middle of the roofline symbolises the dome of the mosque and the two other triangular forms are decorative pieces. It has a semi-circular mihrab. There are six other curved shapes on the wall of the courtyard which signify the mosque, according to native people. Source: Author

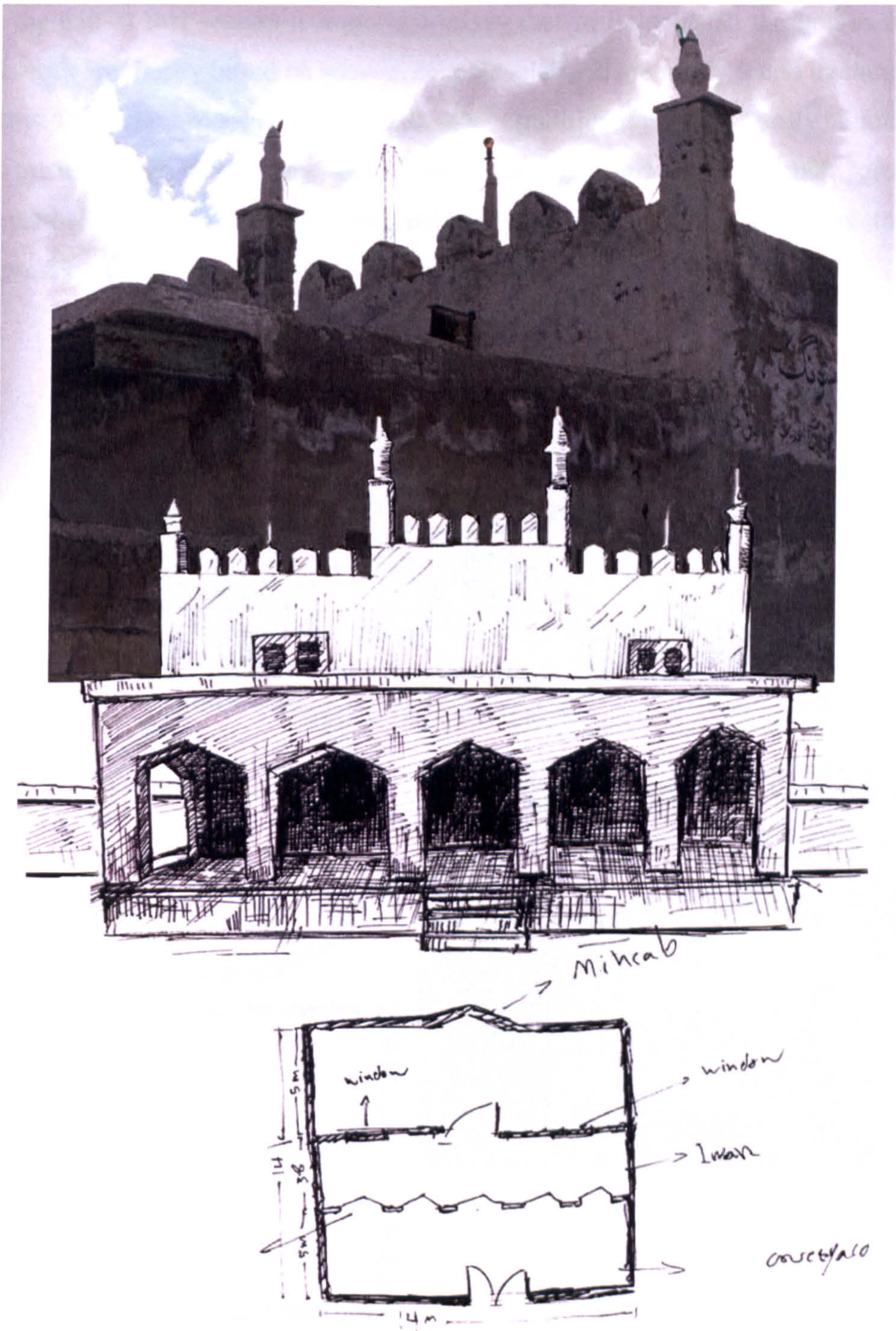


Figure 7.40. Modern permanent roofed mosque with iwan in the rural area of Mastung in Baluchistan. The structure of this mosque is different from the normal traditional mud-brick houses. This mosque is built with brick and metal beams and plastered with cement. In harmony with the triangular mihrab, the arches of the iwan and the decorative pieces between the minarets on the roofline are built in triangular form. Four cubic minarets are fixed on the roofline and plastered with cement. Source: Author

At the end of this section it important to say that in Baluchistan the houses and mosques are mostly based on squares or rectangles and are rarely found in circular forms. Domed mosques as we know them in a traditional way can hardly be found in urban areas, while they are almost absent in rural and nomadic areas. Nevertheless, Baluch people have their own magnificent way to show their expression of the characteristic elements of the mosque.

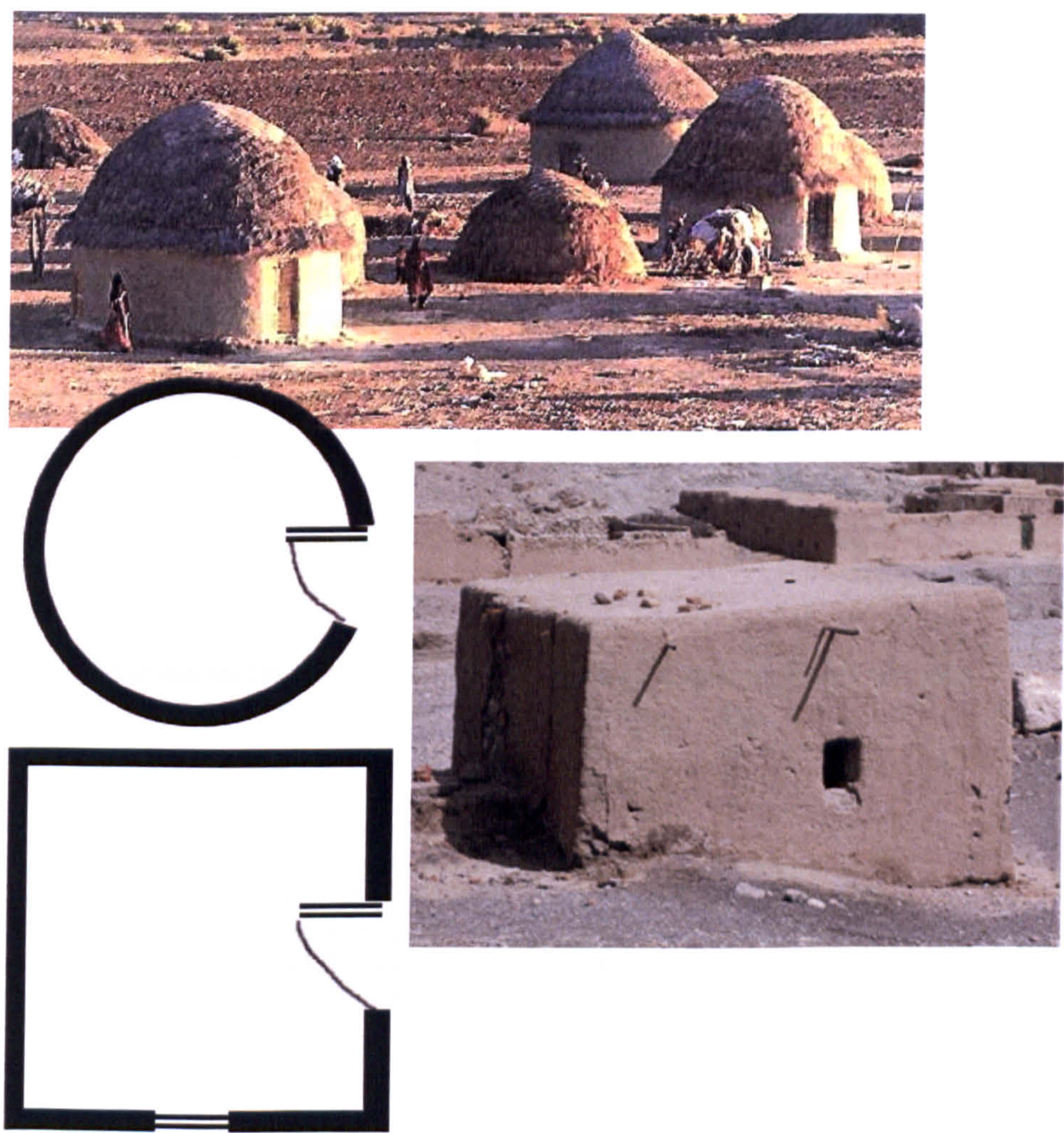


Figure 7.41. Plan of two different houses in square and circle forms in Baluchistan. The top photo shows a Baluchi village with round mud walls and a thatch roof composed of reeds in Baluchistan. The bottom photo shows a one-room house on a square basement in the rural area of Quetta. Source of top photo: Wegner (1985).

The changing pattern of spatial configuration of mosques in different parts of Baluchistan illustrates how the elements of the mosque such as the dome

contribute toward the interior space in highly developed Islamic urban areas and some parts of urban areas of Baluchistan. In rural areas of Baluchistan the domes and minarets are used as decorative pieces to signify the mosque, without contributing toward the spaces. The space moves from a physical enclosure to an abstract flat space in semi-nomadic and nomadic mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan.

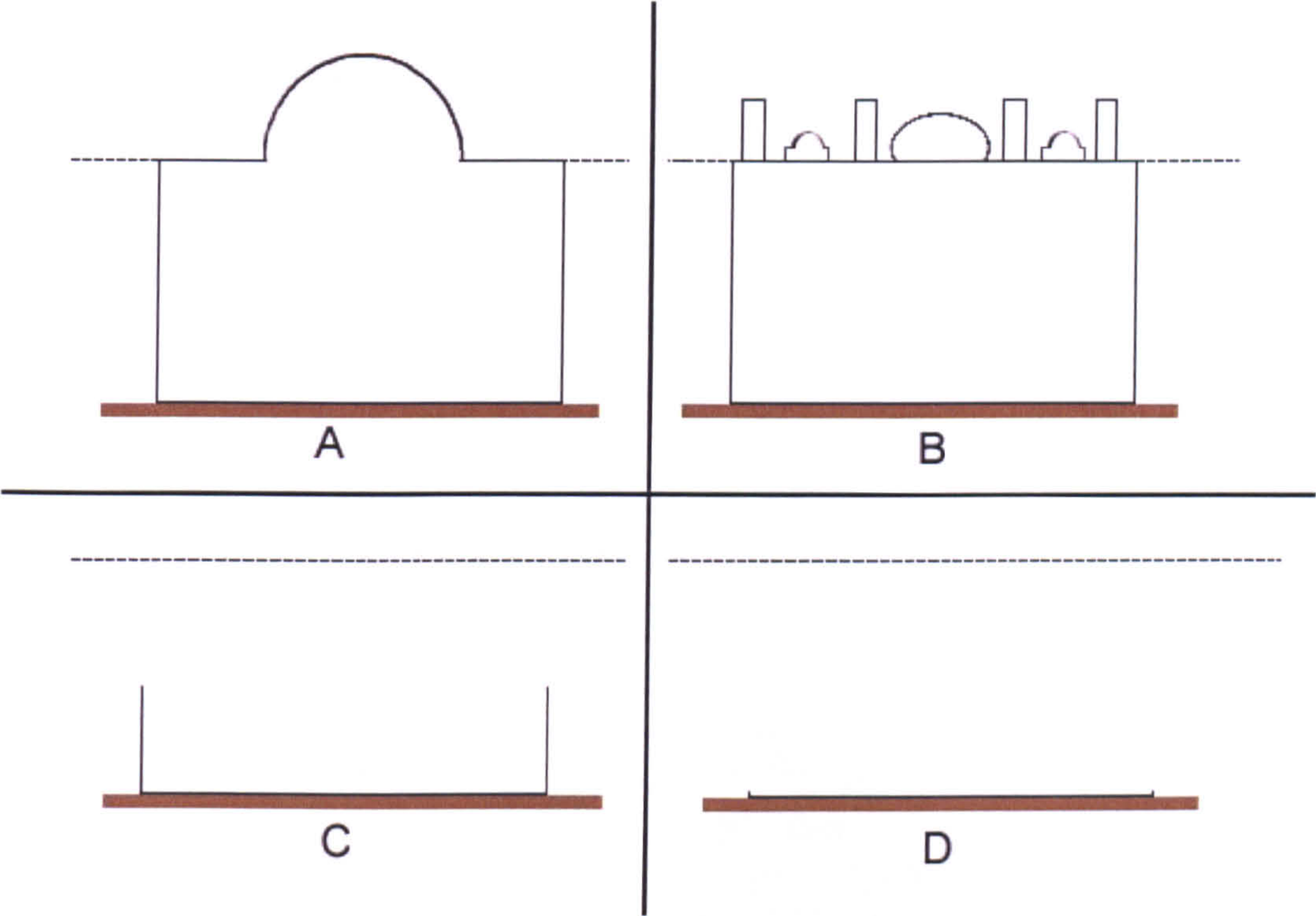


Figure 7.42. Changing patterns of spatial configuration of mosques from highly developed Islamic urban areas to different areas of Baluchistan. **A.** Highly developed Islamic urban area and some parts of urban areas of Baluchistan. **B.** Rural areas of Baluchistan. **C.** Semi-nomadic tribal areas. **D.** Nomadic tribal areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

Chapter 8

Architectural elements of the mosque: function and meanings



8. Architectural elements of the mosque: function and meanings

The mosque, as the heart of Islamic architecture, is identified and characterised by the typical elements of mihrab, minbar, dome and minaret. These elements require appropriate mosque furniture. Royal Monuments for a mosque have additional requirements apart from their functions and symbolic meaning (Hillenbrand, 2000). This section of the study therefore illuminates the history, function and symbolic meanings of each individual element: mihrab, minbar, dome and minaret. Since the minaret is the focus of this study, it will be investigated in more detail.

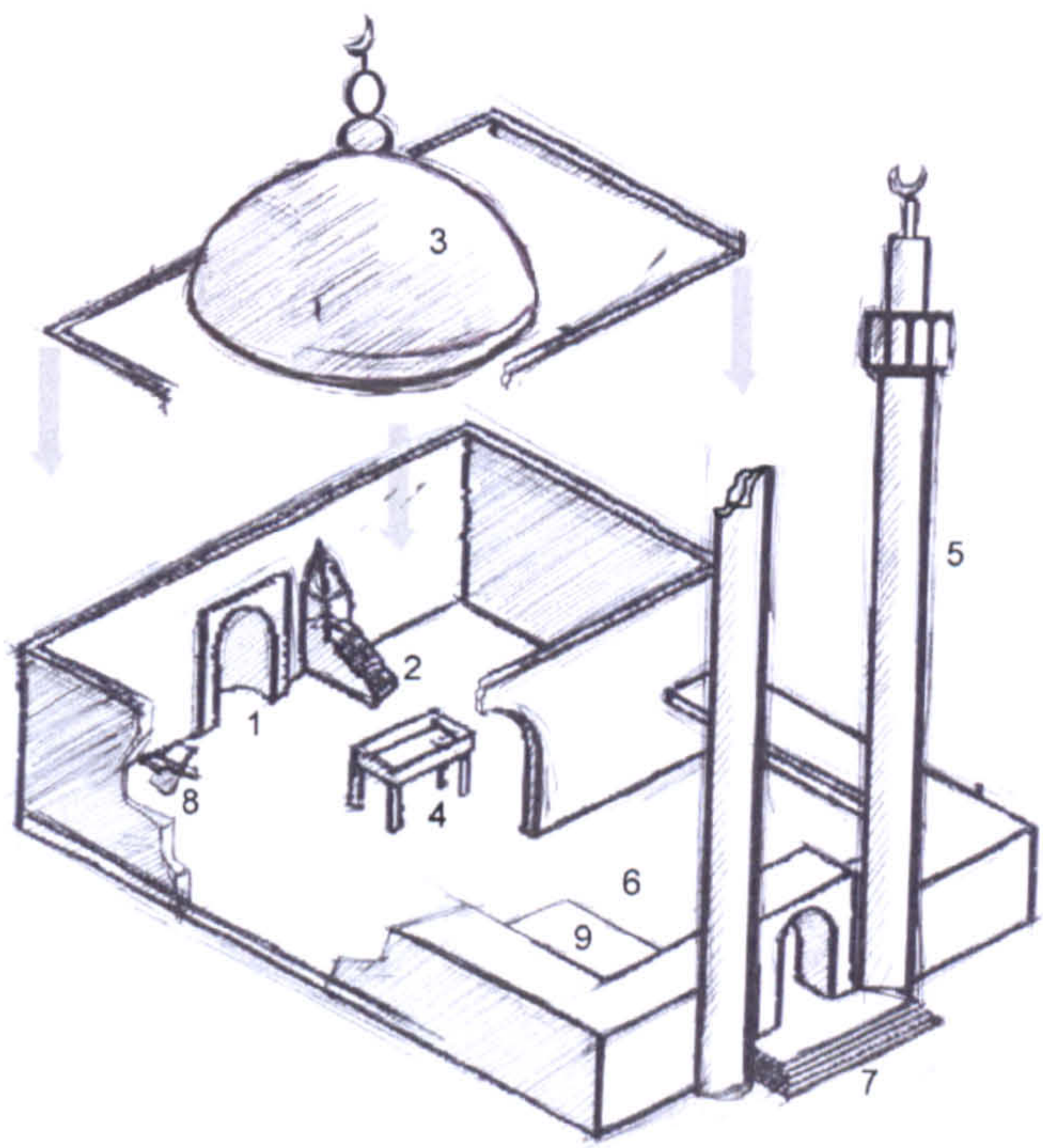


Figure 8.1. Principle elements of the mosque. Source: Author

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Mihrab (prayer niche) |
| 2. | Minbar or pulpit |
| 3. | Dome |
| 4. | Dikka (respondent's platform) |
| 5. | Minaret (call to prayer tower) |
| 6. | Courtyard |
| 7. | Mosque's main gate |
| 8. | Kursi (Quran table) |
| 9. | Ablution place and toilets |

8.1. Mihrab or prayer niche

The mihrab appears in a variety of sizes and forms as a common element of mosques and it unifies the Muslims to pray in the same direction. The Arabic word *mihrab* is derived from *harba*, which is a type of lance that Prophet Mohammad used to lay against the wall to indicate the direction of Ka'ba, which is known as qibla (Ali, 1999). The exact Arabic word mihrab (المِحْرَاب) has been mentioned in the Quran several times in association with prayer.

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ

Then the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary (Mihrab) (Quran, 3:39)

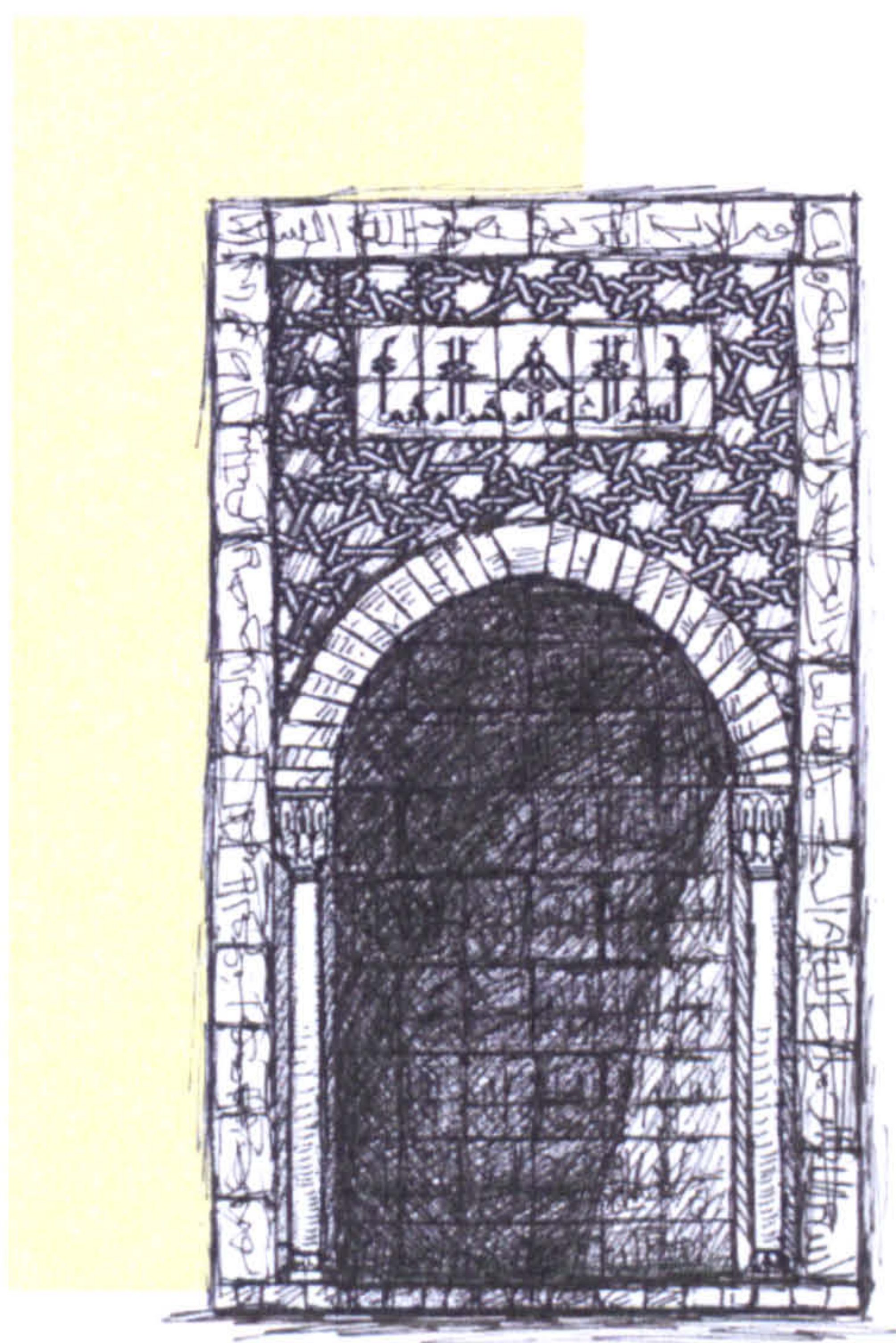


Figure 8.2. Drawing showing general characteristics of a mihrab, which appears in most of mosques, particularly in urban areas. Source: Author

The mihrab is considered as the most important element in the mosque. According to Hillenbrand, the mihrab is the most common element of all mosques and it has been an absolute requirement of any mosque since the rebuilding of the Medina Mosque in 705 CE (Hillenbrand, 2000). The entire Muslim congregation should

face the qibla during prayers. Therefore every mosque has a sign in the form of a mihrab to indicate this direction. The mihrab therefore is a signifying element in the mosque as it indicates the direction of qibla. It has also been used as a resonator for the voice. The prayer leader or *imam* stays in the concave shape of the mihrab to lead the congregation in prayers. The rest of the Muslims need to hear his voice when he is reading the prayers. The circular shape of the mihrab helps to magnify the sound and reflect it back at the same time (Dichie, 1987).

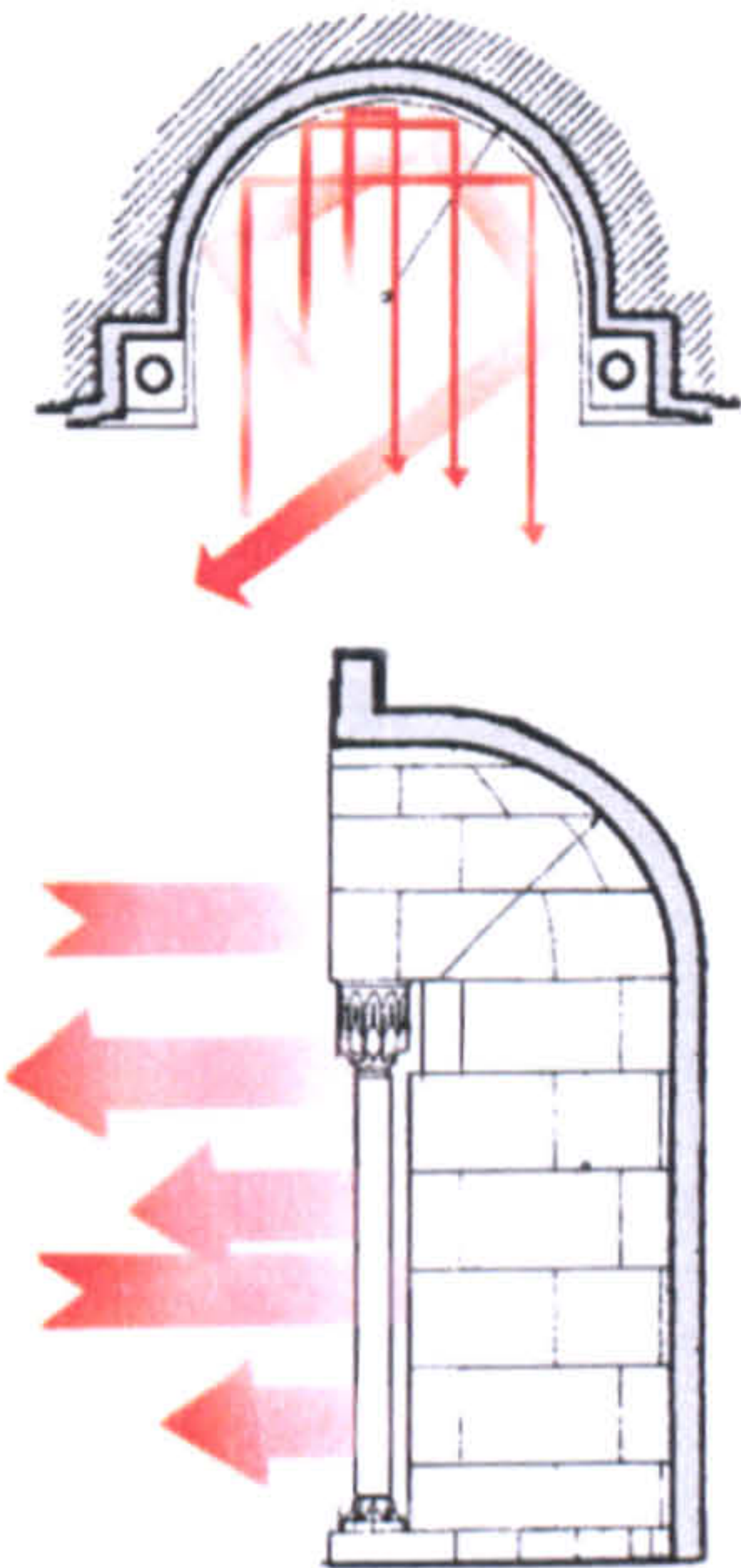


Figure 8.3. Drawing illustrating how the circular shape of the mihrab helps to magnify the sound and bounce it back at the same time in the mosques. Source: Author

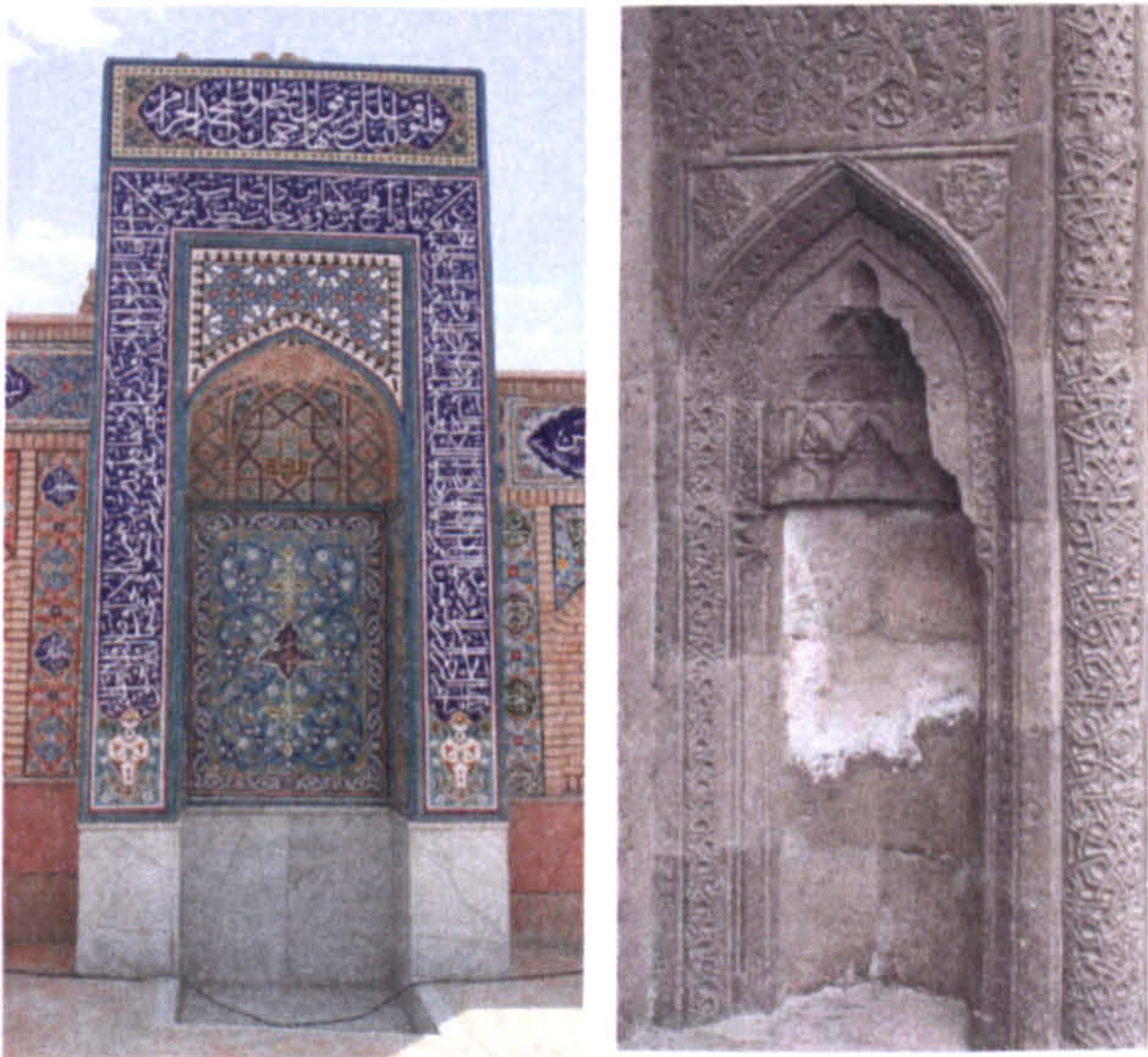


Figure 8.4. Right: elaborate stone curved mihrab form of the Kayseri Haji Lilic Mosque in Turkey. The history of this mosque dates from 1249 and it was built for the Seljuk vizier Abdülgazi. Source: Osseman (2003). Left: the mihrab based at the courtyard of Imam Ali Mosque by the Shiraz- Sarvestan road. This mihrab is mainly used in the dry season, particularly in the evening. The floor of the mihrab is lower than the main floor of the mosque. Source: Author

8.1.1. Appearance of the mihrab

The appearance of the mihrab goes back to the construction of Prophet Mohammad House-mosque, but there is no physical evidence to prove it. As an example, Ali states that the mihrab was first built in the mosque of Prophet Mohammed when it was rebuilt by the order of caliph Al-Walid in 707-9 (Ali, 1999).

Dichie believes that the spear was the earliest indicator of the direction of Mecca. The spear, like an object under a niche, appeared on the coins during the Umayyad dynasty. During the time of Abd al-Malik (685 – 750) the spear became the normal liturgical indicator (Dichie, 1987).



Figure 8.5. The spear standing upright within the niche on this coin is considered as the earliest indictor of the direction of qibla. The coin is from period of Abd al Malik (685 – 705). Source: Dichie (1987: 15).

The earliest existing mihrab is found in the southern wall of Qubbat al-Sakhra in Jerusalem. It is carved in the rock contemporary with the Dome of the Rock and is believed to be from the late seventh century. This mihrab is carved from white marble and the shahada inscribed across the base of the arch is in archaic Kufi characters. The series of Fatimid wooden mihrabs is found in Egypt from about the end of the tenth century. These early wooden mihrabs often contain twisted

column ends with bulbous capitals and bases very similar to the Jerusalem one. They also have concentric circles on their flattened surface and are topped with two or three leaves. It is suggested that some elements of these early mihrabs, such as the concentric circles and bosses, derive from an Egyptian tradition of funerary, going back to the Coptic art of the sixth or seventh century (Baer, 1985 and Creswell, 1926).

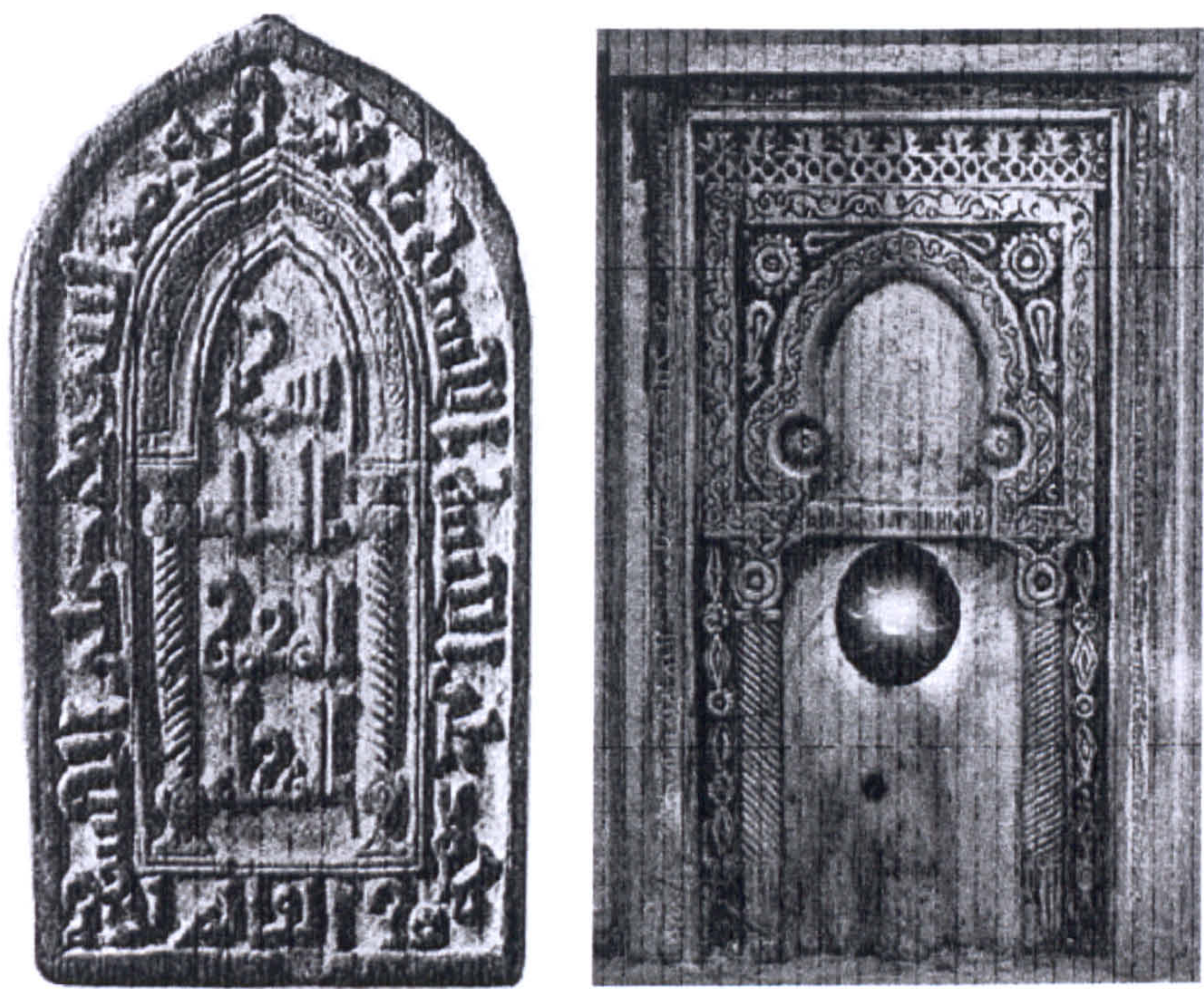


Figure 8.6. Left; the earliest mihrab found, in the cave of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The date of this goes back to the early Umayyad period of the late seventh century. Right; the Fatimid wooden mihrabs found in Egypt from about the end of the tenth century (Baer,1985).

8.1.2. The symbolic meaning of the mihrab

Muslims and scholars alike define the mihrab as a marker or idiom for qibla, which normally appears as a concave niche located in the qibla wall of the mosque. The mihrab establishes a special relationship between the function and

the terms and conditions combined together in a culturally meaningful way (Khoury, 1998).

Dickie, in a symbolic way, compares the Islamic world to an enormous wheel with Mecca as the hub. The imaginative drawn lines from all the mosques around the world would form the spokes of that wheel. All these lines unite at a central point of Ka'ba via the mihrabs of the mosques (Dickie, 1987). He describes the Ka'ba as the centre of the world because *“it is the primordial symbol of the intersection between the vertical axis of the spirit and the horizontal plane of phenomenal existence”* (Dickie, 1987:16).



Figure 8.7. The set of three moulded lustre tiles represents the mihrab (prayer niche) of the tomb of Abd al-Samad in Natanz in Iran. It was made by Hasan ibn ʿAli ibn Ahmad Babavaih in the early 14th century. Source: Fund (1909).

The form of the mihrab itself makes a contribution toward the symbolic meaning. The mihrab is mainly built in an arched concave form. The concave form,

according to many sources, has a meaning in nature. Grabar believes that the mihrab symbolically commemorates the presence of the Prophet Mohammad. The lamp in the mihrab symbolises the divine presence and the universality of the Muslim message (Grabar, 2000). Mihrabs and minarets were occasionally decked with light. In a larger mosque there were lamps in triangular forms like a candelabra. They were suspended on a long chain to just above the height of a man. The use of light in the form of the lamp (*qandil*) in the mihrab has symbolic meaning more than its functional use. The symbolic value of such lighting on a mihrab signifies a metaphor for spiritual illumination. In many cases the lamps used in a mihrab are decorated with Quranic texts associated with light (Hillenbrand, 2000). Verse 35 of the Al-Noor chapter of the Quran is a popular Quranic text used to decorate the lamps. This verse regards the structure of the mihrab and indicates the symbolic meaning of light as well. The light is one of the 99 names of God mentioned in the Quran and it stands as a symbol and signifying element for Allah.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ
الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ
يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth, a likeness of His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, (and) the glass as it were a brightly shining star, lit from a blessed olive oil tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof gives light though fire touch it not, light upon light, Allah guides to His light whom He pleases (Quran, 24:35).



Figure 8.8. Both the candles and lamp of the qandil at the mihrab are illustrated on this sixteenth-century tile panel. The structure of the mihrab, the pointed arch, the columns of the mihrab and the location of the light by depicting a hanging mosque lamp are observed at this picture. Source: Rose (2006).

Mihrabs in large numbers of Shi'a Muslim mosques have a depressed area or ditch appearing on the floor of the mihrab which is mainly 30 – 70 cm lower than the actual floor of the mosque. I have interviewed several imams of mosques to found out the consequences of the ditch in the mihrab.

Interviewee Mommahadian (2007) says that the lower floor or ditch of the mihrab has Islamic legal reasons referring to *sharia law*. According to Islamic sources, the imam, or leader of group prayer, must not be higher than the other prayers while praying. Therefore the floor of the mihrabs is made lower than the main floor of the mosques, looking more like a ditch. This ditch of the mihrab is more obvious at the communal and Friday mosques, where normally hundreds of Muslims attend for prayer.

In the case of the symbolic meanings, the ditch of the mihrab is a reminder for the Muslim prayer leaders, that they are not superior to ordinary members of the Muslim society particularly in the past when the prayer leader used to be the political leader as well. It also symbolises Judgement Day and the demeaning or lowering of oneself as well. It is remembrance of life and death (أَحْيَاءُ وَأَمْوَاتًا) according to Quran (77:26). The ditch or depression of the mihrab looks like a grave, particularly the deeper type.

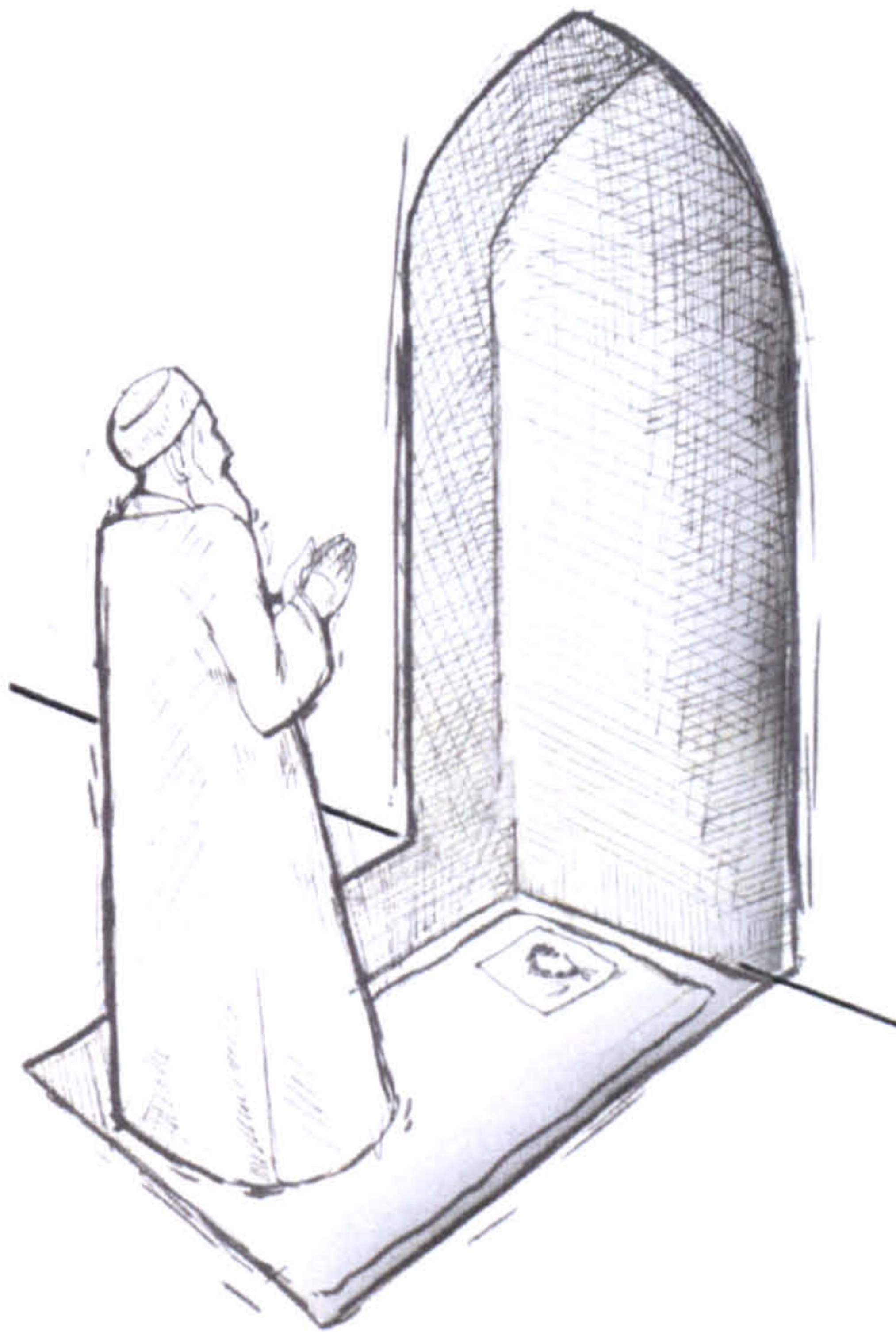


Figure 8.9. Drawing of a Shi'a imam praying in the ditch of a mihrab. Source: Author

8.2. The pulpit or minbar

The *minbar* or *mimbar* is the pulpit used in a mosque, from where the sermon or *khutbah* is recited by the prayer leader or imam. The minbar usually has a moveable wooden structure, but sometimes it has a fixture of stone or brick which is built against the wall by the main mihrab of the mosques (Hughes, 1895). In the early period of Islam, the minbar was the seat of the ruler in the council and it was not associated with worship at all (Houtsma, 1987).

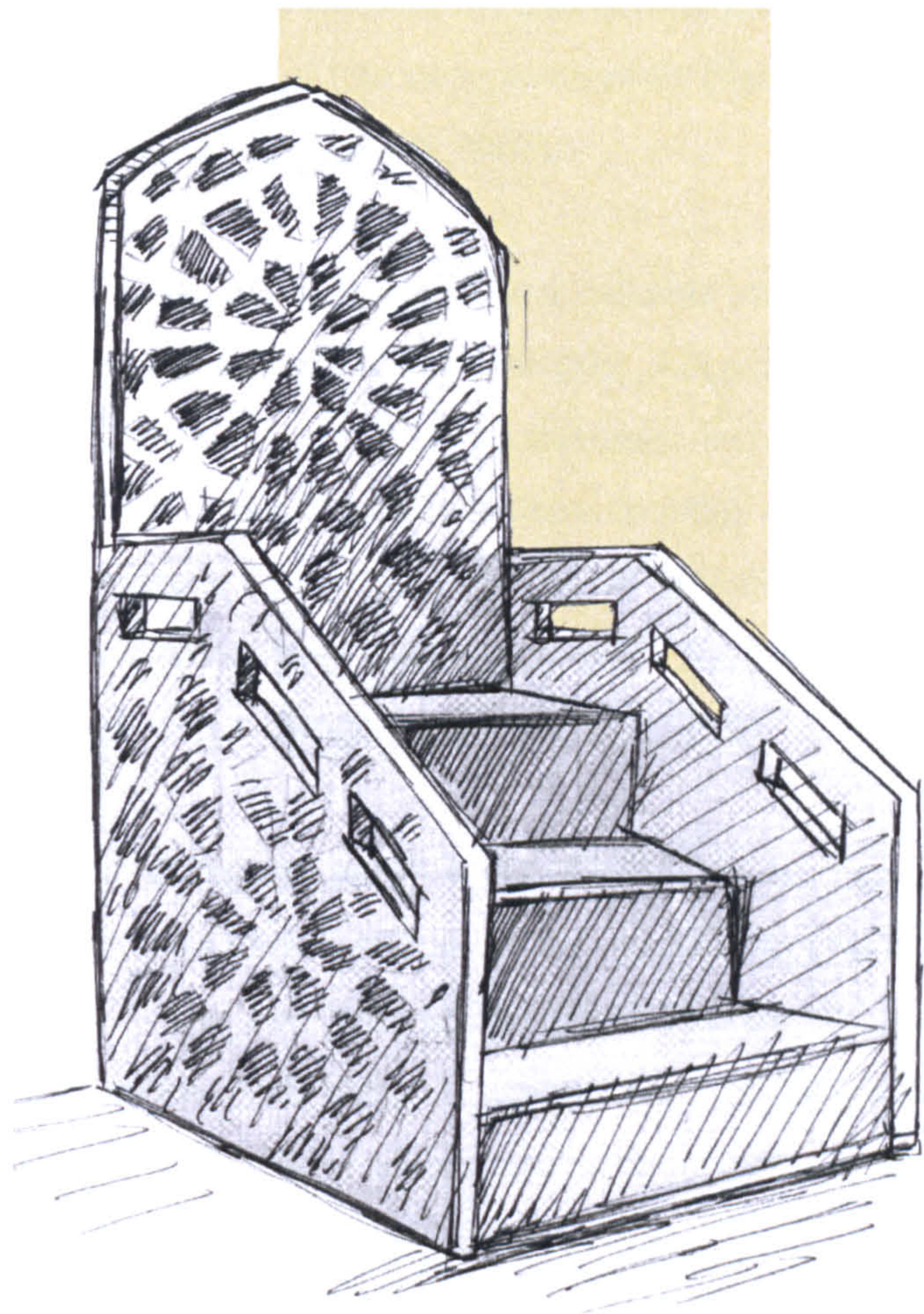


Figure 8.10. Drawing of a typical minbar with three steps. Source: Author

8.2.1. History of the minbar

With regard to the appearance of the minbar as a characteristic element in the mosque, Hughes states that at the beginning of Islam the Prophet Mohammad leaned against a post or a palm tree trunk when he was preaching the khutbah or Friday sermon. The wooden frame minbar or pulpit was an invention of a man in Medina of the Banu Najjar (Hughes, 1895; Helminski, 2004). It is also said that the first two minbars were made by a Greek or Abyssinian carpenter and was used for preaching in the mosque (Esposito, 2003). Khuda- Bakhsh assumes that the minbar was made two years before the death of Prophet Mohammad. Prophet

Mohammad used to sit on a minbar when he received ambassadors, or presided over the deliberations of his community, and delivered the law. The first minbar was described as a platform of two steps, two metres high and a flat surface of one metre square shaped (Khuda- Bakhsh, 2007).

The simplicity of the minbar is regarded as a valuable tradition, but simplicity has lost during the development of minbar over time. According to Bloom, the two or three steps of the minbar soon became staircases and it was isolated with an archway at the bottom which closed with doors in many cases. The top seat of the minbar, where the prayer leader normally sits for speech was also elaborated and covered with a wooden canopy, particularly in Egypt, Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries as well as Mughal India (Bloom, 1998).

There are some five-stepped cedar wood minbars to be found from the mid Islamic period, which is known as the Berber woodcarving tradition of the Atlas regions of Morocco. The iron bolts and engraved and painted patterns cover the body of these minbars. Both sides of this minbar are decorated with Moorish patterns, which can be found on most wooden doors and coffers in Morocco, as well as other North African countries (Fogg, 2007).

8.2.2. Symbolic meaning of minbar

The minbar was an essential piece of furniture in the mosque for the prayer leader to address his congregation. Soon after the death of Prophet Mohammad, however, the minbar was treated as a symbolic character in mosques, both in political and religious ways. The number of steps on the minbar also has its own significant meaning according to different Islamic sects. Most Islamic sources have confirmed that the minbar used by Prophet Mohammad consisted of three steps and he would be on the uppermost step addressing the congregation. Abu Bakr used to stay on the second step and Umar on the third or lowest step. Othman is said to be fixed upon the middle step, and since then it has been the custom to preach from the minbar (Hughes, 1895).

What is obvious is that the successors of Prophet Mohammad and the caliphs made his minbar a symbol of their authority. They also ordered the making of minbars modelled on the Prophet's and placed them in the congregational mosque of every city. The caliphs or their deputies could use these minbars when addressing the community gathered for both political events and congregational prayers or Friday worship (Bloom, 1998).

According to many oral traditions in Baluchistan, the imam or leader of congregational prayer always delivers his address not from the top but from the lower step. This happens because they believe that the top part of minbar should remain empty to remember the absence of the Prophet. The canopied space on the top of the minbar, particularly in later designs, symbolises the presence of Prophet Mohammad. Prophet Mohammad seated on minbars has been illustrated in a number of Islamic manuscripts, particularly in Iran, Iraq and Turkey.

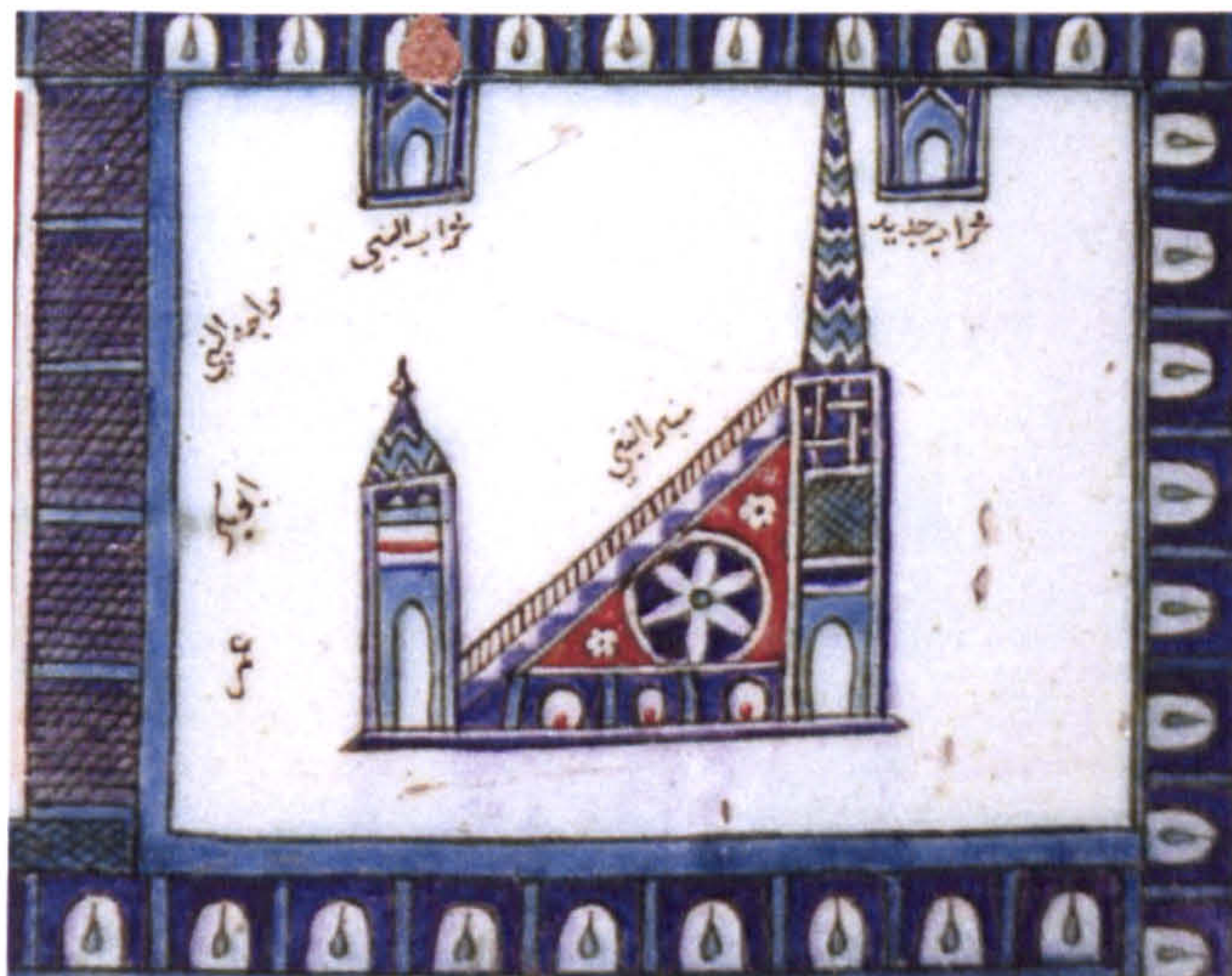


Figure 8.11. The form of minbar in 17th century Ottoman Iznik glazed tile along with the names of Prophet Mohammad, Abu Bakr and Omar. This shows the symbolic character of the minbar as a religious element in the mosque. Source: Osseman (2006).



Figure 8.12. 16th century miniature from *Maqalat-i al-i Rasul*, showing the important role of the minbar in Islamic culture. Ottoman, Baghdad, Iraq (19.8 x 15.4 cm). Source: Fund (1955).

8.3. The dome

The dome has also been regarded as one of the most popular elements characterising the mosque. Dome is defined in the Oxford dictionary of Islam as a rounded vault, typically with a circular base which forms the roof of a building (Esposito, 2003). The arch, the column and the dome have been describes as the trinity of Islamic architecture. Compared with other elements of the mosque, religiously the dome has minor significance, but yet it has been described as the crowning glory of Islamic architecture (Grube and Michell, 1978).

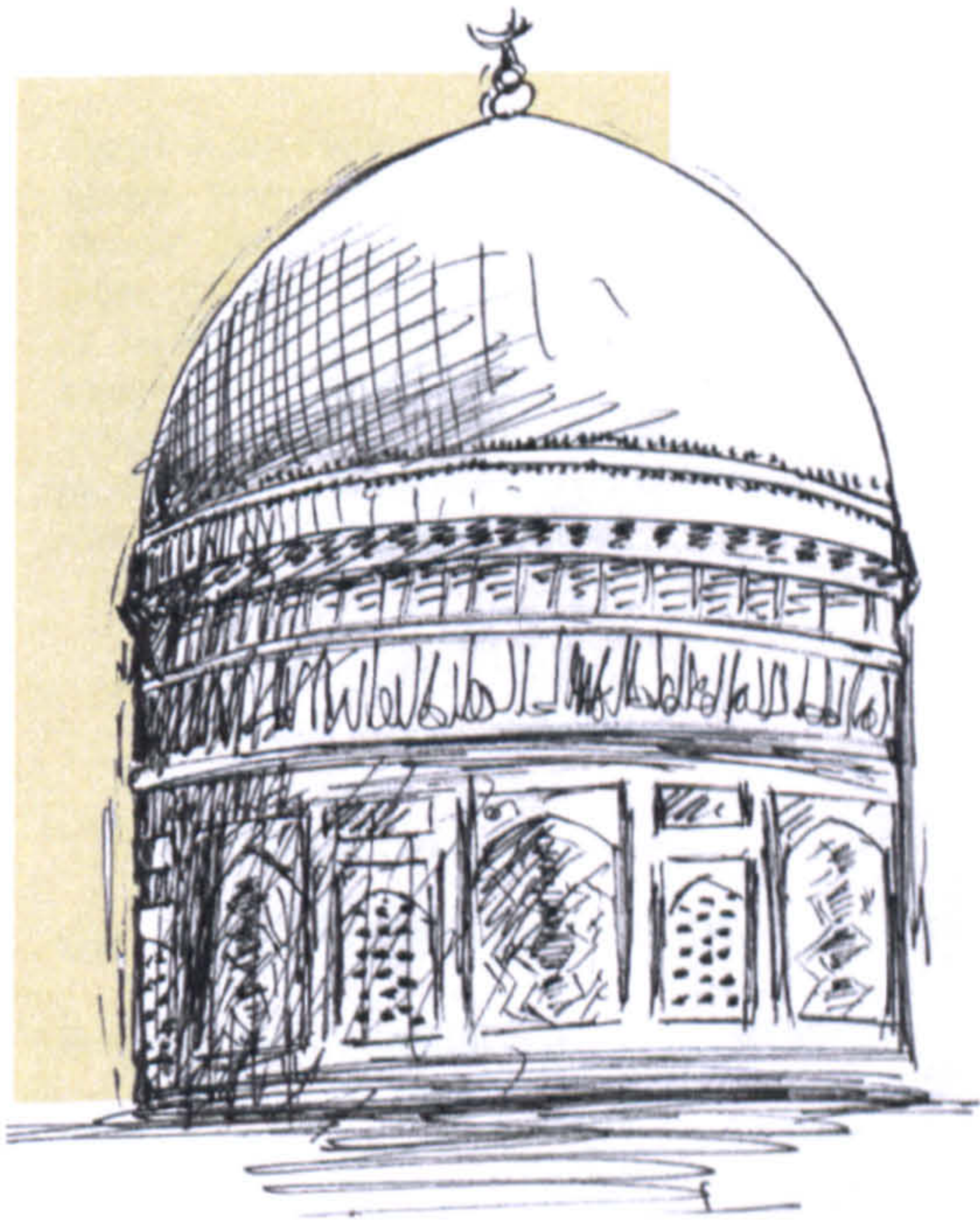


Figure 8.13. Drawing of the dome of the Samarkand congregational mosque in Samarqand, (Timurid, 1398–1405). Source: Author

Hillenbrand, along with many other historians, has confirmed that the glory of the dome goes back to pre-Islamic or even pre- Christian times. He states that

Roman architecture had decisively established the honorific character of the dome by giving it pride of place in palatial architecture, and it is no accident that the greatest of all Roman religious edifices, the Pantheon, makes the dome its focal point (Hillenbrand, 2000:53)

The history of the dome is also associated with ancient Persian architecture and Greek. It also was very important element during the Byzantine Empire. The Hellenic architectural forms became dominant during the Seleucids (330-250 BC) for a few decades in Persia. During the Parthian empire (247 BC – 224 AD) a new style of architecture was developed in northeast Persia which combined Greek and Persian elements. In this case, the vault *ivan* and dome were the most important spiritual and fundamental elements in Parthian architecture, which had an everlasting influence on the architecture of the world (Hejazi, 1997).

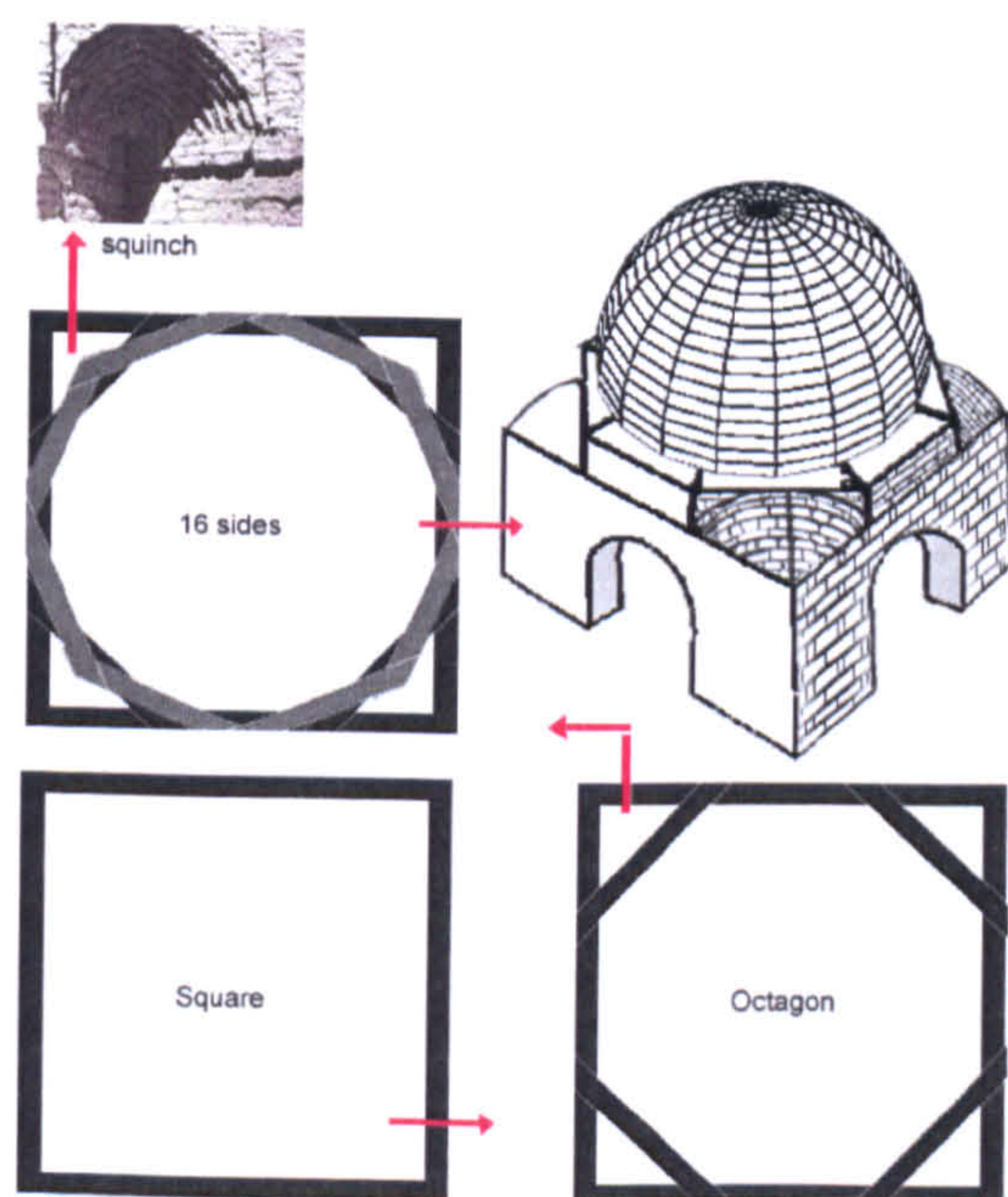


Figure 8.14. Picture showing how a square form transformed into a circular form, which is the base of a dome. It happened by building arches or squinches on the corners of the square form, transforming it into an octagon and later by smaller squinches to make a 16 sided form, which is close to a circle. Source: Author

The hemispherical dome is based on the circular arch and it encloses the largest dimensions in the smallest surface area. It is formed by rotating

a circular arch and the height of the hemispherical dome is a function of its width the same as the circular arch. Islamic architects modified the principle of the pointed arch to build taller domes, known as pointed domes. A combination of pointed arch and dome as an invention of Muslim architects not only introduced a taller dome but it increased the stability and durability of the building as well. This is because the pointed dome distributes the stresses more in the direction of the pull of gravity (Director, 2003).

In conjunction with Islamic architecture, the dome has been interpreted as the necessity element for sacred and religious buildings such as mosques. Therefore is better to separate the function of the dome and its symbolic meaning.

8.3.1. Symbolic meaning of the dome

The circular shape of the dome has always been used in Islamic architecture together with the traditional concept of mathematics and geometric forms. Beyond the function of materials in traditional buildings or gardens there is a greater significant function, which is to remind man, through their symbolic aspect, of the spiritual principles (Nasr, 1972). The circular form is known as a symbol for heaven and the square as a symbol for the earth. Circle and square together represent the 'total world' as they combine heaven and earth. The symbolic aspect of circle and square has been widespread in many kinds of art, including architecture (Berger, 2004).

O'connell and Airey have also confirmed that the dome symbolically represents heaven. They state that the dome is: "*symbol of the heavens, frequently appearing in sacred or important civic buildings, such as mosques, Byzantine churches or the Roman pantheon*" (O'connell and Airey, 2006: 220).

Regarding the religious aspect of the dome beyond the functional roof, Nasr declares that the octagonal or circular forms of so many mosques should not be considered as architectural elements to place a dome on the top of a square form,

but it is in fact a reflection of the divine throne, or *arsh*, which is supported by eight angels in Islamic tradition (Nasr, 1972). Apart from Islamic architecture, the combinations of square and circular forms also appear on other form of arts such as decorative tiles and calligraphy, as well as textiles and carpet design, known as the square-dome mosque.

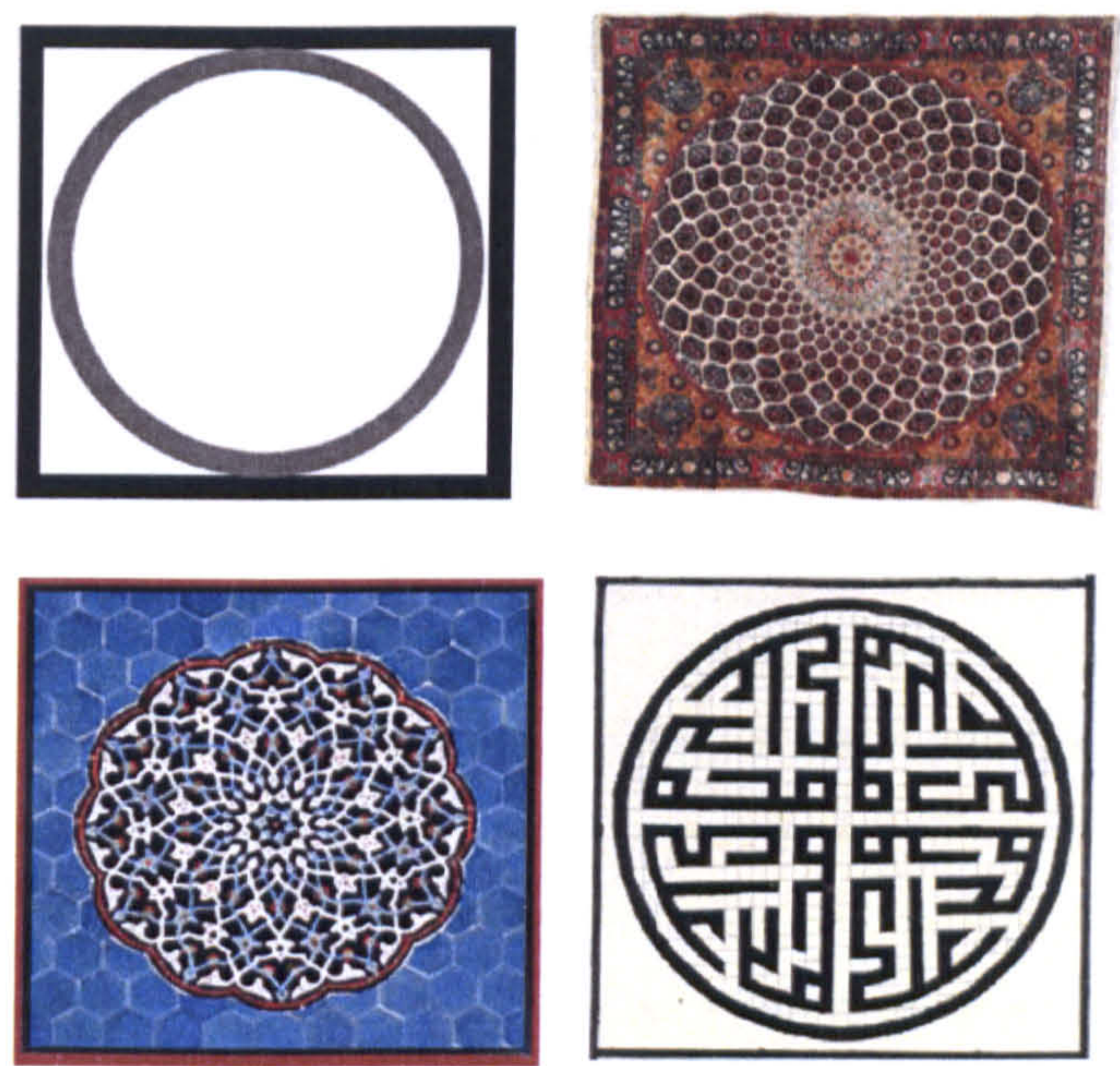


Figure 8.15. The combinations of square and circular forms have been used in Islamic architecture and also in textiles, tiles and calligraphy as it can be observed in this picture. Source: Author

8.4. The minaret

The minaret, as one of the most important features of the mosque, will be discussed to determine its origin and purpose in this section. The form and development of the minaret in Egypt, Turkey, Iran and India will also be investigated as they play a major role influencing the minarets in Pakistan and Baluchistan in particular.

According to the Oxford dictionary of Islam, a minaret is a tall thin tower forming part of a mosque, from which Muslims are called to pray (Esposito, 2003). The

minaret is considered as one of the most distinctive sights in any Islamic city. The sound of the *adhan*, the call to prayer made from minarets five times a day, is typical of any Islamic city, such as Riyadh, Cairo or Istanbul, exactly like the sound of bells in Rome (Bloom, 2002). Abderahman considers the minaret as the symbol of Islamic civilisation. He also believes that the minaret clearly indicates the presence of Islam and it is the best of Islamic architectural shapes (Abderahman, 2006). Talbot describes the minaret as one of the most impressive structures that the history left for us (Talbot, 1984).

The origin of the minaret goes back to the pre-Islamic period and as discussed earlier, this architectural form was integrated into Islamic architecture. Hillenbrand suggests three possible approaches to studying the genre of minarets. The first is through the historical development of the minaret and its inclusion in symbolic architecture. The second is to investigate the Arabic word for minaret to see if there is any clue in its etymology. Third should be a particular focus on the shapes and the functions of the early minarets and their immediate sources (Hillenbrand, 2000). These three approaches are used as the guidelines to study the history, function and meaning of the minaret in this chapter.

8.4.1. The origin of the minaret

Investigating the etymology of the Arabic words used for minaret can be helpful to describe its origin. The words used commonly in Arabic are *manara*, *sauma'a* and *mi'dhana* which refer to different functions of the towers. The Arabic word *sauma'a* is frequently used to designate the minaret, mainly in North Africa, and means a cell in which usually a Christian monk detained himself for religious proposes. *Sauma'a* as a word can also refer to the Spanish word *zoma*, meaning minaret. The third Arabic word, *mi'dhana*, which is rarely used for a minaret refers to the practical function of the tower. It derives from *adhan* (the call to prayer) and it means the place from which the *adhan* is made (Hillenbrand, 2000 and Creswell, 1926).

Minaret as a word does not carry any connotation of the call to prayer, but to a place for light or fire (Arabic *nar* or *nur*) which was used in the pre-Islamic period to refer to high places from which the smoke or fire signal was made (Hillenbrand, 2000).

The word minaret in North Africa, particularly in Egypt, refers to pre-Islamic forms of Pharos, or lighthouses. The multi-storeyed form of the typical minaret of the Egyptian Mamluk sultanate (1250- 1517) can be derived from the Pharos (lighthouse) of Alexandria, one of the wonders of the ancient world (Bloom, 2002). The theory of the connection between the form of the minaret and Pharos has received wide acceptance, as Creswell has also said:

As I was one day looking at a minaret in Cairo, and having Abdellatife's account of the Pharos fresh in mind, I was struck by the remarkable coincidence between the details of the minaret before me and those of the Pharos in his description. He says the Pharos stood at that epoch [c.1200] in four storeys: the first square, the second octagonal, the third round and the lastly a lantern. The minaret also rose in four stages: square, octagonal, round and on top a lantern or small cupola. Since then I have noticed dozens of other minarets with the same four divisions in the same order and have no hesitation in saying that Abdellatif's description of the Pharos is, in all except absolute altitude, the typical description of the early minaret. The Pharos is the origin of the form taken by the minaret in Cairo (Creswell, 1926: 225).

Thiersch supports the above view and writes about the Pharos as a four-storey tower 124m high. The Pharos had a square lower storey 60m high which was surmounted by a 30m high octagonal storey and a circular lantern of 15m. On the top were the covers of the lantern and a figure of Neptune. He has brought to account some historic evidence from Ma'sudi (871-957), Al-Idrisi (1100-1165), and Ibn Batuta (1307-1377), early Islamic historians and geographers, to show that the ancient tower had stood intact until the 8th century and it partly survived

till the 14th century. Therefore it is possible that the architectural form of Pharos inspired Mamluk builders in Egypt in making minarets (Thiersch, 1909).



Figure 8.16. Imaginary drawing of the Pharos (lighthouse) of Alexandria, one of the wonders of the ancient world, which is believed to have been the inspiration for the form of minarets in Egypt. Source: Author



Figure 8.17. The minaret of a mosque set against the Mediterranean Sea in Jaffa, Israel. This minaret reminds one of the traditional use of a tower as lighthouse in the pre-Islamic architecture of the Middle East. Source: Marantzer (2008).

The origin of the square minaret, such as the minaret of the Great Mosque of Damascus, has also been referred to the Christian church tower and cylindrical forms of the Persian Mil and Ziggurats. Wheatley clearly states that the Syrian

type of minaret derived from the characteristically square towers of the Christian churches during the early centuries of Islam (Wheatley, 2001). Hillenbrand quotes Ibn –Al-Faqih, the early Islamic geographer, who claimed that the minarets in the Great Mosque of Damascus were at first watchtowers in the Greek days, and belonged to the Church of John (Hillenbrand, 2000). Bloom discusses a mixture of different views and suggestions from which to indicate that square minarets, such as those found in Syria, North Africa and Spain, were derived from church towers. The theory of the church tower is strengthened by a philological view and the etymology of the Arabic term *sauma'a*, which was used in medieval North Africa and Spain to refer to minarets (Bloom, 2002).

Many philologists, such as Hartmann and Gottheil, have regarded the minaret or *manara* as a fire (Arabic *nar*) signal tower used by ancient Semites. This theory suggests that the minaret derives directly from Mesopotamian ziggurats, the stepped towers built by the Sumerians and Babylonians from the third millennium BC. Many scholars believe that building the 50 metre spiral Malwyeh (9th century minaret of the Great Mosque of Samarra) in Iraq was in fact a likeness of a ziggurat, which may also represent the centuries-old tradition of the Tower of Babel (Bloom, 2002). Houtsma and Wensick also confirm that the Malwyeh in Samarra is one of best examples of a spiral tower which has remained from early Islamic time. He considered it as a significant monument of the early Muslim Arabs, a variation of Babylonian architecture in terms of its motifs and spiral form (Houtsma and Wensick, 1987).

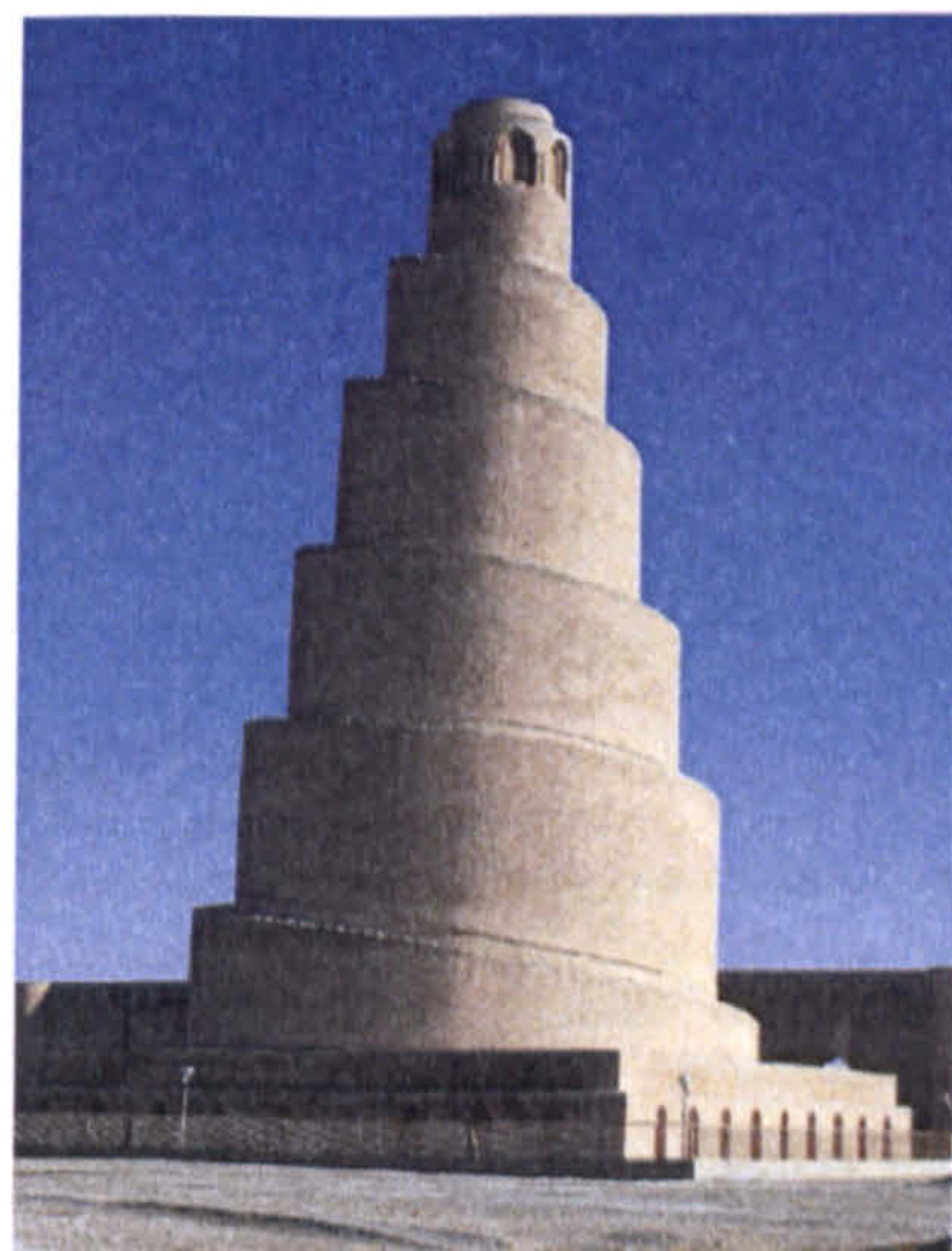


Figure 8.18. The 50 metre spiral tower of Malwiyya built in the 9th century in Iraq, also known as the minaret of the Great Mosque of Samarra. Many scholars believe that erecting this minaret was in fact a likeness of a

ziggurat. Source: Hattstein and Delius (2000:89).

However, modern archaeologists have found that only a few famous ziggurats were built as a spiral tower, such as the one at Khorsabad (the 4th capital of the Kingdom of Assyria, built by King Sargon II in 704 BC) and another at Babylon, and even then they were in fact square, not round, spirals (Bloom, 2002). Bloom argues that the usual type of ziggurat was not the source of inspiration of spiral minarets, particularly the Malwiyya one. Two reasons have been given for this argument. The first refers to the physical shape and structure of ziggurats, the majority of which were actually square stepped towers, with separate flights of stairs at right angles to their sides. The second reason is related to Muslim ideology and its common views of ziggurats in general, and the Tower of Babel in particular, which are attributed to idol worship, which is strongly rejected in Islam. Therefore it is difficult to believe that Muslims would have considered a ziggurat to be a suitable model for their minarets of Islamic religious buildings such as mosques (Bloom, 2002).

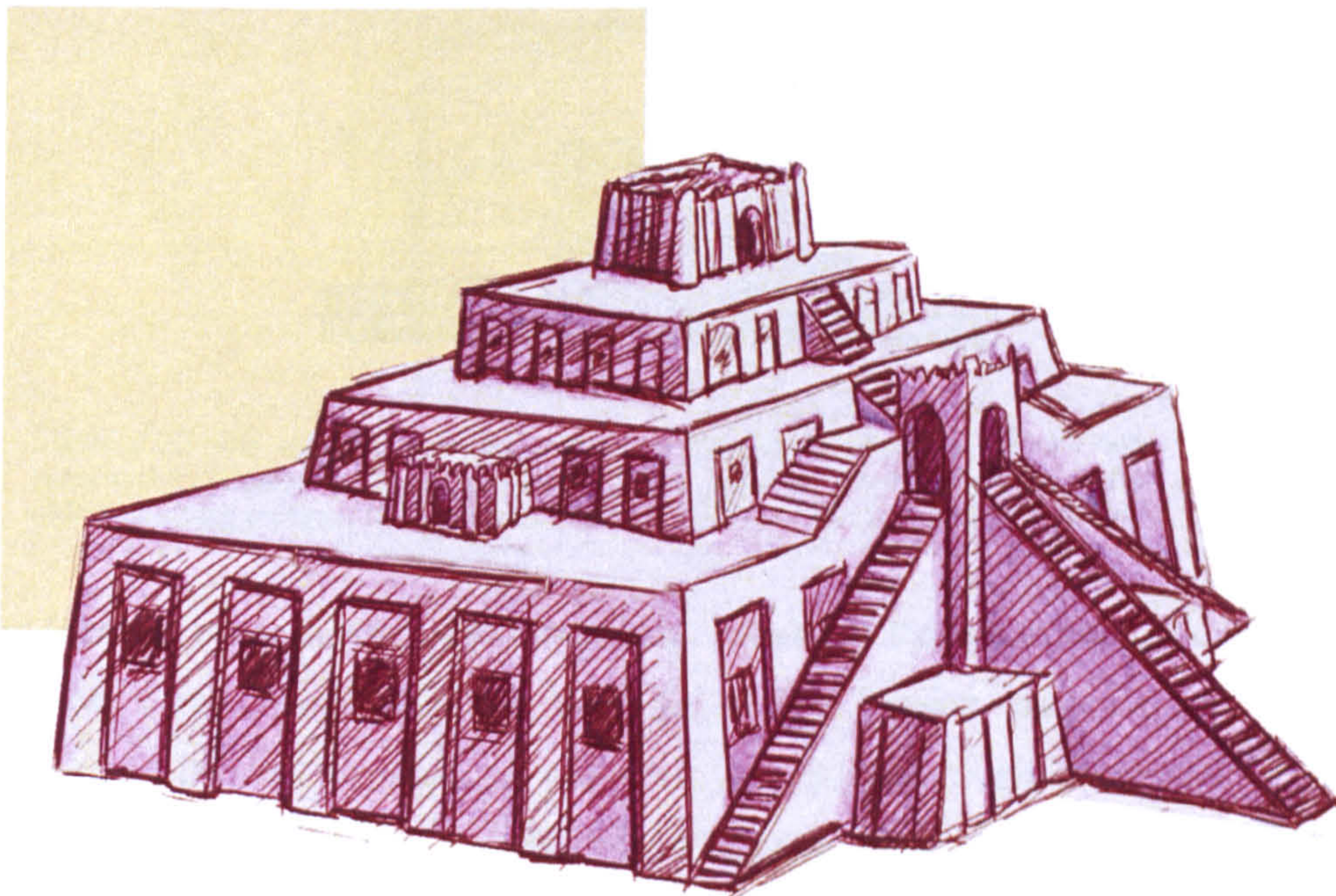


Figure 8.19. Imaginary drawing of a ziggurat, which is mentioned as the source of inspiration of spiral minarets. Ziggurats, which are found in Iraq and Iran (from the 3 millennium BC), are mainly square stepped towers, with separate flights of stairs at right angles to their sides. Source: Author

Wheatley reveals another idea, that the spiral forms of minarets in Iraq were based on certain Sassanid spiral towers which appeared at Samara. Ahmad Ibn Tulun (835 –884) was originally sent by the Abbassid caliph as governor to Egypt from Samara in 868. The spiral form was subsequently adopted in the mosque of Ibn Tulun, which is recognised as one of the oldest surviving mosques in Egypt, as it was built in 876 AD in al- Qata'i (Wheatley, 2001). The idea of the influence of the ziggurat on the minaret of Ibn Tulun Mosque is also confirmed by Talbot, as he described the minaret as: “... recall the ziggurats of ancient Mesopotamia” (Talbot, 1984:46).

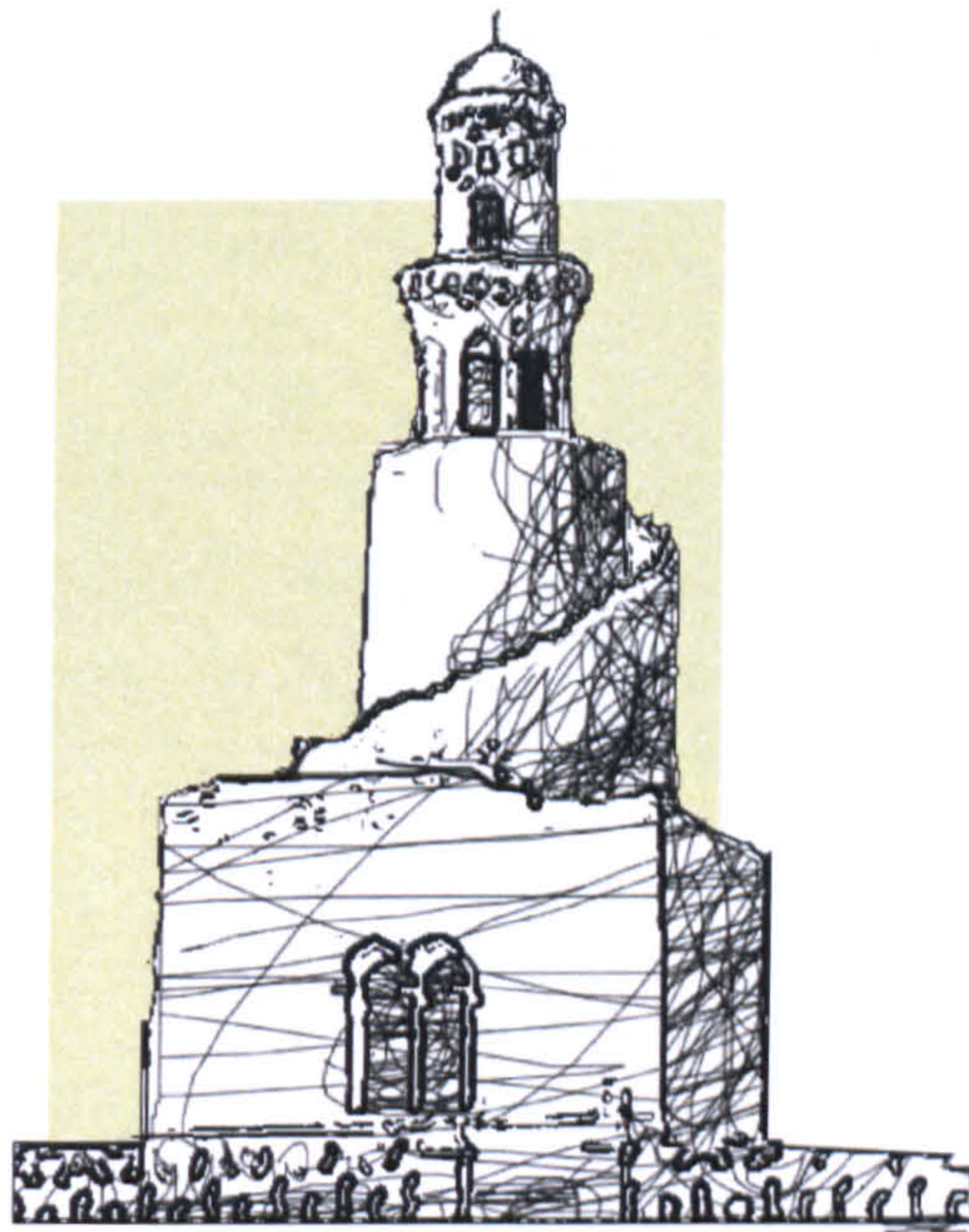


Figure 8.20. The spiral form of the minaret of the Great Mosque of Samara was subsequently adopted in the mosque of Ibn Tulun, which is recognised as one of the oldest surviving mosques in Egypt, as it was built in 876 AD al- Qata'i. Source: Author

Other types of minaret were also developed, which are known as lofty, slender or cylindrical types. Some scholars have linked the Persian minarets and their association with the mosque to some of the ancient religious structures of Mycenaean, pre-Buddhist Indian and Pre-Achaemenid Persian periods. There are even some suggestions that link the minaret and mosque architecture with shamanistic proto-architectural forms (Hillenbrand, 2000). The inspiration source of the cylindrical minarets can be linked to the round towers of Persian pre-

Islamic castles and caravanserais as well as pigeon towers which can be found in different parts of old Persian territory. The use of round architectural elements, particularly the towers, also have a long history in the village neighbourhoods which still exist in Iran. They are referred to as Achaemenid and Sassanid post-houses, Byzantine *pandocheion*, Roman inns and *castrum* or military camps and the Parthian houses in Mesopotamia (Hillenbrand, 2000).

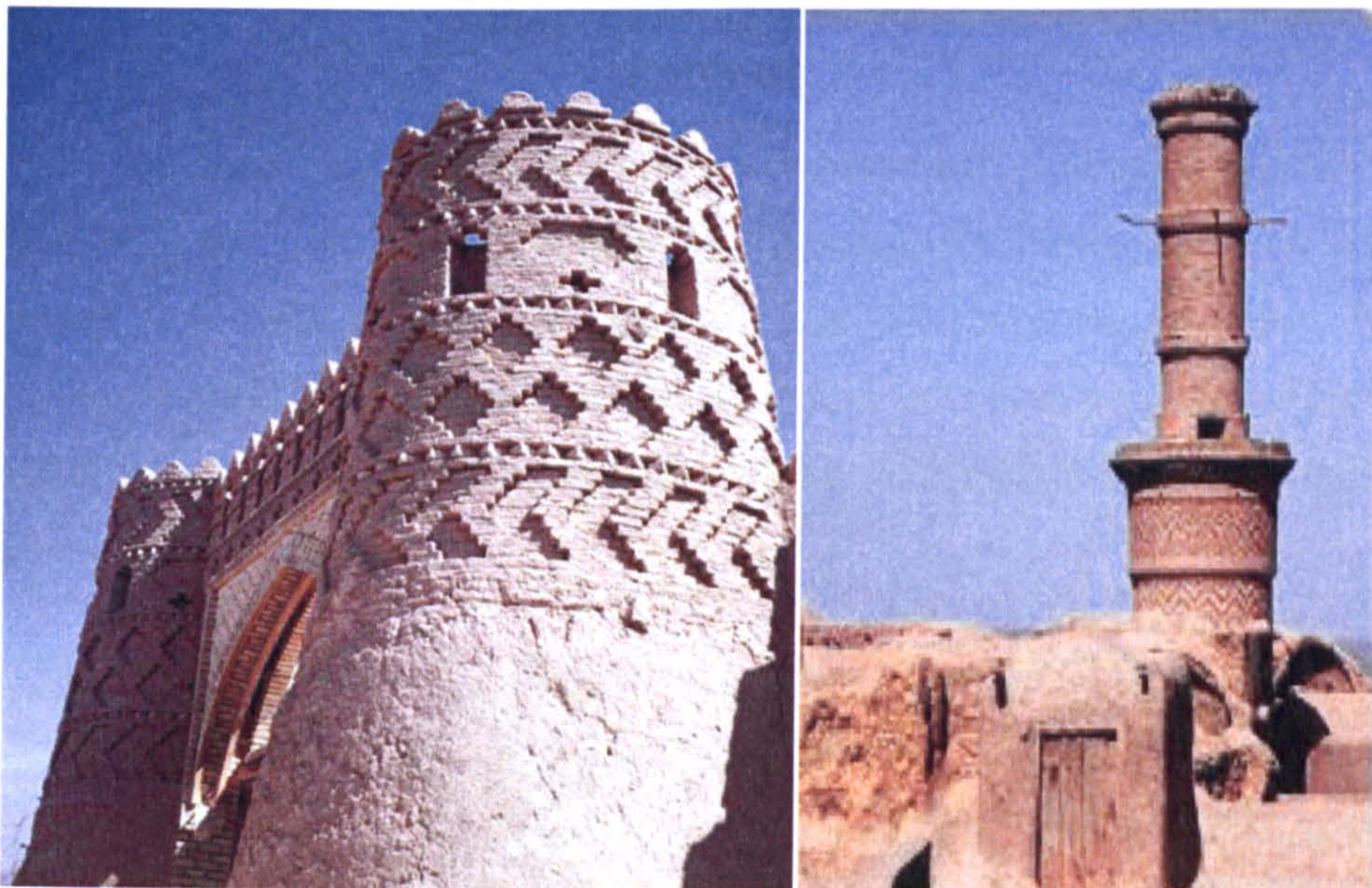


Figure 8.21. Left: two towers at the gate of a mud castle in Iran. Right: the watchtower of Kharanaq village of Adrakan town in Yazd in Iran. Source: Persian tour (2008).

The pigeon tower can also be mentioned as a good source of inspiration for the round minaret as it existed in pre-Islamic architecture in Iran. The pigeon towers are classified as industrial architecture of ancient Persia, serving as fertilizer factories for farming for thousand years. They still exist in Isfahan, along with other cities of Iran, but not for the same purposes.

Figure 8.22. Pigeon towers in Isfahan, which can be mentioned as a possible source of inspiration for the round minaret as they existed in pre-Islamic architecture in Iran. Source: Zomorodina (2009).



The final source of pre-Islamic Persian architectural elements I would like to suggest as the inspiration for cylindrical minarets is the Persian *mil*. The word *mil* or *mileh* is used for any sort of round and tall metal bar in recent Persian language, but it got its name from the tall cylindrical tower used for navigation in old Persian times. The Persian *mil* will be investigated in more detail in a later section.



One of the earliest surviving mosques with a minaret is the 7th century mosque of al – Omar. This mosque is believed to be one of the oldest mosques in Arabia and to have been founded by Omar bin Al-Khattab (581-644), the second caliph and successor of the Prophet Mohammad, when he stopped at Domat – al Jandal en route to Jerusalem. The mosque is still in use, and its square minaret is one of the few surviving sections of the original mosque (Shams and Madden, 2004).

Figure 8.23. One of the earliest surviving minarets from the 7th century mosque of al – Omar at Domat Al-Jandal in Arabia. Source: (Frysinger, 2000).

Creswell believes that no significant architecture existed in Arabia before Islam which would have had any appreciable impact on the course of Islamic architecture. He states that the idea of the minaret first arose in the Umayyad period (661-750) and the first generations of minarets were built in Egypt and Syria. He remarks that in the time of Mohammad no such thing as a minaret was known. According to him, the first minarets were built 41 years after the death of Prophet Mohammad in 673 A.D. These first typical four minarets, known as *sawami*, were erected on the roof of the mosque in Al- Fustat by the order of the Umayyad governor in Egypt (Creswell, 1926). Prior to this time, muezzins had made the call to prayer from a rooftop or any other high platform, which consequently became the architectural feature known as the minaret (Wheatley, 2001).

Bloom's discussion of the Islamic tradition of the minaret also strengthens this idea that in the early stages of Islam, muezzin Bilal and his successors carried out adhan, or the call to prayer, from a high platform in public places, such as the doorway or roof of a mosque, the city wall or from a raised neighbouring structure. It is claimed that Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's cousin, son-in-law and fourth caliph, was against the tall *mi'dhana* (a place from which the call to prayer was given), because the muezzin could see into the homes around the mosque. Therefore he ordered that adhan should not be given from any place higher than the roof of the mosque. This is why blind men have often been selected and trained as muezzins as they are unable to break the rules of privacy of other people's homes (Bloom, 2002).

Regional minarets were developed when Islam came into contact with other tower traditions. In the first decade of the eighth century four corner towers were added to the construction of the Medina mosque during the renovation of the building in Umayyad times. Then, the square minarets followed Umayyad development into North Africa and Spain, where the form of the minaret continued to be square and known as *sawma'a* in medieval times (Creswell, 1926). The Great Mosque of Damascus was the first mosque to have towers and was built in the early eighth

century. These early square Roman towers were relatively short at the four corners of the mosque (Bloom, 2002). The original Umayyad square minaret erected by *al-Walid I* was covered with external glass mosaic and was located at the north entrance on the Great Mosque of Damascus. Unfortunately it was destroyed in 1174 and replaced by the present minaret (Hillenbrand, 2000).

During the early Islamic centuries a high minaret, was exclusive feature of secular administrative architecture, but soon it became accepted as an element of religious buildings at the beginning of the ninth century and with the passage of time it became an essential part of the attributes of the mosque. It became utilised and adopted for the call to prayer (*adhan*) as early as the ninth century, but consistently by the eleventh century (Wheatley, 2001). Bloom also argued that in the ninth century, when the Abbasid caliphs ruled from the shores of the Atlantic to the deserts of Central Asia, minarets largely appeared as towers attached to mosques (Bloom, 2002).

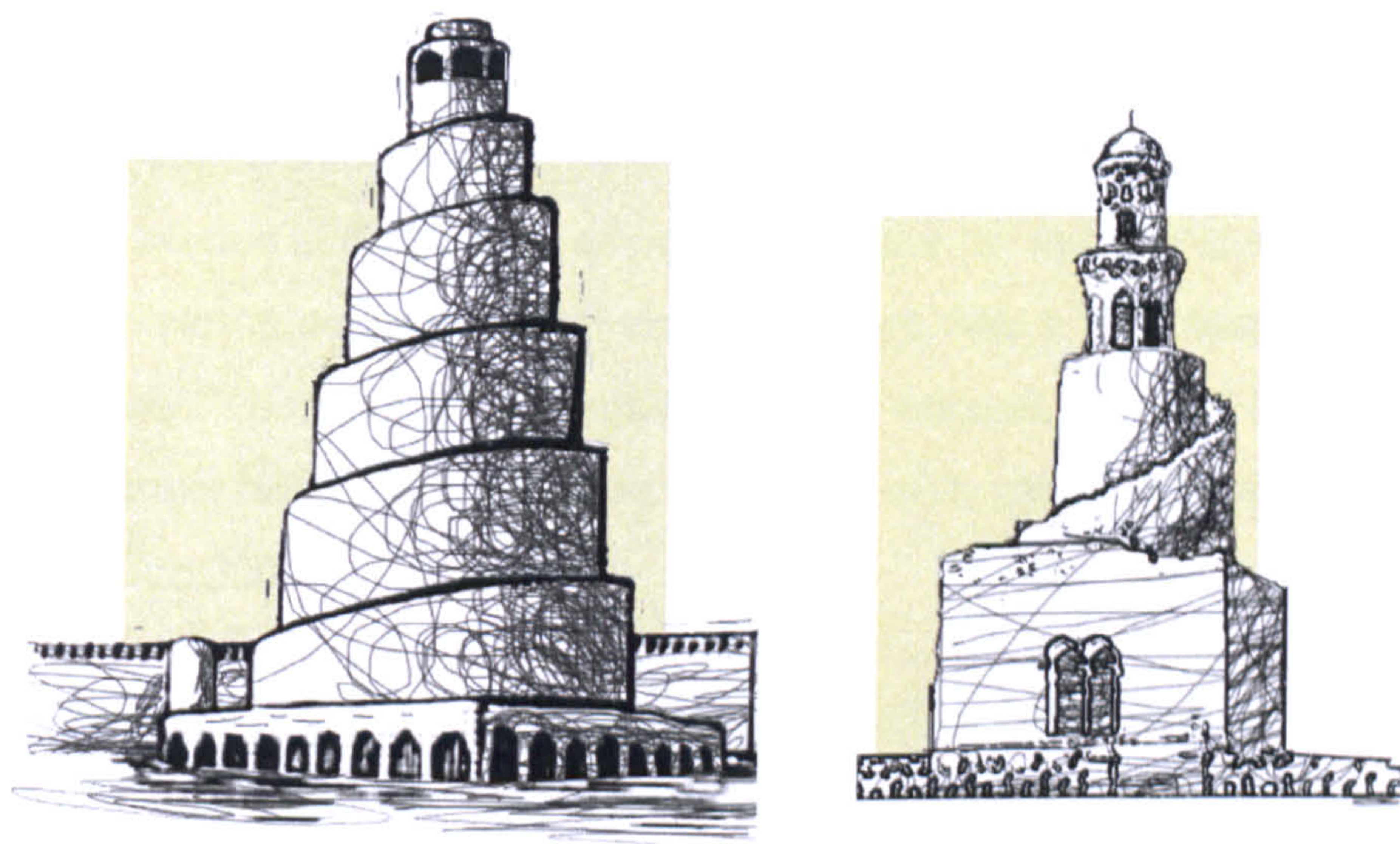


Figure 8.24. Drawing of the famous minaret of the Al- Malwiya mosque, which is 52m high and it is said that there are traces of a wooden pavilion at the top of the minaret to protect the muezzin while he was calling adhan. Left; drawing of the minaret of Ibn Tulun (876 – 879) showing how it was inspired by the spiral form of the Al-Malwiya minaret. Source: Author

Al- Salih Najm al- Din, the last caliph or king of the Ayyubid dynasty (1168 – 1250) imported a large number of Turkish slaves from southern Russia to Egypt. Soon after they took control of Egypt in 1250 and Syria in 1260 and they established a non-Arab Mamluk (*Mamluk* means owned) dynasty (1252- 1517) which ended with the conquest of Syria and Egypt by the Ottoman sultan Selim I in 1517. However, under the political ambitions and wealth of Ayyubid (1169 – 1260) and the Mamluk (1250 – 1517), Cairo developed into the centre of the medieval Islamic world, as is clearly expressed in their urban architecture (Mazot, 2000). Sultan an-Nasir Mohammad built several mosques, palaces and educational centres. He started to use a very outstanding quality of twin towers or minarets in one of his mosques, on the fortress which is regarded as Persian in style (Talbot, 1984). Sultan an-Nasir Hassan (1347-61) was also responsible for one of the finest mosques and madrasas, which was built in 1362. The Sultan Hassan complex is very tall and looks more like a fortress; it has one of the highest minarets in Cairo and the finest mihrab and minbar of the period (Mazot, 2000).

From a structural point of view, the minaret of Sultan Hassan mosque follows the typical architectural style of the Mamluk, being divided into three distinct parts: a square section at the bottom, an octagonal shape for the middle section and finally the top part is crowned with a circular section with a bulb shape, also known as ‘Gawsak’. The stem of the typical Mamluk minaret is richly decorated and the changeover between each section is covered with a band of muqarnas decorations (Iskander, 2006).

However, the glorious stylish architecture, including the Mamluk minarets, came to an end as Egypt was conquered by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I in 1517 (Talbot, 1984).

When *Al-Mutawakkil*, the last Abbasid caliph, formally surrendered the title of Caliph to Sultan Selim I, the Ottoman Empire introduced a new generation of sharp pencil minarets was introduced into Islamic architecture. The Ottoman sultan Fatih Mehmet conquered the Byzantine capital of Constantinople in May

1453. He ordered the addition of a wooden minaret to the 900-year-old church of Hagia Sophia as an indication of the conversion of the church into a mosque. Soon after, the temporary wooden minaret was replaced by a stone one and another three were added, with the same style and measurement. Many more mosques were built in Istanbul, the new Ottoman capital, and the skyline of the city was given a distinctive aspect by the shapes of dozens of slender, arrow-like minarets. These high minarets were used as a signal to indicate that the Ottoman capital was no longer the capital of Christian Byzantium, but the new capital of an Islamic empire. The minarets became a familiar sight as Ottoman authority extended around the Mediterranean Sea into Syria, Arabia, North Africa, Egypt, the Balkans and Greece (Bloom, 2002).



Figure 8.25. Istanbul was introduced as the new capital of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. The skyline of the city was given a distinctive aspect and it was transformed by dozens of slender, arrow-like minarets. Source: Robinson (n.d).

At the same time, according to Bloom, the traditional square minaret continued to hold its shape in Morocco and other parts of North Africa. The ancient Persian architecture also provided a rich source of inspiration for Iranian builders to develop the cylindrical minarets in the eastern Islamic lands.



Figure 8.26. Drawing of the Selimiye Mosque at Edirne (1567-74), which was designed by Sinan. This mosque is considered to be Sinan's masterpiece and the highest achievement of Islamic architecture. Source: Author.

There are more than 60 minarets surviving from the early 11th century to the mid-13th in Iran, the Central Asian republics and Afghanistan. In general, the structures of these surviving minarets are based on a smooth cylindrical form made of brick, with an internal spiral stairway leading to a balcony which is supported by a deep *muqarnas* cornice. The external surfaces of the Iranian cylindrical minarets are generally covered with broad bands of geometric patterns and Islamic inscriptions. In some cases the minarets stand on low bases, and the shafts are decorated with flanges, lobes or decorative arcades every so often (Bloom, 2002). The Friday mosque of Yazd can be mentioned as one the finest examples of Iranian mosques containing cylindrical minarets. This four-iwan mosque was built during the Ilkhanid period (1206 – 1353) and it was rebuilt by a local notable, Shams al-Din Nizami, in 1325-1334. One the most astonishing features of the mosque is its monumental tile portal with two tall cylindrical minarets (Blair and Bloom, 2000).

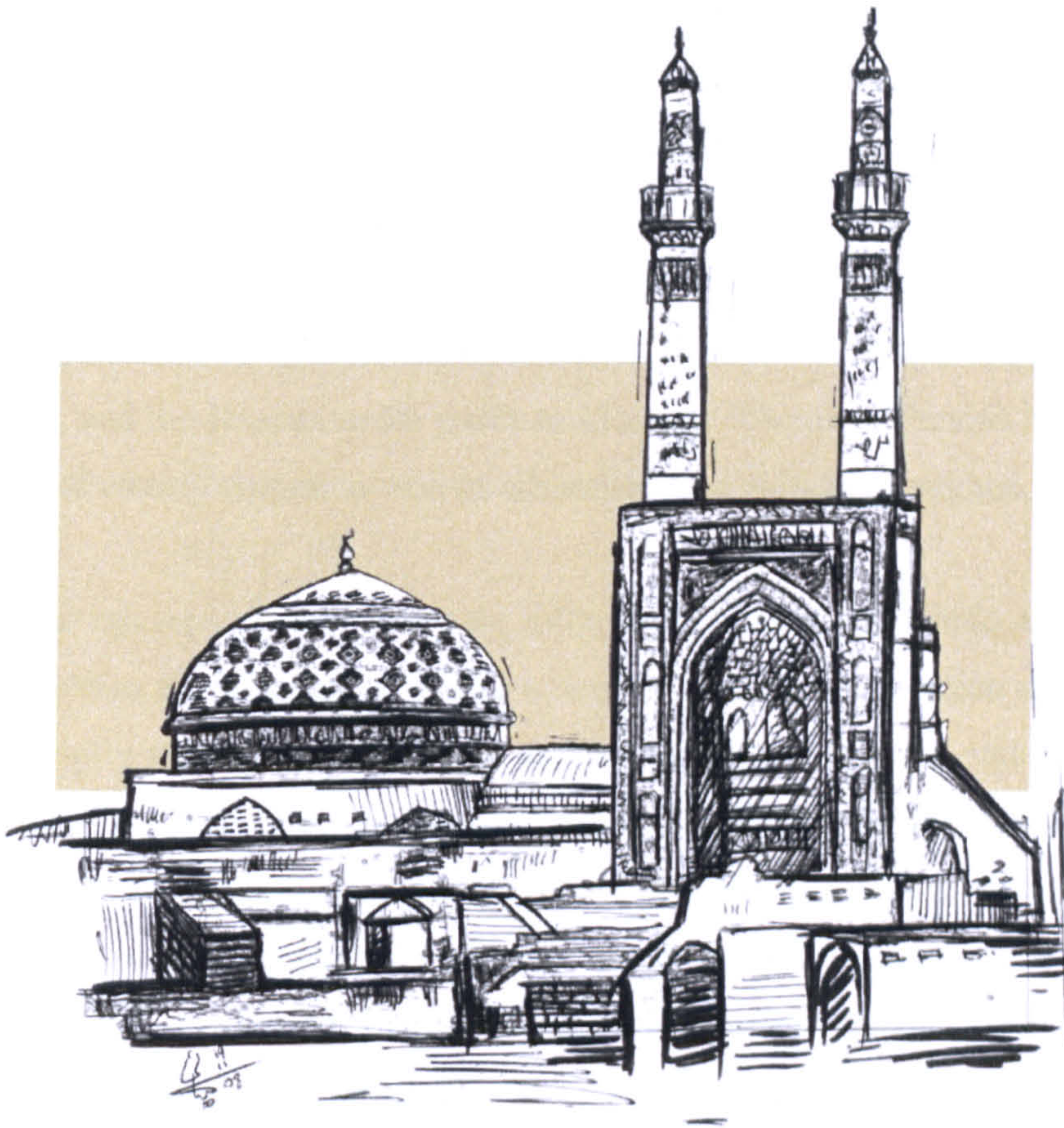


Figure 8.27. Drawing of the Friday mosque of Yazd which was built by Shams al-Din Nizami in 1325-1334. Source: Author.

In brief, the Persian minaret rises high and its form is generally slender and tapered with a round turret. Frequently, the Persian minaret comes in pairs, flanking a great entranceway. The gallery is placed very high and is capped by a low dome in harmony with the main dome of the mosque. Persian minarets are mostly covered with green, blue and yellow glazed tiles containing decorative forms of Islamic patterns, symmetric forms and different sorts of calligraphy (Bloom, 2002).

There is no doubt, however, that the Iranian cylindrical minarets, particularly the Seljuk type, have left their influence far beyond the borders of Iran, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, including recent Pakistan, Bangladesh, parts of Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Ladakh, Assam and Kashmir.

The development of Indo-Islamic architecture started when the Arab armies arrived in 711-712 in Sind. The first phase of the Muslim conquest in India, took an area roughly corresponding to recent Pakistan. During the 11th and 12th centuries invasions from the northwest opened a new influence in India from Iran and Central Asia. The Persian aspiration predominated during the 13th and 14th centuries as the Turko-Iranian leaders ruled the sultanate of Delhi, Punjab, Gujarat to Bengal, and the Deccan as far south as Maduria. Therefore Persian became the language of courtly culture as well as administration in India (Vaughan, 2000).

The typical minarets of India show the influence of both native Hindu architectural styles as well as the influence of Persian minarets. For this reason Indian architecture will be briefly studied here since the architecture of the mosque and minaret in Baluchistan gets its greatest inspiration from India. Islamic architecture in India is divided into two phases. In the first phase the existing Indian temples were demolished to clear ground for Islamic construction. Muslim architects and builders utilised the original space and materials as much as they could. Often all the existing columns and carved pillars were left standing, as in the Quwwat al-Islam mosque near Delhi. In the second phase, the mosque, palace or funerary buildings such as tombs were planned independently, without referring to previous architecture (Sivaramamurti, 1977).

The minaret was not accepted in India for its original function of call to prayers. In this case Hillenbrand states that the minaret had been allotted to a particular function as an articulation feature at the roof level in India from the beginnings of Indo-Islamic architecture. He also states that in a particular Indian form, the minaret was suitable to be mixed with *Chatri* or *Chhatri* (open-plan domed), an arcaded pavilion used as a resource for animating the roof-line of the building. The similarity of the function can easily be measured by comparing a mosque with a mausoleum, which uses the *chatri* form, such as the tomb of Mohammad Chaus Gwalior in 1564 (Hillenbrand, 2000).

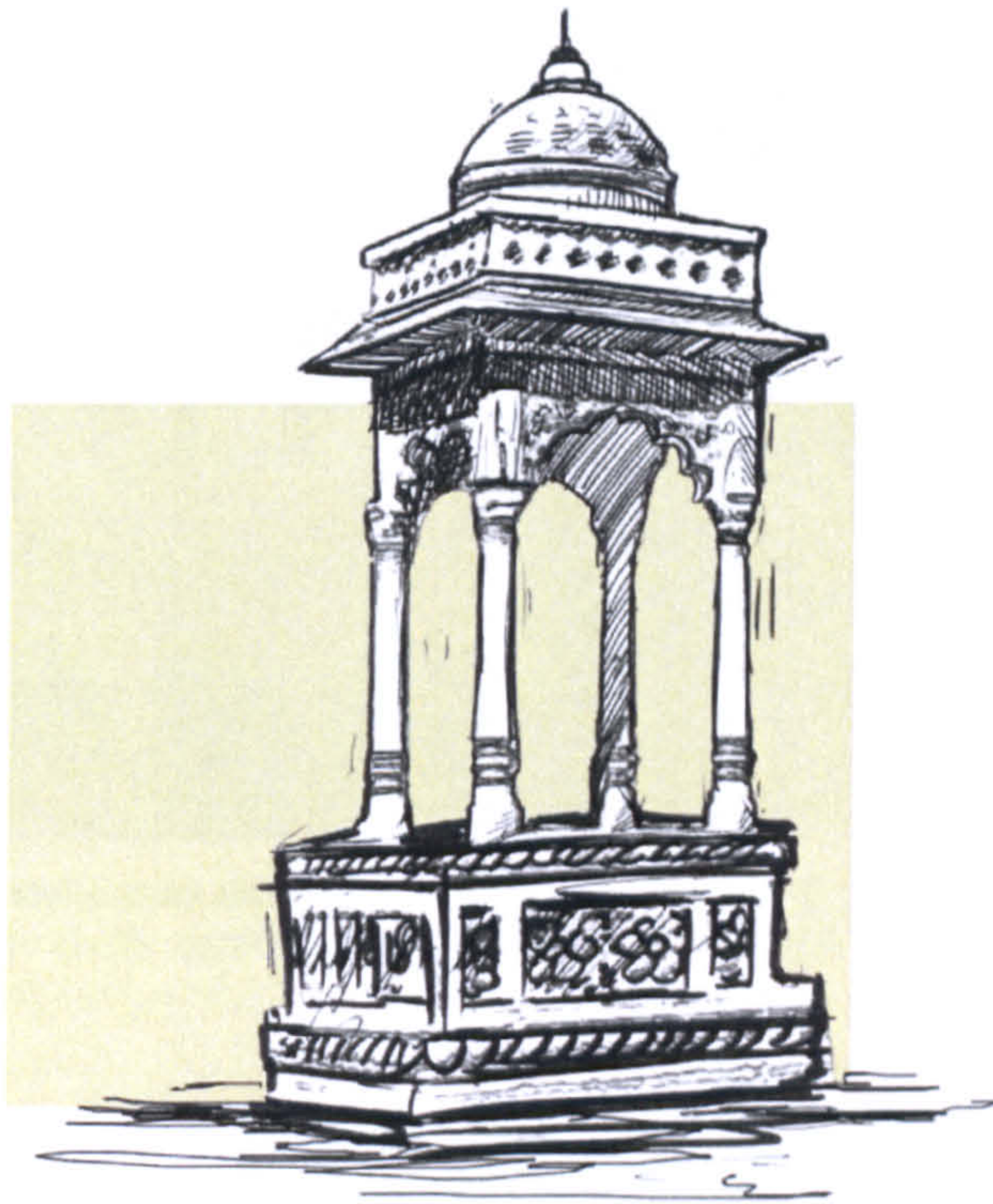


Figure 8.28. The *Chatri* is a domed kiosk resting on pillars. It is used as a cenotaph by Hindus, but Muslim architects placed it on the top of mosques, palaces and tombs as a decoration. Source: Author.

The construction of *chatri*, *chajjas* and *jarohkas*, which characterise Mughal architecture, is also associated with Hindu architecture. The *Chatri* is a domed kiosk resting on pillars. It is used as a cenotaph by Hindus, but Muslim architects placed it on the top of mosques, palaces and tombs as a decoration. A *chatri* has a sloping stone overhang at roof level to deflect rain (Petersen, 1996). The *chatri* was used frequently on different kinds of buildings, including mosques. The minarets of the Taj Mahal can be mentioned as the obvious examples of ones containing *chatri* elements. As mentioned, a new generation of minarets was introduced during the Mughol time, which was far from the origin function of the minarets. This new generation of minarets or semi-minarets had more to deal with symbolic aspect than functional. Semi-minarets, along with the *chatri*, can still be found in different parts of India and Pakistan, particularly in Baluchistan.

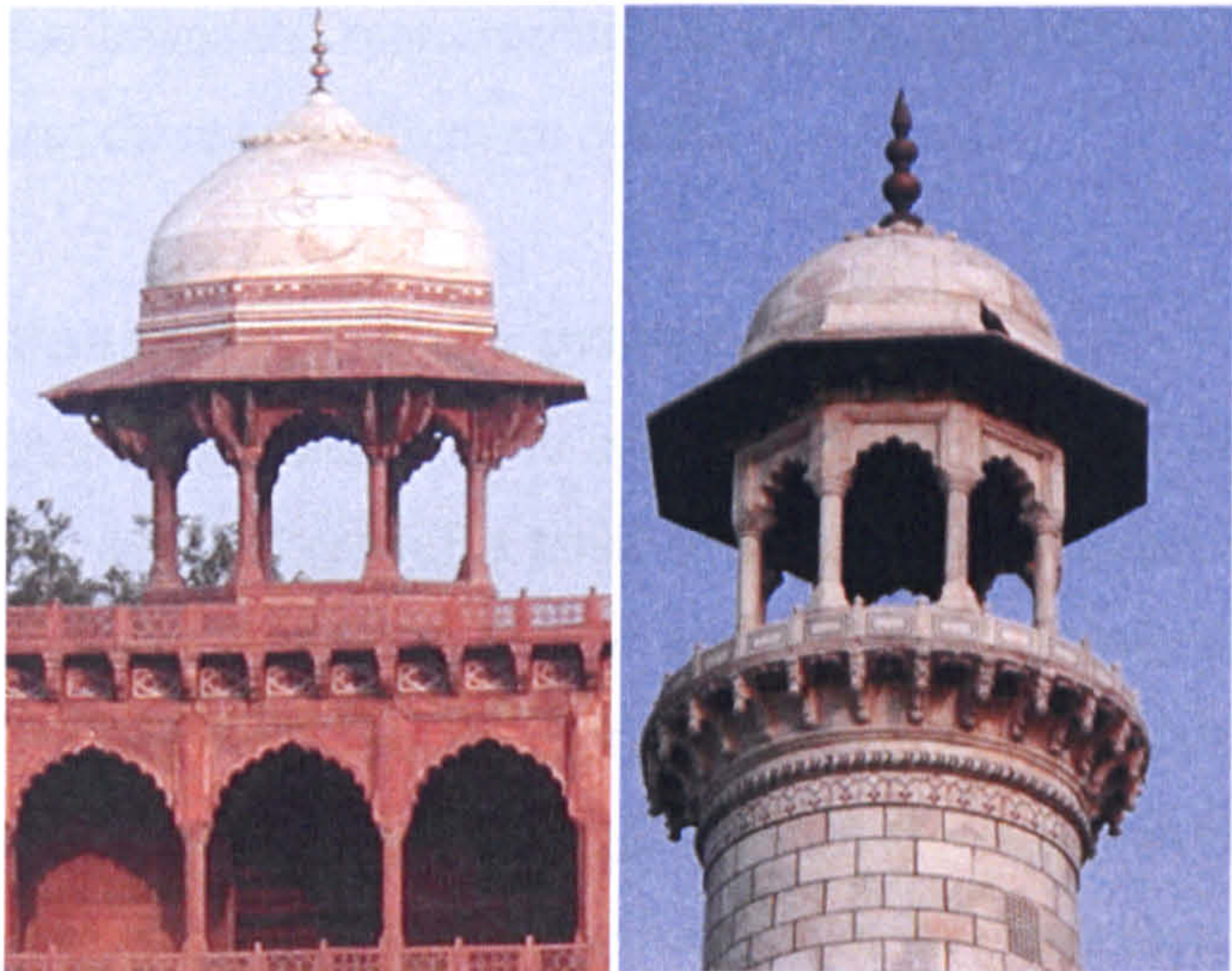


Figure 8.29. Right hand picture shows the chatri form on the top of Taj Mahal minaret and the left hand picture the chatri form on the side wall of the Taj Mahal building. Source: Shah (2002).

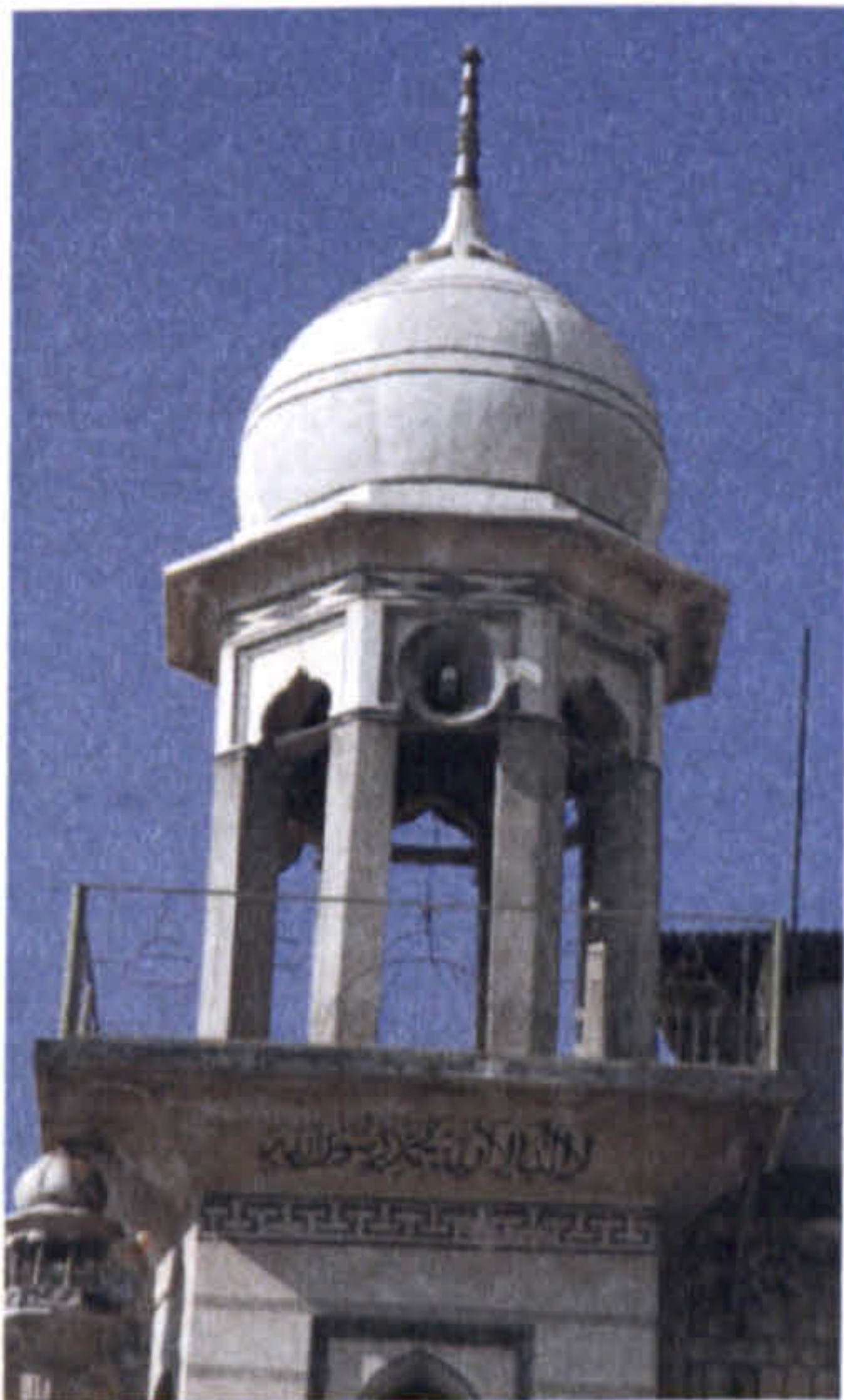


Figure 8.30. The form of the chatri , minaret or semi-minaret can still be found in different parts of India and Pakistan, particularly in Baluchistan. The new generation of minarets deal with symbolic aspects rather than functional monuments. The photo shows an example of chatri form in an urban mosque in the city of Quetta in Baluchistan. Source: Author.

8.5. The functions of the minaret

The function of the minaret as one of the most important elements of the mosque has long been discussed. The call to prayer or adhan has been widely mentioned as the most important function of the minaret, but it is also used as a victory

tower, navigation tower and more recently as a symbolic element. This part of the study investigates these issues in more detail.

8.5.1. The minaret for calls to prayer

The core function of the minaret is to accommodate the Arabic adhan, or call to prayer (Creswell, 1926). Creswell's point of view of the original function of the minaret has been confirmed by other Islamists as well. Nevertheless, there are other views that there was no minaret at the beginning of Islam and adhan, according to Abderahman, originally took place in the streets of the Medina and then from the highest roof of the neighbouring houses rather than from minarets (Abderahman, 2006). Hillenbrand also argues that the adhan is not the only function of the minaret. He states that "*the call to prayer can be made quite adequately from the roof of the mosque or even from a house-top*" (Hillenbrand, 2000:129).

The structure of the adhan and how it was announced must be investigated from the early Islamic times, as it is considered as the most important function of the minaret in a mosque. The appearance of adhan can be found in early Islamic religious sources, such as Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Al-Muslim, along with several others. These early Islamic books are collections of sayings and deeds (Hadith) of Prophet Mohammad and are also known as the *Sunnah* by Sunni Muslims. The Muslim scholar Mohammad Ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari (810-870) in his Sahih narrated how the adhan originated soon after the arrival of Prophet Mohammad in Medina. He declares that

When the Muslims arrived at Medina, they used to assemble for the prayer, and used to guess the time for it. During those days, the practice of Adhan for the prayers had not been introduced yet. Once they discussed this problem regarding the call for prayer. Some people suggested the use of a bell like the Christians, others proposed a trumpet like the horn used by the Jews, but 'Umar was the first to suggest that a man should call (the people) for the prayer;

so Allah's Apostle ordered Bilal to get up and pronounce the Adhan for prayers (Bukhari, 1: 578).



Figure 8.31. An early Persian miniature (1489) illustrating Bilal Al-Habashi pronounces the Adhan or call to prayers on the top of the Kaaba. Source: Wikipedia (2008).

It can be observed that before the migration of Mohammad and his followers to the city of Medina in 622 (known as *Hejrah*), there was no systematic form of adhan. In fact, it is not clear how Muslims were called to gather, particularly for communal prayer.

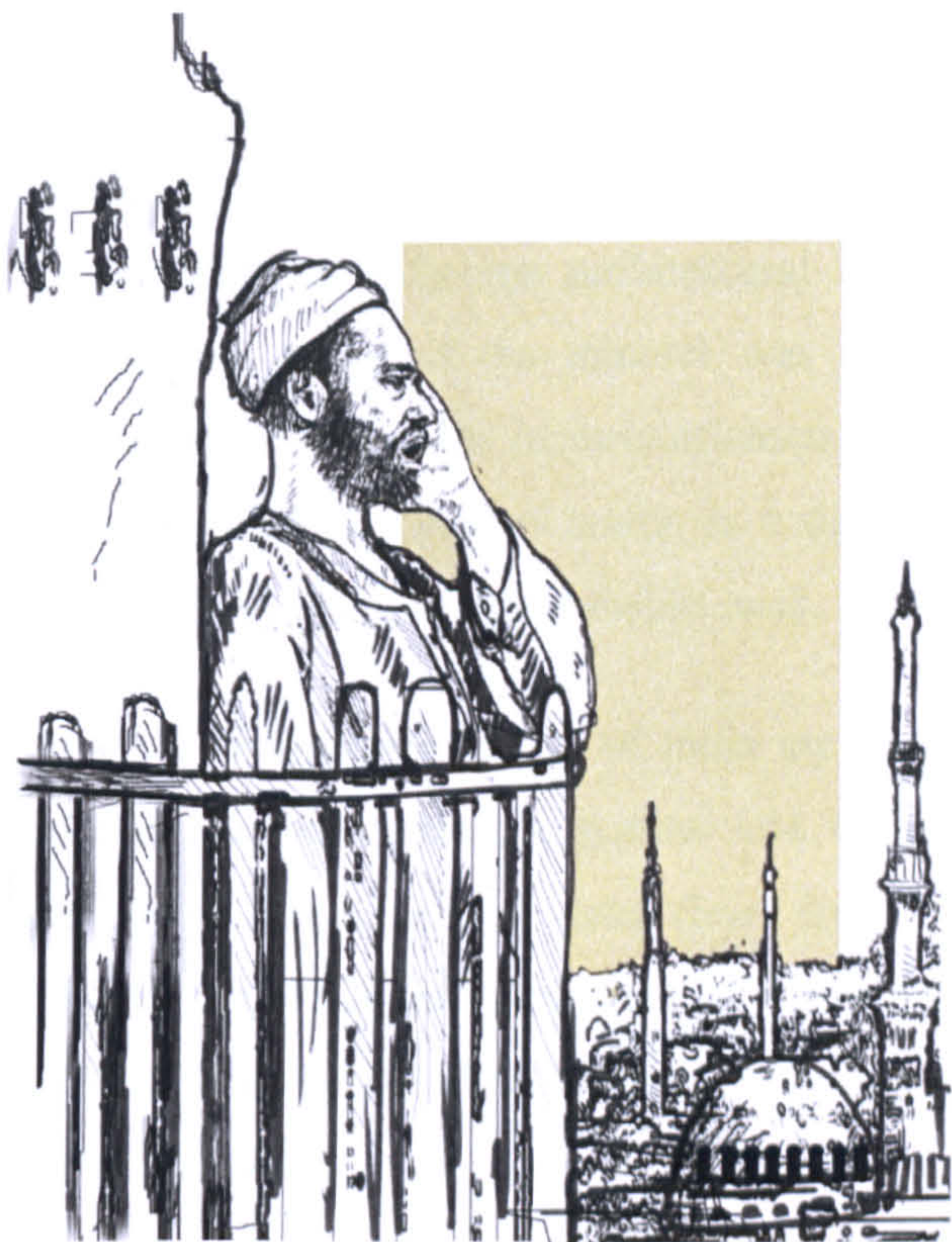


Figure 8.32. Drawing of a muezzin on the top of a minaret calling adhan or call to prayer. The muezzin is highly respected in Islam and sometimes the post has been passed from generation to generation as an honour. Source: Author

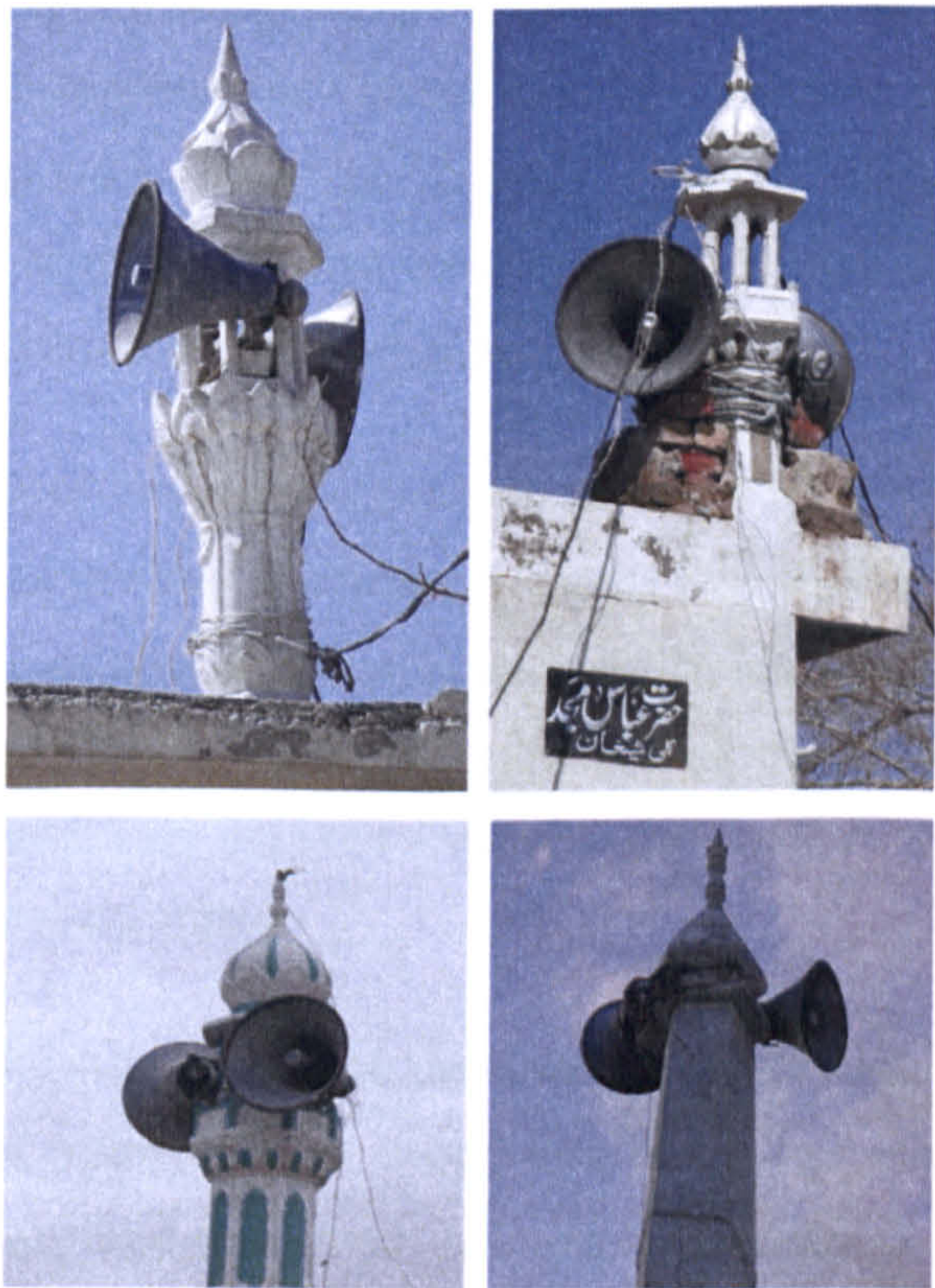


Figure 8.33. Minarets have been soaring in the sky for centuries and they are regarded as one of the most spiritual ornaments in Islamic architecture. Sadly, in recent times it is become simply a pole with a loudspeaker in many cases. The photos are some examples from the urban and rural areas in Baluchistan in Pakistan. Source: Author.

8.5.2. Minaret; the tower of victory

As discussed, the fundamental function of the minaret has been promoting the call to prayers or adhan from early Islamic times. At the same time, in some parts of conquered lands the minaret was adopted as a foreign architectural element. Therefore the function and gradually the shape of the minaret was changed corresponding with the new interpretations. Some of the historic minarets in India and Turkey are believed to have been erected as a victory tower, as a significant element to celebrate the victory of Muslim troops over non-Muslim ones.

Even the sources of inspiration of these victorious minarets of India are open to debate. While most of Islamists confirm the Persian, Egyptian and Ottoman minarets as sources of inspiration, Bloom has discussed some views from Diez and Fergusson, the 19th-century British architectural historian, that the minarets as an Islamic architectural element in India were adaptations of Buddhist and Jaina towers or pillars of victory (Bloom, 2002).

Thiersch compares the cylindrical type of minarets, which are common in Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, to the Roman and Byzantine monumental victory columns, such as Trajan's column. Thiersch's view supports a theory acknowledging that minarets were erected principally as symbols of Islam's victory over other religions (Thiersch, 1909).

There are many other scholars who reject the Thiersch theory. For example, Bloom states that it was relatively easy to accept that square church towers might have led to square minarets in Syria, but Thiersch did not prove how and why the Roman and Byzantine monumental victory columns such as Trajan's column could have inspired Central Asian builders to erect cylindrical brick minarets (Bloom, 2002).

However, apart from the sources of inspiration, it cannot be disregarded that there are some minarets which were erected as a sign of Muslim victory. There are many quotations from different sources which support the function of minarets as

a victorious architectural element. For instance, *“At the end rises the massive domed edifice of Hagia Sophia with its minaret added as a sign of victorious Islam”* (Gladib, 2000:549).

Petersen also confirms that during the Abbasid period the purpose of the minaret in mosques was to demonstrate the power of Abbasid religious authority. Therefore those Muslims who were against the Abbasid power would not adopt the minaret as symbol of conformity. As an example, the Fatimid mosques did not have towers at the beginning. Later, minarets appeared to be synonymous with Islamic architecture, but they never became entirely universal features of the mosque. There are many early mosques in Iran, East Africa and Arabia which were built without any minarets (Petersen, 1996).

The minaret of Jam is mentioned as an Islamic monument which was built to symbolise a Muslim victory. It might not be the only one of this type built by Ghaznavid kings, but it is one of the most remarkable surviving minarets which has left its inspiration on other minarets and victory towers. This point of view can be noticed in *“Islamic art”* by Talbot Rice, who describes the Jam minaret as *“one of the most impressive structures that time has left to us. The famous Qutb Minaret of Delhi must have been inspired by it”* (Talbot 1984:57).

The Ghaznavid minarets followed the Persian types in their use of materials and construction. The minaret of Jam, like many other minarets, was built of bricks and decorated with geometrical patterns and calligraphic bands.

Figure 8.34. The minaret of Jam was built in the 12th century by Masud III during the Ghaznavid dynasty. It is considered as a victory tower and is the most outstanding of the group of some 70 towers erected in Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia during the 11th and 13th centuries (Hattstein and Delius, 2000:337).



In the later years of the tenth century the Ghaznavid dynasty came to power in Eastern Persia, which is known today as Afghanistan, first under Sabuktigin (976-97) and then under Mahmud of Ghazni (999-1030). During the Ghaznavid era several minarets were built as victory towers (Talbot, 1984). The minaret of Jam, which was built in the 12th century, is the most outstanding of the group of some 70 towers erected in Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia during the 11th and 13th centuries. It is an amazing minaret 60 metres in height, rising from the floor of an inaccessible mountain valley in central Afghanistan (Blair and Bloom, 2000).

Qutb Minar is one the most famous Islamic architectural monuments in Delhi, which was built as a victory tower according to many historians and Islamists. It is accepted as the minaret of the Quwwat Al-Islam Mosque but its location in the middle of the courtyard and architectural form indicates that it was built with a different function to normal minarets.

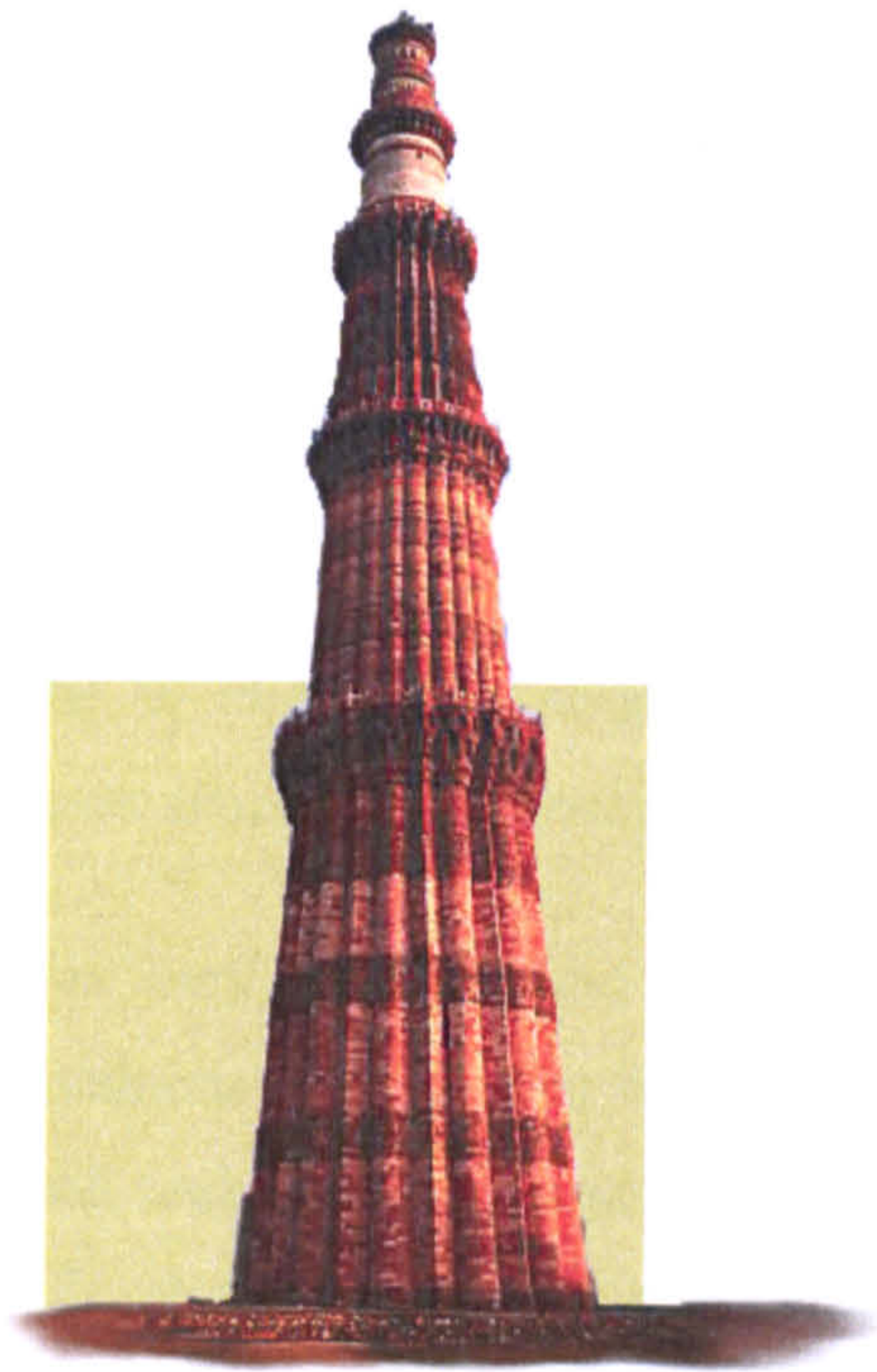


Figure 8.35. The structure of Qutb Minar began in the 12th century in the courtyard of the Great mosque of Quwwat al- Islam. It is suggested that this tower is not simply a minaret. It can be regarded as a victory tower, symbolising the superiority of Islam over all other religions in India. (Hattstein and Delius, 2000:340).

The Qutb Minar is a unique architectural monument which was built to announce the arrival of Islam in India. The minaret of Qutb consists of a tall pointed cylindrical tower based on a circular foundation. It is a five storey minaret with a height of 72.5m. All these five storeys are linked to each other by an internal spiral staircase. The staircase also leads to the balconies, which are supported on muqarnas corbels. The grooved angular and rounded fluting on the shaft are the

most characteristic feature of the Qutb Minar. Its decorative and structural techniques of became the basis for many later examples (Petersen, 1996).

Qutb Minar, which was built in the courtyard of the Great Mosque of Quwwat al-Islam at the end of the 12th century, should not be considered simply as a minaret. It can be regarded as a victory tower, symbolising the superiority of Islam over all other religions in India (Fehervari, 1997). Here there is another quotation suggesting that the minaret of Qutb is in fact acting both as victory tower and minaret of the mosque at the same time. Sivaramamurti states that “*The most outstanding monument in Delhi is the Qutb Minar, which not only served as a tower of victory but also as a minaret to the mosque known as the Quwwat-al-Islam*” (Sivaramamurti, 1974: 437).

8.5.3. Minaret as navigation sign

It has already been argued that cylindrical minarets were based on pre-Islamic Persian architecture. However, hundreds of different types of towers have survived from pre-Islamic Persian architecture and early Islamic times. These towers are commonly known as *mil* or *meel*, *borj* or *minar* in Iran. They are very similar to minarets in structure, form and even decoration, but they are not minarets attached to mosques with the function of call to prayer.

It was very difficult and sometimes impossible to cross the deserts and mountainous lands of Iran by caravan. Therefore the Persian builders combined art and architecture to build monuments working as a landmark and even as significant navigators. They were mainly built on the top of hills and mountains by the main roads. Most of the mils had a fire-place on the top to be used in dark, dusty, and foggy times. It seemed that erecting a mil was necessary in desert areas where there were sandstorms as well as in jungles. They were also built by caravanserai, such as the two 40 metre towers of *Robat e- Sangbast* in *Khurasan* to give a signal to travellers that there was a place for resting and refreshment (Amani- Zoarm, 2006).

The typical mils, therefore, were built as navigation signs to guide the passing caravans in the right direction. Some of them could be seen from a distance of 30-50 km. Ghiyasabadi, a Persian architect, states that most of the minarets or towers in ancient Persia were built as independent architectural monuments, not as part of any other buildings. Minaret, meaning a place for fire, is another name for the signal or guide towers. The fire on the top of minarets was used to guide passing travellers. They were also used to send different secret messages and signals by the light or the smoke from the minaret. These minarets were used as a telegraph (Ghiyasabadi, 2008).

The function of most of these guide mils is misunderstood by the majority of historians and Islamists. They regard them as minarets even though they cannot find any nearby mosque. Khurasan, the north-eastern province of Iran, contains a large number of these typical guide mils or minarets; this is because Khurasan was the most important bypass of the Silk Road and it is still the most religious city of Iran and has been hosting millions of Muslims every year.

Hillenbrand also confirms that there are some minarets with unknown original functions, particularly from the Seljuk period. There are large numbers of minarets, such as Khodro Gerd, Ziyar and Mil-e-Naderi, which are located along major routes or at the edge of the desert in Iran. These types of minarets would lend support to the theory that they undoubtedly served as signposts. As there were many caravans travelling at night, a lamp or fire on the top of the minarets would allow them to serve as a landlocked lighthouse (Hillenbrand, 2000).

Hillenbrand states that

In a few cases the minaret is located on the top of the hill where there is no room for an adjoining mosque (Kirat). Such a siting can only emphasise the role of the minaret as a signal tower or watch-tower; in a small settlement like Kirat there would be little enough call for a minaret in any case, and therefore even less need to site the minaret

well away from the mosque in the interests of making adhan more audible (Hillenbrand, 2000: 155).

There are hundreds of surviving mils or guide towers in Iran. The mil of Ezhdeha (dragon), the *Ayaz* minaret, *Mil-e-Karat*, *Mil-e-Radkan*, the minaret of *Firoozabad*, *Borj-e-Kashar*, *Mil-e-Akhgan* and *Mil-e- Khosro Gard* in Kurasan and *Mil-e-Khosroabad* in Lorestan are some examples of typical guide towers in Iran. Some examples will be investigated in this part of the study.



Figure 8.36. Left; the mil of Ezhdeha or dragon is considered as the oldest surviving guide tower in Iran. The date of this tower goes back more than 2000 years to Ashkanid times. Source: Ghiyasadadi (2008).

Figure 8.37. Right; Mil-e- Karat is also mentioned as a guide tower, landmark, watchtower or minaret in several historical Persian resources. This minaret-shaped tower was built during the Seljuk period (1037- 1192). Source: Ghiyasadadi (2008).

The existence of a large number of towers or minarets built as landmarks, watchtowers and guide or signal towers in Iran, Afghanistan and central Asia can

be mentioned as the main reason for Diez to suggest that some Iranian minarets had non-religious functions and were never used for the function of adhan (Diez, 1918).

In a similar way, the minarets which were directly built for mosques or other religious buildings have also been working as signal towers for the Muslim community as well. As clarified, the minaret of the mosque is traditionally built for the call to prayer, but it also provides a visual indication, particularly for the Jame or Friday mosque, which is normally located traditionally in the centre of Islamic cities.

A similar story is narrated for the function of high minarets in Istanbul. Hillenbrand states that the Ottoman's minarets with their extensive feature are rolling skyline of Istanbul. The minaret was ideally suited to display the political significance of the city. The Ottoman capital encouraged new use of the minaret as an element of urban design on a massive scale (Hillenbrand, 2000).

Rasdi confirms that the minaret still has a function of being a tall landmark to proclaim where the mosque is located. The minaret was primarily built as a place to call out the adhan, but this function is weakened as electronic systems can play this role. It might be the reason why the Malay Nusantara type mosque never had a minaret, as they used the *taboh*, a kind of wooden drum, to indicate the prayer times (Rasdi, 1998).

Sorti believes that the minaret not only signifies the Muslim community and the major mosques in the city, but it also indicates the direction of qibla (Kab'ba) from a distance. Muslims can find the direction of qibla by observing the position of the dome and the minarets of the mosque. The easiest way is to place the dome in the middle of a pair minaret which normally flanks the main entrance of the mosque (Sorti, 2008).

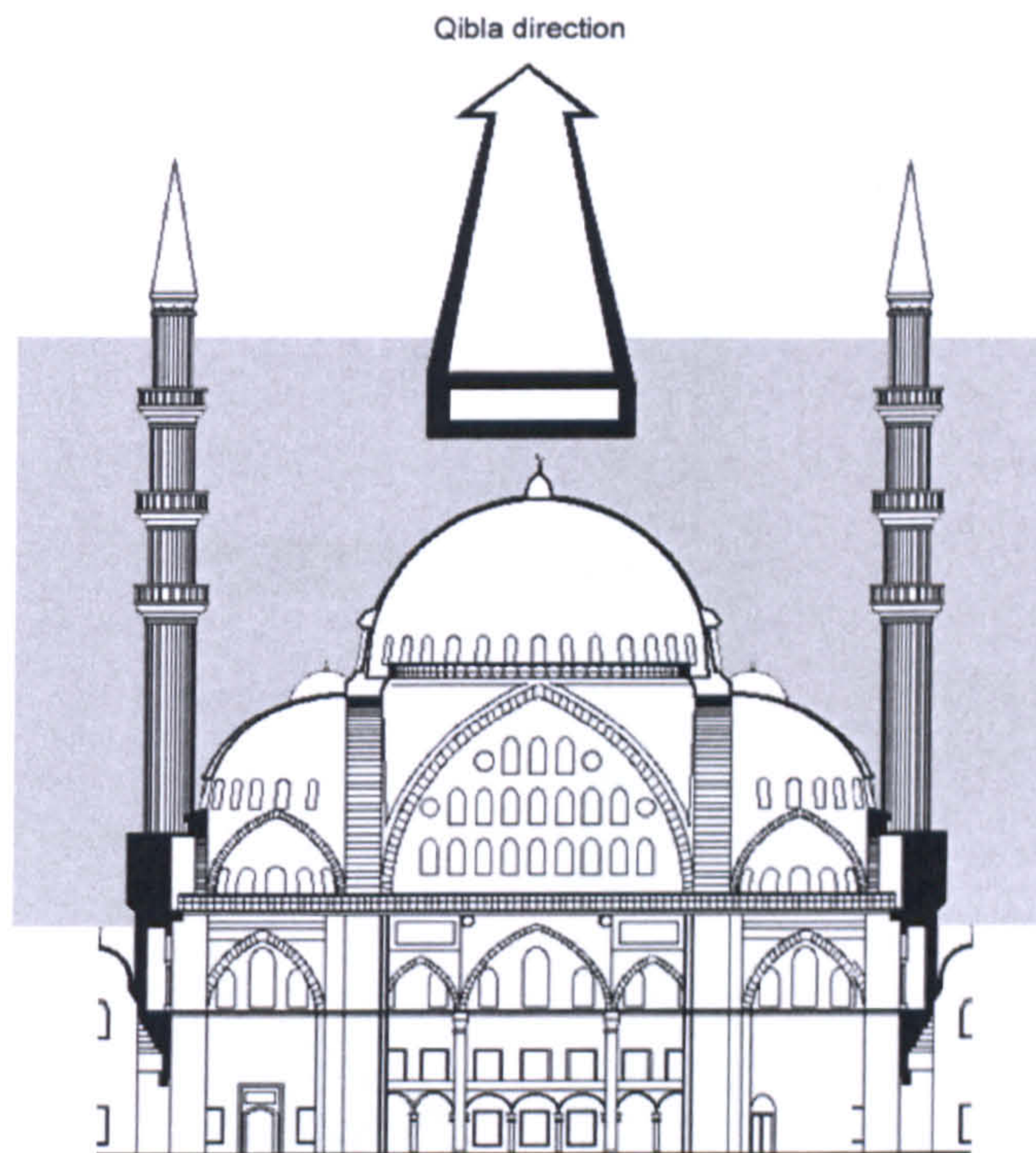


Figure 8.38. Muslims can find the direction of qibla by observing the position of the dome and the minarets of the mosque even from a long distance. Source: Author

8.6. Typology of the minaret

Each individual minaret has its own structure. According to Hutt, it seems that it was a general rule that the minaret was built free-standing, but in a close relation with the mosque (Hutt, 1970). Common architectural features of minarets are a foundation or base, shaft or body, gallery or balcony, the crown or head of the minaret and staircase, which can be commonly found in most of minarets, particularly the traditional types which were built for the function of calling to prayers.

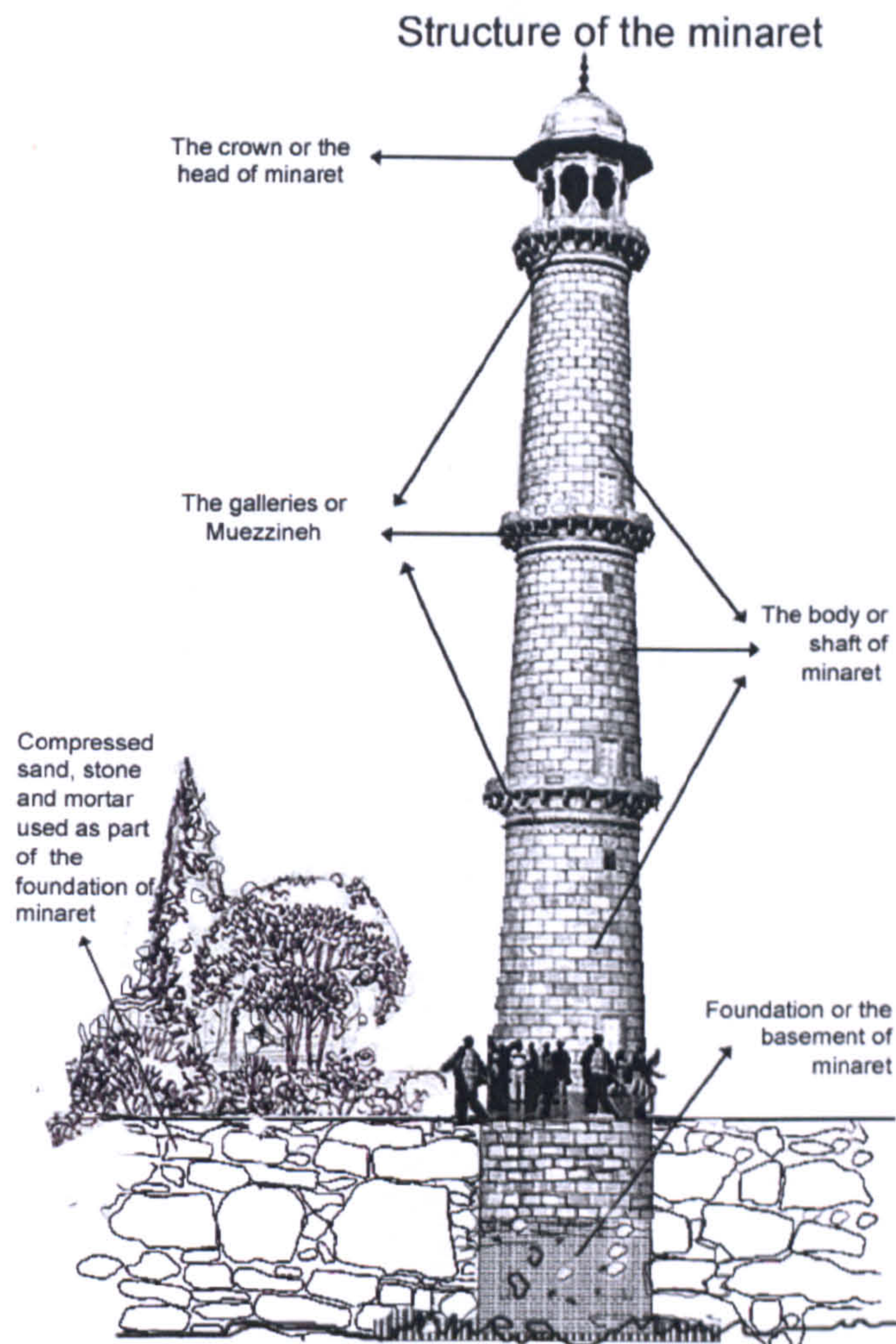


Figure 8.39. The general structure of the minaret is illustrated in this drawing. The foundation or base, shaft or body, gallery or balcony, the crown or the head of the minaret and staircase can be commonly found in most minarets, particularly the traditional types which were built for the function of calling to prayers. Source: Author

As mentioned earlier, the common form of minaret developed during history. It started as a square, changed on the next storey to a polygon and then finally to the cylindrical main shape. Lewcock confirms that the balcony of the minaret at an early stage was constructed of light wood and beamed on brackets as well as superimposed niches. The top of the minaret, which was often crowned by a dome or a conical roof, used to make another storey, frequently complementary in shape and size (Lewcock, 1978).

The lowest section of minarets in Cairo and Syria were built in square forms. They usually have several galleries and the top parts of the minarets are in many cases are capped with a bulbous dome (Anon, 1964). Fehervari states that the earlier minarets of Syrian and western types are based on a square shaft (Fehervari, 1997). The minarets in North Africa, such as Tunisia and Morocco, and also in Spain, are generally large square towers. They are often richly decorated and have a smaller pavilion at the top. The gallery is usually located on the lower stage and serves for the call to prayer (Anon, 1964). Davies reveals that the earliest Syrian square minarets consisted of several storeys. This method became the normal type in North Africa and Spain (Davies, 1982). Lewcock states that the low square tower was built for both pagan and Christian purposes long before the rise of Islam in Syria. Therefore minarets began as low, square masonry towers on the pattern of pre-Islamic Syrian towers and soon after Islamic architects desired to make them higher; however, they resorted to the stepped storey construction of Roman lighthouses (Lewcock, 1978).

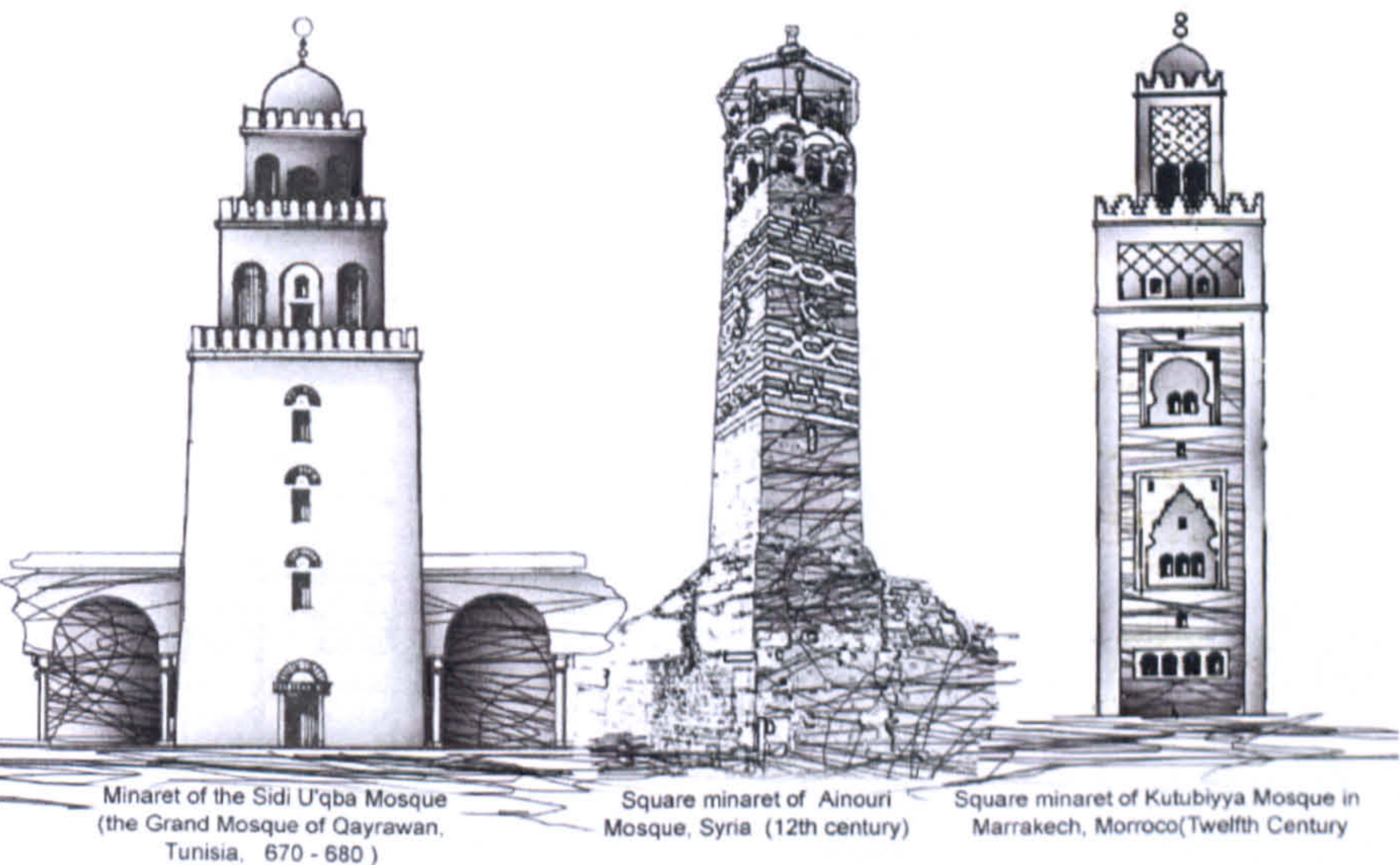


Figure 8.40. Three examples of square minarets. Source: Author.

While the shape of minarets in Africa was mostly the square form or reproduction of the cylindrical minaret of the Middle East, Obojski (1981) believes that in some parts of Africa minaret designs diverge even more from those seen in the Middle

East. He gives some example from Somalia, which show that the mosques often have windmill-like round minarets with two galleries. Apart from the square form of minaret, the cylindrical types are the most popular ones. The appearance of the round minaret can be traced in Iranian architecture, as discussed before.

Persian minarets are mostly in cylindrical form, which appear in Iran as a tall column with an enormous capital, which is in fact the balcony for the muezzin (Davies, 1982). The high raised Persian minarets are tapered slim round tower and they are capped by a low dome. Persian minarets mostly come in pairs flanking a great entranceway. The gallery in Persian minarets is placed very high. The entire Persian minaret is frequently covered with different kinds of decoration and particularly with green, blue, and yellow glazed tiles (Anon, 1964).

In the Middle East, minarets were mainly built in cylindrical shapes, but other shapes of minarets can also be found. For example, in Iraq the spiral form was popular, and it was occasionally exported outside the country of its origin, such as in the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo (876-9) (Davies, 1982).

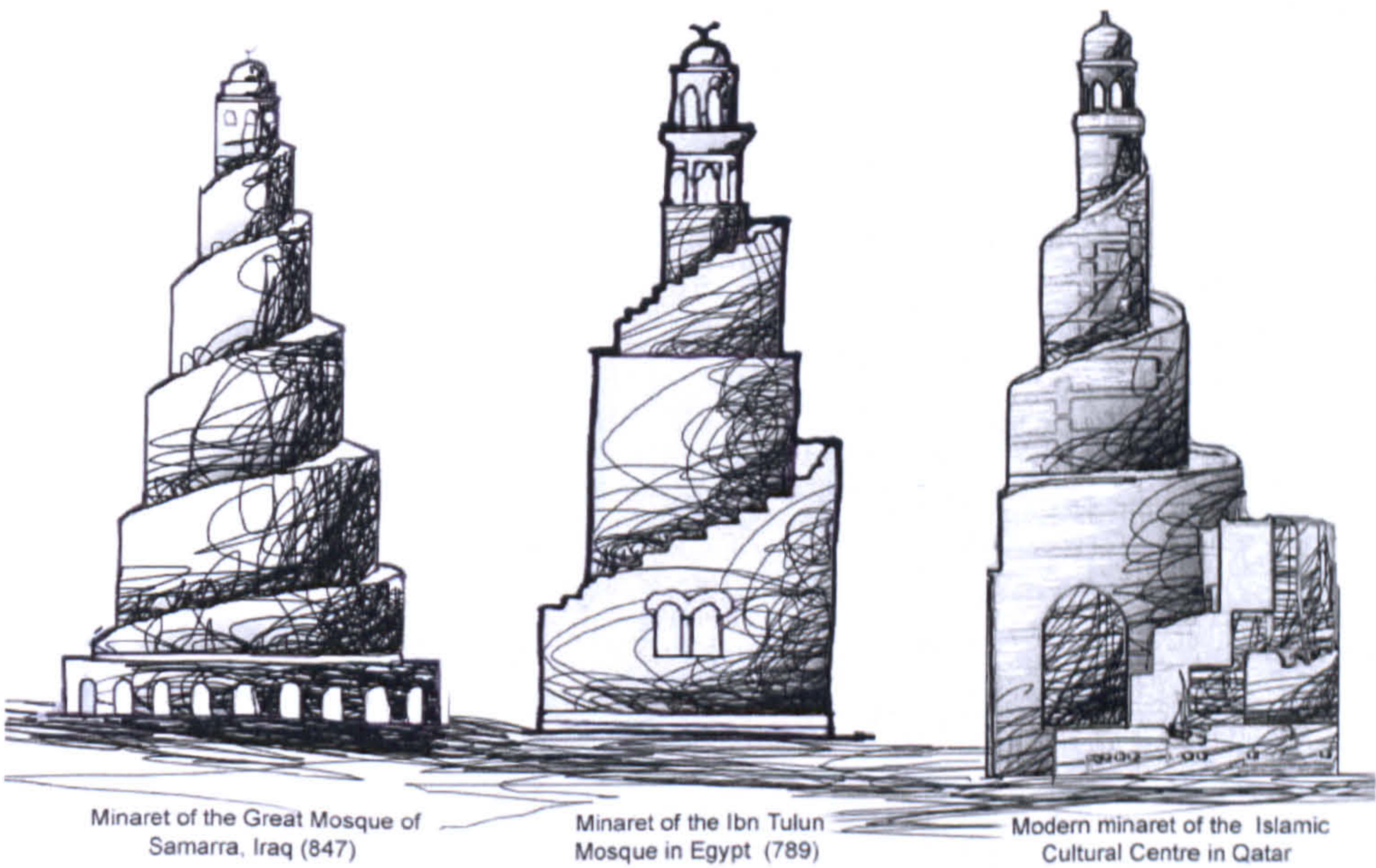


Figure 8.41. Three examples of spiral minarets. Source: Author.

The other typical shape of minaret has been relates to Ottoman architecture, and is mainly recognised as a pencil-shape or needle-like minaret.

Davies remarks that in Turkey needle-like or pencil shapes minarets, which mostly have one or more balconies, present graceful profiles (Davies, 1982). However, the Turkish minarets are generally slender and tapered, and may be round or polygonal, very similar to the Persian minaret. But unlike the Persian type, the Turkish one has two, and even three, galleries and is regularly capped with a slim wooden cone. The use of colours or decorative tiles is minimised or even ignored as they were frequently built of white marble (Anon, 1964).

The last type of minaret which relates to the main subject of this study is Indian minarets. The Indian minarets were not entirely regarded as an independent form of minaret as they were deeply influenced by the Persian type, but at the same time mixed with native Hindu architectural styles (Anon, 1964).

Changing function of minaret in Pakistan and particularly the Baluchi types are rooted in the Islamic architecture of India. The degeneration of the Indian minaret and its deformation and functional change started in the funerary architecture of 17th century Bijapur. In Bijapur one tomb after another was built and decorated by a dozen or more tiny, spherical-headed towers, looking more like candles on a birthday cake. These inconsequential constructions hardly deserve the name of minaret (Hillenbrand, 2000).

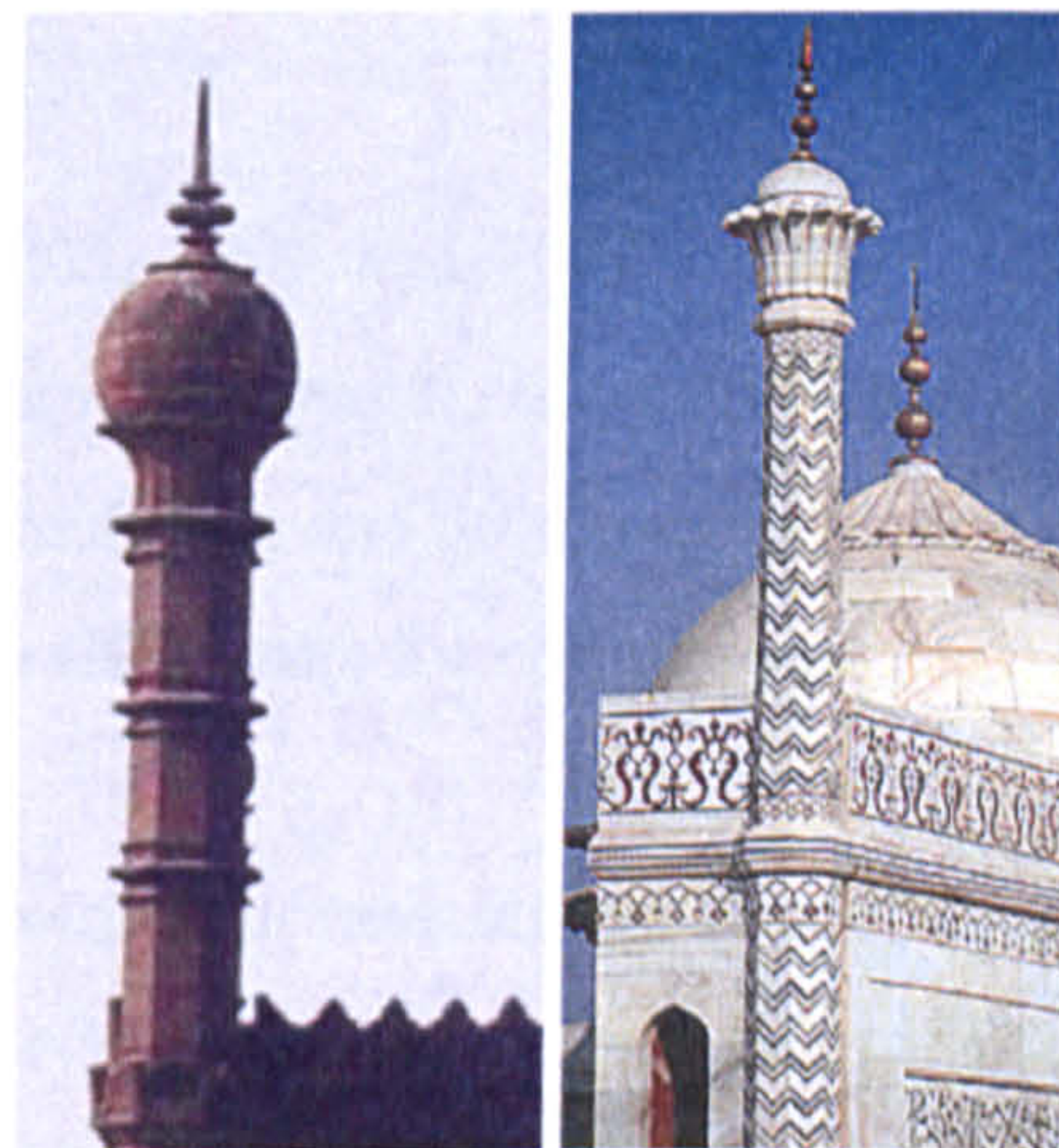


Figure 8.42. The semi- minaret in Mughol architecture can be seen in a 17th century tomb in Bijapur (left) as well as in the Taj Mahal (1630 to 1653) at Agra in India (right). Source: Shah (2002).

The functional change of minaret not only appeared in mosques and religious shrines, but also on tombs, palaces and funerary complexes. Hillenbrand states that:

In the Taj Mahal the major minarets defining the extent of the funerary complex are supplemented by a series of extremely slender minarets integrated into the facades of the tomb and barely breaking the roof-line; these show how the minaret could shrink to a symbolic presence only (Hillenbrand, 2000:161).

Many semi-minarets appeared around the building only as decorative pieces, which were far from the original notion of the minarets. These semi-minarets can be observed on the historic site of the Taj Mahal as well as elsewhere in modern India and Pakistan, particularly in Baluchistan.

8.7. The significance of the minaret in Baluchistan

How important is using the minaret as a religious architectural element in the mosques of Baluchistan? I conducted several surveys to address this question during my case study. These surveys included visiting the mosques, both in rural and urban areas of Baluchistan, a visual survey and interviews. The result of these surveys indicates the significance of minarets in Baluchistan.

8.7.1. Site visits (case study)

During my three journeys to Baluchistan in 2003, 2005 and 2009 I visited 145 mosques, including 27 mosques in the urban area of Quetta, the capital city of Baluchistan, 93 mosques in the rural area of Baluchistan and 30 mosques in urban and rural areas of Islamabad, Jhelum and Mirpur (Kashmir) for comparison.

The aims of my site visits were to identify the symbolic minarets and understand their meaning, study the structure of different types of mosque and the various uses of mosque elements such as minaret, mihrab, minbar and dome. The result of my site visits shows that mihrabs and minarets are the most important elements of mosques in Baluchistan. According to the people of Baluchistan, minarets signify

the mosques. They simply show where the mosque is and the mihrab tells you in which direction to pray.

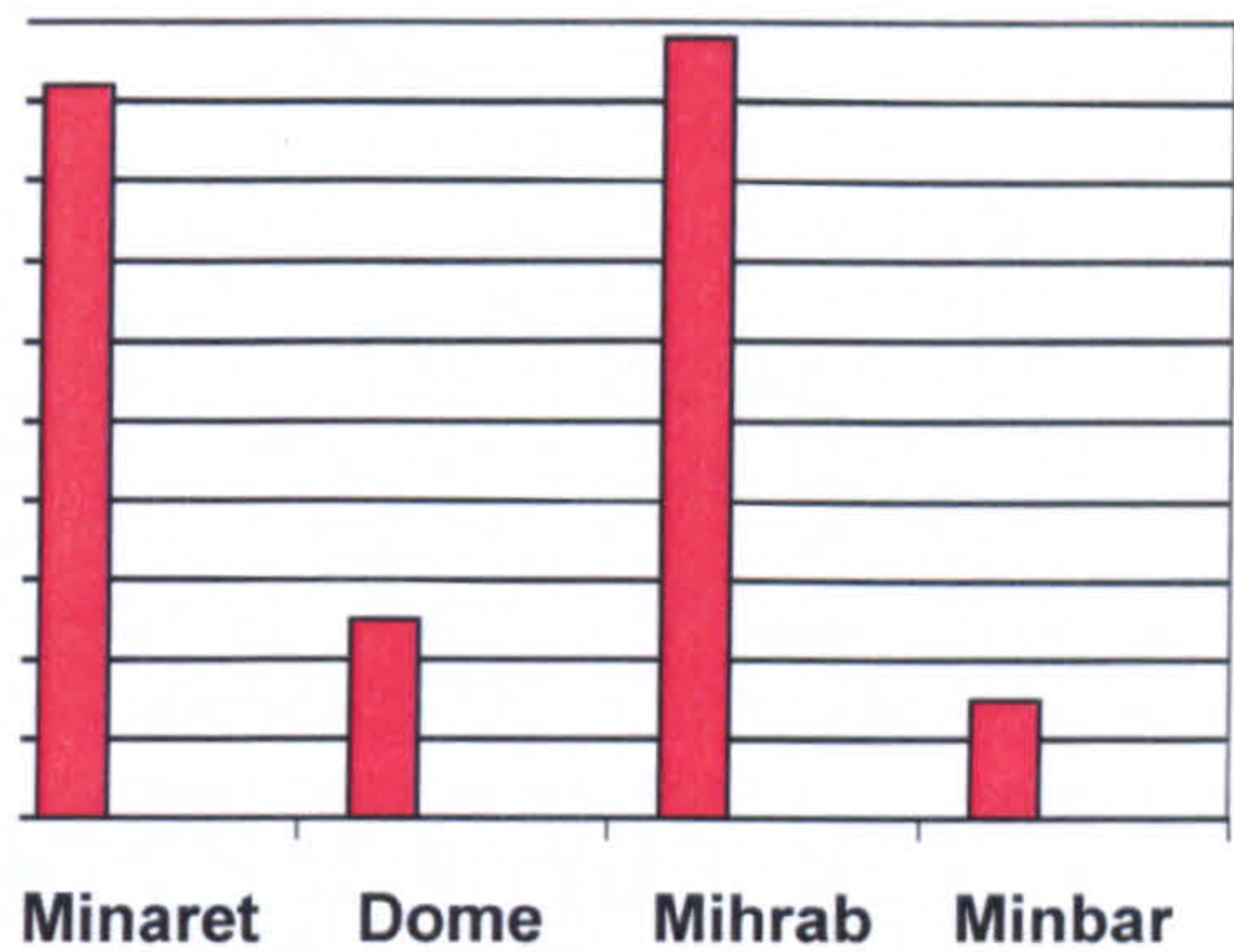


Figure 8.43. The chart shows the percentage of mosque elements used in mosques in Baluchistan. Source: Author

8.7.2. Visual survey

To find out how important the minaret is for the people of Baluchistan I carried out a visual survey. I randomly picked 78 people of different age groups from 7 to 80 years old to participate in the visual survey. The participants were mainly from rural areas with different occupations, such as farmers, pastors, shopkeepers, shepherds, students, *mullahs* (teachers of religious study) and several others.

The task was to draw a mosque. My aim was to discover how the people visualise the mosque. What features of the mosque are more important in their drawing? The result of the visual survey shows that the minaret was the most important



element of the mosque, which can clearly be observed in the drawings. The dome, ablution space and hygiene service follow, as some participants featured and explained in their drawing. In this part of the study some examples of the visual survey will be explored.

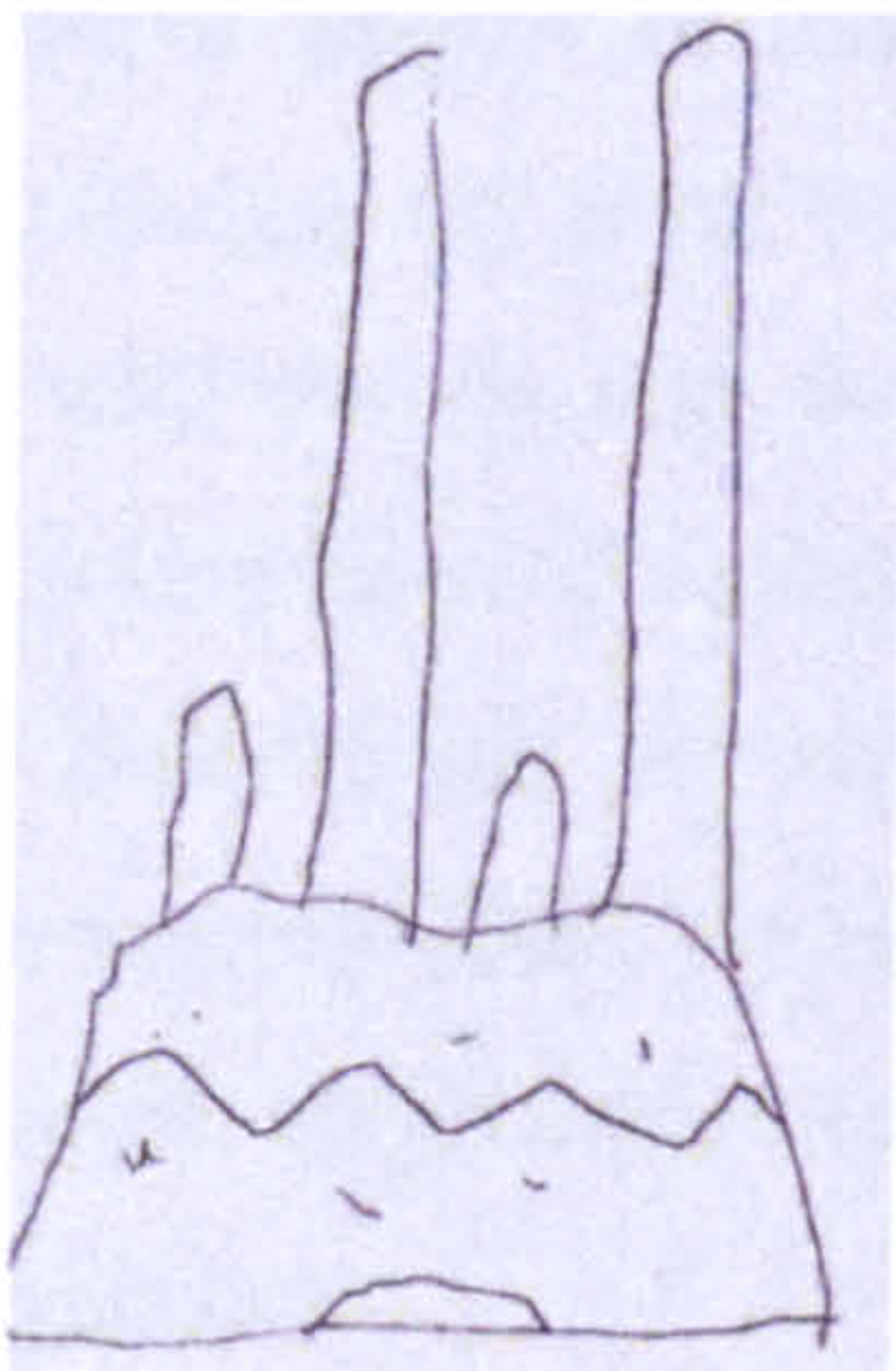
Figure 8.44. Two Baluchi men standing by manufactured minarets who participated in the visual survey. Source: Author

Samples of participants in the survey

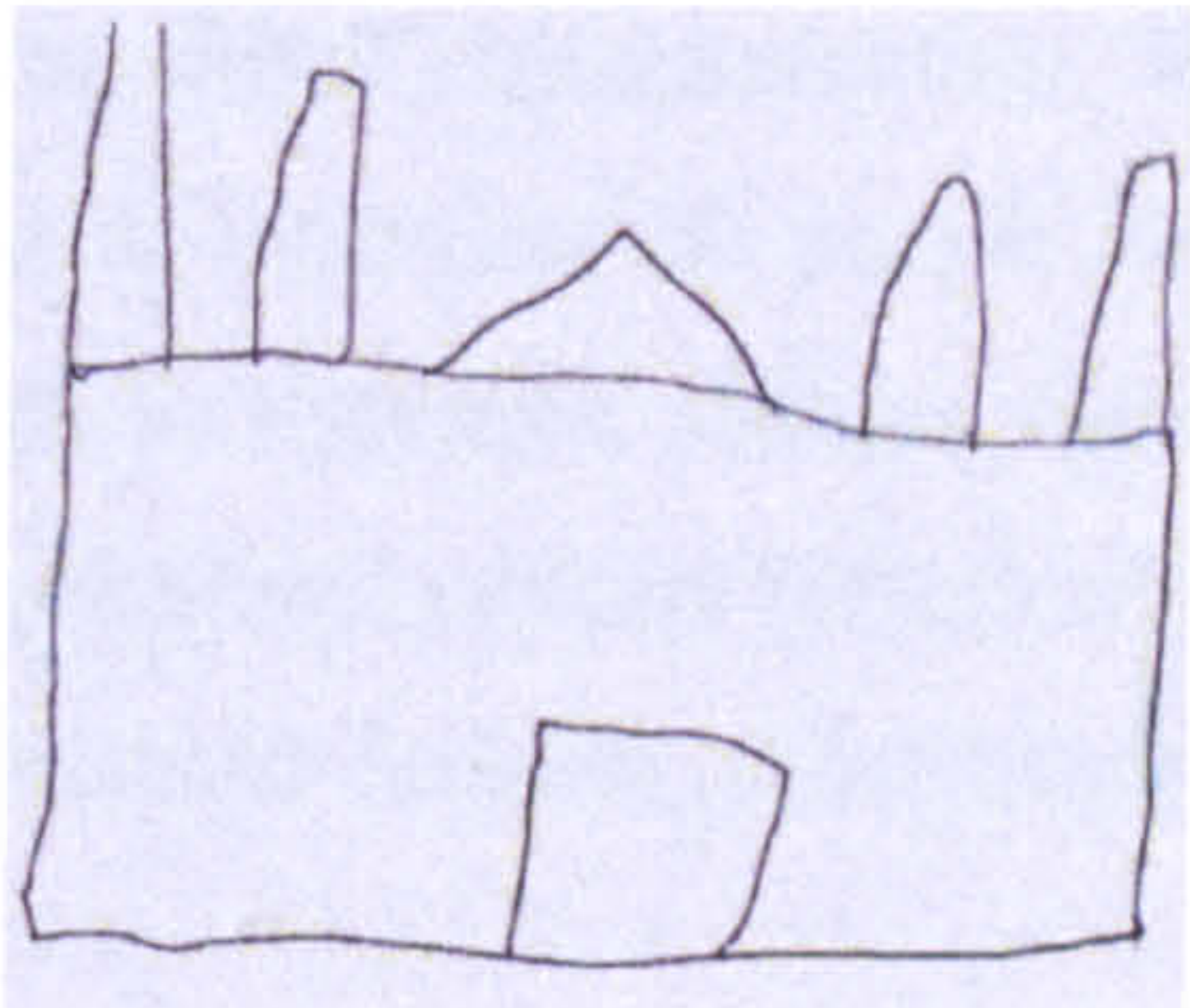


Figure 8.45. Photos shows different aged people participating in the visual survey. Source: Author

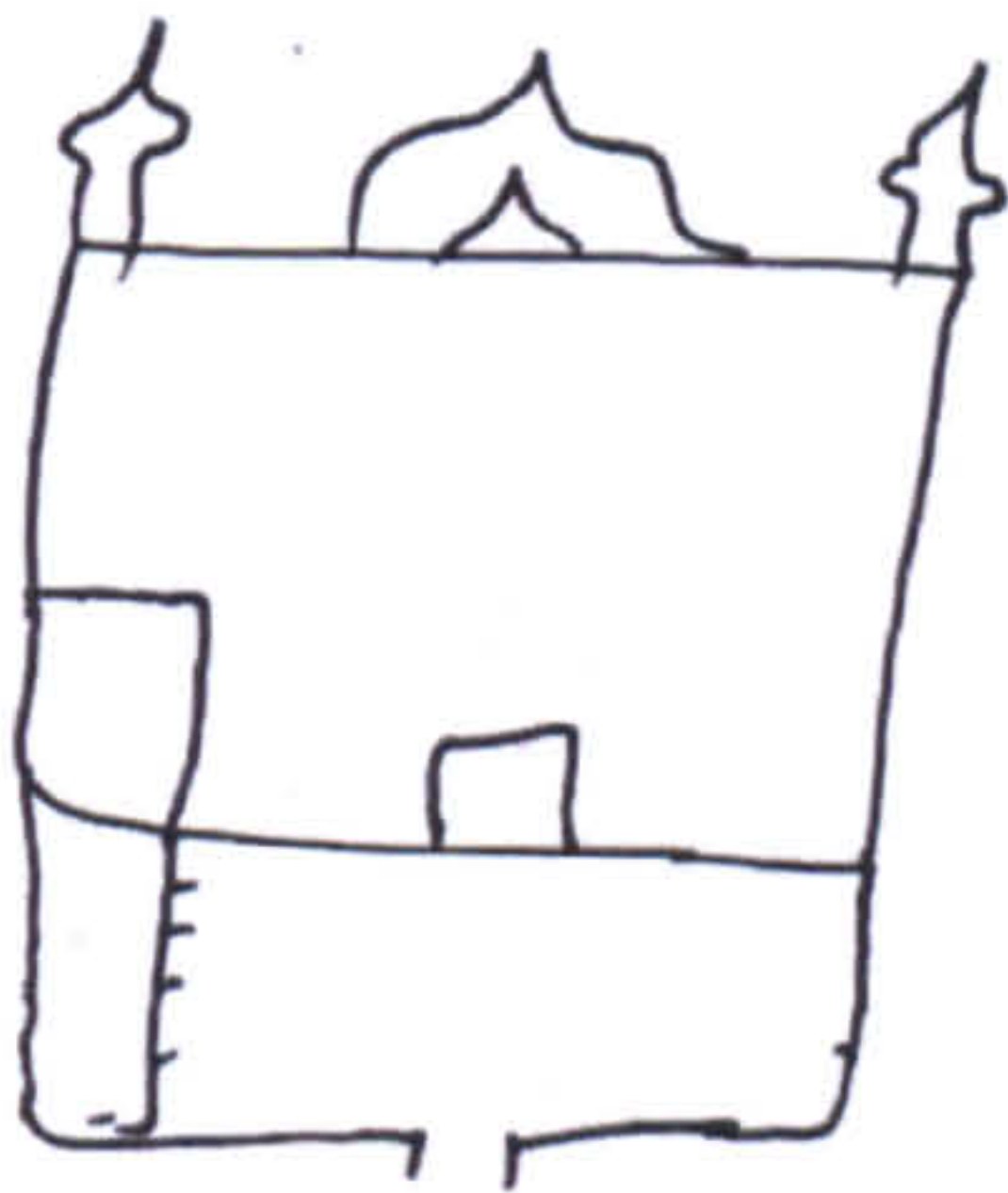
Selected samples of drawings



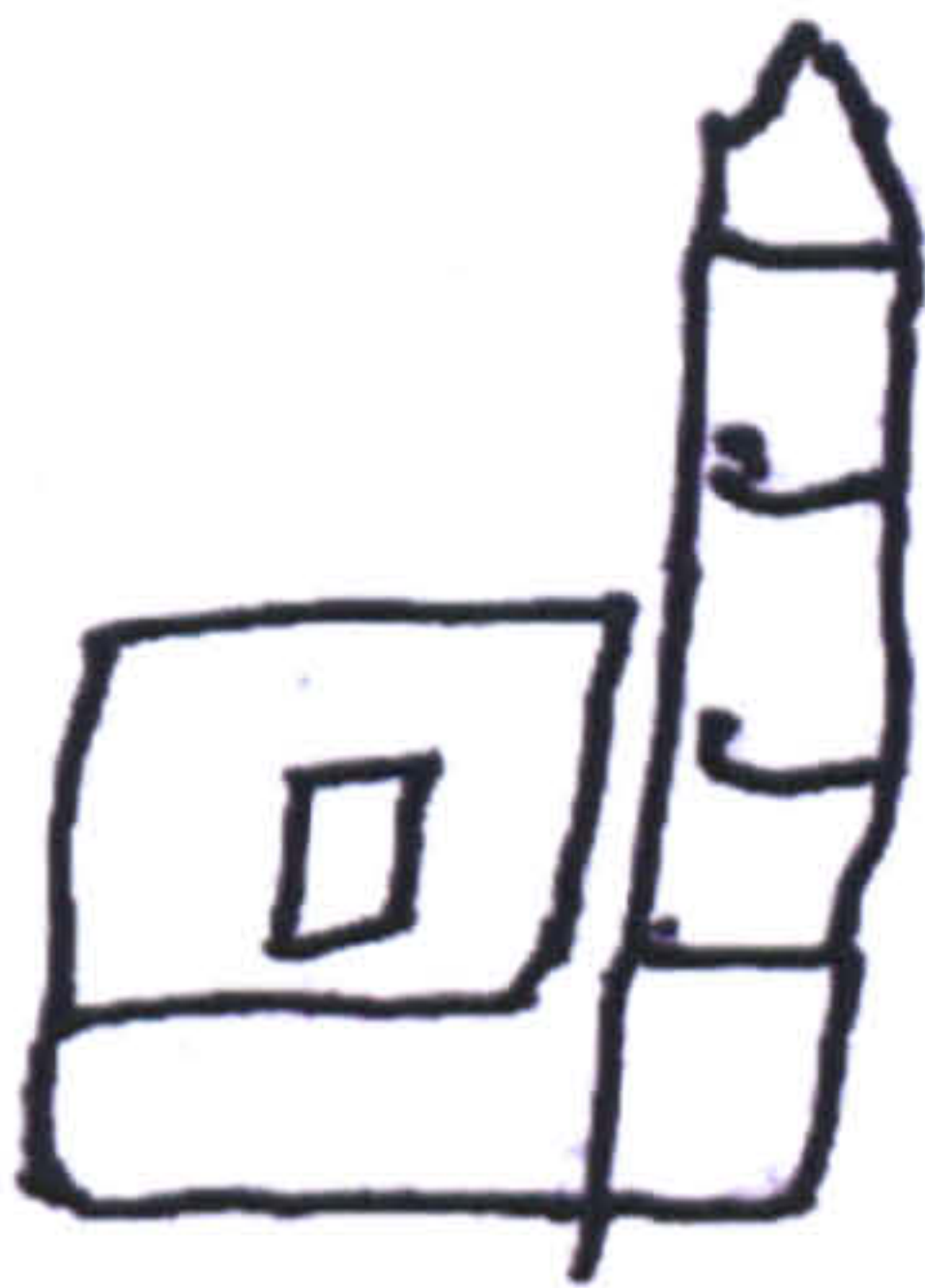
Mr Qurban Mohammad 70 years



Mr Khaleq 65



Mahfooz Ahmad 28 years



Yasen 41 years



Mohammad Rafiq 70 years



Adeel 16 years old

Figure 8.46. Some examples of drawings of the mosques by native people in Baluchistan. The important role of minarets in Baluchi mosque architecture can be observed through these drawings. Source: Author

8.7.3. Interviews

Interviewing native people of Baluchistan was the most important source of collecting data during my case study. It is not easy to understand any culture without living with people and making direct communication. With the help of my guide and interpreters I managed to interview 50 people both in rural and urban areas of Baluchistan, as well as in Kashmir, Jhelum and Islamabad. The interviews were mainly about the religious and cultural beliefs of the local people to understand more about their architectural features, particularly their mosques and symbolic minarets.

I also planned to distribute a questionnaire, but because of the lack of education I had to ask the questions one by one and write down their answers. The aims of the questionnaire were to understand how important the mosque is for the Muslim communities widespread in different settlements such as villages, tribal areas and small towns and cities. I also wanted to be acquainted with the significance of minarets and in particular their symbolic meaning.

My questions included:

1. What is the most important building in your community (settlement)?
2. How do you recognise a mosque?
3. What is the most important feature of the mosque?
4. How many minarets should a mosque have and why?
5. What do you think a minaret symbolises?

I selected 50 people to participate in the questionnaire. The results are as follow:

- In order, the most important buildings according to the native people of Baluchistan are mosque (70%), school (20%), shrine (5%), hospital (3%) and bank and congregation hall (2%).
- The people of Baluchistan mostly (95%) recognise a mosque from its minaret. The minaret represents a mosque.

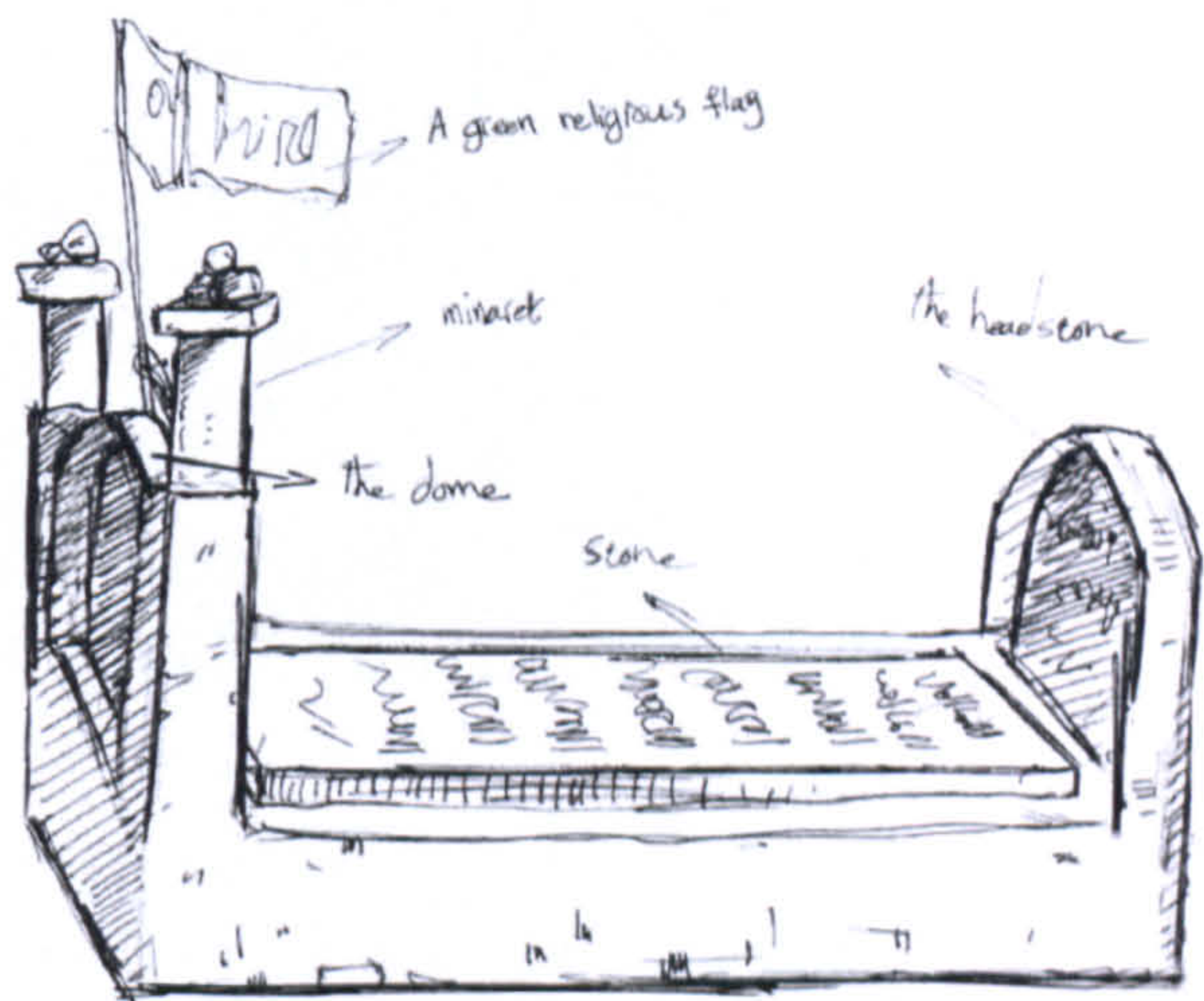
- Large numbers of people (85%) in Baluchistan believe that the mihrab is the most important element in the mosque, while small numbers also believe that the ablution place (10%) and minaret (5%) is very important as well.
- The number of minarets in a mosque can vary, but people mainly believe that a mosque should have four minarets (45%), two minarets (35%), one minaret (15%), and five or more minarets (5%). Minarets make the mosque beautiful and more attractive and the number of minarets on a mosque shows how much local people love their mosque according to native people.
- According to the interviewees the minaret symbolises God or Allah (15%), Prophet Mohammad and four Caliphs (60%). It is also seen as a spiritual sign of blessing and healing from God (25%).

To conclude this part of the study it is appropriate to mention that the result of my case study reveals that the minaret is a very important element of the sacred places in Baluchistan. The native people of Baluchistan have their own way of building minarets and symbolise them with different objects. The minaret is recognised as the most significant external element of the mosque in Baluchistan. Therefore, any type of mosque is represented by minarets. It seems, however, the recognition of mosques is by minarets and mihrabs; without these two elements the mosque is not usually acceptable in rural areas. Therefore, the native people have a preference to have any kind of minaret, even a piece of wood, stone or bricks, rather than having none. Consequently, the handmade minarets are built of different kinds of raw material. The structure of some handmade minarets will be illustrated in this part of the study. Minarets not only appear on the mosques, but also on shrines, tombs, graves and as a subject for internal decoration of the mosques, such as the mihrab. Minarets are also used as religious images in the decoration of vehicles such as lorries, buses, charka and several other types.



Figure 8.47. Decorating vehicles and using the form of minarets as a sign of blessing.
Source: Author

Some examples of minarets used for different proposes will be discussed to confirm of important role of minarets in Baluchi culture. There are several graveyards by the main road of Quetta-Chaman which contain different types of minarets. The minarets are used both at the head and on some occasions at the bottom of the grave. According to a native Baluchi man, the minaret on graves signifies the religion of Islam and brings blessing for the healthy people.



the use of minaret on grave in Baluchistan .

Figure 8.48. Picture showing the use of minarets on a Baluchi grave. The triangular form in the middle represents the dome and the pentagonal form under the dome signifies the gate of the mosque, which also symbolises the gate of heaven. Source: Author



8.8. Typology of minarets in Baluchistan

The minarets of Baluchistan, particularly in rural areas, can be classified into three major groups: manufactured minaret, handmade minaret and symbolic minaret.

8.8.1. Manufactured minaret

One of the earliest discoveries of my case study was the similarity between a large number of minarets which can be observed both in urban and rural areas of Baluchistan. The reason for the similarities was, in fact, the same manufacturing sources.

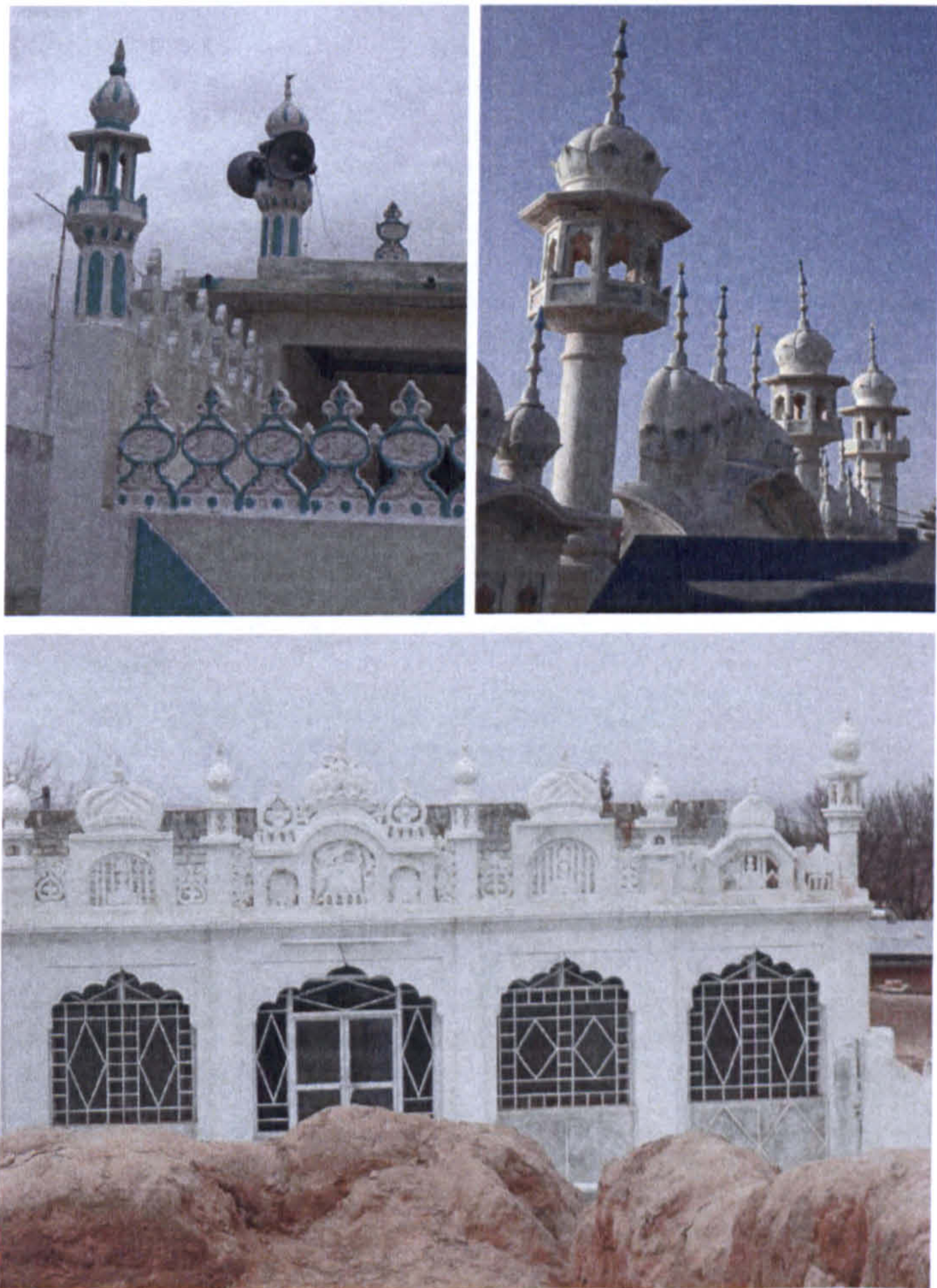


Figure 8.49. Three different mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan with manufactured minarets and other decorative pieces. Source: Author

There are several small local factories in Quetta City where the minarets are produced. The minarets therefore can be ordered in different sizes, shapes and

colours. They can be assembled or bought as a readymade minaret and fixed on the top of the mosques.

According to Omar (2005), the owners of the factories, using one, two or a number of minarets, depend on the financial and economic circumstances of the local community which is responsible for building the mosque. The minarets are mainly painted in white and green and occasionally in blue.



Figure 8.50. Manufactured minarets on display ready to be sold. Source: Author

The local factories producing minarets in Baluchistan are very simple. Most of the moulding works are done by hand. Only one of the five factories which I visited had a moulding and pressing machine. The native moulders normally use a traditional bucket called *dalv* to carry the water as there is no running water in most parts of Baluchistan.

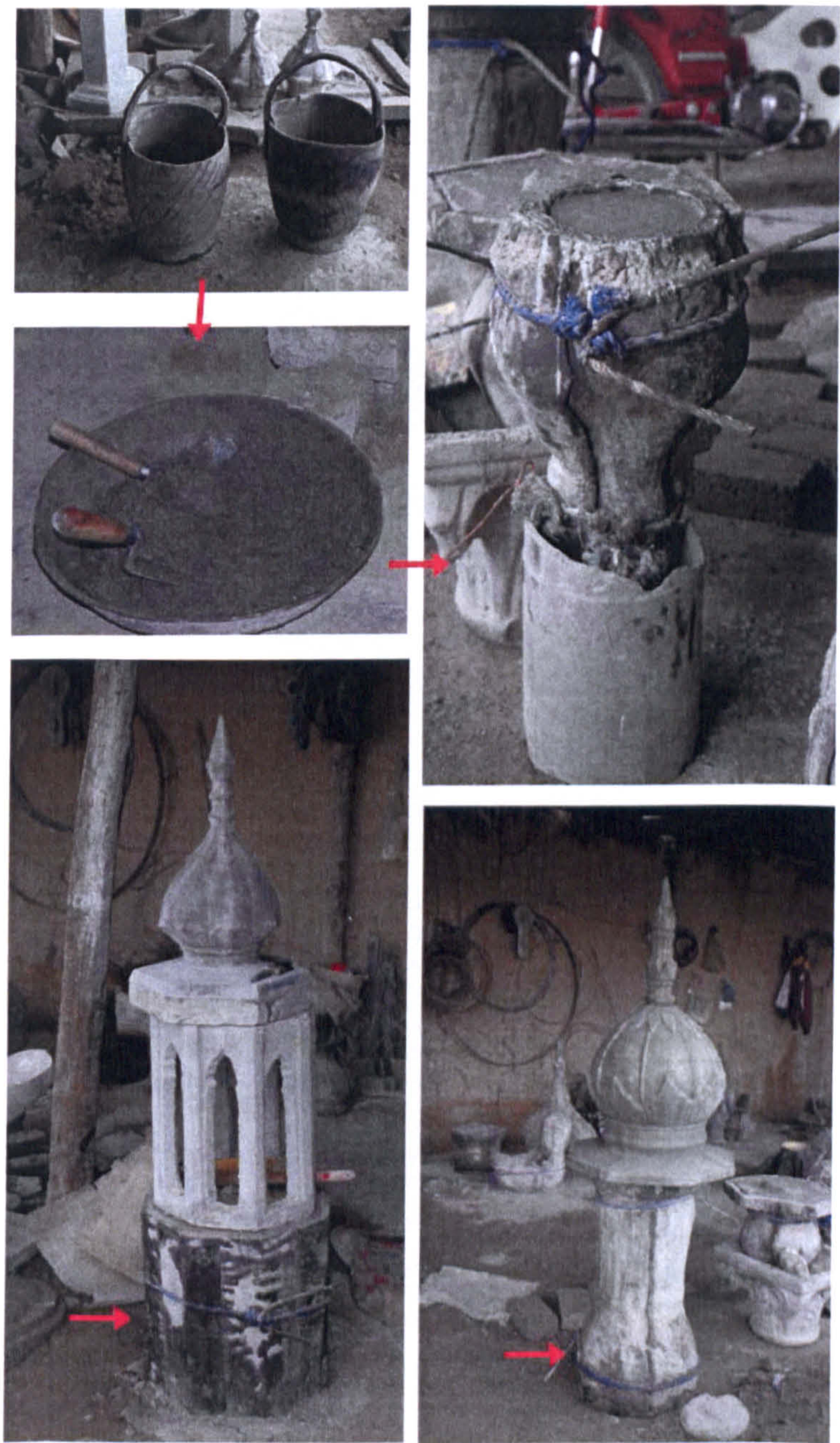
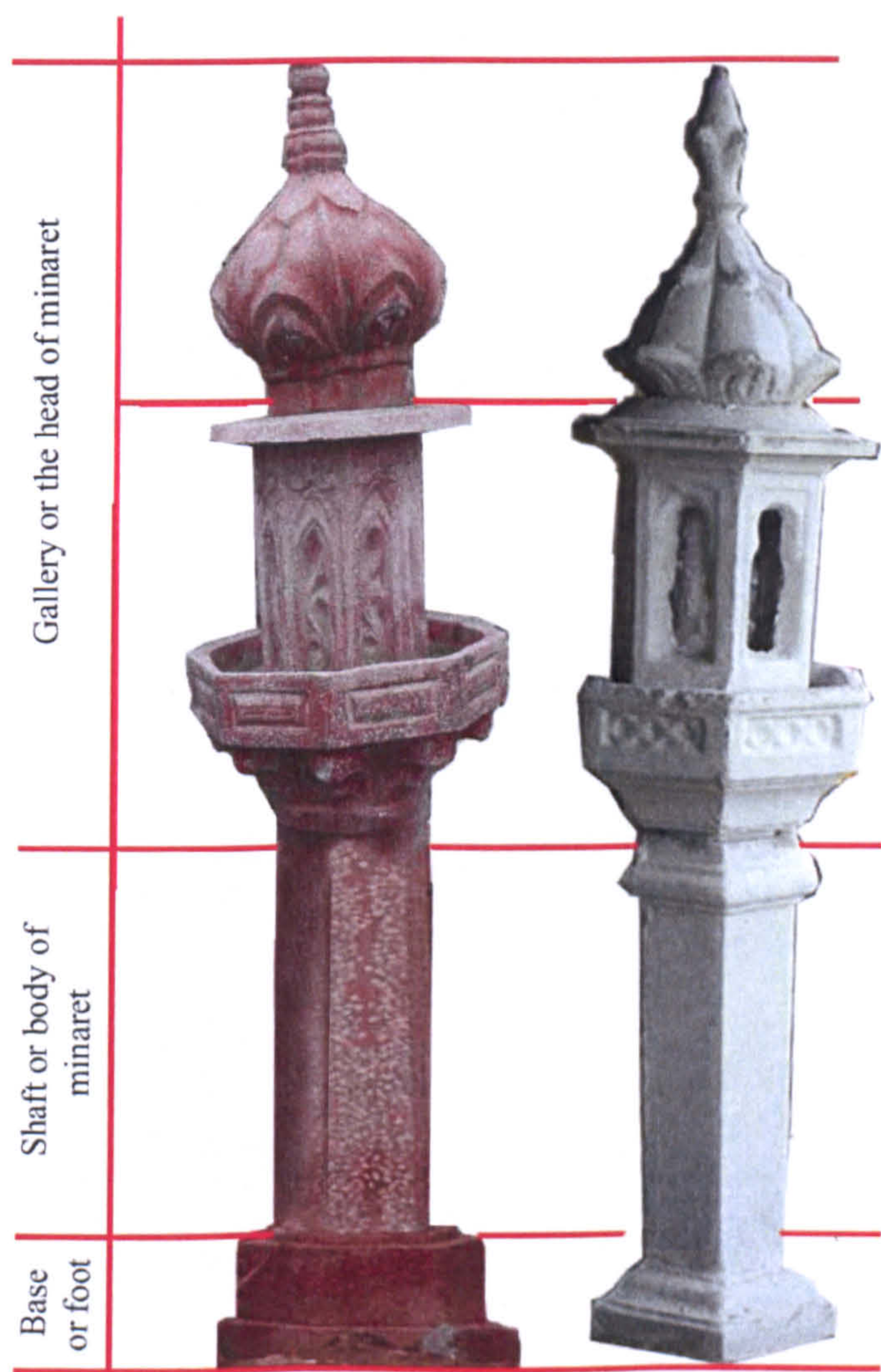


Figure 8.51. The photos show minarets in process of manufacture. Source: Author

A mixture of cement, sand and water is used for casting the minarets. Different pieces of moulds are tied with metal wires or ropes and left for 4-7 hours. They are then taken out of the mould and laid out in the sun to dry. The rough parts of the minarets will be smoothed and painted later on.

The basic form of manufactured minarets consists of three parts: a base, shaft and a gallery. The native minaret makers of Baluchistan call these three parts foot, body and head.



Structures of two different manufactured minarets

Figure 8.52. Two examples of manufactured minarets which are used both in rural and urban areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

A manufactured minaret, depending on the wishes of the clients, can have one, two or even more galleries. The shaft of the minaret also can be bought in different sizes. Using manufactured minarets is very popular in both urban and rural areas of Islamabad and in Azad Kashmir as well. Therefore, more advanced manufactured minarets can be found in bigger cities such as Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and Mirpur in Kashmir.



Figure 8.53. Manufactured minarets are sold by the main road of Islamabad-Mirpur. Source: Author



Figure 8.54. Glaze manufactured minarets used in a rural mosque in the Pouna area of Azad Kashmir. Source: Author

8.8.2. Handmade minarets

A large numbers of minarets are built by hand by the native people, particularly in rural areas of Baluchistan. The handmade minarets can be regarded as a piece of art, sculpture or handicraft as they represent innovation and creativity, which generate the idea of minarets as both functional and innovative. Creativity and artistry can be mentioned as the obvious parts of the handmade minarets, particularly in rural areas of Baluchistan. The handmade minarets are more understandable when they are interpreted as the imaginative products of native people who in some cases have never seen any minarets on a large scale.

Generally it is the builders' responsibility to build the mosque and minarets in the village. The local builder generally takes the action and follows the traditional local architecture to build a mosque. According to local people the mosque is the first building to be built in a village, followed by the building of the houses.

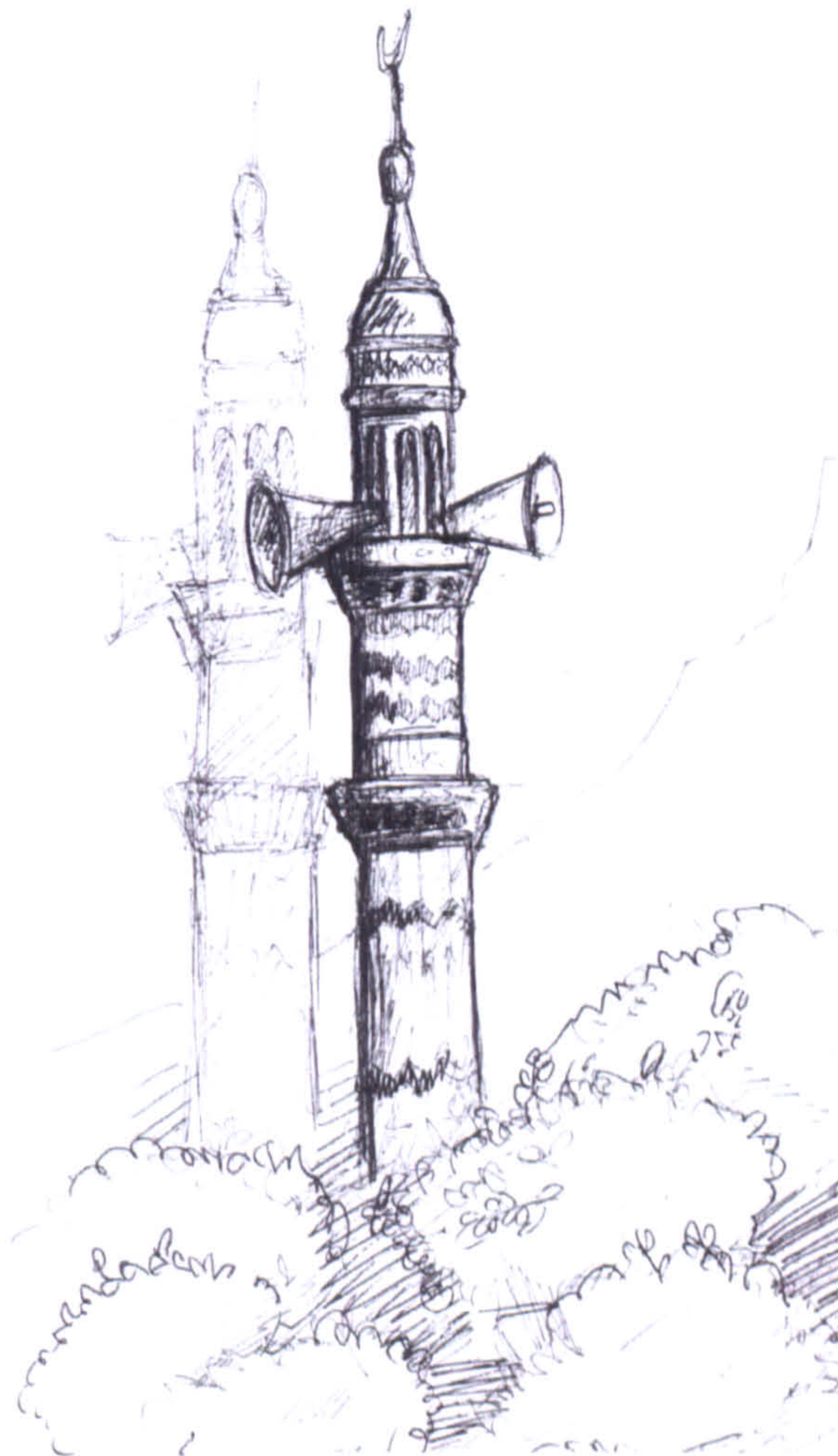


Figure 8.55. Drawing of a handmade minaret decorated with ordinary tiles.
Source: Author

In most cases the local builders who are build the magnificent minarets have little or no basic education. Some of them are very good at using their imagination and using different kinds of building materials to make the minarets.

During my case study I interviewed some local builders and asked them about the minarets which they built. The first one was Mr Ahmmad, 41 years old, a builder from the Pashtoon tribe based in Quetta in Baluchistan who mainly builds minarets. He said that the size and the number and decoration of minarets depend on the financial circumstance and affordability of the persons or the community who are in charge of building the mosques. He uses his own imagination to make minarets, but sometimes the clients give him photos or sketches of a particular minaret and ask him to build a similar one. He took me to a mosque where he is building the minarets from a photo of a mosque which the client took in Turkey.

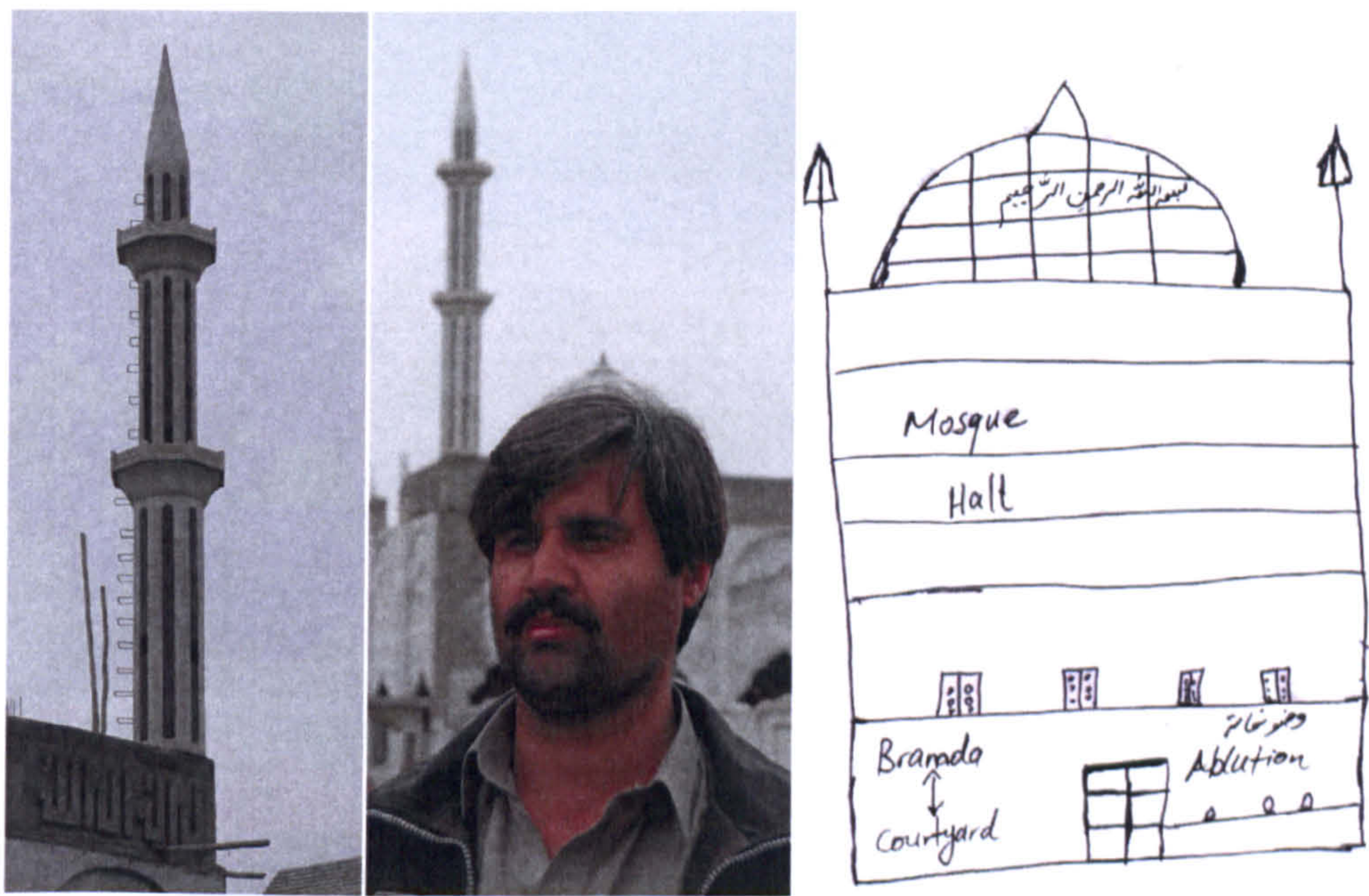


Figure 8.56. A handmade minaret built by Ahmmad in the countryside of Quetta. On the right is a drawing of a mosque which I asked him to draw. Source: Author

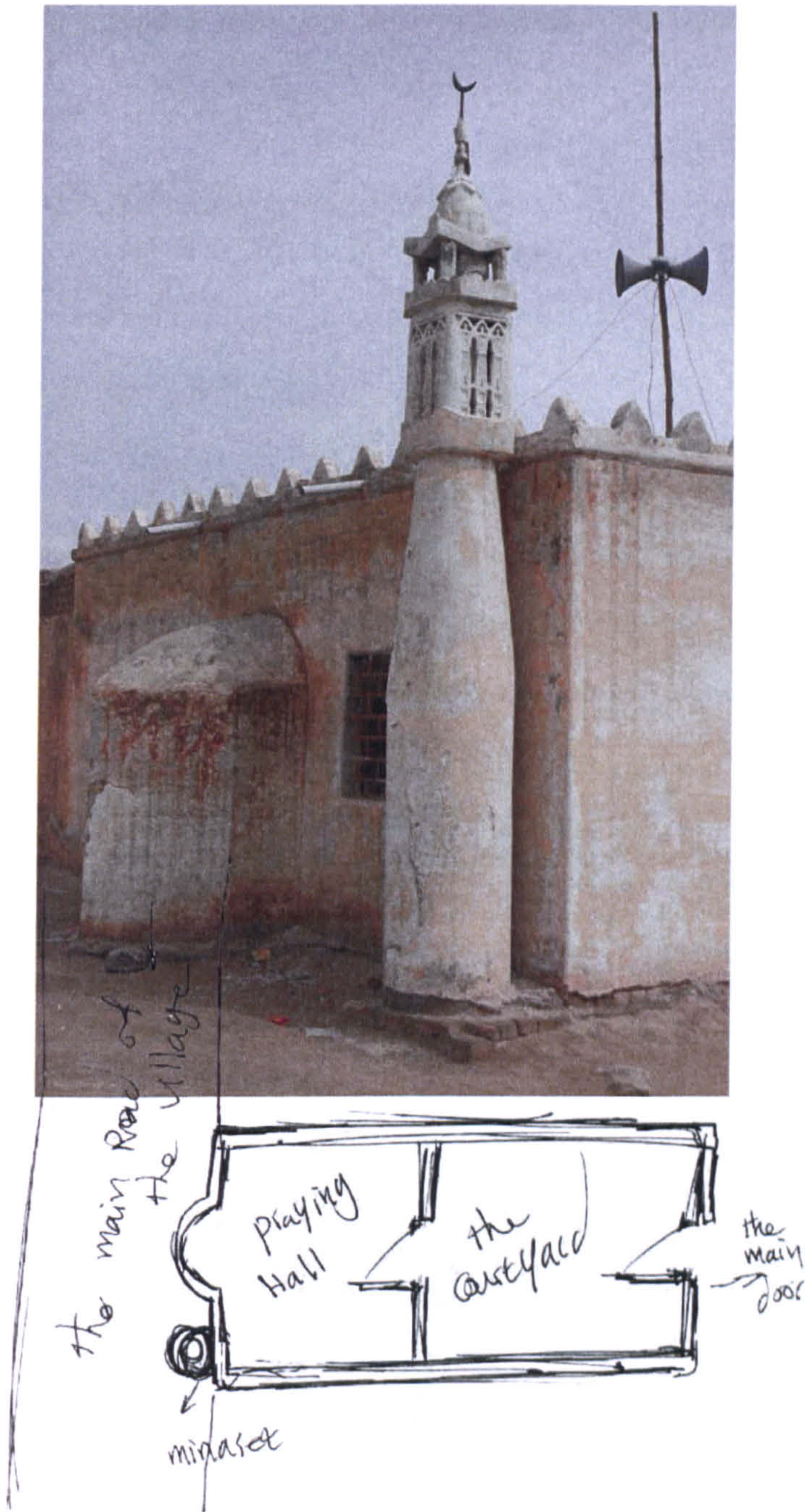


Figure 8.57. A detached handmade minaret which is built at the back of the mosque.
Source: Author

As mentioned, the minaret in Baluchistan represents the mosque and people recognise the mosque by minarets. Therefore when the main road of the village is located to the back of the mosque, the minarets are also moved to the back to be observed easily by passing people. Handmade minarets are sometimes painted and

decorated with different materials such as pieces of coloured glass, tiles, and wood.



Figure 8.58. Handmade mud minarets in a rural area of Baluchistan. The top or head of both minarets is decorated with fragments of glass. The middle form represents the dome and it is marked with a piece of shiny metal. Source: Author

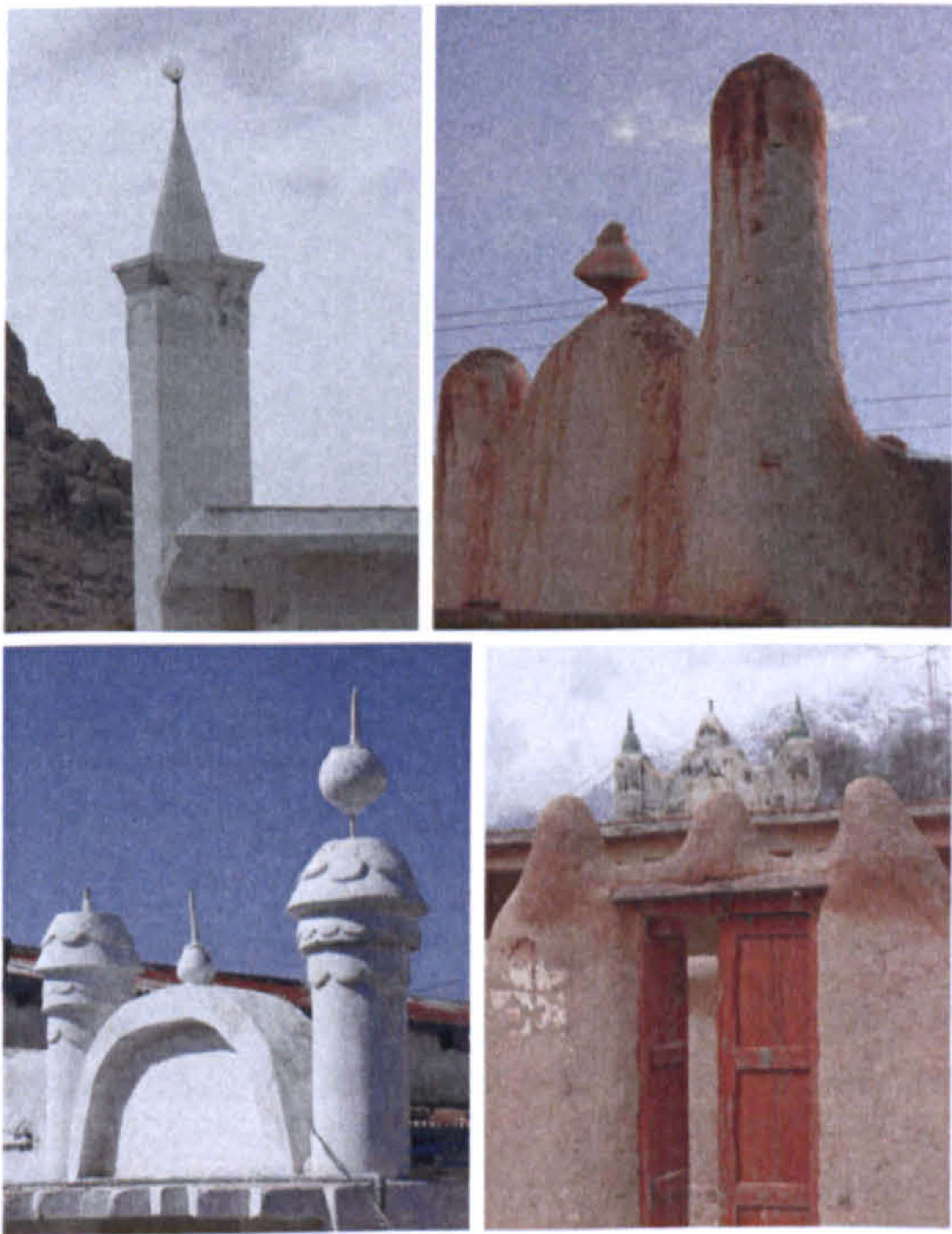


Figure 8.59. Some examples of various handmade minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author



Figure 8.60. Some examples of various handmade minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

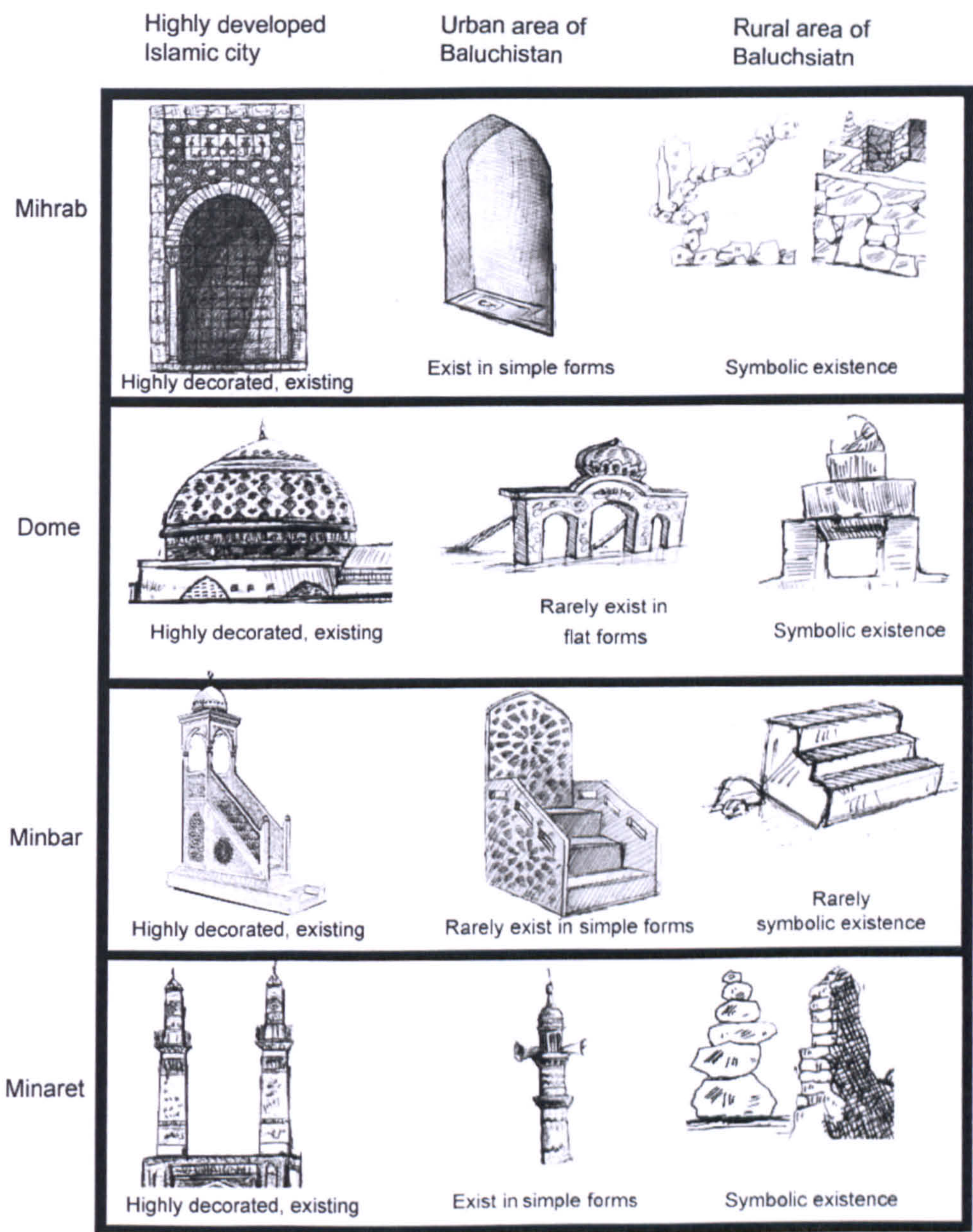


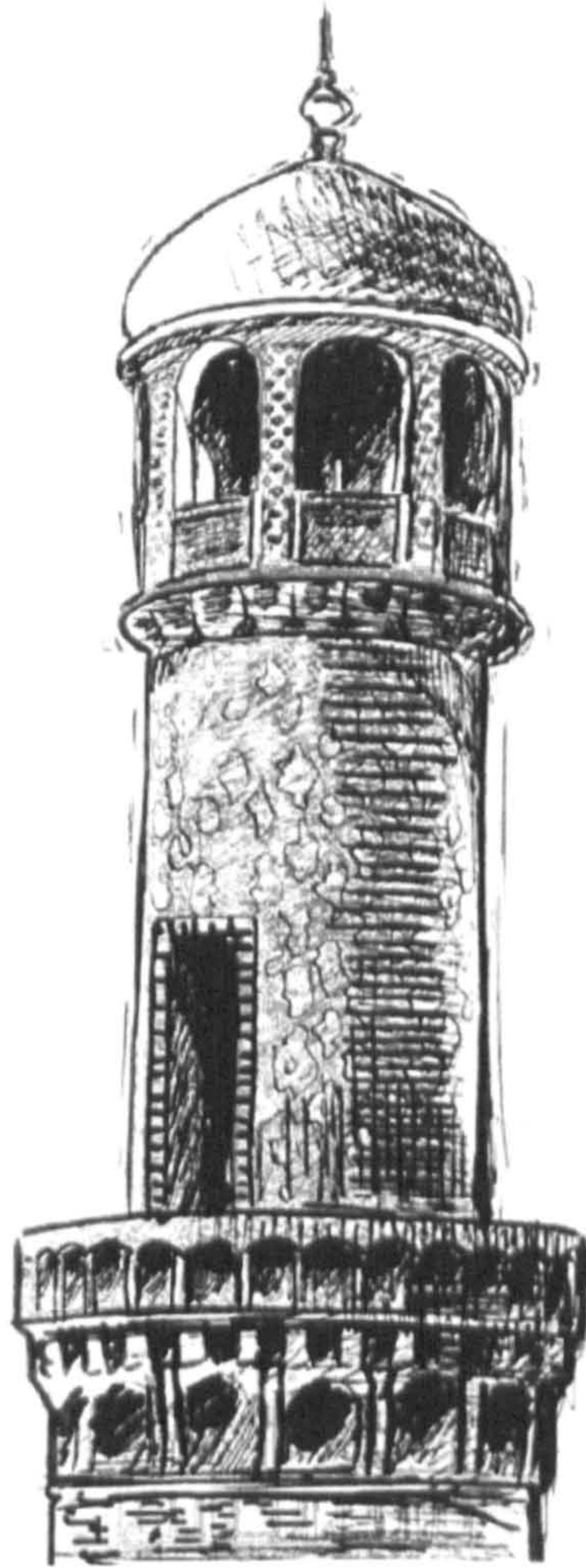
Figure 8.61. Diagram showing how elements of mosques have been presented in highly developed Islamic cities along with urban and rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

The diagram shows how the elements of the mosque such as the mihrab, dome, minbar and minarets have been represented in highly developed Islamic cities as well as in urban and rural area of Baluchistan. The elements of the mosque were

developed and highly decorated to a magnificent level in Islamic urban civilisation, but some elements of the mosque such as the minbar and the dome hardly exist in simple forms in urban areas of Baluchistan. The mosque elements in rural areas of Baluchistan have mostly been represented in a symbolic way, which has no connection with the function of the elements.

Chapter 9

Symbolism and the minaret



9. Symbolism and the minaret

A symbol has been considered as an abstract construction of life, a different way of thinking, as a language for communication, and essentially embodies the product of a civilisation.

This final part of my thesis investigates the notion of the symbol, its function and connection with religion. It analyses the anthropological and psychological views of philosophers in relation with decoding the meanings and understanding of the symbolic minarets in Baluchistan. Several rural symbolic minarets of Baluchistan will also be studied at the end of the chapter.

The study addresses questions such as; what is a symbol? What is the significance of a symbol? Are there any common symbols shared by different civilisations? What can be considered as religion and what is a religious symbol?

9.1. What is a symbol?

According to Whitehead, a symbol is one of the most overburdened terms in the field of humanities. It is the key concept in many fields of research, such as in theology (Eliade, 1972) in philosophy and hermeneutics (Cassirer, 1923; Whitehead, 1928; Durand, 1964), poetry (Pohl, 1968; Todorov, 1972; Pochat 1982) and psychoanalysis (Arrive, 1982; Gillan, 1982) (Whitehead, 1996). The word “symbol” has been used so frequently in different sciences, philosophy and arts that its meaning has become vague. Kepes mentions that the urgent problem of philosophy is primarily the recognition and the use of symbols (Kepes, 1966). The Oxford English Dictionary (Soanes, and Stevenson, 2003) simply defines a symbol as a person, an object, an event, or something else which represents a more general quality or circumstances. Ogden and Richard define symbols as signs which are used in human communication. Symbols can emerge as words, images, gestures, drawings or mimetic sounds (Ogden and Richard, 1923).

Kant, in 'Critique of Judgement,' regards symbols as indirect representations of a concept through the medium of analogy. Hegel defines the symbol as a significant fact whose external form already presents the idea which it symbolises (Hegel, 1920). A symbol, however, is a generic term which in the modern sense includes all that is meant by a sign, mark or token. The symbol is regarded as that which stands for something else in psychology, sociology, philosophy and art (Whittick, 1971).

Symbols have had a very important role and unique position in human societies from the early ages. The action of symbolising objects or events has been signified as one of the main elements which distinguishes mankind from other animals. *"The process of man's development beyond mere animal existence has been achieved partly by his ability to use and invent symbols"* (Whittick, 1971:3). This theory is also supported by Kepes, who confirms that *"Man, with his large brain and capacity for speech, has been able to achieve what no other organism has found possible, namely to create symbols"* (Kepes, 1966:3). Santaella states that the symbol in ancient Greek philosophy meant the celebration of a contract and for Aristotle, a symbol was a conventional sign (Santaella, 2003). It is also considered that the Greek root of the word symbol appears to have meant a bringing together. This ancient meaning is still the logical antecedent of the modern meaning for symbolism, which is defined as the bringing together of ideas and objects, one of which expresses the other (Whittick, 1971).

The earliest symbols or signs have been classified into two categories of unplanned and planned symbols. The history of the earliest type of unplanned symbols goes back to the time when man or beasts left their footprints in a muddy swamp. The footprint, therefore, indicated or signified that some living being had been there. Some of the unplanned symbols also refer to the unconsciousness mind of human beings (Ballinger, 1972). Freud states that symbolism can be found in a more developed condition in folklore, myths, legends, idiomatic phrases, proverbs and the current witticisms of a people (Freud, 2004).

The first humans used a variety of signs and symbols to communicate with each other, even before the use of sound and words. When the people such as Red Indians bent the limbs of trees in their path or when they arranged piles of stones, these were regarded as planned symbols as they tried to communicate with others (Tomkins, 1969).

At some time in man's human career, he began to create symbols for communicating with the world and the larger universe, with other human beings and himself, according to his beliefs and feelings (Kepes, 1966:4).

The early types of pictography show how mankind started to symbolise the images of different objects and events as a way of communication. Picture writing is a mode of expressing thoughts and noting facts by referencing to sound, gesture language being the earlier form (Tomkins, 1969). The best example of planned symbolism can be found in the early pictography of China and the Egyptian hieroglyphs from 2500 to 2000 B.C. The sun, moon, fire and animals, woman and child can be mentioned as recognisable drawings and water was used as similar characters to represent streams, rivers and rain, which were depicted by drops of water falling from heaven (Whittick, 1971). The primary writing systems of the world began with pictures and in fact the earliest characters were simple pictures of the things they represented. Later, almost in all cases these pictorial images were simplified to abstract symbols and letters. The abstract symbols were in the end used for their sound values, giving rise to the major alphabet systems of the world. Exceptionally in China, the principal function of the characters has always been to express sound and meaning (Halpern, 2001).













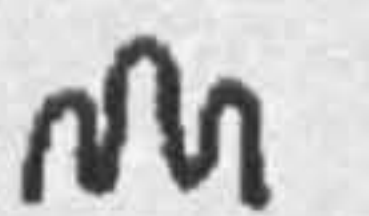
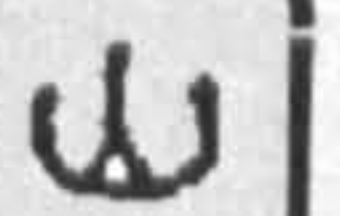
Early Forms	Modern Character	Meaning
 → 	木	tree, wood
 → 	林	wood
 → 	森	forest
 → 	本	root, origin
 → 	日	sun
 → 	月	moon
 → 	山	mountain

Table 9.1. Pictographs and simple images of the Chinese pictographic writing. Source: Kang and Nelson (1979).

Tomkins investigates the picture writing of the Red Indians of North America, which is still in use. He writes that “*Investigation has proven the interesting psychological fact that primitive or at least very ancient man made the same figures in widely separated regions, though it is not established that the same figures had a common significance*” (Tomkins, 1969:74).

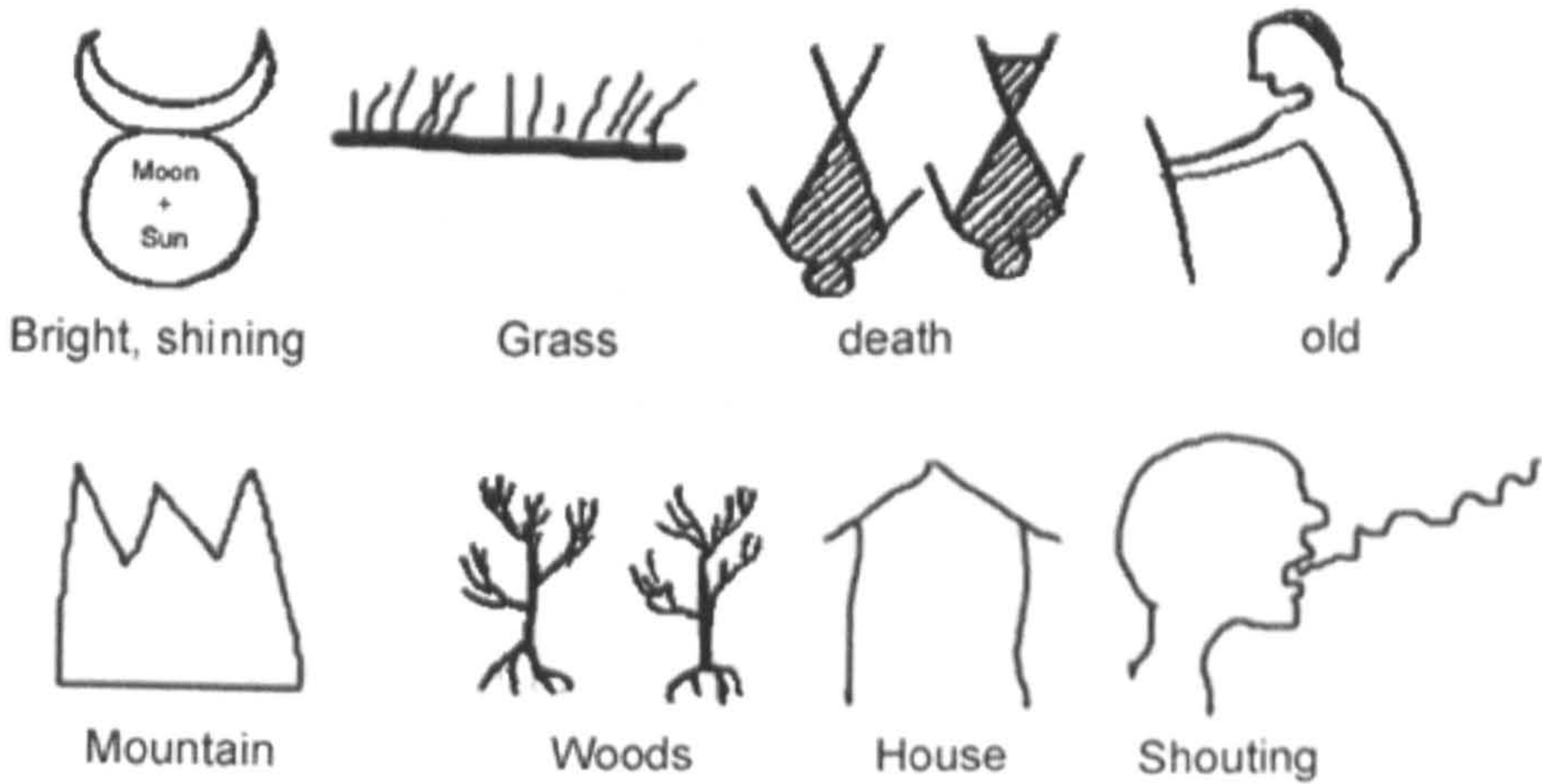


Figure 9.1. Picture writing has been considered as a way of communication in different Red Indian tribes of North America. Source: Tomkins (1969).

According to Richter-Ushana,s the cultural environment is one of the important factors in decoding any symbols. He relates the symbols of the ancient Indus civilization of Baluchistan to the oral Vedic tradition, whose oldest and holiest book is the *Rg-Veda* (1500 to 1200 BC), consisting of about 1000 hymns addressed to different gods and goddesses (Richter-Ushanas, 2008).

9.2. What is the significance of a symbol?

To understand a symbol we need to deal with two distinctions, which are meaning and expression beyond it. While Hegel (1977) believed the connection with meaning and its expression is only a purely random linkage, Armstrong confirms that “*symbol perpetrates a mystified, narcissistic culture of identification of form and content, self and sensory world*” (Armstrong, 2000: 52). De Man also states that “*The symbol is the mediation between mind and the physical world of which art manifestly par-takes, be it as stone, as colour, as sound or as language*” (De Man, 1982: 763).

In connection with the relation between the symbol as an object and what is symbolises, Freud notices that in many cases the common quality shared by the symbol and the thing which it represents is obvious (Freud, 2004). However, in many symbols the relation is hidden and in some cases the choice of the symbol appears to be enigmatic. Psychoanalysis has also revealed that the symbol comes into existence with the function of concealing the meaning, as a substitute for something revolting (Kepes, 1966). Hegel believes that symbols, as products say nothing to us directly. Sometimes they do not please us or even satisfy us by their immediate appearance, but they encourage us to go beyond them to their meaning. The meaning in symbols is wider, deeper and more important than what they are as objects. In a perfect symbol there is a very strong relationship between the meaning and the significance of the symbol’s external shape (Hegel, 1977).

According to Hegel, the transformation of objects and materials into meaningful symbols started whenever Man needed to cut himself free from the material world and its direct individual existence, as he considered it as “*liberation from the one-*

sidedness of forms” (Hegel, 1971:302). Man satisfies his subjective feeling of being something higher, essential, and universal and considers nature as an objective and external need (Hegel, 1977).



Figure 9.2. Transforming different materials such as stones and mud into a symbolic and sacred form in a rural area of Baluchistan. In this monumental tower the meaning of ordinary stones, sand, or mud painted white have been changed as it represents a religious symbol signifying a mosque. Source: Author

Transformation of objects in Hegel’s philosophy can be regarded as an attempt by man to unify his thoughts with nature by bringing spiritual feeling to self-conscious thought. This is a goal which Hegel regarded as the satisfaction of man’s ultimate influences.

Opposed to the Hegel’s theory is Marx’s philosophy, which turns nature into an object. He says that the transformation of material comes from the needs of humans as objects. A need is always a need for an object and so the object is the source and essential need for the externalisation and conformation by the subject. According to Marxist aesthetics, there is a permanent relationship between human needs and human creativity or productivity. The activity that makes this relationship possible is human work. Work is the expression and essential

condition of human freedom and its significance lies only in its relationship to human needs (Vazquez, 1973). So far, the action of symbolising objects has referred to the needs of human beings. These needs in most cases are rooted in the psycho-spiritual part of the human mind and they have brought unity, freedom and satisfaction for human being during history. Wittkower noticed that there are some common symbols shared by different ancient civilisations from East to West. These common symbols, which are regarded as a large body of cultural material, include “*the gammadion or swastika, the winged globe, the Tree of Life, the eagle and snake, the Great Mother, the mythical hero as animal-tamer, the dragon, and the totemisitc fauna of animals and monsters*” (Wittkower, 1977:14).

Regarding cultural homogeneity, Wittkower has divided civilisations into two groups of urban and nomadic or semi- nomadic civilisations. All the high civilisations of ancient times, such as those of China, India, Persia, Babylonia, Egypt, Greece and Rome, are located in the southern belt. He remarks about these cultures that “*They all were urban civilisations with- broadly speaking- similarly structured societies. They all developed classic literatures, believing in a similar moral code and boasted great law-givers and founders of religions*” (Wittkower, 1977: 14). These urban civilisations were interested in producing monumental stone buildings, sculptures and paintings, by focusing on the representation of godhead, man and beast. In contrast, the northern half produced nomadic or semi-nomadic civilisations with their own specific culture, which can also be observed from the northern borders of China all along the Asian mountain barrier to the Danube and European heartland. Wittkower regards nomadic art as:

Nomadic art is confined to portable objects, to weapons, implements of daily use, and personal ornaments; this art is, moreover, intrinsically abstract and, in spite of sober observation, tends to ornamentalise animal and man” (Wittkower , 1977: 14).

Wittkower regards variety as the hallmark of civilisations and in conjunction with homogeneity each civilisation developed separate characters and symbols of its own, which were sustained throughout history (Wittkower, 1971). Boyer also states that: *“In many cultures, subjects agree that a certain ritual requires the use of certain objects”* (Boyer, 1993: 26).

The theory of Eco is that the symbol is an image which is commonplace and universally understandable. Furthermore, he regards symbols as indefinitely interpretable elements. He states that *“they [symbols] realise the coincidence of the contraries; they express the inexpressible, since their content exceeded the capability of our reason”* (Eco, 1984:142).

Hegel’s philosophy also allows that the personal or individual symbolic conception is acceptable when it is recognised and confirmed by others, as he considered *“pure self-recognition in absolute otherness”* (Hegel, 1998:14). In this case, for instance, the minaret can be considered as an Islamic symbol since it is recognised by other members of the Muslim community. This recognition can also be diverse within different communities. For example, the use of selective objects to symbolise minarets in Baluchistan might not be accepted by other Muslims. Some examples of these symbolic minarets will be investigated in the next section.

9.3. Religious symbols

Symbolism also has been considered as a way of exploring the spiritual senses and the sense of sacredness. One of the reasons why human beings showed their interest in symbolising different objects was that they found ordinary speech and scientific language too vague to contain and express the meanings and sense of sacredness. It has been argued that the sense of sacredness cannot be expressed in the language of science, nor in the prosaic language of ordinary speech (Rader and Jessup, 1976).

For better understanding of religious symbols it is necessary to give some popular definitions of religion. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) defines religion as *"Human recognition of superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal God entitled to obedience"*. James defines religion as *"the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto."* (James, 2007:39)

According to Whitehead, religion is *"What the individual does with his own solitariness"* (Whitehead, 1996:16-17). Religion helps human beings develop their individual characters. Menken defines the term of 'religious' as spiritual and social term through the function of religion. He believes that the single function of religion is to give man access to the powers to control his fate and be friendly to God (Menken, 1946). Swenson believes that religion is an individual and social experience of being sacred: *"Religion is the individual and social experience of the sacred that is manifested in mythologies, ritual, ethos, and integrated into a collective or organization"* (Swenson, 1999:69).

Connelly also focuses on the terms of the sacred and the spiritual. He argues that religion is a response to a direct experience of sacredness and spirituality. Religion attempts to represent and order beliefs, feelings, imaginings and actions that arise within the spiritual and sacred senses. Consequently, as the religious attempt gets bigger and develops its formulation and amplification, it becomes a process to create meaning for itself on a satisfying foundation (Connelly, 1996).

Cunningham investigates the theory of the American anthropologist Geertz (1972), who defines religion as a system of symbols. The philological opinion of Geertz stresses the influences of religion on the social structure which would include forming any specific style of art and architecture. Accordingly, the system of symbols or religion brings a sense of cosmic order to existence and it shapes our observation of reality that appears, for example, in building monumental architecture such as minarets (Cunningham, 1999).

Animism is considered as one of man's oldest beliefs, with its origin probably going back to the Palaeolithic age. Gilbert states that *"From its earliest beginnings, it was a belief that a soul or spirit existed in every object, even if it was inanimate. In a future state, this soul or spirit would exist as part of an immaterial soul. The spirit, therefore, was thought to be universal"* (Gilbert, 2004:322). All religions, from the simplest to the most complex, has some sort of animistic belief in common. The primitive peoples believed in spirits or souls within the of life human beings. Primitive people illustrated the soul as smoke, vapour or a shadow which goes from one body to another. The soul not only passes between human beings but also into animals, plants, and also into non-living objects (Tylor, 1920).

What could be considered as spiritual beings and how they influence humankind is a complex issue. Lambek describes it as something that affects or controls the events of the material world, as well as man's life here and after death. The principle of spiritual beings, or animism, primarily among the primitive people, is divided into two great systems of belief. *"First, concerning souls of individual creatures capable of continual existence after the death or destruction of the body; second, concerning other spirits, upward to the rank of powerful deities"* (Lambek, 2002: 24).

Spirituality is considered the personal internalisation of religion and self-conscious, which has a common aspect with religion. In its simplest and most general sense, spirituality is the self-motivated bond between human beings and the sacred. The spiritual determines how we integrate and organise our life and approach our goal of union with God (Woods, 1983). Neville, for instance, sticks with an old-fashioned Western way of defining religion by stating that *"religion has to do with the bearing of God on human life"* (Neville, 1996:6). The Quran refers religion to the existence of God: *"Surely religion is for Allah only [(Quran, 39: 3) اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ]* and also; *Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam, [اِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الْاِسْلَامُ (Quran, 3: 19)]*

In case of perfection of religion Quran says:

This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (Quran, 5: 3).

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

According to Pirani, Islam is a way of life and teaching of the faith of Islam, not only shifting the spiritual being but it also guides the ordinary life of Muslims (Pirani, 2002). Religion therefore is associated with spiritual being, a system of symbols, a direct experience of sacredness and spirituality, man's access to the powers, believing in an unseen order and how humans personally deal with their solitariness.

As described, a symbol can be an object, image, sign, action, or sound; when they are associated with religion they are considered as religious symbols. Symbolising things, in fact, is considered as man's effort to understand and incorporate the inspirational and often indefinable parts of life into reality. Woods believes that spirituality depends on the imaginative power of myth and symbols and tries to shape the direction of our experience (Woods, 1983). The religious aspect of symbols can be noticed in the description of Ricoeur, who refers to the symbol as the power to discover and reveal the connection between humans and the sacred world (Ricoeur, 1969). A true symbol and myth, including things, actions and words, connect us with the time to go beyond the events that re-establish the order of the world, linking heaven and earth in a beautiful way (Woods, 1983). Some examples of symbolic minarets will be presented showing how a local tradition, mixed with religious ideas, appears as a sacred symbol.

The abstract subjects of religion, its mysterious character, and more importantly its expression, flow into various form of religious symbolism. Whittick admires the theory of Whitehead (1996), which argues that the principle of symbolism is to increase the importance of what is symbolised. In this case, he reveals that symbolic expression has demonstrated itself to be a great support for religious teaching (Whittick, 1971).

In connection with religious symbolism, religious activity is divided into two broad categories. First, the propitiation and worship of a spirit or deity and second, expression or teaching. Propitiation and worship are forms of expression to the spirit or deity. The worship of a spirit can be observed in primitive societies; Whittick mentions that “*primitive man animates the world with spirits which have power over him for good or evil*” (Whittick, 1971:131).

The symbol, therefore, was a part of everyday life for primitive people. It was not only respected as the conductor or connector between primitive people and their religious belief of spiritual world, but it was, in fact, reality itself (Kepes, 1966). Tylor associates the evolving of religious symbolism, especially within primitive societies, with nature and the environment. Whittick also states that “*Several kinds of religious symbolism have evolved, naturally and inevitably, from our physical environment*” (Whittick, 1971:131).

The most powerful symbols are usually the simplest types, while at the same time such symbols represent philosophical thoughts of the natural and social world including the sun, moon, water, flowers and many other ideas. These typical symbols in their most evolved form carry out what they signify (Woods, 1983). Eliade regards religious symbols as an obvious historical phenomenon. He believes that when we talk about religious symbols we are in fact dealing with religious phenomena, which are manifested or revealed to us by the historical moment in which they were born (Eliade, 1991). The American anthropologist Geertz sees all religion as a symbolic system, which not only has influenced the structure of our life, but also, this system of symbols brings a sense of cosmic order to existence and it shapes our perception of reality (Geertz, 1972). Many philosophers agree with Geertz’s definition of religion as a system of symbols. Lambek writes that

religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing

these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Lambek, 2002:63).

In connection with Geertz's theory, Cunningham states that religious symbols establish powerful and pervasive moods and motivations in people. There is a direct connection between our worldview and our culture. The worldview, philosophy and culture in religious symbols reinforce each other, but at the same time they fit together perfectly (Cunningham, 1999).

There is a definite relation between a symbol and its conception or the meaning which it delivers (Hobson, 1998). Eco notices that symbolism transforms knowledge into an idea and then an idea into an image. Therefore, the idea expressed by the image remains active and unachievable forever and even if it is expressed in all languages, it still remains inexpressible. In this case, the aesthetic and the symbolic come to a definite coincidence and define each other in a circular way (Eco, 1984).

Taylor states that both human life and nature are nothing less than the self-embodiment of God. The personification, therefore, according to Hegel, is not a unique event limited to the lifetime of a single individual, but it is regarded as a universal process. The relation between the religious symbol and the spiritual concepts can be observed in Taylor's theory, as he states that the absolute spirit is embodied in nature and history. He believes that religion never disappears, even when it seems to be absent. Religious symbols have always appeared as a strong factor in this revival. Accordingly, *"The truth is gradually revealed first in religious symbols and artistic images and then is translated into philosophical concepts"* (Taylor, 1998:4).

The influences of religion on people's mentality and behaviour and the relationship between God and man, is regarded as religious consciousness, particularly in Hegel's philosophy. Religious symbols have played a strong role in the field of religious activity as a matter of consciousness. Toews states that the

final understanding of man and God was completed only when religious consciousness realised itself in knowledge. He believes that

In philosophical comprehension the subjectivity of feeling and faith was superseded by the objectivity of rational knowledge, and the 'positivity' of religious symbols and representations dissolved in the comprehension of positivity as a moment" (Toews, 1985:66).

Yet again, the religious symbol is regarded as a positive element and understanding of positivity as a mood or a moment found in the positive representation of religious symbols. The various roles of symbols in different kinds of religious belief and religious activities cannot be dismissed, but at the same time it is difficult to end up with a particular definition of religious symbols and clarify how they work. Wellek states that the "*Symbol works indirectly, without commentary. Symbol suggests an ideal to the mind indirectly; it speaks to the senses by means of concrete representation*" (Wellek, 1981:211).

The religious symbols employed by different religions, particularly by Christianity, express the ceremonial worship and teaching as well as furnishing the holy places. Religious symbols can be found in various art forms such as architecture, sculpture, mosaic, painting, ivories, silver and glass vessels, stained glass windows, gold, embroideries and much else that has contributed to different religions (Whittick, 1971). As an example, the cross has always been regarded as an obviously religious symbol in Christianity. It can communicate in different ways and carries many messages. The shape, size and quality of the cross, and being three or two dimensional or not do not make any difference. The cross for many Christians symbolises something basic about how the religious world works.

Islam, in contrast with other religions, has never encouraged any sort of symbolism from its beginning. However, there are several forms and particularly architectural elements such as the minaret which are regarded as Islamic symbols.

various documentation. It has also been linked to Quran, which states that God *has* explained what is forbidden for Muslim in detail in part 6 of Quran. Many Islamists, therefore, believe that creating any art forms such as photos, paintings, symbolic images, signs or logos which represent beings, whether they are animals or birds, is not permitted (Abdul-Rahman, 2003). Lewis argues that the rejection of images and incarnations and generally iconic symbols is a common resemblance between Islam and Judaism. Therefore the illustration of God or people is forbidden both in Islam and in Judaism (Lewis, 2001). In general, the Arab Sunni Muslims are not satisfied with the representation of live beings. This is because of respect for the divine secret contained within every creature. The prohibition of images may not equally be practised by all Muslim ethnic groups in general, but it is however strict for everything which deals with the liturgical framework of Islam. The rejection of images seems to strike at the very roots of a visual art dealing with things divine (Cornell, 2007).

Yet, with all these strict Islamic laws, many Muslim communities did not dismiss using religious symbols in their societies. Muslims in different societies and cultures have developed and cultivated a great variety of local religious symbolism and symbols. A particular symbolism has arisen from the Quran's attention to the order of nature and essential harmony and beauty of creation. This task encourages Muslim believers to see themselves as a part of creation, recognising the beauty and contemplating the Creator (Waardenburg, 2002).

Religious symbols not only served the religious ceremonies and at sacred places such as mosques and shrines, but are also used by Muslim religious leaders to unite factionalised peoples into more unified religious-political movements (Huff, 1999; Lapidus, 2002).

Cornell argues that symbolism is the normal foundation of a sacred art, as religion expresses itself through anthropomorphic symbols. He believes that the prohibition of images, including the iconic symbols in Islam, is a paradoxical matter as the Quran speaks of Allah (God) in an anthropomorphic symbolic way and describes Him by mentioning His 'face', His 'hand' and the throne He 'sits

upon' (Cornell, 2007). Esposito mentions that the form of Ka'ba is the most familiar form of symbolism in Islam. He states that the *"Distinctive cube shape with black covering of Ka'ba which is considered the most sacred place, is considered as one the most familiar symbols in Islam"* (Esposito, 2002:6).

It is believed that Islam itself, as a word meaning "submission to God", carries a symbolic meaning. Waardenburg states that *"Islam itself can be seen as a sign and can be symbolically used for many aims and purposes"* (Waardenburg, 2002:66). Islamic arts communicate throughout symbolism. It intimates, suggests, and more importantly indicates transcendence, infinity, power and magnificence by using various forms of vegetal and geometric arabesques as well as infinitely repeatable patterns (Renard, 1996).

Cultural and symbolic meanings were attached to the structure of the buildings, particularly the mosque's architecture. The mosques were built to represent paradise. The fountain at the centre of courtyard symbolised the heavenly basin of Kawthar, in which flow the waters of four heavenly streams. The dome on the qibla wall was inscriptional and visually associates with the philosophy of light which is mentioned in Verse of Light in Quran (24:35).

Persian architecture includes eight symbolic items of common archetypes which have appeared in different forms and styles. These eight items examine the symbolisation of paradise, sacred mountain, transition, hierarchic demarcation, multiplicity, unity, reintegration, and ontological axis (Ardalan and Bakhtiar 1979).

No.	Archetype	Form	Style
1.	The Recapitulation of Paradise	-Garden (Bâgh) - Courtyard (Hayât)	Bâgh-I-Fin Madrasah-yi-Nimawâr
2.	Sacred Mountain	Socle (Takht)	Takht-I-Jamshid (Persepolis)
3.	Transition-The Way	(ivân) Porch (Talâr)	Masjid-I-Jâmi' Chihil Sutun Sanctuary Portal
4.	Hierarchic Demarcation (of time and space)	Gateway (Darvâzah)	'Ali Qâpu
5.	Multiplicity	Room (Tâq)	Madrasah-yi-Nimawâr
6.	Unity	Sphere Dome (Gunbad)	Masjid-I-Jâmi' North Dome Chamber
7.	Reintegration	Chahâr Tâq	Sasanian Châhar Tâq Masjid-I-Shah main Sanctuary Chamber
8.	Ontological Axis	Column (Mil) Minaret	Manâr-I-'Ali

Table 9.2. Eight symbolic items of common archetypes in Persian architecture. Source: Ardalan and Bakhtiar (1979: 68).

Representation of paradise is not only used in the construction of many mosques but also in the structure of the columned-garden known as *Iram*. The Quranic inscriptions were evidently chosen to be used in different parts of buildings, particularly in the *Iram* garden.

The gateways and gardens of the Taj symbolise the gateway and garden of celestial paradise. The main entrance represents the gateway through which Prophet Mohammad entered Paradise during the Meraj, or the heavenly night of journey. The four water channels of the gardens in the Taj represent the four Rivers of Paradise which are known as the water of Al-Kowthar. The marble dome symbolises the Throne of God. God sits above in the throne above paradise for Judgment on the Day of Resurrection (Richards, 1996).

The minaret was used as a symbol of Islam as early as 707-709 A.D. It happened when the enlargement and rebuilding of the Mosque of Medina, which was originally built by Prophet Mohammad, was started. Four minarets were included

in the new enlarged structure of the mosque. According to contemporary accounts, these minarets were panelled with marble and polychrome mosaics (Anon, 1964). Talbot states that the minaret is one of the most impressive structures that time has left to us. Bloom considers the minaret as the most distinctive sight in any Islamic city. He shows the importance of the role of the minaret by confirming that the minaret and dome are the most characteristic forms of Islamic architecture. Bloom clearly considers the minaret as a symbol of Islam, but he expresses his interest by investigating the history and development of minarets rather the symbolic meaning of minarets in his book “Minaret symbol of Islam” (Bloom, 2002). In the case of Islamic civilisation, the minaret indicates the presence of Islam and it is the best of Islamic architectural shapes. As mentioned before, the minaret is also considered as the symbol of Islamic civilisation (Abderahman, 2006). Insoll states that “*the best known visible feature of the mosque is the minaret, which has been called the symbol of Islam*” (Insoll, 1999:31). Ariffin confirms that “*the minaret has been widely accepted as a symbol of an Islamic environment*” (Ariffin, 2005:98).

Bennison and Gascoigne regard the minaret as the most visually symbolic image of a mosque as it rises upward toward the sky. The vertical forms of the minaret signify the meaningful recall of an earlier historical period in a different place and time. This recall revives the time when the call to prayer (*athan*) was made in Medina in the year 622 C.E by Bilal (Bennison and Gascoigne, 2007). Grabar suggests that not only the form of minaret, but also its inscriptions and decorative patterns, have a symbolic meaning. He states that the use of the whole verse of the Quran called Mariam on the Jam Minaret in Afghanistan symbolises the close relationship of Islam with other religions, as initially some non-Muslim communities such as the Christian and Zoroastrian used to live in that religion. In the same manner, the minaret of Kalayan in Bukhara has been understood as principle unity of God (Grabar, 2006). Bennison and Gascoigne also confirm that the minaret is surrounded by a symbolic concept. “*Huge tiled minaret, [...] suggests a settlement of some symbolic significance*” (Bennison and Gascoigne, 2007:9-10).

As mentioned, the dome in Islamic architecture represents the Throne of God and the number of minarets located around the dome has been regarded as the supporters or the guards of the throne. Minarets in Baluchistan are mainly influenced by Indian Mughol architecture, particularly the minaret of the Taj Mahal. Richards investigates the symbolic aspect of minarets by discussing the four minarets of the Taj Mahal in India. The Taj Mahal, in fact, is not a mosque, but it is believed that it was built with the architectural sign of a mosque. He states that *“The four minarets can be seen as the four supports of the Throne of God referred to in popular medieval cosmology”* (Richards, 1996:124).

The four minarets of the Taj Mahal are narrated symbolically as guards, men-at-arms, as well as ladies-in-waiting by Ham and Hamilton as well. *“ the minarets [are] white sentinels, each 137 feet high, standing guard over the Taj like men-at-arms, look defiant and round, while the pale palace they watch is so fragile, so feminine and so queenly”* (Ham and Hamilton, 1937:12).

As reviewed in different literature, the minarets are widely accepted as religious symbols of Islam, but at the same time there are many other sources opposing and dismissing the symbolic concept of the minarets. They believe that minarets should only be regarded as a functional element rather than as Islamic symbols. For instance, it is believed that a minaret is not an essential part of Islamic architecture (Hillenbrand, 2000). Cappadona also states that *“The minaret fulfils an important need for a high place from which the muezzin’s call to prayer can more easily be heard. It has no symbolic significance”* (Cappadona, 1995:171).

Insoll regards the minaret as a foreign architectural element, which was added to the Mosque of Prophet Mohammad in Medina (Insoll, 1999). Gascoigne and Bennison believe that the symbolic meaning of the minaret has been exaggerated over time. They state that

the shifting meaning of minarets [...] is a cogent example of an Islamic feature that actually had a much more variegated meaning for Muslims themselves, some of whom initially rejected the minaret as a symbol of Islam (Bennison and Gascoigne, 2007:9).

However, the reality is that the function of minarets has changed in mosques; muezzins do not, in the majority of cases, climb up the minarets to carry the call to prayer anymore, as new technology such as loudspeakers do the job and in many cases the minarets are not built for the same old function at all. In most rural areas, particularly in Baluchistan, the minarets have not any external or internal staircase. For that reason, the best option would be to consider the minaret as a symbolic and decorative sign of a mosque. The minaret is an Islamic symbol which can be seen from far away, representing a mosque in a city (Hassan, 2007).

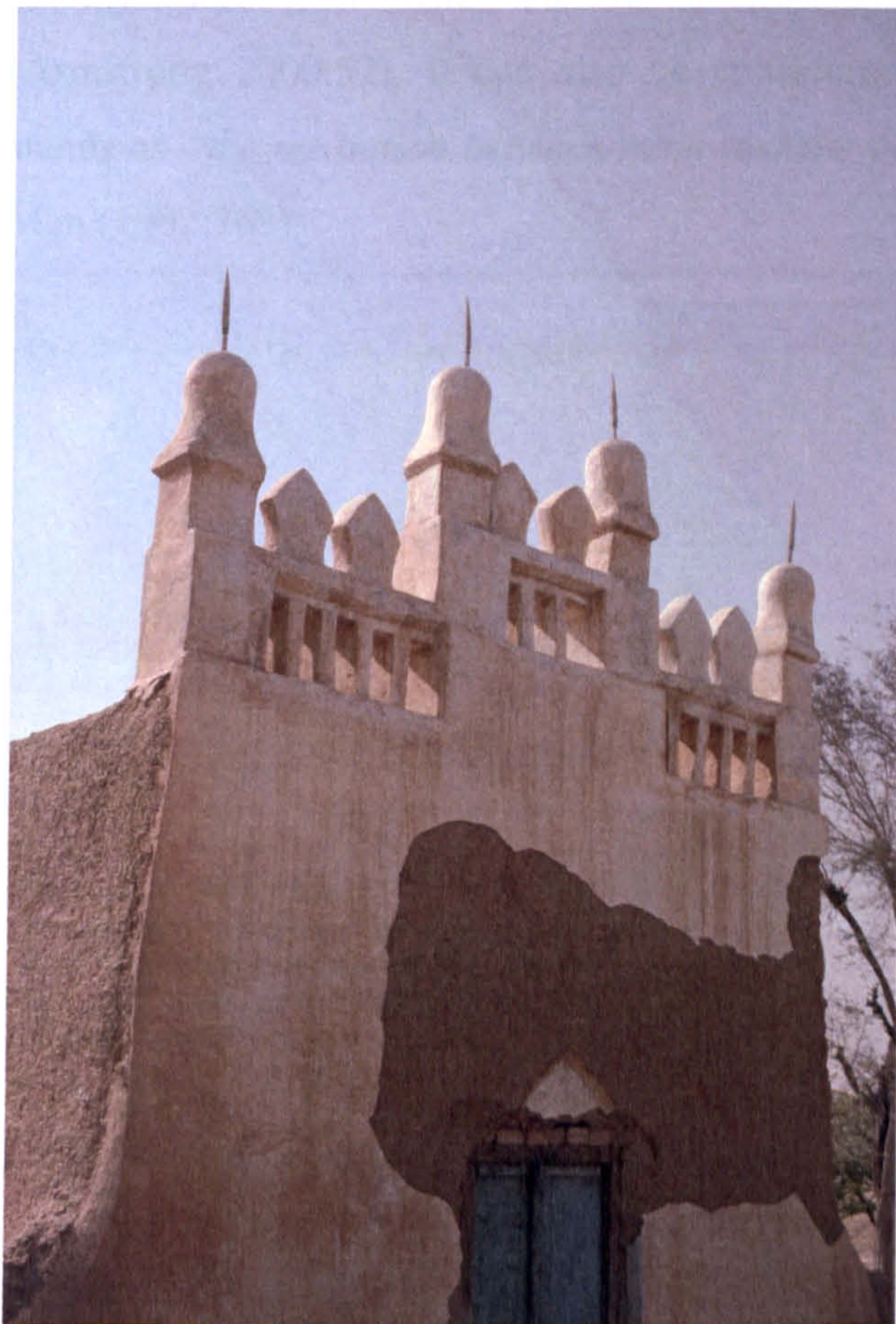


Figure 9.4. Most of the minarets in the rural areas of Baluchistan have no external or internal staircase. They can be considered as a symbolic and decorative sign of a mosque. Source: Author



Figure 9.5. The minaret is considered as an Islamic symbol which can be seen from far away as the outline of a mosque and it indicates that there are Muslims present in that city. The minaret of the mosque of Al Ghouri in Cairo is a good example to be considered. Source: Seaman (2008).

The minaret, therefore, can be regarded as a symbol which accordingly represents “a mystified, narcissistic culture of identification of form and content” (Armstrong 2000:52). It can also be considered as a religious symbol which stands as “the mediation between mind and the physical world” according to De Man (1982:763).



Figure 9.6. The minaret of the Central Mosque in Birmingham which can be seen from a distance as a sign of the mosque and the existence of Muslim society. Source: Author

The minaret is symbolic product of the Muslim conscious mind, which, according to Hegel (1975), points beyond itself and ties with infinity. It transfers the

spiritual feelings and “*sense of sacredness*” which cannot be expressed in ordinary speech or the language of science (Rader and Jessup, 1976).

Finally, minarets have not only been symbolised in urban areas of the most civilized centres of the Islamic world, but they have also been accepted as the most important religious architectural symbol in an isolated or primitive society such as Baluchistan. The transformation of pre-Islamic towers to Islamic minarets and further to their symbolic representation by the tribal people of Baluchistan can be mentioned as a good example which reveals the relationship between the meaning and the significance of the symbol. The next section introduces some typical minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan and leads to the identification and classification of these symbolic minarets as the result of my case study. According to Byron and Kockel (2006) the dream of a mosque is only completed with the image of minaret.

9.5. Symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan

There are a variety of objects which are used to symbolise minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. These minarets appear in various forms and shapes, from the simplest form of a stone cairn or a piece of wood to very complex ones. Some examples of symbolic minarets are investigated in this part of the study.

9.5.1. Stone minarets

Symbolising minarets with stones is very popular, particularly in stone-marked and low wall mosques in Baluchistan. The stone minarets can be found in various forms and sizes, such as single stone minarets, cairn stone minarets and stone tower minarets. Some examples of these three groups are shown below.

9.5.1.1. Single stone minaret

A single stone is used in some Baluchi mosques as a symbol of the minaret. The single stone is used mainly by the entrance of the stone-marked mosques and in some cases in short or low wall mosques as well. The single stones representing

the minaret are painted white and occasionally are placed on each side of the mihrab and sometimes even in the middle of the mihrab's wall to indicate the direction of qibla. A large slab of stone (up to three metres in height) is used in some parts of Baluchistan to symbolise the minaret.

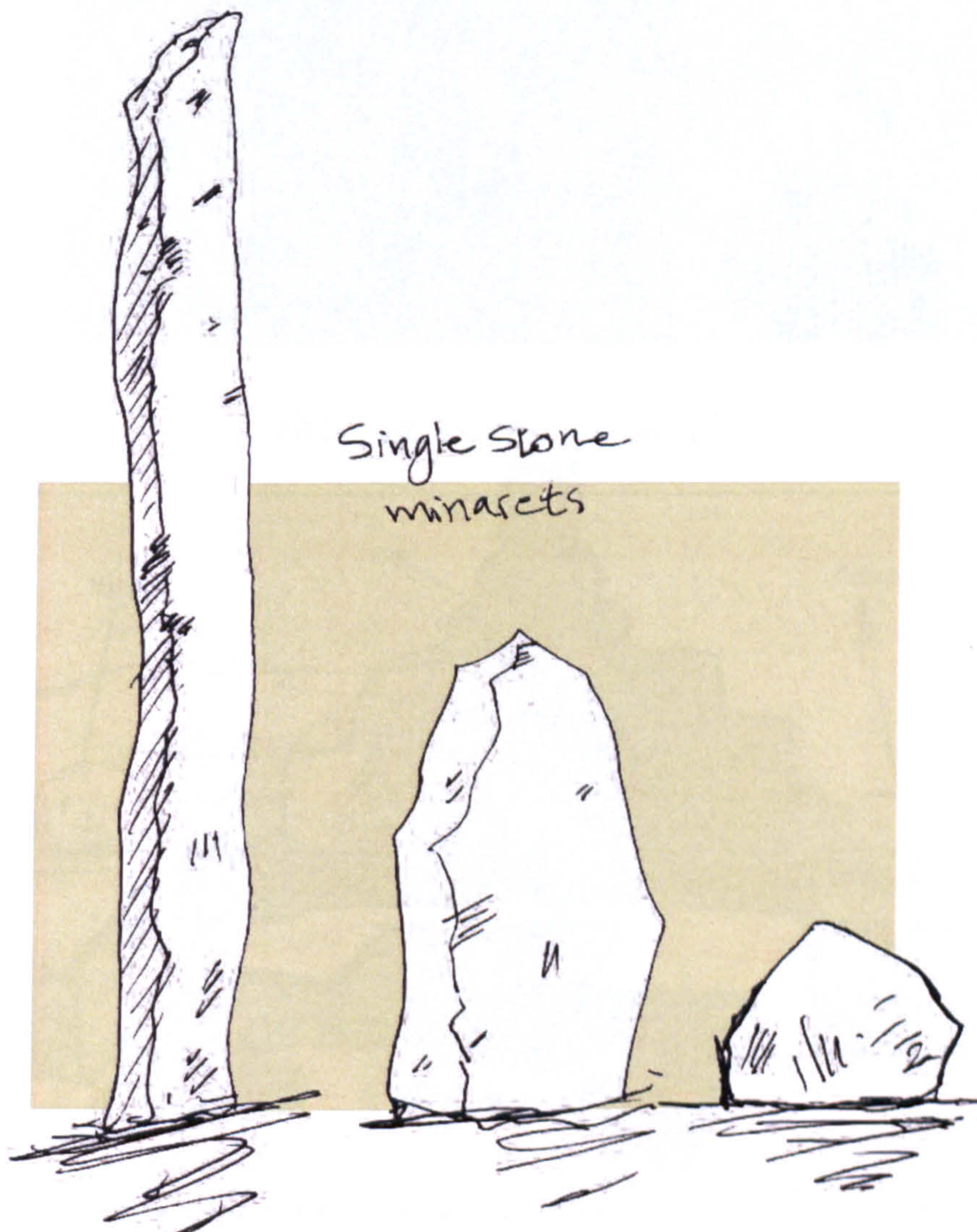


Figure 9.7. Three different types of single-stone minarets used in Baluchi mosques. Source: Author

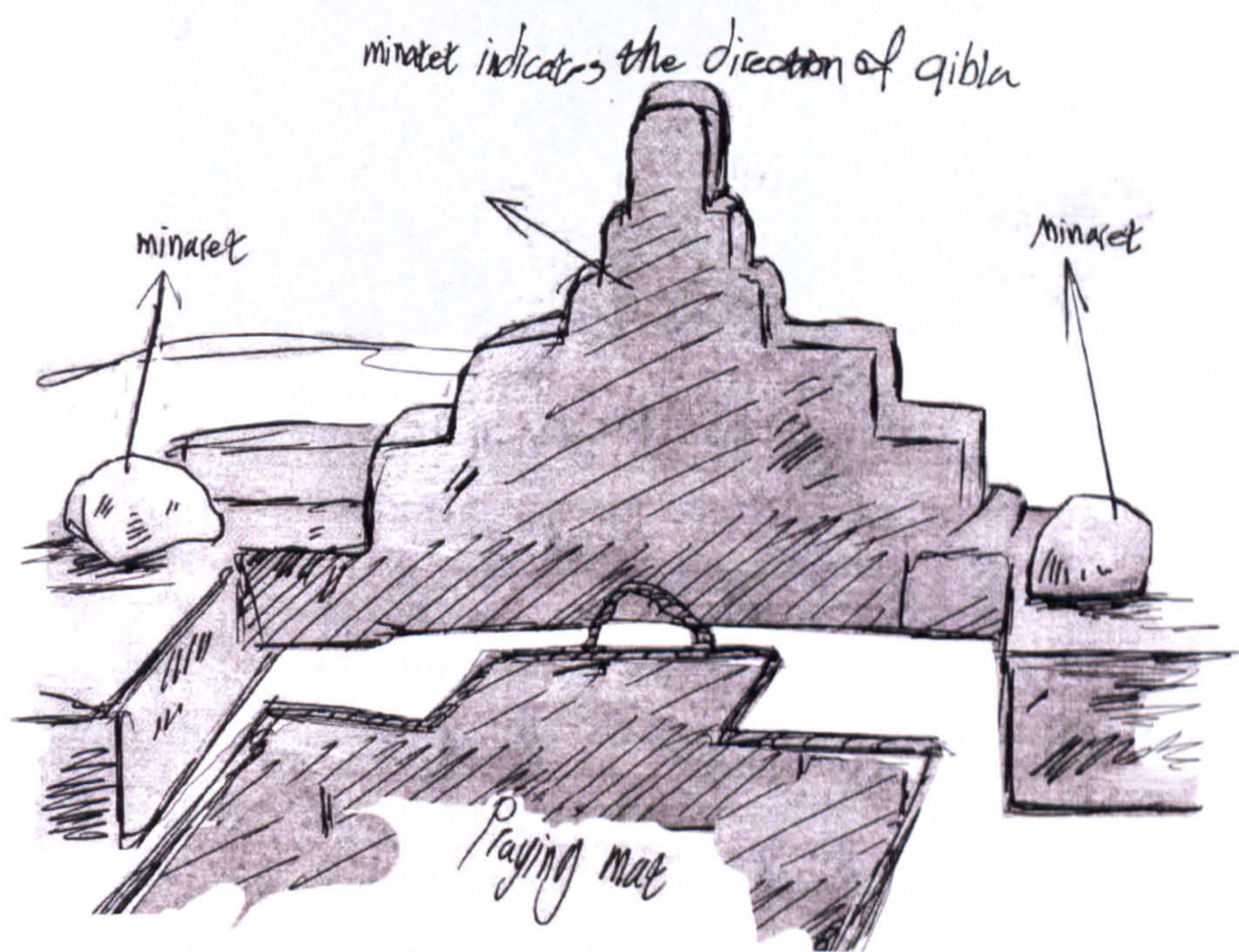


Figure 9.8. Two single stones symbolising minarets; they were primary painted white and placed on each side of the mihrab. The middle stair form can be recognised as symbolisation of the dome, but a local Baluchi man introduced it as the main minaret which originally indicated the direction of qibla. Source: Author



Figure 9.9. Three different types of single – stones symbolise minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. The top left hand picture shows how two large slabs of stone 250 cm in height are on the grave to symbolise a minaret and as a religious symbol bringing blessing for the dead person. Source: Author

9.5.1.2. Cairn- stone and stone- tower minarets

Gage regards the stone cairns as artefacts as each has a distinct style which at one time had an individual and specific meaning for its builder, as well as other people. Stone cairns can be found at many places such as old farms, land, conservation areas or other places. The stone cairns can be found in groups which often occur on marginal lands with a limited quantity of boulders and near wetlands (Gage, 2006).

The stone cairn is a popular type of symbolic minaret which is found at stone-marked and short or low wall mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan. The cairn stone minarets simply are made by putting a few stones on top of each other. They appear by the entrances of the mosque, by the mihrab and sometimes in the middle of the mihrab to show the direction of prayers. On many occasions these symbolic minarets are painted white so they can be observed from a distance as indicating a mosque.

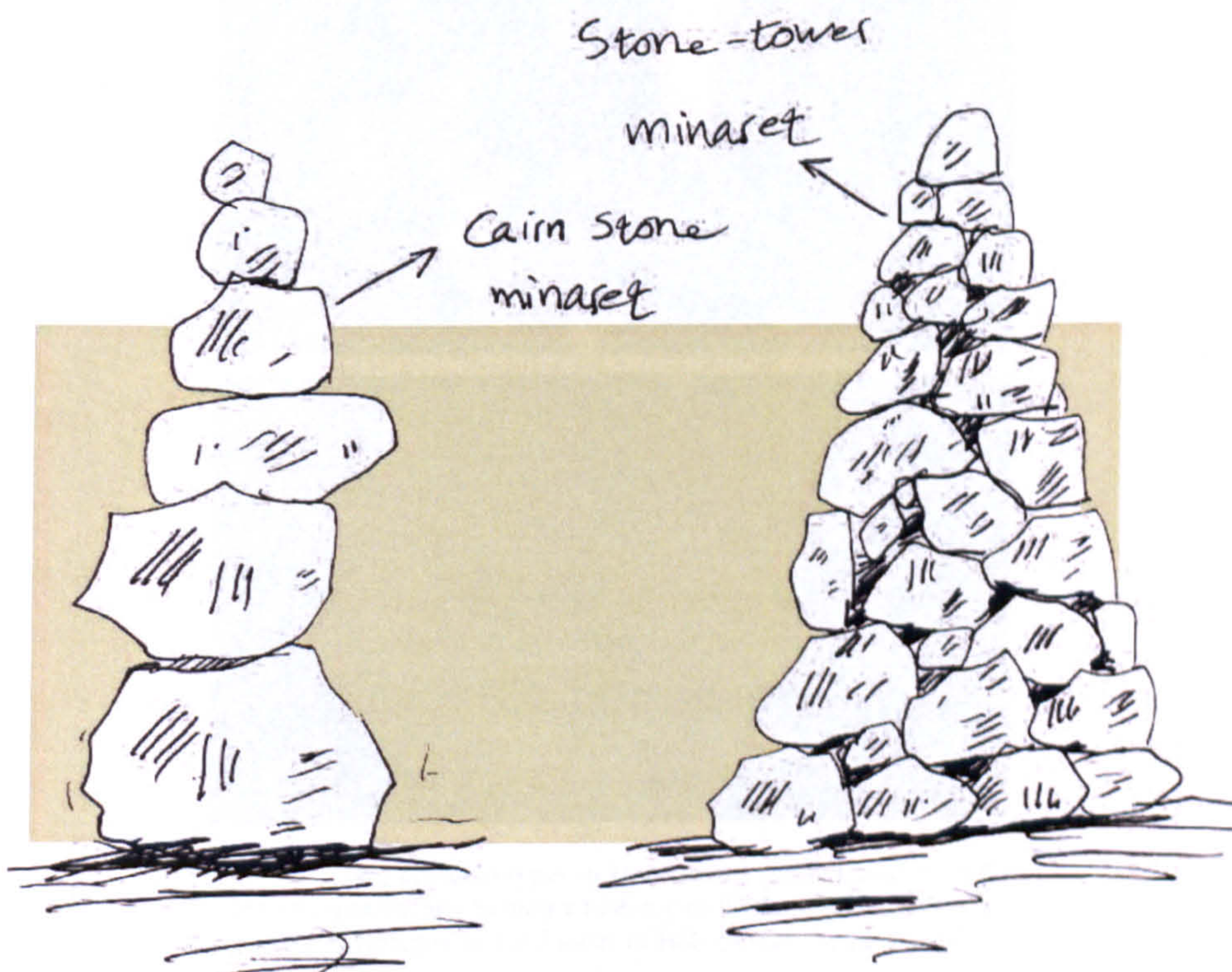
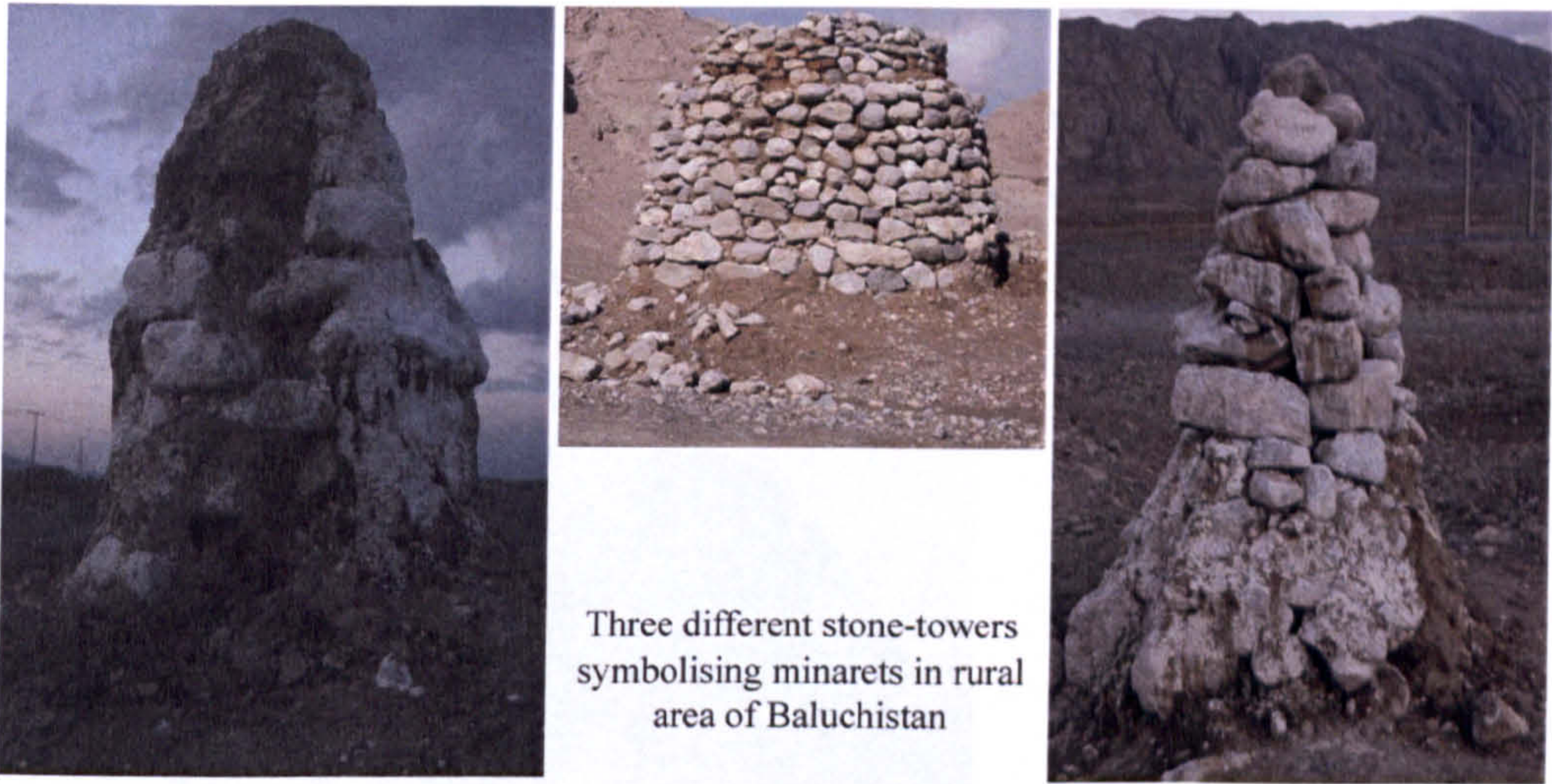


Figure 9.10. Drawing showing the structures of cairn-stone minarets and stone-towers which symbolise the minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author



Three different stone-towers
symbolising minarets in rural
area of Baluchistan

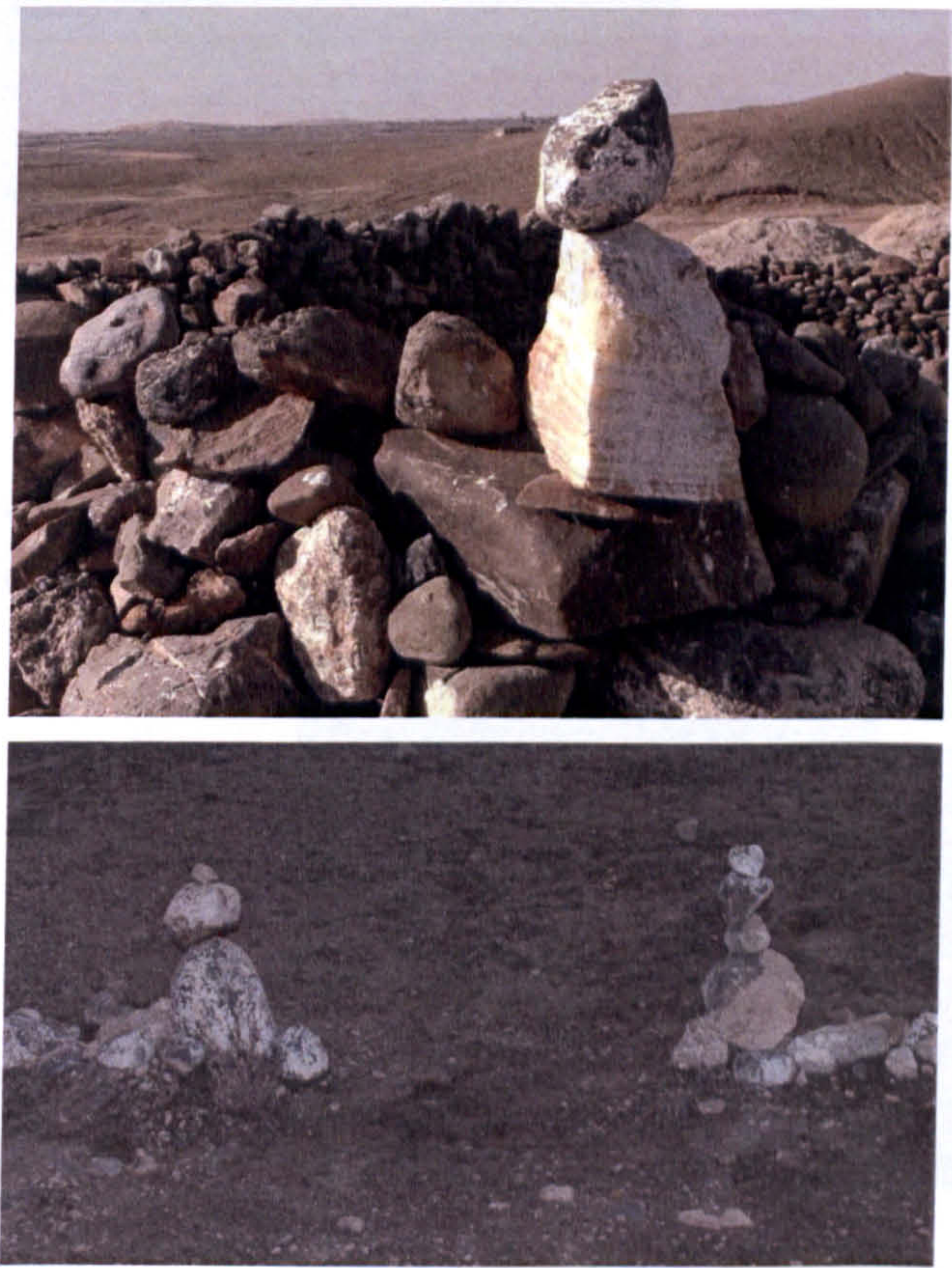


Figure 9.11. Two different types of stone cairns symbolising minarets. These two minarets are painted white any as they are used to signify stone-marked mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

9.5.2. Brick minarets

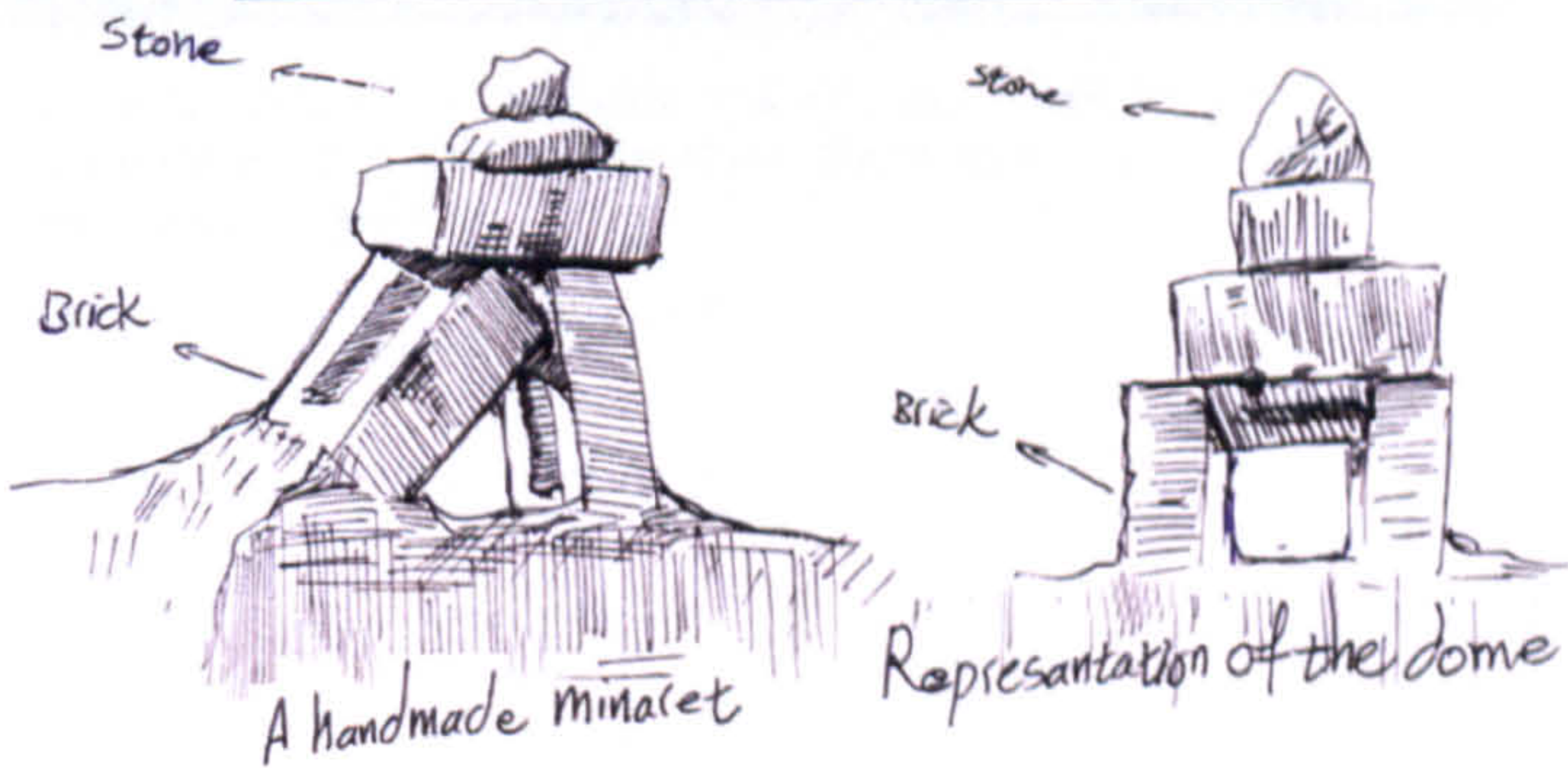
Brick is the most popular building material used in the construction of minarets both in rural and urban areas of Baluchistan. Different types of bricks, including

mud-brick and fired-brick, have been used in building various forms of symbolic minarets, particularly in rural areas of Baluchistan. The symbolic brick minarets cannot be noticed without the guide of the native people. Some examples of symbolic brick minarets are discussed in this part of the study.



Figure 9.12. Minaret and dome built with fired-brick in a rural area of Baluchistan. Source: Author

Figure 9.13. Picture demonstrating the structure of a typical symbolic minaret and dome built of mud-bricks in a rural area of Baluchistan. Source: Author



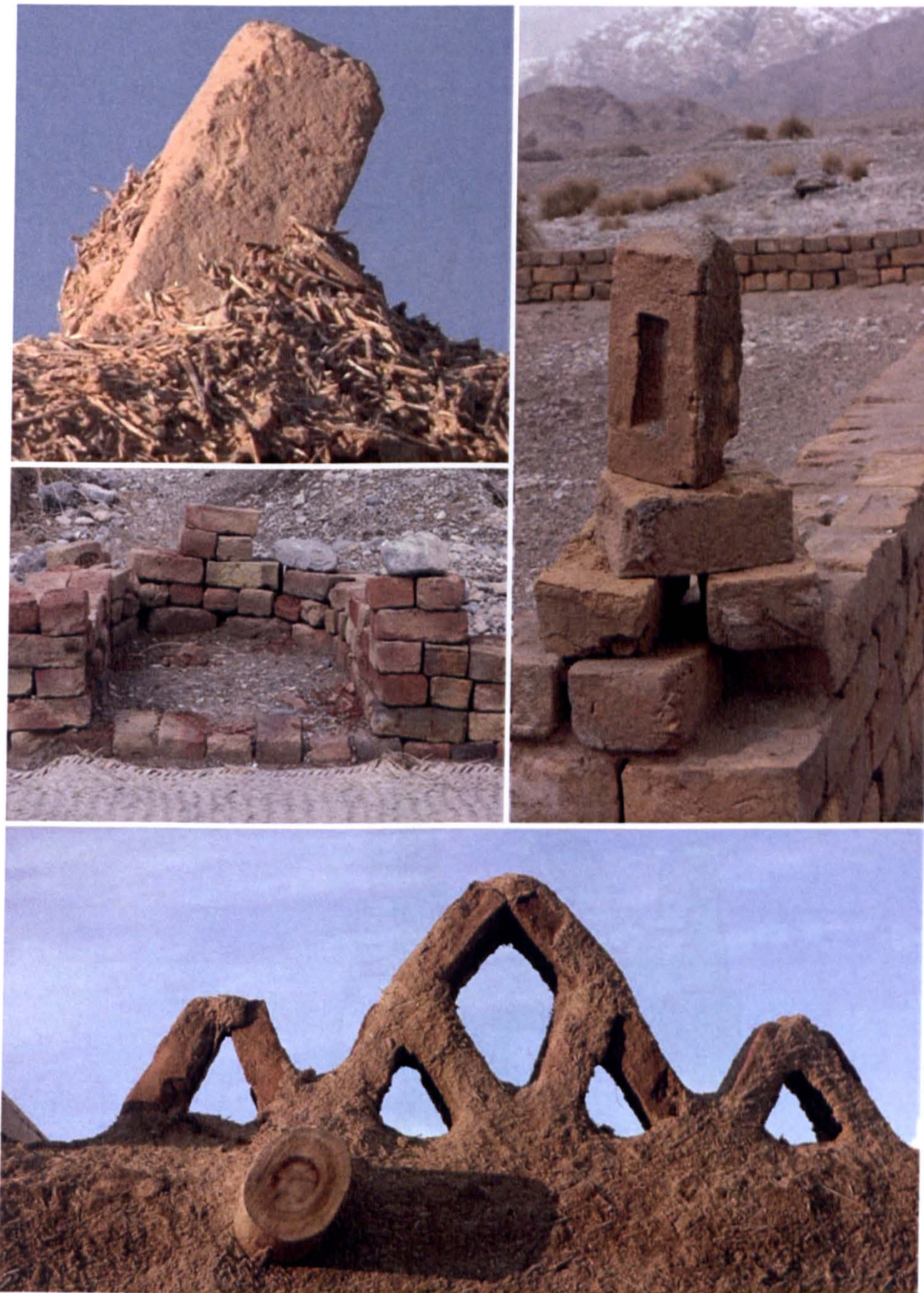


Figure 9.14. Photos demonstrating different types of symbolic minarets and domes built of brick in a rural area of Baluchistan. Two triangular forms at the bottom of the photo represent the minarets and the middle form signifies the dome. Source: Author

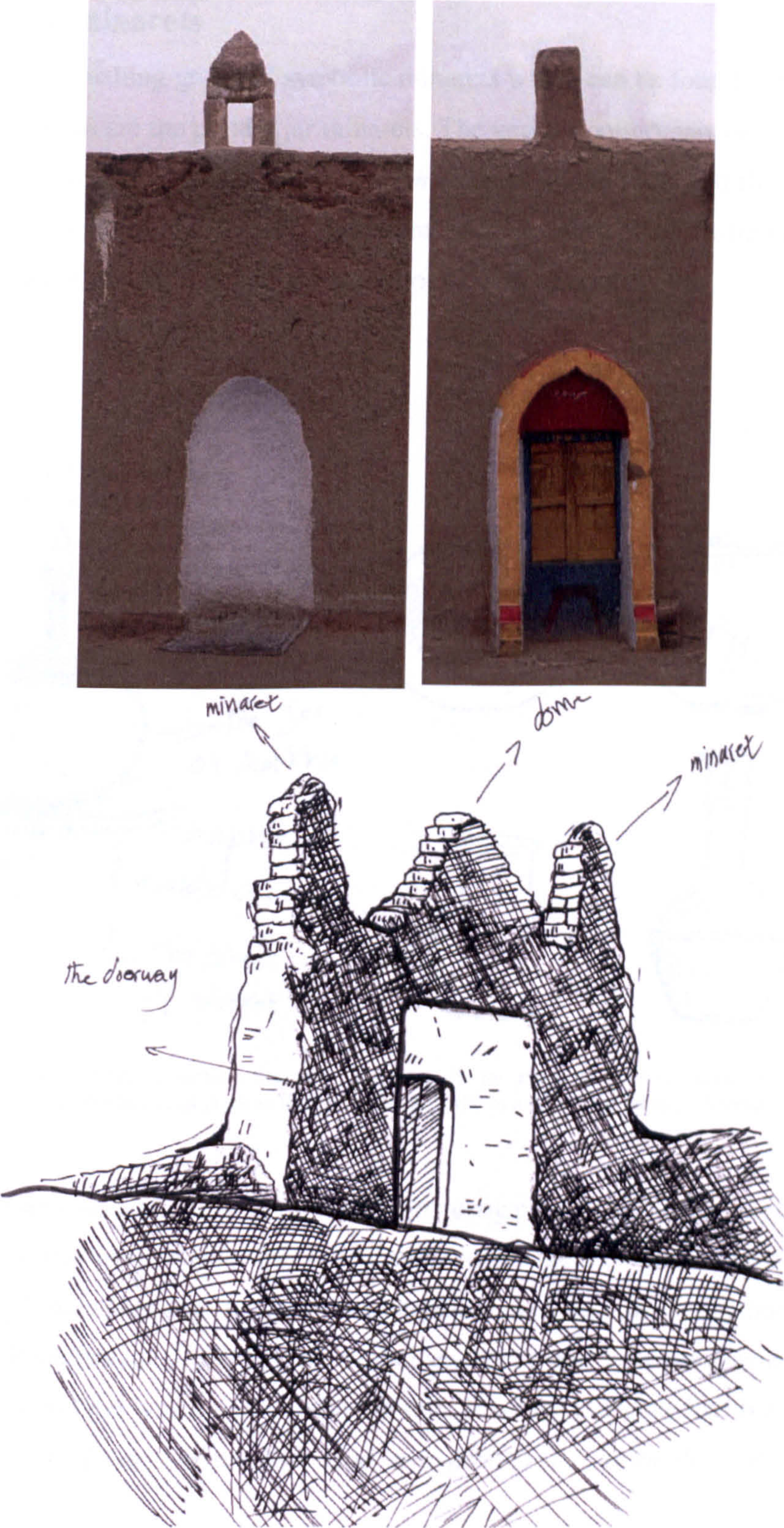


Figure 9.15. These pictures reveal the three typical symbolic minarets and domes built of brick in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

9.5.3. Jar minarets

Another astonishing group of symbolic minarets which can be found in rural areas of Baluchistan are the pottery jar minarets. The various pottery jars or vases which are used in minarets are known as *koozeh*, *gharah* and *matkha* and the decorated types are also known as *kalash*. There are large numbers of symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan containing various forms of pottery jars.

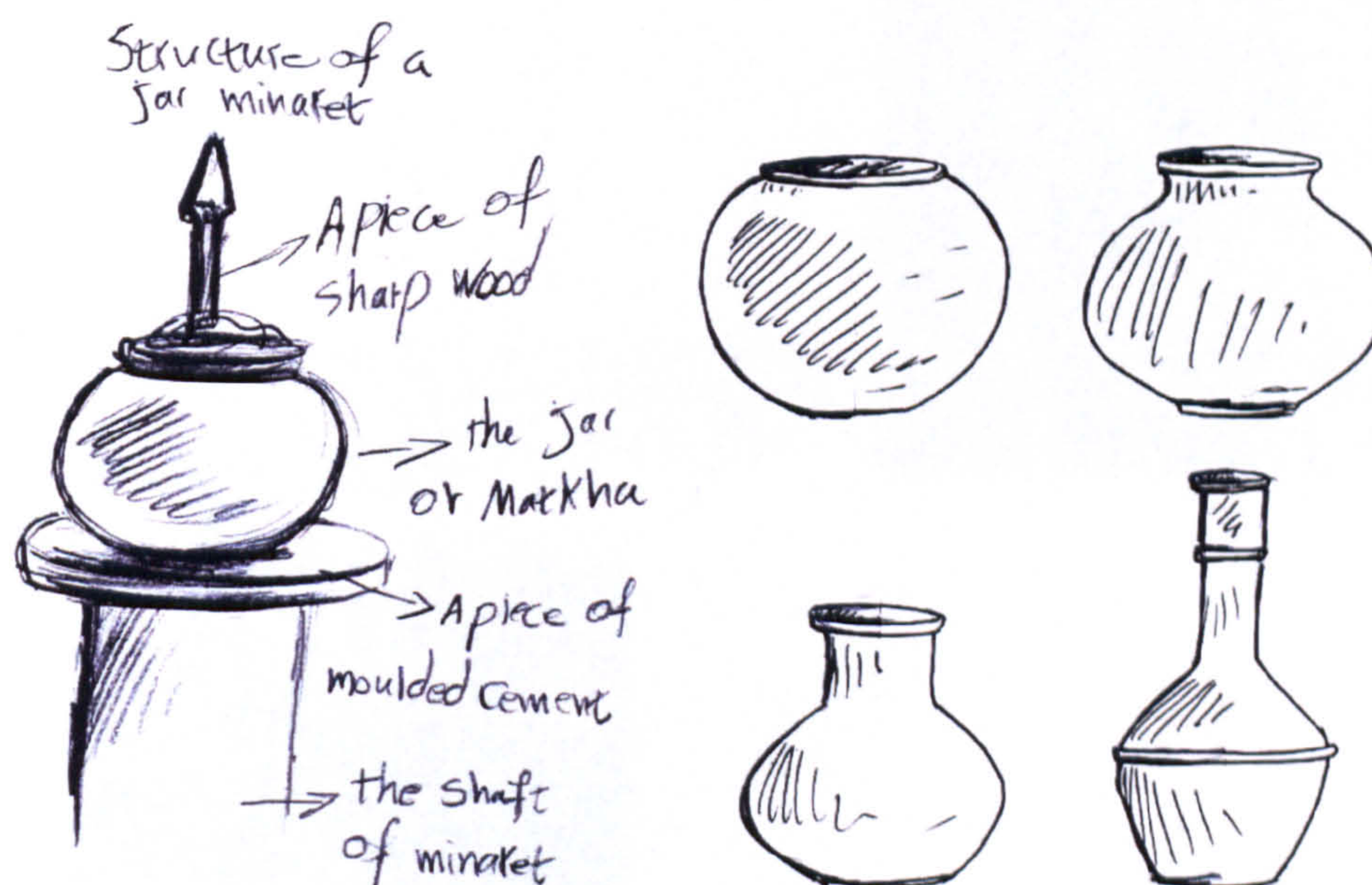


Figure 9.16. Various forms of pottery jars used in jar minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. The left hand drawing illustrates the structure of a typical jar minaret. Source: Author

I interviewed several native people while investigating the symbolic significance of the jar minarets. Some specific reasons were mentioned by local people, including God's blessing. As there is a desperate need for rain in dry hot regions such as Baluchistan, a pottery jar symbolises water and it is used as a sign of blessing from God which comes with the rain. It is also associated with a verse in the Quran: *Did not you see how God sent down water from the sky?* (Quran, 35:27)

The jars used in the minarets are used in various ways such as upside down and sometimes filled with mud or cement. A sharpened wooden stick is placed in the middle of the jars on the top of the minarets.

