

Shi'ism in the Maghrib  
and al-Andalus,  
Volume One



# Shi'ism in the Maghrib and al-Andalus, Volume One:

*History*

By

John Andrew Morrow

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To Ottmar Hegyi, Dennis Patrick Walker, and Laleh Bakhtiar



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More than anyone, my spouse deserves the prize of "the most patient wife on the planet." I started to work on this study ten years before we married and twenty years later, I was still working on it. "Enough is enough," she said, "the time has come to publish it." Not only will she be pleased to see this book in print, but she will also be relieved. A scholarly gestation should not last three decades. The birth of this work was overdue.

Although this study was long in the making and was reviewed by numerous scholars who made every reasonable effort to ensure that it was free of errors, human beings are fallible. Consequently, despite due diligence on the part of all parties, I accept complete responsibility for any shortcomings to be found in this work. Some scholars might complain that it contains no index; however, this is compensated by the detailed table of contents in which the subject matter of each sub-section is identifiable. Finally, I would like to thank everyone at Cambridge Scholars Publishing for supporting my scholarship and, most importantly, for considering contributions to the field far more critical than commercial potential and profit.

## ENDORSEMENTS

“This is the first comprehensive work on the Shī‘ite presence and contribution in Andalusia. Prior to this book, studies on the subject were confined to the role and contribution of Sunnī Muslims, ignoring any mention of Shī‘ah Muslims. John Andrew Morrow has done some amazing ground-breaking research work demonstrating the social, religious, and political contribution of key Shī‘ah figures in Muslim Spain. His lucid and well-researched work makes an important contribution to our understanding of the interplay between religion and politics in this part of the Islāmīc world. This book provides a wealth of information and will be an invaluable resource that students of Islām can draw upon.” **Dr. Liyakat Takim**, *Sharjah Chair in Global Islām, Department of Religious Studies, McMaster University*

“An outstanding work that demonstrates an exceptional knowledge of classical Arabic texts and sources... The work, in and of itself, is of unquestionable academic merit... It provides masterful coverage of an especially important field when it comes to understanding the history of North Africa and al-Andalus during its classic period... This excellent work of historical research... will certainly provoke a great deal of scholarly debate.” **Dr. José Francisco Cutillas Ferrer**, *University of Alicante, Professor of Arabic and Islāmīc Studies*

“In this seminal work, John Andrew Morrow makes a compelling historical argument for the presence of Shī‘ite Muslims in Andalusia (Islāmīc Spain) and, as such, provides an excellent corrective to the generally held belief that there were few, if any, Shī‘ites in the region. Drawing from a variety of sources, his scrupulous and painstaking research pieces the scattered accounts together to make a cogent, coherent case for their presence. Being the first major and thought-provoking study on this subject, and one that diverges from existing scholarship, Morrow’s work will undoubtedly attract attention and be the center of scholarly debate for years to come.” **Dr. Hamid Mavani**, *Associate Professor of Islāmīc Studies, Bayan-Claremont*

“Academic studies on Islām and Muslims in Spain and North Africa have tended to focus on the art and architecture, philosophy and mysticism, and periods of cooperation and conflict between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Among the unexamined axioms concerning Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula is the Sunnī identity of those who practiced Islām. John Andrew Morrow’s two volume study, *Shī’ism in the Maghrib and al-Andalus*, deconstructs this narrative by providing a treasure trove of historical and textual evidence and analysis. This landmark study is a necessary and timely corrective to those who would attempt to erase any trace of Shī’ī Islām from both the past and the present, whether through myopic scholarship or the destruction of sacred sites and communities. Dr. Morrow’s study may also serve to remind us that not only were there both Sunnīs and Shī’as in Muslim Spain and North Africa, but that both communities exist wherever Islām does.” **Zachary Markwith**, *PhD Candidate, Graduate Theological Union*

## SOURCES

As is customary in the field of Islāmic studies, I generally do not provide page numbers for citations of prophetic sayings, and simply reference them by source, such as Kulaynī or Bukhārī. Since works of *aḥādīth* come in so many versions, page numbers are hardly useful. What is more, virtually all the primary Arabic sources of Islām have been digitalized. Consequently, it requires almost no effort to track down traditions through key word searches.

When English translations of traditions were available, these have been quoted. It is the primary source of the *ḥadīth* that is cited; not necessarily the secondary sources and translations in which it appears. When the translations were not idiomatic, they were improved, often on the basis of the original Arabic. Most of the canonical prophetic traditions cited in this work can easily be found in print and online in Arabic and English. While every reasonable effort has been made to document sources in the bibliography, the sources of some works, often obscure and difficult to access, and which are merely mentioned in passing, are not always included.

Since this work has been thirty years in the making, small segments of its findings have been shared in some articles, books, and presentations, including “Shī‘ism in Morocco,” which was published in several places on the internet, including *Jafariya News* (2006) and the *Imam Reza Network*, and appeared in print in *Islāmic Insights: Writings and Reviews* (2012) (193-198). Other findings appeared online in “Shī‘ism in North Africa and Islāmic Spain” which was published in *Shafaqna* (2016). This study also appeared online in Spanish in *Musulmanes por la Paz* (2019), *ABNA*, *Rahyafteha*, and *Prensa Islāmica* (2020).

Some research on the Berber wives and mothers of the Shī‘ite Imāms was included in *Restoring the Balance: Using the Qur‘ān and the Sunnah to Guide a Return to the Prophet’s Islām* (20-24). Many of the prophetic traditions that I cite are found in *Shī‘ite Islām: Orthodoxy or Heterodoxy*, a work by Luis Alberto Vittor that I translated, edited, and annotated, and which is available in print and various digital editions in both English and Spanish. Since these are my works, and every reasonable effort has been made to identify them, any parallels and echoes fall into the category of fair use.

Whenever it is written that the Prophet, the Imāms, or the companions made certain statements, it merely indicates that the source says so. In other words, when one reads that “the Prophet said” it is always implied that “the Prophet reportedly said,” “the Prophet supposedly said,” or the “Prophet allegedly said.” Including such qualifiers, however, would be burdensome, annoying, and repetitive. I am not claiming that all these traditions are true. I am simply sharing sayings that some Moriscos held to be true. Finally, while this work is not indexed, it contains a meticulously detailed table of contents that should allow readers to locate subjects with relative ease.

## INTRODUCTION

With a few notable exceptions, the presence of Shī'ite Muslims in al-Andalus or Islāmic Spain has been ignored, minimized, or denied by most historians, orientalists, Arabists, and *aljamiadistas*, namely, specialists in Aljamiado literature, that is, Spanish language works written in the Arabic alphabet and occasionally in Latin script by the Moriscos or cryptic Muslims. As anyone familiar with the historical, religious, and literary writings of the period can comprehend, this is a puzzling position to take when one considers the evidence available in primary Arabic and *aljamiado* sources.

While there is no shortage of academics who have advanced the argument that there were no Shī'ites in al-Andalus, I will focus on the views of a select group of scholars which, I believe, are representative of the broader sentiments shared by academics who specialize in al-Andalus. They include Derek W. Lomax (1933-1992), David Wasserstein (b. 1951), Régis Blachère (1900-1973), Bernard F. Reilly (b. 1925), Dominique Urvoy (b. 1943), M.A. Makkī, José Raimundo Sastre Parres, Jorge Aguadé, Mercedes García-Arenal (b. 1950), and José Francisco Cutillas Ferrer. Some of these scholars deny the presence of Shī'ites in al-Andalus. Some are reticent to recognize it. Others acknowledge the historical existence of Shī'ite Muslims in Islāmic Spain; however, they generally seek to downplay their significance.

In *The Reconquest of Spain*, for example, Derek W. Lomax, the respected historian, claims that

from c. 800 all Spanish Muslims accepted the Mālikite interpretation of Qur'ānic law, which was extremely literal and conservative, discouraged speculation, and severely repressed heterodox tendencies. (21)

He claims that “neither Khārijism nor any other heresy could take root in Spain and so weaken Umayyad resistance to Christian attack” (21-22). Although *The Reconquest of Spain* contributes to our understanding of Spanish history, Lomax's claims in the previous passage are incorrect. The author asserts that “all Spanish Muslims accepted the Mālikite interpretation of Koranic law” (21). Although the Mālikite *madhhab* was imposed as the land's official law, some Spanish Muslims continued to adhere to other

schools of jurisprudence. There were followers of the Awzā'ī, Shāfi'ī, Ḥanafī, Ismā'īlī, and Ja'farī schools of jurisprudence in al-Andalus.

The first school of law to prosper in al-Andalus was that of Awzā'ī (707-774) (Cruz Hernández 777; Urvoy 850). As Jorge Aguadé mentions, the followers of al-Shāfi'ī (767-820) were rather numerous (58). The school of Shāfi'ī was even discreetly favored by Muḥammad I (Urvoy 853). Some of the famous Shāfi'ī shaykhs in al-Andalus included Qāsim b. Muḥammad Qāsim b. Sayyār (d. 889 or 891) who was protected by Muḥammad I against the attacks of the Mālikīs (Urvoy 853-54). Dominique Urvoy also reports that 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Umawī (987/88-1068/69) was the *imām* of the mosque in Cordova even though he was a Shāfi'ī (Wasserstein 1985: 177, note 40). In the previous century, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh had also been a Shāfi'ī (177, note 40). Other Shāfi'īs from al-Andalus include al-'Udhri (1003-1085), the geographer, and Abū Umayyah al-Ḥijārī (177). Although he had Shāfi'ī leanings, the judge Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (978-1070) used to judge according to Mālikī law (177). While Mālikī jurisprudence dominated, Ḥanafī jurisprudence was also taught in al-Andalus (Saavedra 12). Although Ibn Ḥanbal's (780-855) works were known, there were few Ḥanbalīs in al-Andalus (Aguadé 58). As al-Maqqarī (c. 1578-1632) relates,

In former times the Andalusians, like the inhabitants of Syria, followed the sect of al-Awzā'ī, but during the reign of al-Ḥakīm, son of Hishām... some learned doctors began to utter legal decisions in conformity with the opinions of Mālik b. Anas and the people of Medina, whose doctrines soon became known and spread all over Andalus and Africa; the change being in great means brought by al-Ḥakīm's conviction and firmness. (vol 1: 113)

Consequently, “he issued immediate orders for the establishment of the sect of Mālik b. Anas throughout his domain” (113).

From a jurisprudential perspective, the situation remained equally diverse in early modern Spain as manifested by the rulings that were passed by sixteenth-century jurists from Cairo regarding the plight of the Mudéjares, the Muslim minority communities that lived under Christian rule. In response to several questions regarding the duty of the Mudéjares to emigrate to *dār al-islām* [the House or Land of Islām] and the circumstances that might justify a Muslim's continued residence in lands conquered by Christians, four judges, representing the Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, Ḥanbalī, and Mālikī schools of law, issued a series of edicts or fatwas (Miller 2000: 258). If the Muslims in al-Andalus and early modern Spain were exclusively Mālikīs, why was there a need for edicts from Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī scholars? The generalization made by Lomax is therefore untenable.

Lomax also claims that the Mālikī interpretation of Qur'ānic law was exceedingly literal and conservative, discouraged speculation, and severely repressed heterodox tendencies (21). This is not the case. According to Mālikī jurists, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah contain texts which are explicit [*naṣṣ*], apparent [*zāhir*], indicative [*dalīl*], implicit [*mafḥūm*], and expositive [*tanbīh*]. They also rely on consensus [*ijmā'*], analogy [*qiyās*], the practice of the people of Medina [*'amal ahl al-Madīnah*], statements from the companions [*qawl al-ṣaḥābī*], judicial preference [*istiḥsān*], and blocking the means [*sadd al-dharā'i'*].

Mālikī scholars also include considerations of public interest [*maṣāliḥ mursalah*], local custom [*'urf*], common usage [*'adat*], presumption of continuity [*istiṣḥāb*], and discretion [*istiḥsān*] when formulating laws. The Mālikī *madhhab* is one of the most eclectic, practical, flexible, and culturally tolerant schools of thought in Islām. As a result, scholars like Nuḥ Ha Mīm Keller (b. 1954) view it as the most developed for Muslims living as minorities. Consequently, it is quite popular among Western converts, particularly those who follow the Ṣūfī current. Since the Mālikīs employ all these methods to derive legal rulings, and since they differentiate between the apparent and implied meanings of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, they cannot be called “literalists.”

Lomax also claims that the Mālikī school of thought “discouraged speculation” (22). The term “speculation” seems misplaced in this context as speculation does not come into play in the field of jurisprudence. The Mālikīs represent a school of law, not a school of theology or philosophy. In the field of theology, a limited degree of speculation is permitted in the form of *kalām* or scholastic philosophy. In *kalām*, one can philosophize, but within the accepted framework of Islāmic beliefs. It is in the field of pure philosophy where speculation comes into play.

Lomax also claims that the Mālikīs “severely repressed heterodox tendencies” (22). This statement is problematic in two regards: firstly, because it makes an academically inappropriate value judgment in terms of what is orthodox and what is heterodox; and secondly, because it confuses the theological establishment with the political establishment. As Luis Alberto Vittor has demonstrated in *Shī'ite Islām: Orthodoxy or Heterodoxy*, Sunnism, Shī'ism, and Ṣūfism, are all different aspects of Islāmic orthodoxy. Although they may differ in matters of detail, they all share the same fundamentals of faith -- Divine Unity [*tawḥīd*], Prophethood [*nubuwwah*], and the Day of Judgment [*qiyāmah*] -- despite relatively minor variations in practice. Scholars like Jorge Aguadé and Isabel Fierro both argue that characterizing the Mālikī *madhhab* as “conservative” and “intolerant” is both inaccurate and inappropriate (Fierro 1987: 34).

Finally, if Mālikīsm was imposed as the official school of jurisprudence in al-Andalus, it was the result of a political decision made by the Umayyads. If Mālikī jurists abused the power they were given, that reflects poorly on the Mālikī jurists involved, and not the Mālikī school of law per se. In Persia, the Ṣafavīds imposed the Jaʿfarī school of law by force, something which reflects poorly upon the Ṣafavīds, but for which the Jaʿfarī school cannot be blamed.

In *The Rise and Fall of the Party Kings: Politics and Society in Islāmic Spain: 1002-1086*, David Wasserstein, an accomplished academic, claims that:

Almost from the start of the Umayyad period in the Peninsula, Andalusian Islām is marked by characteristics of uniformity, correctness, and staidness. It was completely Sunnī, and the only legal *madhhab* to enjoy official recognition through the *tāʿīfah* period was that of Mālik... There was hardly any evidence of Shīʿism or of other forms of heterodoxy during the fifth/eleventh century, and such evidence as there is was concerned with newcomers to the [Iberian] Peninsula. In this context, the way to express divergence from the religious behavior of the majority was through adherence to a different Sunnī *madhhab*, and even this remained very slight throughout the *tāʿīfah* period. (1985: 174-75)

Al-Andalus did become predominantly Mālikī Sunnī after the imposition of Mālikism as the official school of Islāmic jurisprudence. However, it was certainly not so “almost from the start” (1985: 174). Wasserstein also describes Andalusian Islām, namely, Sunnī Mālikī Islām, as being uniform, correct, and staid, words which would irk not only Ḥanafī, Shāfiʿī, Ḥanbalī, Jaʿfarī, Zaydī, and Ismāʿīlī Muslims, but which would be called into question by Mālikī Muslims as well. Although many Sunnī Muslims ignore the validity of the Shīʿite schools of law, they generally recognize that the four Sunnī schools of law are equally acceptable.

Wasserstein also claims that Andalusian Islām “was completely Sunnī” (1985: 174). As the primary sources indicate, and as we will see in the course of this study, this was not the case. Al-Andalus, like the Maghrib, was a veritable hodgepodge of Islāmic ideas. As Usmān Bugaje describes, North Africa was “a region where numerous heretical Khawārij and Shīