



TRIBE OF MOTHERS

A RITUALISTIC BASOTHO BIRTH VILLAGE

BY STEPHAN BOTHA



DECLARATION

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Architecture. All the work contained in this document is my own except where otherwise acknowledged.

Department of Architecture, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, University of the Free State.

Stephan Botha | 2018322087 | 2018322087@ufs4life.ac.za

SUPERVISORS:

Prof. J. Smit

P. Smit

Prof. J Noble

Orepa Mosidi

Date of submission:

Declaration of original authorship:

The work contained in this dissertation has not been previously submitted to meet the requirements for an award at this or any other institution of higher education. To the best of my knowledge, this dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am profoundly grateful to the exceptional women who have played pivotal roles in shaping the person I am today, serving as the nurturing forces for my mind, body, and spirit. To my grandmothers, Hettie Rademeyer and Lynda Botha, my mothers Maria Botha and Juliet Ferreira De Sousa Botha, as well as my sisters Micaela Botha and Lavelle Ferreira De Sousa, your boundless love, wisdom, and resilience have been the cornerstone of my growth and development. Your immeasurable contributions to my life are cherished beyond words, and I am eternally indebted for the values and strength you instilled in me. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor, Orepa Mosidi, whose guidance, mentorship, and unwavering support have been instrumental in my journey. This acknowledgement is a testament to the profound impact these remarkable women have had on my life, and I am blessed to carry their lessons with me into the future.



Figure 01: Mothers of the mind, body and spirit (author)

ABSTRACT

Global maternal death rates continue to be an alarming issue. This thesis focuses on the reasons for death surrounding childbirth that relate to the lack of understanding of native Basotho beliefs. The proposed project aims to remove the boundaries between Western medicinal practices and traditional ways of childbearing as a means to transition the indigenous tribes of South Africa into the contemporary age without sacrificing their ancestral beliefs and by doing so creates an opportunity for the growth of African Identity. The research question is centred on how the rituals involved in Basotho cultural practices, specifically childbirth, can lead to an architectural design that amalgamates a relationship between site and building that emulates the phenomenon of mother and child that are two separate entities but also simultaneously one. The research will be based on studies of sacred sites used for various Basotho rituals, precedent studies of contemporary ritual buildings and architectural theories relating to ritual, hermeneutics and liminality. The result of the project will serve as inspiration for the incorporation of cultural practices in contemporary institutional buildings and how the architectural applications thereof can result in spaces that endorse spirituality. Through doing this the proposed project will aim to assist in the transition of indigenous beliefs and communities into the contemporary age, consisting of a maternity waiting village, a cultural clinic with a training centre and a visitors' centre accompanied by clay workshops for the accommodated mothers, and multifunctional spaces where rituals pertaining to Basotho cultural practices can take place.

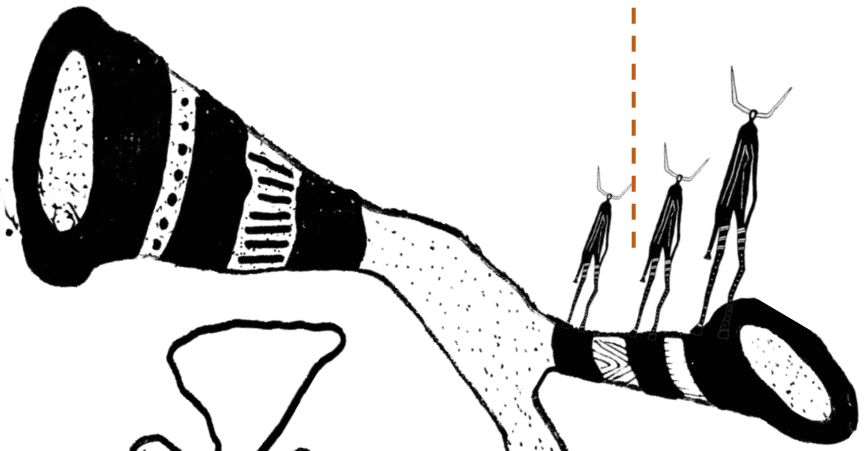
INTRODUCTION

The proposed dissertation delves into the intricate interplay between cultural practices, contemporary medicinal applications, and the possibility for profound narrative that emerges when these elements converge. Central to this investigation is the examination of Basotho women's ritual and cultural practices during pregnancy, serving as a compelling case study. This exploration is underpinned by the assertion that the neglect of these practices has not only exerted a detrimental impact on public health but has also stifled the development and sustainability of essential ritual traditions.

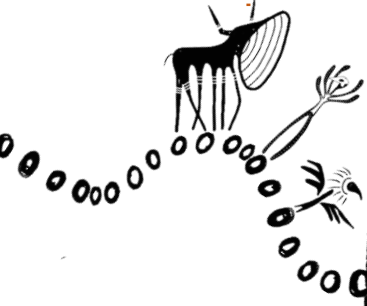
This research project aspires to establish a meaningful nexus between medicine, culture, and ritual, demonstrating its implications through programmatic and architectural applications. To elucidate the theoretical underpinnings of this endeavour, key architectural theories will be examined such as permanence and temporality, hermeneutics and the threshold, and their relevance to the aforementioned relationship. Subsequently, these theoretical concepts will be applied to the context of the project site, exploring their influence on light, structure, spatiality, and the coexistence of the site and the architectural intervention.

Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of the site will be undertaken to discern the appropriate response concerning Basotho spiritual and cultural practices. This analysis will also consider the integration of existing natural sacred elements, aligning with Heidegger's philosophical insights on morphology, typology, and topology. The design decisions will then be expounded upon with a focus on structural resolution, culminating in a comprehensive examination of the final project in terms of its conceptual approach and programmatic construction. Through this comprehensive study, this dissertation seeks to shed light on the intricate relationship between cultural practices, medicine, and architecture, offering valuable insights for future endeavours in this field.

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT



3. SITE ANALYSIS



2. THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION

4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



5. FINAL DESIGN

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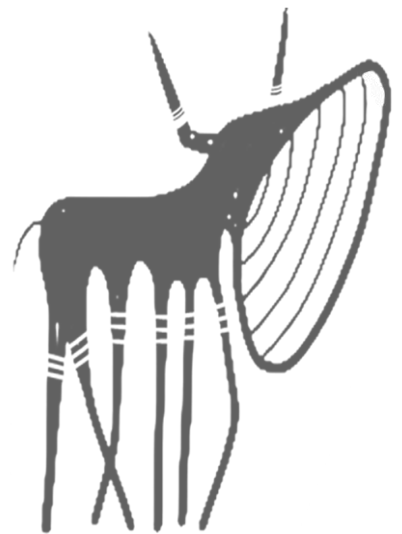


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PRECONCEPTION

(prē'kōn-sep'shōn)

1. Occurring before fertilization of an ovum, as in genetic counselling. 2. An idea or a belief held before analysis or investigation (medical dictionary, 2023: online)



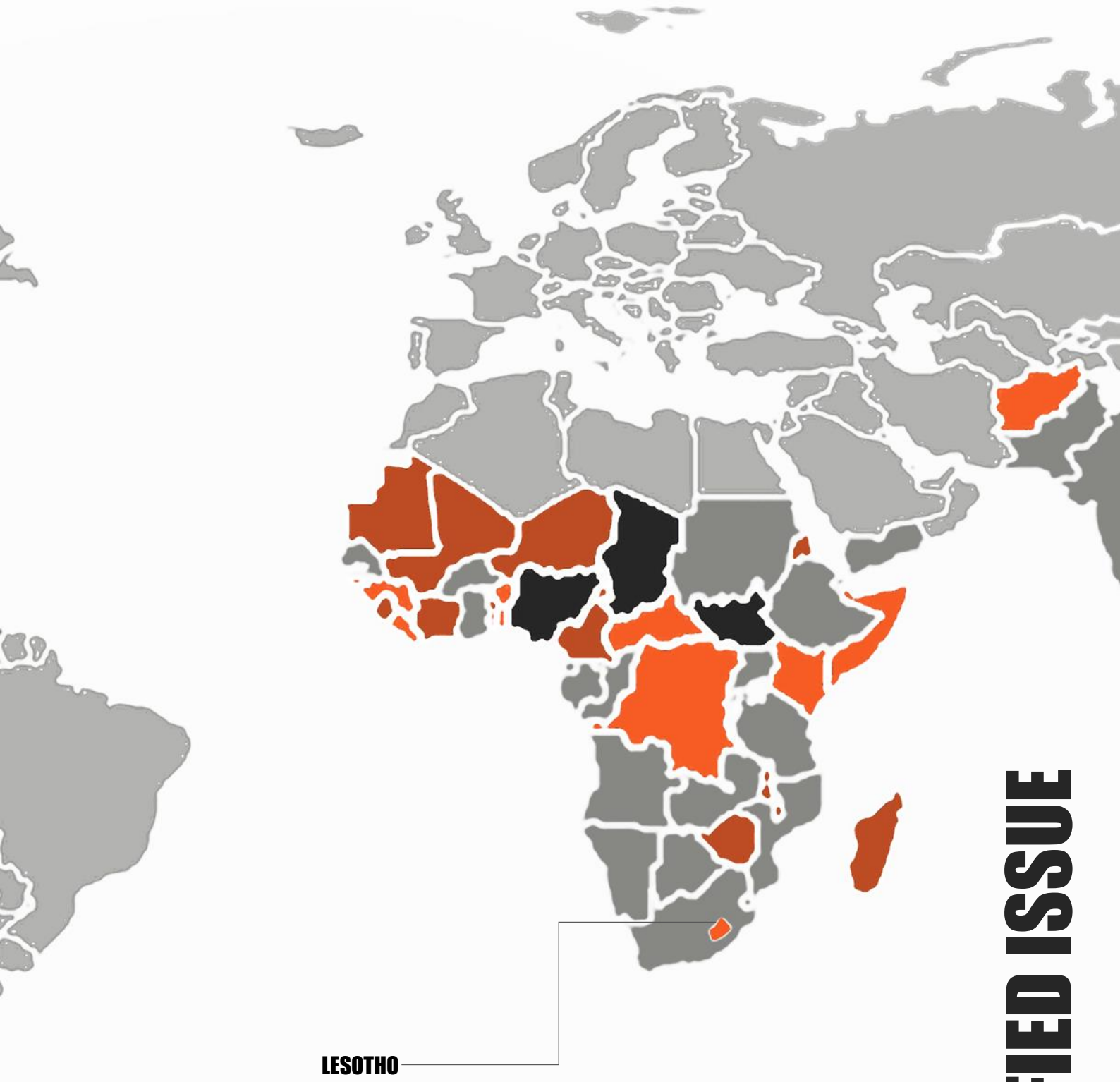
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the meaning of preconception is used to develop an idea of what the dissertation will investigate and analyse before an architectural approach is conceived.

The investigation will consist of a comprehensive exploration of the global impact of maternal death rates in medical practice with specific reference to the context of Lesotho and the Basotho. The exploration then delves into the importance of human-centred care and the importance of respect for cultural beliefs and ritual practices.

A comparison is then made between the currently existing relationship architecture and medicine has with culture and ritual. This comparison will investigate the possible need for transition. This transition will be informed by developing a new perception of African identity, drawing inspiration from the poetic expressions of the Basotho people, as authored by poet Malcolm Grant accompanied by photographer Gordon Clark. These poetic insights will inspire the project touchstone that guides the further trajectory of conceptual and theoretical inquiries throughout the dissertation and outlines the intentions of the architectural project.

In essence, this chapter functions as an introduction to the broader scholarly journey, providing a foundational understanding for future chapters. The objective of this study is to enrich the discourse surrounding human-centred care, cultural significance, architectural impact, and African identity within the Basotho cultural context.



MATERNAL DEATH RATE PER 10 000 BIRTHS

- Very Low (<100)
- Low (100-299)
- High (300-499)
- Very High (500-999)
- Extremely High (>1000)

Figure 03: Map indicating international maternal death rates per 10 000 births adapted by author (World Health Organization,2023:online)

MATERNAL DEATH RATES

Maternal mortality has remained one of the critical health concerns worldwide and antenatal and intrapartum complications are considered as the main causes of high maternal mortality, which is estimated to 830 maternal deaths per day (WHO), (2016:1). In the fight against the global maternal death burden, recommendations were made to improve facility deliveries and access to skilled care during childbirth, and it was prioritised as a second indicator of progress in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (Bradley, McCourt, Rayment and Parmar, (2016:157-170). However, evidence has shown that increased access to facility delivery alone does not improve maternal outcomes, but that women should be provided quality services throughout the birth continuum (Banks, Karim, Ratcliffe, Betemariam and Langer, (2017:317-327). Furthermore, like many underdeveloped countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Lesotho is facing many challenges, including a persistently high maternal mortality rate and high HIV prevalence. According to the Kingdom of Lesotho Millennium Development Goals Status Report (2016:online), the high maternal mortality rate is declared a national crisis. The findings further indicate that high maternal mortality is associated with three delays; a delay in seeking health care, a delay in reaching care, and a delay in receiving care.

The maternal mortality ratio is the number of women who die from pregnancy-related causes while pregnant or within 42 days of pregnancy termination per 100,000 live births. The data are estimated with a regression model using the information on the proportion of maternal deaths among non-AIDS deaths in women aged 15-49 years, fertility, birth attendants, and GDP. (CEIC,2021:online)

The Lesotho maternal mortality rate

2017 was 544.00, a 2.68% decline from 2016.

2016 was 559.00, a 2.61% decline from 2015.

2015 was 574.00, a 0.86% decline from 2014.

2014 was 579.00, a 0.69% decline from 2013.

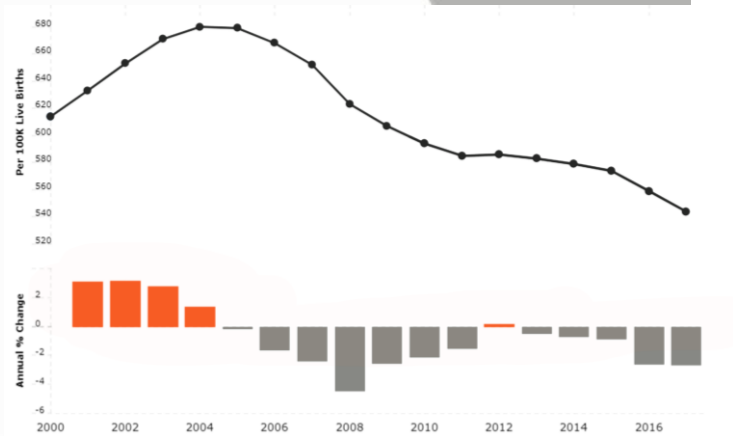


Figure 04: Data graph indicating annual change in maternal death rates per 10 000 live births (CEIC,2021:online)

LACK OF HUMAN-CENTRED CARE

The lack of human-centred care in maternal healthcare settings has been a persistent issue, and its detrimental effects on women's experiences and outcomes have been well-documented. Miller and Lalonde (2015) highlighted that disrespectful and abusive care encountered by women during childbirth can deter them from using facility-based delivery services, ultimately contributing to higher maternal mortality rates. Similarly, Banks et al. (2017) emphasised the negative impact of disrespectful care and abuse during childbirth on the overall quality of care and the achievement of positive maternal outcomes.

In response to these challenges, Behruzi et al. (2010) advocated the humanization of the childbirth process. They emphasize the need for respectful care and the active involvement of women in their care, enabling them to make informed decisions while understanding the risks and implications of interventions. Additionally, the concept of maternity waiting homes, introduced by the World Health Organization in the 1960s, aimed to improve access to skilled obstetric care for women in remote areas (Wild et al., 2011:97-103). However, a systematic review in low- and middle-income countries revealed barriers to their effective implementation, including a lack of family companionship and insensitivity to cultural practices at these facilities (Penn-Kekana et al., 2017).

Despite these efforts, a crucial gap exists in understanding women's subjective experiences, particularly concerning separation from family support and its impact. Historically, women across various cultures received support from other women during childbirth, enhancing continuous support and humanization. This support encompassed physical presence, emotional support, and coping strategies (Hodnett et al., 2014). The institutionalized environment of healthcare facilities, marked by routines, high intervention rates, and unfamiliar faces, has led to the recognition of doulas as valuable companions who can mitigate the impersonal nature of healthcare settings through support and companionship (Dekker, 2019).

However, there has been a decline in the use of doula support in African nations, coinciding with the medicalization of childbirth and a desire to transition to Western practices (Gulic and Sorensen, 2018). This shift is not necessarily in the best interest of women.

Cultural beliefs and traditions play a significant role in shaping an individual's perceptions and experiences. Oosthuizen et al. (2017) indicated that women's childbirth experiences are deeply influenced by their cultural backgrounds and beliefs.



Figure 05: image of Basotho Women at sacred caves (Mofokeng,1996:online)



Fraser et al. (2010) stressed the importance of midwives assessing a woman's cultural practices to ensure the acceptability of healthcare services. Bawadi and Al-Hamdan (2017) argued that culture forms the foundation for a woman's attitudes and choices, surfacing the need for culturally sensitive maternity care services.

The importance of culturally sensitive care in healthcare is not a new concept. Madeleine Leininger, the founder of transcultural nursing, introduced the theory of culture care diversity and universality in the 1950s. This theory strengthens the argument that individuals from different cultures perceive and experience nursing care differently based on their beliefs and practises (George, 2010).

A study conducted in Jordan by Hatamleh et al. (2013) revealed that women viewed childbirth as a technological process, where certain interventions and practices, such as episiotomies, frequent vaginal examinations, limited mobility, and restricted food intake, contributed to negative experiences. These practices made women feel as though they were denied the opportunity to experience normal childbirth on their own terms, as their choices were often disregarded.

In conclusion, the lack of human-centred care in maternal healthcare settings, including disrespectful and abusive practices, inadequate cultural sensitivity, and the diminishing role of traditional support systems, has a profound impact on women's experiences during childbirth. To improve maternal outcomes and promote positive experiences, it is imperative to prioritize respectful, culturally sensitive care that respects women's autonomy and choices while considering their cultural backgrounds and beliefs.

CULTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

In light of the relationship between medical practice and Basotho cultural practice, an analysis of African cultural representation and understanding within architectural practice will be made to identify a possible lack of human-centred spaces and how to address such dysfunctions.

To guide the argument for cultural design inspiration is drawn from Steyn (2020;1-12) who explains that the relationship between architects and their clients/users often revolves around differing goals. Users typically seek buildings with familiar and practical features that meet their physical and psychological needs, while architects often aim to set themselves apart as creative and innovative designers, striving for uniqueness in their work. This inherent tension within formal architecture underscores the challenge architects face in translating users' spatial requirements into spaces that are not only accepted but also resonate with the users' sense of identity.

In terms of the dissertation, the above statement highlights the importance of investigating the cultural identity surrounding ritualistic use of space specifically relating to Basotho identity, instead of reverting to conventional Western design. This will consist of a deep investigation and exploration of embedded cultural practices, pre-colonial building traditions, and even contemporary vernacular architecture relating to the Basotho.

Steyn (2020;1-12) elaborates that In contrast to formal architecture, vernacular architecture offers a different perspective. Spaces created through vernacular architecture are inherently seen as places because they are conceived, constructed, and used in harmony with the longstanding customs of their respective communities.



Figure 06: Basotho people praying at altar in cave (Mofokeng,1996:online)

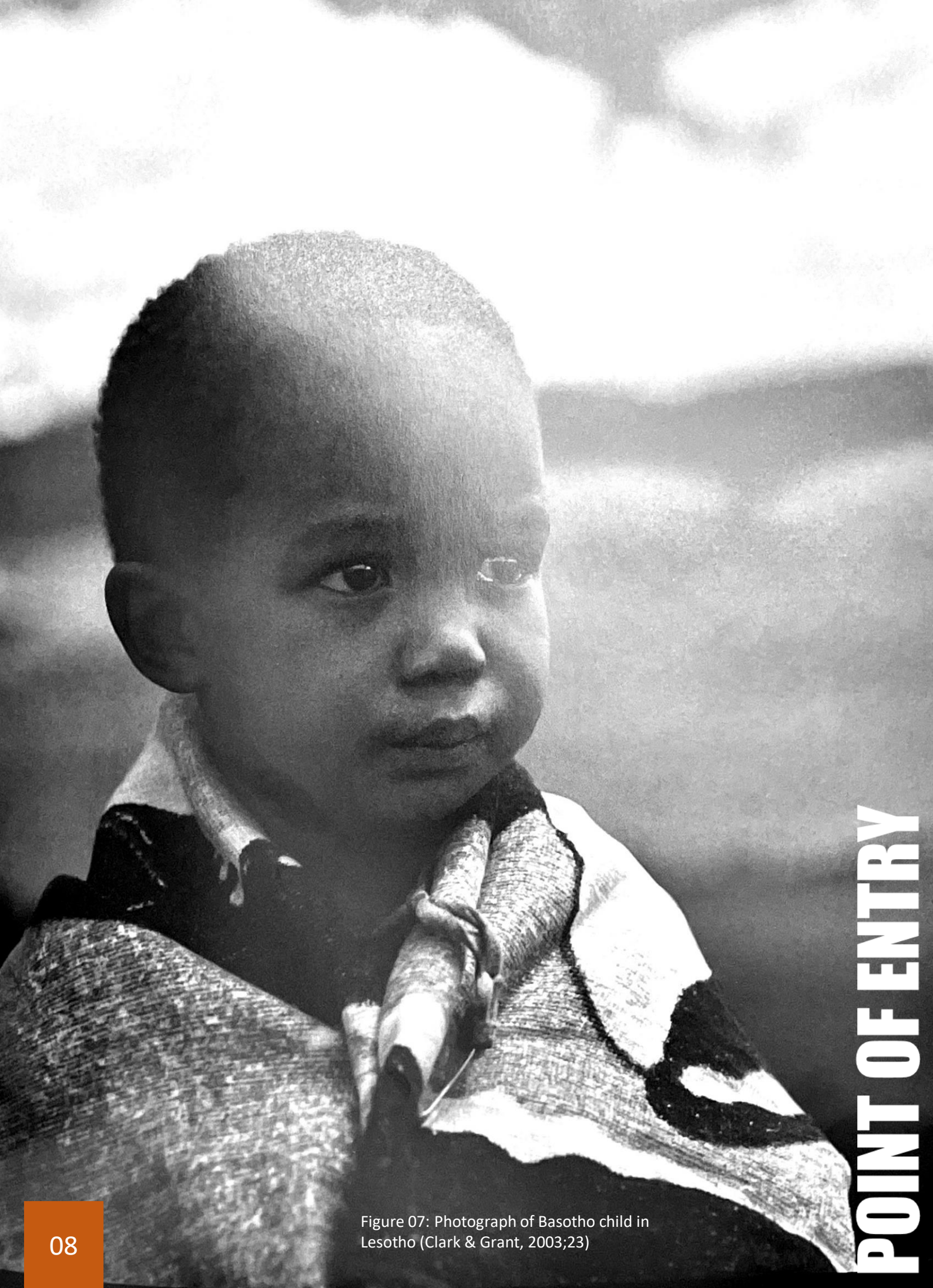


Hence it becomes imperative to include Basotho-specific functions, rituals and spaces within the respectful development of the design to create a spatial architectural response true to Basotho identity

"... space is fundamental to how we see, shape, and interact with/in the world. Within it, our economic, political, social, and aesthetic values are revealed and as such space plays a critical part in how we see ourselves and construct our identities and our lives." (Wilkins,2007; 91)

In essence, the project faces the challenge of reconciling functional spaces with the aspiration to infuse authentic Basotho identity into the architectural design. This undertaking will manifest through an exploration of Basotho cultural heritage and a deliberate effort to redefine architectural standards, moving away from Western conventions to create spaces that authentically embody the spirit of African Basotho identity.

The exploration will start as a point of entry into Basotho culture by acknowledging previous personal investigations and interest in the study thereof as well as my position as a white male designing for a cultural identity that has different spatial experiences than myself.



POINT OF ENTRY

Figure 07: Photograph of Basotho child in Lesotho (Clark & Grant, 2003;23)

POINT OF ENTRY

The decision to centre the Basotho people as a vessel to voice the significance of spirituality within the South African context stems from a series of impressionable experiences and explorations throughout my academic journey. These encounters with Basotho cultural rituals and their architectural translations have left a lasting imprint on my architectural perspective.

My initial introduction to the architectural embodiment of Basotho rituals occurred during my first year of study when I was tasked with designing an interpretation centre at Golden Gate in Clarens. This project compelled me to delve into the intricate tapestry of Basotho culture and the vibrant rituals they actively engage in. As the years progressed, I found myself consistently drawn to their culture as a wellspring of inspiration for my design endeavours. What captivated me was their profound connection to nature and their strong sense of community, which permeated every facet of their lives.

My continued exploration of Basotho culture surfaced in a realization of the pivotal role of ritual practices. These physical rites of passage served not only as cultural expressions but also as a profound channel for individuals to connect with their spirituality. It was this realization that prompted me to focus on integrating spiritual elements within contemporary buildings. This emphasis extends not only to the Basotho people but to all Africans at large. By embracing spirituality within architectural spaces, we have the potential to elevate the collective spiritual experience and enhance the embodied lived experiences of individuals across the South African context

African spirituality is holistic, and it impacts on the whole of life. It is not considered as an individual affair, because it is expressed in all levels of society, socially, economically, politically as well as among people – hence it contributes to the building of a nation. (Masango,2006;964)

Masango's above explanation of African spirituality further strengthens the idea of African people as spiritual beings in every aspect of their lives as well as emphasises the necessity for contemporary institutional architecture to reflect these values in the African context; hence the proposed design will attempt to incorporate spiritual practice into the functional ways of institutional design.

A poem by Malcolm Grant, titled *Ubuntu* was meant to capture the humility and grace of the Basotho people and is therefore, analysed hereafter to further develop an understanding of spirituality within South Africa concerning the Basotho in search to gain insights into the essence of Basotho identity that can be carried through as a leading theme into further investigations and portrayed as grey text within any theoretical arguments.

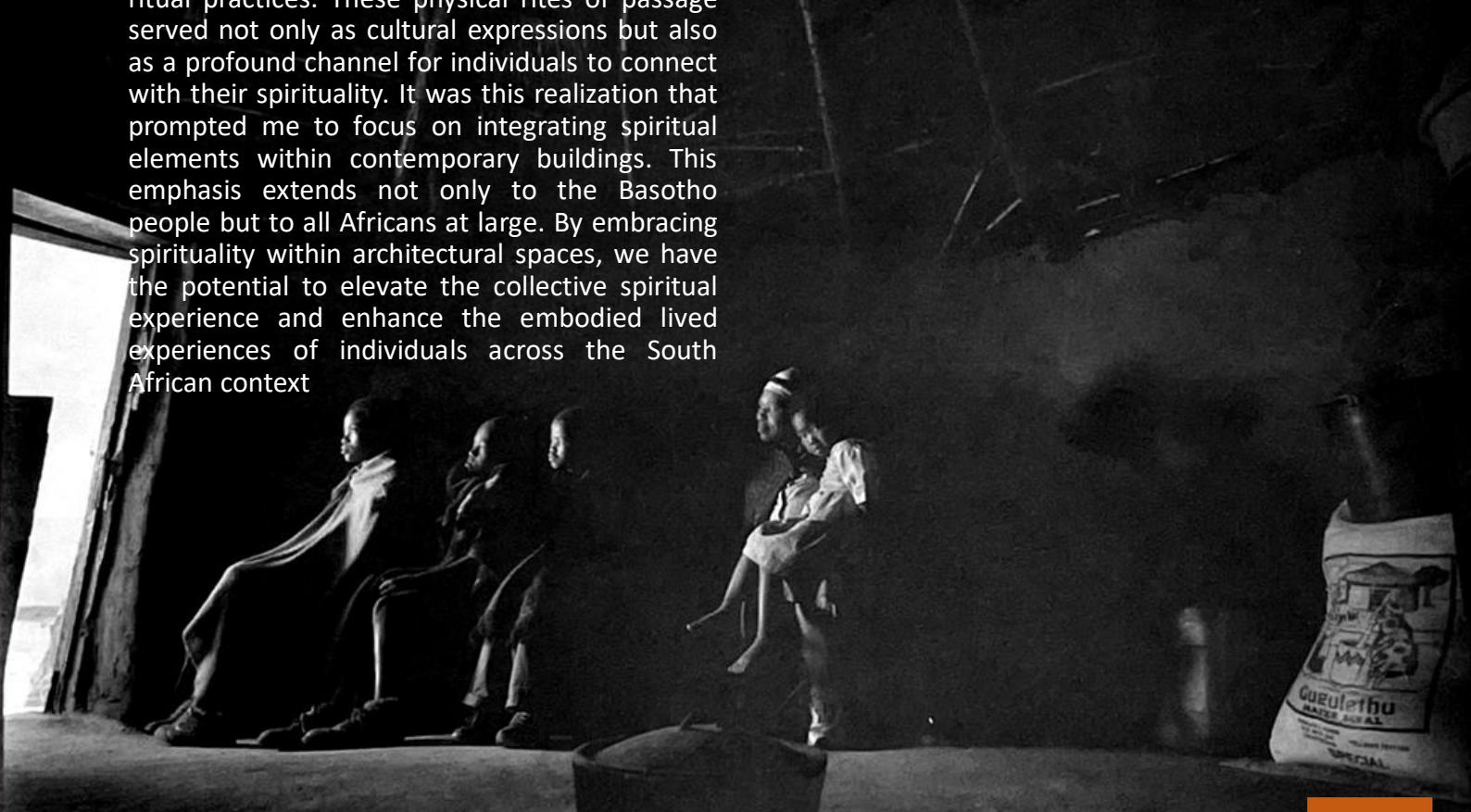


Figure 08: Photograph of Basotho family in hut (Clark & Grant, 2003;23)

With the advent and accelerated **obsession to power** and technologies behest
 Silent adversaries to nature's plan
 consume and deplete the **resource of man**
Imbalance prevails, Global warming and frantic cosmic abuse
 Creating discomfort in the Western zone.
 Life's circumstances are a premonition of pure possibility
 and **necessity is the Mother of invention**
 Through giving and instilling respect
 our **forebears** will protect.
 Africa, Africa what shall we do?
 She is a **female in trance**, abused and shorn while showing her beguiling form.
 Her fertile shock of indestructible demure
 The vastness of horizons, spawns the depth of **personal understanding and reflection** which anchor her **history and hopes**, awaiting the awakening.
 Her fettered forebears, were painstakingly tortured
 Minds pierced with cruel intrusion
 Then **nurtured** through with love and HUMILITY.
 With this knowledge of oppression and torment,
 She has gained her time-earned **scholarship to teach** -
 All is intertwined, **human behavior, atmosphere, earth**;
 All of creation, **connected as one**
 And in this basic state of **being**
harmonizing with nature herself, true possibilities are born.

MALCOLM GRANT

(Clark & Grant, 2003; 42)

INTERPRETATION OF PHRASES

Harmonizing with nature herself: emphasises humans' primal connection to nature

Being: reference to being consciously present in one's surroundings and an openness to profound disclosures

Connected as one: relating to the idea of holistically viewing mortals as interconnected and part of a larger whole but also as an assemblage of mental and social constructs

Human behaviour, atmosphere, earth: mind, spirit, body

Scholarship to teach: indication of knowledge being shared, and stories told

Nurtured proves and supports the importance of the presence of care and protection during development and growth

History and hopes: introduces the phenomenon of the past and the future influencing the present, the interplay of time

Personal understanding and reflection: brings to light the importance of identity and its inevitable connection to culture

Female in trance: an altered state of mind obtained through participating in ritual [a gateway between the physical and spiritual]

Forebears: the active awareness of ancestors manifested through appreciation and high regard

Necessity is the Mother of invention: raises a question regarding the indispensable factor of spirituality and the innovation required for its transition into the contemporary age

Imbalance prevails: a disconnect in the matters of body and spirit as well as science and culture

Resource of man: the mismanagement of natural resources and a disregard of the organic development and transition of the environment

Obsession to power: mortal greed in conflict and contrast to the humility of nature resulting in unnatural dominance

EXPLORING AFRICAN IDENTITY

African identity, based on the previous statements extracted from Malcolm Grant's poem, can be interpreted as an intricate assemblage of human interaction with nature, culture, spirituality, and the interconnectedness of all these elements. It delves into the contrast between human ambition and the humility of the natural world, as well as the consequences of mismanaging natural resources. It also examines the imbalance between body and spirit, science and culture, and reflects on the necessity of innovation in the spiritual realm.

Furthermore, the poem highlights the reverence for ancestors and rituals, offering a gateway to the spiritual realm. Personal understanding and reflection become essential components of this exploration, emphasizing the deep connection between African identity and culture. The interplay of time, where history and hopes shape the present, is another crucial aspect that has surfaced within the poem.

The presence of care and protection during development and growth is emphasized, as is the importance of sharing knowledge and stories during times of transition. The theme recognizes the interconnectedness of human behaviour, the atmosphere, and the earth. It underscores the idea of viewing mortals as both individual entities and integral parts of a larger whole, consisting of mental and social constructs.

Ultimately, this poem encourages a theme of conscious presence in one's surroundings and an openness to profound revelations, emphasizing the inherent and harmonious connection between humans and the natural world. It presents African identity as a multifaceted concept deeply rooted in spirituality, culture, and the intricate assemblage of existence.

The reason for the poem's title becomes evident as Coghlan et al. (2014;2-3) describes *Ubuntu* as a philosophy rooted in relationships, often expressed as 'I exist because we exist.' This philosophy is deeply constructivist, emphasizing that an individual's sense of identity is inseparable from their social surroundings. It highlights the significance of a subjective and emotional understanding of human experiences over favouring objectivity and rationality. Hence the initial inception of a design approach that follows hereafter will serve as a baseline for further in-depth investigations of Basotho cultural practice and how spirituality, space and function can commence in an intricate dialogue.



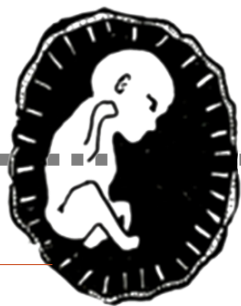
Figure 09: Image of project touchstone and QR code to presentation (author)

BEAST, BIRTH AND BELIEF

My touchstone represents a newborn relationship between Western ideologies of birth and the cultural and ritualistic practices of the Basotho woman during pregnancy that in certain cases have similarities to practices engaged in by women in other cultures as well. The rusted metal wire indicates the current cold and undesirable experience of birth that repel Basotho women away from Western medicine however still serves as a functional structure for safe childbirth. The material wrapping around the metal framework

emphasizes how introducing cultural practices can soften and humanize the journey of pregnancy and childbirth however may lack the scientific strength to protect Basotho women from the variety of risks associated with pregnancies. Together the two elements can create a structure that is both functional and accommodating, creating a platform where ritual can once again thrive during the birthing process. This new suggested relationship communicates the intentions of the architectural response generated by the investigations of the dissertation. In light of previous arguments formed in terms of African identity and architecture, the investigations throughout the dissertation will be focused on cultural and ritual practises engaged in by Basotho women around and during the time of pregnancy.

Figure 10: Graphic explaining rituals related to baby during pregnancy and birth



RITE OF SEPARATION FOR CHILD

The newly conceived child is separated from the spiritual realm and transitions through the land of reeds into the physical realm within the comfort of the mother's womb.

RITE OF SEPARATION FOR CHILD AND MOTHER

According to Opong (1997;23) the mother and child are isolated for protection from bad paths, medicines and malevolent people. This statement supports the idea that the child is still vulnerable in its initial phase of transition into the physical world



PRESENCE OF THE UMBILICAL CORD

The umbilical cord can be perceived as a sort of lifeline and ally for the foetus as it transfers necessary nutrients and essential information from the outside world, mitigated by the mother.



ANCESTRAL AND THE COMMUNAL ASSISTANCE FOR SAFE DEVELOPMENT

Opong (1997;24) confirms that a necklace consisting of eggshells, the father's clan beads, and a wildcat tail serves as a supernatural form of protection for the mother and child



EGGSHELLS

PERCEPTIONS OF PREGNANCY

Birth is by conventional wisdom considered to be the real beginning of one's life in the world, whereas pregnancy itself is often considered to be a mere transit phase, waiting for delivery.

Life is generally considered as the gift of God in every culture. The arrival of a child, therefore, signals a sort of interaction between the divine and the human world. As such, his entrance and the eventual reception of the gift of life is always ritualised ... Birth is a transition from the world preceding life to actual existence. (Onu,1992;150)

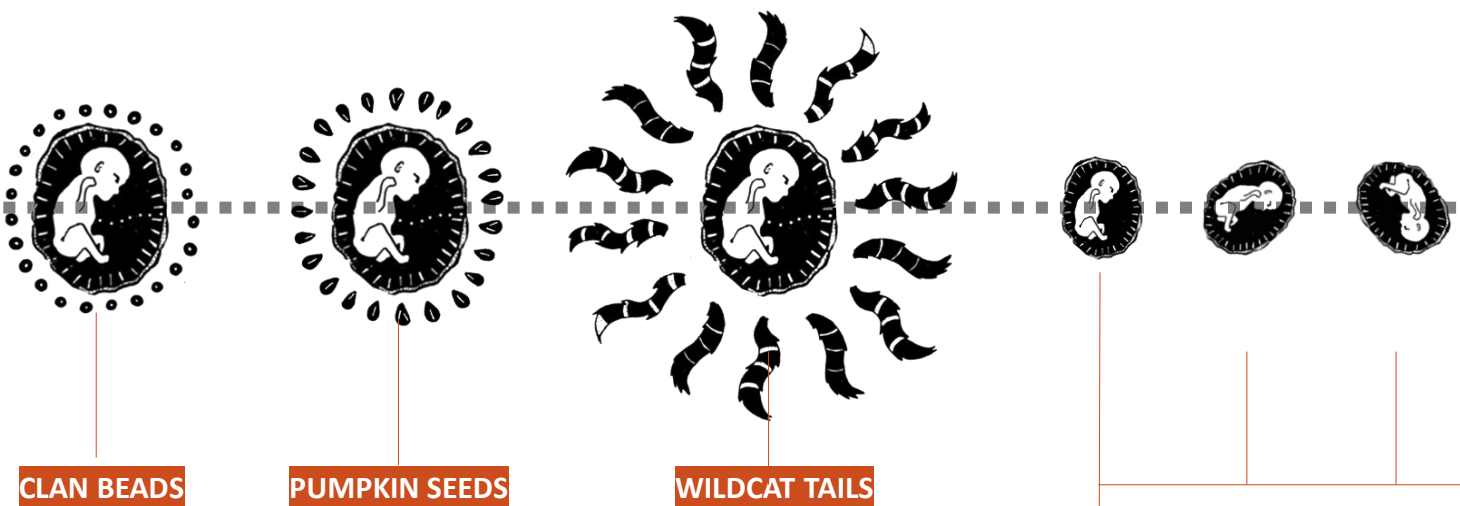
Onu's statement strengthens the necessity of investigations into ritual practices and how it serves as a mediator between the physical and spiritual aspects of mortal beings especially within the context of African cultures and identities.

RITUALS OF PREGNANCY

The touchstone exploration focused specifically on the Basotho ritual practices relating to pregnancy and childbirth and the spiritual significance of these practises in relation to the child along with the various rites of passage theoretically linked thereto, namely:

THE RITES OF SEPARATION

The rites of separation can refer to the separation the mother undergoes from society to protect the child from dangerous individuals and malevolent entities as well as the physical separation mother and child experiences once the umbilical cord is cut.



MANIFESTATION OF PHYSICAL/ MORTAL BODY

As time passes and the pregnancy endures multiple precautionary measures are taken by the mother and her supporting elders to involving their ancestors and by doing so protecting the vulnerable child in its transition from spiritual into physical form. The gestational period can be seen as the time the child forms a physical vessel for its spirit

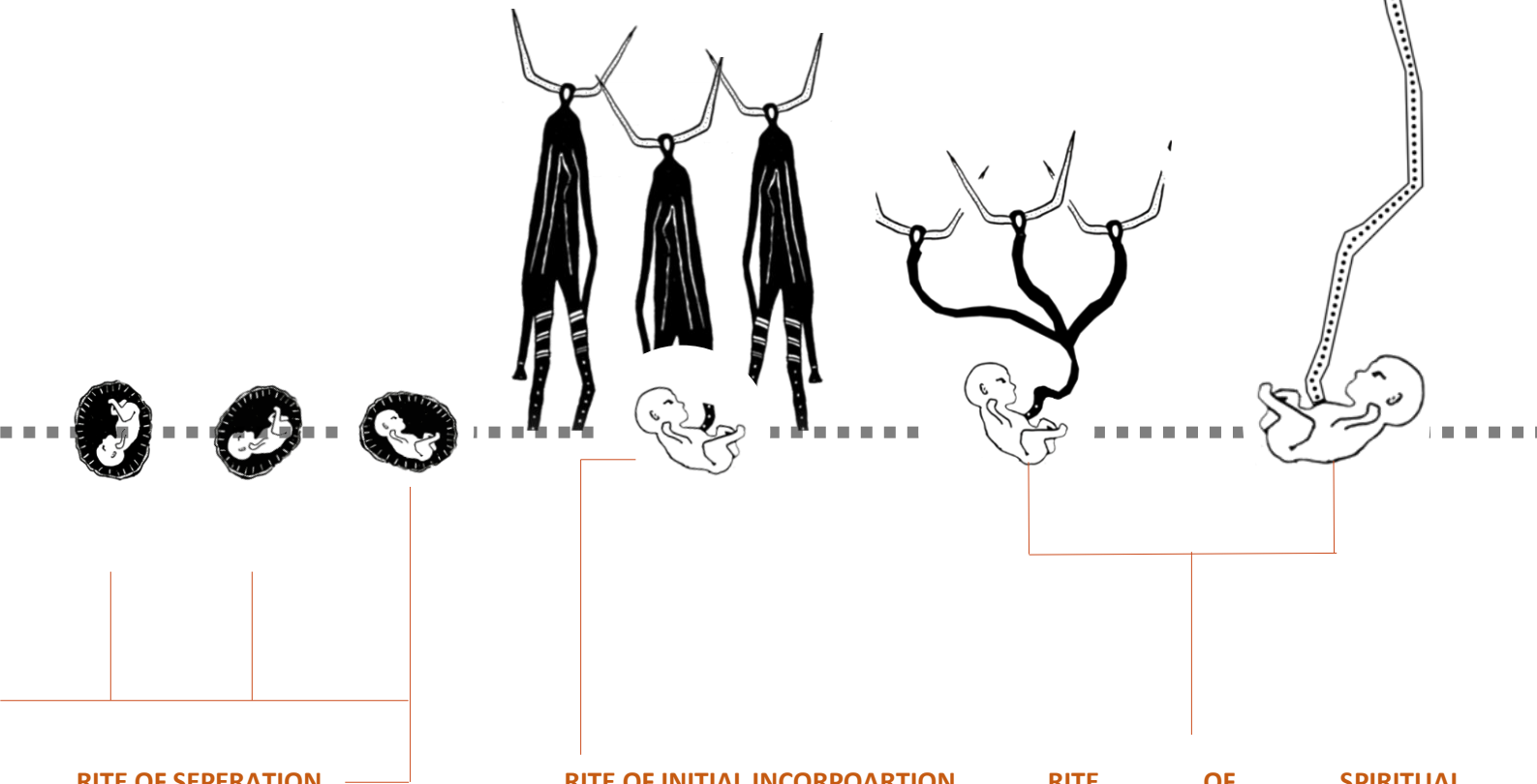
TRANSITIONAL RITES

The transitional rites link with the ritual enacted after the child is born where a beast [cattle] of the same sex is presented to the child where they are made to touch heads three times whereafter the beast is slaughtered as a thanksgiving to the ancestors and the mother and child baptised with its bile. By participating in this ritual, the cattle transforms/transitions from a mere beast into a messenger that enables a connection between the mother, child and their ancestors.

INCORPORATION RITES

Relates to how the mother and child have to be reincorporated into the social, cultural and religious society together after they have been secluded during pregnancy.

The various rites of passage also represent several other forms of spiritual transformation and growth in terms of the child's development that are depicted in the accompanying diagrams.



RITE OF SEPERATION

Opong (1997;25) explains that the cutting of the umbilical cord signifies a rite of separation for the child, a separation from the mother. A small piece (6 inches) is still left attached to the child and tied around its body. The cutting of the umbilical cord also serves as the final separation from the child's spiritual environment and emphasises its entry into the physical world. To further strengthen this idea Opong adds that two reeds are placed at the entrance of the birthing hut to warn others from entering but also to express the idea of the child transitioning through the *land of reeds*

RITE OF INITIAL INCORPOARTION

According to Opong (1997;28) a variety of animal (beast) ritual sacrifices can occur but essentially serve as a thanksgiving to the ancestors and as a means for the father to accept/claim the child as his own and place it under the protection of the family ancestors.

