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Nota di contenuto	Introduction -- Pt. I. The principle of walayah and the origins of the community -- Walayah in the Islamic tradition -- The Ghadir Khumm tradition: walayah and the spiritual distinctions of Ali b. Abi Talib -- Walayah, authority and religious community in the first civil war -- The Shiite community in the aftermath of the first civil war -- Pt. II. Walayah, faith and the charismatic nature of Shiite identity -- Walayah as the essence of religion: theological developments at the turn of the second Islamic century -- Membership in the Shiite community and salvation -- Predestination and the mythological origins of Shiite identity -- The charismatic nature and spiritual distinction of the Shiites -- Pt. III. Creating a community within a community -- Shiites and non-Shiites: the distinction between Iman and Islam -- Degrees of faith: establishing a hierarchy within the Shiite community -- "Rarer than red sulphur": women's identity in early Shiism -- Perforated boundaries: establishing two codes of conduct.