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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Note on Conventions -- Note on the Cover Image -- Preface and Acknowledgements -- Genealogy of the Imams -- Map of the Region -- 1 Introduction: The Karbala Story and Shiite Identity -- 2 Studying the Karbala Story as Myth -- PART I THE KARBALA STORY -- 3 Three Times Karbala: Early Accounts of the Killing of al-usayn -- 4 Karbala and Covenant according to Ab Mikhnaf -- PART II REVENGE OR MARTYRDOM: THE STORY OF THE TAWWBN (THE 'PENITENTS') -- 5 Introducing the Story of the Tawwbn -- 6 Betrayal and Guilt in the Tawwbn's Speeches and Letters -- 7 The Visit to al-usayn's Grave -- 8 The Story of the Tawwbn: Date and Concluding Remarks -- PART III FROM SKIRMISH TO COSMIC BATTLE -- 9 Al-Mukhtr and the Mahdi -- 10 The Contest over the Imams in Early Shiism -- 11 Al-usayn among the Imams -- 12 Conclusion: Mythmaking and Identity in Early Shiism -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	In 680 CE al-usayn ibn Al, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, was killed in a battle at Karbala. Ancient accounts describe this event as a minor skirmish, similar to the numerous battles that were waged in the early history of Islam. Among Shiites, however, the story of the

event soon developed into a narrative about a cosmic battle between the powers of universe, with al-usayn personifying good and life-giving powers. The story came to epitomise the trauma that is at the heart of the Shiite ethos: the treachery of the non-Shiite community against the family of the Prophet. This book investigates this development in the 7th to 10th centuries CE and its significance for emerging Shiite identity in early Islam. It provides an in-depth analysis and diachronic comparison of the three earliest versions of the Karbala story, analyses the story of the Penitents who attempted to avenge the death of al-usayn, and surveys the development of the image of al-usayn and the rituals associated with him in historiography, poetry and Shiite hadith.

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