

World Cultures: Islamic Societies
V55.0502.001-MW-12:30-1:45PM
Instructor: Peter Chelkowski
Room 714 Main/Silver Building
Fall 2007

In this course, Islam will be considered as a religion, culture, and civilization. The society of Shi'i Muslims in particular will be the focus of the course. During the last 200 years of Western study of Islam, Shi'ism has been neglected. It is only since the Islamic Revolution in Iran 1978-79 that Shi'ism received attention. Now with American forces in Iraq, Shi'ism is suddenly one of the main topics of interest for the news media. The Shi'is of Iraq are the majority -- some 60% -- of the population. But historically, Shi'is have been deprived of power in the government and of access to the political and economic life of the country. The most holy places of the Shi'is -- Karbala and Najaf -- are located south of Baghdad.

There will be two examinations: a MIDTERM and a FINAL.

Course Materials: Three books and one copy package: Frederic Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, hereinafter referred to as *Denny*, John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, hereinafter referred to as *Esposito*, and Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, hereinafter referred to as *Mottahedeh*. The books are to be found at the NYU bookstore. In addition to the books, there is a reproduced selection of topics under the title, *World Culture: Islamic Societies*, hereinafter referred to as "CP," to be obtained at Advanced Copy Center, 552 LaGuardia Place (between West 3rd and Bleecker Streets).

Each week, we shall read one chapter of *The Mantle of the Prophet*, and each student will be required to write a weekly one- to two-page response paper based on this reading.

Grades will be based on Midterm (1/3), Final (1/3), and Weekly Response Papers (1/3)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 5

Course Introduction
The Peoples of Islam (map), CP: p. 1
Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (roster), CP: p. 2
The Shi'i World in Modern Times (map), CP: p. 3
The Basic Patterns of Mosque Architecture, CP: p. 4

Monday, September 10

Pre-Islamic Arabia: Beliefs, Values, Way of Life. Denny, pp. 29-43

Wednesday, September 12

Muhammad and the Early Muslim Community. Denny, pp. 47-71; Esposito, pp. 1-31.
Concise Description of Sunni and Shi'i Islam, CP: pp. 7-14
The Medina Charter; Pact of Umar, CP: pp.15-20.

Mottahedeh, Note to the Reader and Prologue, pp. 7-17.

Monday, September 17

CONTINUATION OF SEPTEMBER 12

Muhammad and the Early Muslim Community. Denny, pp. 47-71; Esposito, pp. 1-31.
Concise Description of Sunni and Shi'i Islam, CP: pp. 7-14
The Medina Charter; Pact of Umar CP: pp.15-20

Wednesday, September 19

The Arab Conquest and Islamic Rule: The Struggle for a Unified Umma. Denny, pp. 72-94.
The Muslim Community in History. Esposito, pp. 32-67.
The Arab Kingdom, CP: pp. 21-31
The Formation of the Society, CP: pp. 32-43

Mottahedeh, Chapter 1, pp.18-37.

Monday, September 24

Basic Beliefs and Worship. Practices of Islam. Denny, pp. 97-127.

Wednesday, September 26

Inside Mecca (video) – one page response paper required.

Mottahedeh, Chapter 2, pp.38-68.

Monday, October 1

The Nature and Function of the Qur'an. Denny, pp. 128-148;
The Prophet's Sunna as Preserved in the Hadith. Denny pp. 149-163.
An Introduction to the Opening Sura, CP: pp. 5-6.

Wednesday, October 3

Muslim Creeds and Theologies: Their Purposes and Varieties. Denny pp. 164-186.
Law and the State in Classical Islamic Formulations. Denny, pp. 187-207.
Religious Life: Belief and Practice. Esposito, pp. 68-100.

Mottahedeh, Chapter 3, pp.69-109.

Monday, October 8

NO CLASS – COLUMBUS DAY

Wednesday, October 10

Mottahedeh, Chapter 4, pp.110-133.

Monday, October 15

The Story of Layla and Majnun, CP: pp. 45-64.

Wednesday, October 17

The Sufi Way. Islamic Mysticism and the Disciplines of Esoteric Piety. Denny, pp. 211-237; Esposito, pp. 100-108.
Rumi, The Wings of Love (video) – one page response paper required.

Mottahedeh, Chapter 5, pp.134-185.

- Monday, October 22 Masters and Disciples: The Forms and Functions of Sufi Orders. Denny, pp. 238-259.
Visit to Sufi Center in the West Village.
- Wednesday, October 24 **MID-TERM EXAMINATION**
- Monday, October 29 Concert of Sufi Music (live)
- Wednesday, October 31 Moorish Spain, CP: pp. 65-84
Mottahedeh, Chapter 6, pp.186-247.
- Monday, November 5 Land of the Lion and the Sun, CP: pp. 85-113.
- Wednesday, November 7 The Ottoman Empire, CP: pp. 114-141.
Mottahedeh, Chapter 7, pp.248-268.
- Monday, November 12 Muslim India, CP: pp. 142-161.
- Wednesday, November 14 Islamic Cycle and Family. Denny, pp. 263-288.
Mottahedeh, Chapter 8, pp.269-336.
- Monday, November 19 Shi'i Popular Beliefs and Rituals Employed in Revolution and War. In Ritual and Revolution, CP: pp. 163-167.
- Wednesday, November 21 Ideals and Realities of Islamic Community Life. Denny, pp. 289-312
Mottahedeh, Chapter 9, pp.337-356.
- Monday, November 26 Modern Interpretations of Islam. Esposito, pp. 115-157.
Major Movements and Trends in Renewal and Reform.
Denny, pp. 315-339.
- Wednesday, November 28 Contemporary Islam Religion and Politics. Esposito, pp. 158-222.
Mottahedeh, Chapter 10, pp.357-377.

Monday, December 3

Islam and Change: Issues of Authority and Interpretation.
Esposito, pp. 223-252.

Wednesday, December 5

Epilogue. Esposito, pp. 253-271.

Mottahedeh, Epilogue, pp.378-390.

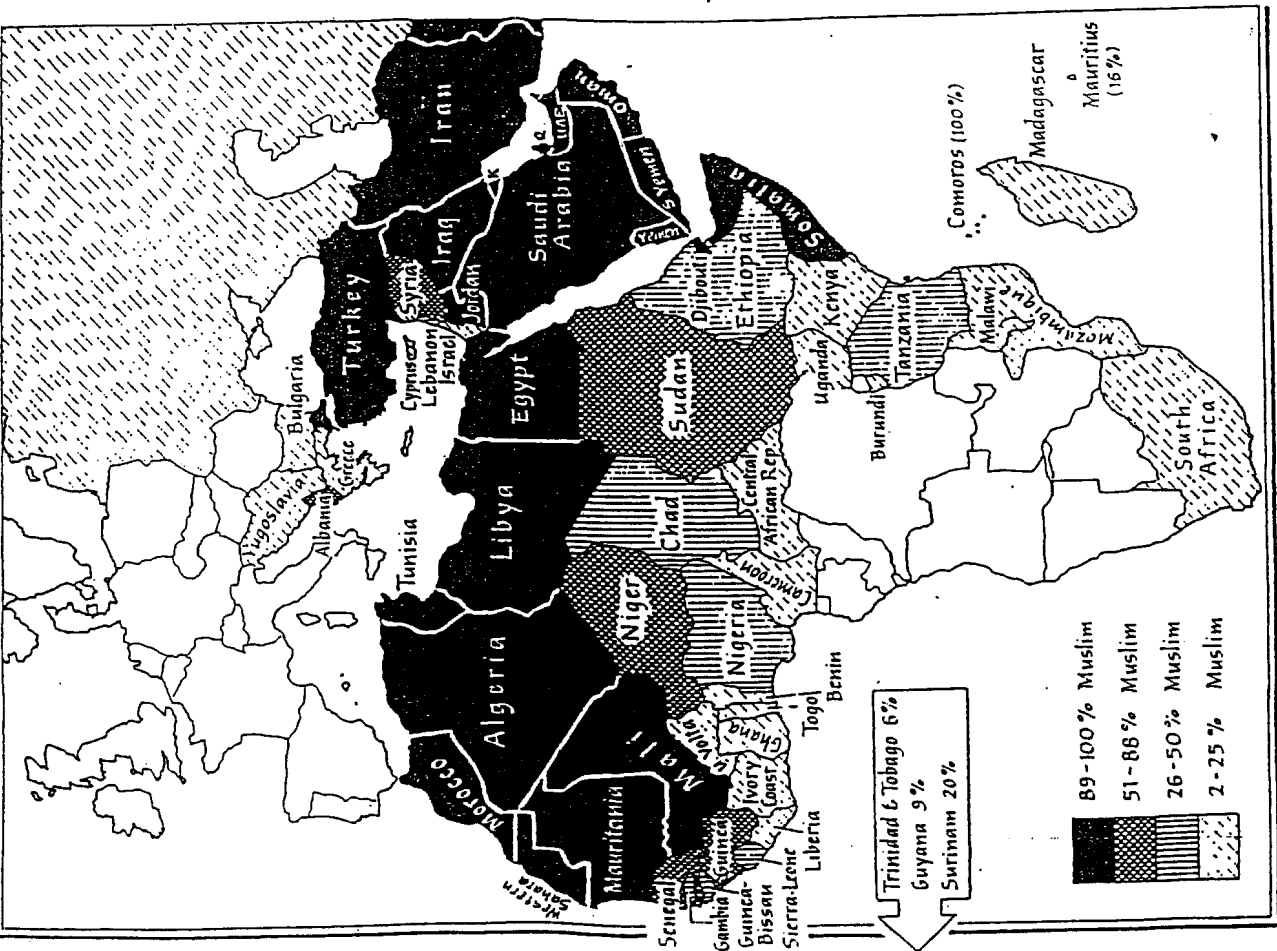
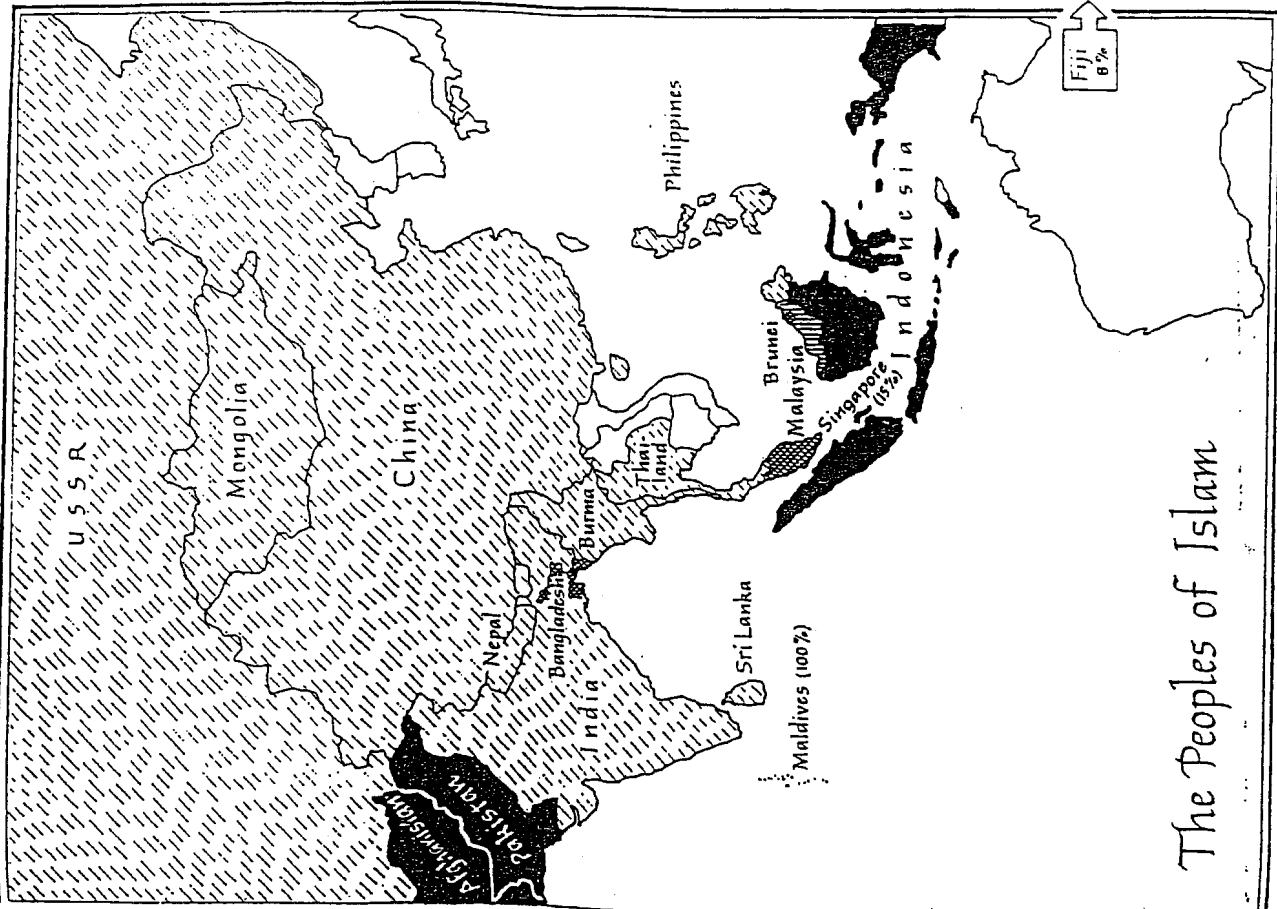
Monday, December 10

Three forms of Islamic Revival: Fundamentalism, Feminism,
and Establishing the Umma in North America. Denny, pp.
340-362.

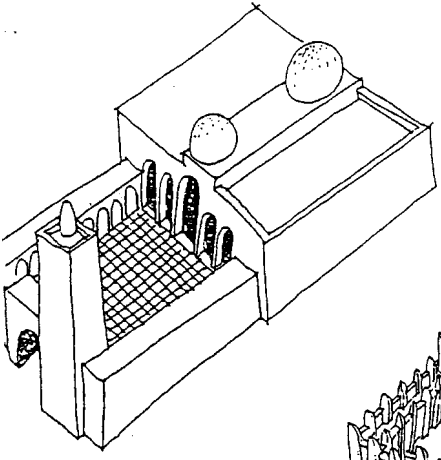
Wednesday, December 12

Course Review

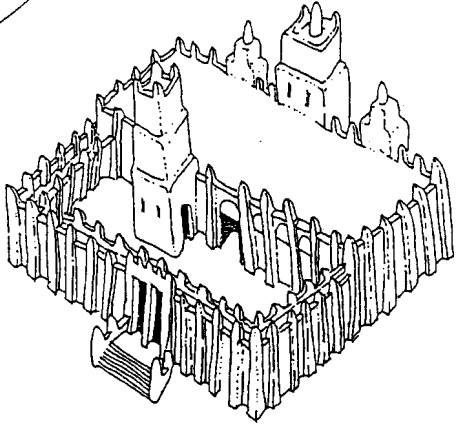
Final Examination: To be announced.



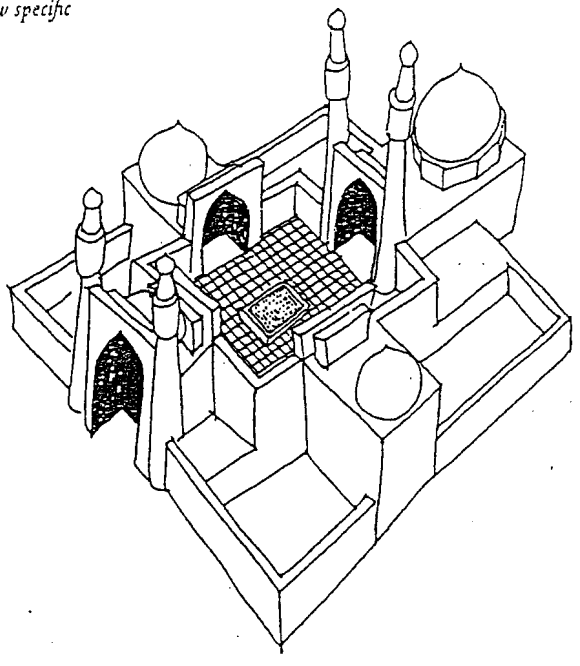
The five basic categories of mosque design occur in seven distinctive regional styles; the sketches do not show specific mosques, nor are they drawn to scale.



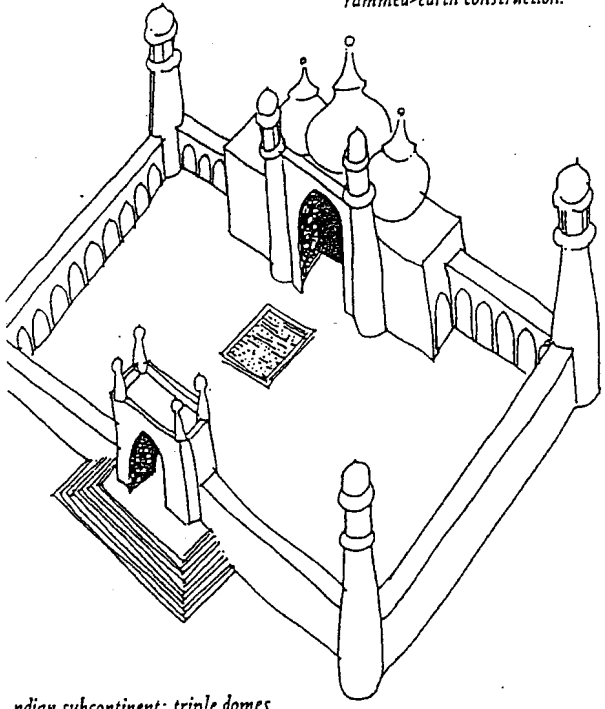
Arabian heartland, Spain and North Africa: the hypostyle hall and courtyard.



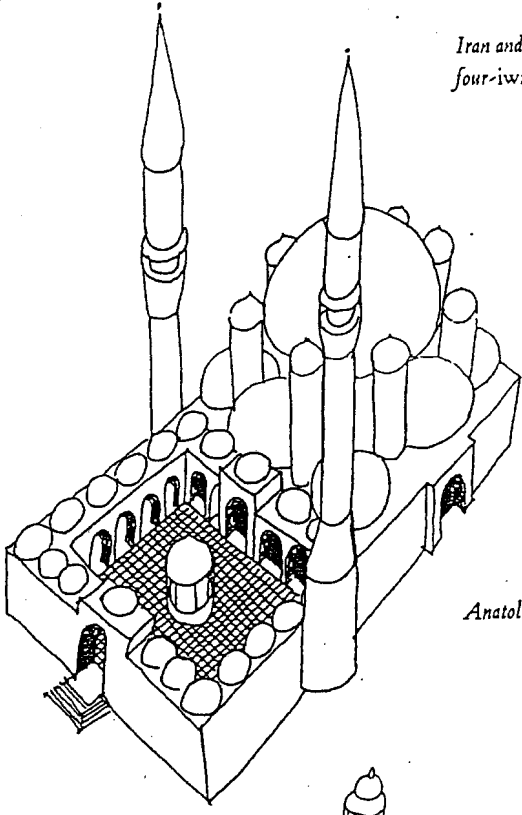
Sub-Saharan West Africa: the hypostyle hall using mud-brick or rammed-earth construction.



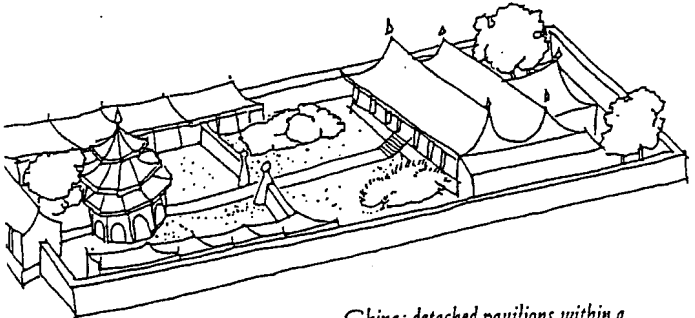
Iran and Central Asia: the bi-axial four-iwan type.



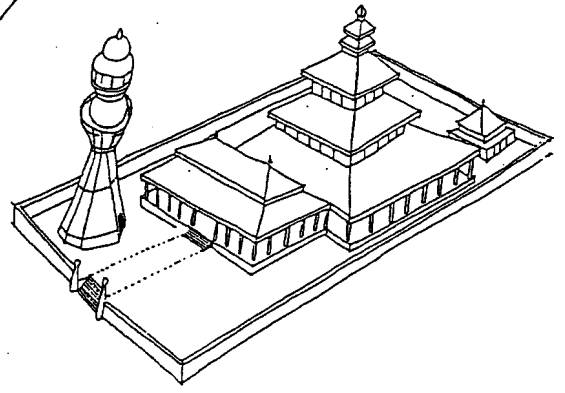
Indian subcontinent: triple domes and extensive courtyard.



Anatolia: use of massive central dome.



China: detached pavilions within a walled garden enclosure.