RITE OF SPIRITUAL REINCORPORATION

The connection the beasts have to the child enables them to serve as messengers into the spiritual realm to notify the ancestors of the child's arrival whereafter the child develops a spiritual umbilical cord. This spiritual umbilical cord reincorporates the child with his spirituality and will serve as a constant ancestral presence throughout the child's infancy and adulthood

PRECONCEPTION

(prē'kōn-sep'shōn)

1. Occurring before fertilization of an ovum, as in genetic counselling. 2. An idea or a belief held before analysis or investigation (medical dictionary, 2023: online)



CONCLUSION

This chapter has laid the foundation for an in-depth exploration of critical issues surrounding maternal mortality rates and the lack of human-centred care in healthcare settings, particularly in Lesotho and the Basotho culture. We have delved into the significance of culture, rituals, and their relationship with architecture and medicine. The exploration has also highlighted the need to transition towards a more culturally sensitive and human-centred approach in healthcare design.

The alarming maternal mortality rates in Lesotho and the associated delays in seeking, reaching, and receiving care are crucial challenges that demand attention and innovative solutions. Additionally, the absence of human-centred care and cultural insensitivity further compound these issues, affecting women's experiences during childbirth.

Furthermore, the importance of Basotho cultural practices and rituals has been introduced emphasizing their role in the transition from spiritual to physical existence and their potential impact on architectural design. By recognising the significance of culture and spirituality, this dissertation will aim to create spaces that authentically embody the spirit of African Basotho identity.

The following chapter will consist of a deep exploration of Basotho culture, rituals, and architectural traditions in terms of the theoretical discourse this chapter will provide a solid foundation to contribute to the dialogue surrounding human-centred care, cultural significance, architectural impact, and African identity within the Basotho cultural context.

CONCEPTION 02

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SPIRITUALITY, IDENTITY AND UNDERSTANDING

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CONCEPTION

(kənsəp'shen)

1.b. The entity formed by the union of the male sperm and female ovum; an embryo or zygote. **2.a.** The ability to form or understand mental concepts and abstractions **b.** Something conceived in the mind or believed by a group of people; a concept, thought, or belief **c.** The beginning or formation of an idea or plan (medical dictionary,2023: online)

INTRODUCTION

In the pursuit of bridging cultural gaps and fostering mutual understanding among diverse communities, this chapter delves into the multifaceted concept of conception, where ideas are formed, and beliefs take shape. It's a journey that encompasses not only the literal conception of life but also the formation of mental concepts and abstractions, as well as the birth of ideas and plans. This chapter embarks on an exploration of African spirituality, deeply rooted in communal interdependence and the philosophy of Ubuntu, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living and ancestral beings. This interconnectedness transcends the physical realm, extending into the spiritual dimensions and the cyclical existence of life.

The chapter highlights the importance of facilitating dialogue without seeking to homogenize different cultures. Rather, the aim is to nurture a profound sense of understanding and respect, fostering empathy and appreciation for the unique spiritual identities of various communities.

Hufford's distinction between spirituality and religion is highlighted, with spirituality seen as an individual's quest for answers to life's deeper questions and connection to the sacred, while religion represents organized systems of beliefs and practices. This distinction sets the stage for a discussion of how African spirituality involves both individual journeys of self-discovery and communal participation in rituals and religious practices, existing simultaneously and separately.

This holistic perspective supports the significance of creating ritualistic spaces within cultural contexts, particularly those related to rites of passage. These spaces serve as sanctuaries where spirituality can be explored and celebrated while respecting the diverse beliefs and practices of different cultures. Such spaces allow individuals to strengthen their identities, drawing inspiration from their cultural roots and spiritual heritage.

In the upcoming sections of this chapter, three key conceptual aspects will be discussed: Gestation, Rites of Passage, and Impregnation. Each concept holds a unique place in understanding how architecture, spirituality, and identity intersect in profound ways. This chapter serves as an exploration of how these concepts are intrinsically linked to the culture and experiences of Basotho women during pregnancy, and how they can inform architectural applications that enrich the human experience.



Figure 11: Traditional healer at sacred caves
(Mofokeng,1996:online)

SPIRITUALITY, IDENTITY AND UNDERSTANDING

To bridge cultural gaps and promote understanding, there is a compelling need to facilitate dialogue among different cultures. This dialogue should not aim to amalgamate/melt together diverse cultures but should nurture a profound sense of understanding and respect. This belief communicates the essence of African spirituality, rooted in communal interdependence and *Ubuntu*, and emphasizes the interconnectedness of all beings, both living and ancestral, that extends beyond the physical realm, encompassing spiritual dimensions and the cyclical existence of life. Such interactions can serve as a means to share knowledge, values, and practices, fostering empathy and appreciation for the unique spiritual identities of various communities.

American Ethnographer Hufford (2005:online) distinguishes between spirituality and religion, defining spirituality as an individual's journey to seek answers to profound questions about life, meaning, and connection to the sacred or transcendent. This quest may or may not involve the development of religious rituals and the formation of a community. On the other hand, religion is characterized as an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols aimed at fostering a closer connection to the sacred or transcendent (such as God, a higher power, or ultimate truth/reality) and promoting an understanding of one's responsibilities and relationships within a communal context.

Hufford's statement surfaces the idea that within African spirituality there exists an individual journey of self-discovery, within communal participation in rituals and religious practises. The individual and community therefore exist separately but also simultaneously as one.

The understanding that spirituality is both individual and collective underscores the holistic nature of African beliefs. Hence creating ritualistic spaces within cultural contexts becomes imperative in this dissertation, especially rituals relating to rites of passage as mentioned in previous chapters. These spaces should serve as sanctuaries where spirituality can be explored and celebrated, respecting the

diverse beliefs and practices of different cultures. Such spaces allow individuals to strengthen and develop their identities over time, drawing inspiration from their cultural roots and spiritual heritage.

By acknowledging the interconnectedness of spirituality, time, and coexistence, societies can move towards embracing the rich diversity of human experience. Through respectful dialogue and the creation of ritualistic spaces, individuals can explore their spirituality within their cultural contexts, fostering a profound sense of identity and interconnectedness with the broader human experience. This approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also enriches the experience of global spirituality, promoting harmony and mutual respect among different communities.

These principles are further investigated by relating the development of community and ritual to the culture and experiences surrounding Basotho women during pregnancy and the possible architectural applications it might lead to, to accommodate these rituals in terms of the concepts of Gestation, Impregnation and Rites of passage developed for the dissertation.

Figure 12: abstracted shadow image of conceptual model related to Gestation (author)

GESTATION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOMETHING OVER TIME

KEYWORDS:

PERMANENCE – TEMPORALITY – LIVED EXPERIENCE – PHENOMENOLOGY – VERNACULAR.

EXPERIENCE OF PREGNANCY

The temporality of pregnancy leaves no permanent mark in time and can only be experienced in its immediate context and can only reappear in another time or another body. (MacKenzie-Griffiths, 1997; 14)

The sketch relating to the conceptualization of this temporality refers to the phenomenon of pregnancy that is unknown to people who have not been involved in the experience of birth themselves. It is only experienced by pregnant individuals, generation after generation and is unique to each Basotho woman and her involved family members. The specific involvement of each woman's ancestors further isolates the experience from her own individuality and spirituality. This brings me to the topic of time and rituals during this phenomenon.

RITUALS OF PREGNANCY

The rituals of pregnancy are bonded to different phases of the woman's pregnancy ranging from initiation rituals, consuming medicinal herbs gathered from traditional healers and even frequent engagement with her ancestors in the form of appreciation rituals. During this time of her pregnancy, she endures a phase of isolation from her social life to protect the baby. This phenomenon can be divided into the temporary phase of transition and the permanent results where the newborn child serves as the only form of proof for the phenomenon of pregnancy.

The mother experiences a sense of permanence, as well as temporality in terms of the pregnancy being temporary, but the permanence of motherhood follows along with physical bodily changes.

The pregnant woman experiences carrying somebody in her body for nine months, waiting for the birth of her child, being patient, continually recognizing the changes in and of her body, the growing of her child, living an intense double life for a certain time period. [...] Women do indeed have a specific sense of temporality due to their female bodies. (Stoller, 2011, 79)

This idea of permanence and temporality and its link to time is what the proposed project will try to emulate.

ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION

The proposed building itself will be used temporarily and mostly singularly by a multitude of different individuals throughout its existence but can serve as permanent proof of the phenomenon the Basotho woman have undergone. The building will physically refer to time by the way it introduces light into the building as a means to communicate the passage of time, seasons and weather. Furthermore, reference will be made to the development of the Basotho dwellings over time and how their use of materials developed and adapted. The possibility of interchangeable and adaptable elements within the building also arises with reference to permanence and temporality. The possibility of multifunctional use of space also borrows itself to the interplay of permanence and temporality.

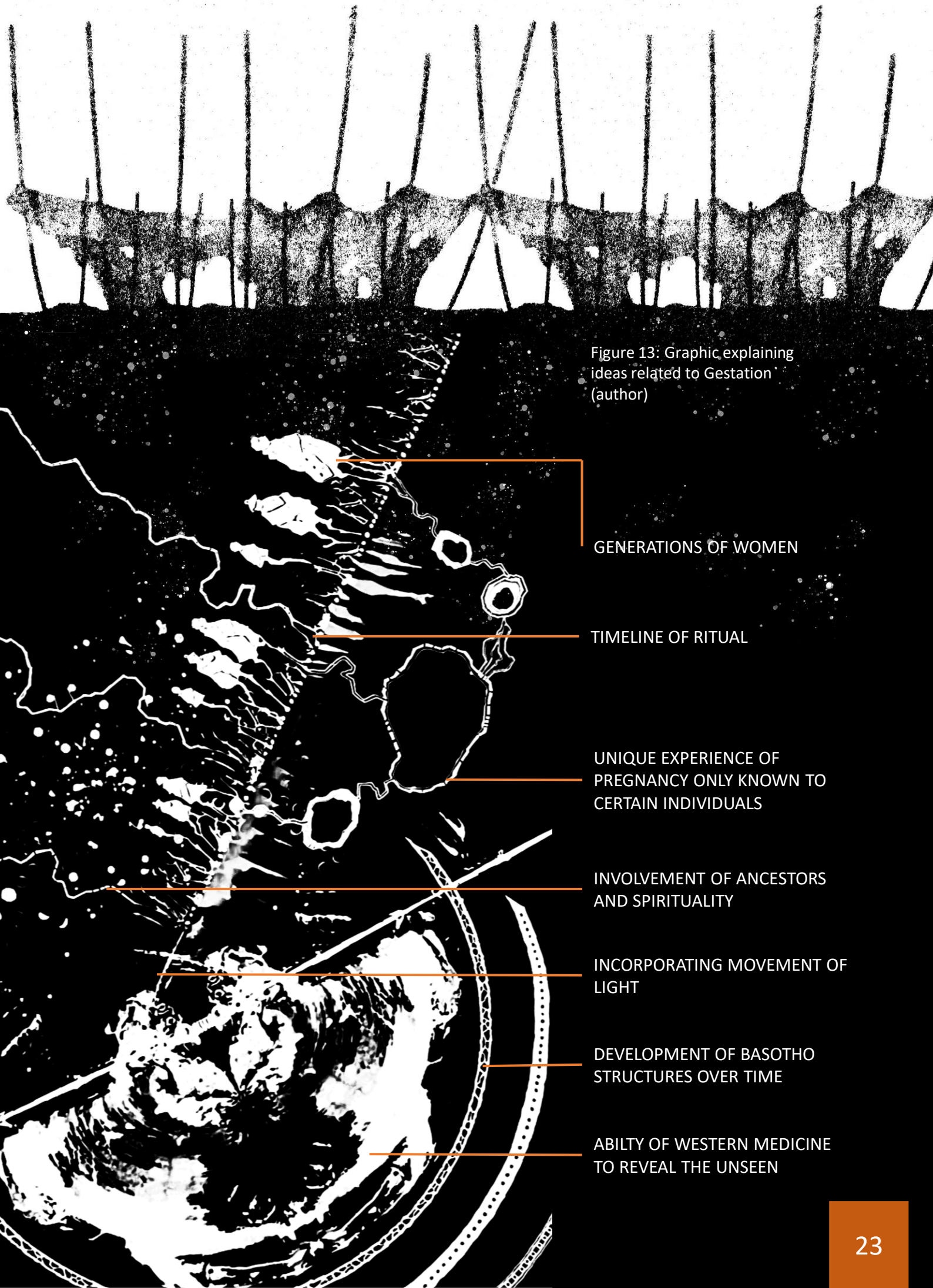


Figure 13: Graphic explaining ideas related to Gestation (author)

GENERATIONS OF WOMEN

TIMELINE OF RITUAL

UNIQUE EXPERIENCE OF PREGNANCY ONLY KNOWN TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS

INVOLVEMENT OF ANCESTORS AND SPIRITUALITY

INCORPORATING MOVEMENT OF LIGHT

DEVELOPMENT OF BASOTHO STRUCTURES OVER TIME

ABILITY OF WESTERN MEDICINE TO REVEAL THE UNSEEN

ARCHITECTURE AND TIME:

A RESPONSE TO THE CONCEPT OF GESTATION

In response to previous arguments, it becomes evident that the concept of **temporality** and time is deeply intertwined with humanistic ideals. Therefore, architecture should not isolate itself but respond to changing needs, interactions, and cultural contexts as it has the ability to influence the way we perceive time and space.

On the notion of time the discussion of **permanence** In reference to the topic of motherhood, the proof of pregnancy and its possible relation to architecture becomes imperative.

"[Architecture] longing for permanence, which reacts against uncertainty, against continual change, and against the value given to the instantaneous, the immaterial, and the temporary."(Gregotti et al.,1996;64)

Gregotti's approach to **permanence** aims to create buildings that withstand the passage of time and seek to distance themselves from the transience of events, emphasizing a timeless quality. The idea is to resist the effects of time and maintain a sense of enduring value.

In contradiction, this dissertation will celebrate the transience of **lived experience** in relation to the **phenomenon** of pregnancy and serve as proof of the pregnant woman's transition into motherhood, alongside her newborn child. The building will embrace the idea of permanence by encapsulating this **temporary** moment in time.

The building will not only acknowledge the mother's experience, but by accommodating the rituals linked to the phenomenon of Basotho pregnancy, the building will serve as an active reminder of their ancestors manifested through appreciation and high regard [a reminder of the **permanent** presence of their forebears]

Highlighting the concept of architecture incorporating time as a fundamental aspect of its identity, the envisioned structure won't attempt to evade time; instead, it will enhance its significance by establishing profound connections with its surroundings and the natural environment. By utilizing various elements,

materials, and sensory components, it will emphasize the flow of time. The maturation of materials, the **permanence** and **temporality** of light, the effects on surfaces from use, and the ritualistic and cultural importance of spaces collectively contribute to the interplay of architecture, time, and identity.

Naturally, in this context, I think of the patina of age on materials, of innumerable small scratches on surfaces, of varnish that has grown dull and brittle, and of edges polished by use. But when I close my eyes and try to forget both these physical traces and my own first associations, what remains is a different impression, a deeper feeling – a consciousness of time passing and an awareness of the human lives that have been acted out in these places and rooms and charged them with a special aura. At these moments, architecture's aesthetic and practical values, and stylistic and historical significance are of secondary importance.(Zumthor,2017;25-26)

This approach recognizes that architecture isn't just about aesthetics or functionality; it's about how people experience and interact with spaces through direct sensory experiences, memories, and connections to the past or future. It involves the history and hopes of culture, introducing the **phenomenon** of the past and the future influencing the present, and the interplay of time. Attempting to create an architecture that can evoke emotions, embody cultural values, and become a part of the search for African identity.

Furthermore, the building will make use of multifunctional spaces that can adjust to the cultural and spiritual needs of the Basotho woman as they evolve throughout the passage of time, from generation to generation.

In essence, the research highlights a shift in architectural thinking from an architecture that opposes time to one that actively engages with **temporality**. Instead of fearing the passage of time, it will be used as a medium to create meaningful, humanistic, and culturally significant architectural spaces. This approach enriches the understanding of architecture and its role in shaping experiences and memories.

Figure 14: graphic explain mind, body and spirit experiences during pregnancy (author)

RITE OF SEPERATION.

Sheep is sacrificed at stage of pregnancy to ask for blessing and support of ancestors for wellbeing and a peaceful delivery

Separated from social life for protection and avoids contact with malevolent people/spirits

Seclusion marked with wearing of necklace that consists of ostrich eggshells, husband clan beads, pumpkin seeds and wildcat claw/tail tip

Vaccinated with traditional medicine on lips and breasts

Travels to parents' house on 7th month during first pregnancy

At parents: ornaments are removed-eyebrows shaved-smeared with red ochre on head, face and torso-butter fat- sheep skin tied around breasts

Mother and older women provide tender care

RITE OF TRANSITION

As birth approaches medicine is given to pregnant woman to turn

The child can take after any woman serving as midwife hence involved woman are to have good personality traits

Midwives school mother on principles of childbearing and self-medication

Childbearing rituals start with the cutting of the umbilical cord

Umbilical cord is tied to child's body, woman stays home until umbilical cord dries

Afterbirth buried in "lelapa"

Sex of child announced to father with a stick if child is male and with water if child is female

Reeds placed ate entrance of hut to warn about birth taking place and also represents that Basotho believe in originating from the land of reeds

Sheep sacrificed as "koroso" - thanks to ancestors

RITE OF REINCORPORATION

Appreciation ritual takes place again during the naming ceremony, the mother and child then undergoes the baptism of bile

fumigation ceremony also takes place using "bush of the vulture" blessing the baby with wisdom,courage and eloquence

Grandparents believed to reincarnate through child "o boile mo tseleng" – he has returned to the path

Figure 15: abstracted shadow image of conceptual model related to Rites of passage (author)

rites of passage

IA RITUAL EVENT OR EXPERIENCE THAT MARKS OR CONSTITUTES A MAJOR MILESTONE OR CHANGE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE!

KEYWORDS:

RITUAL – TRANSITIONS – THRESHOLD – LIMINALITY – SKY-SPACE.

EXPERIENCE OF PREGNANCY

Being a mother for the first time is a life-changing experience. at the time of birth, it is not only the baby that is being born; a mother is also being born for she was not a mother before that. For new mothers, in particular, it is a transitional process into the unknown. Ideally, it is a transition that no one should go through unaccompanied. (Mojapelo,2011;3)

RITUALS OF PREGNANCY

As previously mentioned, the Basotho woman undergoes various rites of passage the rite of separation refers to the separation from her normal social life for the baby's safety, rites of transition as the period of pregnancy and rites of reincorporation as the reuniting of the mother with social life. These three categories can also be seen as pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal where the liminal stage is the category of main investigation as it is a transitioning period or in other words a threshold period. Laydevant (1952:30) explains that at the birth of a Basotho child, a reed or rope of straw is placed near the door of the hut to warn the public and prohibit entrance it also symbolises the belief that the Basotho nation came from a land of reeds and marshes and that one passes through

this threshold of reeds at birth and at death. The mother in herself can be viewed as the physical threshold or vessel that allows safe passage to the baby from the ancestral plain into the physical world.

ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION

The threshold presents itself in multiple forms within architectural applications as well as transitions. the transition from one area to another as well as the relationship between inside and outside that can either be strengthened or diluted by the threshold between them. When referring to Basotho settlements the idea of *Sky-space* as explained by Heinrich Kammeyer (2010;11-57) presents itself, in essence as a courtyard space between different residences and provides a multifunctional space for ritual and social activities to take place. The *Sky-space* is also a place where a nearness to the earth and exposure to the sky is present linking the different residences to each other and to the natural sacred elements that emulate a connection to the ancestors and their spirituality. In terms of threshold, the manner in which settlements link to and transition into these multifunctional spaces is imperative for the development of this dissertation.

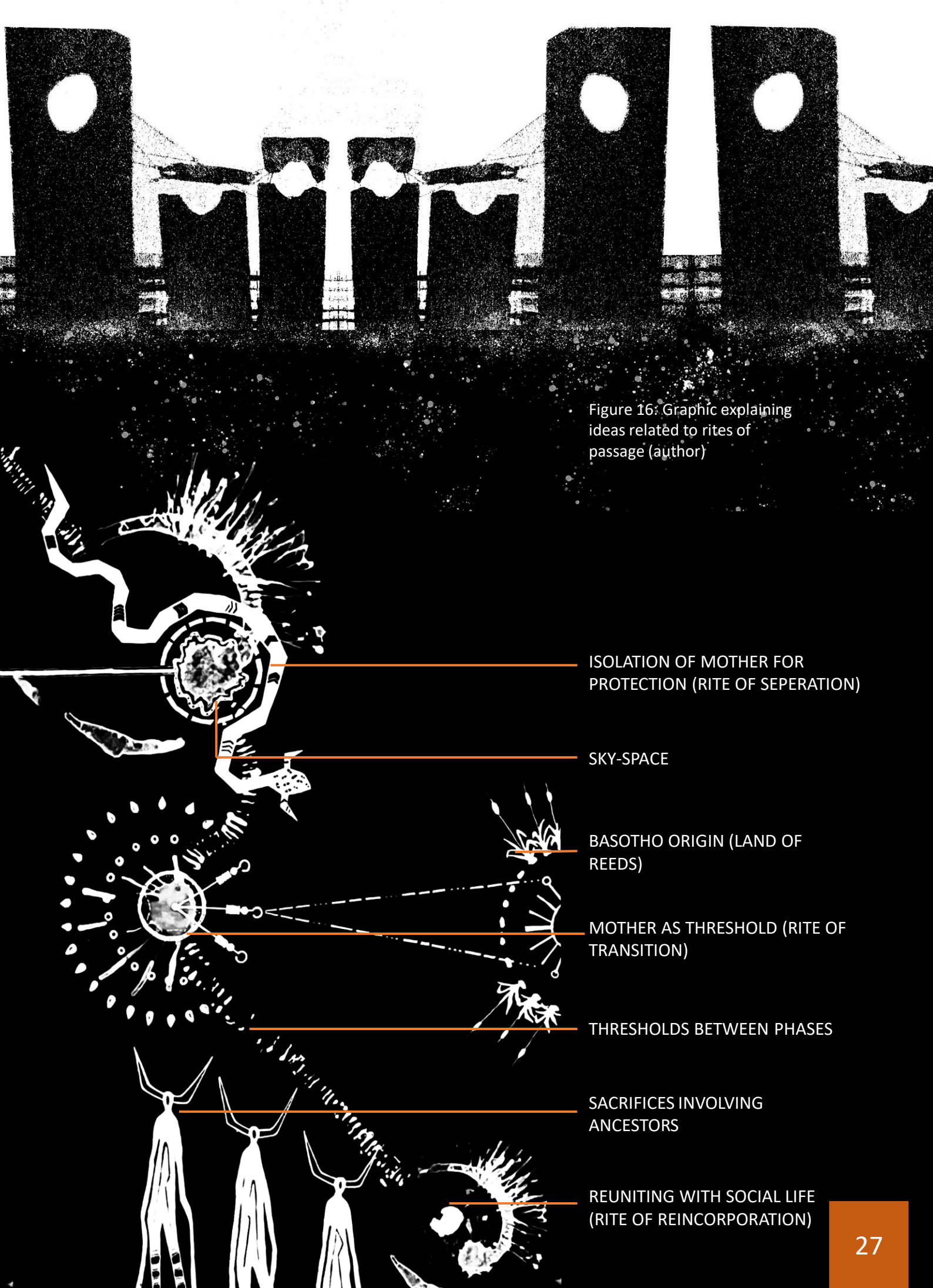


Figure 16: Graphic explaining ideas related to rites of passage (author)

ISOLATION OF MOTHER FOR PROTECTION (RITE OF SEPERATION)

SKY-SPACE

BASOTHO ORIGIN (LAND OF REEDS)

MOTHER AS THRESHOLD (RITE OF TRANSITION)

THRESHOLDS BETWEEN PHASES

SACRIFICES INVOLVING ANCESTORS

REUNITING WITH SOCIAL LIFE (RITE OF REINCORPORATION)

LIMINALITY AND RITUAL

A RESPONSE TO RITES OF PASSAGE

As established in the previous text, individuals **transition** from one state of being to another through **rituals**, and these events are significant moments in one's life journey. Witnessing or participating in these **rituals** solidifies the importance of those involved in the initiate's life.

The threshold, the door show the solution of continuity in space immediately and concretely; hence their great religious importance, for they are symbols and at the same time vehicles of passage from the one space to the other. (Eliade,1957:25)

Based on Eliade's notion and previous texts it becomes evident that even the most habitual act can become a **ritual**, transforming mundane activity into a ceremony of symbolic or even spiritual significance. Such transformative acts serve to mediate between the sacred and the profane, the world of man and that of spirits, deities or ancestors, between this life and the next.

The notion that rituals can exist outside of religious contexts, gives rise to an opportunity for **transition** not only for the pregnant Basotho woman but all visitors that enter the proposed space. In other words, the proposed design can be seen as a manifestation of **transition**, the materialization of the **liminal**. This demarcates that there is a **pre-liminal** as well as a **post-liminal** state for all users of the building. As the building aims to nurture a profound understanding between different cultures and communities, it will promote a scholarship to teach, indicating knowledge being shared, and stories told.

This sharing of knowledge between different users transforms into a new **ritual**, a rite of passage that allows the users to separate themselves from the social constructs they existed in previously, actively participate in a respectful exchange of knowledge and re-enter society, adopting a new state of being, consciously present in one's surroundings with an openness to profound disclosures. Therefore, the architecture itself represents a state of **transition** and transformation, where the individual exists in an in-between condition – a **threshold** – much like the pregnant Mother that in herself becomes

a **threshold** from the ancestral realm into the physical realm, a manifestation of the in-between, protecting the vulnerable child in its **transition** from spiritual into physical form.

...dwell for a moment on the symbolism of "passage" as a religious man reads it in his familiar surroundings and his daily life—in his house, for example, in the paths that he takes to go to his work, in the bridges he crosses, and so on. This symbolism is present even in the structure of his habitation. As we saw, the upper opening signifies the ascending direction to heaven, the desire for transcendence. The threshold concentrates not only the boundary between outside and inside but also the possibility of passage from one zone to another (from the profane to the sacred). (Eliade,1957:181)

It has become evident that the **threshold** can be interpreted and functions as a multi-fold of identities that accommodate various **transitions**. Hence the notion of *sky-space* arises once again.

According to Kammeyer (2010;168-169), the *sky-space* represents a **threshold** area that connects both the daily life of the community and special occasions. This versatile **transition** space is utilized for regular social interactions and pedestrian movement, as well as for communal celebrations and important community events. It can also be regarded as a **threshold** between earth and sky as well as physical and spiritual.

In essence, the exploration of liminality, ritual, and the **threshold** within the context of rites of passage demonstrates the intricate relationship between architecture, cultural **transitions**, and human experiences. The proposed architectural design not only acknowledges these principles but will also aim to embody them, offering a space that celebrates the profound significance of transitions in the human **lived experience**.

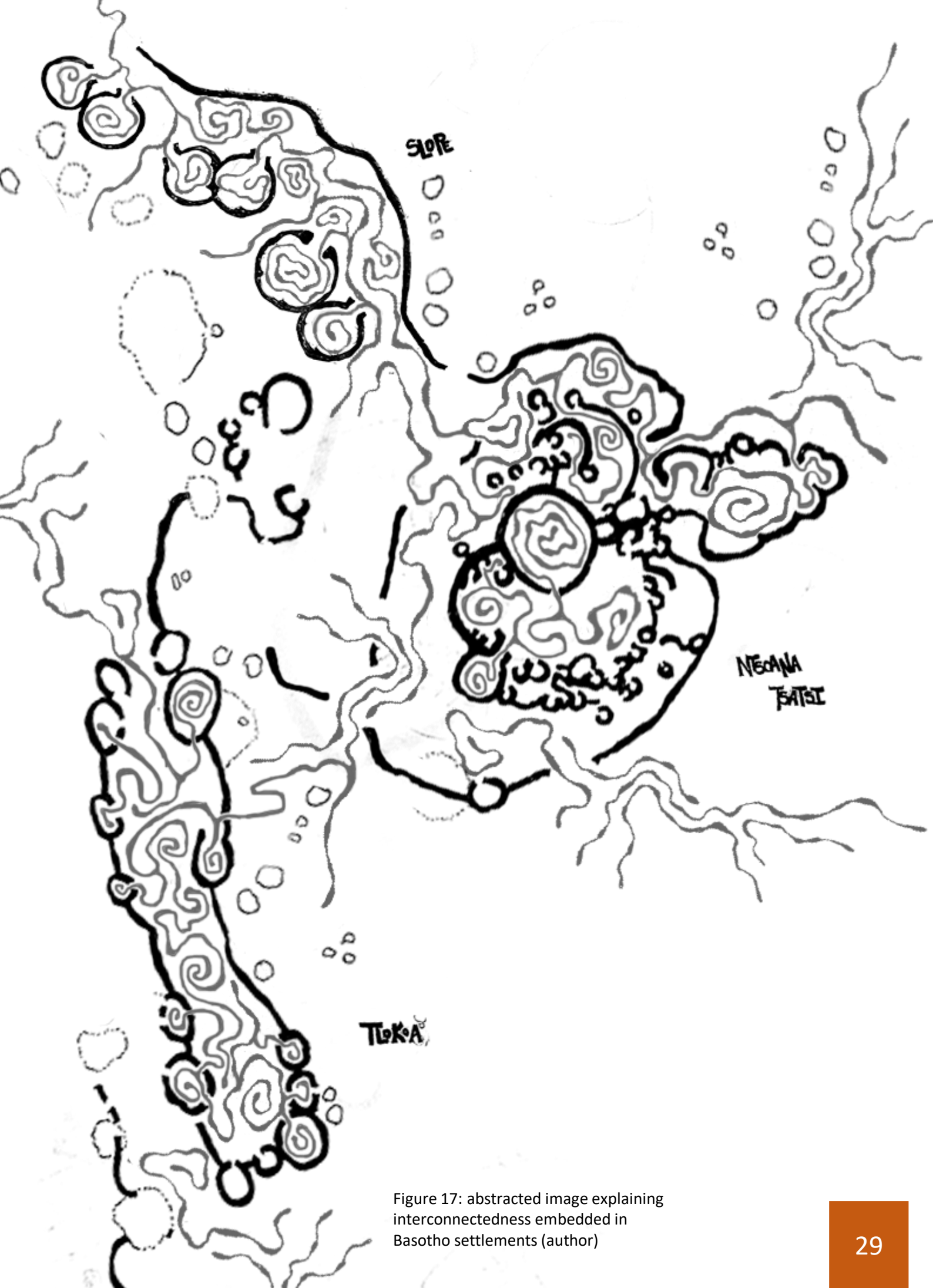


Figure 17: abstracted image explaining interconnectedness embedded in Basotho settlements (author)

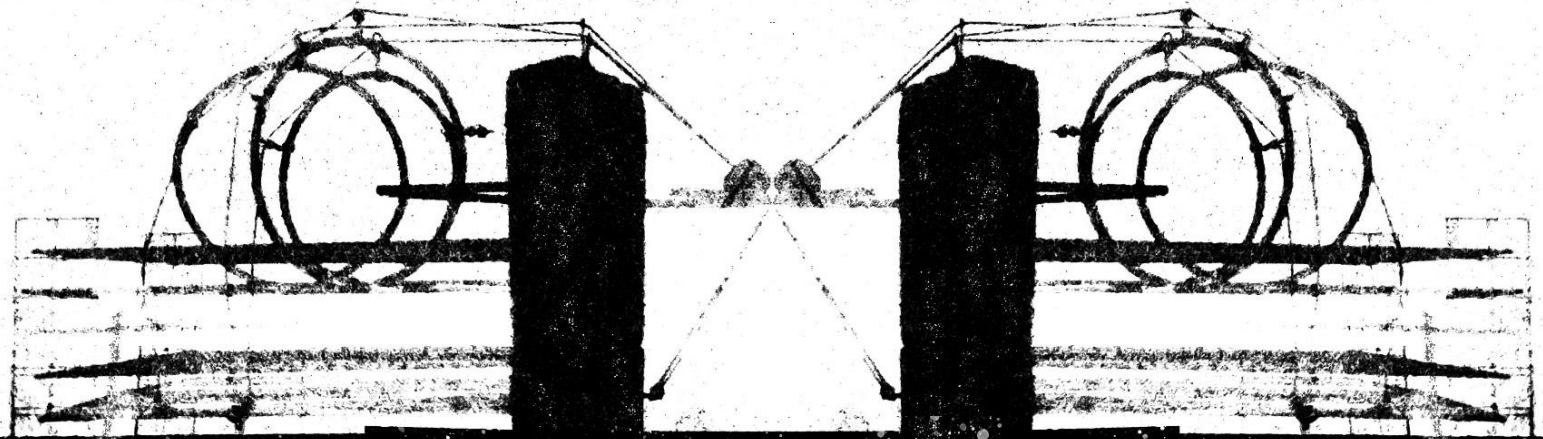


Figure 18: abstracted shadow image of conceptual model related to Impregnation (author)

IMPREGNATION

IT TO CAUSE SOMETHING, USUALLY A SOLID SUBSTANCE, TO ABSORB SOMETHING ELSE, USUALLY A LIQUID

KEYWORDS:

DUALITY – INTERWOVEN – FLUIDITY – PREG – IMPRINT.

EXPERIENCE OF PREGNANCY

One could say that pregnancy is an unstable, indeterminate articulation of being, simultaneously one yet two. (MacKenzie-Griffiths, 1997; 16)

this statement relates the experience of childbirth and pregnancy and the relationship the mother and child share to the relationship African identity emulates in terms of the individual and their community.

RITUALS OF PREGNANCY

The rituals of birth begins with the pregnancy/impregnation of the mother. During this time period of pregnancy, the new mother usually returns to her mother's home, especially during her first pregnancy. Opong (1997; 23) states that the reason for return to the parent's home lies in the fact that being a novice in childbearing, she may need special attention, tender care and instructions that may best be given by her own mother and the old ladies of her kin. This enlarges the circle of simultaneous involvement during pregnancy. It is not only the mother and child that share the experience but also elder woman and the woman's mother all interwoven into the effort of protecting the

child. Furthermore, sacrifices are made to the new mother's ancestors to ask for their blessing and support for her well-being and peaceful delivery and so also adding the ancestors to the circle of loved ones bringing the child into the world Opong (1997; 23). It is also believed that the child could take after the personalities any of the women serving as midwives, Opong (1997; 23) hence the need for people of good reputation and conduct is essential and strengthens the theory of interwoven existence between multiple family members and the imprint left on each other.

ARCHITECTURAL THEORY

The proposed building itself will aim to co-exist with the existing landscape and absorb its qualities by using materials appropriate to the site and working with the existing contours to allow itself to be cradled by the earth. This incorporation of landscape is also visible in the settlements found on sacred sites surrounding Clarens and Fouriesburg as the residences are submerged into natural masses found on the sites. In terms of the buildings function it will assist in removing the boundaries between the ritual and science of both westernized medicine and Basotho cultural practices involved in childbirth so they too can exist together and assist in both the humanization of western practice and the safeguarding of Basotho cultural/ritual practices

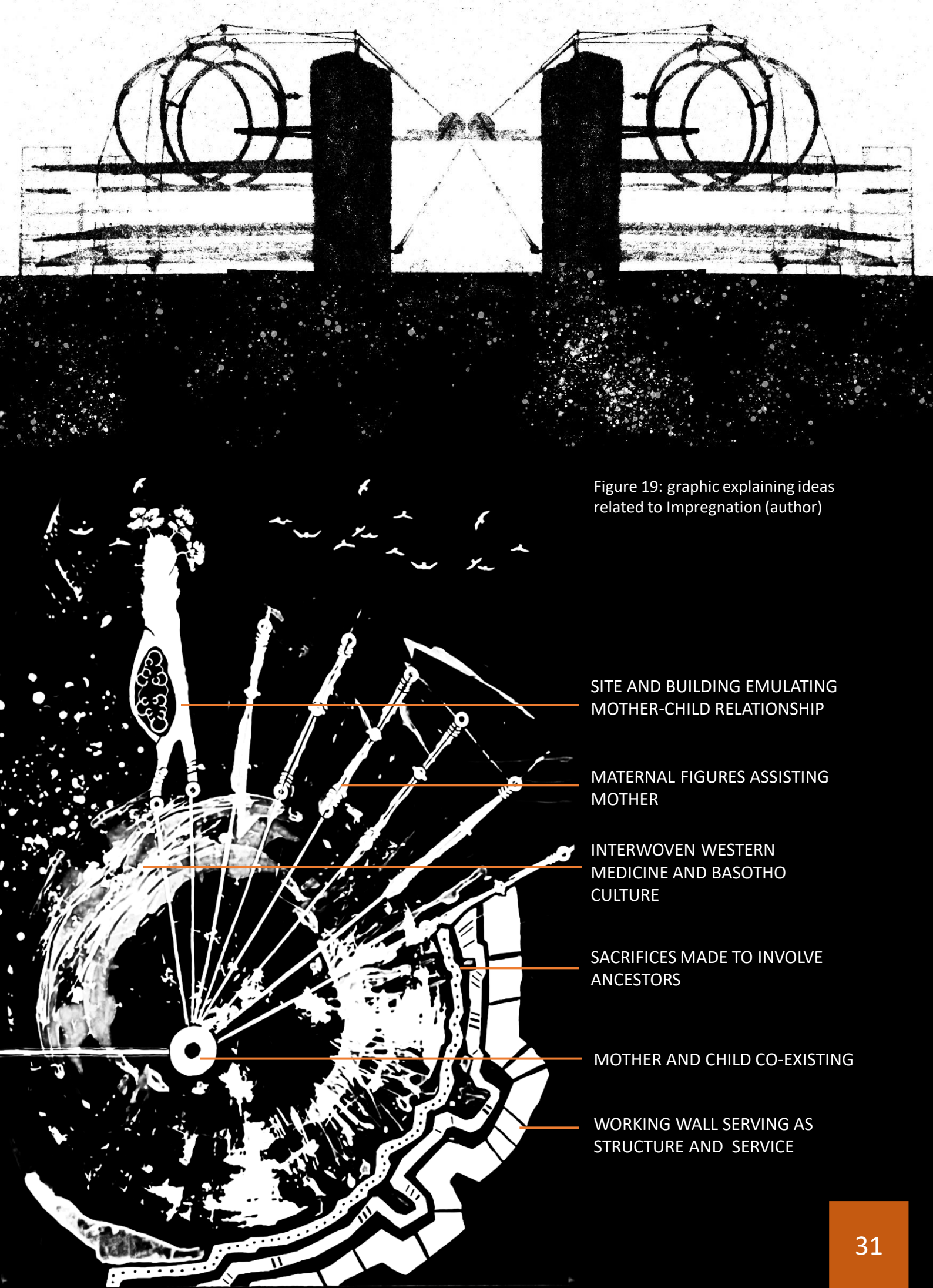


Figure 19: graphic explaining ideas related to Impregnation (author)

SITE AND BUILDING EMULATING MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

MATERNAL FIGURES ASSISTING MOTHER

INTERWOVEN WESTERN MEDICINE AND BASOTHO CULTURE

SACRIFICES MADE TO INVOLVE ANCESTORS

MOTHER AND CHILD CO-EXISTING

WORKING WALL SERVING AS STRUCTURE AND SERVICE

DUALITY AND HERMENEUTICS

A RESPONSE TO IMPREGNATION

The relationship of mother and child existing simultaneously as individual and also separate entities elaborated on in previous arguments can be seen as an expression of *ubuntu*, described by Coghlan et al. (2014;2-3) as a philosophy rooted in relationships, often expressed as 'I exist because we exist.' This philosophy is deeply constructivist, emphasizing that an individual's sense of identity is *interwoven* with their social surroundings. The active involvement of maternal figures and an ancestral presence strengthens this idea of an existing *duality* between the individual and their community. This notion can also be related to Heidegger's definition of dwelling, stated by Norberg-Schulz as:

"The way in which you are and I am, the way in which we humans are on the earth, is dwelling...". But on the earth" already means "under the sky"! He also calls what is between earth and sky the world, and says that "the world is the house where the mortals dwell' In other words, when man is capable of dwelling the world becomes an "inside" In general, nature forms an extended comprehensive totality, a "place" which according to local circumstances has a particular identity.(Norberg-Schulz,1980;10)

The statement by Norberg-Schulz acknowledges the identities of mortals connected as one: relating to the idea of holistically viewing mortals as *interwoven* and part of a larger whole but also as an assemblage of mental and social constructs. However, he also factors in the environmental elements of earth and sky, this strengthens previous ideas of the importance of spirituality but also introduces the substance of nature.

From [my] hermeneutical frame, it is not buildings but the human experience or apprehension of buildings that holds our attention.... From this perspective, the locus of meaning resides neither in the building itself (a physical object) nor in the mind of the beholder (a human subject) but rather in the negotiation or the interactive relation that subsumes both the building and the beholder.(Jones,2000;3)

In addition to Jones' framework and according to the notion of *Ubuntu* a third party needs to be introduced to her understanding of meaningful creation. This dissertation suggests not only a co-existence of building and beholder, but a trinity of simultaneous existence between architecture, mortal and nature, as nature plays a significant role in the spiritual identity of Basotho culture as well as ritual practises.

Sebaka sa badimo (ritual or sacred site/space): A sacred space is where one can find oneself again and again...(peace of mind)... a place in nature, near a rock, a stream or lake, or under an old tree. A place one would find it ideal to feel a strong connection with nature, ancestors, gods and spirits; mostly with God.(Mansele,2011;viii)

By introducing the element of the natural environment this dissertation can attempt to emulate the relationship of mother and unborn child, where building and environment can exist simultaneously as one but also as two separate entities and by doing so strengthen the *imprint* left on the beholders encapsulated within their dialogue through harmonizing with nature herself: emphasising humans' primal connection to nature

Architectural hermeneutics is a framework for understanding architecture that focuses on the human experience and apprehension of buildings within their natural/environmental context. It suggests that the meaning of a building does not solely reside in the physical structure itself or in the subjective interpretation of an individual but highlights the importance of architecture in interpreting the world as a meaningful order where individuals find their place within nature and their community.

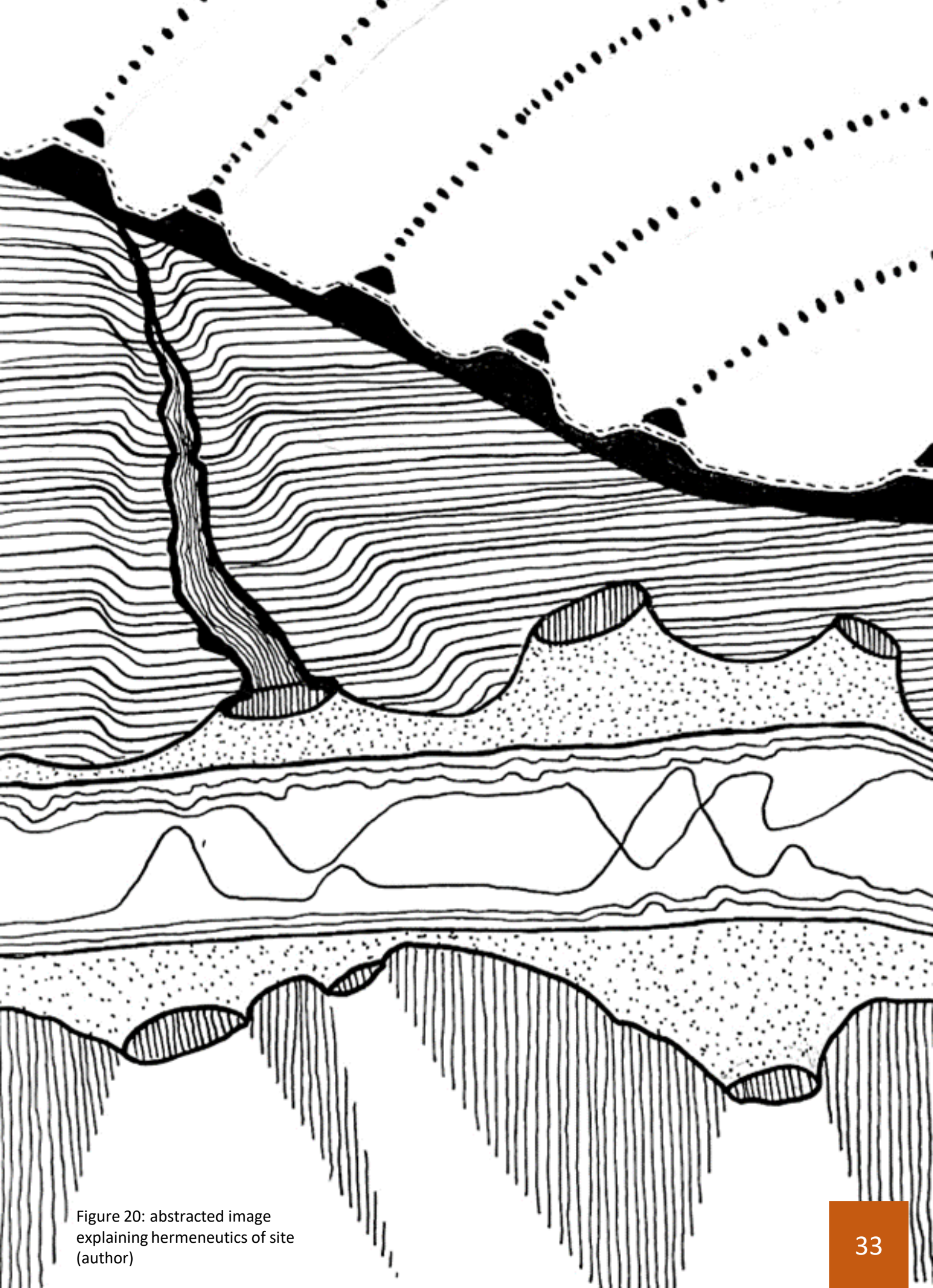


Figure 20: abstracted image explaining hermeneutics of site (author)

CONCEPTION

(kənsəp'shen)

1.b. The entity formed by the union of the male sperm and female ovum; an embryo or zygote. **2.a.** The ability to form or understand mental concepts and abstractions **b.** Something conceived in the mind or believed by a group of people; a concept, thought, or belief **c.** The beginning or formation of an idea or plan (medical dictionary, 2023: online)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, by exploring the profound interplay of spirituality, time, and coexistence within the context of African culture, particularly among Basotho women during pregnancy an architectural approach was conceived. An approach that emphasizes the holistic nature of African beliefs, celebrating the interconnectedness of individual and community, the sacred and the profane. This perspective promotes the idea that architecture should actively engage with temporality, embracing transitions and rituals as significant moments in the human lived experience.

The proposed architectural design should not only acknowledge these principles but embody them, by becoming a manifestation of transition and transformation, much like the pregnant mother who is a threshold between the ancestral and physical realms. In this way, the chapter highlights the importance of architecture as a vessel for shared experiences, transitions, and the celebration of cultural rituals, all of which contribute to the preservation of African cultural heritage and the enrichment of global spirituality. By embracing the interplay of permanence and temporality, architecture can become a beacon of mutual respect and understanding among different communities, fostering empathy and appreciation for the unique spiritual identities of various cultures.

Moreover, the architectural design aims to coexist with the natural environment, absorbing its qualities and incorporating the landscape into its structure. It reinforces the idea that architecture should harmonize with nature, just as humans share an intrinsic connection with the environment. This trinity of existence between architecture, mortal, and nature deepens the understanding of architecture's role in interpreting the world as a meaningful order where individuals find their place within their community and the natural world. Hence the next chapter will investigate the chosen site to determine how the conceived ideas can appropriately be applied to the design in terms of its location.

ANTEPARTUM 03

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ANTEPARTUM

[an"te-pahr'tum]

occurring before childbirth, with reference to the mother. Spelled also ante partum. Called also antepartal and prepartal.

(medical dictionary, 2023: online)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the last investigation before the design process begins, hence the term Antepartum is used to relate this process to the period before childbirth.

The first discussion within this chapter focuses on migration, which especially in the context of HIV/AIDS, has disproportionately affected the Basotho community. This chapter delves into the pressing need for cultural and medical facilities that serve as hubs for awareness, prevention, and support, particularly for women in primary income-earning roles due to migration. Rocchi and Del Sette's insights underscore the importance of preserving Basotho cultural identity amid these shifts. Cultural facilities, by celebrating traditions and fostering community, can be a bridge, connecting the past with the present.

Additionally, this chapter explores the interconnectedness within Basotho spirituality, focusing on the sacred caves of Motouleng and their significance. Here, spirituality transcends religious boundaries, with both traditional Basotho and Christian groups coexisting peacefully. The caves represent a convergence of beliefs, a testament to the harmony possible between diverse spiritual practices.

The narrative also delves into the ritualistic analysis inspired by Basotho fertility rituals and medical practices. Drawing parallels between ultrasound techniques and traditional healing methods, the chapter reveals hidden messages from the sacred spots. Sculpting clay from the site becomes a medium of translation, capturing the essence of the unseen.

Through this exploration, the chapter unearths profound insights into the essence of Basotho spirituality and the convergence of tradition and modernity. By understanding the interplay between cultural shifts, spirituality, and medical practices, the chapter sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the Basotho women's experiences and the holistic facilities needed to support their journey in this specific evolving landscape.

THE SHIFTING LOCUS

SITUATING BASOTHO WOMAN WITHIN THE MACRO CONTEXT

The need for cultural facilities for Basotho women in South Africa is essential, driven by shifting migration patterns and the challenges arising from these changes. According to Rocchi and Del Sette (2016:online), Basotho men have historically formed the majority of migrant labourers in South African mines, but this has significantly declined. As a result, cultural facilities within the South African context become evidently vital for several reasons.

Rocchi and Del Sette (2016:online) further explain that the shift in migration patterns has led to the feminization of migration, necessitating support for Basotho women adapting to new roles and challenges. Furthermore, based on the previous comments on the decline in male migrant labourers, this resulted in reduced remittances, impacted household incomes and increased poverty. This highlights the development of cultural facilities that can equip Basotho women with skills and resources to explore alternative income sources within South Africa as well as in Lesotho. Cultural facilities that incorporate training and resources to empower these women, can improve job prospects and income potential.

Additionally, Rocchi and Del Sette (2016:online) as well as Motaba(2020;12) HIV/AIDS has disproportionately affected the Basotho community, particularly migrants who are at higher risk. This raises the importance of cultural and medical facilities that can serve as hubs for HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, and support, especially among women who have assumed primary income-earning roles due to migration.

Preserving cultural identity and traditions is vital amidst migration-related cultural shifts, as explained by Rocchi and Del Sette (2016:online). Cultural facilities can facilitate this preservation by incorporating activities, events and rituals that celebrate Basotho traditions, language, and history. Moreover, these facilities can serve as centres for community building and cohesion among Basotho women in South Africa, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing isolation and

loneliness commonly experienced by migrants (Rocchi & Del Sette,2016:online).

The a need for all the stakeholders involved to take responsibility to nurture and protect not only these two sacred sites in the Eastern Free State but a whole lot of other sacred sites in South Africa and the neighbouring countries such as Lesotho as most of the local user communities who come from outside South Africa are the Basotho from Lesotho. (Mensele,2011;108)

Based on Mensele's statement, a variety of Spiritual locations that relate to the Basotho people and are frequently visited, are found in South Africa close to the border of Lesotho and situate the sense of Basotho spirituality and identity within the South African context

Cultural and medical facilities for Basotho women in South Africa that accommodate ritual needs are indispensable in addressing evolving migration dynamics. They can empower women economically, provide essential support for health challenges, preserve cultural heritage, foster community cohesion, and promote ritual practices and the development of African identity. Hence the chosen site will be located within conversation of the necessary elements to accommodate the human behaviour, atmosphere, earth: mind, body, and spirit, of the Basotho woman. It is situated within proximity of the frequently visited Sacred caves, as well as the border crossing between Lesotho and South Africa to ensure minimum travel necessary for visitors from both the Lesotho and South African context.

Figure 21: graphic showing the chosen site within its international, continental and national context (author)

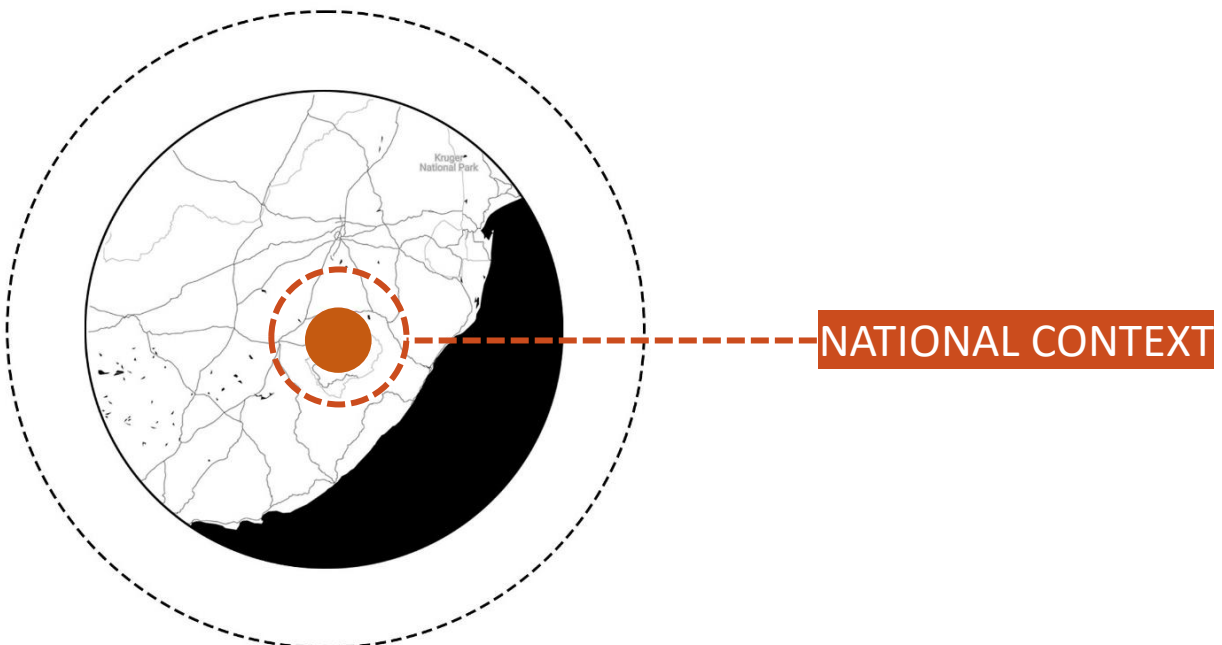
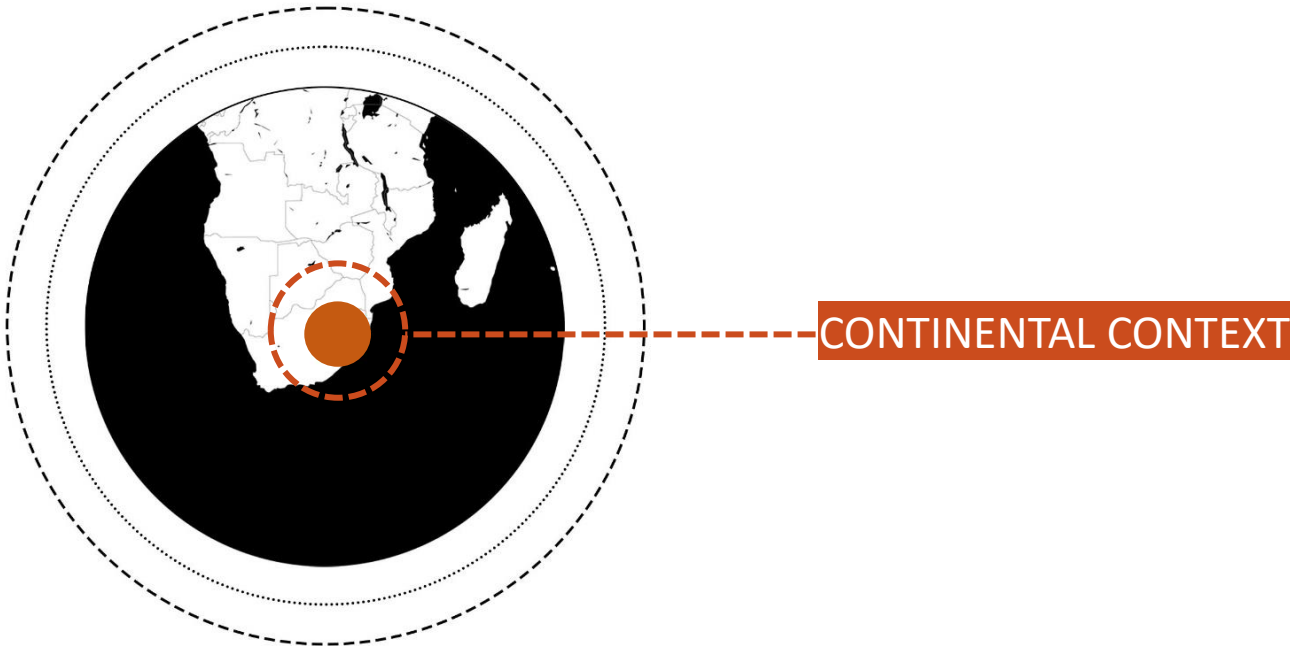
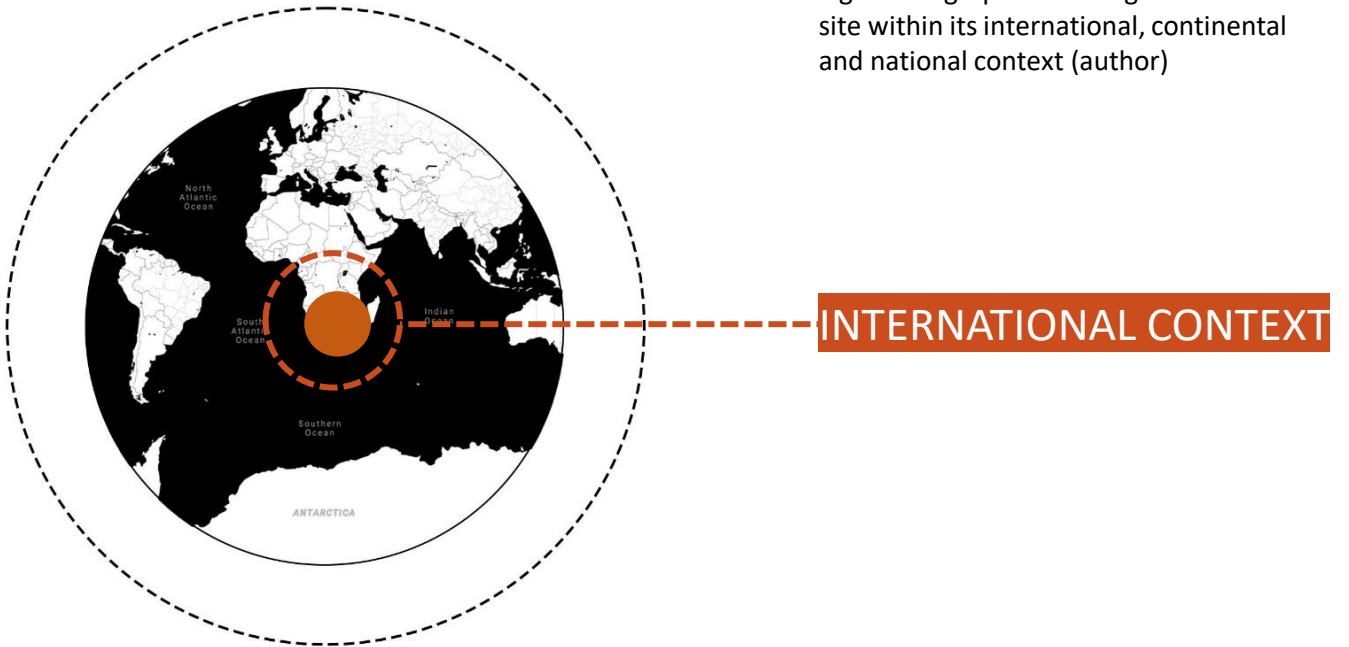
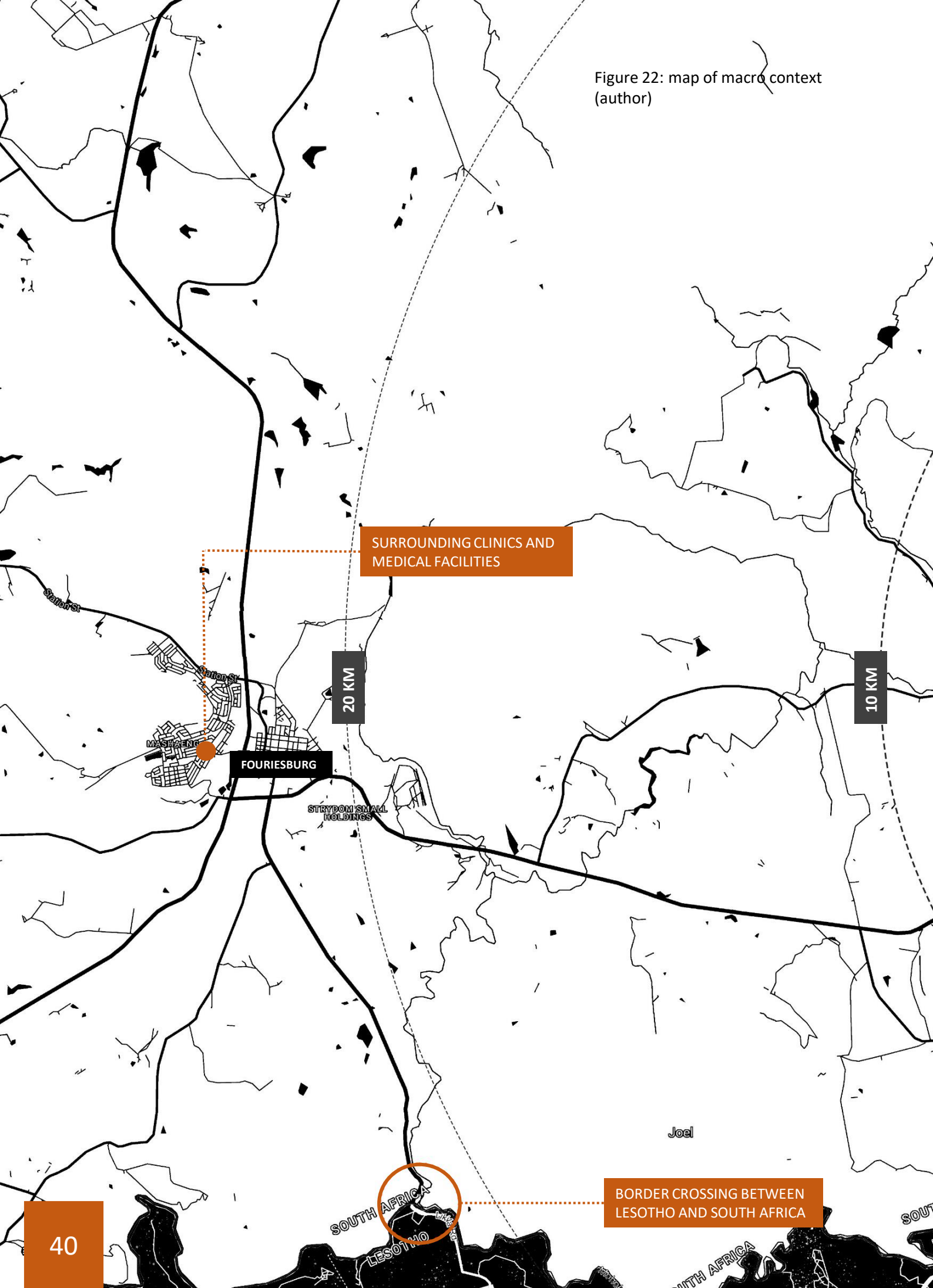


Figure 22: map of macro context
(author)



SURROUNDING CLINICS AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

20 KM

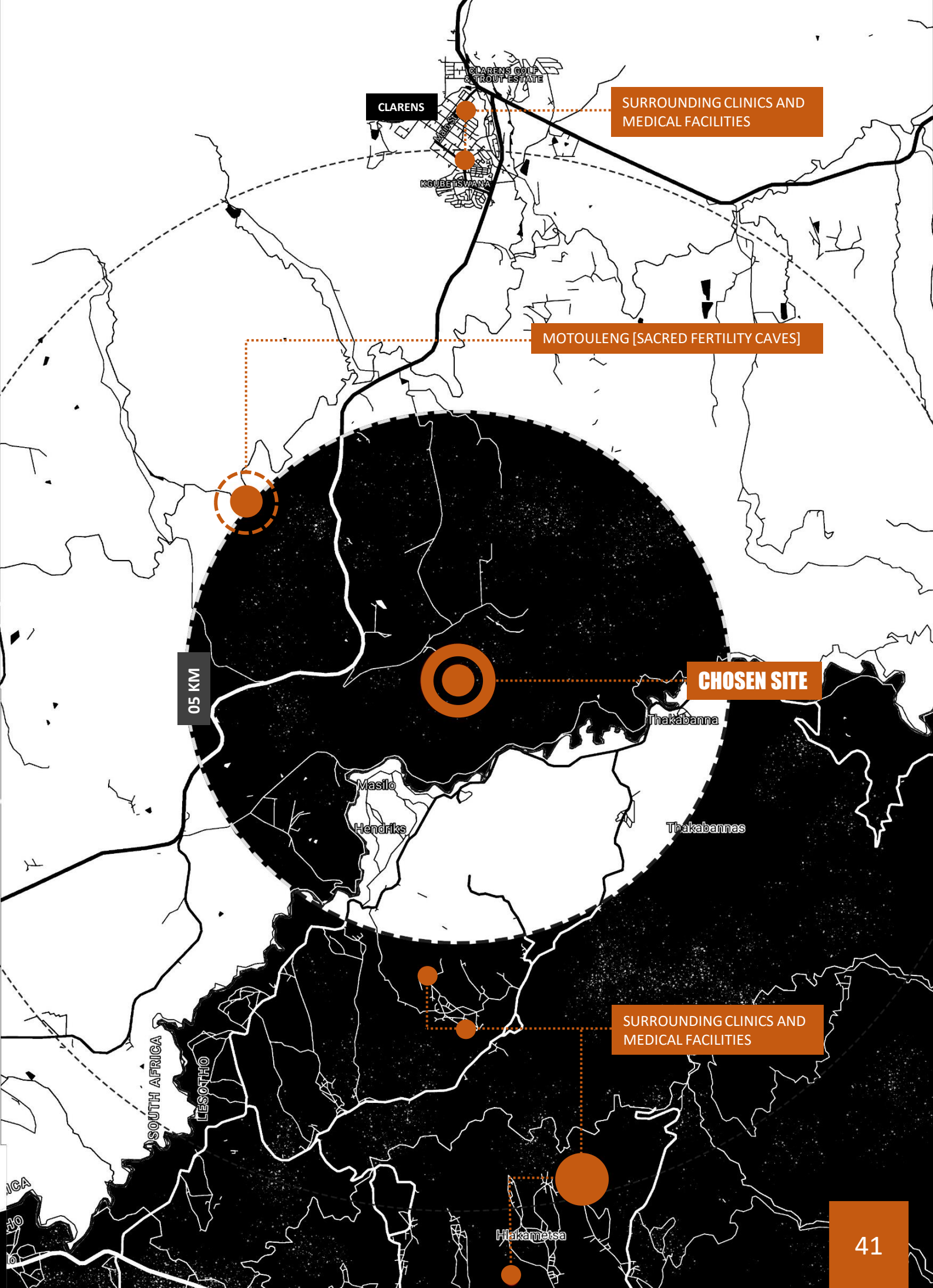
10 KM

FOURIESBURG

STRYDOM SMALL HOLDINGS

Joel

BORDER CROSSING BETWEEN LESOTHO AND SOUTH AFRICA



CLARENS

CLARENS GOLF & TROUT ESTATE

MGUBETSWANA

SURROUNDING CLINICS AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

MOTOULENG [SACRED FERTILITY CAVES]

05 KM

CHOSEN SITE

Thakabanna

Masilo

Hendriks

Thakabannas

SURROUNDING CLINICS AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

SOUTH AFRICA

LESOTHO

Hlakametsa

ASSOCIATING CIRCLES

ANALYSING THE INTERCONNECTED COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE MESO CONTEXT

The co-existence of different spiritualities, ritual activities, and entities at the sacred Basotho cave of *Motouleng* (place of beating drums) can be analysed as an existing interwoven community of vibrant mental, physical and spiritual interactions. It's characterized by a massive cave formed by a rock fall, with a river and ritual performance locations nearby and within.

In most African cultures which strongly believe in ancestors such as the Basotho people, the ancestral spirits are sometimes seen as living in caves in the sacred mountains.(Mensele,2011;29)

The sacred cave of *Motouleng* holds profound meanings and symbolism for the traditional Basotho. These meanings are deeply rooted in their religious beliefs, where the caves are seen as dwelling places of the ancestors. These ancestral connections are central to Basotho spirituality. This profound meaning suggests an active awareness of ancestors manifested through appreciation and high regard, within the context of the natural environment and spiritual being.

It's important to note that these sacred caves are not used exclusively by Basotho people but also by a significant number of Christian individuals and groups. This coexistence is made possible by the acceptance and accommodation of traditional and religious concepts among many Christian pilgrims. They do not see ancestral veneration as conflicting with their Christian faith. The cave expresses itself as a sacred space that enhances and accepts a variety of spiritual rituals and forms of transience.

There is also a general acceptance and accommodation of traditional and religious concepts among many pilgrims who are Christian and who attend church regularly. They accept the presence of ancestors despite the missionaries' attempt to eradicate this view of life, erroneously believing that the ancestors compete with God. Examples of such groups can be seen in the African Zionist Church, the Shembe, the Methodists, Anglicans and Muslims. Ancestors, they say are like saints are to Christians — good people who have gone before.(Boon,2007;9)

Both traditional Basotho and Christian groups visit the sacred sites regularly to perform prayer rituals. These rituals serve various purposes, including individual spiritual needs and church-related endeavours. The rituals acknowledge the sacredness of the sites and their significance in connecting with the ancestors and higher deities.

The two sacred sites enjoy their highest visitors around times of important Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas...church groups and individual local user communities visit the sacred sites to perform rituals to their ancestors.(Cawood,2010;159)

This convergence or interconnectedness of traditions highlights the commonality in the reverence for spirituality among the visitors of the *Motouleng* cave.

Basotho beliefs emphasize that the dead, including the ancestors, continue to exist and influence the living. They are not confined to the ground but are present in various aspects of nature, from the fire to the wind, forest, and homestead.

In conclusion, the co-existence of different spiritualities, activities, and entities at the sacred Basotho caves of *Motouleng* is a testament to the possibility of acceptance and development of traditional Basotho but also other spiritual beliefs. These sacred sites serve as a place of convergence, for human behaviour, atmosphere, and earth: mind, body, and spirit, where a variety of beliefs find common ground in honouring their ancestors and partaking in rituals that embody values important to their spirituality



ATMOSPHERE

EARTH

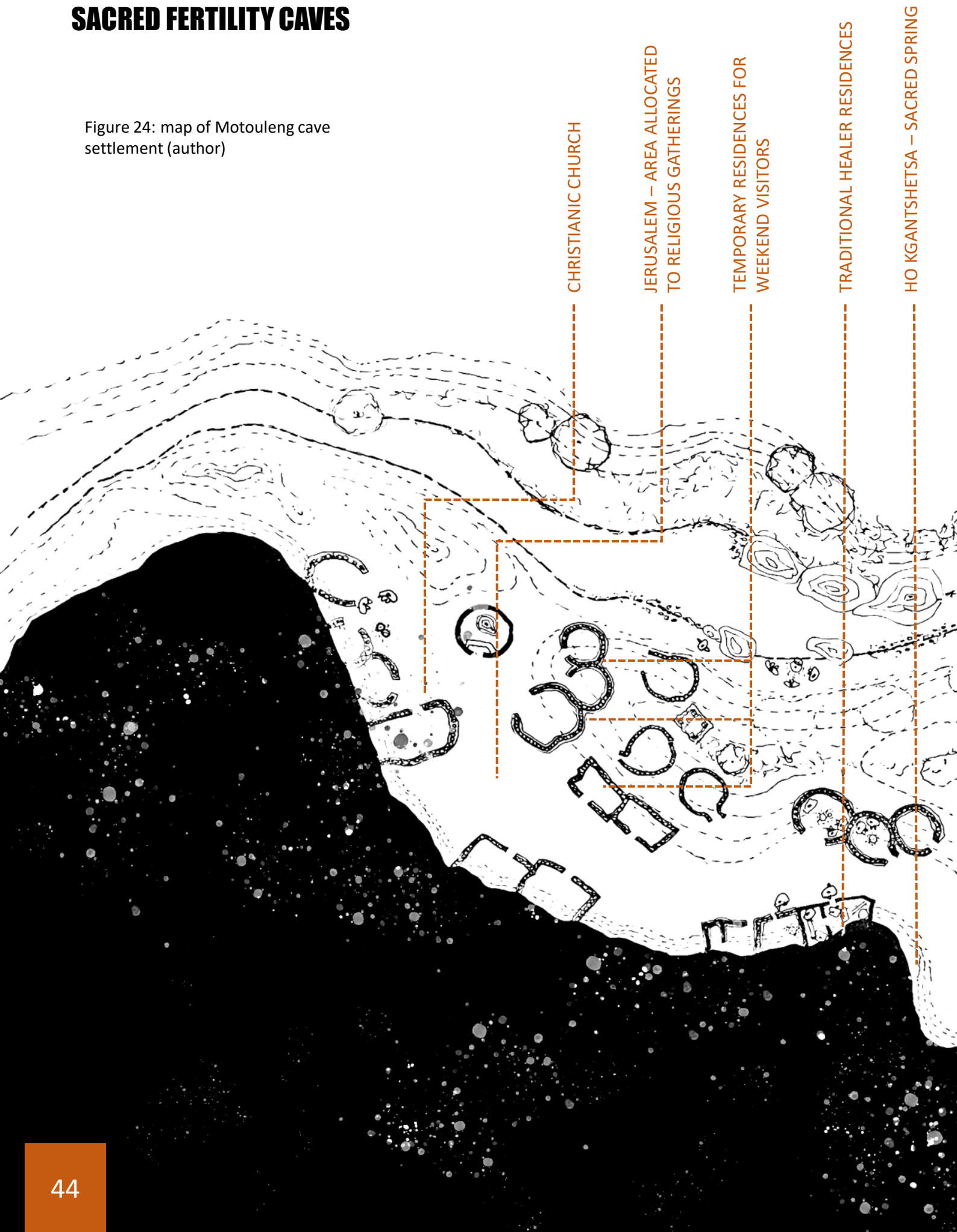
HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Figure 23: image of author consulting a traditional healer at Moutoleng caves in relation to the earth, atmosphere and human behaviour (author)

MOTOLENG

SACRED FERTILITY CAVES

Figure 24: map of Motouleng cave settlement (author)



KGOTLA

GATEWAY FOR SPIRITUAL ENTITIES
INTO PHYSICAL WORLD

SACRIFICIAL PODIUM

SPECIFIED AREA WHERE ANCESTORS
UNBURRIED CAN BE CONTACTED

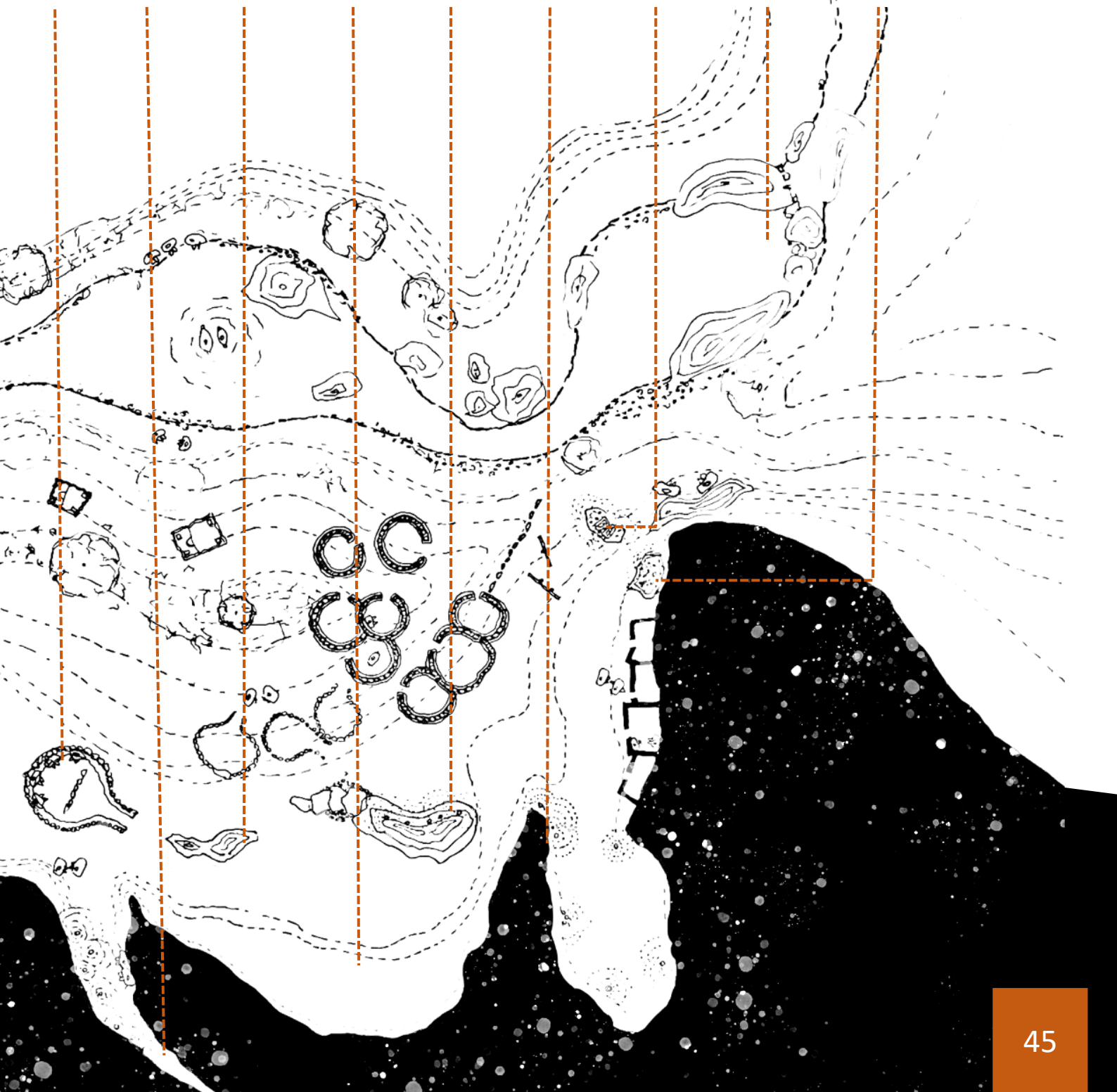
MAIN ALTAR WHERE WHERE BASOTHO
CAN SPEAK TO ANCESTORS

PRIVATE AREA WHERE ANCESTORS
CAN BE REACHED THROUGH WRITTEN
MESSAGES/LETTERS

ROCK WHERE CANDLE IS LIT AND PRESENCE
ANNOUNCED TO ANCESTORS

SACRED POOL WHERE ONLY INDIVIDUALS
SUMMONED BY WATER DEITY MAY ENTER

BANENG – SACRED SPOT FOR
CHILDREN WHERE PRAY FOR FERTILITY



SCULPTING ORISONS

DETERMINING SPIRIT-OF-PLACE WITHIN THE MICRO CONTEXT

To inspire a design that emulates the relationship between mother and child [two entities simultaneously one] and reveals hidden messages from sacred spots located on the chosen site. A haptic ritualistic analysis was inspired by ways of revealing the unseen by both medical practises with reference to childbirth and Basotho rituals relating to fertility.

THE RITUAL JOURNEY

To determine the journey walked and the sacred spots used for the analysis inspiration was drawn from the fertility ritual done by barren Basotho women at the Sacred fertility caves. The ritual consists of announcing oneself at the Baneng, and engaging in a face-to-face prayer with their ancestors whereafter healing water is collected from the sacred pools.

Mensele (2011;60-64) elaborates on the subject stating that in Basotho culture and other societies, infertility is perceived as a medical condition. Infertile individuals seek remedies from either Western-trained physicians or traditional healers practising the Sesotho method. A common practice involves visiting sacred caves to invoke ancestors for fertility. In some cases, the invocation is tailored to request specific genders, particularly when couples desire children of both sexes.

One such sacred cave, Motouleng, holds a special location known as **Baneng**, dedicated to seeking assistance for children. Ancestors may guide the patient to this spot or suggest other sacred caves, like *Badimong*, where a specific traditional healer resides. The traditional healer takes the patient to a secluded area within the sacred site devoted to aiding fertility. In Motouleng, the **(Baneng) place for children** is situated near the cave's

entrance on the left-hand side. Here, the traditional healer and the patient light candles and **introduce themselves to the ancestors**. They take turns praying for fertility and leave pacifiers, candies, a doll or **clay baby**, and a burning candle to facilitate fertility. This practice is mostly undertaken by women, as male infertility is not openly acknowledged in Basotho society.

Next, they move to a revered section of Motouleng known as the sacred spot for ancestors (*Sekgutlwaneng sa bonkgono/ badimo/ ka makhosing*), where they present their case directly to the ancestors. Prayers and offerings, including pumpkin seeds, maize, sorghum, snuff, and tobacco, are made to appease the ancestors.

Another remedy involves collecting water from the sacred spring/well inside Motouleng (*sediba ba bonkgono*) at the back of the cave. The patient lights a candle, seeks the positive functionality of the water for curing infertility, and may throw coins into the spring to appease the ancestors. The patient carries a doll, **clay baby**, or little rock from the "babies" section (*Baneng*) of the cave as if it were a real child, treating it as such in every aspect.

If the patient's desire for a child is genuine, the ancestors may grant their request, leading to conception and childbirth. In such cases, it is believed that the ancestors have fulfilled their role in answering the patient's prayers positively.

FORMULATING AN ANALYSIS

The analysis itself was informed by the manner in which both sonography and traditional healers rely on sounds to reveal hidden information. Freudenrich (2023:online) explains that an ultrasound, also known as ultrasonography, is a medical imaging technique that employs high-frequency sound waves and their echoes. This method bears similarity to the echolocation

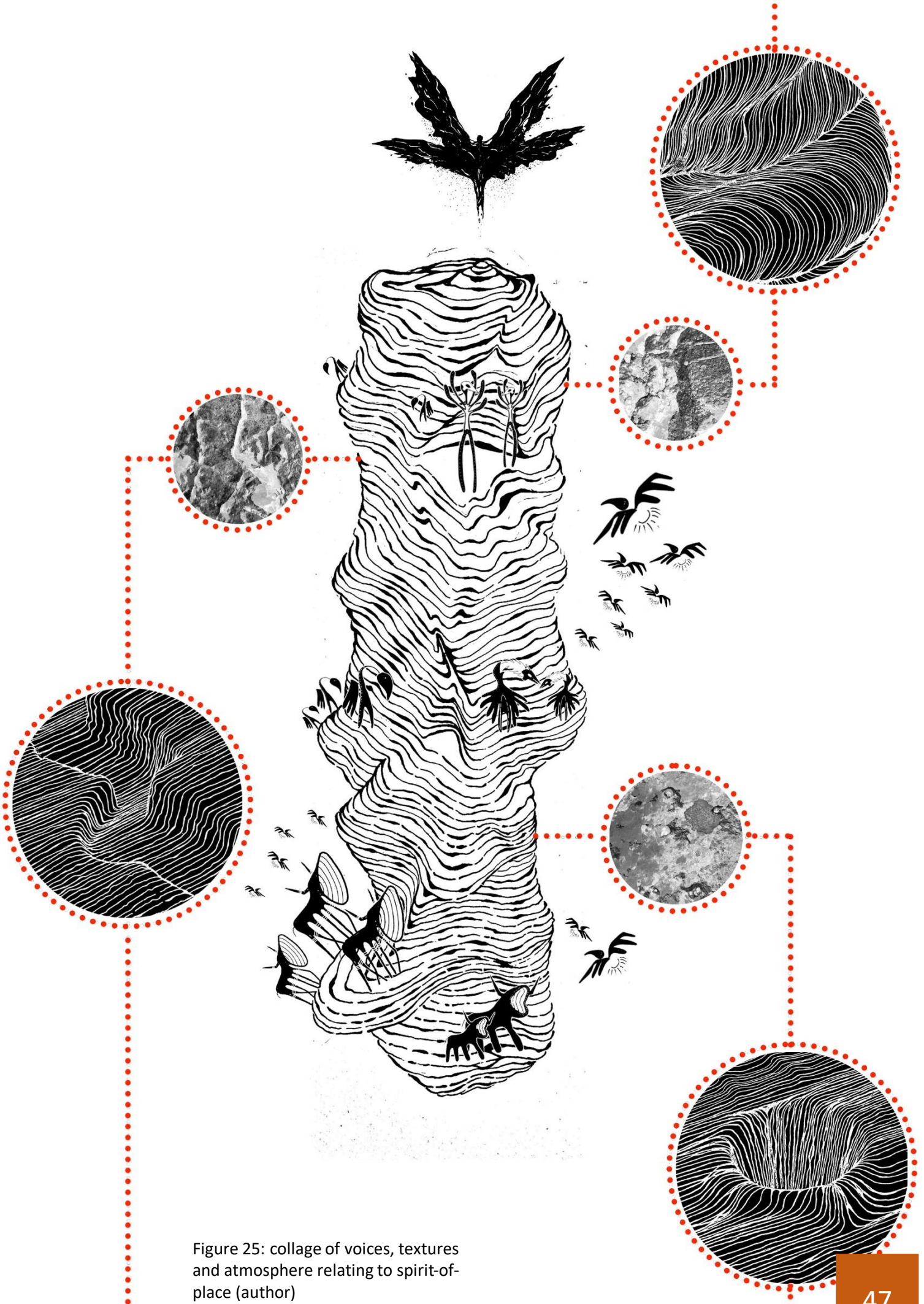


Figure 25: collage of voices, textures and atmosphere relating to spirit-of-place (author)

mechanism used by bats, whales, and dolphins, as well as the SONAR technology utilized by submarines. During an ultrasound examination, the following processes occur: The ultrasound machine utilizes a probe to emit high-frequency sound pulses, into the patient's body. These sound waves travel through the body and encounter boundaries between different tissues, such as those between fluid and soft tissue, or soft tissue and bone. Some of the sound waves are reflected back to the probe upon hitting these boundaries, while others continue further until they encounter another boundary and undergo reflection again. The reflected waves are detected by the probe and transmitted to the ultrasound machine. To create a useful image, the machine calculates the distance between the probe and the tissue or organ boundaries by considering the speed of sound in the tissue. The machine then displays the distances and intensities of the echoes on the screen, resulting in the formation of a two-dimensional image

In Mansele's (2011;60-64) research a traditional healer states the troubles of her calling as follows:

"It was hard for me at first; it still is, but what can I do... I do not have a choice. It has been two years now that I have left behind my husband and my children. I eventually became very sick because the ancestors were becoming angry with me for not obeying their instructions. They came to me in my dreams and sometimes even when I was still awake... for instance; they would come to me during the time, in a vision (Ka pono, ke sa robala) I would see, listen and speak to them regardless of whether I was with other people... and people were starting to spread rumours that I had gone crazy."

Mansele (2011;55) further explains that the visions mentioned above are often characterized by a voice from a speaker invisible to the naked

eyes of the trainee or graduate even during daylight and had to be interpreted by the traditional healers. Referring to the idea of a clay child brought to the sacred caves and returning home with said clay child, the analysis relied on collecting clay from the site under investigation as a medium to communicate the received information. The information sculpted with the clay continued the idea of the use of sound, hence the analysis consisted of being blindfolded and focusing on the sense of hearing only to translate the messages conveyed by the spirit of the site.

Texture studies (by means of sketches of textures on the three chosen locations inspired by the journey of the Basotho fertility ritual) done before starting the sculpting process ensured a site-specific and relevant translation and manifestation of the sounds captured in the three specific areas. This process was inspired by the revelation of the hidden found in Western medicine and Basotho cultural practices as the information gathered by both sonography and traditional healers underwent a transitioning phase of interpretation.

INSIGHTS

By participating in this developed process/ritual the basis of sound transferred from Basotho rituals and westernized medicine hidden forms were extracted from the site by listening to messages amplified by the lack of sight.

Figure 26: illustration of recorded voices on the chosen site and QR code link to audio (author)

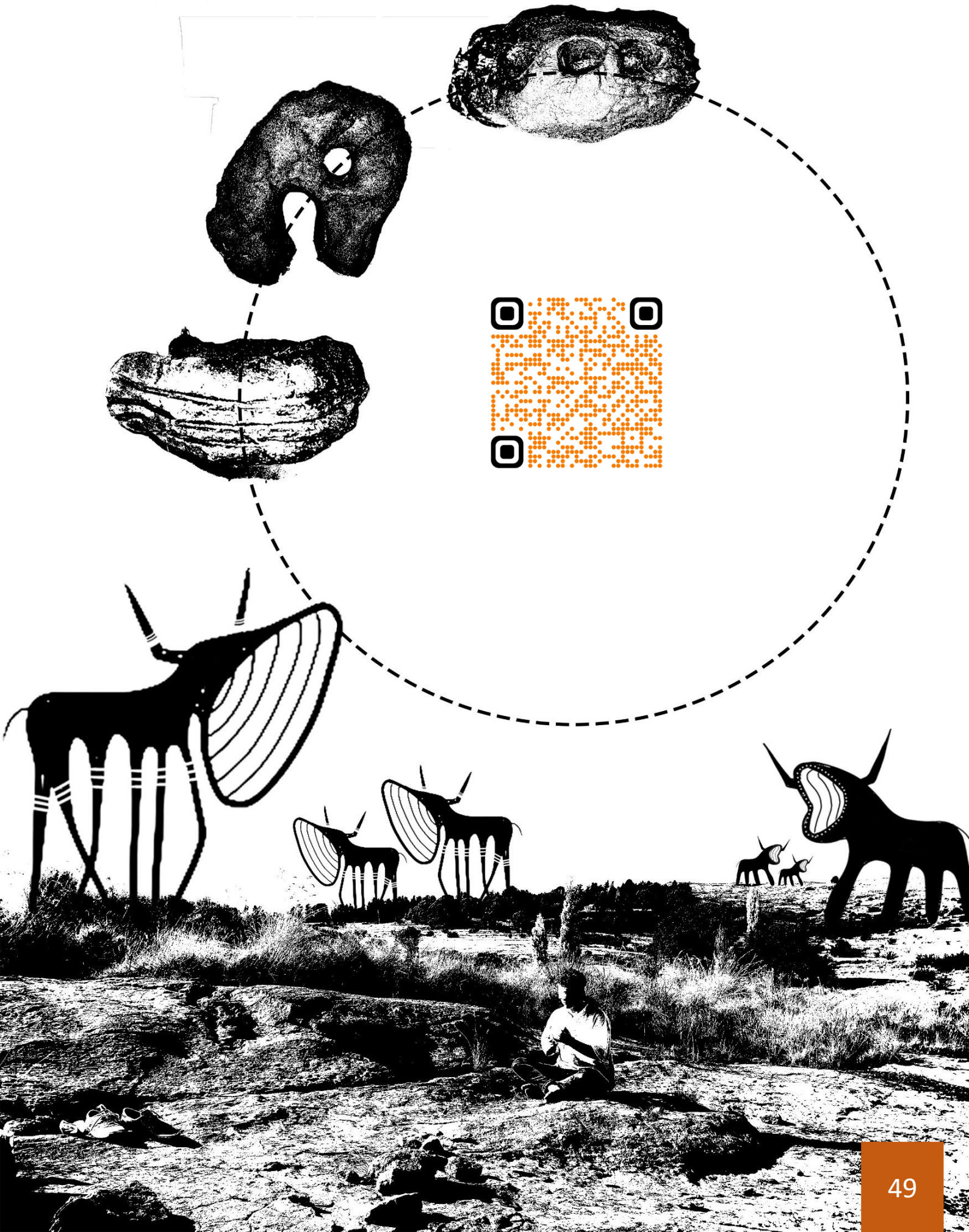


Figure 27: illustration of recorded voices on the chosen site and QR code link to audio (author)

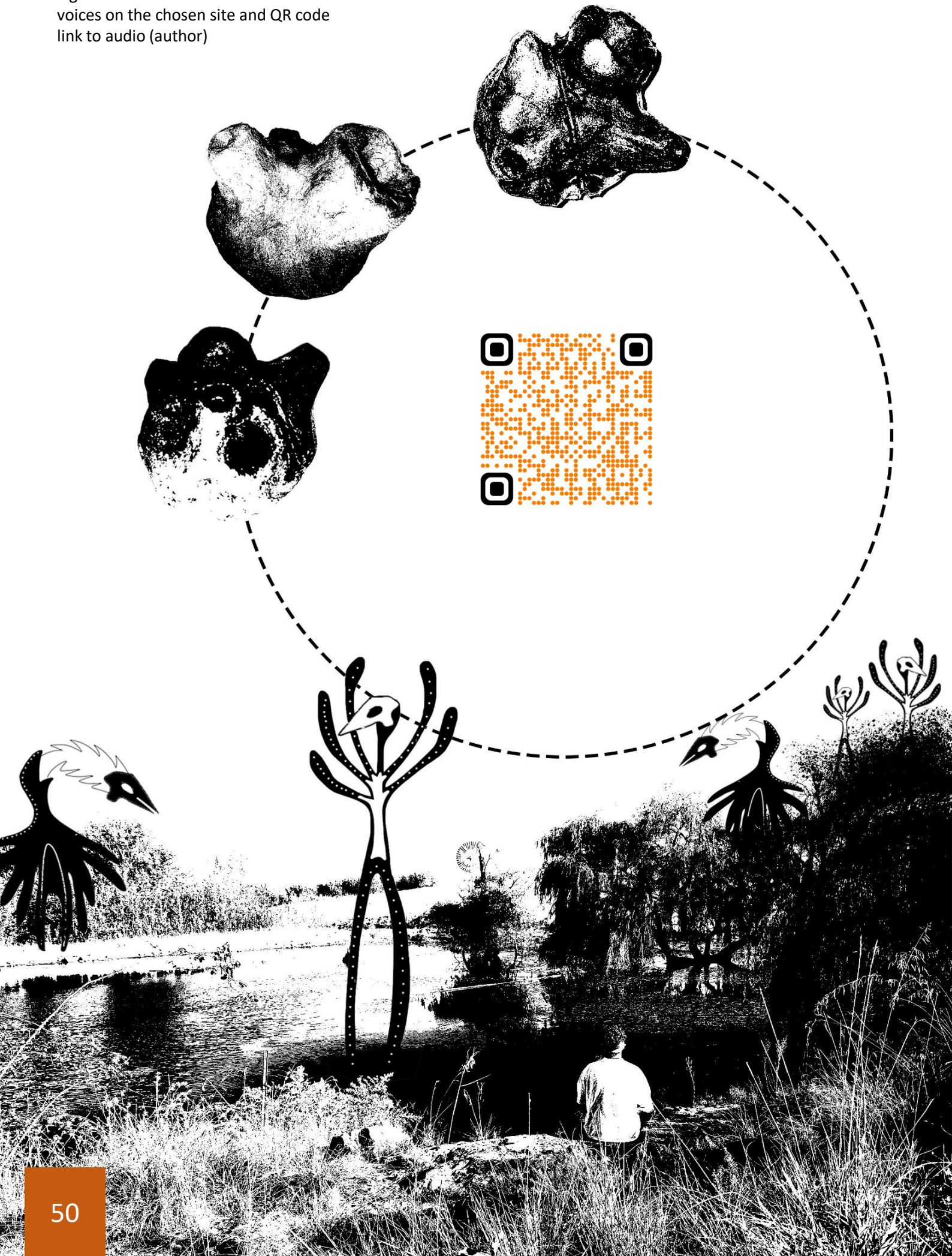
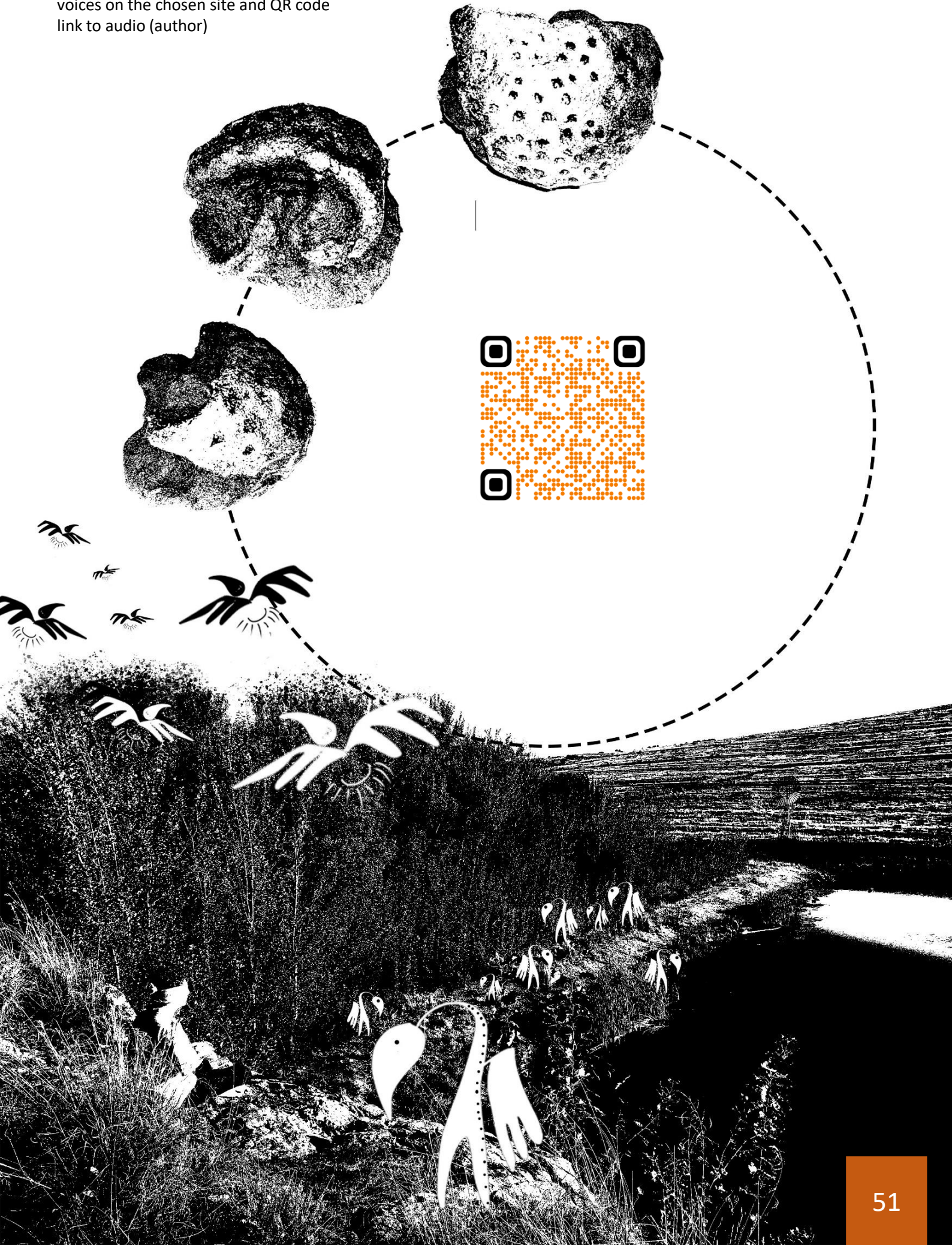
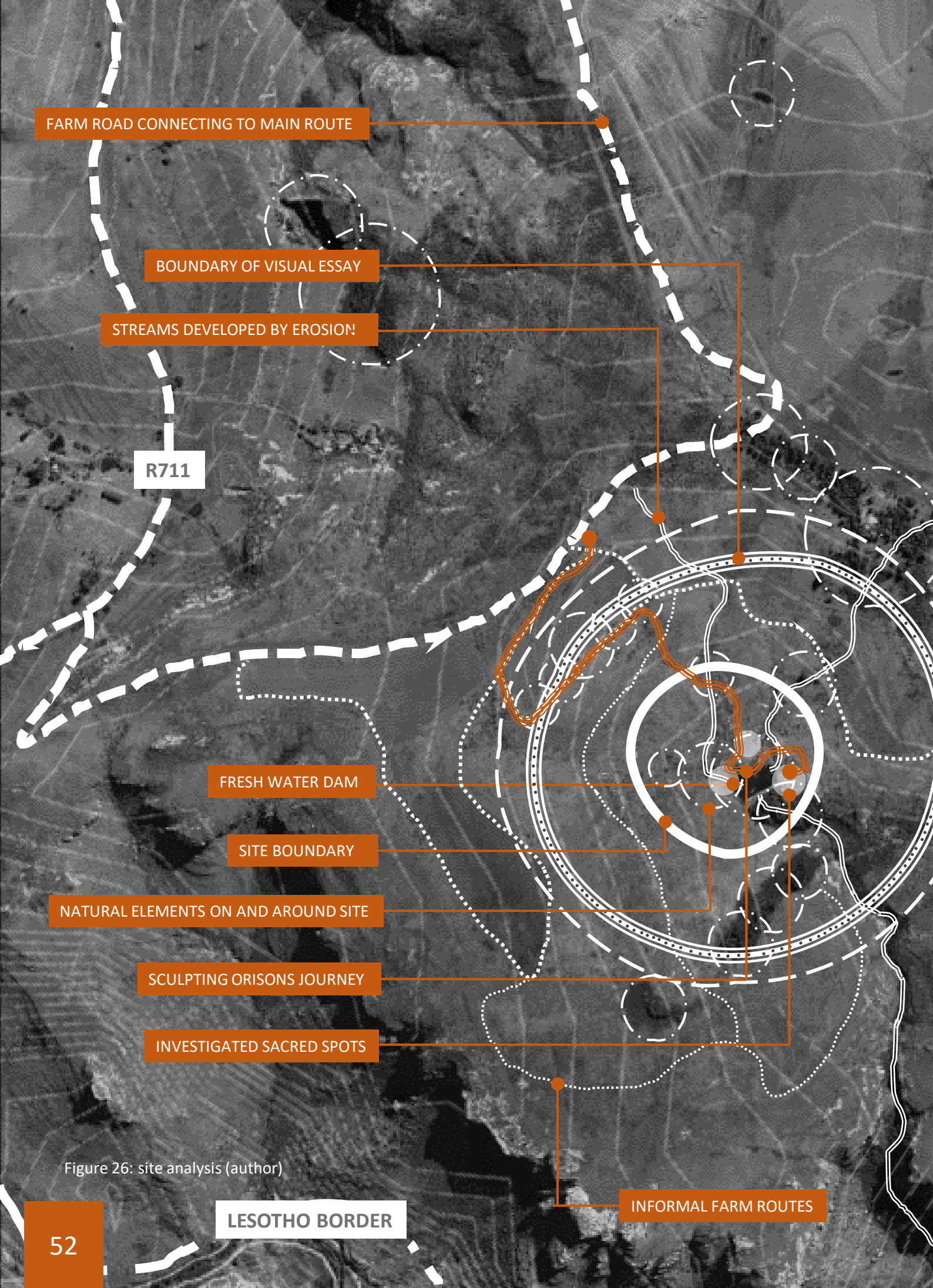


Figure 28: illustration of recorded voices on the chosen site and QR code link to audio (author)





FARM ROAD CONNECTING TO MAIN ROUTE

BOUNDARY OF VISUAL ESSAY

STREAMS DEVELOPED BY EROSION

R711

FRESH WATER DAM

SITE BOUNDARY

NATURAL ELEMENTS ON AND AROUND SITE

SCULPTING ORISONS JOURNEY

INVESTIGATED SACRED SPOTS

Figure 26: site analysis (author)

LESOTHO BORDER

INFORMAL FARM ROUTES

Figure 27: site analysis (author)

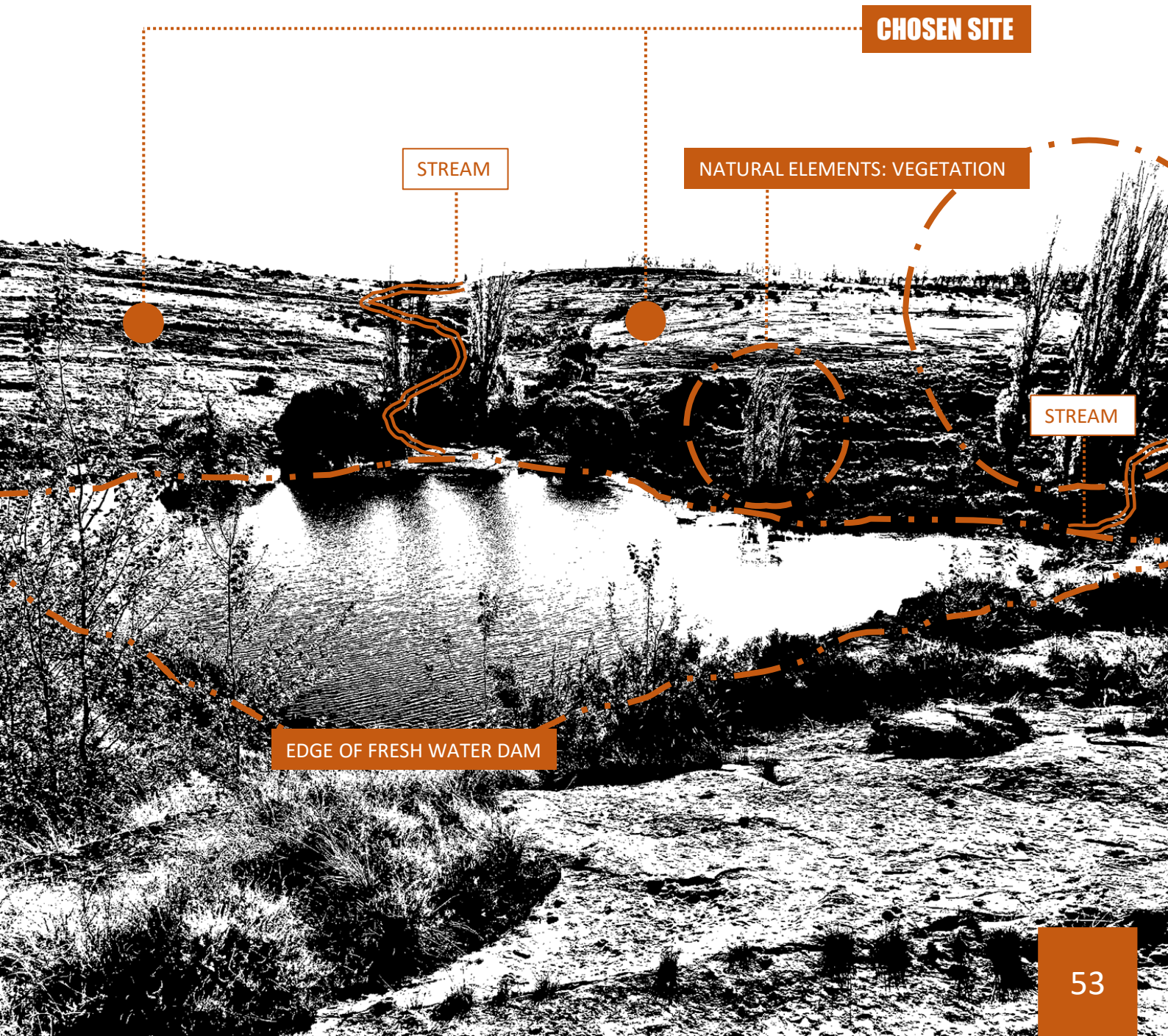


Figure 28: site analysis (author)

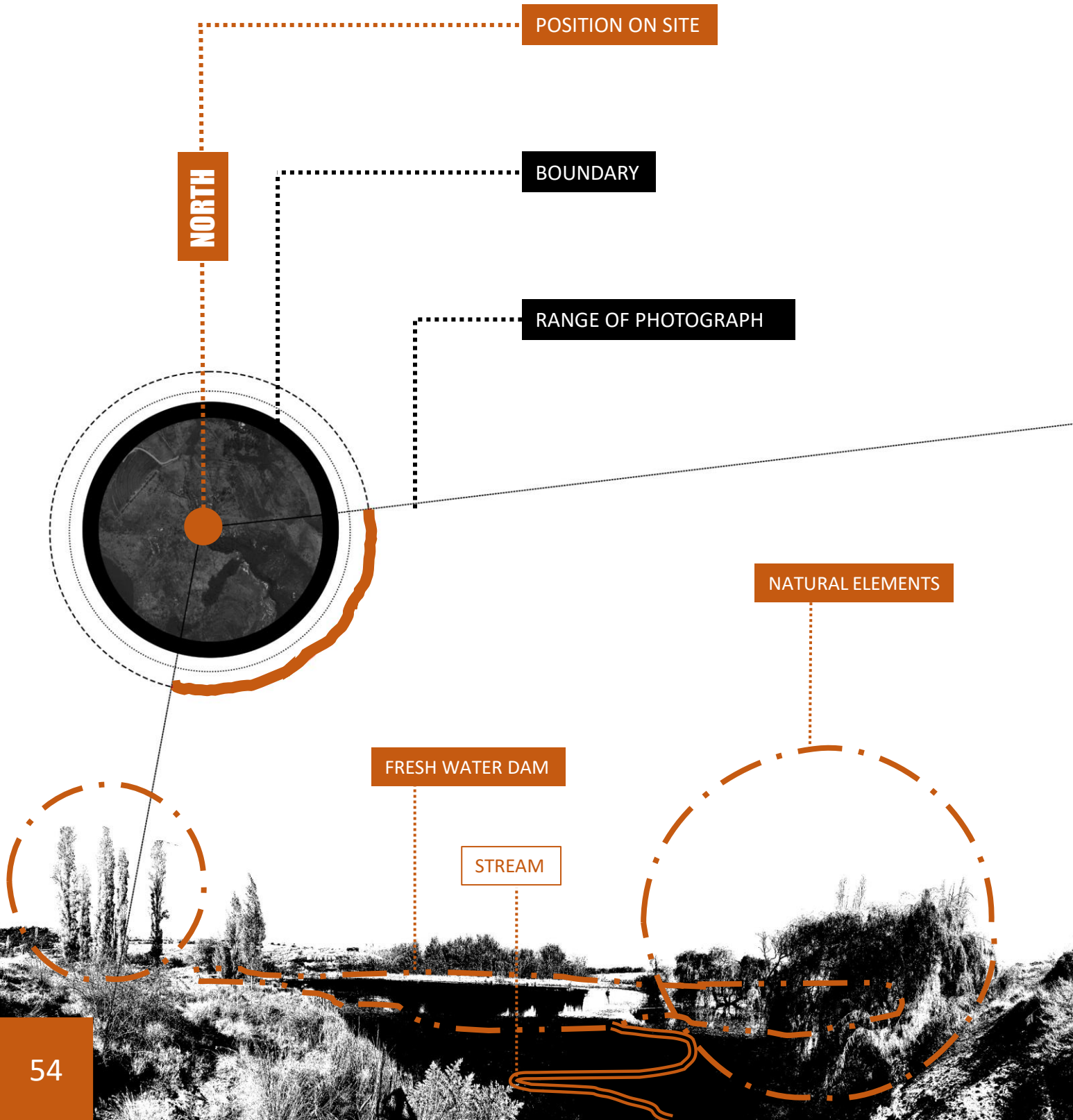


Figure 29: site analysis (author)

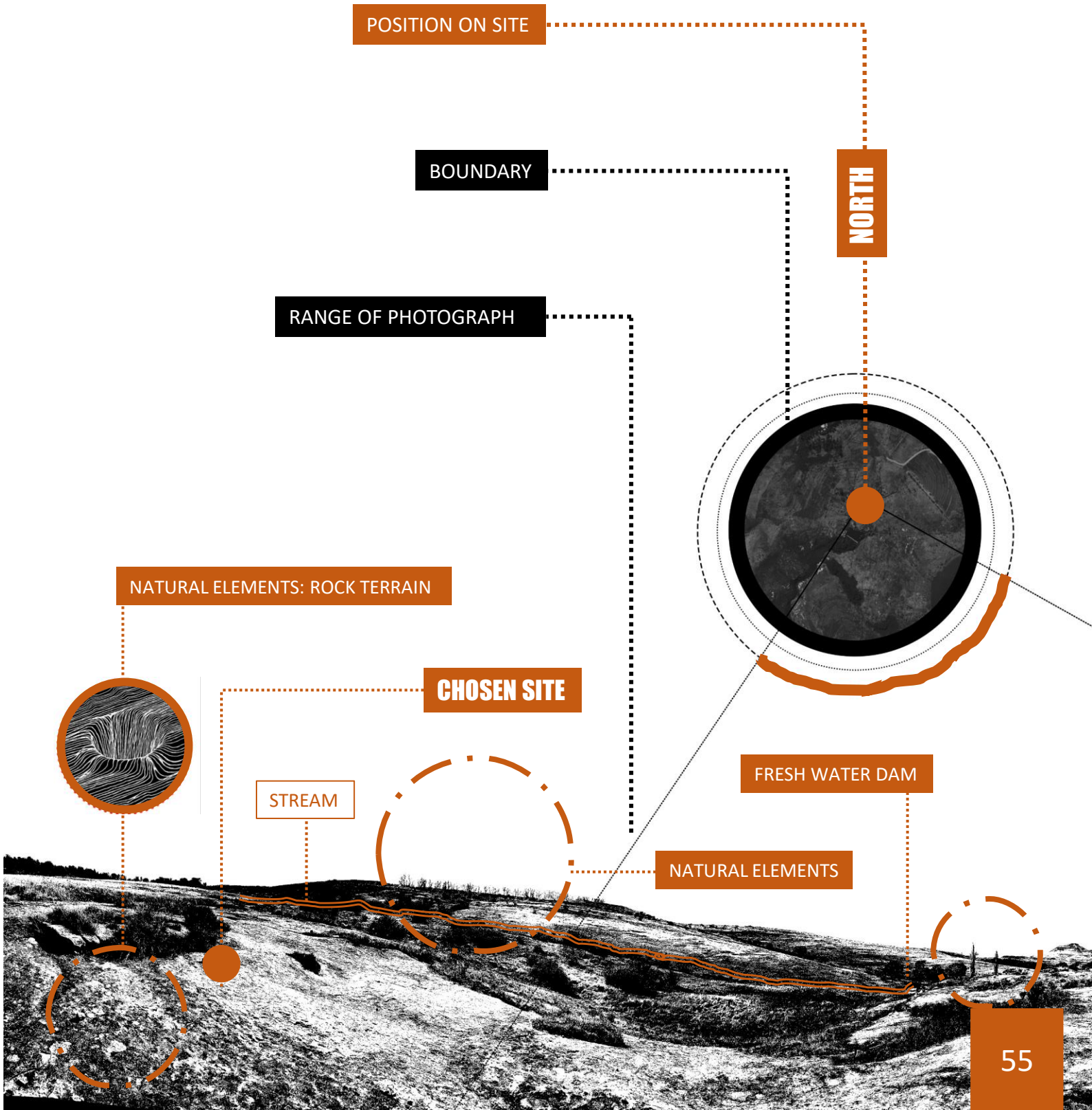


Figure 30: site analysis (author)

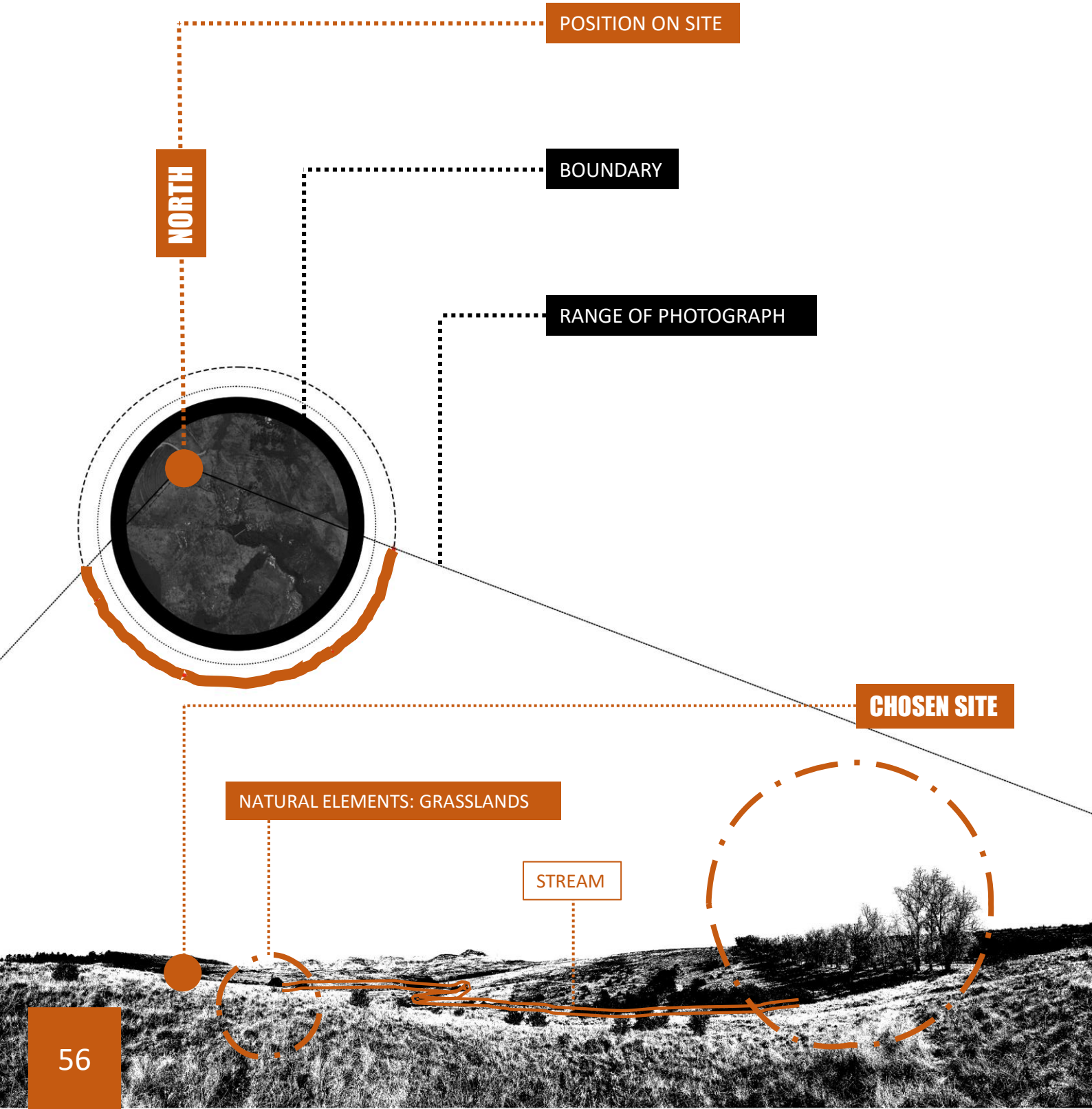
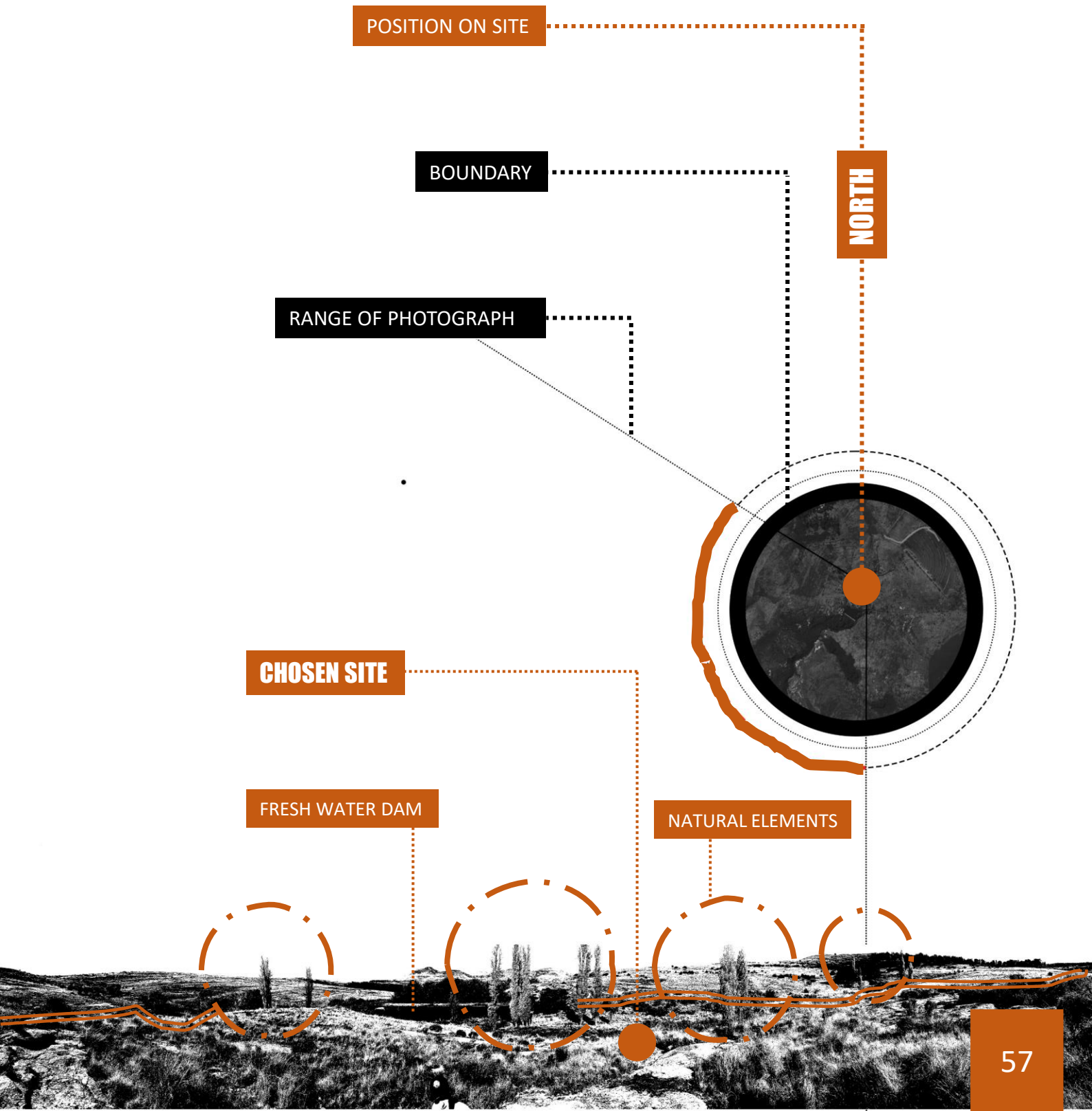


Figure 31: site analysis (author)



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter draws a parallel between the antepartum period and the phase before the design process. Just as the period before childbirth is essential in preparing for a healthy delivery, the preliminary stages of design for cultural and medical facilities for Basotho women in South Africa are crucial in addressing the evolving migration dynamics and spiritual needs of the community.

The need for cultural facilities for Basotho women in South Africa is underscored by the shifting migration patterns and their impact on gender roles and income. These facilities are essential in empowering women economically, providing support for health challenges, preserving cultural heritage, fostering community cohesion, and promoting ritual practices.

The interconnectedness of different spiritualities and rituals at the sacred Basotho caves of Motouleng exemplifies the acceptance and development of traditional and other spiritual beliefs. It's a testament to the possibility of finding common ground in honouring ancestors and embracing values important to spirituality. These sacred sites serve as places of convergence for various beliefs.

The chapter also delved into the ritualistic analysis inspired by Basotho fertility rituals and medical practices related to childbirth. This haptic ritualistic analysis is instrumental in shaping the design process that follows hereafter, emphasizing the importance of understanding and respecting the cultural and spiritual dimensions of the project.

In essence, the chapter highlights the importance of the antepartum phase of the design process, where careful consideration of cultural, spiritual, and community aspects is essential to ensure that the resulting facilities effectively meet the needs of Basotho women in South Africa. Just as preparing for childbirth requires attention to every detail, the design process must be thorough and holistic to create spaces that empower, heal, and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Basotho community.

PRETHERM INFANT 04

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HARBINGER OF LIGHT

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GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD

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THE DANCING SISTERS

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THE EARTHLY ALCHEMIST

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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

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PRETERM

((prē'tûrm', prē-tûrm')

adj. Occurring or appearing before the expected time at the end of a full-term pregnancy: preterm labor; a preterm infant. n. An infant born prematurely. (medical dictionary,2023: online)

INTRODUCTION

The proposed chapter explores how the design of maternity homes can provide a safe, supportive, and culturally attuned environment for expectant mothers and simultaneously embrace a broader sense of community and tradition. Taking inspiration from the Maternity Waiting Village project in Kasungu. This chapter delves into the evolution of the design concept, highlighting the role of various "midwives" in the process.

In this context, "midwives" are metaphorical figures that symbolize key design principles and elements woven into the architectural fabric, addressing not only the physical but also the psychological and cultural aspects of childbirth and motherhood. These design elements are guided by the notion that architecture, like a midwife, plays a pivotal role in ensuring a smooth transition from one state to another, embodying the principles of Ubuntu and harmonizing with nature.

The following chapter will delve into the significance of various "midwives" in the architectural design process, including the Earthly Alchemist, the Harbinger of Light, the Guardian of the Threshold, the Dancing Sisters, and the Entwined Twins. These metaphorical figures represent design principles derived from traditional Basotho architecture, sacred rituals, and the integration of local materials, weaving together a narrative that goes beyond the mere physicality of buildings. To provide context, Opong explains:

It is believed that the child could take after any of the women serving as midwives hence the need for people of good reputation and conduct. It also guards against witchcraft and sorcery. And they obviously school her on the principles of childbearing and self medication. (1997;25)

The subsequent sections of this chapter will explore these metaphorical midwives, dissecting their roles in the architectural design process and demonstrating how they contribute to the creation of a supportive and culturally responsive environment for expectant mothers and how it leads to the technical approach of proposed design

PROGRAMMATIC DEVELOPMENT

PRECEDENT STUDY: MATERNITY WAITING VILLAGE, KASUNGA, MALAWI

BY MASS DESIGN STUDIO

MASS Design Studio (2023:online) explains that maternal mortality due to childbirth complications is a significant global issue, particularly in Malawi, where approximately one in every 36 women faced a risk of dying during pregnancy or delivery in 2010, often due to preventable causes. The same can be said about maternal death rates relating to Basotho women and Lesotho. To address this problem, Maternal Waiting Homes were established to improve access to skilled healthcare professionals near health centres. The proposed project will hence incorporate the same initiative, creating homes that offer a supervised environment for expectant mothers from the 36th week of pregnancy until delivery because of the lack of medical facilities in the area the proposed design will also incorporate a maternity clinic.

MASS Design Studio (2023:online) elaborates on the topic stating, that the University of North Carolina Project-Malawi collaborated with a hospital in Kasungu, Malawi, and committed to building two new maternal waiting homes in partnership with MASS, an architectural design firm. The existing prototype was insufficient, lacking adequate daylight, ventilation, sanitation, and the capacity to accommodate patient attendants. This led many pregnant women to return to their homes instead of staying at the facility. Hence the proposed design will incorporate a variety of Accommodation units where pregnant mothers can be accompanied by family members or friends who provide support during the process.

MASS, in consultation with healthcare professionals and expectant mothers in Kasungu,





SOCIAL SPACES

introduced a new design concept called the Maternity Waiting Village. The new design moved away from a single, block-like structure and instead created smaller compounds arranged around courtyards, inspired by the layout of traditional Malawian villages. This design encouraged knowledge sharing among mothers and created a sense of community. (2023:online) The proposed design will also incorporate the necessity for social spaces and draw inspiration from Basotho settlement patterns

The new design by MASS also featured dedicated education areas for workshops on prenatal and postnatal care, as well as vocational training to help mothers earn income during their stay. This addressed the issue of wage loss, a significant barrier to the widespread use of maternity waiting facilities. The shared spaces became hubs of activity and learning. (2023:online) To promote the sharing of knowledge and the initiative to provide facilities for income generation. The proposed design incorporates a training facility where knowledge between trained nurses and Basotho women can be exchanged as well as pottery workshops, where the women staying in the maternity waiting village can sculpt pots that are sold within the visitor centre. The visitor centre will be used by visitors from the public who want to paint pots sculpted by the Basotho women as well as partake in the guided walk to the sacred fertility caves. The visitor centre also accommodates visits from family members of the pregnant women.

The maternity waiting village designed by MASS provided insight with regard to the physical and psychological necessities of maternity waiting villages. In addition to the programme inspired by MASS's design the proposed design will also incorporate spaces that accommodate the spiritual/ritual needs specific to Basotho Women.

THE RITUAL TIMELINE:

DESIGNATING SPACES FOR RITUAL ACTS

He adds that on reaching her parents' home, she undergoes some ritual acts. All her ornaments are removed, her eyebrows are shaved, a mixture of red ochre and butter fat is smeared on her head, face and torso, and a sheep-skin similarly besmeared is tied across her breasts to hide her bigness and keep the foetus warm. (Opong,1997;23-24)

A sheep may be killed for her, its gall sprinkled at the back of the hut and its mohlehlo or gallbladder fastened round her neck. She may also wear a necklace of ostrich eggshells, threaded with her husbands' clan beads, together with pumpkin seeds and a wildcat's claw or tail-tip. This rite should bring luck and strength and marks the beginning of her seclusion. (Opong,1997;23-24)

As a response to the notions made by Opong an initiation pavilion was also incorporated into the proposed design where the sheep skin apron and amulet sent to the facility beforehand will be handed over to the new mothers by one of the elders in the village during the besmearing ritual. The pavilion will also act as a private prayer space for mothers who want to give thanks to their ancestors or for barren mothers who visit the facility to pray for fertility.

... when announcing the birth of a child to the father, the Basotho use a stick or water. If the child is a boy they use a stick, if it is a girl, they use water. To the Basotho, the stick represents manhood and water womanhood. (Opong,1997;26)

This ritual is accommodated within the Clinic by incorporating a gender reveal courtyard where a fountain will represent womanhood and will be allowed to flow when revealing the gender of the newborn child as a girl. The tectonic structure covering the courtyard will also incorporate movable shading panels that will be lowered to reveal the gender of the child as a boy. By incorporating the aforementioned ritual, the father will also be involved in the facility and the process of the woman's birth

A very old custom holds that, after the birth of a child a sheep be slaughtered as sacrifice or, if the child is the son of a chief, an ox. This sacrifice was meant to place the baby under the protection of the family gods. The fat from the entrails, symbol of prosperity, was wrapped around the child's neck for a few moments; the gall was poured over mother and child as a source of blessings. This was the 'hlatsuo ea nyooko' - (baptism of bile) and called down upon them the blessing of the ancestors. The sacrifice itself was more of thanksgiving offering. This is the meaning that Basotho give to this kind of oblation called 'Ho ananela' i.e Thank by offering a gift. (Opong,1997;28)

To accommodate the above-mentioned ritual a thanksgiving orchard was incorporated into the design programme that will allow the sacrificial rituals to take place after the birth of a child at the facility. The orchard will also serve as a space where the child's naming ceremony can take place, hence incorporating an orchard of the *bush of the vulture's* trees used to fumigate the baby and give wisdom, courage and eloquence.