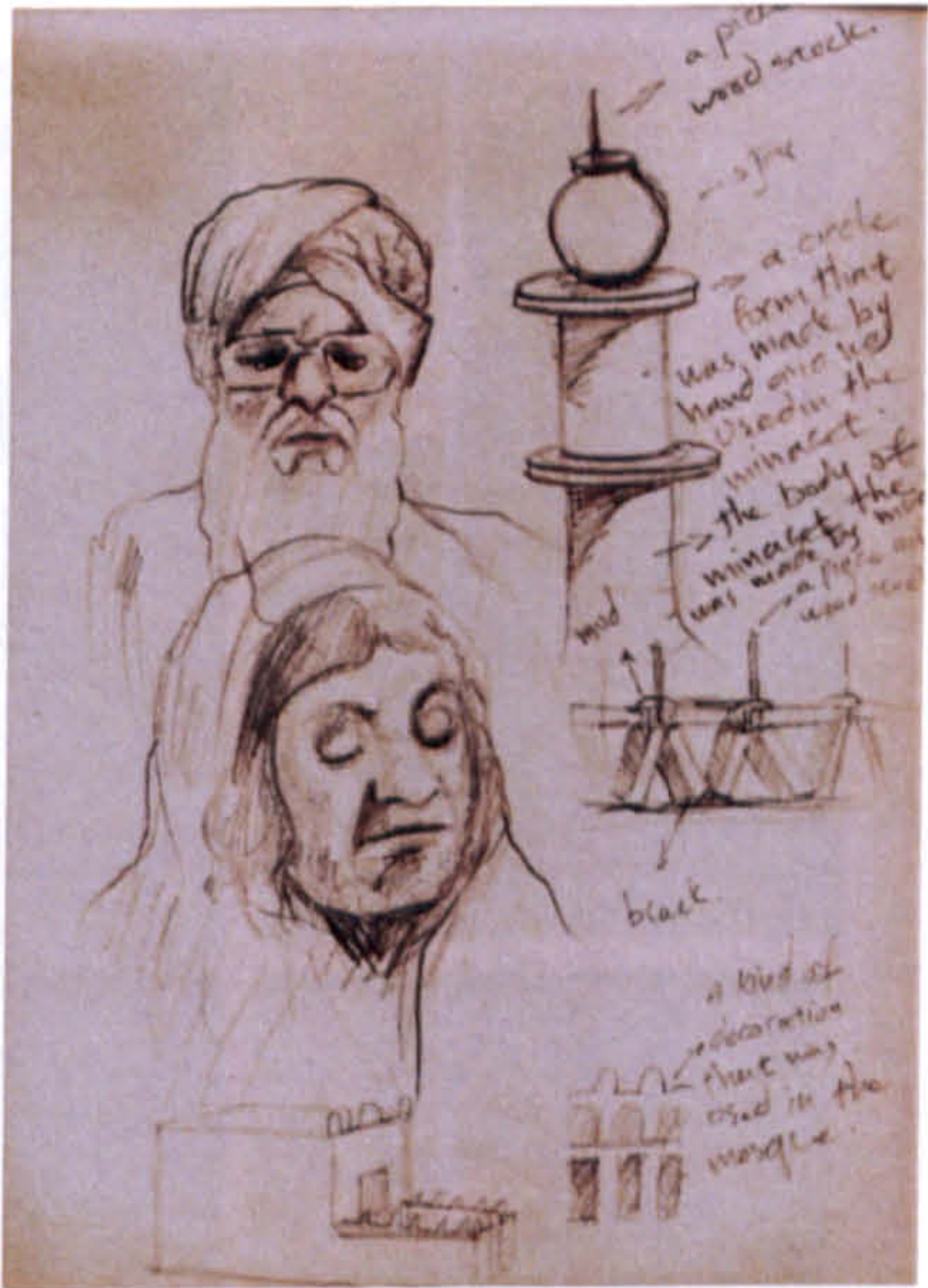


Figure 9.17. Drawing of a symbolic jar minaret and as well as a Baluchi couple which I met near the mosque by the main road of Quetta – Sibi. Source: Author

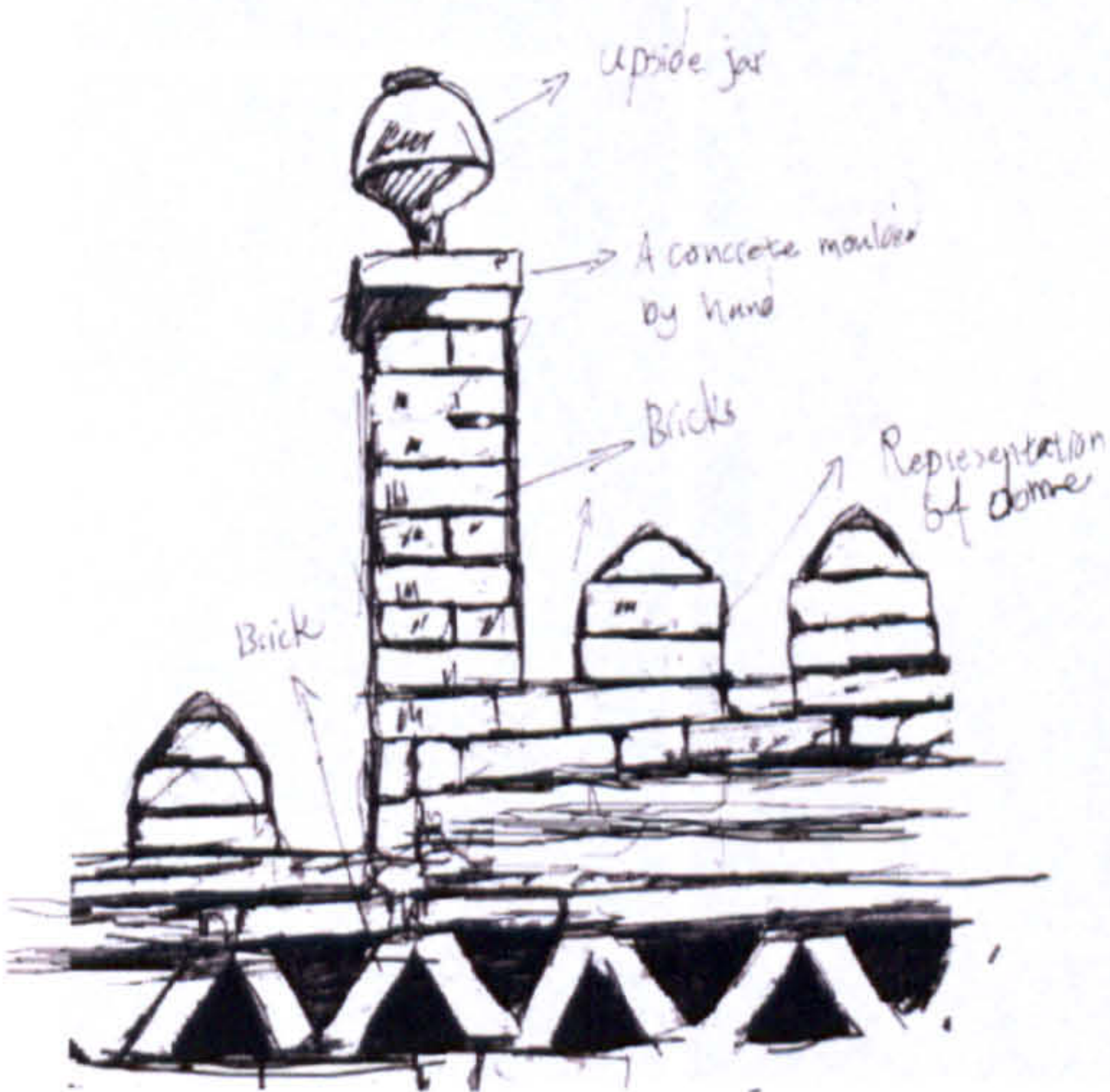
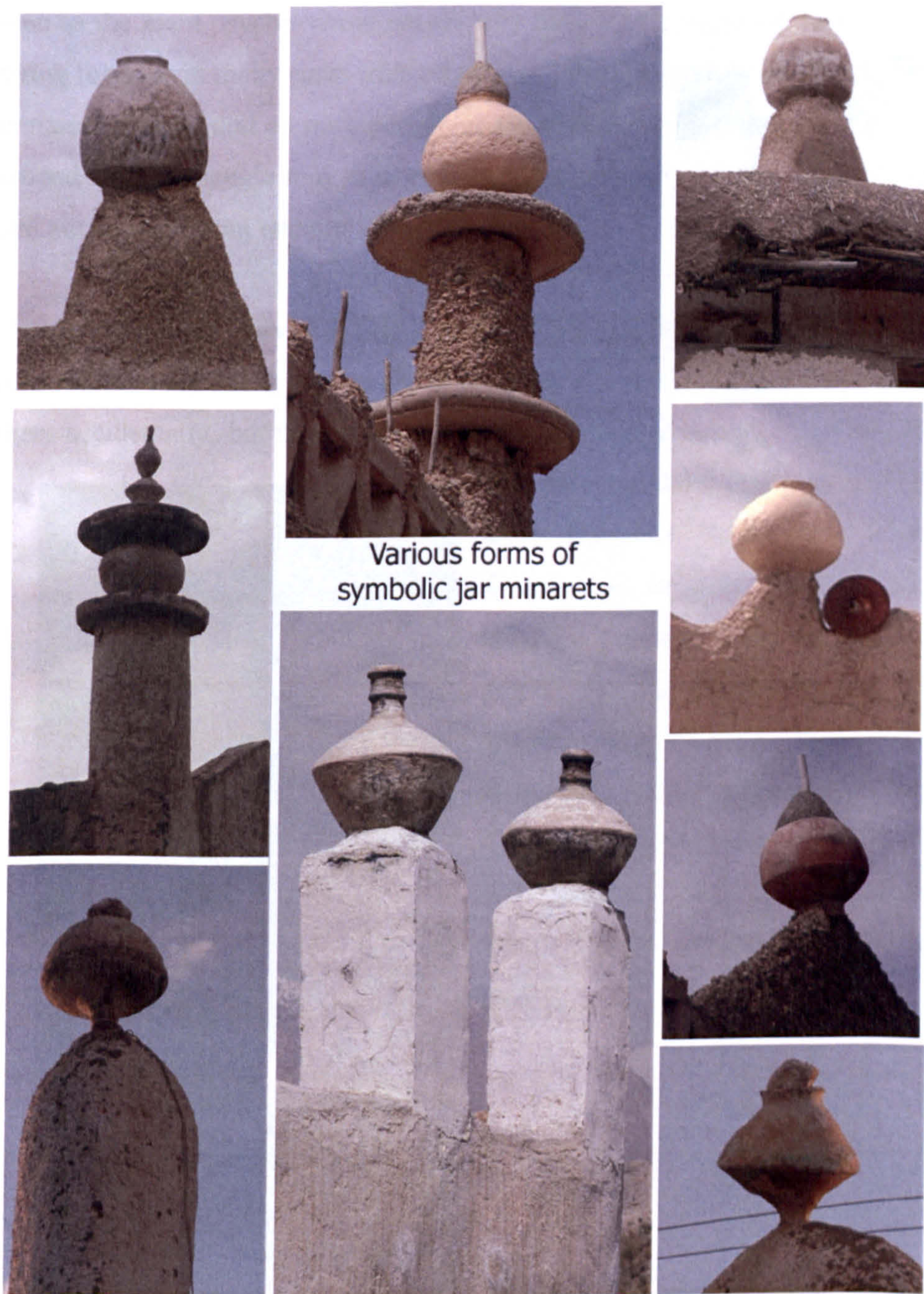


Figure 9.18. Structure of a jar minaret in a rural area of Baluchistan. The drawing introduces various materials used in the construction of these minarets. Source: Author

Osman (2007), a native Pashtoon man, who lives in the village of *Houharabad* in *Saryab*, says that placing a pottery jar on the top of the minaret reminds Muslims to pray for rain.



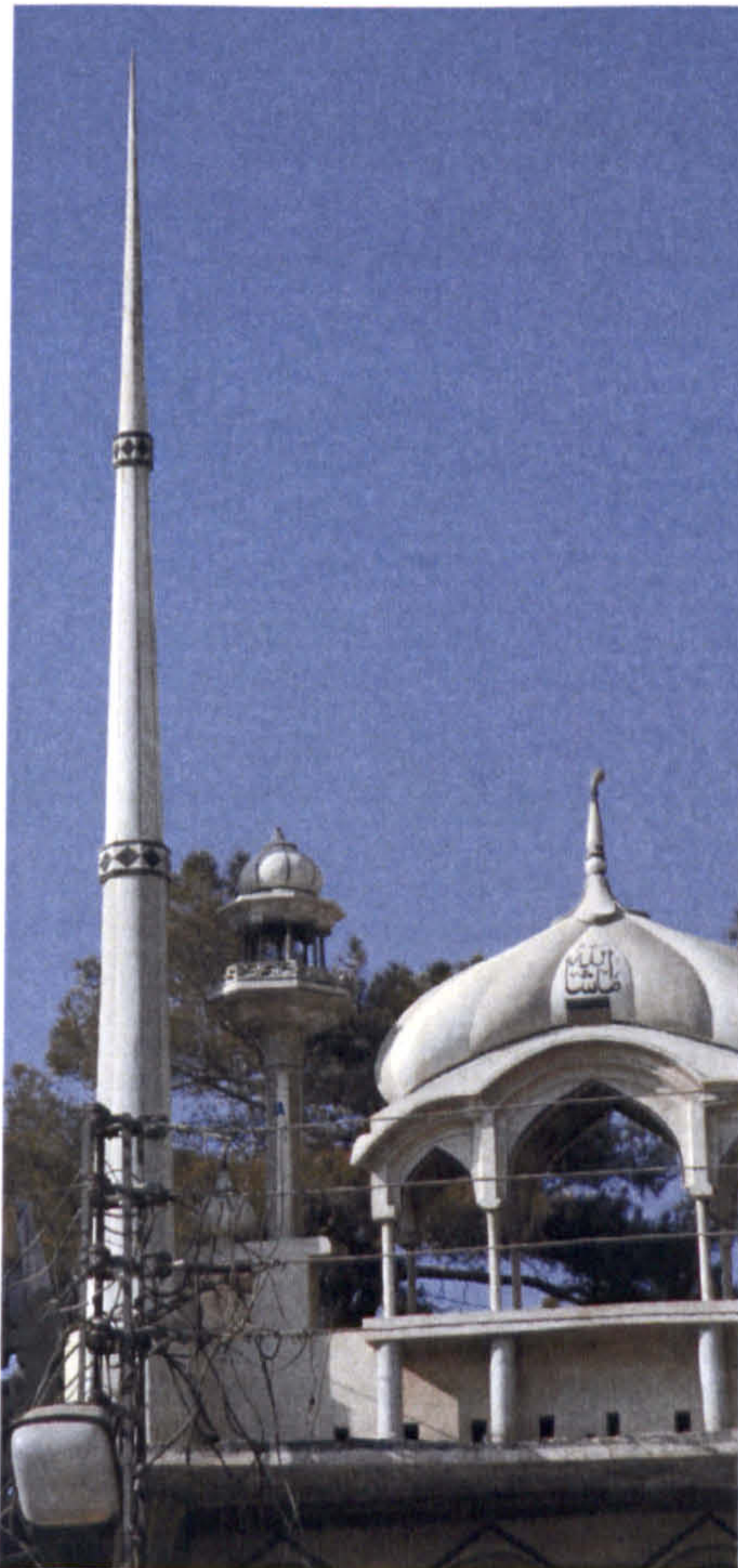
Various forms of
symbolic jar minarets

Figure 9.19. These photos show some examples of the symbolic jar minaret in rural areas of Baluchistan.
Source: Author

9.5.4. Arrow minarets

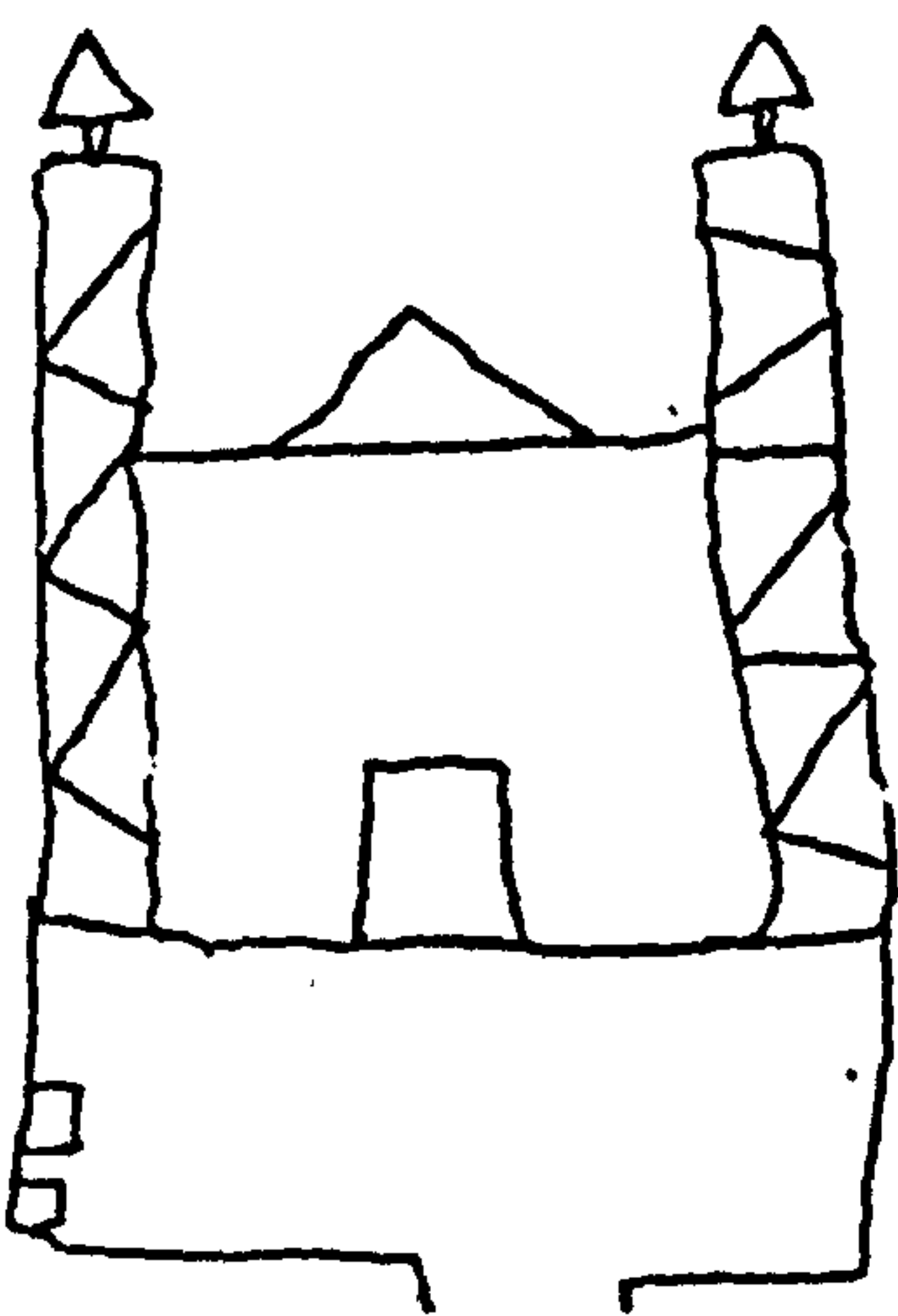
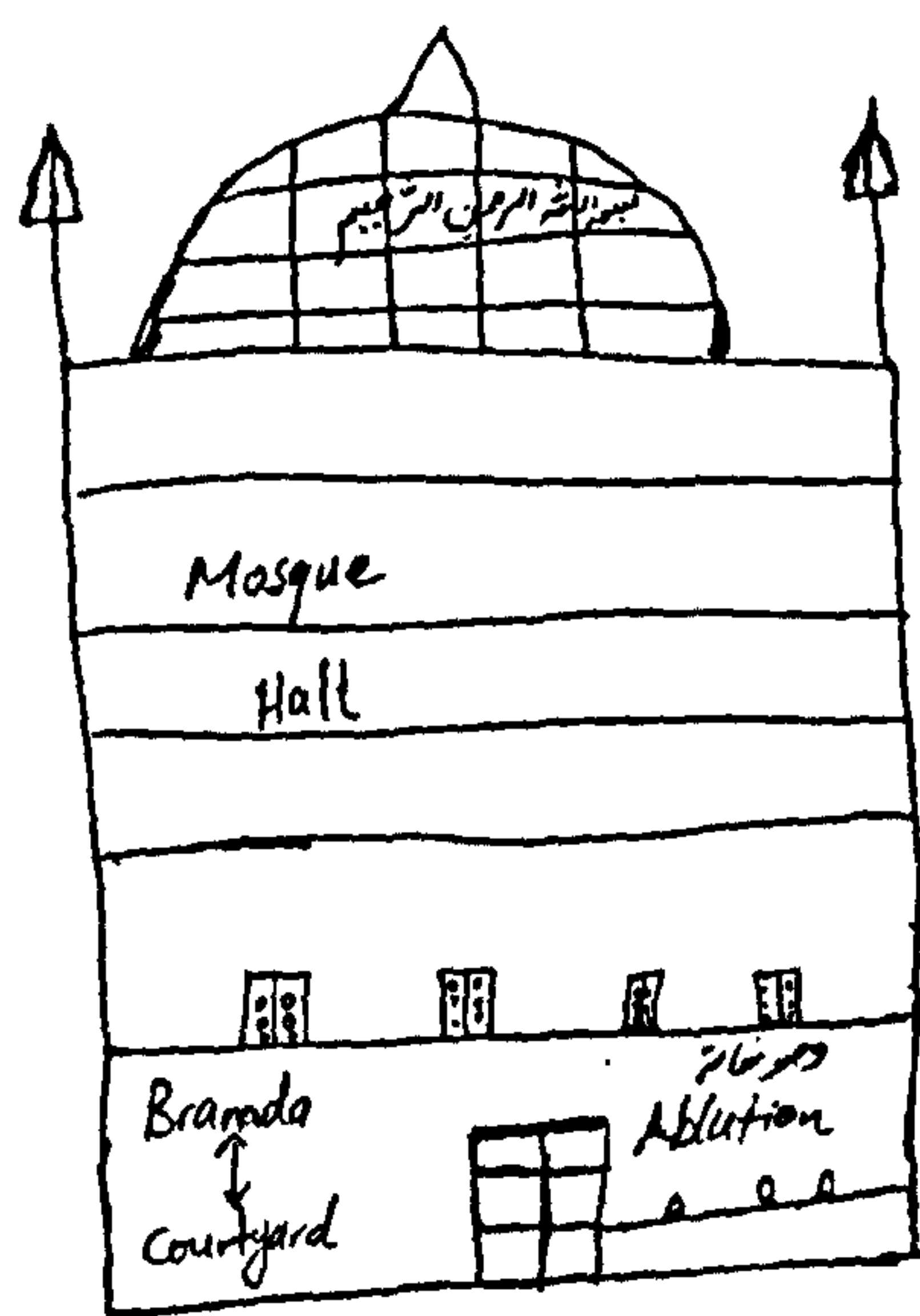
An arrow basically indicates direction and movement (Dreyfuss, 1966). It can be considered that it was important for Muslim architects to develop a shape, which, according to Modley, indicates the urgent need for attention or action. This can be seen as the main psycho-visual reason why most of the minarets were built in an arrow form, or in many cases triangular form. The sharp arrow or triangle form of minarets may remind or warn people in a religious way that there is a god and a second life. A triangle may well represent the concept of instability and danger and attract maximum attention (Modley, 1966).

During my visual survey I found some of the participants were drawing the minarets looking much like an arrow or spear. At first, I thought they just drew them accidentally, but through the investigation and interviews, I realised that in



fact they see the minaret as a symbolic arrow. Bashir (2005), a 60 year old native Baluch man, believes that the minaret is an arrow pointing to the sky, where God and all the angels are. Moshtaq (2009), another Baluch man, says that the minarets looks like arrows and attract the vision and take you to the sky. 32 year old Mustafa (2009) also says that the arrow minaret simply tells you where God is.

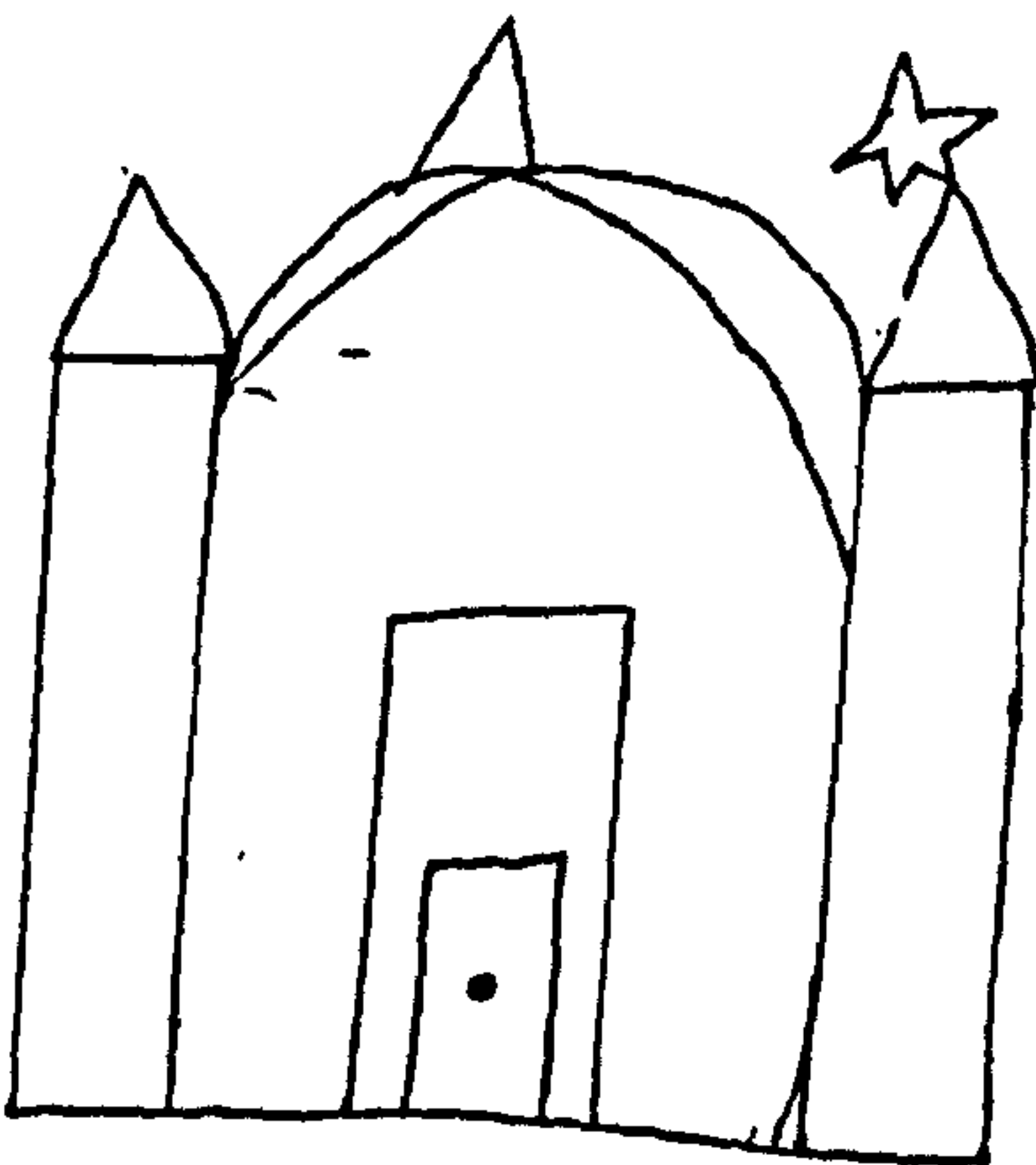
Figure 9.20. Example of arrow minaret in an urban area of Baluchistan. Source: Author



Moshadq 37 years



Mohammad Bashir 60 year.



Adel 16 years old

Figure 9.21. The minaret was represented as an arrow or flash in the drawings of some participants in the visual survey carried out in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author



Figure 9.22. Minarets built in arrow or triangular forms in rural areas of Baluchistan. According to local people, the sharp minarets direct Muslims to the sky, where God is. Source: Author

9.5.5. Glass minarets

Another group of symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan is the glass minaret. Placing a piece of glass or different types of glass-bottles is associated with the philosophy of light. Flashing or shining light has various symbolic meanings in different cultures and religions. Light is highly regarded as a sacred symbol in Islamic philosophy. Quran also refer to “*Light as the symbol of God’s revelation of knowledge and wisdom*” (Behrens-Abouseif, 1999:31). A number of verses in the Quran indicate the important role of symbolic light in Islamic ideology. For example:

God is the light of heaven (sky) and the Earth, His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp; the lamp is in a glass and the glass is like a shining star” (Quran, 24:35).

“The earth will shine with the light of her Lord” (Quran, 39:69).

Various electric lights are symbolically used on the top of the minarets in most villages which benefit from electricity, otherwise pieces of glasses and empty glass bottles are used to signify the lights.

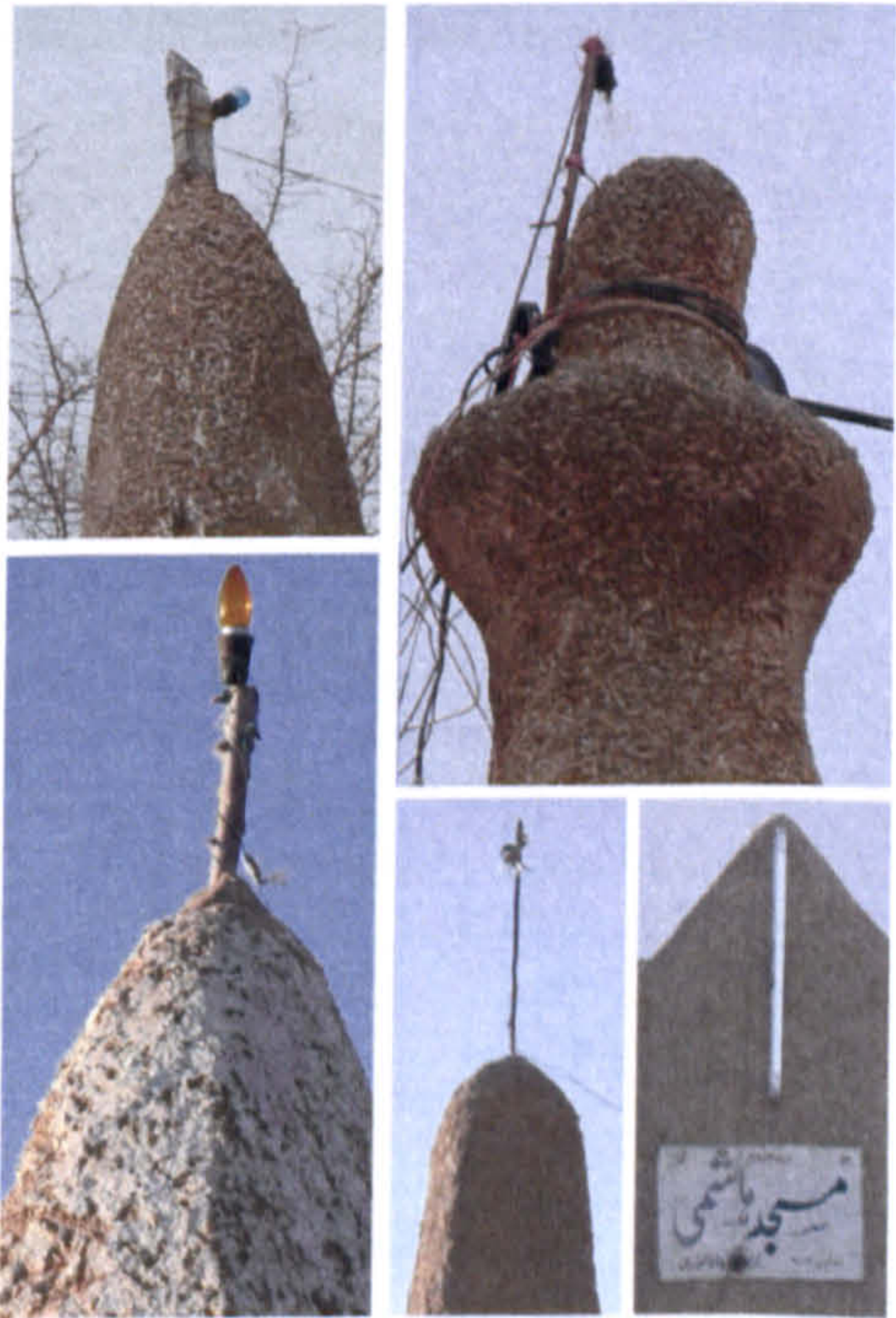


Figure 9.23. Different electric lights are placed on the top of the minarets as symbols of light and blessing in the rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

Baluchi people believe that a glass bottle on the top of a minaret is lighting; it shines, it reflects the light and can be recognised from distance, and it is beautiful. A few people also mentioned that they used glass on the minarets because light and glass are mentioned in the Quran. Therefore they see it as a religious symbol which brings blessing for the community.

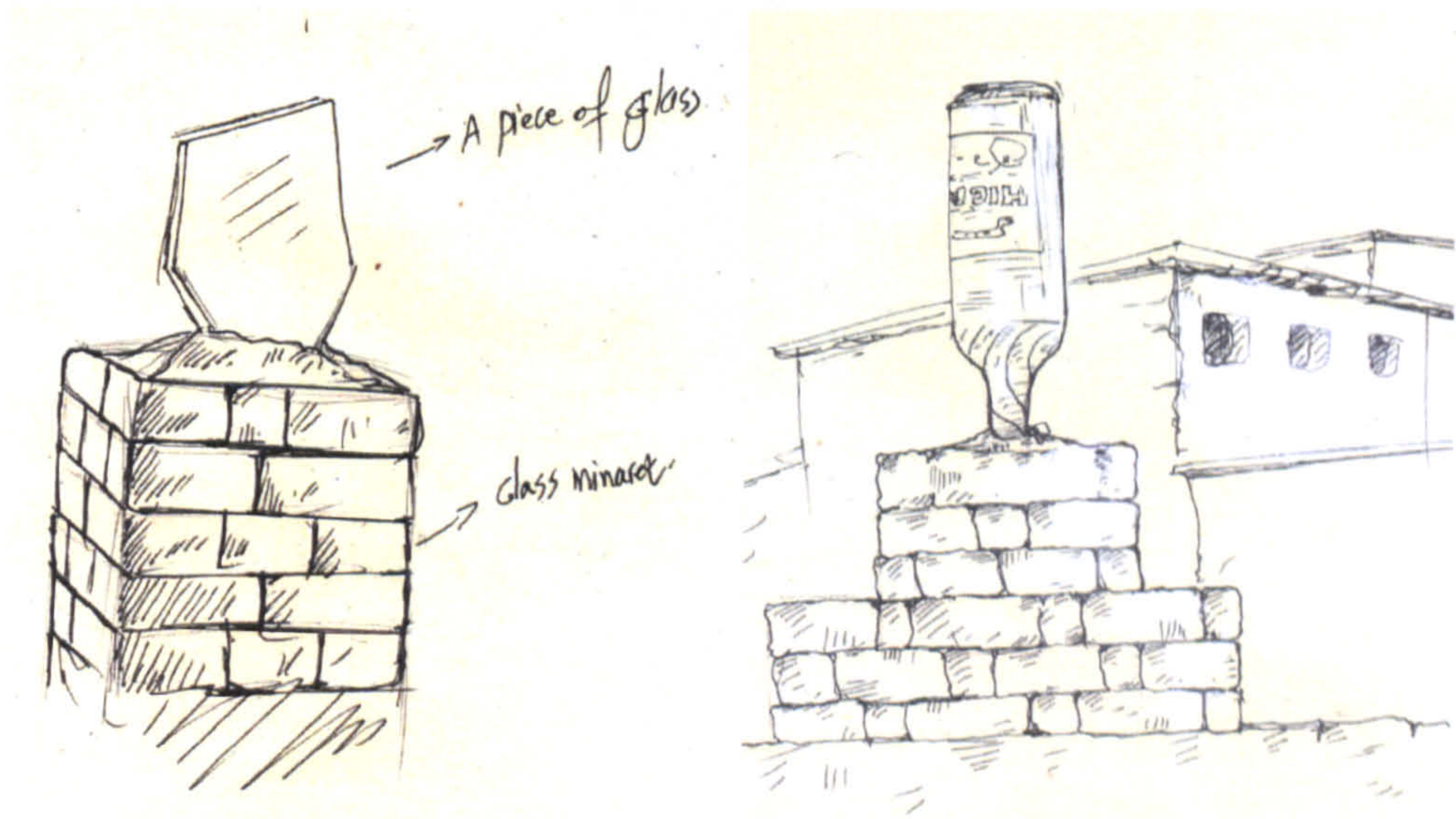
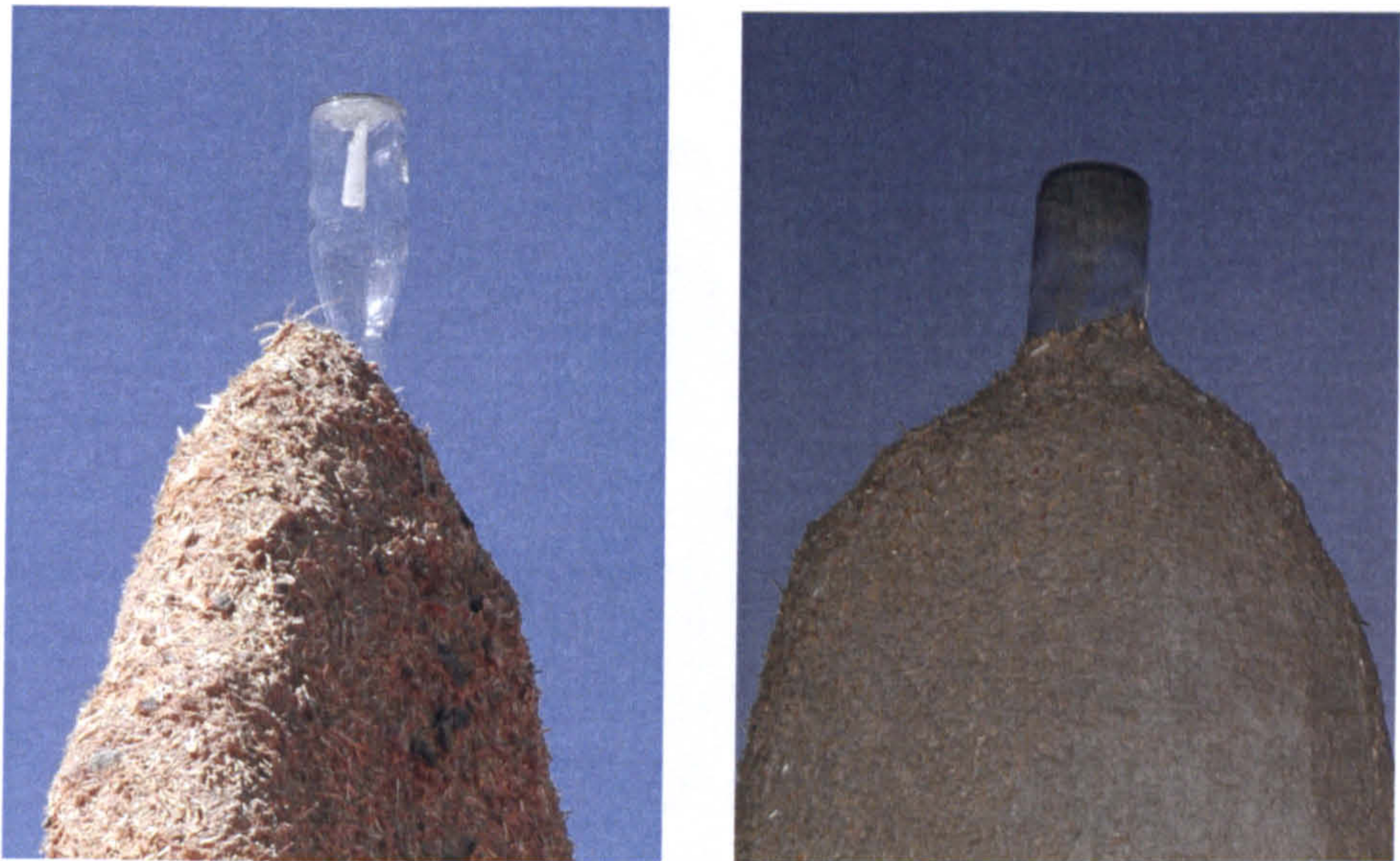


Figure 9.24. Examples of glass minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

On some occasions an empty glass bottle is used to symbolise light and also healing. Sometimes an empty bottle of medication which is used by a member of the local Muslim community, who has been cured from a serious disease, is used on the top of the minarets to bring blessing and healing for the community.



Figure 9.25. An empty glass bottle of liquid medication is used on the top of a minaret in a rural area of Baluchistan. It is used to symbolise healing and brings blessing for the community according to local culture. Source: Author

9.5.6. Horn minarets

Another group of symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan use the horns of animals, particularly those of the ibex, wild goat and ram. These animals with

long horns have a symbolic significance for the native Baluchi people, as well as other ancient civilisations such as in Persia and Greece.



Figure 9.26. The symbolic images in the Doushe cave and Mir Malas rock shelter in the Kouhdasht area (western Iran) were among the first rock art sites to attract notice. They date to more than 10,000 years ago. Source: Nasery-Fard (2008).

Animals with long horns symbolise power and blessing. The ibex, with a symbolic long horn, transmit a common communicative message of rain, water, wealth, and knowledge of policies. Similar forms of animals, particularly the ibex, with different symbolic meanings can also be found in other Asian countries (Nasery- Fard, 2008).



Figure 9.27. Various forms of domestic and wild animals, such as the wild goat (markhor), and different sorts of birds are represented in the corpus of Indus pottery and seals. Nindowari painted pottery vessel and lid. Source: BC Galleries Ancient & Tribal Art. Right: funerary beaker in Susa (4000 B.C.) revealing the use of symbols in ancient Persia. Source: Archaeological Museum of Teheran (2008) .

The horn as a religious symbol has a strong link with Judaism. According to Blech, the symbolic ram's horn in Judaism is called the *shofar*. To realise how

important the symbolic horn is for Jews, it is appropriate to mention that Judgement Day has another biblical name in Judaism, *Yom T Tuah*, meaning the day of blowing the horn (Blech, 2003). Blech has listed some symbolic significance of the horn or shofar in Judaism, such as:

- The Jews sounded the shofar when they were wandering in the desert as a symbol of going forward, moving, changing location, making progress and improvement and growth.
- The symbolic horn was used as a call to war. Therefore it symbolised fighting against evil nature.
- It also announced the presence of God and it reminded Jews that they were always being watched by a higher authority.
- A horn symbolised that the Jews recommitted themselves to the concept of God and His kinship and control of the entire earth (Blech, 2003).

Landor, the British late 19th century adventurer, spotted the use of horns in religious places such as mosques and shrines (*ziyarat*) in Baluchistan. He observed *masses of horns* in Baluchi scared places and describes that the enclosing wall of a shrine in Dalbandin was decorated with horns of sacrificed goats. He also mentions the presence of traditional inscriptions and primitive representations of favourite Baluchi animals such as goats on internal walls of the shrine (Landor, 1902).



Figure 9.28. A stone-mosque in Dalbanin in Baluchistan which was observed by Henry Landor in the late 19th Century. The horn of an animal, as a religious symbol, was used in the qibla side of the mosque. Source: Landor (1902).

The horn has religious or sacred meanings in most parts of Baluchistan. The horn is treated as a holy object and it symbolises God’s blessing. Therefore, the Baluchi find the best place for the holy horn is on the top of the minarets. On some occasions the horn is placed on the front of the vehicles such as decorative lorries and buses.

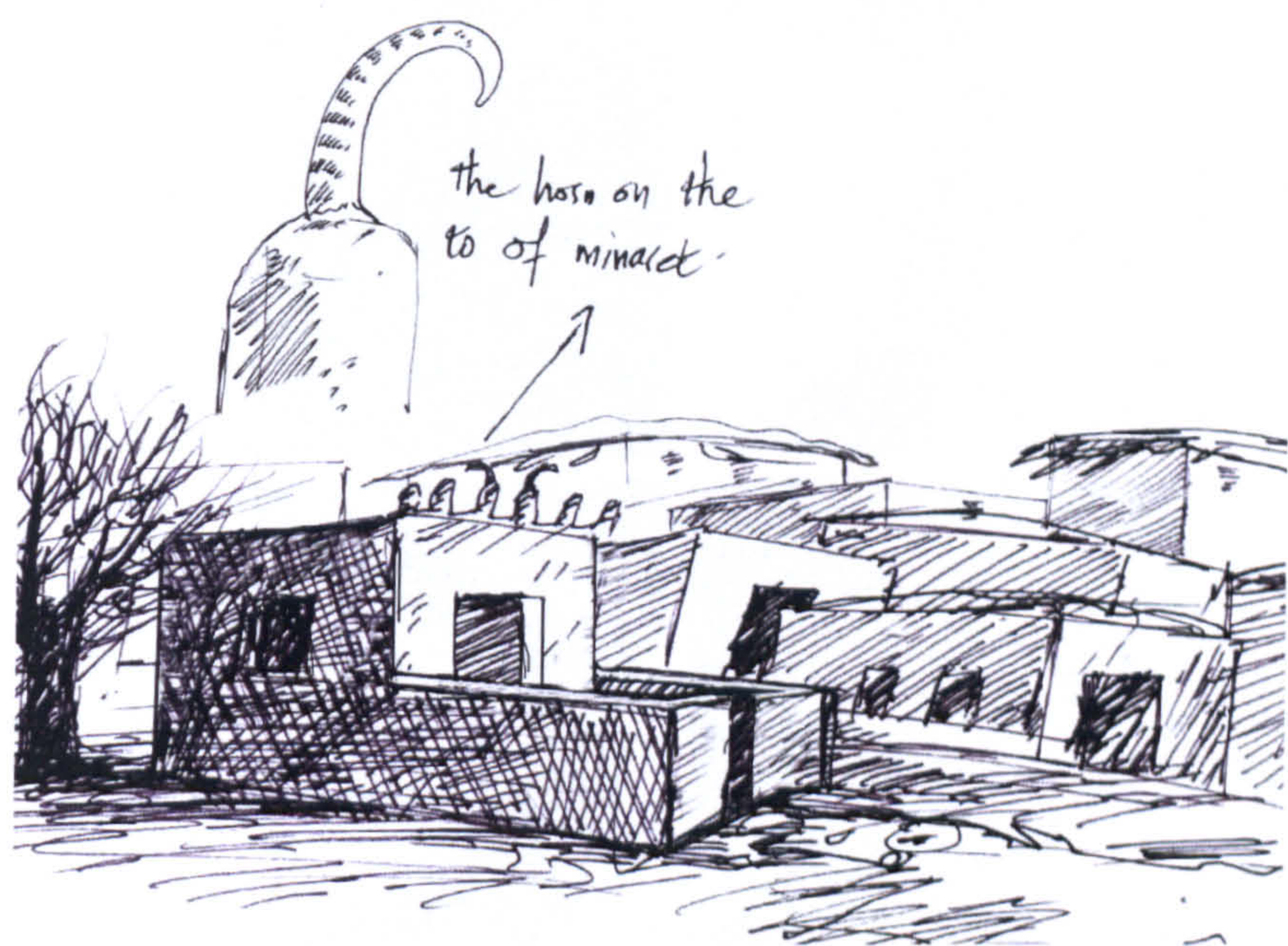


Figure 9.29. Drawing of a mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan with symbolic horn minarets. Source: Author



Figure 9.30. Drawing of a ram with long horn on an external wall of a mosque in a rural area of Baluchistan. Source: Author



Figure 9.31. Some examples of horns used as a religious symbolic object on the top of minarets and also on vehicles. The symbolic horn signifies God’s blessing according to local tradition. The horns are painted in the religious colour of green on some occasions. Source: Author

It has been noticed that occasionally an artificial horn made of cement or clay is placed on the top of the minarets whenever actual horns are not available. Shahnavaaz (2005), a student from the University of Baluchistan, direct me to an

unusual symbolic horn made of cement and placed on the top of a minaret in the rural area of Nushki. He wrote:

I have seen a cement horn which was, and is, displayed on a mosque minar (minaret) in Nushki at Killi (village) Mengal. The mosque is called Mulla Quasim's Mosque. Remember! Every time Baluchis put horns on mosques they do it in pairs, but this mosque has only got one horn.



Figure 9.32. Drawing of a symbolic minaret in the village of Mengal, which contains a symbolic minaret made of cement. Source: Author

The horn only has religious and symbolic meaning in some parts of Baluchistan. It can be coincidence but yet the question can be asked of whether there is any historic link between the Jewish Semitic tribes and some of the tribes settled in Baluchistan.

The former ruler of Kalat state of Baluchistan, Baloch, acknowledged that the ethnicity of the Baluchi tribes goes back to Semitic tribes. He states:

Baluchis are of Arabian origin.[...] Thus, they have the same characteristics as Arabs.[...] their tribal society has much in common with the Arab society based on a tribal system (Baloch, 1975a: 51).

Concerning the origin of some Baluchi, and in particular Pashtun, tribes in the Jewish Lost Tribe has been debated for a few decades. Halkin assumes that some Pashtun tribes believed they were descended from the children of Israel (*Bani Isra'il*) (Halkin, 2002). Duran remarks that some Muslim peoples, such as the Pashtun in Afghanistan and Pakistan, proudly claim to be from the Jewish Lost Tribes and they choose the name Israel (*Isra'il*) for their children (Duran, 2001). Goldman also states that the Pashtun tribesmen have many traditions and cultural identification that could be understood as Judaic (Goldman, 2004).

Therefore there is a possibility of a historic link between Jewish Semitic culture and the Baluchi and Pashtun tribes regarding the horns as a religious and symbolic object.

9.5.7. Hookah minarets

There is another group of symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan which contains the stem of the *hookah* and because of its similarity to a hookah I have classified it as hookah-minaret. The hookah has been used as a ceremonial activity for smoking tobacco for more than 400 years (Jabbour, 2003). It can be found within traditional cultures of Turkey, the Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, as well as in some parts of Africa. It is argued that smoking the hookah originated in India and it spread to Persia, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Turkey and other parts of the world (Kinzer, 1997).

The hookah has been made of different materials such as metal, clay and glass, and it is designed in a variety of forms, sizes and colours. The hookah generally has the following parts: a bowl for placing the tobacco inside, a vase or smoke chamber, the pipe and the stem which connects all these parts together (Knishkoway and Amitai, 2005). Smoking a hookah is also popular in Baluchistan as well as other parts of Pakistan, and the middle part of the hookah is used in the construction of minarets.

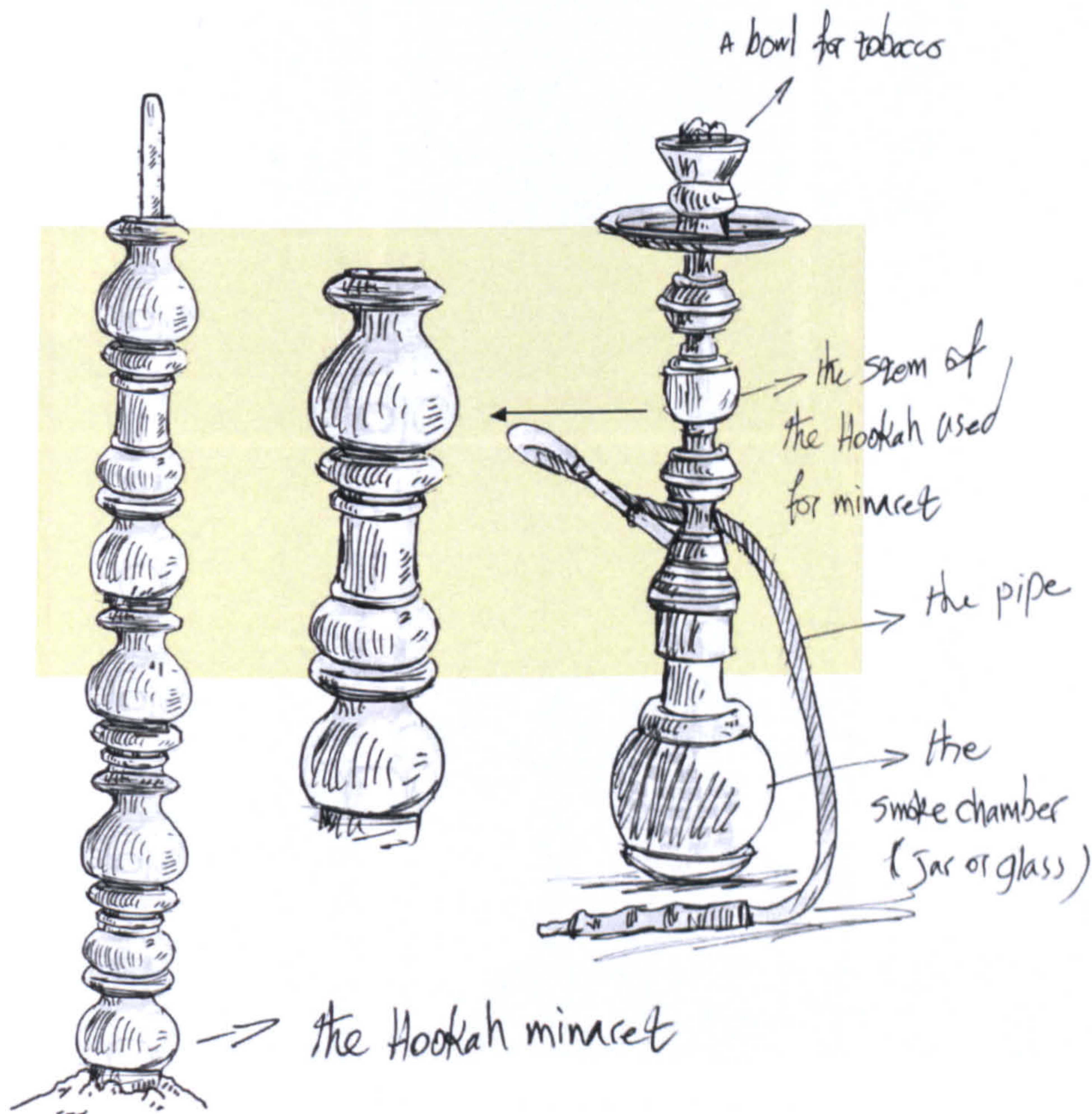


Figure 9.33. Drawing illustrating the structure of the hookah and showing how the stems of the hookah are used to make minarets of the mosque in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

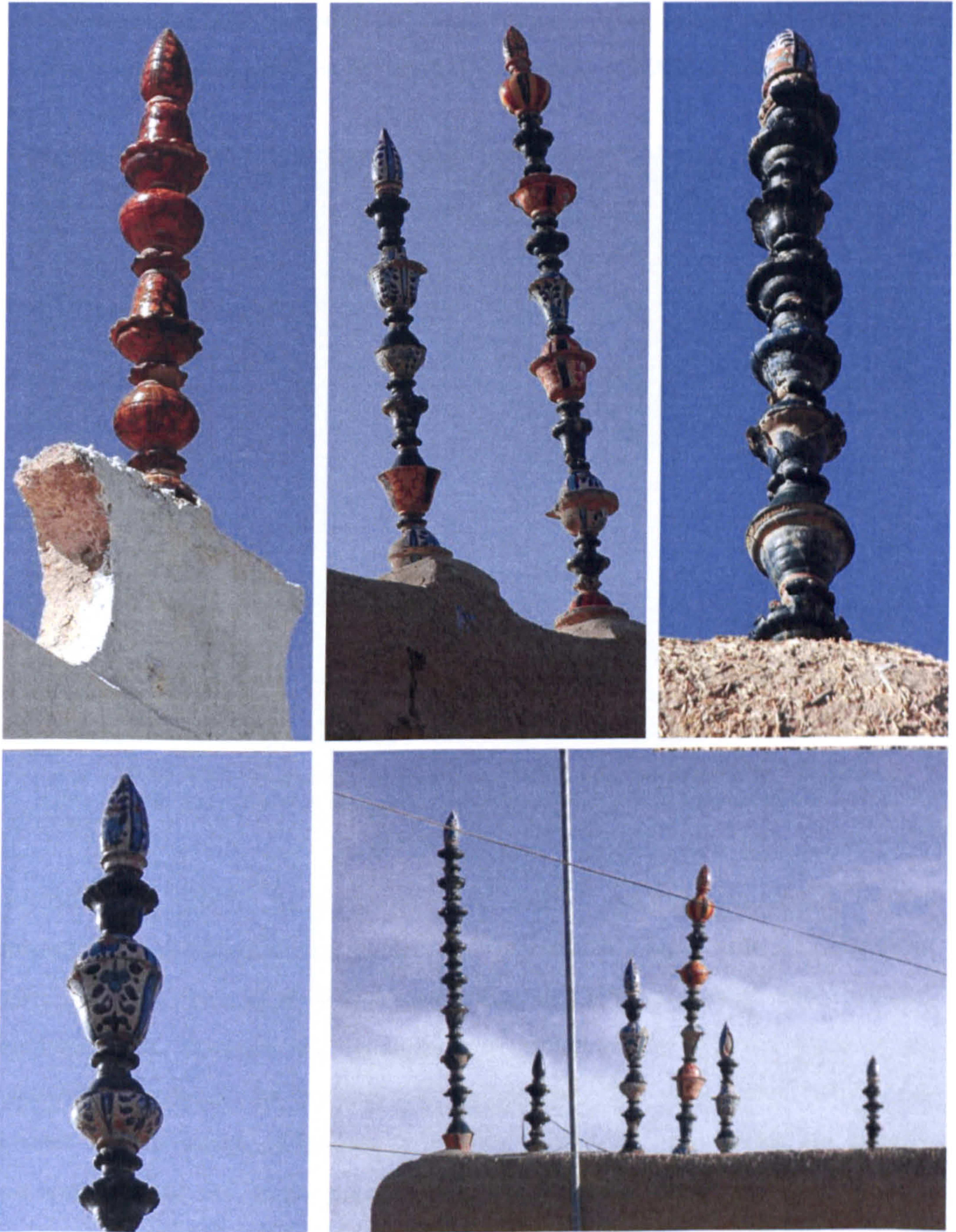


Figure 9.34. Some examples of hookah minarets used to represent mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan. Source: Author

During my case study I visited at least ten mosques containing hookah minarets in rural areas in different parts of Baluchistan. To understand the consequences and

symbolic meaning of using hookah minarets, I interviewed different native people including imams (prayer leaders) of the mosques, a potter who makes the stems of hookahs and several local people from both Baluchi and Pashtun tribes.

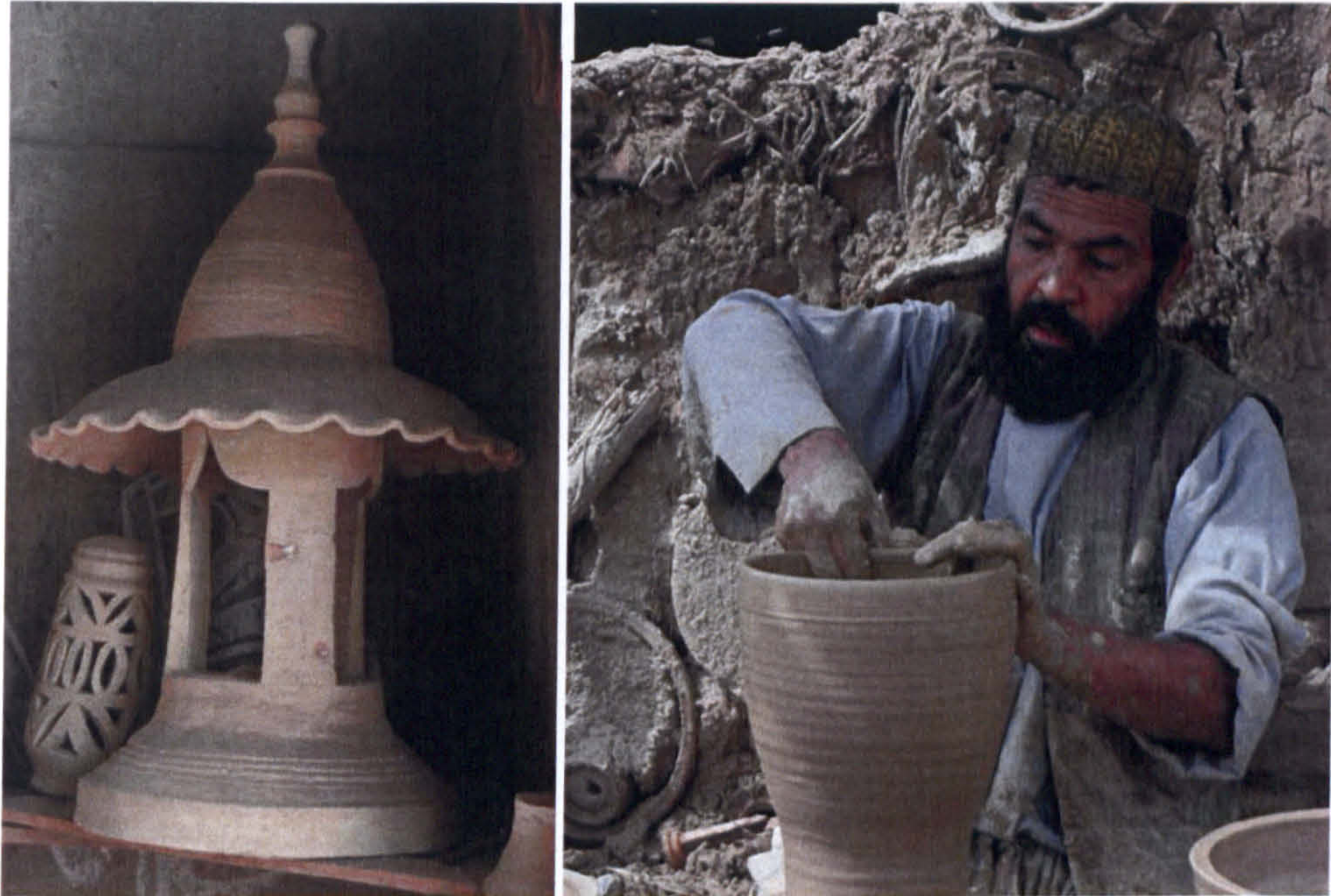


Figure 9.35. Mr Walikhan, who has a pottery workshop in Quetta, demonstrates how he makes a pottery minaret. One of his ready made pottery minarets can be seen in the left hand picture. Source: Author

Abdoul-Malik (2005), an imam or prayer leader, assumes that decorating the mosques and minarets shows the level of love which local people have for their own mosques. The local people, according to their knowledge and financial circumstances, decorate the mosques and minarets. He believes there is no connection between the hookah and the minaret. The only reason why local people use the stems of hookah is that the pottery or glass stems are already decorated. They are glass, painted in various colours and are very beautiful, particularly when you put several of them on top of each other. Most of the local people I interviewed also mentioned that the stems of hookah are decorative, beautiful and attractive and these are the reasons for being used on minarets.

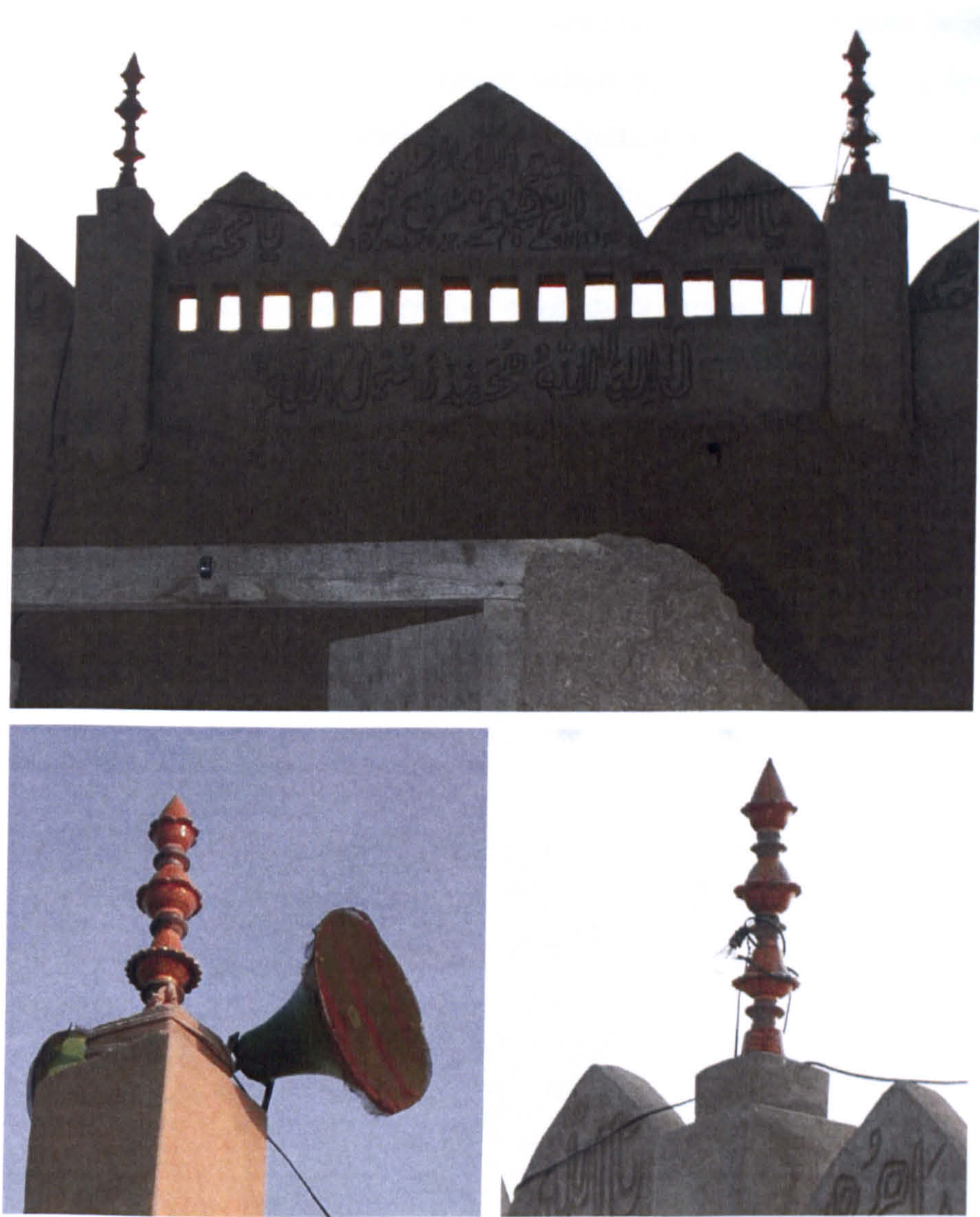


Figure 9.36. These photos show the location of different hookah minarets on rural mosques in Baluchistan. The hookah minarets, in a similar way to others, are used in pairs, but sometimes three, four or even five of them are used on the mosque. Source: Author

As it can be observed with these investigated minarets, there is a particular symbolism in the tribal society of Baluchistan which basically deals with the cultural and religious beliefs of the native people. Transformation of different objects into minarets generally happens to represent God’s blessing. Symbolising minarets can also be interpreted as their attempt to signify the sacred places with elements of love and beauty. Waardenbury regards this symbolism as the order of

nature which originated from the Quran's attention to the fundamental harmony and beauty of creation. Therefore, Muslim believers, as a part of creation, see this beatification as a task for themselves and recognition to realise the beauty and to contemplate on their Creator (Waardenbury, 2002).

The beautification and symbolisation of minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan is deeply rooted in local traditions and cultures. There is a similarity between the decoration and symbolic objects of the mosques and other architecture, such as graves, and also in other traditional products such as rugs and clothes. Waardenbury states that the characteristic forms of religious symbolism took shape on a popular level, often linked to local traditions, as a sign of holiness for donating blessing (*baraka*). The religious symbol is supposed "to convey immediate Baraka (blessing) or to give a ready solution to problems" (Waardenbury, 2002:67).

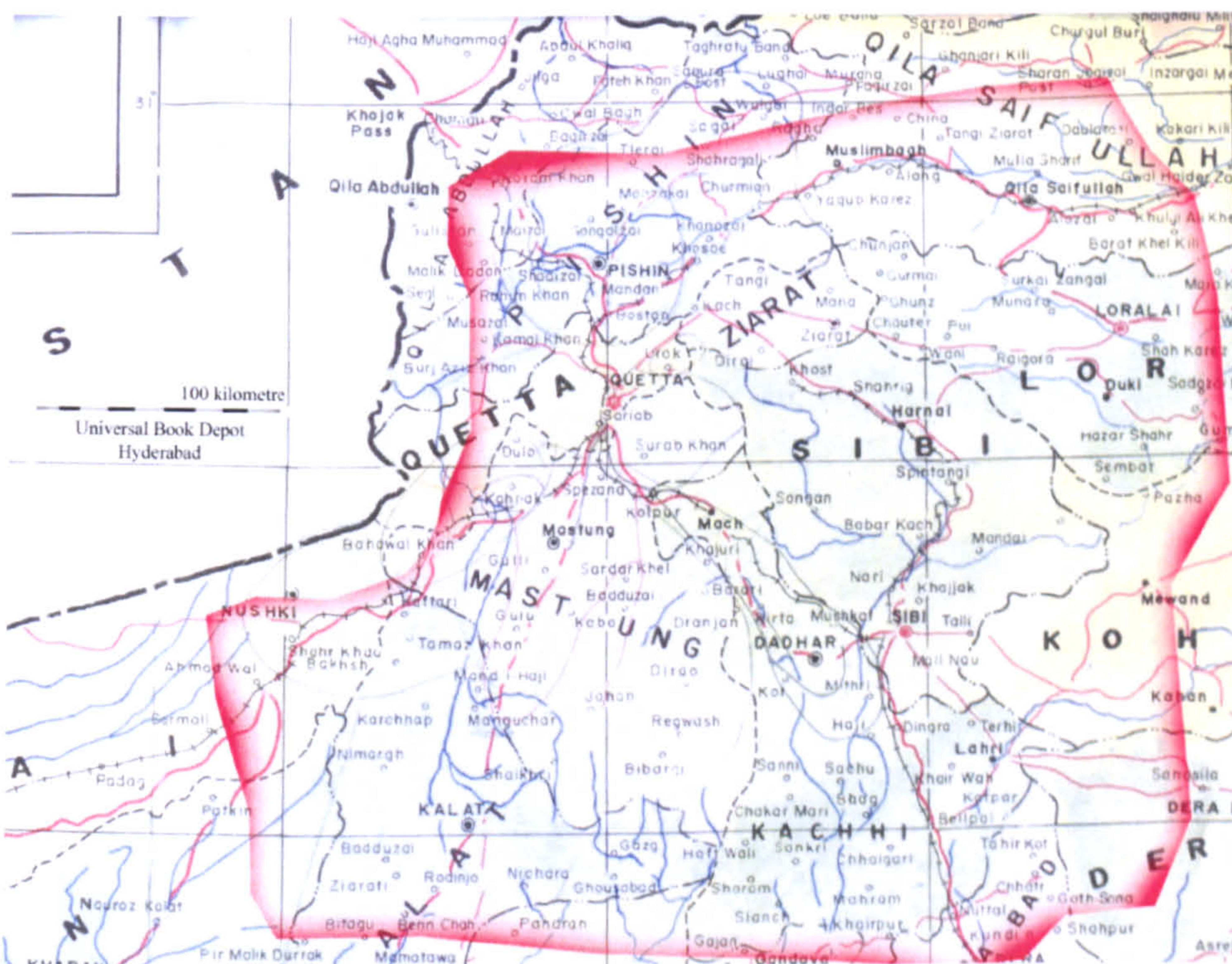


Figure 9.37. The rural areas where the case studies took place are highlighted on the map of Baluchistan.
source: Aslam and Akhtar (n.d)

Chapter 10

Conclusion



10. Conclusion

The idea for this study was based on a personal experience I had during a trip to Baluchistan, crossing the border of Pakistan and Iran. I found myself in a new environment and fascinated by many new architectural and social surprises. I found myself in a new atmosphere filled with meaningful items, particularly the architectural elements. As a Muslim, when I was introduced to native mosques which I was not able to identify on my own, I became aware of the inter-cultural transformation of religious architecture such as shrines, mosques and their featuring elements, especially the minaret. Therefore, the research aimed to explore the living tradition of Baluchistan by focusing on its art, architecture and providing a deeper understanding of religio-cultural aspects and the symbolic meanings which have influenced its physical and social environment. When I observed that various objects are used in rural areas of Baluchistan to symbolise minarets, I decided to explore the minaret in particular and interpret its meaning through the western philosophy of symbolism.

When I started investigating Baluchi rural architecture and lifestyle and analysing the symbolic minaret, I expected to move towards a conclusion close to my primary goal of decoding the symbolic meaning of identified architectural elements such as minarets through western symbolism, such as the philosophy of Hegel. As the study developed further, I realised that the outcome of the study would not be as expected. I started to realise that the general concept of the western philosophy of symbolism can be only partly to understand the general aspect of Baluchi symbolic architecture. The research found that the meanings beyond the rural architecture of Baluchistan can only be decoded through the local religio-cultural beliefs, as well as Islamic philosophy. As I started to explore the aim of the study, I realised that the title of my study, “decoding symbolism,” has a narrow scope, as the study does not only deal with the concept of symbolism, but also a living tradition.

However, the study achieved its aims and objectives through three methodological stages of research: literature review, case studies, and examination, classification and analysis of results. The main findings of this research can be addressed directly by referring to the aims and objectives (see 1.2), which were explored in different chapters. The first set of findings are the result of the investigation of the history and socio-cultural background of the region and the second set specifically deal with new findings which are brought to account in brief along with a new contribution to knowledge.

10.1. The general findings of the research

The general findings of the research were achieved by conducting research and a literature review in three stages. The first stage of the study (chapters 1-5) is the introductory stage which investigates Baluchistan as a region, its settlement, history, and social environment and it seeks to understand the local culture, tribo-religious lifestyle, and its influences on native architecture. The second phase of the study (chapters 6, 7 and 8) explored, through the literature review and the case study, the principle of the mosque and its elements, such as the dome, mihrab, minbar, and minaret in general and it specifically covers the applicability and interpretation of these elements in rural areas of Baluchistan. The final phase of the study (chapter 9) investigated symbolism in general, which led to understanding the meaning beyond the symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan, which are regarded as specific findings. The general findings of the research are summarised in this part.

Richter-Ushanas (2008) assumes that the cultural environment has to be considered as one of the important factors in decoding any symbols. This study considered symbolism in Baluchistan as the specific products of Baluchi culture and their meaning can only be understood by studying the local cultural environment of the people. Chapter 2 of this research investigated the region of Baluchistan and the historical, ethnic, language and economic background of its inhabitants to achieve objectives 2 and 3 and also approached the aim of the

research, which concerns provision of a deeper insight and development of a better understanding of art and architecture as products of Baluchi culture.

Baluchistan is a harsh, mountainous, desert region suffering from a shortage of water, but its geographical location makes it a strategic area, as it is connected to other civilizations such as the Persian, Indian, Arab and Afghan. The research found that the local Baluchi art and architecture have been interrelated with the neighbouring nations. Baluchistan is a multi-ethnic region, as different tribes such as the Baluch, Pashtun, Brahui and Hezarejat occupy different parts of it. Tribes with the same ethnic background practise the same tribal codes and share a similar culture. The origin of the Baluchi is still uncertain, but they are broadly classified as Turko-Iranian (Ganguly, 2001).

Tribalism still exists in Baluchistan and each tribal system is led by its own leader, known as the Ameer, Sardar or Khan and at a higher level the tribal council is called the *Jirga*. Most of the population in Baluchistan follow Islam, but as Olesen (1996) posits, the tribal identities such as Pashtunwali laws and Rasmibaluch laws are given priority over religious identity.

The research found that the history, economic circumstances and geography of Baluchistan have played a major role in forming the local art architecture and also the existing symbolism. As an example, the hot and dry climate of Baluchistan is the main factor which enables Baluchi people to carry out their religious rituals in the open air. As result of the weather and poor economy, the pieces of lands are marked in a simple form and symbolised by stone or mud as mosques without any need for buildings or roofs.

As an exploration of objectives 3 and 4, through the investigation of social patterns the research found that there are three major groups of nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled people in rural areas of Baluchistan and each group has its own characteristic architecture and specific ways of symbolising different objects

for religious purposes. The nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled people and their architecture were studied in chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis.

It was observed in chapter 3 that the main compulsory factors which have shaped the nomadic architecture of tents are flexibility, portability, lightness, simplicity, cheapness and variety in design and colour. According to Baluchi nomads, mobility of the tent is the most important factor as they move from one place to other during the year. The study analysed, and, through the visual method of drawing and photography, introduced the popular elements which are commonly used in the structure of tents in Baluchistan, such as cloth, flaps, pegs, guy ropes, posts or poles and different types of fastener.

Chapter 4 explored the fact that the semi- nomadic (*bar-o-ar*) society in Baluchistan is also characterised by its mobility as the people settle for part of the year in an area and then move on to other area. Although they have abandoned their nomadic lifestyle, nomadic culture still shapes their thinking, values and social relationships. The research observed the semi-nomadic life as a shift from a nomadic to a settled one. It was found that the semi-nomads mostly live in semi-portable, semi-permanent or temporary stone or mud houses. The most important variations of the temporary shelters were identified, studied and visualised in chapter 4. Sketches, drawings and photos are used as a key tool to illustrate and introduce the temporary and semi-portable shelters of semi-nomadic people.

Investigation of rural architecture was a necessary stage to progress the research toward understanding of the mosque's architecture and it particularly helps to identify and study symbolic minarets.

Chapter 5 explored the living tradition of the settled people as the third major group in rural areas of Baluchistan. The study found it difficult to draw any specific line between urban and rural areas, but it studied the lifestyle of the people who live in rural permanent houses.

The important outcome of the investigation into the rural architecture of the settled people was that their entire life is influenced by religio-cultural expression and their tribal system. It was found that the traditional rural dwelling has social and religious meanings in Baluchistan. Privacy or segregation of gender was one of the key cultural practices which enforced architectural transformation of the rural houses.

Privacy in general has been referred to as the mechanism of personal space and territory, but the study reveals that the concept of privacy has a significant importance amongst most families in Baluchistan. The concept of privacy in rural areas of Baluchistan has been mixed with tribal terms such as *pashtunwali* and *rasmibaluch* and it is practised strictly. Segregation of gender, which is regarded as privacy and boundary-regulation (*purdah*) for female residents, has different significances within tribal cultural contexts. The study in chapter 5 demonstrated that privacy is an important institution in Baluchi culture and it is practised in moral, personal and physical aspects.

The moral aspect of privacy is considered as a religious obligation and it is regarded as Islamic term of *mahramiyat* by the Baluchi people. The personal aspect of privacy is reflected in the traditional dress worn by women in Baluchistan. Women cover their entire body, which is known as *hejab* and which reflects the level of personal obligation towards their religious and tribal beliefs.

The study observed that the physical aspect of privacy is practised through organisation of space in local Baluchi architecture. Chapter 5.5 shows how the concept of privacy is reflected in the architectural form of the houses by allocating private spaces for females known as the *purdah* or *harem* and for males known as *baithak* (see pp. 106 -108 and 119)

To explore objectives 1, 3 and 4 the research took a further step to study Baluchi culture, traditions and symbolism from a different angle, by studying their art

products such as prayer rugs in chapter 6. It was found that the entire life of Baluchi people is reflected in the patterns and images on pictorial carpets. It was revealed that the religious concept of the prayer rug is to provide a clean surface for prayers, but while Islamic law rejects representation of life forms, most prayer rugs in Baluchistan contain images of flowers, birds and other animals. The pictorial rugs with images of sheep, goats, camels, horses and donkeys represent the nomadic lifestyle of the Baluchi or Pathun people in Baluchistan. Since the Afghan- Soviet war of 1979-1989 the images in rugs have changed, representing different lifestyle and environment. During the war the daily bombardment, air fighters, tanks and rifles, and other weaponry hardware became part of the nomadic lifestyle and appeared on their hand-made products, including the prayer rug.

In the case of symbolism, it was found that the pictorial patterns of prayer rugs are symbolically associated with the arch or mihrab, the gateway to paradise. The tree of life is considered as an example of paradisiacal imagery, such as the Blessed Tree which is mentioned in the Quran. The blessed tree is associated with the "Lote Tree of the Boundary," which is located in Janna or paradise and also the Tooba tree, which is a sacred tree originating in the Quran and which means tree of paradise, offers shelter and blessings to those in need. The diversity of animals which are gathered on the nomadic and rural rugs of Baluchistan symbolises the notion of the religious term of "peaceable kingdom". The peaceable kingdom was introduced into Islamic tradition as "Madinat-al-Faseleh".

As a necessary introductory stage to identify and recognise the native Baluchi rural mosques and understand and interpret the religio-cultural and symbolic aspects of the mosque and their featuring elements and also to explore objective 5, in chapter 7 the study investigated the concepts of Islamic architecture and specifically focused on the architecture of the mosque.

The study observed that there are large numbers mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan, which can hardly be acknowledged and documented without the

local people's help and consideration. For recognition of native Baluchi mosques, the research took an analytical approach to the early Islamic sources such as the Quran and it is revealed that the mosque is a noun, with the meaning of place or location of prostration. As Hillenbrand (2000) states, a mosque does not necessarily signify a building of any kind. The research revealed that the native Baluch mosques, even those pieces of land marked by stone, earth or mud, qualify as symbolic mosques. It is acknowledged that the rural mosques of Baluchistan, such as stoned marked mosques and short or low wall mosques, are very similar to early Islamic mosques in their design, simplicity and use of materials. The Islamic term of simplicity was encouraged at the beginning of Islam. Analysis of the general institution of mosque architecture in chapter 7 revealed that the Baluchi native mosque is an inter-cultural transformation and product and expression of the native culture and environment.

Through the case study and field work, the research identified various types of rural mosques and classified them into several groups of permanent roofed mosques, mosques with courtyards, short wall mosques and stone marked mosques. Several examples of each group were examined and introduced in chapter 7 (see 7.5). The results of the analysis, investigation and spatial configuration of the Baluchi native mosque revealed that the elements of the mosque such as the dome contribute toward the interior space in highly developed Islamic urban areas, but the domes and minarets are used as decorative pieces to signify the mosque, without contributing towards the spaces in rural areas of Baluchistan. Space moves from a physical enclosure to an abstract flat space in semi-nomadic and nomadic mosques in rural areas of Baluchistan.

Investigating the general concept of the mosque and especially studying and introducing the Baluchi rural mosques led the research to focus on analysis of the elements of the mosque such as the dome, mihrab, minbar and minaret. Chapter 8 provided a deeper understanding of the influences of Baluchi religio-cultural belief on the architecture of the mosque's elements and leads to exploration of objectives 5 and 6 of the research.

Chapter 8 illustrated the history, function and symbolic meanings of each individual element of mihrab, minbar, dome and minaret. It also introduced the symbolic meaning beyond each element. According to Grabar (2002), the mihrab symbolically commemorates the presence of the Prophet Mohammad and is associated with light; it symbolises the divine presence and signifies a metaphor for spiritual illumination (Hillenbrand, 2000). The minbar is treated as a characteristic element in mosques, symbolising political and religious authority. The top step of the minbar, particularly in later designs, symbolises the presence of the Prophet Mohammad. The circular form of the dome symbolises heaven and the square form of the prayer hall symbolises earth; together they represent the ‘total world’ as they combine heaven and earth (Berger, 2004).

The history, functions and development of minarets were studied. The research investigated the linkage between pre-Islamic towers and Islamic minarets. It is suggested that the origin of the minaret goes back to tower buildings in pre-Islamic cultures and their use of the tower as a place for light or fire, where the smoke or fire signal took place. The notion of the minaret in North Africa, particularly the Egyptian type, refers to the pre-Islamic forms of Pharos or lighthouses. The origin of the square minaret, such as minaret of the Great Mosque of Damascus, has also been referred to as a Christian church tower and the cylindrical forms of the Persian mil and ziggurats. In the time of Prophet Mohammad the minaret was not well-known and the first minaret was built in 673 A.D. 41 years after the death of Prophet Mohammad.

The most important function of the minaret is for calling to prayer (adhan), but the study revealed that it was also used as a victory tower, navigation tower and more recently as a symbolic element.

After exploring the concept of the minaret, the research analysed the inter-cultural transformation of minarets by native Baluchi builders. The study suggested that the changing functions of the minaret in rural areas of Baluchistan originated from

the Islamic architecture of India and as a degeneration of the Indian minaret, and its deformation and functional change started with the funerary architecture of the 17th century. A large number of symbolic minarets were identified and introduced. The rural minarets were classified into three major groups: manufactured minaret, handmade minaret and symbolic minaret. The research found that there are similarities between large numbers of minarets both in urban and rural areas of Baluchistan due to their being manufactured by the same manufacturing sources. Several examples of each group of Baluchi native minarets were studied and illustrated in chapter 8 and this led to a decoding of their meaning in chapter 9.

10.2. General findings in relation to minarets and symbolism

To explore the aim and objective 1 the research investigated symbolism and religious symbolism as a key term for decoding the meaning of and understanding the symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. The study investigated the general notion of the symbol, and its connections with religion were analysed by referring to the views of various philosophers such as Hegel, De Man, Armstrong and Freud.

It was assumed that a symbol is a person, an object, an event, or something else which represents a more general quality or circumstances. It is a sign used in human communication and can emerge as a word, image, gesture, drawing or mimetic sound. Symbols have had a very important role and unique position in human societies from the early ages. To understand a symbol we need to deal with two distinctions, which are meaning and expression beyond the meaning. As the symbolic minarets in Baluchistan are directly associated with religion, the study defined religion as the key issue leading toward understanding of religious symbols such as minarets, according to the views of both western and Islamic philosophers. It was found that Islam as a religion is not only considered by local people as the focal point to develop their individual characters, but also as a spiritual and social expression which covers their entire society. In the isolated

society of Baluchistan, which can partly be considered as an Islamic primitive type, the symbol is a part of everyday life. It appears in their cultural products, such as their art and architecture.

Through the literature review it was found that the minaret is the most obvious Islamic symbol. It is an impressive structure that time has left to us, the most distinctive sight in any Islamic city and the most characteristic form of Islamic architecture. The minaret indicates the presence of Islam and it is the best of Islamic architectural shapes, as well as the symbol of Islamic civilisation. The dome in Islamic architecture represents the Throne of God and the numbers of minarets which are located around the dome have been regarded as the supporters or the guards of the throne.

Recent research and surveys, including my own survey, show that the functions of the minaret have changed from a tower to call to prayers to a symbolic decorative feature of the mosques, particularly in rural areas of Baluchistan. The rural Baluchistan minarets are intentionally used to deliver the symbolic meaning signifying the decorative element of a mosque. The rural minarets are symbolic products of the Baluchi conscious mind, which, according to Hegel (1975), points beyond itself and to the ties of affinity. They transfer spiritual feelings and a *“sense of sacredness”*.

It was found that there is a particular symbolism in the tribal society of Baluchistan, which basically deals with the religio-cultural and tribal system of the native people. Transformation of different objects into minarets generally happens to represent God's blessing. Symbolic minarets can also be interpreted as people's attempt to signify the scared places with elements of love and beauty. Symbolism as the order of nature originated from the Quran's attention to the fundamental harmony and beauty of creation. Therefore, Muslim believers, as a part of creation, see this beatification as a task for themselves to realise the beauty and contemplate on their Creator (Waardenbury, 2002).

Beautification and symbolisation of minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan is deeply rooted in local traditions and cultures. There is a similarity between the decoration and symbolised objects of the mosques and other architecture such as graves and also in other traditional products such rugs and clothes.

10.3. Survey analysis: specific findings and original contribution to new knowledge

This research has largely contributed to new knowledge as it is the first time that research investigating the symbolic minarets in isolated rural areas of Baluchistan has been conducted. The research is new and it is based mainly on first hand data which were collected from the region during the case study. Several trips were planned for site visits, and carrying out surveys in different parts of rural areas in Baluchistan. The results of the case study are the main contribution to new knowledge as they can be noticed in different parts of my thesis. The case study generally contributes to new knowledge by introducing the rural and tribal architecture, mosques, and their featuring elements, particularly symbolic minarets, in a typological order. Studying the local culture and religio-cultural influence on native architecture is another area of contribution. The summary and the results of my case study are as follows.

During the site visits, the structure of different types of the mosques was identified and various uses of featuring elements such as the symbolic minarets, mihrab, minbar and dome were studied and illustrated. The results of the case study reveal the important characteristic role of minarets as a symbolic icon in rural areas of Baluchistan.

The results of my site visits show that the mihrab and minarets are the most important elements of mosques in Baluchistan. According to the people of Baluchistan, minarets signify the mosques. They simply show where the mosque is and the mihrab tells you in which direction to pray.

The visual survey shows that minaret is the most important element of the mosque, which can clearly be observed in the drawings. The dome, ablution space and hygiene service follow, as some participants featured and explained in their drawings. In this part of the study some examples of the visual survey will be explored.

The results of the questionnaire reveal that the most important buildings in a settlement are the mosques, according to the native people of Baluchistan. The minaret signifies a mosque, as the native people of Baluchistan mostly recognise a mosque from its minaret. Large numbers of people in Baluchistan believe that the mihrab is the most important element in the mosque. According to local people, using one, two or more minarets depends on the financial and economic circumstances of the local community. The number of minarets in a mosque varies, but the native people mainly believe that a mosque should have four minarets. Minarets make the mosque beautiful and more attractive and the number of minarets on a mosque indicates the amount of love by the local people for their mosque. Minarets are mainly painted white, green and occasionally blue.

According to the interviewees, the minaret symbolises God or Allah, Prophet Mohammad and the four Caliphs. It is also seen as a spiritual sign of blessing and healing from God. Overall, the results of the case study reveal that the minaret is a very important element in the sacred places in Baluchistan. The native people of Baluchistan have their own way of building minarets and symbolise them with different objects. The minaret is recognised as the most significant external element of the mosque in Baluchistan. Therefore, any type of mosque is represented by minarets. It seems, however, that recognition of mosques is by minarets and mihrabs; without these two elements the mosque is usually not acceptable, mostly in rural areas. Therefore the native people have a preference to have any kind of minaret, even a piece of wood, stone or bricks rather than having none.

There are a variety of objects which are used to symbolise minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan. These minarets appear in various forms and shapes, from the simplest form of a stone cairn or a piece of wood to very complex types.

A single stone is used in some Baluchi mosques as a symbol of the minaret. The single stone is used mainly by the entrance of the stone-marked mosques and in some cases of short or low wall mosques as well. The cairn stone minarets are simply made by putting a few stones on top of each other. They appear by the entrances of the mosque, also by the mihrab and sometimes in the middle of the mihrab to show the direction of prayers. On many occasions these symbolic minarets are painted white to be observed from a distance as signs of the mosque. Different types of bricks, including mud-brick and fired-brick, have been used in building various forms of symbolic minarets in Baluchistan.

The various pottery jars or vases which are used in minarets are known as koozeh, gharah, matkha and the decorated types are also known as kalash. The jar minarets signify God's blessing. As there is a desperate need for rain in dry hot regions such as Baluchistan, a pottery jar symbolises water and it is a sign of blessing from God which comes with the rain, in association with Quranic phrase (35:27) refer to water sent down by God from the sky.

During my visual survey I found some of the participants drew the minarets looking like arrows. I realised that in fact they saw the minaret as a symbolic arrow or spear. As the arrow indicates direction and movement, the arrow minarets used in rural areas of Baluchistan indicate the urgent need for attention or action. This can be seen as the main psycho-visual reason why most of the minarets were built in an arrow form or in many cases in triangular forms. The sharp arrow or triangle form of minarets remind the natives or warn them in a religious way that there is God and a second life. According to local people, the arrow form minaret attracts the vision and it points to the sky as a reminder for God the angels. It simply tells you where God is.

Placing a piece of glass or different types of glass bottles is associated with the philosophy of light. Flashing or shining light has various symbolic meanings in different cultures and religions. Light is highly regarded as a sacred symbol in Islamic philosophy. It symbolise God's revelation of knowledge and wisdom as can be observed in several verses of the Quran.

On some occasions an empty glass bottle is used to symbolise light and also healing. Sometime an empty bottle of medication which was used by a member of the local Muslim community, and who was cured from a serious disease, is used on the top of the minarets to bring blessing and healing for the community.

There are typical symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan which contain horns of animals such as the ibex, wild goat and ram. These animals with long horns have symbolic significance for native Baluchi people as well as other ancient civilisations such as the Persian and Greek.

The horn has religious or sacred meanings in most parts of Baluchistan. The horn is treated as a holy object and it symbolises God's blessing. Therefore, the Baluchi found the best place for locating the holy horn is on the top of the minarets. On some occasions the horn is placed on the front of vehicles for instance to decorate lorries and buses. Historically, animals with long horns also symbolised power and blessing. The ibex, with a symbolic long horn, transmits a common communicative message of rain, water and wealth. Using horn as a religious symbol can be probably linked with Judaism. Through a literature review the research investigated a theory which refers to the origin of some Baluchi and Pashtun tribes in the Jewish Lost Tribes. As result, the use of the symbolic horn as a religious and symbolic object on minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan suggests a possible historic link between the Jewish Semitic culture and the Baluchi and Pashtun tribes.

The last group of symbolic minarets which was identified in rural areas of Baluchistan contains the stem of a hookah and classified as hookah-minarets.

Hookah minarets are placed on the roof of the mosque as a sign of beautification and in a similar way to other types symbolise God's blessing as well.

The case study revealed that the native architectural forms, including mosques and minarets, can be regarded as pieces of art, sculpture and handicraft. They deal with innovation and creativity, which generate the idea of buildings as functional and religio-cultural exploration. Artistic creativity and personal expression are mentioned as two obvious facts which combine to transfer the meaning and message hidden in architectural forms. The symbolic minarets in rural areas of Baluchistan are more understandable when they are interpreted as the imaginative products of native people who in some cases have never seen any minarets on a large scale in highly developed Islamic urban areas.

Finally, the most important outcome of this research is that the symbolic minarets which were identified for the first time in Baluchistan are unique to Baluchi people and they are based on their nomadic and tribal religio-culture.

10.4. Illustrations

Illustrations are the most important assessment tool planned in the research methodology for recognition and analysis of the collected data from the field study. As a professional artist, who has exhibited in more than 60 international exhibitions, sketches and drawings were my most powerful ammunition in illustrating the rural lifestyle in Baluchistan.

Drawings of mosques and their elements such as minarets, domes, minbars and mihrabs are used in chapters 7, 8 and 9 to illustrate and give a better understanding of forms and the sacred architectural elements within the Muslim community. Illustration is used as a method to compare the functions and meanings of Islamic architecture both in urban and rural areas and it helps to reveal the tribo-religious influences on the architectural products of the native Baluchis.

Chapter 8 gives pictorial consideration to mosque architecture in by classifying them into three typical groups of stone marked mosques, short or low wall mosques and permanent roofed mosques.

Drawing and photography are used as the key tools for identification, classification, and analysis of the minarets in chapter 9. Visualisation of minarets was a great help in introducing and understanding the meaning beyond the physical form of symbolic minarets.

10.5. Research limitations

Through careful investigation and reflection on the research, three main areas have been identified as having a number of limitations, namely limitation of resources for the literature review, limitation of case study examination and field study and finally financial limitation. The purpose of this section is to summarise them and include other limitations that have been recognised.

10.5.1. Limitation of resources for the literature review

On reflection, the concept of symbolism can be considered as being too broad. Symbolism, according to western aesthetics, is mainly concerned with and based on western philosophy, science and art and it cannot always be used for interpretation of eastern matters, particularly Islamic art and architecture. The research, therefore, found it difficult to interpret the native Baluchi architectural forms, particularly the symbolic minaret, according to western symbolism.

The function and symbolic meaning of Islamic art and architecture have been widely reviewed by focusing on architecture in highly developed Islamic urban areas. Islamic rural architecture has attracted many researchers. There are limited resources focusing on Baluchi rural lifestyle. The previous research was mainly conducted by archaeologists concerning the history of the settlements

and ancient civilisation of the Indus Valley. Architectural research also focuses on historical sites, but not recent architecture. There is a limited number of books which mainly cover the history of Baluchistan, particularly the colonial period and also the political and religio-tribal system in Baluchistan. As mentioned, it is the first time that rural architecture, including nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled architecture, has been classified and the rural mosques and their featuring elements, especially the symbolic minarets, have been identified, classified and examined in a pictorial and typological order. Because of limited resources the research is based in first hand data collected from only a limited area in Baluchistan where the case study was carried out, and it does not cover the entire province of Baluchistan.

10.5.2. Limitation of case study examination and field study

Baluchistan has always carried negative implications such as poverty, brutality and cruelty, drug smuggling, gun culture, terrorism and religious extremism. I initially decided to see the other side of the coin and introduce the beauty, cultural richness and the meaningful lifestyle of people living in rural areas of Baluchistan. But the reality is that rural areas of Baluchistan are not completely safe for carrying out field studies and surveys as an individual. You are not free to go whenever and wherever you want. I was kidnapped and kept in a shelter in a desert area of Dalbandi for 9 days in 2003 when I went to a rural area of Baluchistan for a pilot study. There are serious limitations of the case study which should be taken into account before starting any research in Baluchistan. The main limitations follow:

A. Cultural barriers

Diverse tribes live in different rural areas of Baluchistan have their own specific tribal and religio-cultural systems which a researcher should be aware of. Talking to, looking at and more seriously taking pictures of women are not welcomed in Baluchistan. Apart from the Islamic *Sharia* laws of *mahramiyat*, the tribal laws such as *purdah* or female zone are strictly practised in rural areas of Baluchistan.

Many people are killed for breaking the tribal laws every year in Baluchistan. Even as a Muslim I found it difficult to understand their culture and the way they practise Islam. I had to stay in Baluchistan for months to be familiar with the local culture. Wearing unusual colourful clothes or fancy sunglasses or hat would exclude you from the local culture and cause problems in carrying out any research. Pictorial methods such as film making, photography, drawing and sketches generally cause problems as you have to stay in a particular location for long time which attracts the local people's attention, who are already suspicious of their local government.

B. Communication barriers

The high level of illiteracy in Baluchistan and the lack of English speakers, particularly in the rural areas, cause difficulties and bring limitations in communicating with the native people. Another limitation has been imposed by the research methodology. The research followed both quantitative and qualitative approaches, which are based on existing objectives, surveys and quantitative data analysis of the case study. The quality of Baluchi rural architecture and rural design products, and the response of the users of a rural sacred space such as a mosque with high or low physical complexity, are beyond the capacity of this research. Methods such as distributing written questionnaires do not work there and I had to create other methods such as visual survey and questionnaire. Through the translation and oral interpretation some information would be lost. I managed to alleviate the problems with the enormous help of my local friends, particularly Mr Adul Haleem, who worked as my guide, interpreter and driver, but I still found it very difficult to communicate with people directly.

10.5.3. Financial limitations

As previously mentioned, this research is mainly based on the data collected during the case study. Baluchistan is the largest province of Pakistan. Choosing a particular location which contains the relative architectural forms as the main focus of the research was not easy. The time and place of the case study could not

be fully planned as a limited area may not provide a different range of relative data needed for investigation. Therefore the area of study would extend gradually and more time would be needed. Travelling to and within Baluchistan and staying there for a long time was costly and it was difficult to cover all the costs from a private budget. Covering a larger area or the whole of Baluchistan would need defined budgets covering the travel expenditure and professional equipment as well as a defined team of researchers combined with the local institutions and native people.

10.6. Recommendations for future research

This research adds to previous studies and acknowledges that other research is required. Our knowledge about the rural architecture of Baluchistan has by no means been completed and further research is required. Baluchistan might be considered as an isolated area. The isolation and disconnection from modern technology can be regarded in a positive way. It can be seen as a unique area full of new subjects for research. The symbolic architecture can extend to wider areas, even crossing the border of the neighbouring countries such as Iran and Afghanistan. None of these areas have yet been sufficiently explored concerning culture, art and architecture. Various textiles such tribal rugs, traditional clothes, magnificent embroidered covers for the Quran and the architecture of graveyards are some unique new areas for further research.

From the research experience and limitations there are several crucial points which need to be made for the attention of researchers interested in carrying out research in Baluchistan.

There is conflict between the central government of Pakistan and some Baluchi and Pashtun tribes in Baluchistan. It is therefore better not to carry out any research under the authority of the government as the local people see you working for them. The best way is to establish a connection with local people who know the area and the tribes settled in any specific areas.

Local architectural forms, even the simplest types, should be fully respected. From personal experience I saw a square piece of land separated by some stones. I thought children were playing there make a house. It had an entrance marked by a few stones on the top of each other and also a semi-circular form on the side, opposite the doorway. It caught my attention and I went inside to take some photos.

Soon after an old man left a mud shelter nearby and ran toward me. He was very angry and shouted at me. He nearly punched my face and pushed me out of the marked land. The only word I understood was the Arabic word *kaffer*, meaning infidel. Later my guide explained that this was a mosque (stone marked mosque, chapter 10). I disrespected their holy place by going inside with shoes.

The consequences of the religious spaces and the cultural concept beyond every single tribal or rural element should be considered. As mentioned, making films, taking photos, drawing and sketching should be done with previous permission. In some rural areas these pictorial tools are forbidden, according to their religious interpretation.

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Glossary

Aawaarah Gard: name for a nomad in Baluchistan.

Adagh, otak or halk: nomadic encampment in Baluchistan.

Adhan: the call to prayer.

Ameer: chief of the tribe in Baluchistan.

Baithak: a guest room or sitting area for men.

Baluch: a nation consisting of 500 tribes sharing similar traditions and values.

Baluchi: the principal language of Baluchistan area

Baluchistan: a wide region which is located at the eastern edge of the Iranian plateau occupying a large area divided between Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Bam: a city in the central desert of Iran.

Bandar Abbas: a port city in the south of Iran.

Baraka: religious term for blessing.

Bar-o-ar: semi- nomadic people in Baluchistan.

Brahui: an ethnic group in Baluchistan and also the only Dravidian language that is spoken in Baluchistan by the same ethnic groups.

Bukerwal: name of nomad in Baluchistan.

Burqa: traditional women's clothes worn in Baluchistan.

Chador: traditional women's clothes worn in Baluchistan.

Chankhansur: a province in Afghanistan

Chatri: a domed kiosk resting on pillars.

Dari: another name for the Farsi or Persian language.

Ddupatta: traditional women's clothes worn in Baluchistan.

Dome: a rounded vault, typically with a circular base which forms the roof of a building.

Gashghai: nomadic tribes living in south-west Iran.

Gharah: pottery jars or vases.

Hadith: sayings of Prophet Mohammad.

Hakim: elderly male highly respected in Baluchistan.

Hanafi: a rite of the Sunni branch of Islam.

- Hejab:** a religious term for women covering their bodies and hiding their form by wearing long loose clothes.
- Hezareh:** name of an ethnic group in Afghanistan and Baluchistan.
- Imam:** the leader of prayers or the religious ruler.
- Janamaz or Sajjada:** the prayer rug or prayer mat.
- Jirga:** the tribal council.
- Kalash:** types of decorated pottery jars or vases.
- Kalat:** the central region of Baluchistan.
- Khaanah Badosh:** name of nomad in Baluchistan.
- Khan:** chief of the tribe in Baluchistan.
- Khutbah:** sermon recited by the leader of prayers or imam.
- Koozeh:** pottery jars or vases.
- Kothar:** a water-fountain in heaven.
- Makran:** the southern region of Baluchistan
- Masjid - al- jami:** the formal communal mosque.
- Masjid:** Arabic word for mosque.
- Matkha:** pottery jars or vases.
- Mehrgarh:** one of the earliest settlements in the Indian subcontinent (7000-3000 B.C.).
- Mi'dhana:** Arabic word for a place from which the call to prayer is given.
- Mihrab:** the praying niche in a mosque indicates the direction of qibla.
- Mil or Mileh:** a round and tall metal bar in recent Persian language, but it got its name from the tall cylindrical tower used for navigation in old Persian times.
- Milmastiya:** a hospitality obligation in Pashtunwali laws.
- Minaret:** a tall thin tower forming part of a mosque, from which Muslims are called to prayer.
- Minar or Manara:** Arabic word for minaret.
- Minbar:** pulpit or a platform in mosque for preaching.
- Mi'raj:** the Night Journey of Prophet Mohammad.
- Mohammad bin Qasim (695- 715):** the governor of Persia in Al-Walid period I who brought Islam to Pakistan in 711.

Nharhui Baluch: nomadic peoples in Baluchistan who were descended from Iranian tribes.

Pahwal: name of nomad in Baluchistan.

Pashtu: the language spoken in Afghanistan, Baluchistan and NWFP (Peshawar) in Pakistan.

Pashtun: an ethnic group of people living primarily in Afghanistan, Pakistan and some parts of India.

Pashtunwali: one of the major tribal codes in customary law practised by Pashtun tribes settled in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Pond: beehive or tub architectural form built in Pakistan.

Purdah: special room or space which is also called harem, used by female members of a family in Baluchistan.

Qibla: a sign or structure indicating the direction of Mecca.

Quetta: capital city of Baluchistan.

Razmi-Baluch: the major tribal codes of Baluchi people.

Sajdeh: prostration.

Sardar: leader of the tribe in Baluchistan.

Sarooj: a Persian historical mortar made of a mixture of sand and lime.

Shahada: Islamic term of believing in one God and in Mohammad as his prophet.

Sharia law: Islamic legal law.

Shi'a: the name of the second major Muslim branch.

Sibi: a town in Baluchistan where the Baluchi kingdom was established.

Sonnat: the traditions of Prophet Mohammad.

Tarighat: mysterious dimensions or spiritual way.

Tawhid: believing in one God.

Toranj: central medallion of Persian carpets.

Umma: the nation of Prophet Mohammad.

Veil: traditional women's clothes worn in Baluchistan.

Zanana area or Harem: allocated area or space for females in a Baluchi house.