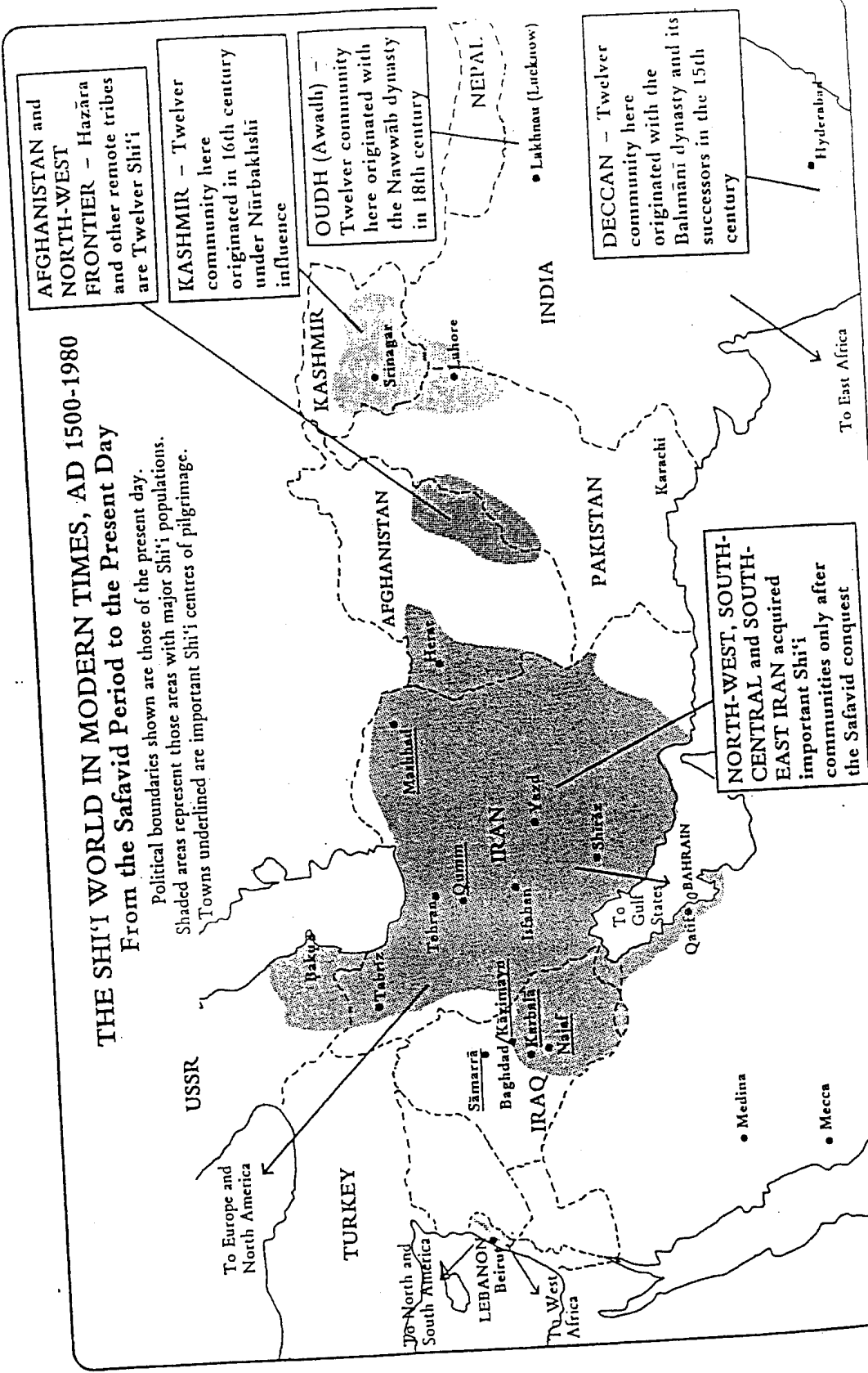


South-East Asia: central pyramidal roof construction.

THE SHI'I WORLD IN MODERN TIMES, AD 1500-1980

From the Safavid Period to the Present Day

Political boundaries shown are those of the present day.
 Shaded areas represent those areas with major Shi'i populations.
 Towns underlined are important Shi'i centres of pilgrimage.



AFGHANISTAN and NORTH-WEST FRONTIER - Hazāra and other remote tribes are Twelver Shi'i

KASHMIR - Twelver community here originated in 16th century under Nūrbakshī influence

OUDH (Awadh) - Twelver community here originated with the Nawwāb dynasty in 18th century

DECCAN - Twelver community here originated with the Bahmani dynasty and its successors in the 15th century

NORTH-WEST, SOUTH-CENTRAL and SOUTH-EAST IRAN acquired important Shi'i communities only after the Safavid conquest