Spiders' eggs, believed to represent the ancestors' souls, is mixed with mud from mole's nests, burnt, cooked with fat from a black lamb, and given the required ointment. This ointment is smeared on the child's head along the sutures of the cranium, the first line starting from the brow and going right to the back of neck; the second from ear to ear, in the form of a large cross. He adds that the mother is also anointed on the forehead and on the soles of the feet so as to enable her to overcome the obstacles she might meet on her path. This is followed by a fumigation ceremony which consisted of smoking the baby in the smoke of the burning bush called 'sehalahala sa mat/aka' - the bush of the vultures. He says that D. Kidd and Willongby believed that this fumigation was destined to give wisdom, courage and eloquence to the baby. (Opong,1997;30)

Based on the precedent study and investigation of Pregnancy rituals an accommodation list for the project was compiled

ACCOMMODATION LIST

VISITOR CENTRE

PURIFICATION CHAPEL	100sqm
ENTRANCE GARDEN	100sqm
RECEPTION	20sqm
ABLUTION	66sqm
POTTERY DISPLAY WALKWAY	63sqm
CLEANER ROOM	15sqm
POTTERY STORAGE	45sqm
OFFICE	15sqm
SUPPLY STORAGE	9sqm
RESTAURANT + POT PAINT STUDIO	160sqm
KITCHEN	75 sqm
COLD STORAGE	9sqm
DRY STORAGE	9sqm
OFFICE	15sqm
LOCKER ROOM	32sqm

MATERNITY CLINIC

RECEPTION	40 sqm
WAITING AREA	20sqm
GENDER REVEAL COURTYARD	56sqm
CLEANER SUPPLY ROOM	4sqm
LOCKER + CALL ROOM	100sqm
LOUNGE	20sqm
CONFERENCE ROOM	75sqm
KITCHEN	60sqm
OFFICE	30sqm
STORAGE	35sqm
CONSULTATION ROOM	30sqm
ABLUTIONS	15sqm
STORAGE	10sqm
CLEAN ROOM	6sqm
SOILED ROOM	6sqm
NURSE STATION	30sqm
NURSERY	30sqm
MED PREP ROOM	12sqm
2 x OPERATING ROOM	60sqm
5 x PATIENT ROOMS	250sqm
TERRACE	60sqm
GRIEVANCE GARDEN	80sqm

POTTERY WORKSHOP

3 x STUDIO	159sqm
3 x ABLUTION	18sqm
3 x STORAGE	9sqm
3 x CLAY DRYING	27sqm
3 x CLAY GRINDING	27sqm

MATERNITY WAITING VILLAGE

INITIATION PAVILION	300 sqm
NAMING ORCHARD	250sqm
12 X 3 PERSON UNITS	580sqm
8 X 2 PERSON UNIT	336sqm
6 x PUBLIC KITCHEN + WASH ROOM	360sqm

MEDICAL TRAINING CENTRE

PRESENTATION CLASSROOM	35sqm
PRACTICAL CLASSROOM	30sqm
CONFERENCE ROOM	36sqm
KITCHEN	25sqm
ABLUTION	25sqm
OFFICE	9sqm

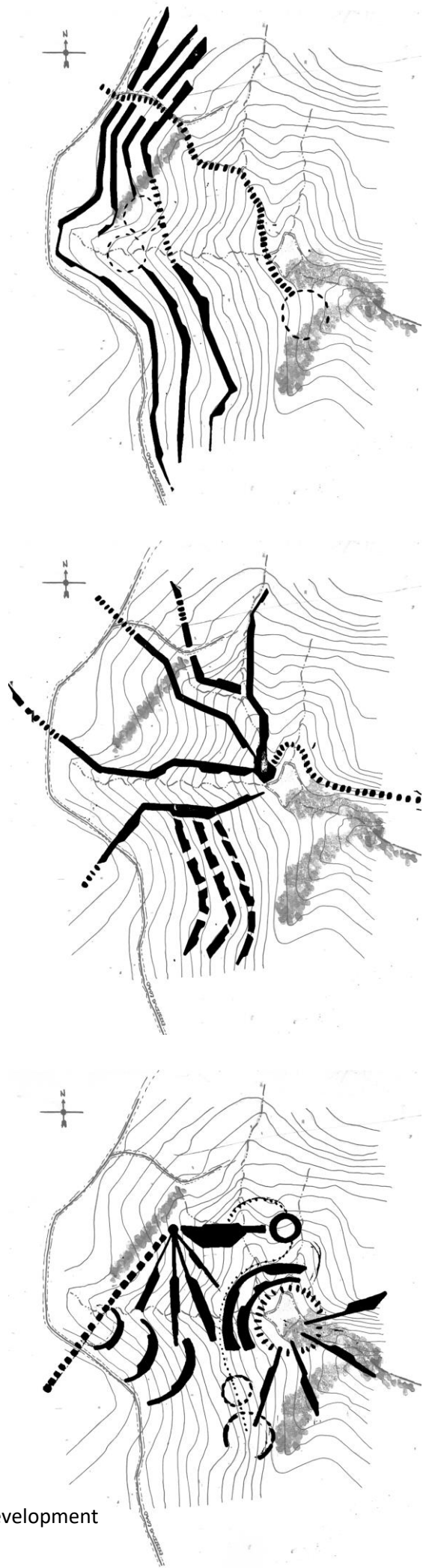


Figure 32: initial plan development (author)

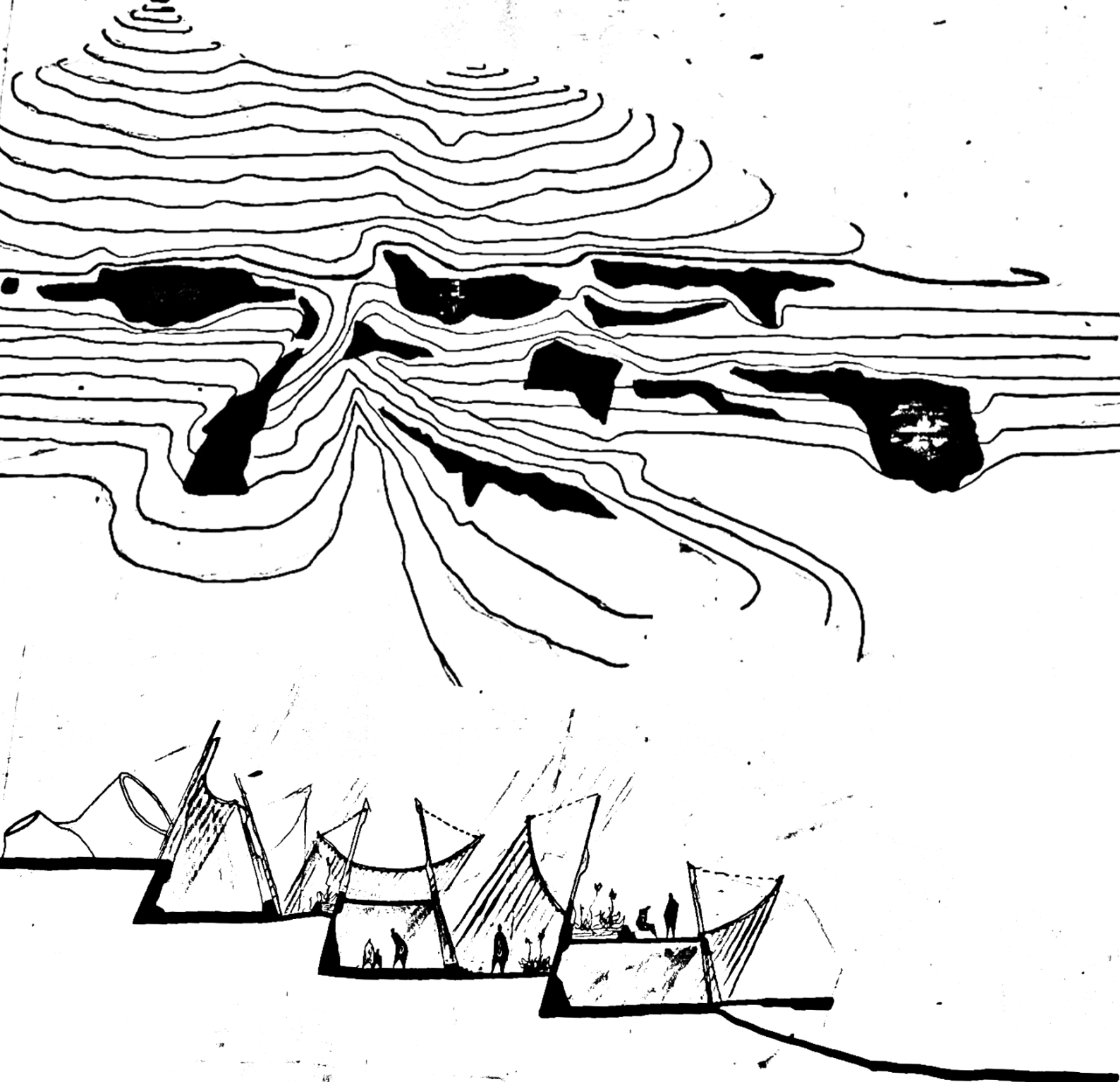
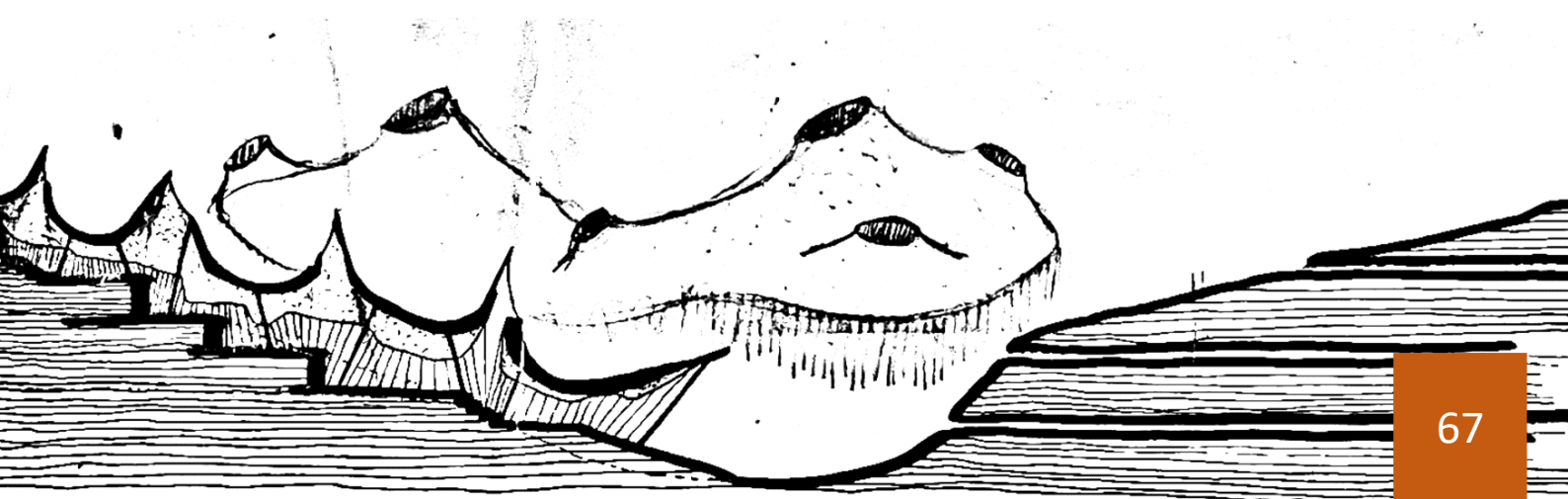


Figure 33: initial ideas regarding approach to contours (author)



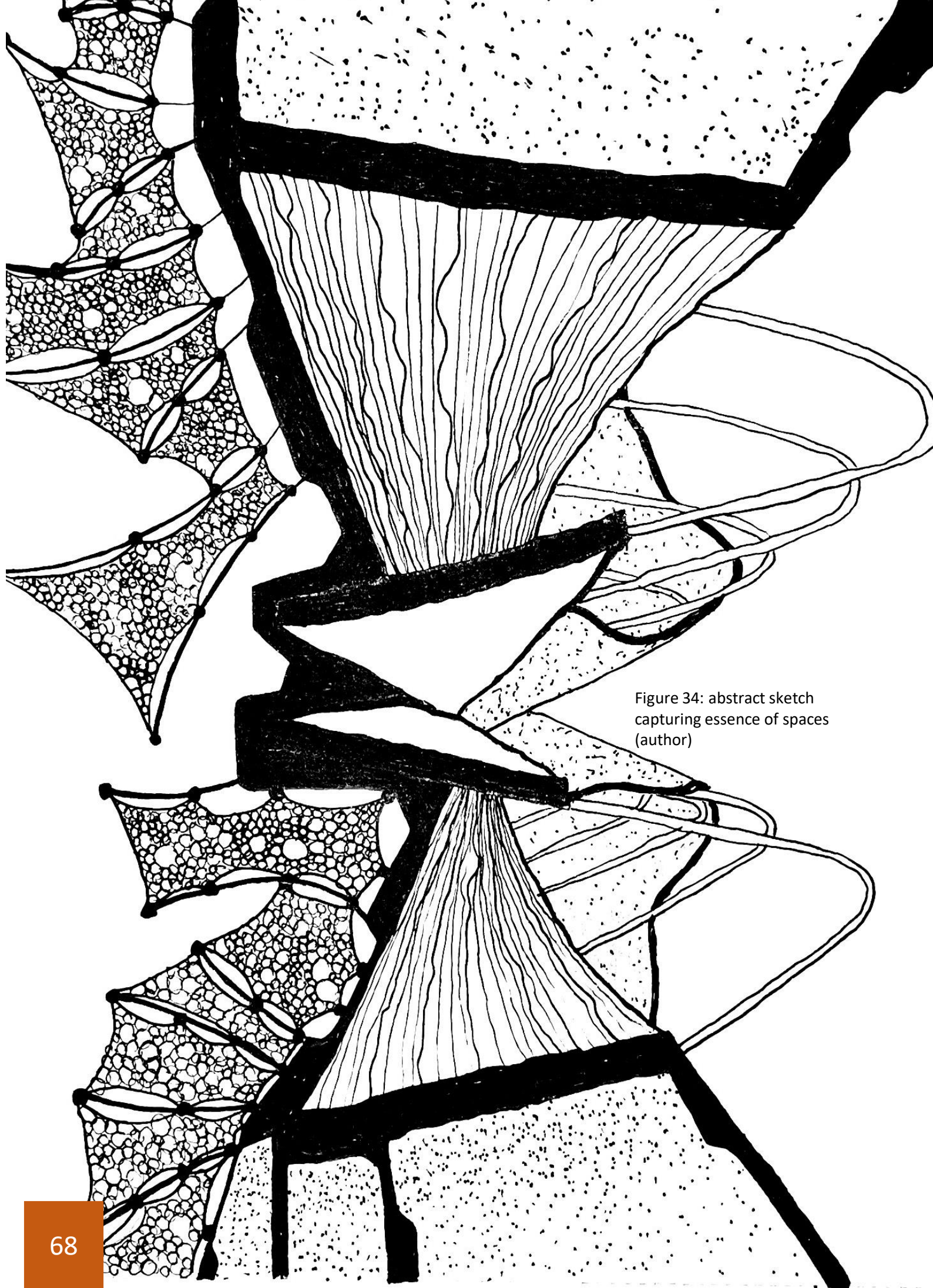


Figure 34: abstract sketch capturing essence of spaces (author)

THE ENTWINED TWINS

TECTONIC AND STEREOTOMIC PRINCIPLES FOUND WITHIN THE BASOTHO HUT

Basotho building styles offer a fascinating context in which to explore the interplay of tectonic and stereotomic architectural elements, and how these elements relate to the philosophical concept of *ubuntu*, the idea of dwelling, and the notion of harmonizing with nature itself within architectural hermeneutics.

... there is a special funeral ritual for twins. According to her, when a twin brother or sister dies no formal funeral rites are performed until the living one also dies. She said that before the deceased twin is put in the coffin, the living one has to lie in it first and before the coffin is lowered into the grave, the living one climbs in and lies in first. Other interviewees confirmed this ritual. Nobody could, however, give any substantial reasons for this ritual. All they could say was that because they were born together, it is believed that they should go together. Therefore, it is only when the living one dies that formal funeral rites are performed for both of them. (Opong,1997,76)

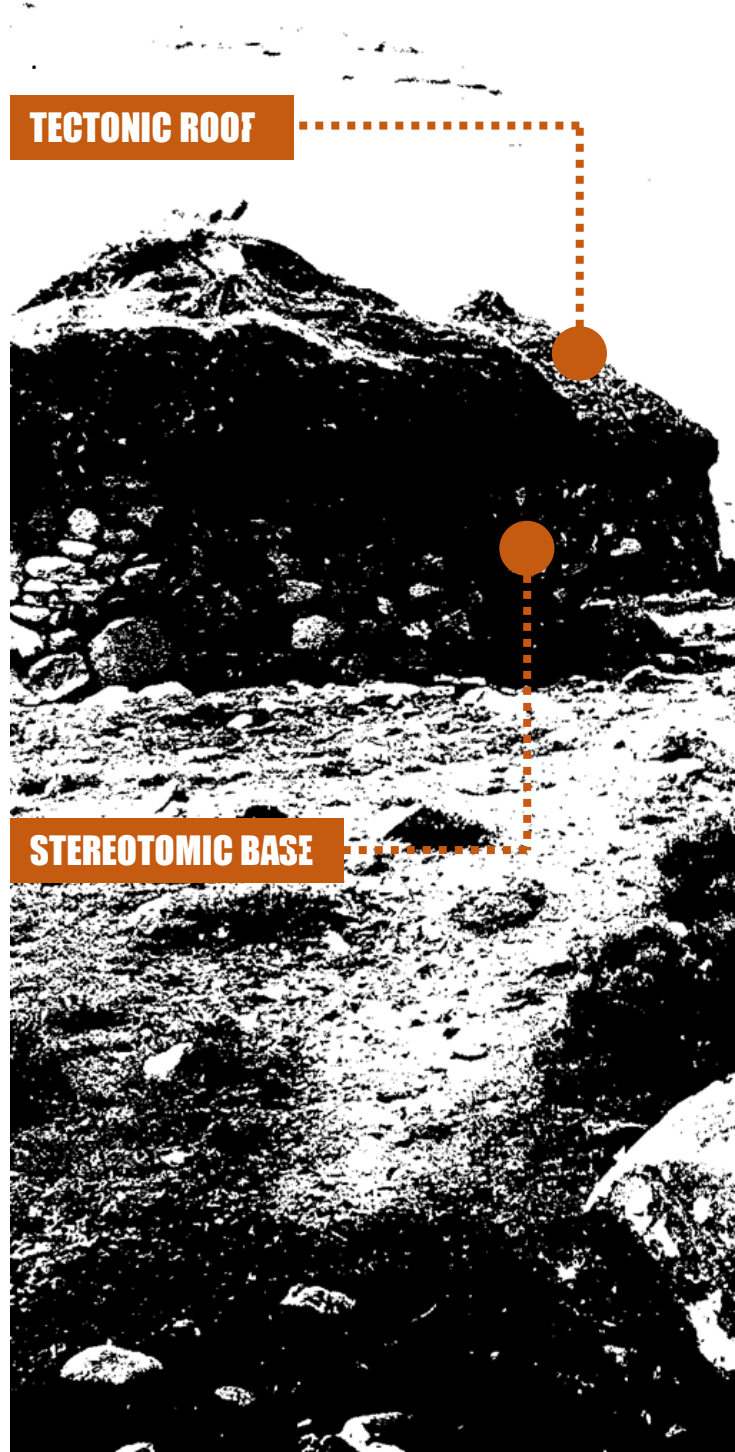
This connection between siblings explained by Opong is the reason for introducing the entwined twins as midwives, as a means to introduce the interconnectedness of stereotomic and tectonic elements within Basotho architectural building styles and how these principles can be incorporated into the development of the proposed design

Basotho architecture often incorporates tectonic elements, which are characterized by the use of lightweight, flexible, and typically wooden/reed structures.

Stereotomic elements in Basotho architecture can be seen in the use of heavy, solid, and durable materials, such as stone or earth, for building foundations and walls. Stereotomic elements provide stability and permanence to the structures, representing a sense of rootedness and tradition. The use of these

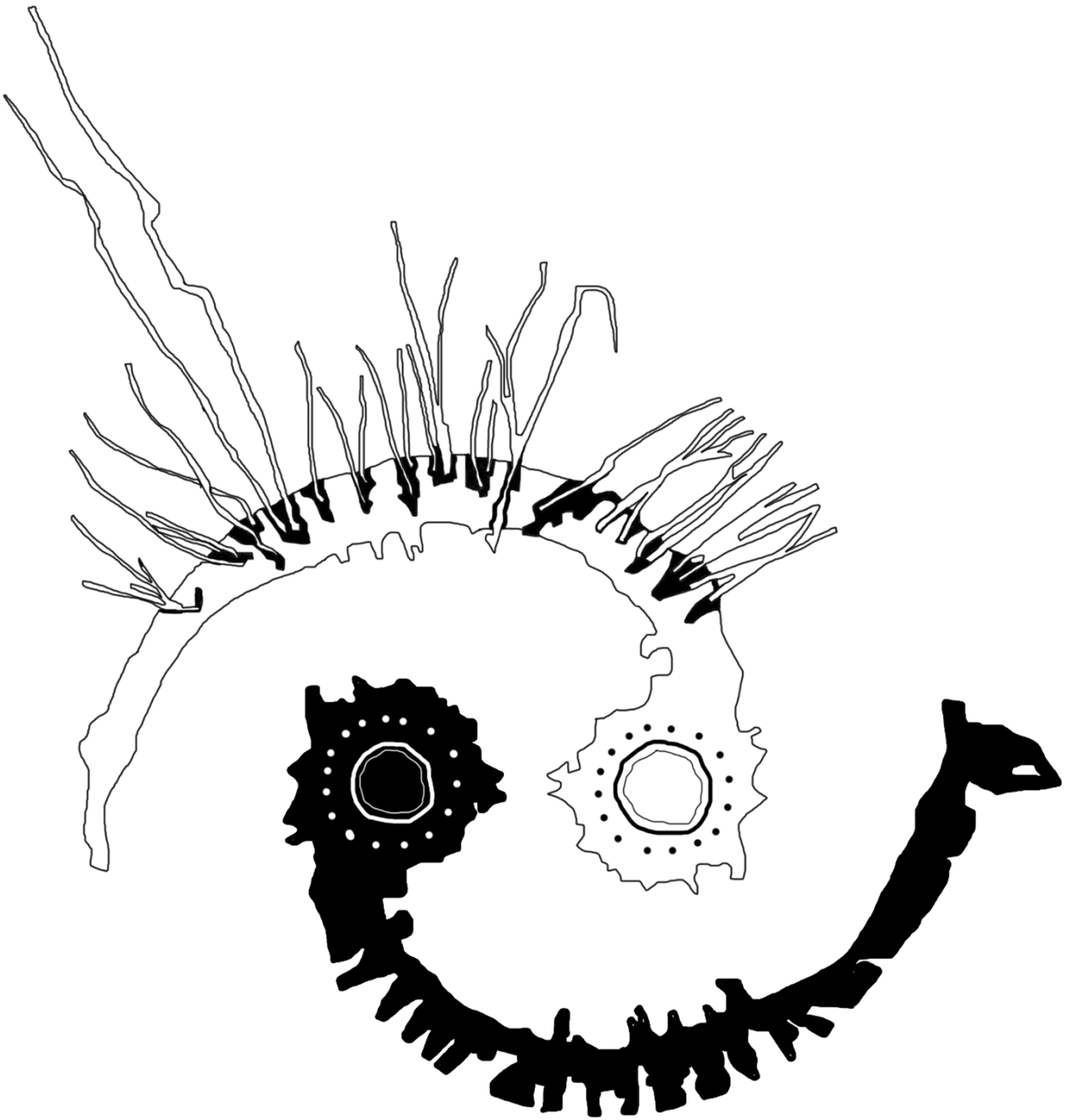
materials can be seen as an embodiment of the Basotho people's connection to their land and heritage.

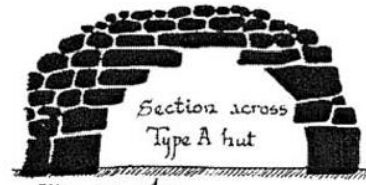
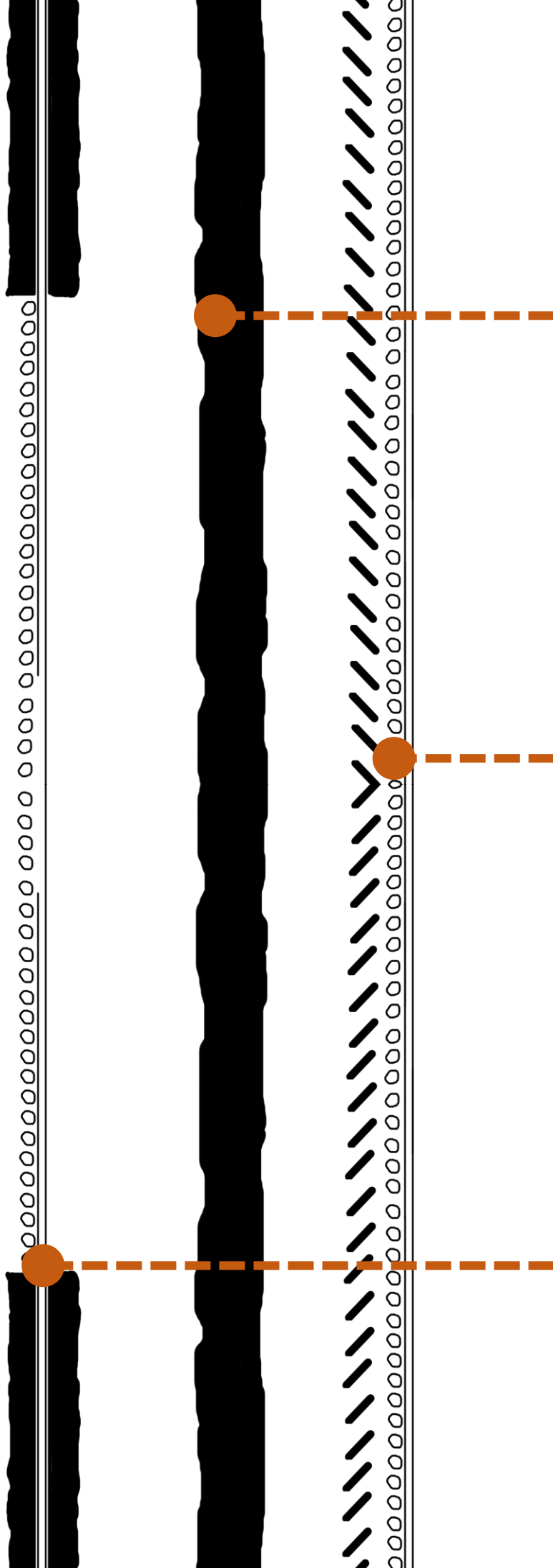
In conclusion, Basotho building styles exemplify the dynamic interplay between tectonic and stereotomic elements while embodying the philosophical concepts of *ubuntu* and the entwined twins



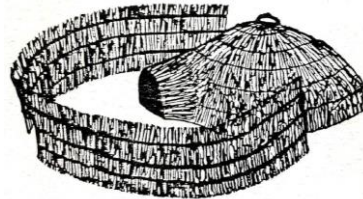
TECTONIC ROOF

STEREOTOMIC BASE

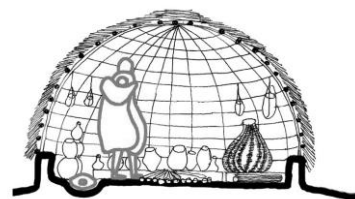




GHOYA HUT (Kammeyer ,2010; 179) that consists of a stereotomic stone structure from roof to base



MOHLONGOA FATSU HUT (Kammeyer ,2010; 186) that consists of a tectonic thatch structure from roof to base



MOHLONGOA FATSU HUT VARIATION (Kammeyer ,2010; 188) that consists of a stereotomic stone base with a thatched wall and roof structure

THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT

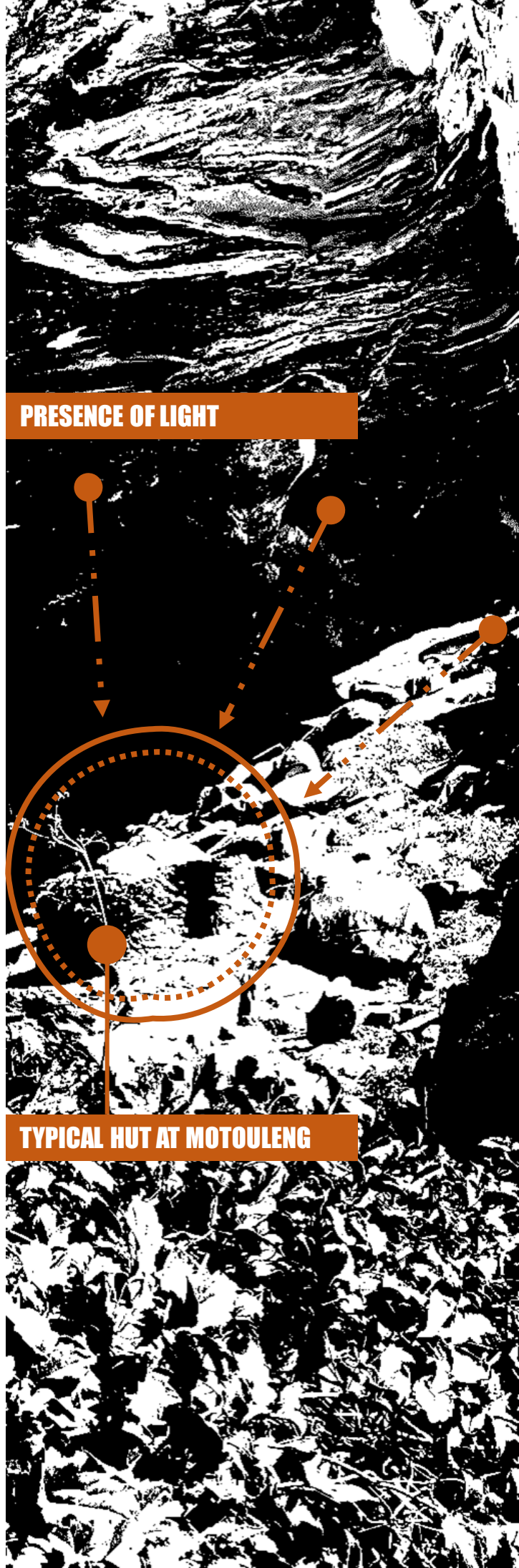
A STUDY OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIGHT AND ITS INCORPORATION IN THE BASOTHO HUT

Upon a visit to the *Motouleng* sacred fertility caves the traditional healer expressed that after the thatched roofs of the cave settlement was burned during a protest in 2020, they were instructed by their ancestors not to construct new roofs but to leave the top of their huts exposed to the light and sky so that a closer connection and more intimate communication can be experienced with the ancestors.

The traditional healer's account of leaving the tops of their huts exposed to light and sky after the thatched roofs were burned reveals a profound belief in the connection between light and the ancestors. Light, in this context, is seen as a means to establish closer and more intimate communication with the ancestral realm. It is considered a conduit for spiritual connection, allowing for the passage of messages and blessings between the living and the ancestors. The exposure to light symbolizes a conscious effort to facilitate this connection, making light a pivotal aspect of Basotho spirituality.

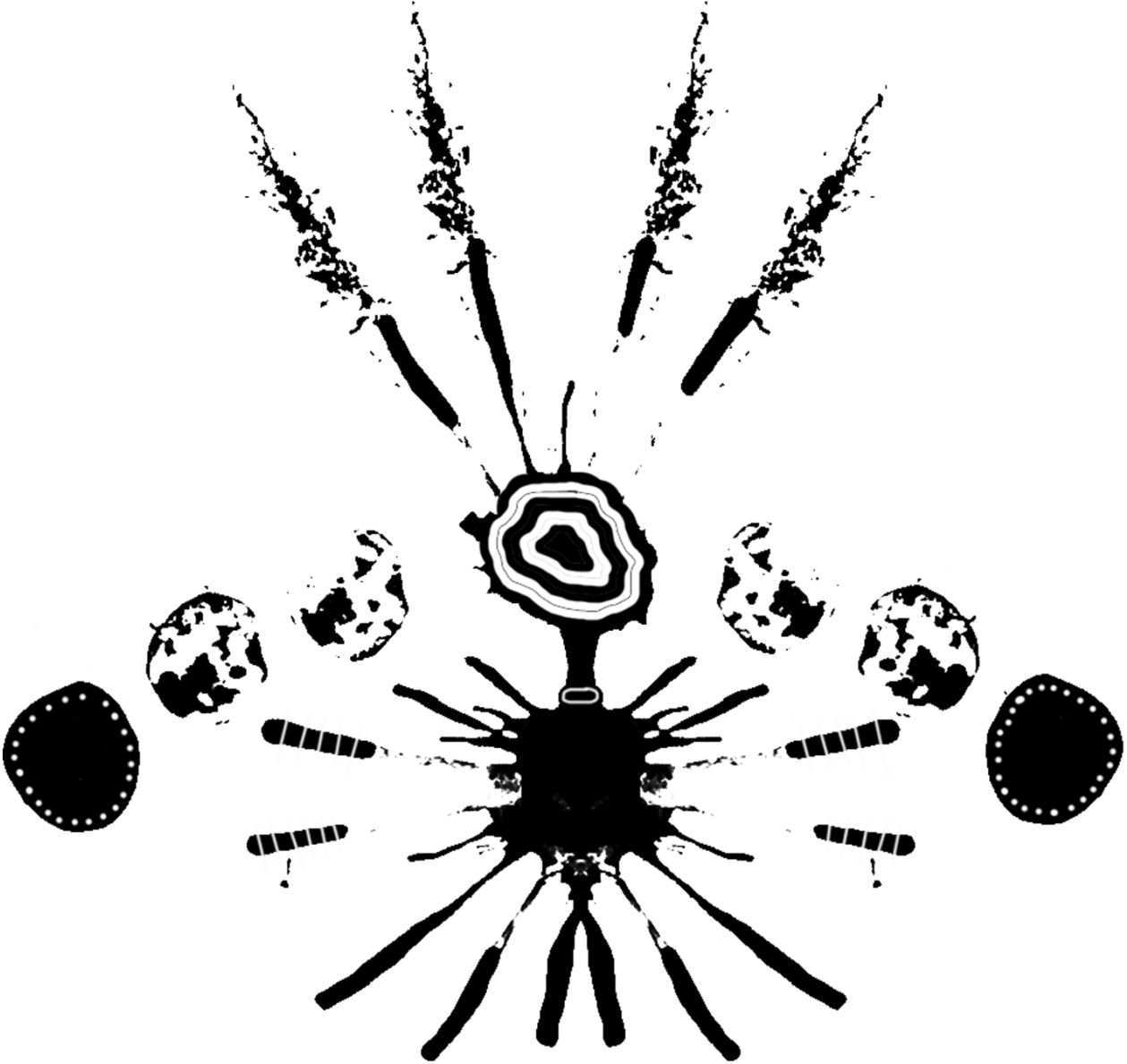
Hence the harbinger of light is introduced as a midwife. The harbinger inspired an analysis of the development of Basotho hut silhouettes and how they can be reinterpreted in a manner that remains functional but also accommodates more natural light within everyday spaces to heighten the spiritual experiences of the proposed design's built form. The incorporation of natural light also highlights the awareness of the passage of time.

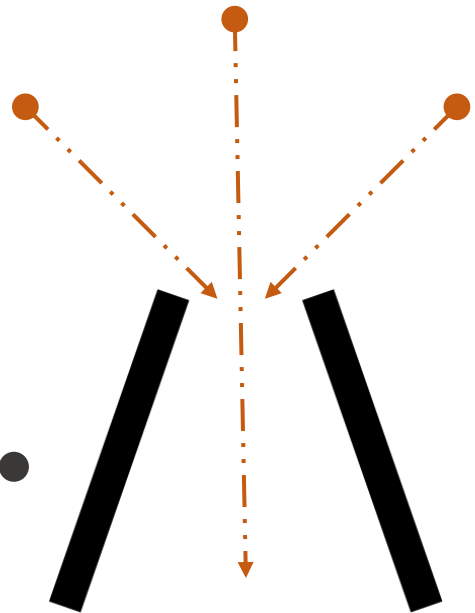
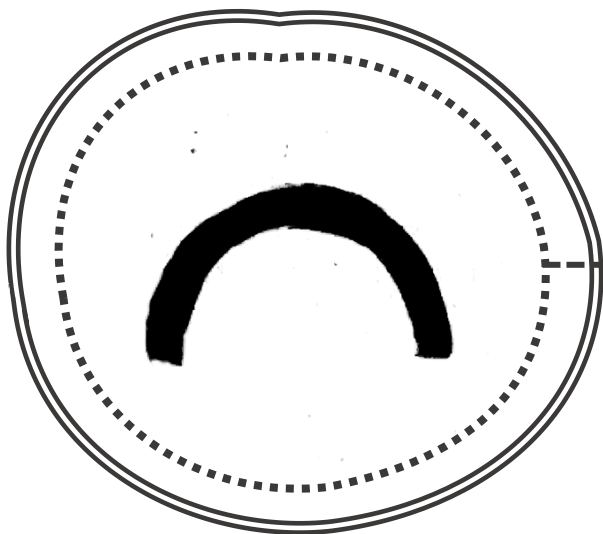
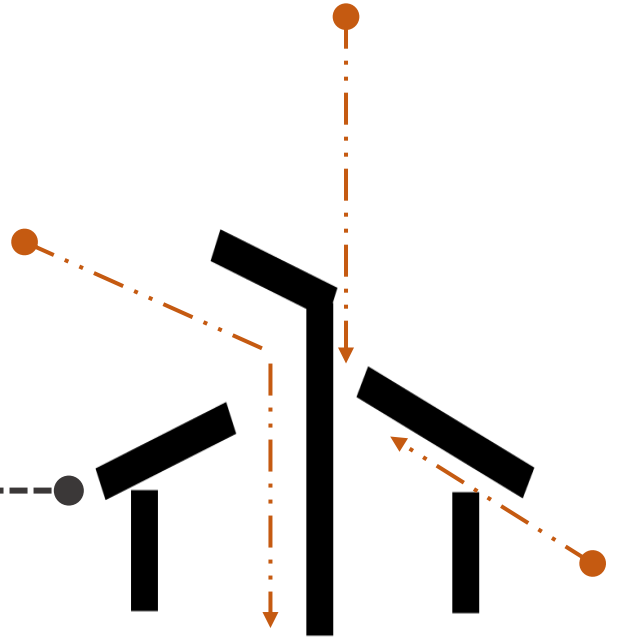
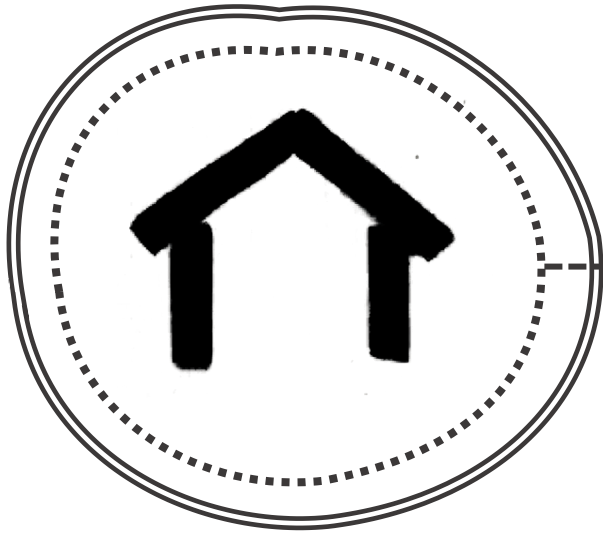
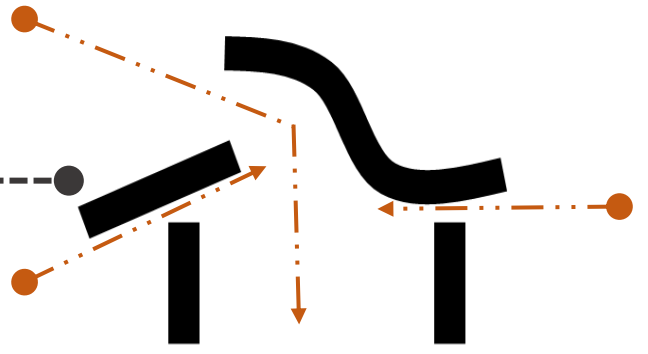
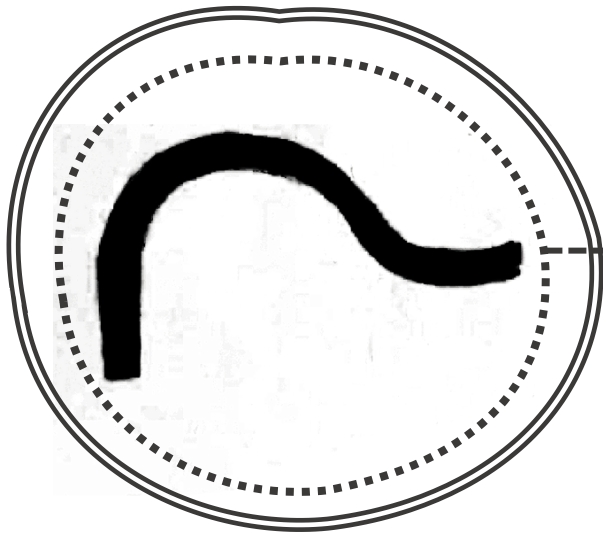
the harbinger of light conveys the idea that light, in this context, is not merely a physical phenomenon but is seen as a bearer of spiritual revelations and guidance.. This symbolism underscores the importance of light as a spiritual guide and facilitator.



PRESENCE OF LIGHT

TYPICAL HUT AT MOTOULENG





GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD

A STUDY OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THRESHOLD PRESENT IN THE BASOTHO HUT

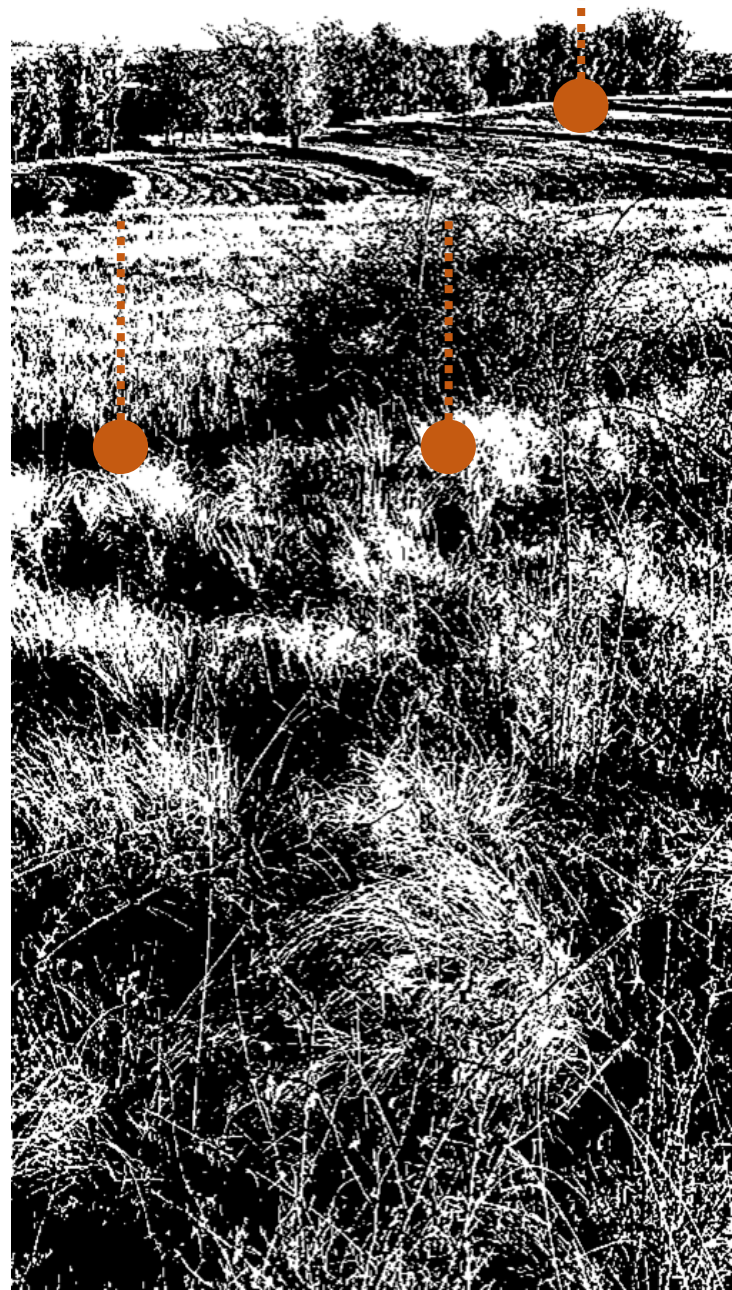
As discussed in previous chapters, the threshold serves as a symbolic bridge between different states of being. The sharing of knowledge, often expressed through rituals, represents a profound rite of passage. It allows individuals to transition from one state to another, necessitating a departure from existing societal constructs. This transformation is fundamental in the Basotho architectural context, and the threshold acts as the facilitator of this journey.

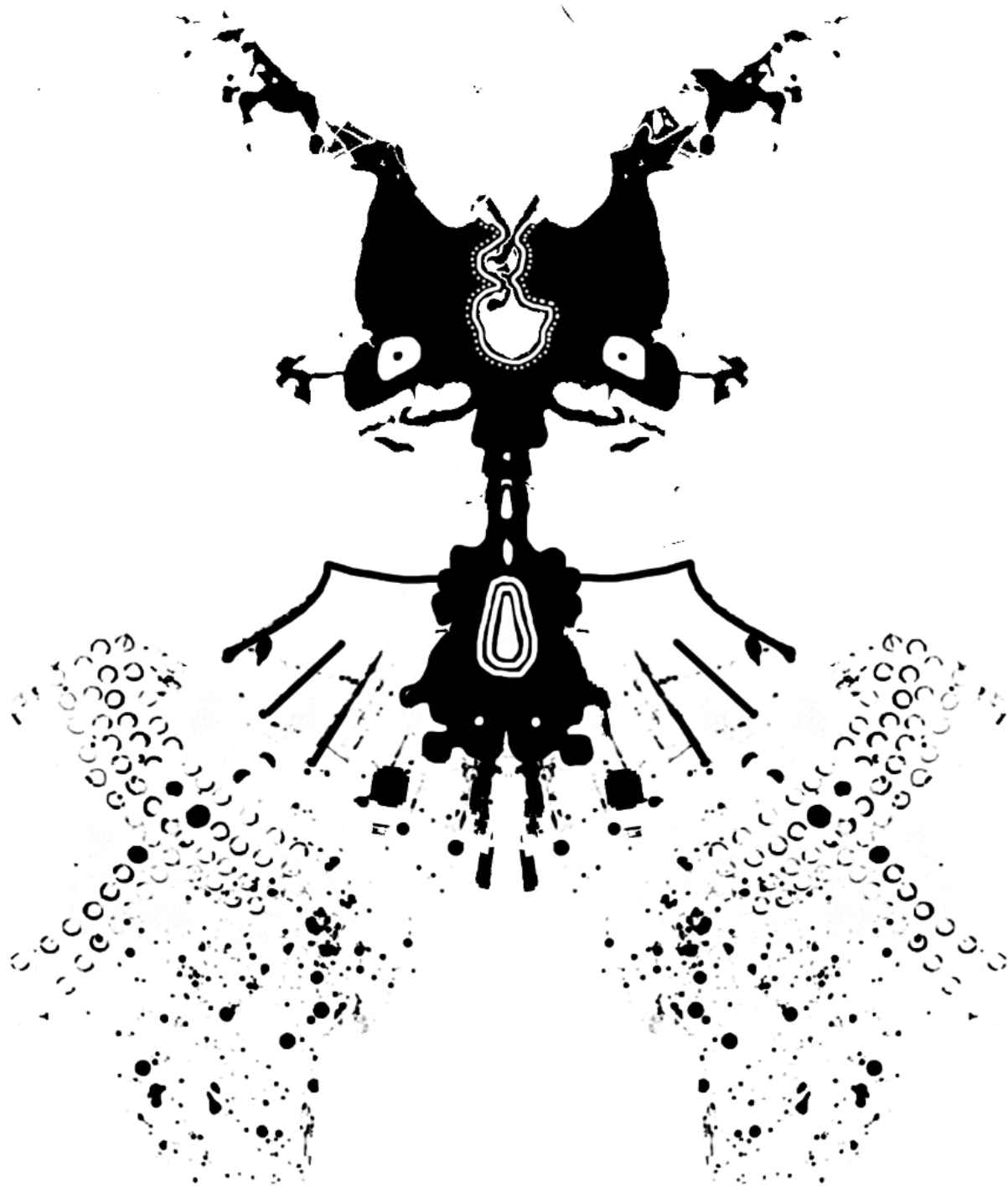
This idea of liminality is central to Basotho architecture, where the threshold, be it the entrance to a hut or a communal space, represents a realm of transition. Here, individuals are neither fully inside nor outside; they are connected to both the world they leave behind and the one they are entering. This concept is exemplified through the metaphor of the pregnant mother, herself a threshold between the ancestral and physical realms.

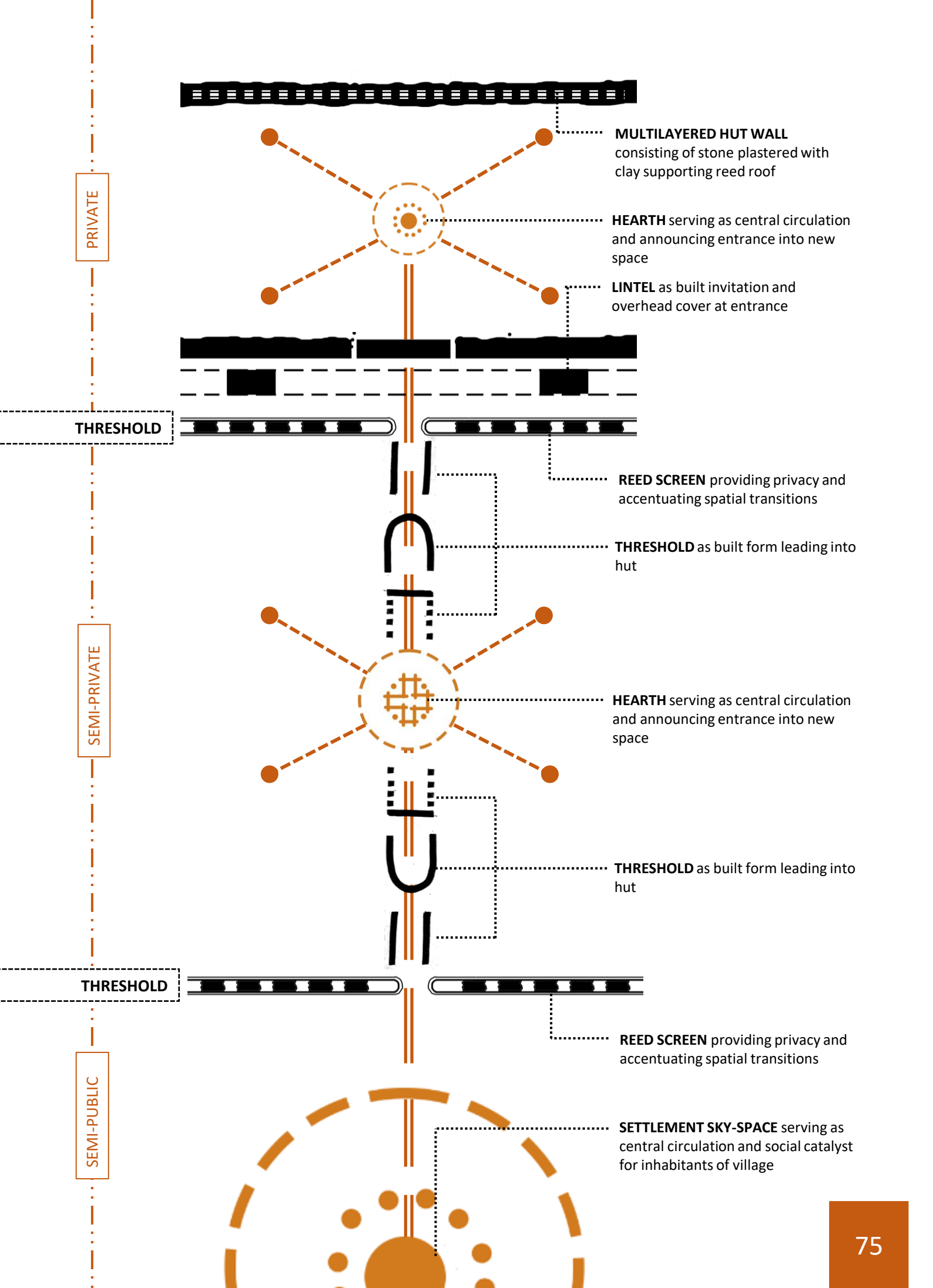
The introduction of the guardian of the threshold as a midwife serves as a means to highlight the importance of transitioning spaces within Basotho architectural design. Specifically, the transition from social into more private spaces

In conclusion, the threshold in Basotho architecture embodies a complex and multifaceted concept that goes far beyond its physical manifestation. It signifies a deep understanding of transition, transformation, and liminality. The guardian of the threshold accentuates the cultural and spiritual importance of these transitions. Each threshold within Basotho architecture serves as a sacred space, similar to the pregnant mother, embodying the in-between state as a protector during both spiritual and physical transitions.

CONTOURS AS THRESHOLD ON SITE







THE DANCING SISTERS

A STUDY OF SOCIAL AND COMMUNAL SPACES WITHIN BASOTHO SETTLEMENTS

According to Kammeyer (2010;168-169), the *sky-space* represents a **threshold** area that connects both the daily life of the community and special occasions. This versatile **transition** space is utilized for regular social interactions and pedestrian movement, as well as for communal celebrations and important community events.

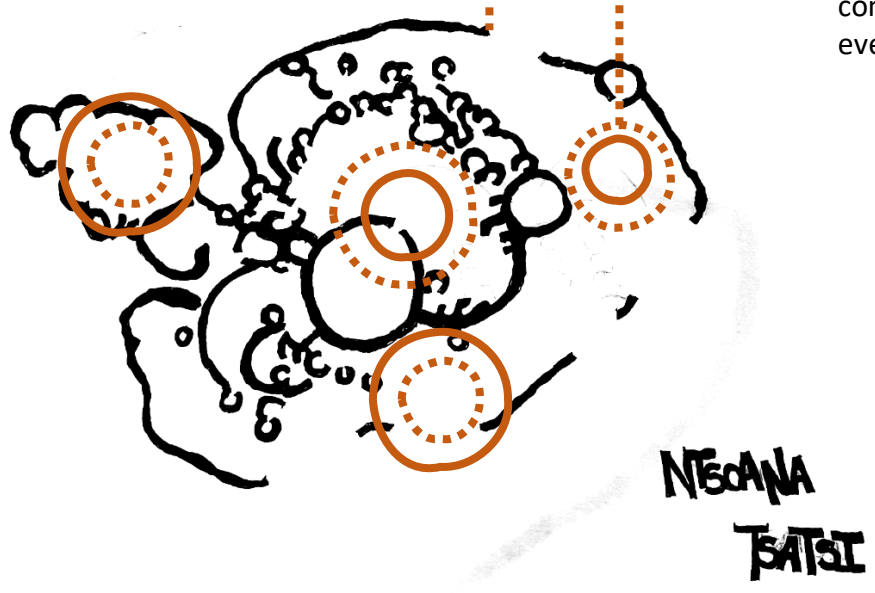
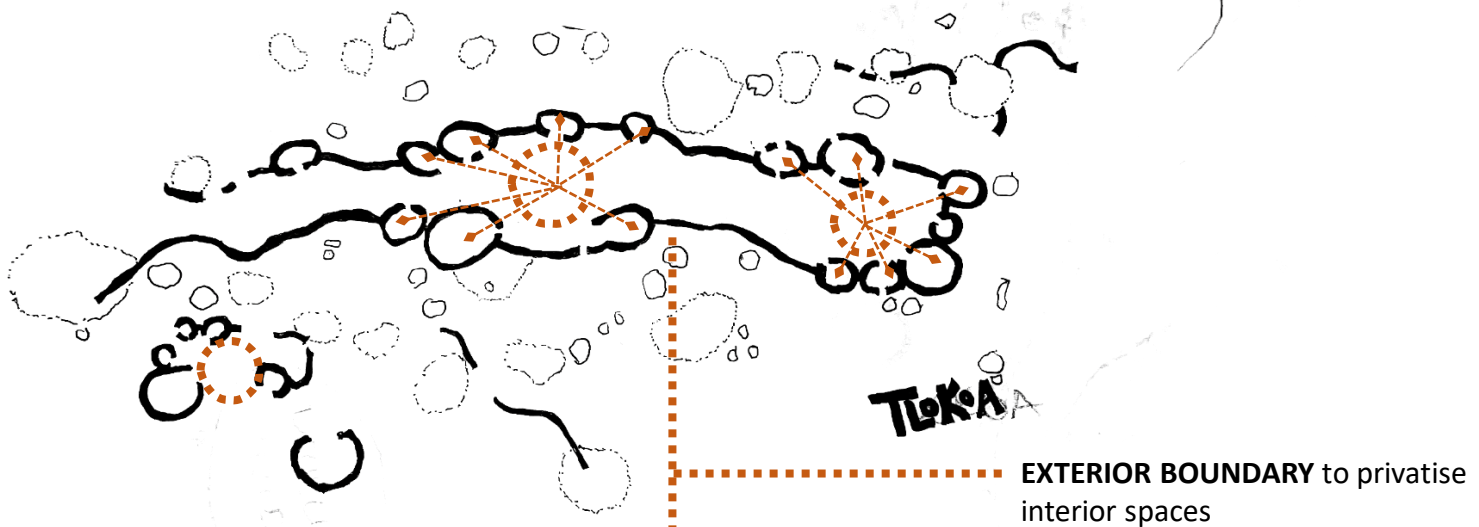
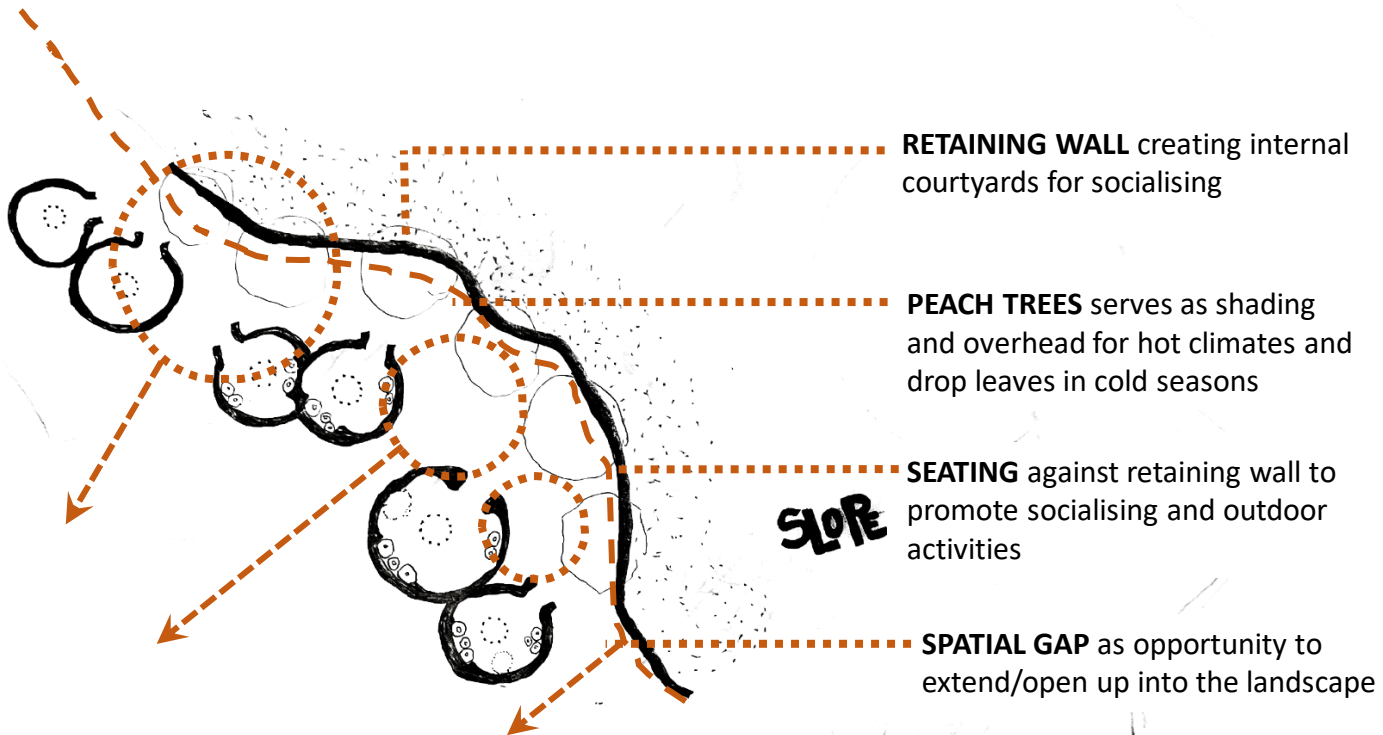
Based on Kammeyer's notion discussed in previous chapters the dancing sisters are introduced as midwives to accommodate the development of social and communal spaces within the proposed design. The social spaces created by the Dancing Sisters draw inspiration from the traditional layout of Basotho settlements. These spaces are designed to encourage a variety of social engagements and events. Informal seating arrangements and the integration of natural elements make these spaces comfortable and engaging, in harmony with the surrounding landscape. This approach respects and pays homage to the existing Basotho settlement patterns, which are deeply embedded in their culture and way of life.

The design aims to facilitate an environment where mothers can learn from each other, strengthening their bonds and providing valuable insights into pregnancy and childbirth, as well as their broader community.

In summary, the concept of the Dancing Sisters represents an innovative approach to creating social and communal spaces within Basotho settlements. It aligns with Kammeyer's idea of the sky-space as a threshold, emphasizing the interconnectedness of daily life, special occasions, and the spiritual realm. These social spaces, inspired by Basotho settlement patterns, serve as hubs for knowledge sharing and community engagement, ultimately enriching the lives of Basotho women and their communities. The Dancing Sisters become the metaphorical midwives of a new, vibrant social landscape within the proposed design.







THE EARTHY ALCHEMIST

A STUDY OF LOCAL MATERIALS ON SITE AND THEIR USE IN THE BASOTHO HUT

The previously discussed notion of introducing elements of the natural environment as an attempt to emulate the relationship of mother and unborn child, where building and environment can exist simultaneously as one but also as two separate entities led to the introduction of the earthy alchemist as a midwife.

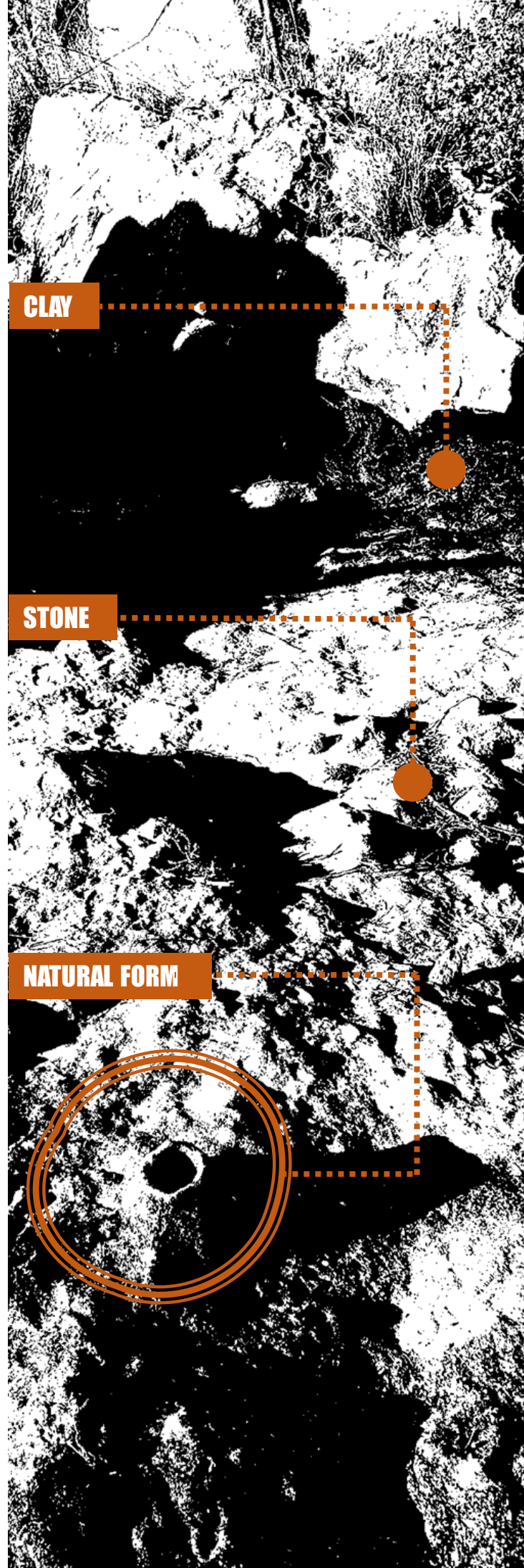
The earthy alchemist focuses on the natural building materials that are abundant on the chosen site but are also used in Basotho architecture.

One of the key materials in this architectural approach is stone masonry, a durable and readily available resource. Additionally, compressed earth bricks, crafted from the site's clay-rich soil, will play a vital role in the construction. These natural materials form the foundation of the building, connecting it harmoniously with the earth it rests upon. Wood, employed for structural support and tectonic elements, complements the natural materials, further enhancing the architectural identity.

This study of textures and elements found on the chosen site unveils cues for the development of sacred spaces within the design. Basotho sacred spaces have a profound connection with the natural environment. The architecture, thus, draws inspiration from the shapes and phenomena observed on the site, preserving the relationship between spirit and nature.

This approach forms profound connections with the surrounding environment and the natural world. The maturation of materials, the interplay of light, the effects of usage on surfaces, and the cultural and ritualistic importance of spaces collectively contribute to the intricate relationship between architecture, time, and identity.

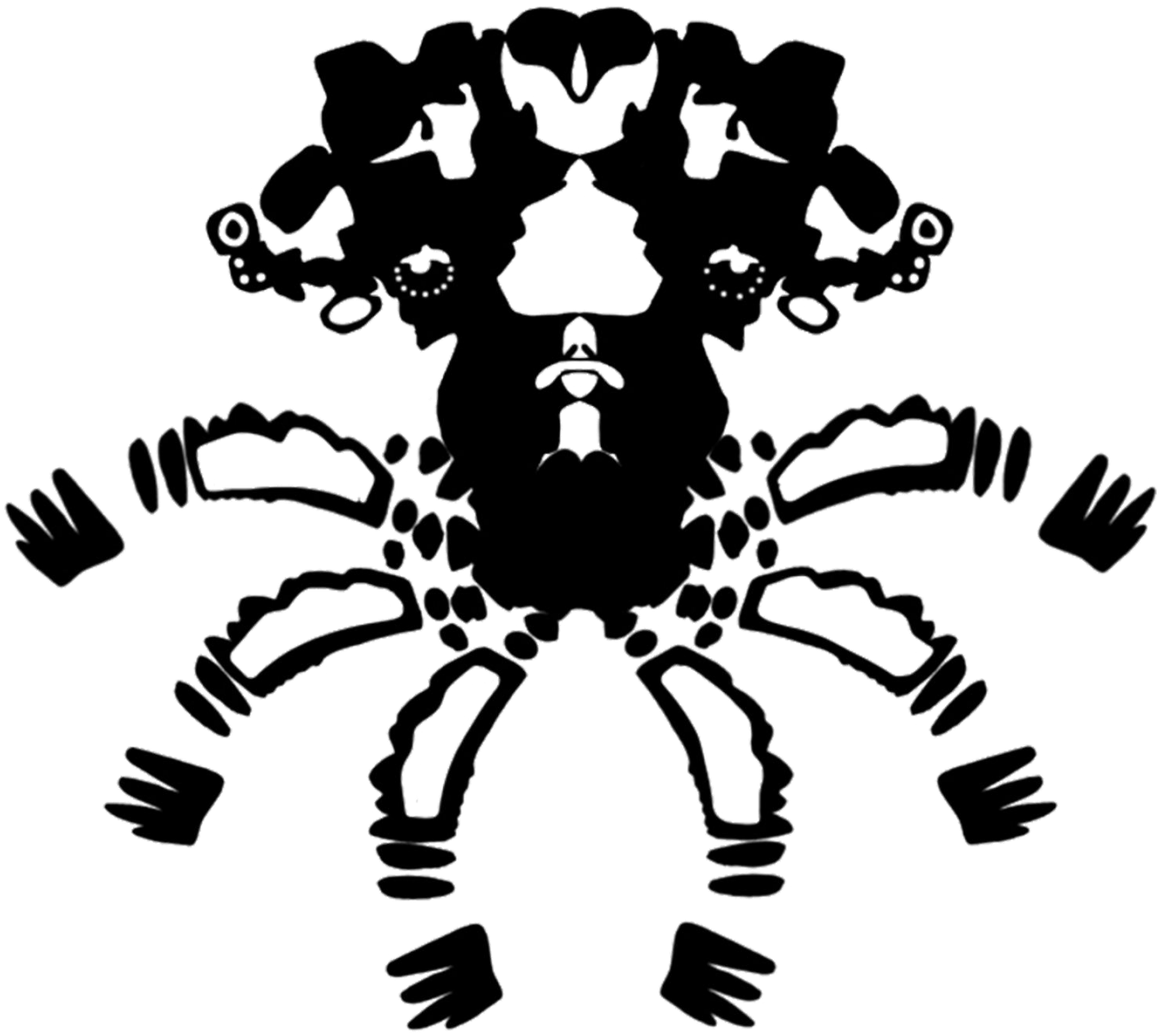
In essence, the Earthly Alchemist approach in Basotho architecture celebrates the integration of local materials, the influence of the natural environment, and the dynamic interplay between the built structure and the passage of time, creating an appropriate architectural response



CLAY

STONE

NATURAL FORM





The materials chosen for the design were inspired either by the traditional Basotho building methods in residential and sacred areas or were used in some manner to strengthen the idea of **Gestation** in terms of the building changing over time through human or natural intervention. Architecturally the building will be used and encountered differently by every individual. **Rites of passage** and **Impregnation** both support the transformation/transition of the earth into a dwelling by changing the state of natural elements so they can be used as building materials. This extends the idea of the proposed building and site existing simultaneously as one but also as separate entities, not only according to the programme but as built form as well.

STONE is a material known for its enduring qualities. Over time, it develops a unique patina, marked by weathering, small scratches, and subtle changes in colour and texture. The patina of age on stone surfaces reflects the passage of time and the layers of history associated with the building. The worn edges and textures tell stories of human lives that have interacted with the stone, creating a sense of continuity and connection with the past.



COMPRESSED EARTH BRICKS symbolize the transformation of natural elements into functional building materials. These bricks age gracefully, as they absorb moisture, develop fine cracks, and change in colour. This ageing process not only adds to the aesthetics but also signifies the continuous evolution of the building.

TIMBER is a material that evolves significantly with age. Timber carries an aura of the lives that have played out within the spaces it frames, imbuing them with a sense of history and continuity.

In summary, the choice of stone, compressed earth bricks, and timber as building materials in this design concept speaks to the themes of permanence and temporality. The concept aligns with the idea that, in architecture, the aesthetic and practical values are secondary to the consciousness of time and the special aura created by human experiences in those spaces.



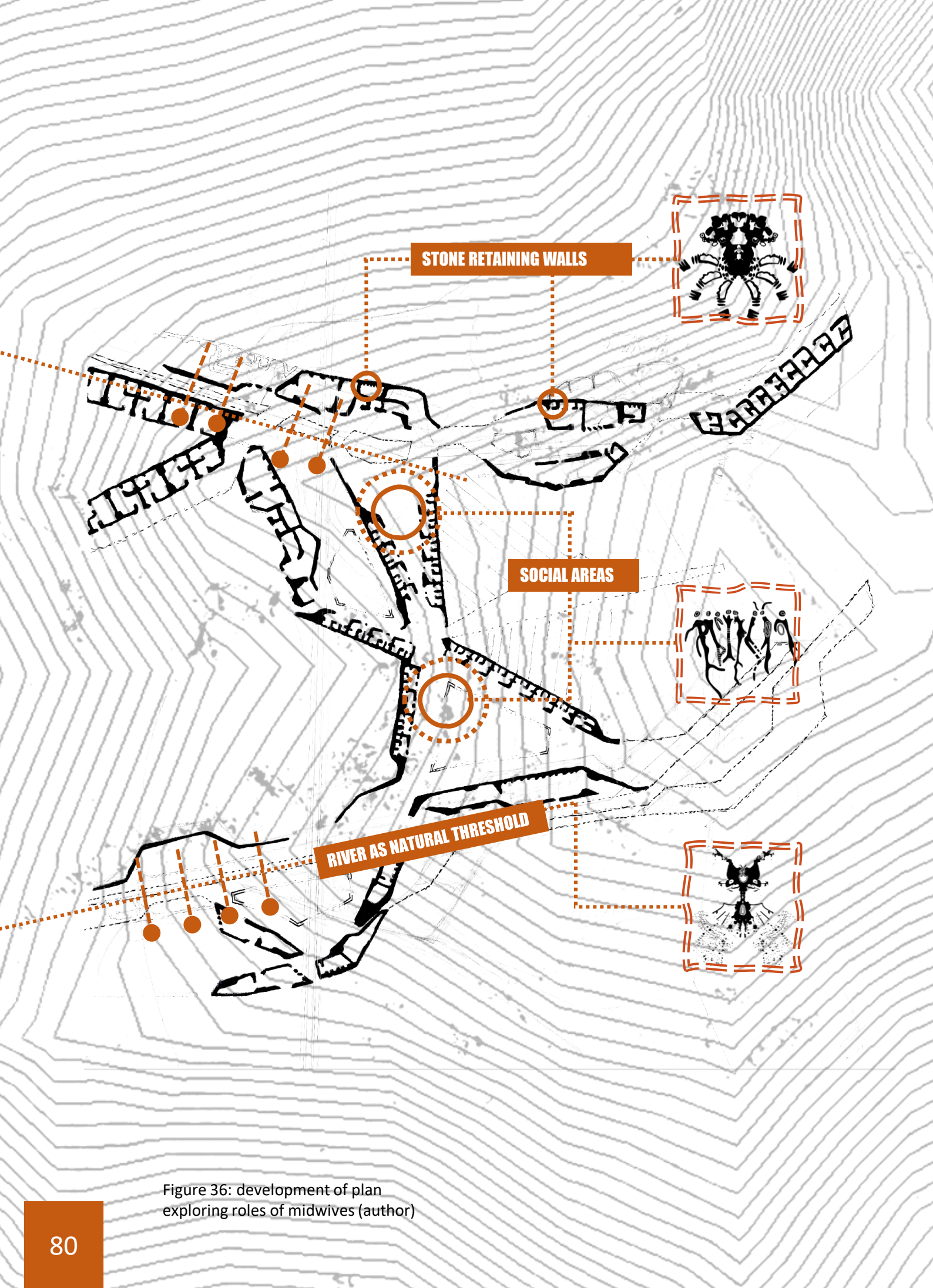


Figure 36: development of plan exploring roles of midwives (author)

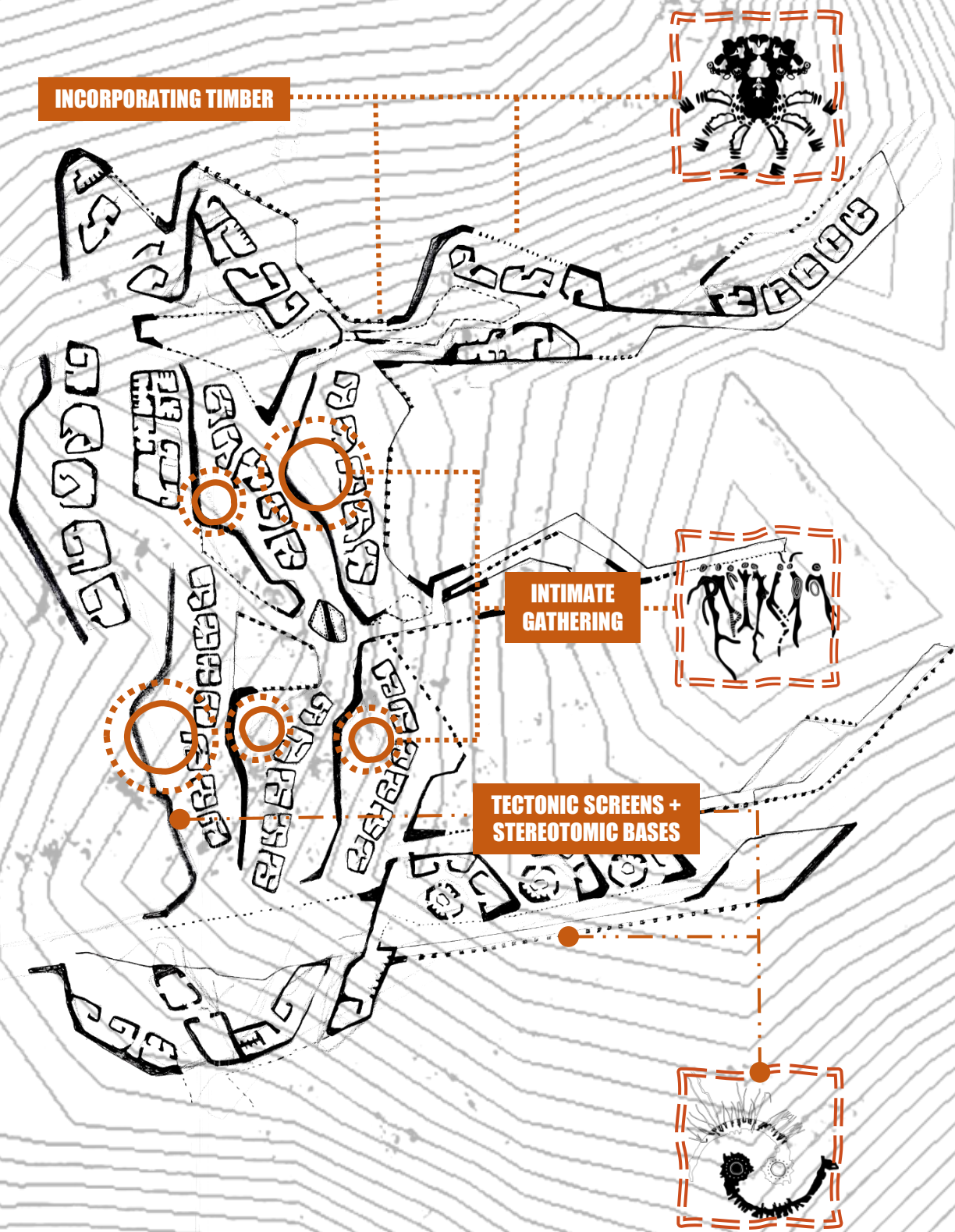
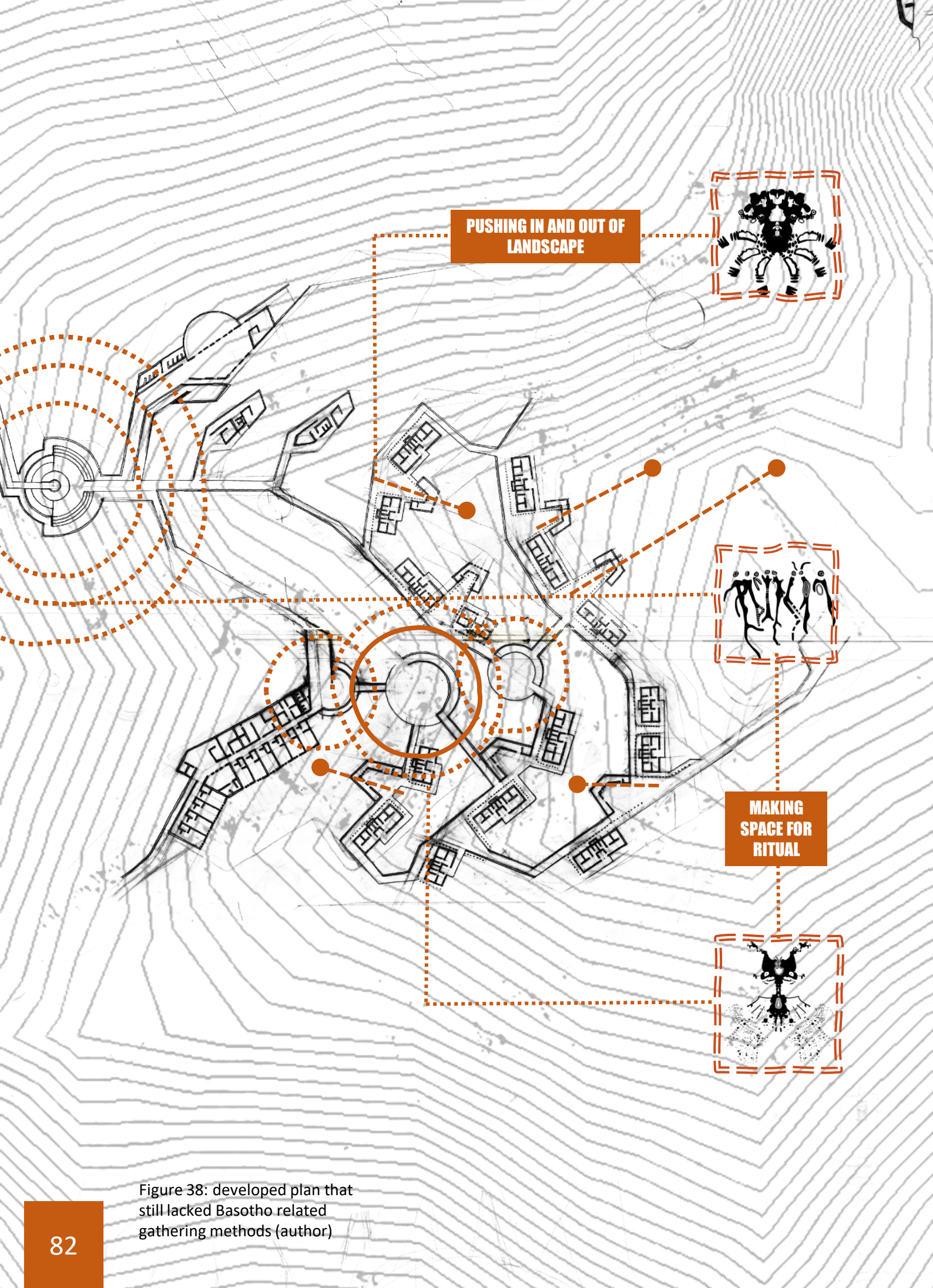


Figure 37: developed plan that lacked narrative order within planning (author)



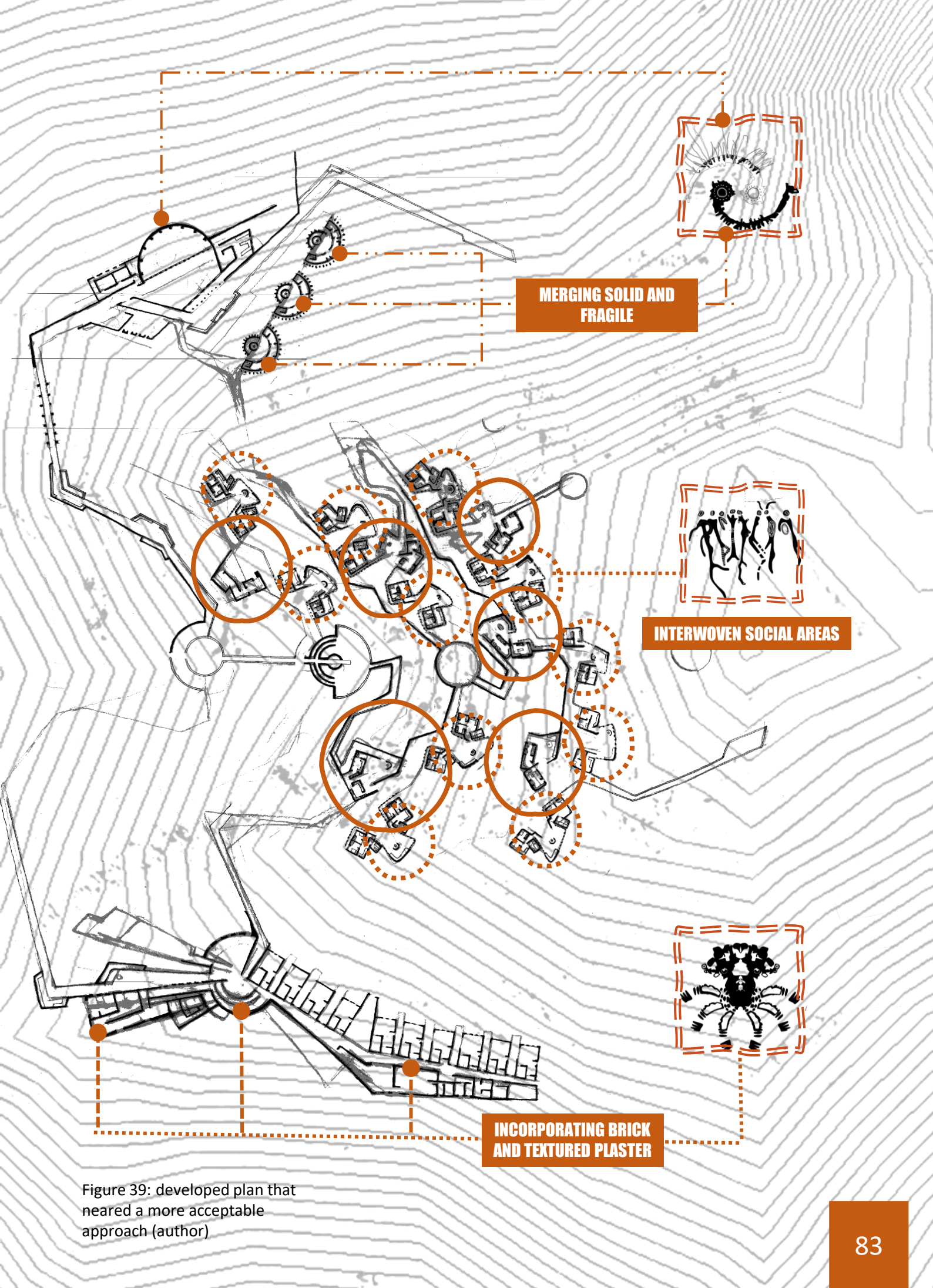
**PUSHING IN AND OUT OF
LANDSCAPE**



**MAKING
SPACE FOR
RITUAL**



Figure 38: developed plan that still lacked Basotho related gathering methods (author)



MERGING SOLID AND FRAGILE

INTERWOVEN SOCIAL AREAS

INCORPORATING BRICK AND TEXTURED PLASTER

Figure 39: developed plan that neared a more acceptable approach (author)

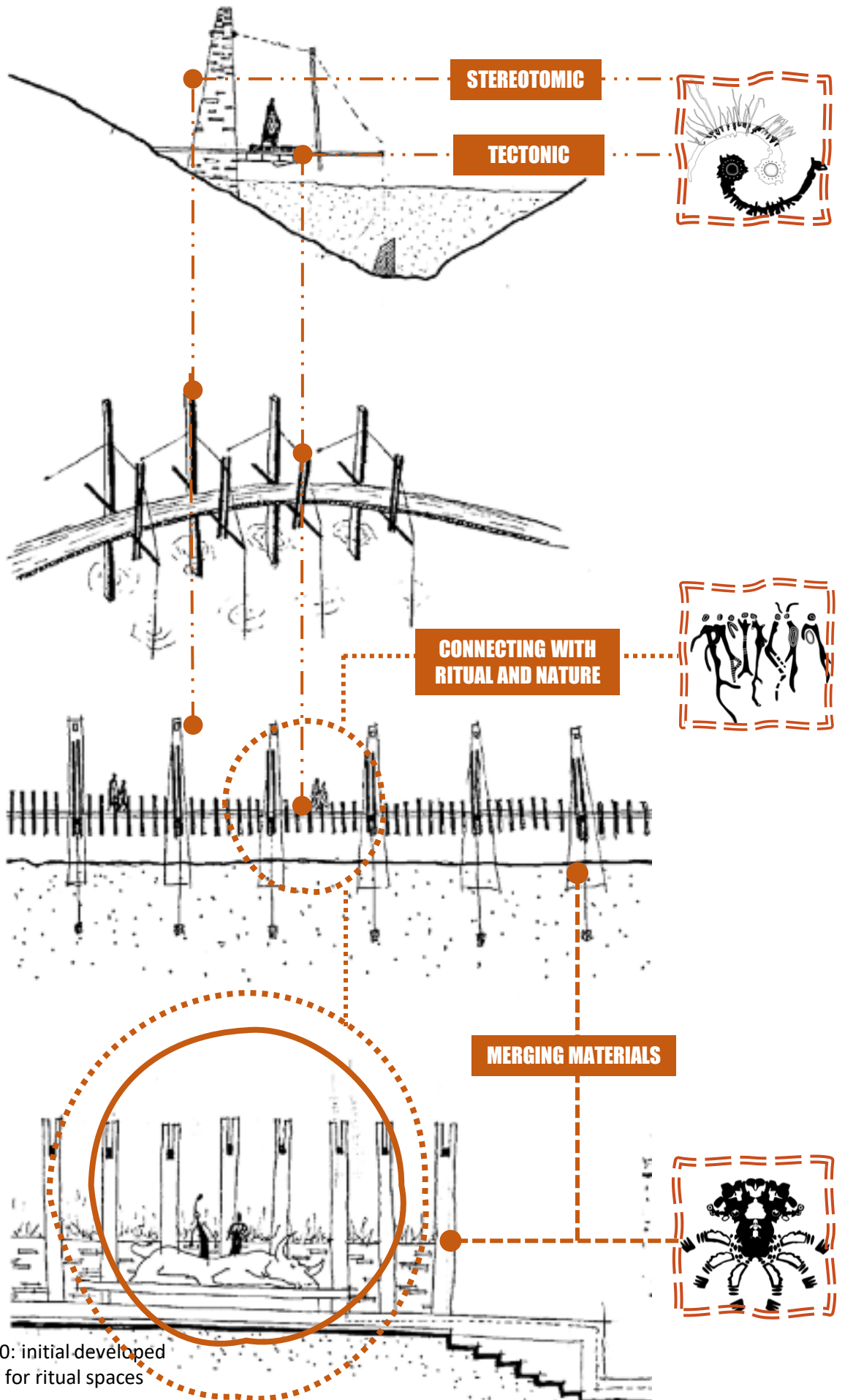


Figure 40: initial developed sections for ritual spaces (author)

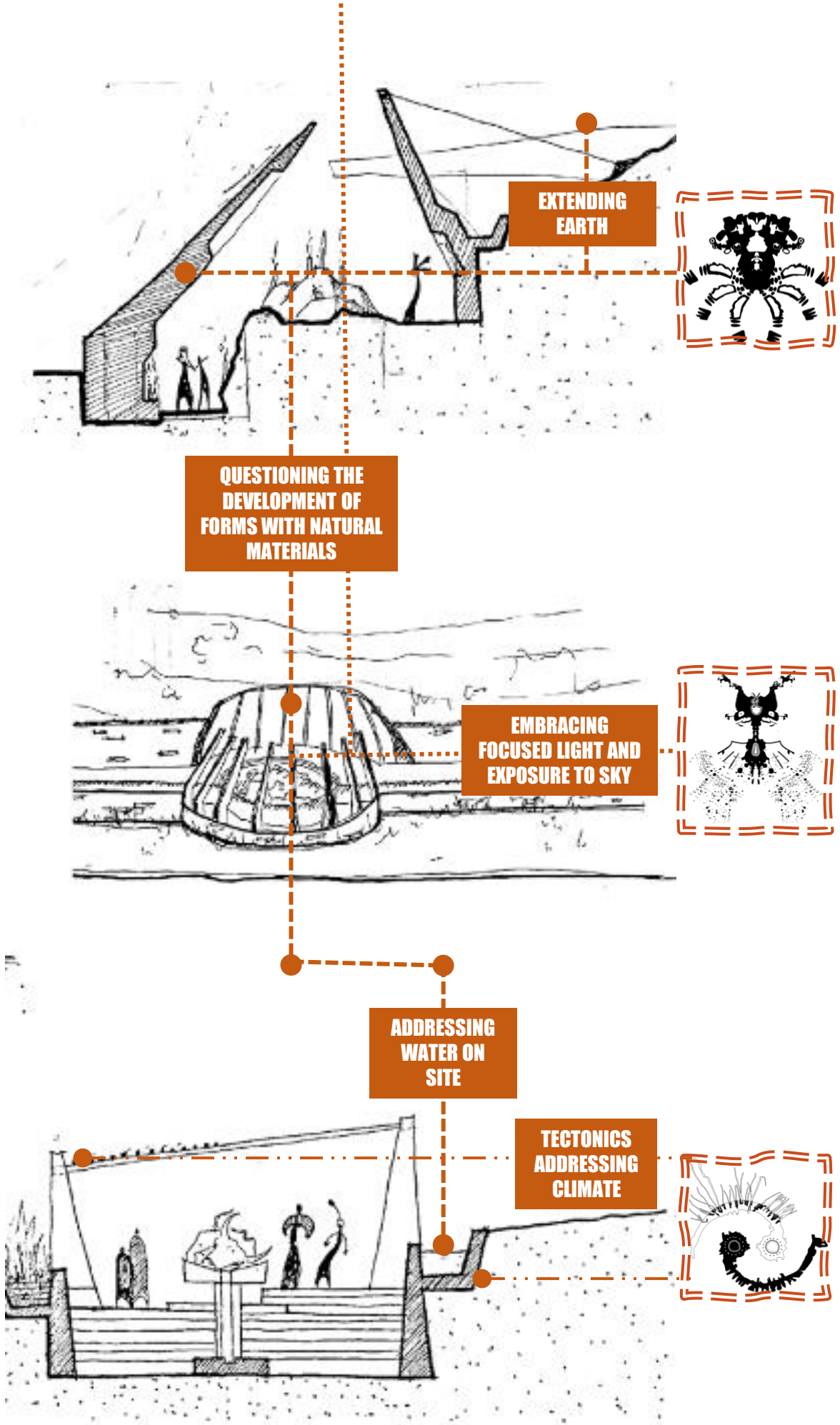


Figure 41: initial developed sections for ritual spaces (author)

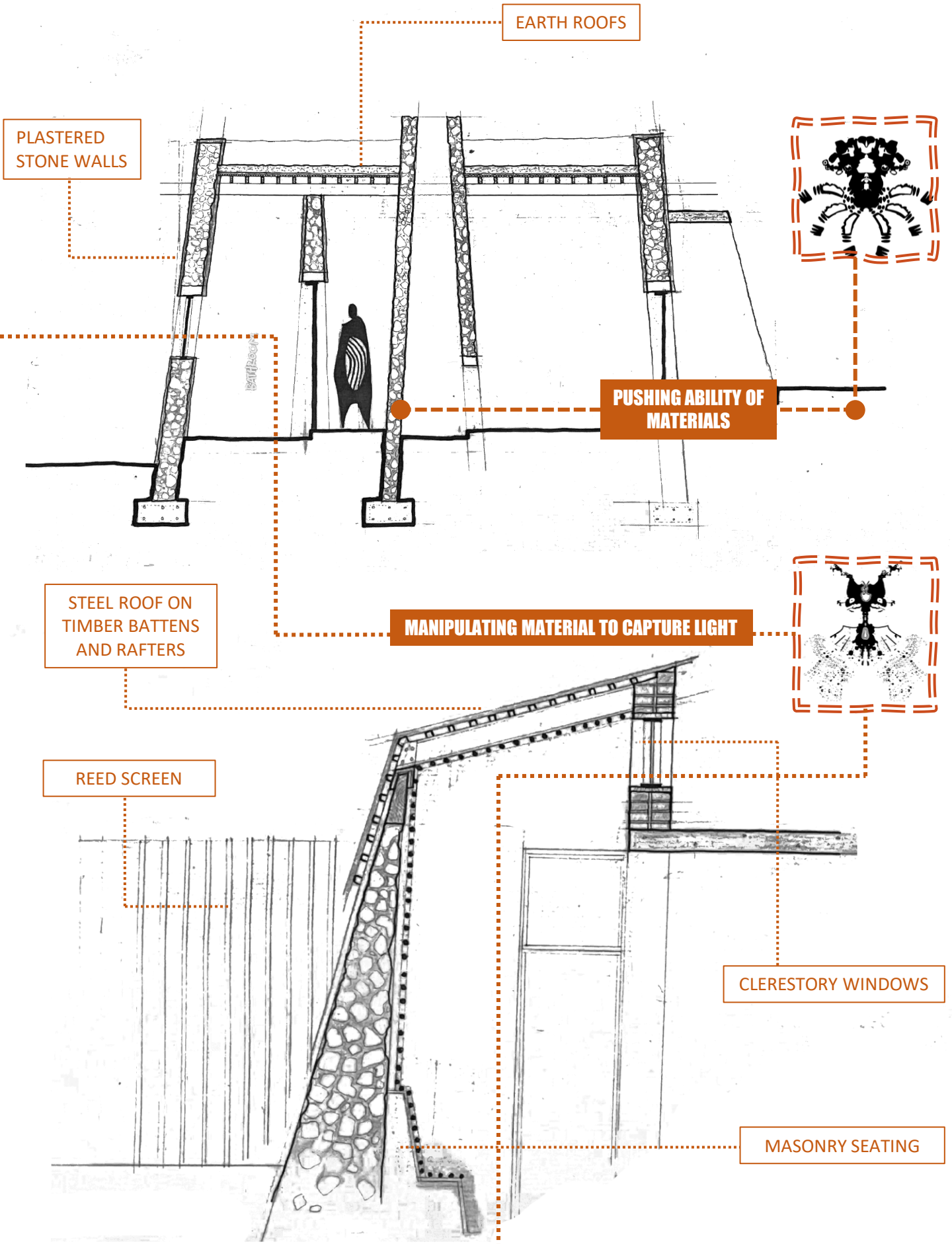


Figure 42: initial developed sections for accommodation (author)

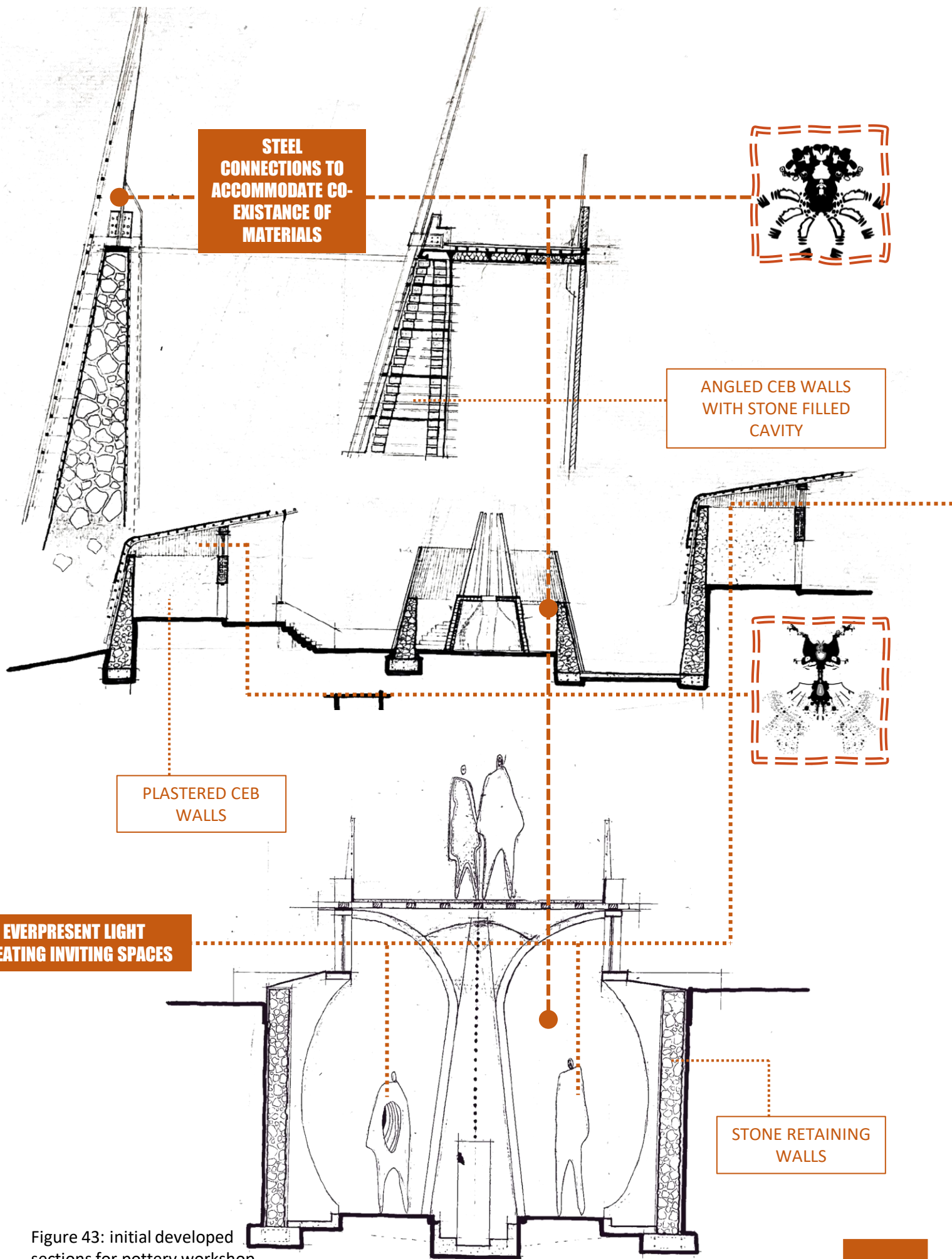


Figure 43: initial developed sections for pottery workshop stations (author)

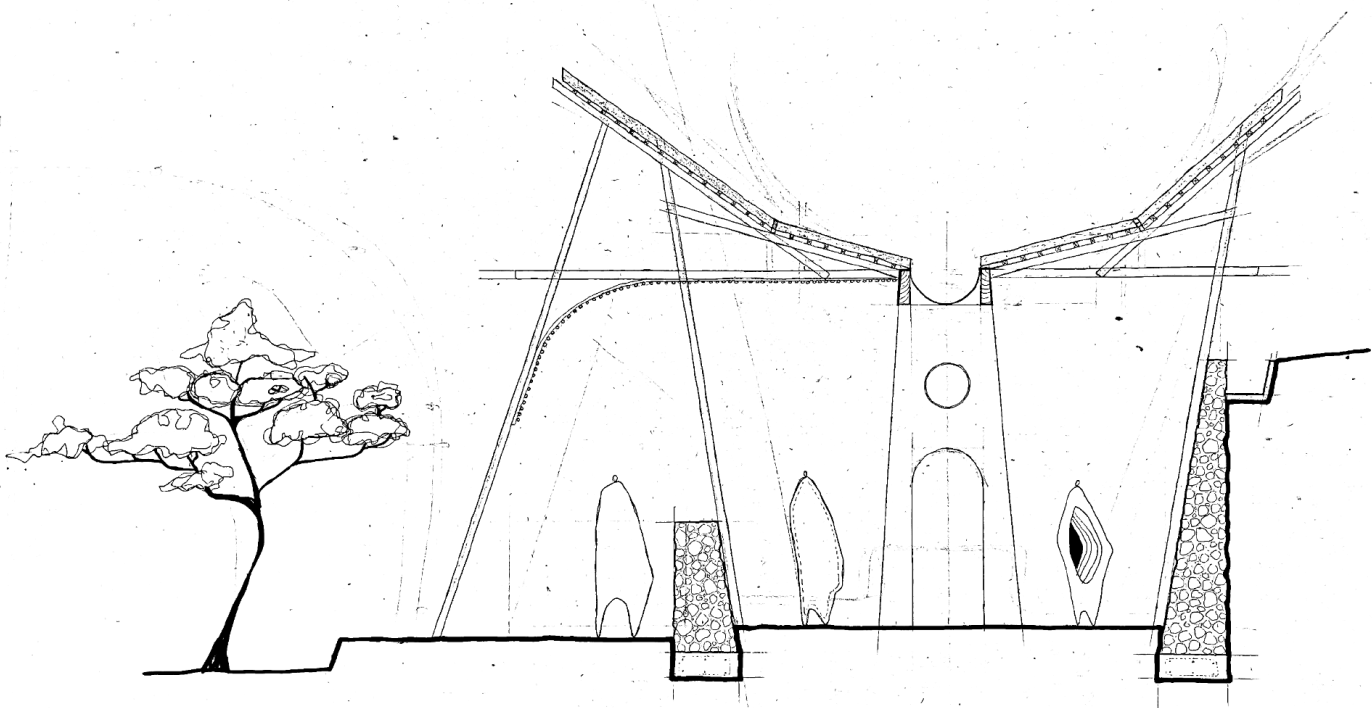
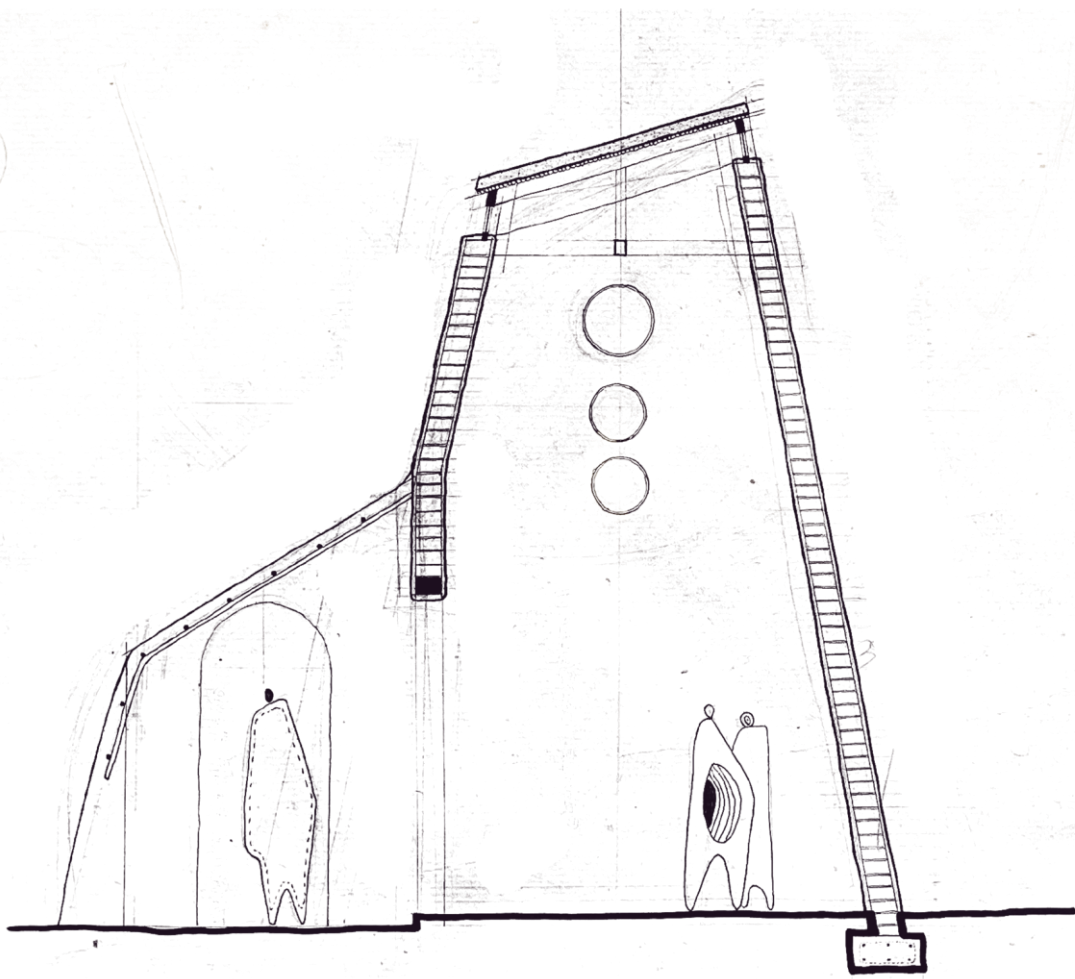
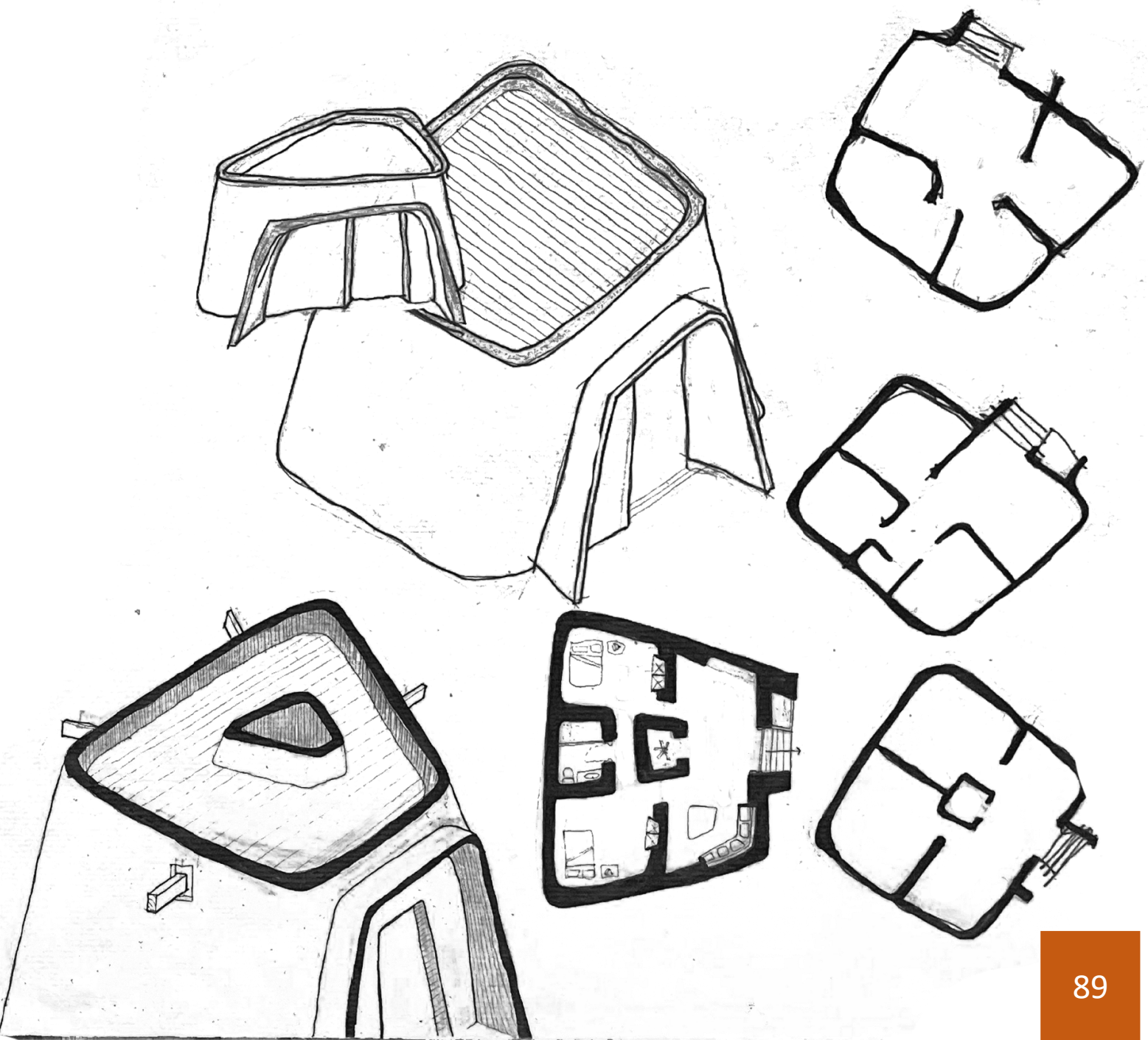
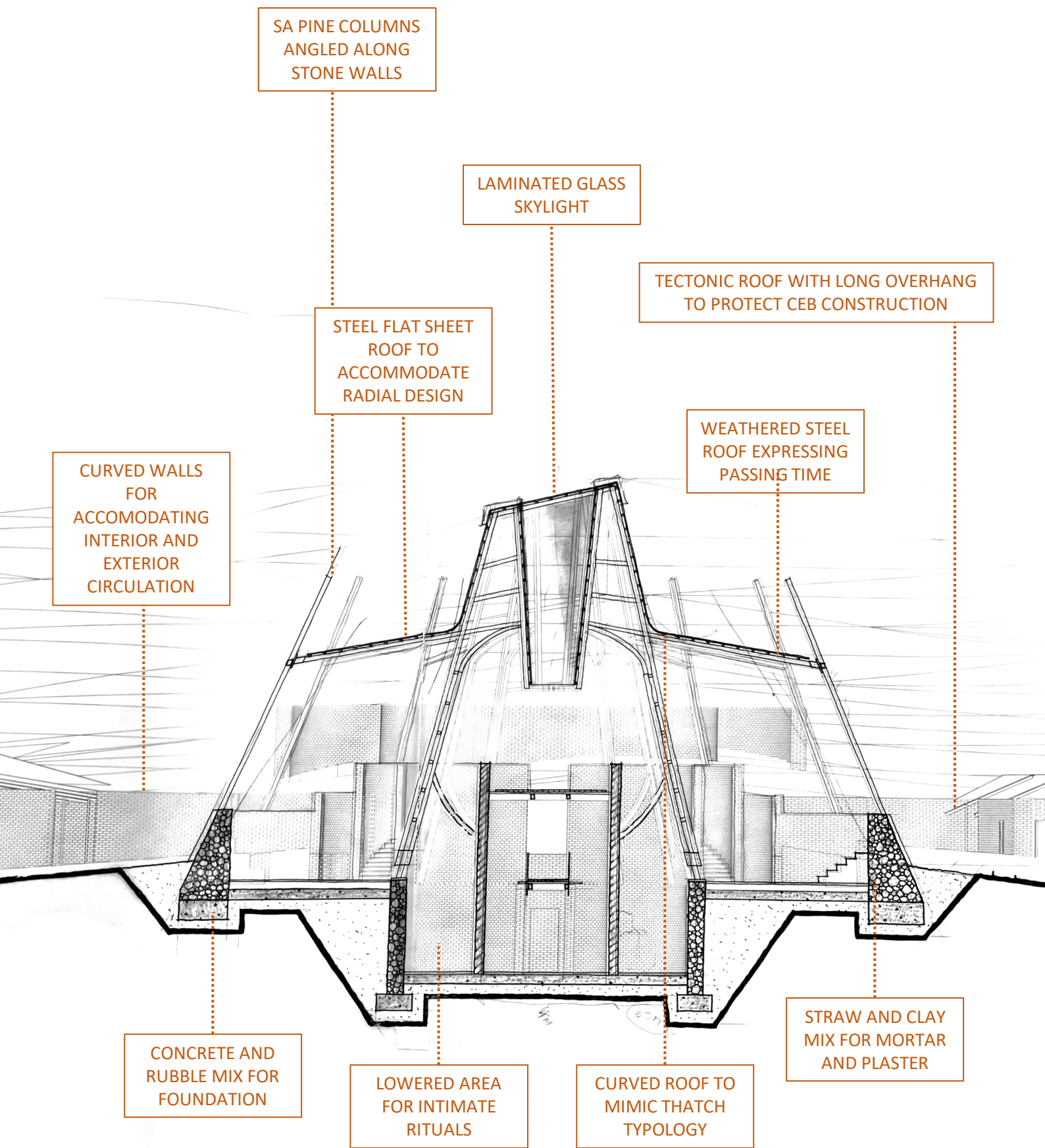


Figure 44: initial developed sections for public clinic spaces (author)

Figure 45: initial investigation of possible Basotho related typological shapes (author)





SA PINE COLUMNS
ANGLED ALONG
STONE WALLS

LAMINATED GLASS
SKYLIGHT

TECTONIC ROOF WITH LONG OVERHANG
TO PROTECT CEB CONSTRUCTION

STEEL FLAT SHEET
ROOF TO
ACCOMMODATE
RADIAL DESIGN

WEATHERED STEEL
ROOF EXPRESSING
PASSING TIME

CURVED WALLS
FOR
ACCOMODATING
INTERIOR AND
EXTERIOR
CIRCULATION

CONCRETE AND
RUBBLE MIX FOR
FOUNDATION

LOWERED AREA
FOR INTIMATE
RITUALS

CURVED ROOF TO
MIMIC THATCH
TYPOLOGY

STRAW AND CLAY
MIX FOR MORTAR
AND PLASTER

MASONRY
THRESHOLD
EMPASIZING
STREAM CROSSING

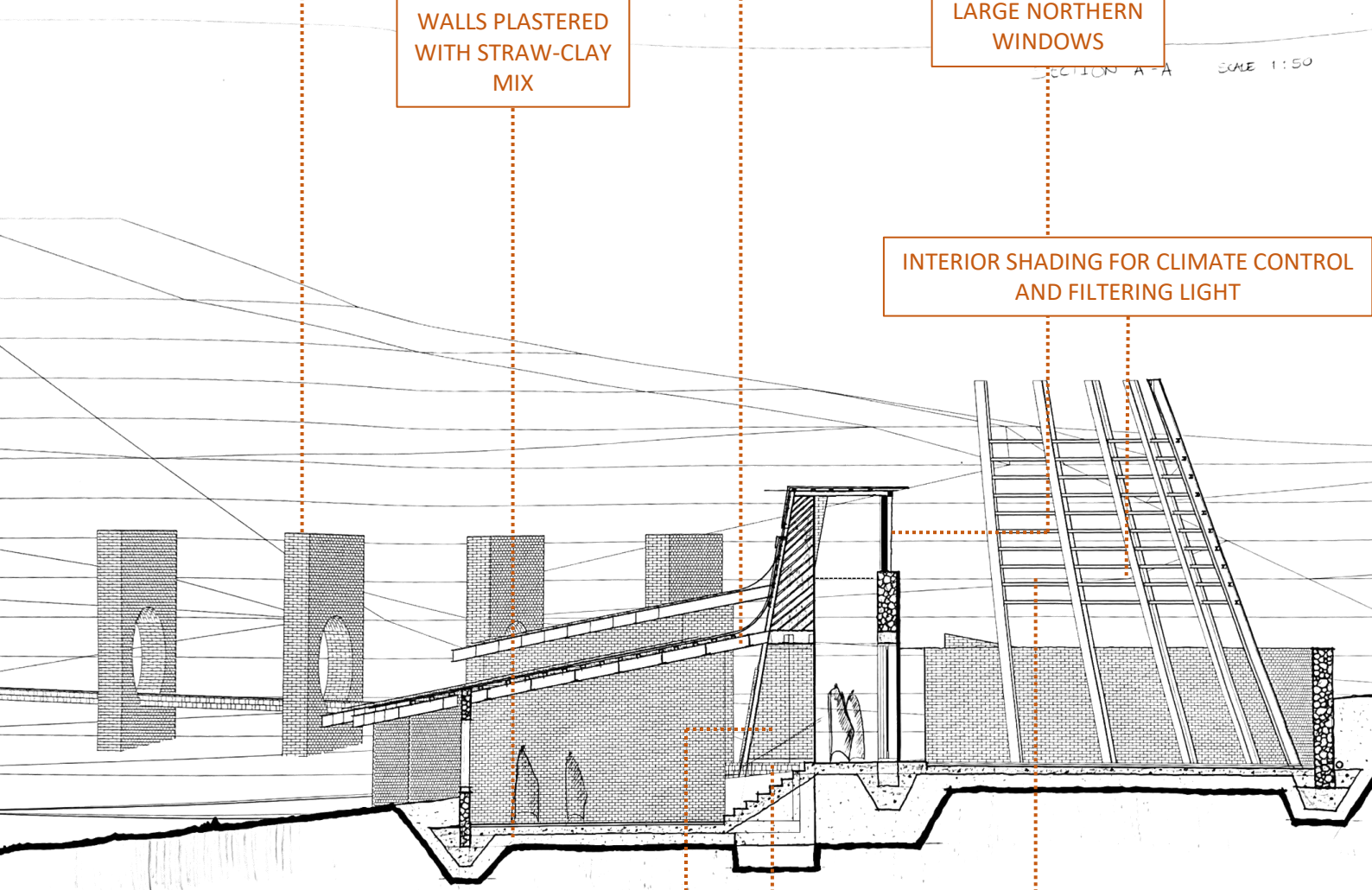
STEEL FLAT SHEETS
BENT TO
CONTINUE
TYPLOGY OF HUT

COLUMNS SITUATED
WITHIN WALL TO
SUPPORT
OVERHEAD ROOF
AND
ACCOMMODATE
LARGE NORTHERN
WINDOWS

WALLS PLASTERED
WITH STRAW-CLAY
MIX

SECTION A-A SCALE 1:50

INTERIOR SHADING FOR CLIMATE CONTROL
AND FILTERING LIGHT



RECESSED WALLS HOLDING FINISHED POTS SERVING AS
WORKING WALL AS REFERENCE TO SACRED SHELF IN HUT
RESERVED FOR RITUAL BEER ETC.

LOUVRES INSTALLED TO COOL DOWN
EXTERIOR SPACES

ANGLED CAVITY CEB WALLS FILLED
EXCAVATED STONE

EXTRUDING
ANGLED WALLS
SYMBOLIZING
HIERARCHY

CONVENTIONAL BRICK CONSTRUCTION FOR
INTERIOR OF CLINIC TO ACCOMMODATE R158
REGULATIONS

1:12 RAMPS INCORPORATED THROUGHOUT
DESIGN FOR COMFORTABLE CIRCULATION

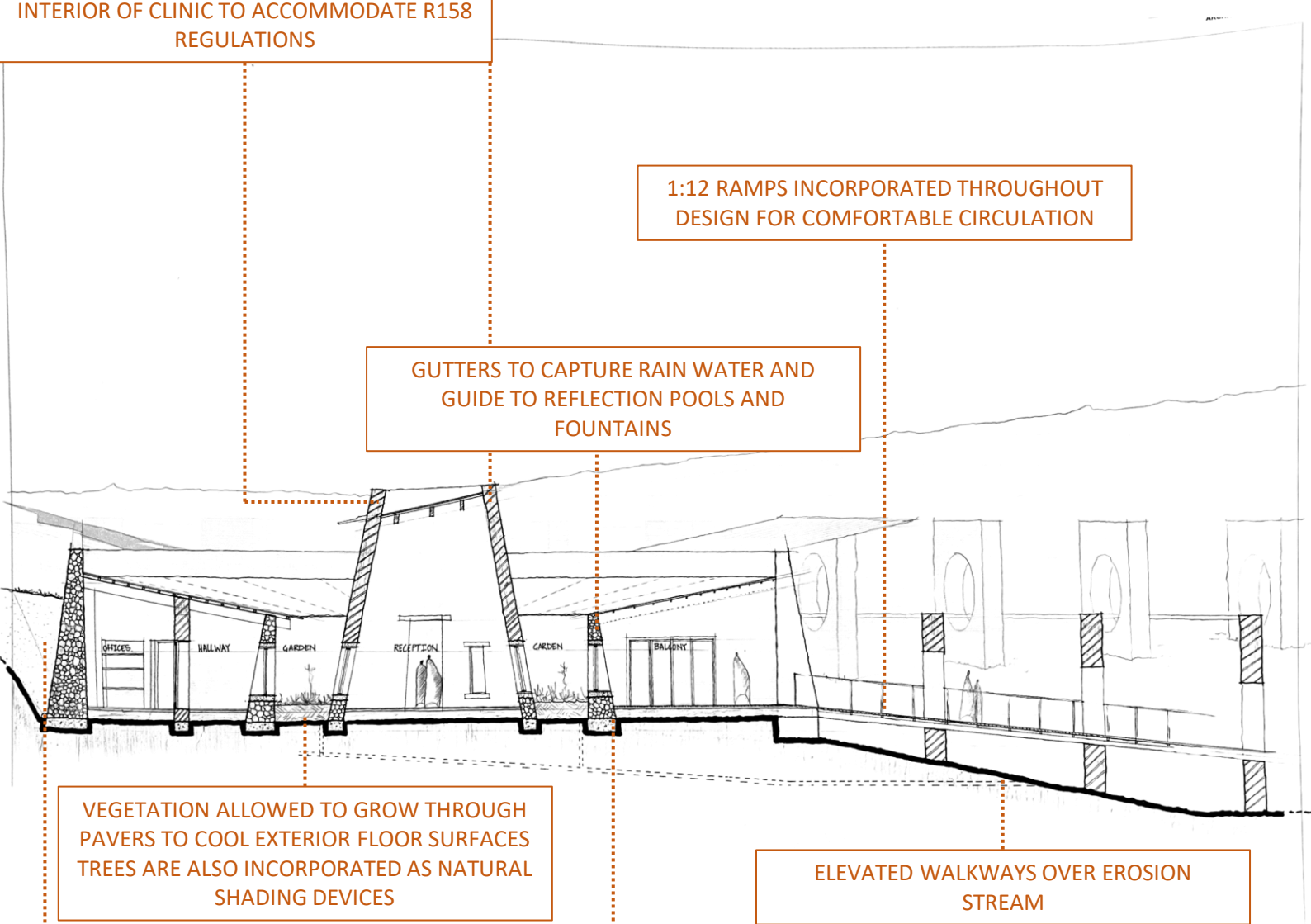
GUTTERS TO CAPTURE RAIN WATER AND
GUIDE TO REFLECTION POOLS AND
FOUNTAINS

VEGETATION ALLOWED TO GROW THROUGH
PAVERS TO COOL EXTERIOR FLOOR SURFACES
TREES ARE ALSO INCORPORATED AS NATURAL
SHADING DEVICES

ELEVATED WALKWAYS OVER EROSION
STREAM

THICK RETAINING WALLS TO ACCOMMODATE
RECESS OF EARTH MASS

SHALLOW FOUNDATIONS AS SITE SOIL
PREDOMINANTLY CONSISTS OF ROCK



NEONATAL ENTERTY 01

INTRODUCTION

PAGE 95

PLANS

APPENDED AFTER INTRODUCTION

SECTIONS

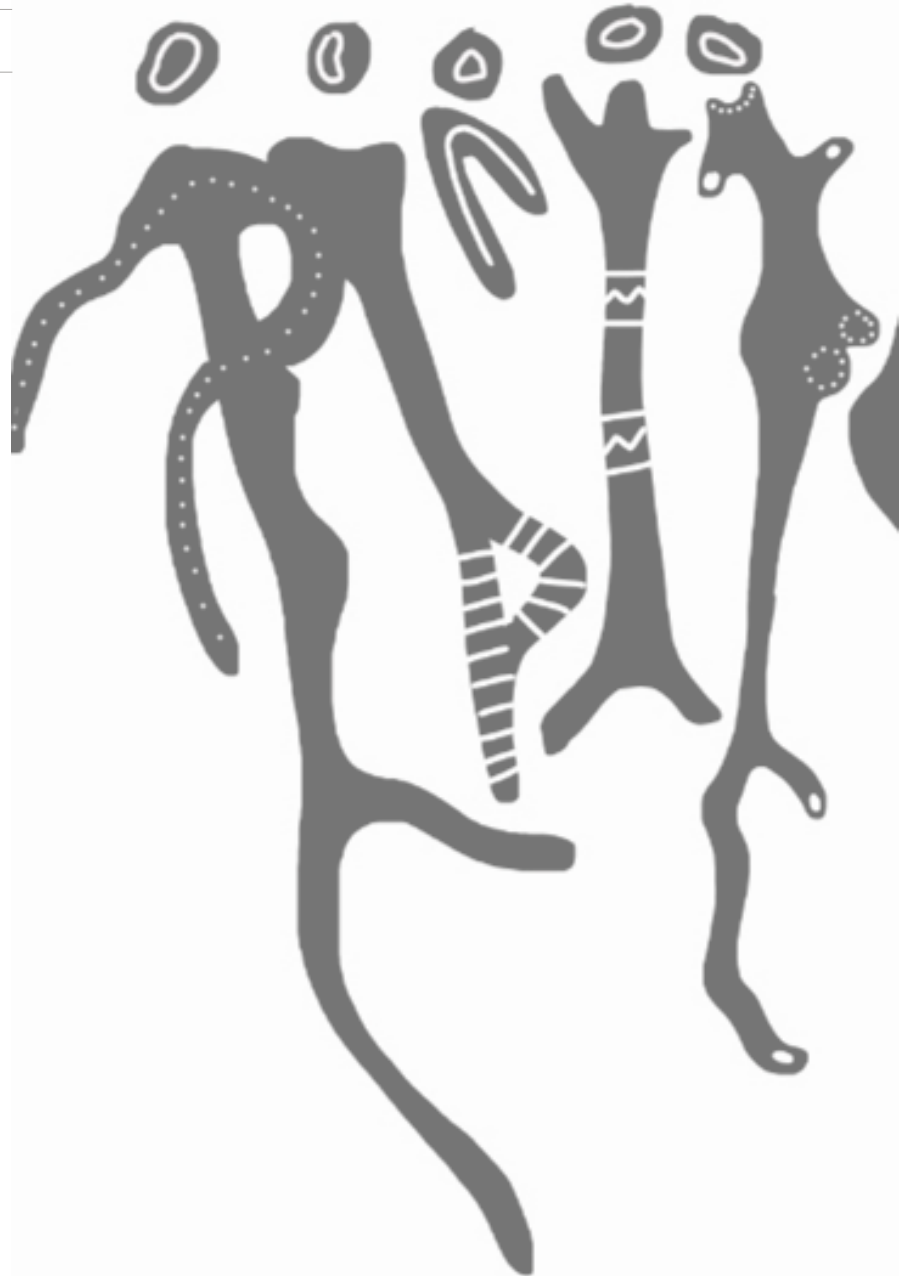
PAGE 96

VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES

PAGE 104

CONCLUSION

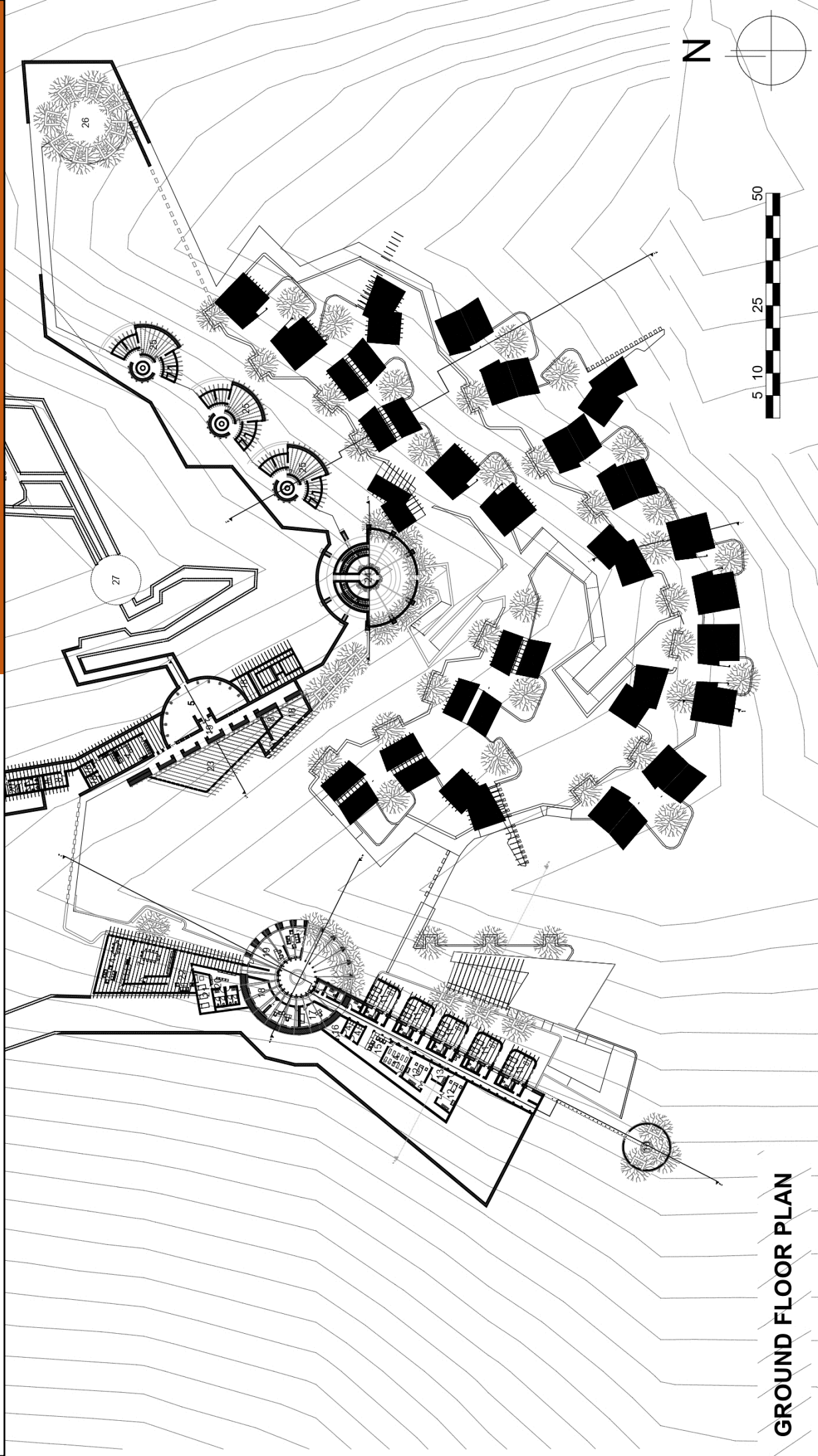
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INTRODUCTION

The following chapter will express the final design outcome that was informed by investigations expressed in previous chapters. The project combined traditional knowledge systems and rituals to compile a brief that not only satisfies the lack of spirituality but also the lack of human-centred care. The project consists of training centres where the medical practitioners and family accompanying the pregnant Basotho woman to the facility, can exchange knowledge with regard to the birthing process. The training centre is linked to a maternity clinic where the pregnant Basotho woman can receive proper care from nurses who have been informed about cultural and ritual practices. The clinic then links to the visitor centre where the public and family members can either dine at the restaurant or partake in painting the locally made pots at the pottery workshops on site.

1. BED
2. KITCHEN
3. BATHROOM
4. WASHROOM
5. COURTYARD
6. CLASS ROOM
7. CONFERENCE ROOM
8. OFFICE
9. PRIVATE PRAYER
10. GRIEVANCE GARDEN
11. PATIENT ROOM
12. OPERATING ROOM
13. MED PREP ROOM
14. NURSERY
15. NURSE STATION
16. STORAGE
17. CONSULTING ROOM
18. STORAGE
19. RECEPTION
20. LOCKER ROOM
21. CALL ROOM
22. LOUNGE
23. RESTAURANT
24. INITIATION PAVILION
25. CLAY WORKSHOP
26. NAMING CEREMONY ORCHARD
27. PARKING



PLANS

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1. BED
2. KITCHEN
3. BATHROOM
4. WASHROOM
5. COURTYARD
6. CLASS ROOM
7. CONFERENCE ROOM
8. OFFICE
9. PRIVATE PRAYER
10. GRIEVANCE GARDEN
11. PATIENT ROOM
12. OPERATING ROOM
13. MED PREP ROOM
14. NURSERY
15. NURSE STATION
16. STORAGE
17. CONSULTING ROOM
18. STORAGE
19. RECEPTION
20. LOCKER ROOM
21. CALL ROOM
22. LOUNGE
23. RESTAURANT
24. INITIATION PAVILION
25. CLAY WORKSHOP
26. NAMING CEREMONY
- ORCHARD
27. PARKING



PLANS

LOWER LEVEL PLAN

1. BED
2. KITCHEN
3. BATHROOM
4. WASHROOM
5. COURTYARD
6. CLASS ROOM
7. CONFERENCE ROOM
8. OFFICE
9. PRIVATE PRAYER
10. GRIEVANCE GARDEN
11. PATIENT ROOM
12. OPERATING ROOM
13. MED PREP ROOM
14. NURSERY
15. NURSE STATION
16. STORAGE
17. CONSULTING ROOM
18. STORAGE
19. RECEPTION
20. LOCKER ROOM
21. CALL ROOM
22. LOUNGE
23. RESTAURANT
24. INITIATION PAVILION
25. CLAY WORKSHOP
26. NAMING CEREMONY
- ORCHARD
27. PARKING

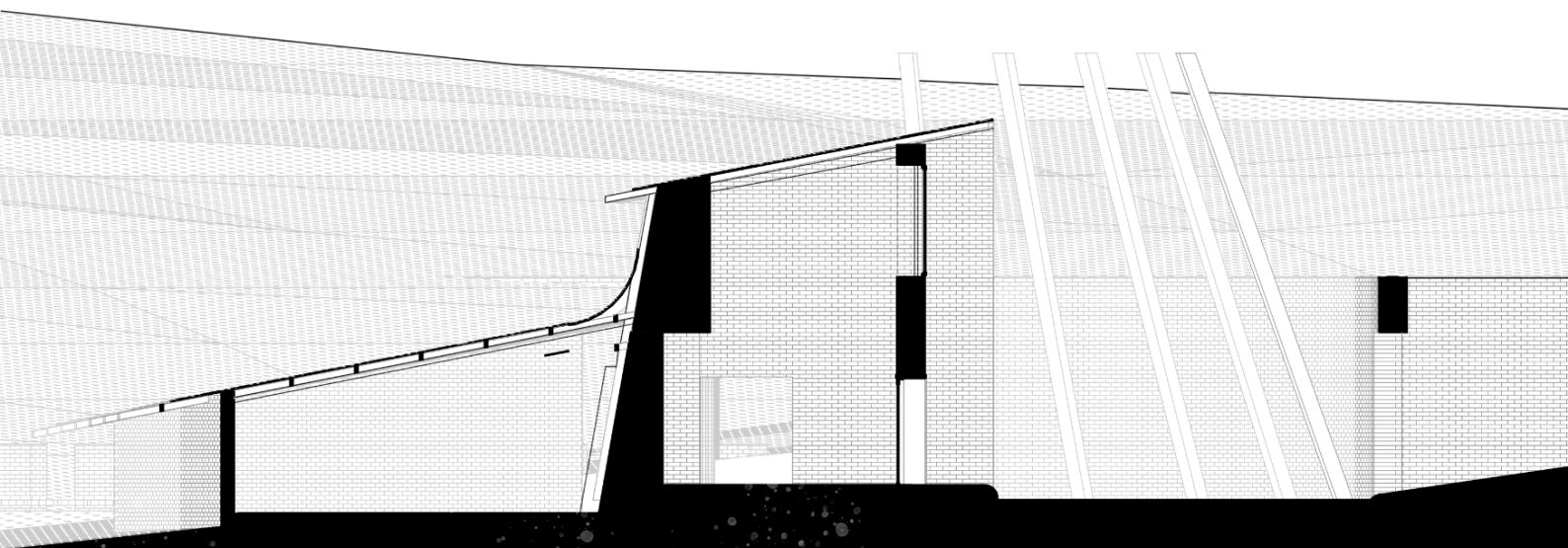


LOWEST LEVEL PLAN

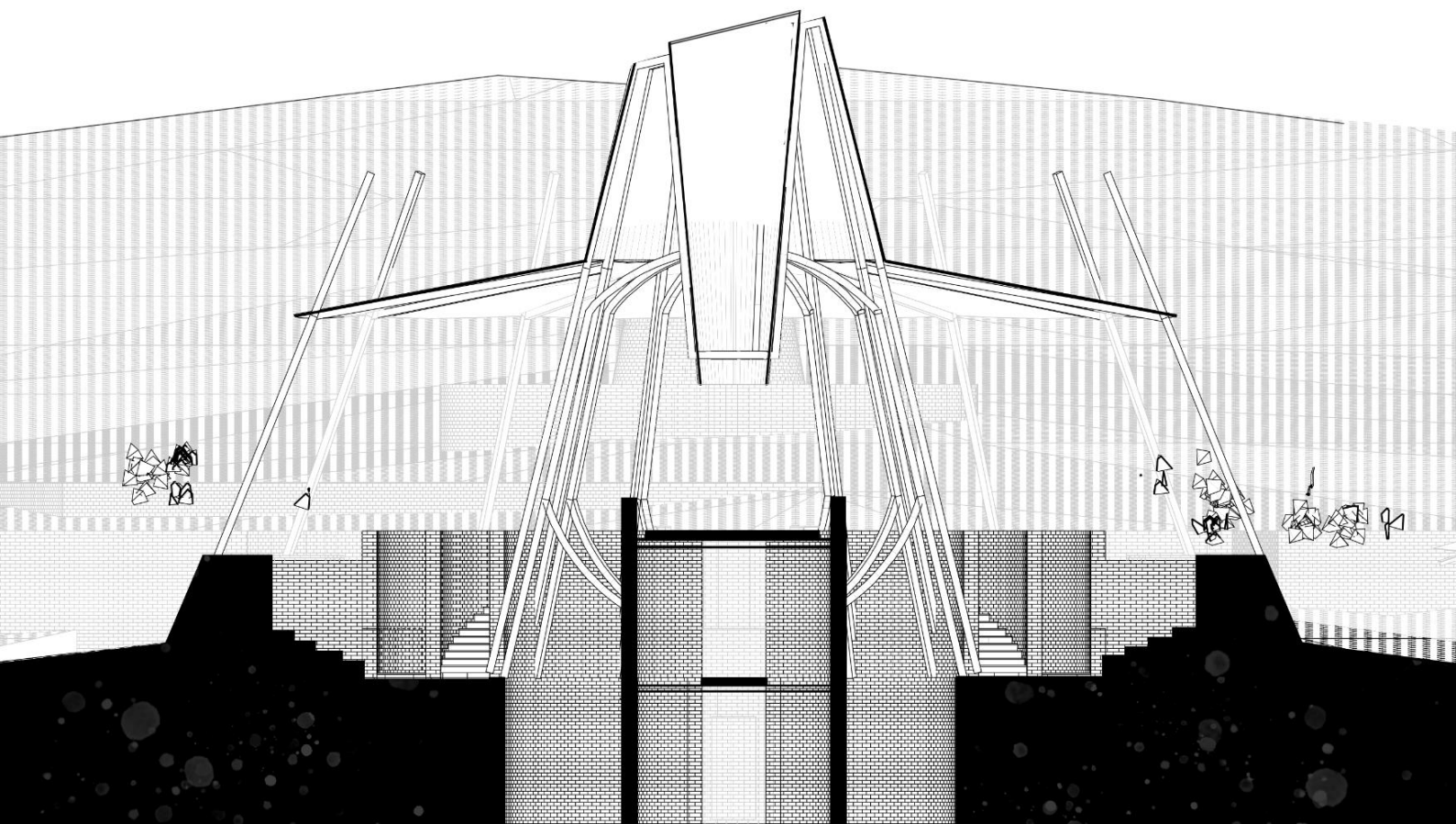
PLANS



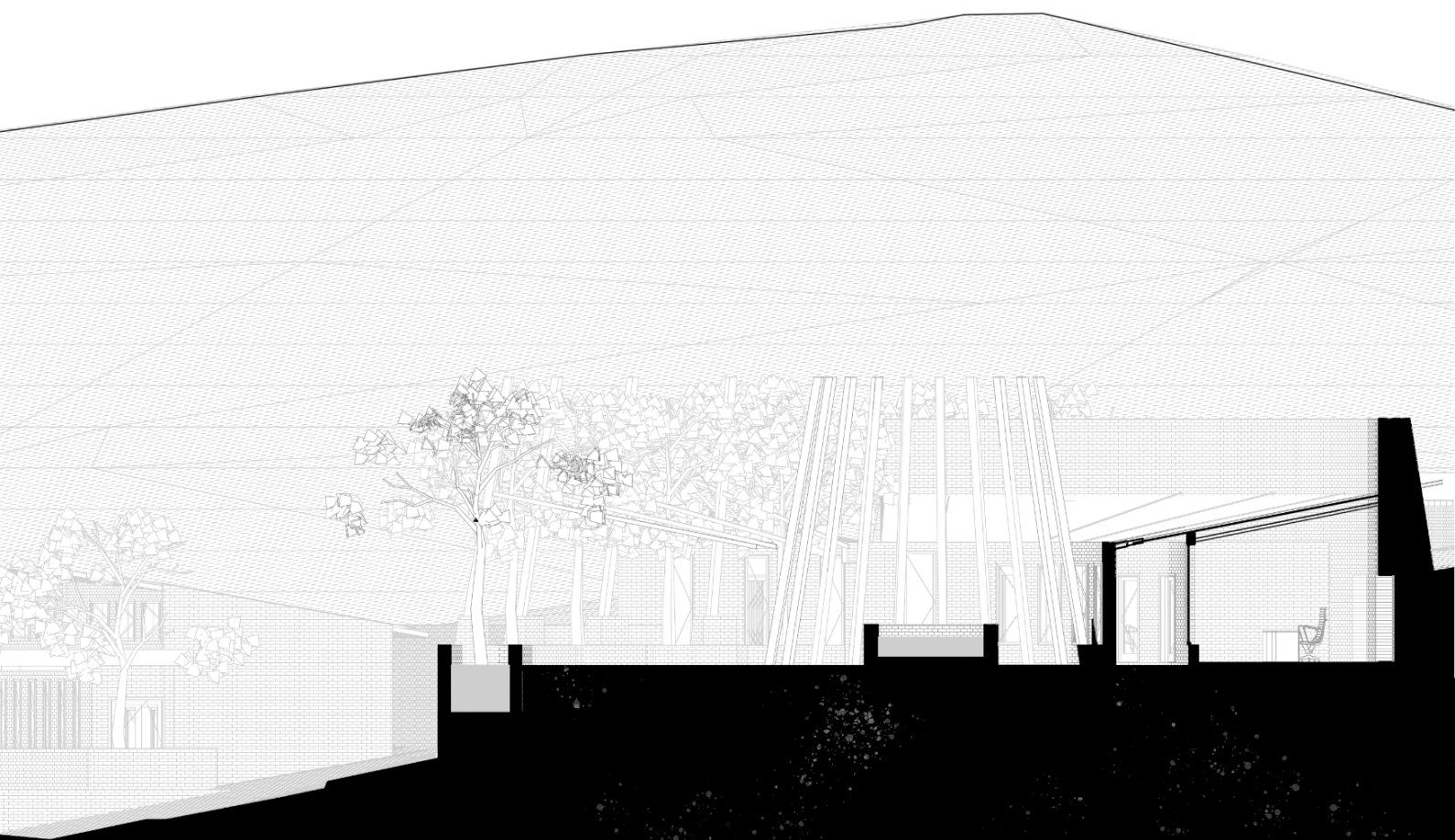
SECTION A-A



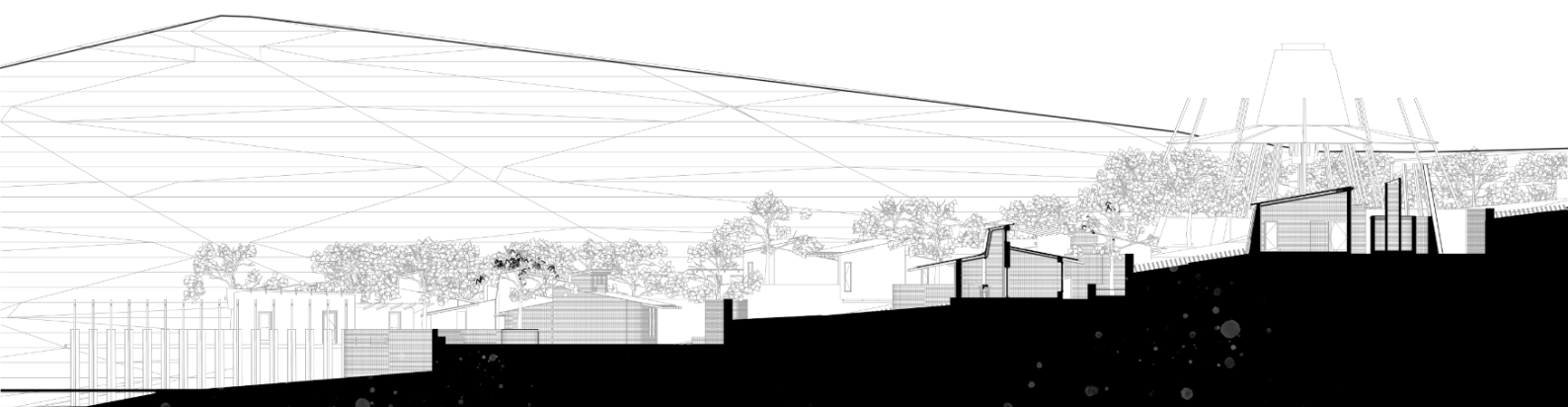
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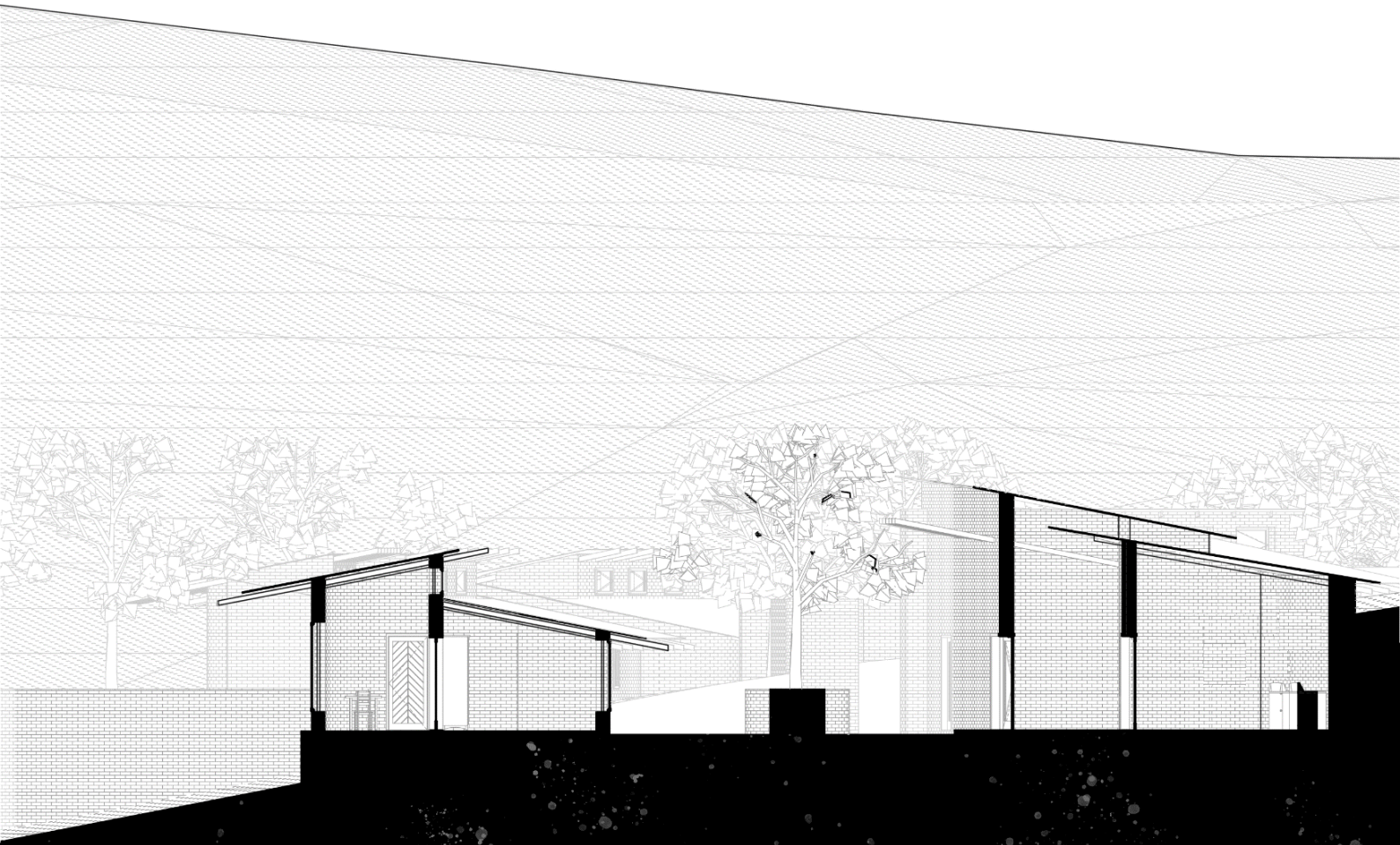
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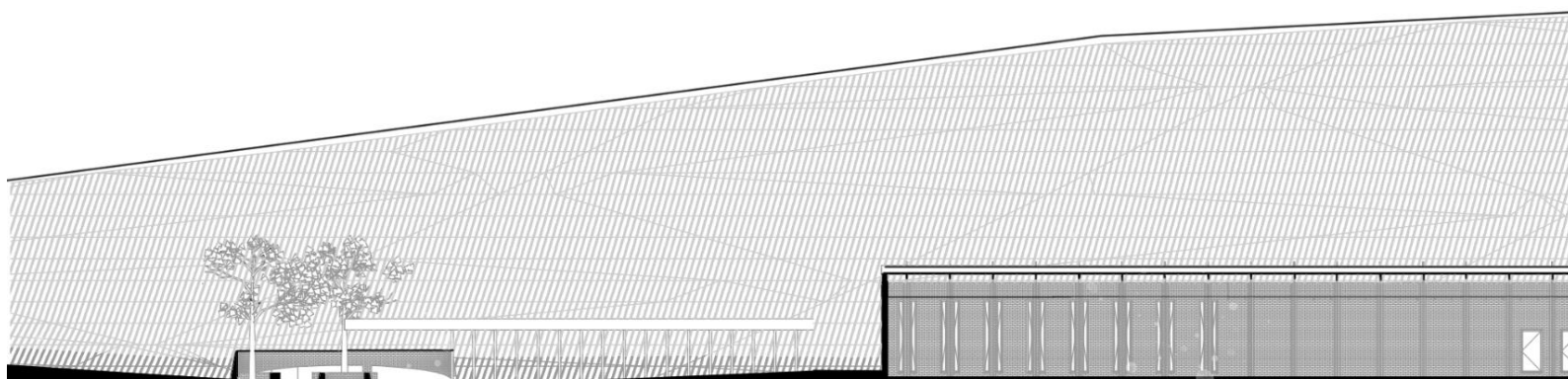
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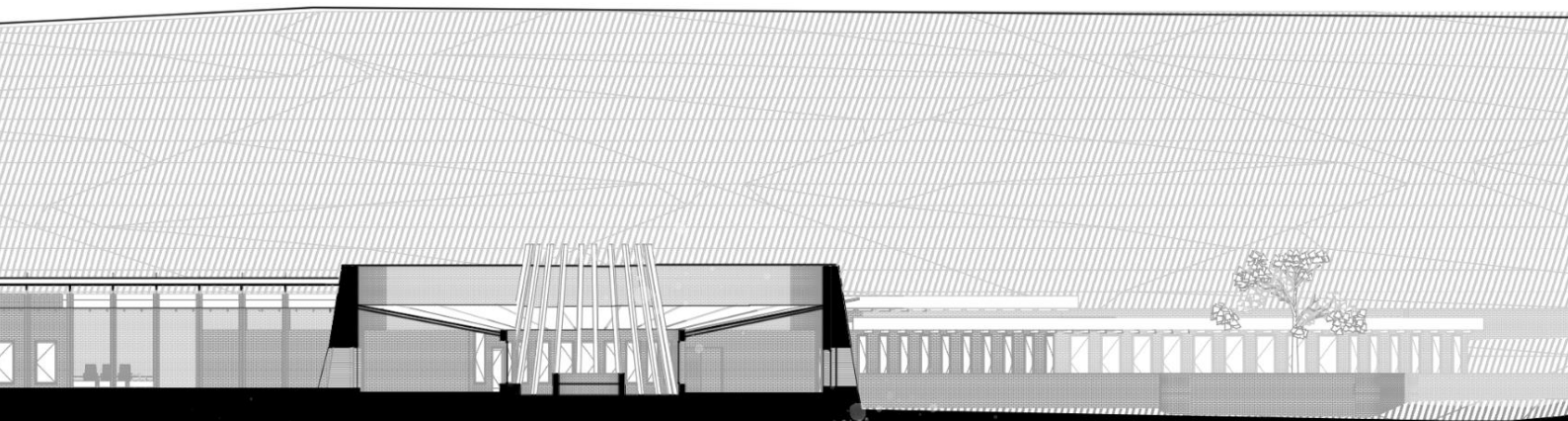
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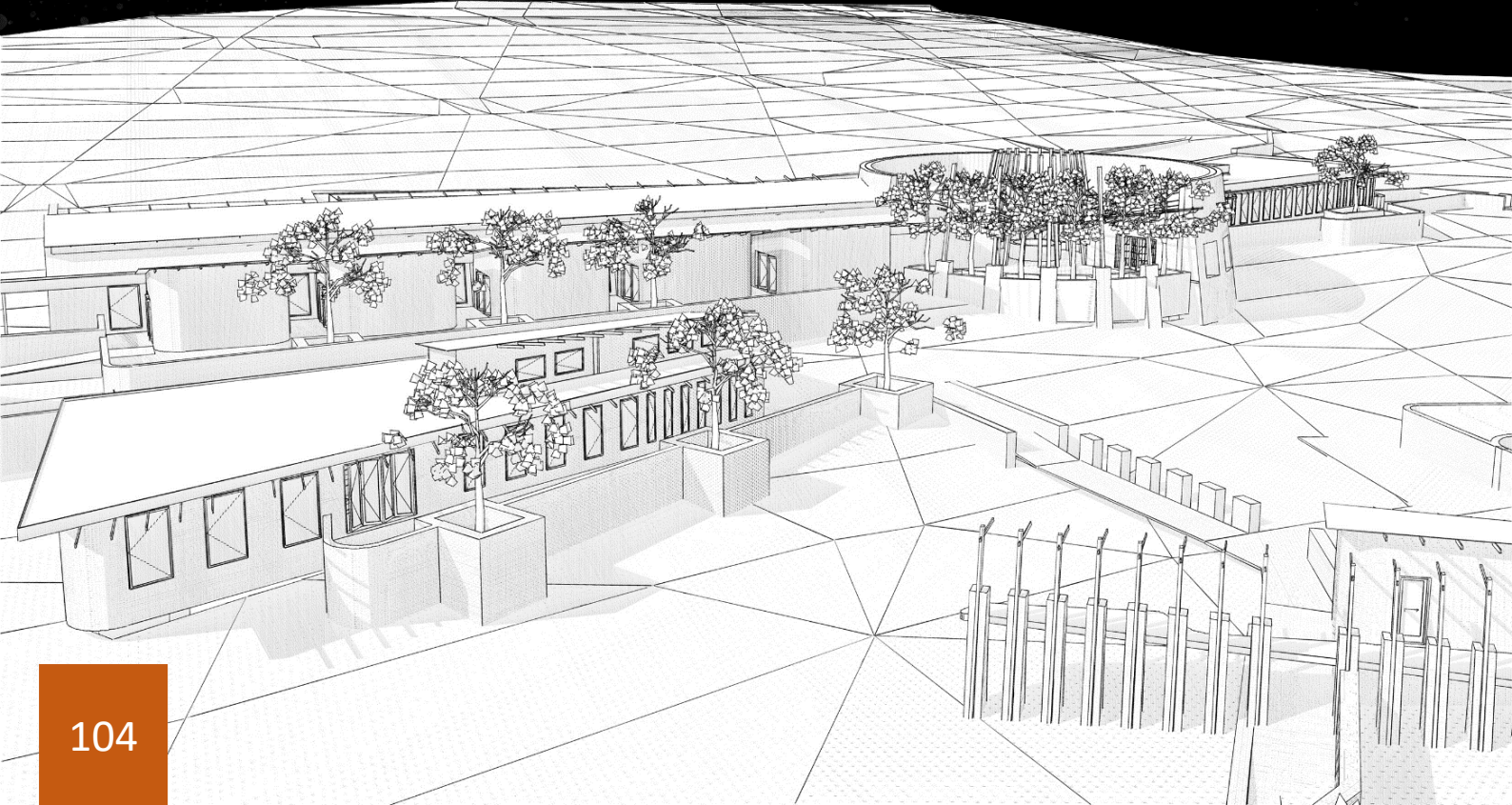
SECTION F-F



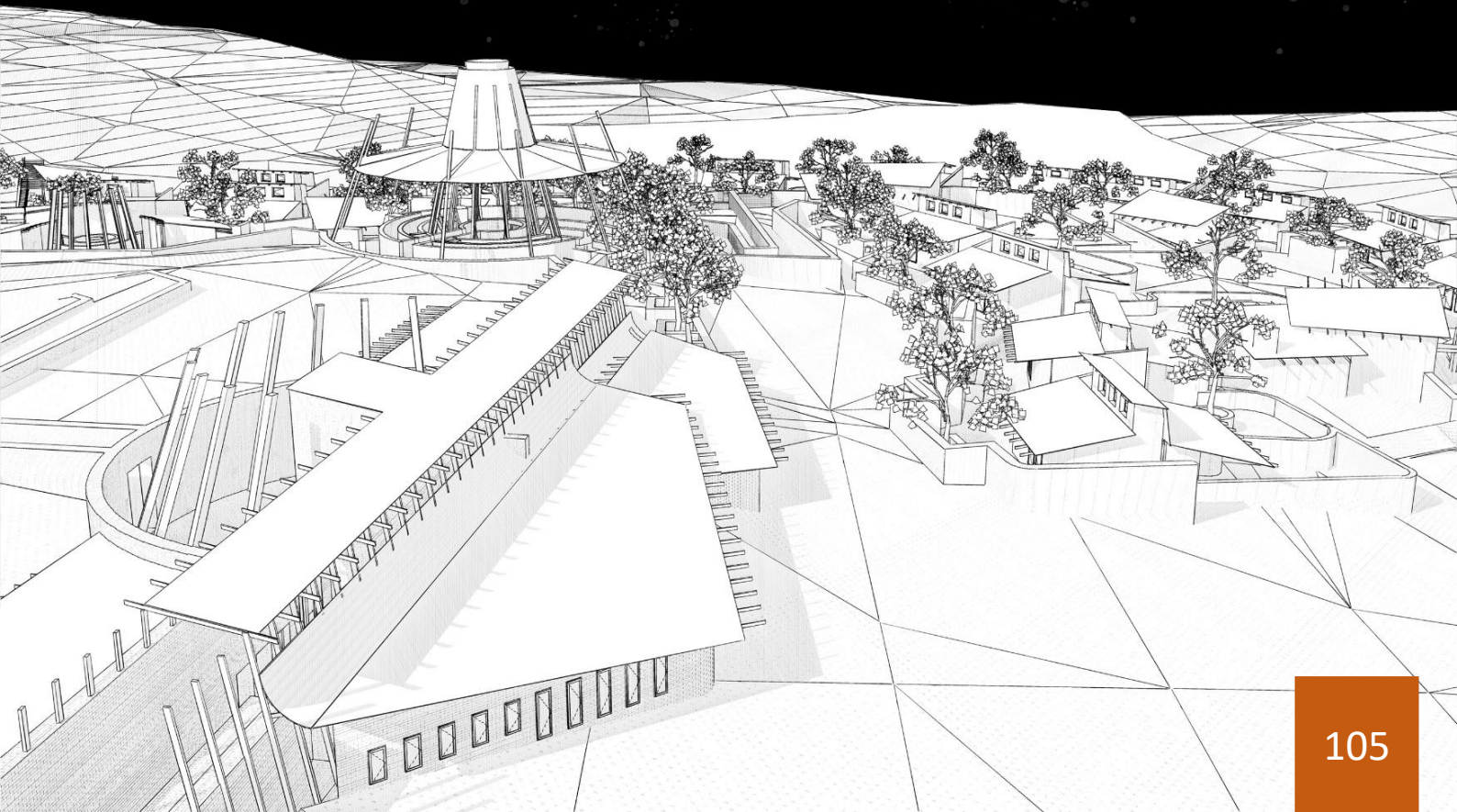
SECTION G-G



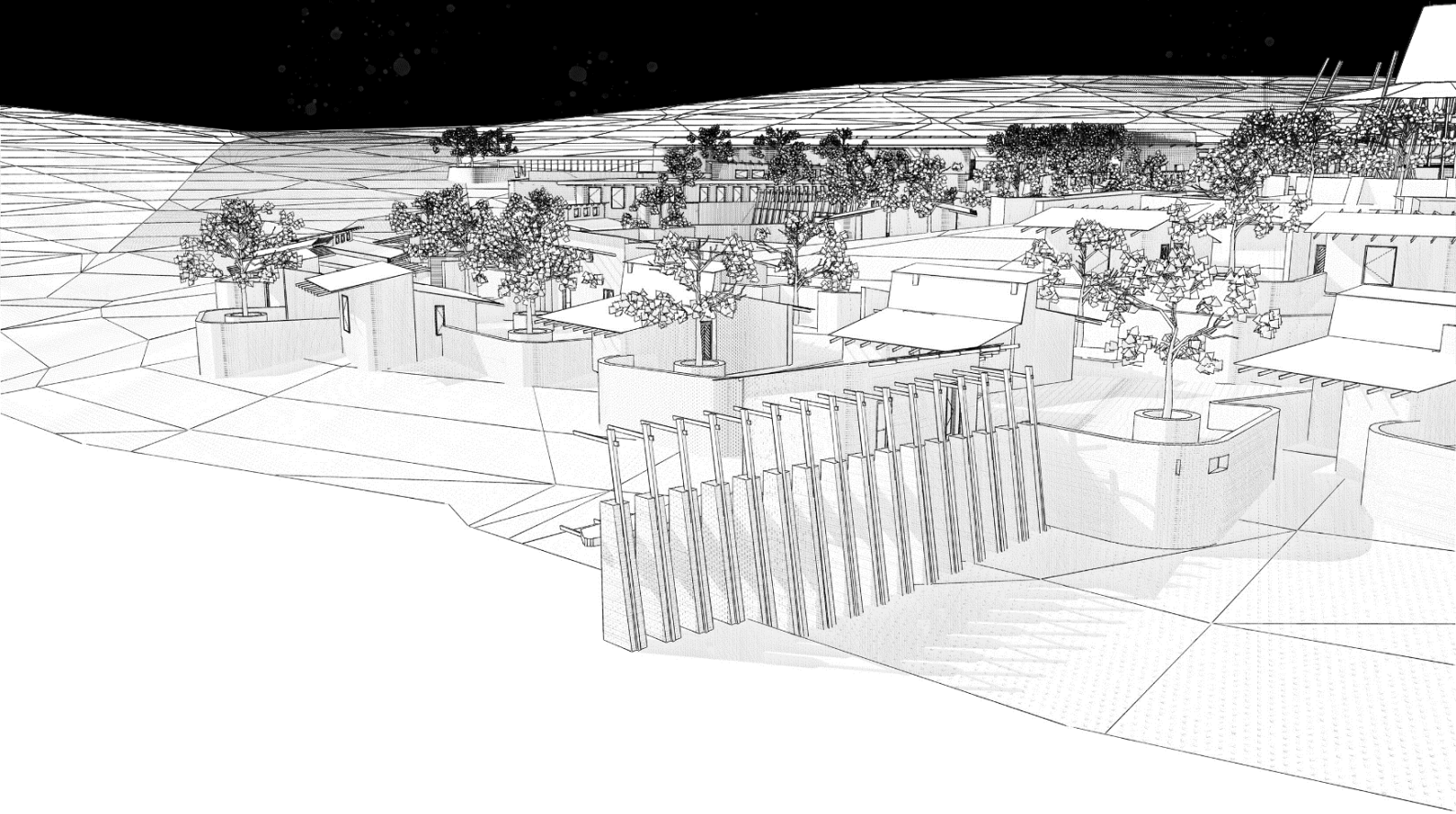
VIEW OVER CLINIC AND TRAINING CENTRE



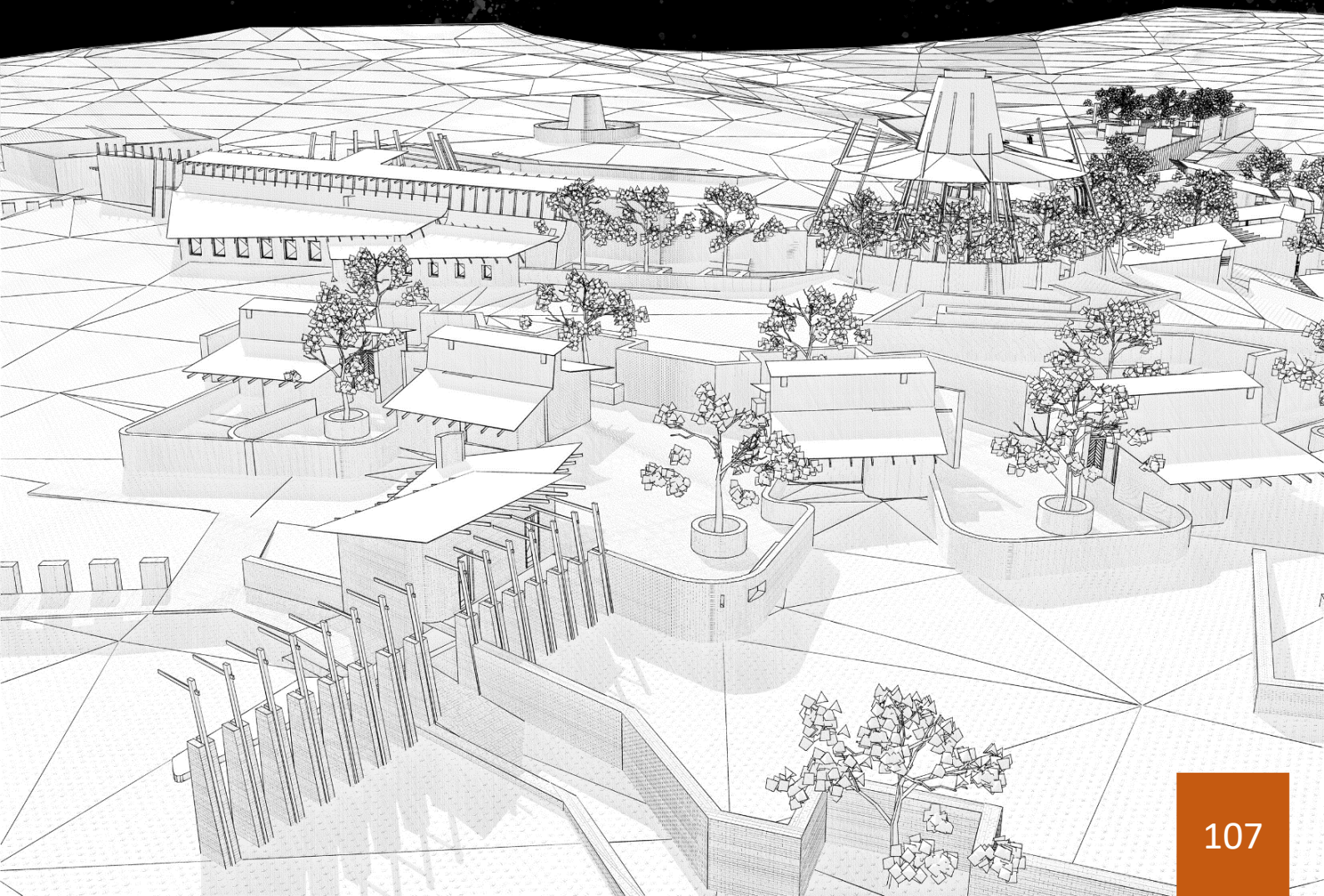
VIEW OVER VISITOR CENTRE AND VILLAGE

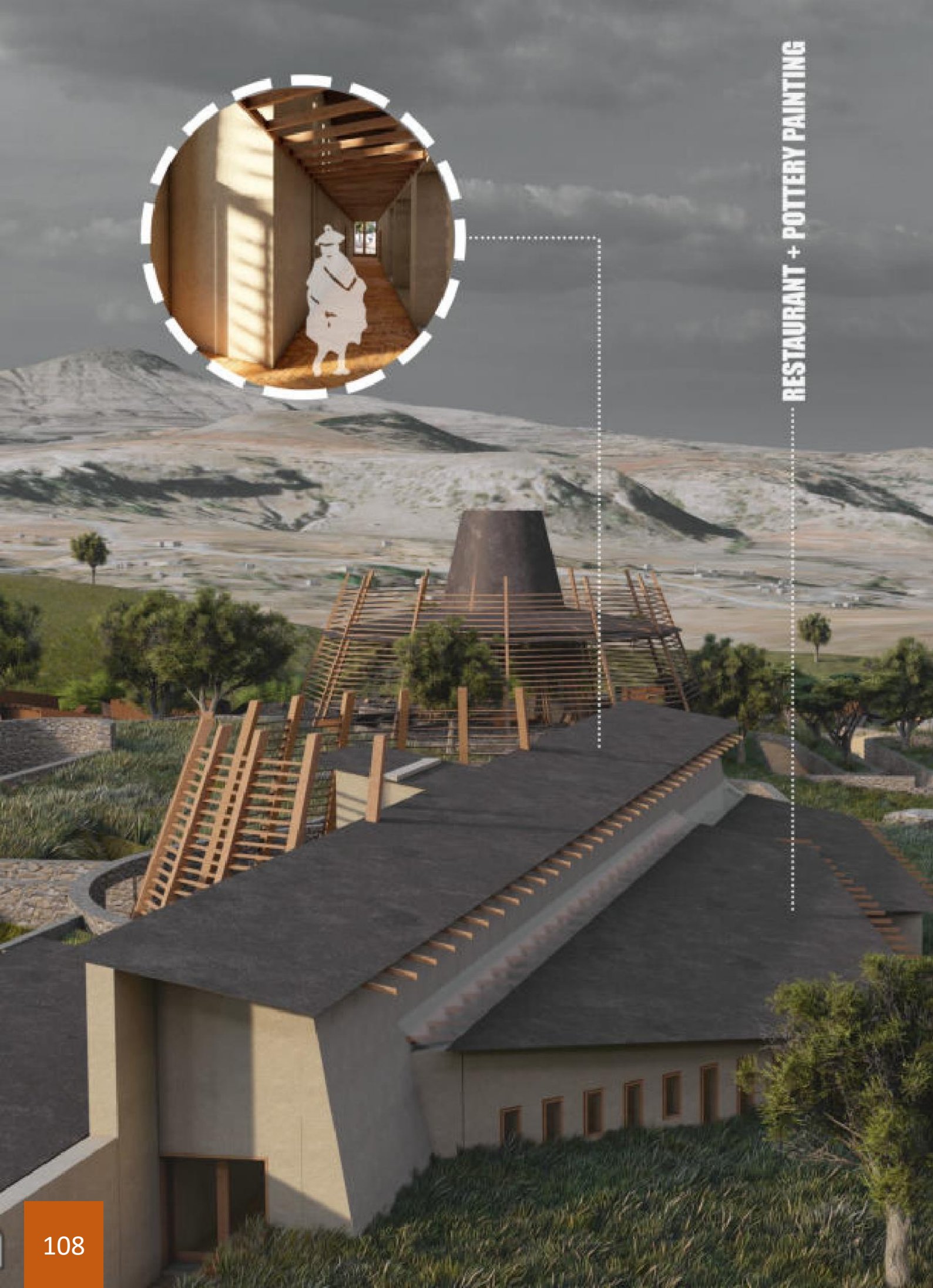


VIEW OVER VILLAGE LOOKOUT POINT



VIEW OVER VILLAGE AND INITIATION PAVILION





RESTAURANT + POTTERY PAINTING

ACCOMMODATION UNITS

COMMUNAL LAUNDRY ROOM

VIEW OVER VISITOR CENTRE TOWARDS VILLAGE

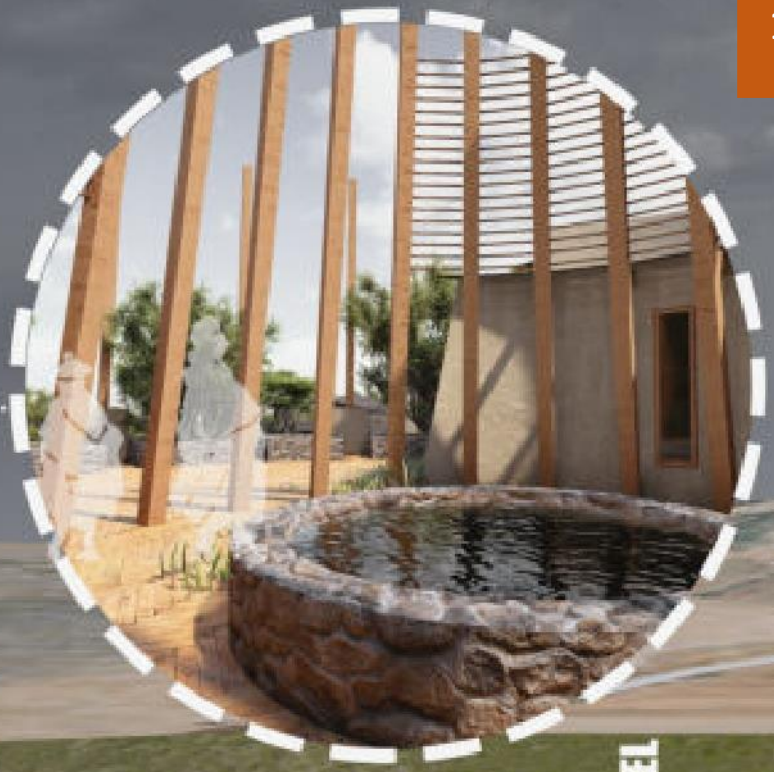




INITIATION PAVILION

WORKSHOP

GENDER REVEAL COURTYARD



PURIFICATION CHAPEL

VIEW OVER WORKSHOPS TOWARD MAIN ENTRANCE AND CLINIC



LOOKOUT POINT

COMMUNAL KITCHEN

PRIVATE COURTYARD



VIEW OF MATERNITY VILLAGE COURTYARD AND LOOKOUT POINT

GRIEVANCE GARDEN

TRAINING CENTRE





VIEW OF TRAINING CENTRE AND CLINIC



NURSE HEADQUARTERS

OUTSIDE WAITING COURTYARD

VIEW OF CLINIC MAIN ENTRANCE







VIEW OVER MATERNITY VILLAGE

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter draws a parallel between the antepartum period and the phase before the design process. Just as the period before childbirth is essential in preparing for a healthy delivery, the preliminary stages of design for cultural and medical facilities for Basotho women in South Africa are crucial in addressing the evolving migration dynamics and spiritual needs of the community.

The need for cultural facilities for Basotho women in South Africa is underscored by the shifting migration patterns and their impact on gender roles and income. These facilities are essential in empowering women economically, providing support for health challenges, preserving cultural heritage, fostering community cohesion, and promoting ritual practices.

The interconnectedness of different spiritualities and rituals at the sacred Basotho caves of Motouleng exemplifies the acceptance and development of traditional and other spiritual beliefs. It's a testament to the possibility of finding common ground in honoring ancestors and embracing values important to spirituality. These sacred sites serve as places of convergence for various beliefs.

The chapter also delved into the ritualistic analysis inspired by Basotho fertility rituals and medical practices related to childbirth. This haptic ritualistic analysis is instrumental in shaping the design process that follows hereafter, emphasizing the importance of understanding and respecting the cultural and spiritual dimensions of the project.

In essence, the chapter highlights the importance of the antepartum phase of the design process, where careful consideration of cultural, spiritual, and community aspects is essential to ensure that the resulting facilities effectively meet the needs of Basotho women in South Africa. Just as preparing for childbirth requires attention to every detail, the design process must be thorough and holistic to create spaces that empower, heal, and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Basotho community.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis embarked on a journey to address the alarming global maternal death rates, specifically exploring the reasons linked to childbirth mortality within the context of native Basotho beliefs. The primary objective was to transcend the boundaries between Western medicinal practices and traditional childbearing methods, facilitating the transition of indigenous South African tribes into the contemporary age while preserving their ancestral beliefs. This undertaking aimed to foster the growth of African identity by integrating cultural practices into architectural designs that endorse spirituality.

The initial stages of the thesis involved a deep dive into Basotho women's ritual and cultural practices during pregnancy, serving as a compelling case study that highlighted the neglected impact on public health and the stifled development of essential ritual traditions. The subsequent exploration sought to establish a meaningful nexus between medicine, culture, and ritual, examining key architectural theories such as permanence, temporality, hermeneutics, and the threshold. The application of these theoretical concepts to the project site aimed to unravel their influence on light, structure, spatiality, and the coexistence of site and architectural intervention.

Further, an in-depth analysis of the site was conducted to discern appropriate responses to Basotho spiritual and cultural practices, considering the integration of existing natural sacred elements aligned with Heidegger's philosophical insights. Design decisions were then expounded upon, with a focus on structural resolution, culminating in a comprehensive examination of the final project's conceptual approach and programmatic construction.

The proposed architectural design, incorporating traditional Basotho practices such as rituals and ceremonies, stands as a testament to the thesis's core objective. Beyond promoting positive childbirth experiences, the synthesis of medical and cultural elements reflects a forward-thinking paradigm acknowledging the interconnectedness of physical and spiritual well-being. This innovative approach contributes a unique and meaningful perspective to the advancement of African spiritual identity in the contemporary age.

As this dissertation sheds light on the intricate relationship between cultural practices, medicine, and architecture, it provides valuable insights for future endeavors in this field. The envisioned maternity waiting village, cultural clinic, training center, visitors' center, clay workshops, and multifunctional spaces signify a holistic approach toward assisting in the transition of indigenous beliefs and communities into the contemporary age. In doing so, this thesis underscores the importance of embracing cultural richness in architectural designs, fostering a sense of identity and spirituality that resonates across the diverse landscapes of the African continent.

REFLECTION

Reflecting on the journey outlined for this thesis, I find myself immersed in a profound sense of purpose. The staggering maternal death rates within the global context, particularly concerning African spirituality, have fuelled my determination to bridge the gap between contemporary architecture and the rich tapestry of cultural beliefs. The inception of this thesis can be traced back to my initial exposure to African cultural rituals during my first-year project at Golden Gate in Clarens. The vibrant and deeply rooted rituals of the African community left an indelible mark on my architectural perspective, sparking a sustained curiosity that has guided my academic trajectory.

As I delved deeper into the intricacies of Basotho culture, the significance of ritual practices, particularly within African spirituality, emerged as a focal point. This realization spurred my commitment to integrating spiritual elements within contemporary buildings. Masango's insights on African spirituality further reinforced the notion that spirituality is woven into the fabric of life, impacting every aspect of society. This belief, coupled with Malcolm Grant's poem "Ubuntu," inspired a quest to understand the essence of African identity and spirituality, serving as guiding themes throughout this research.

The exploration of sacred African spaces further deepened my understanding of the interconnectedness of different spiritualities and rituals. Witnessing the coexistence of traditional African beliefs with Christianity in these sacred spaces underscored the potential for acceptance and development of diverse spiritual practices. This insight became integral to the envisioned architectural design, where the integration of African practices aims not only to enhance experiences but also to foster cultural identity and spirituality.

The proposed dissertation is not merely an academic pursuit; it is a testament to what spirituality and architecture can meaningfully contribute to the well-being of African communities and, by extension, the broader global context. It seeks to establish a symbiotic relationship between the contemporary movement, culture, and ritual, offering a paradigm that acknowledges the holistic nature of human existence. As I embark on this research journey, I am acutely aware of the transformative potential it holds and the responsibility to amplify the voices of African communities, ensuring their cultural practices are not only preserved but also integrated into the architectural fabric of the contemporary age.



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APPENDIX A

CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTATION

PLEASE FIND DOCUMENTS ATTACHED OR SCAN QR CODE FOR DIGITAL VERSIONS OF THE FILES.

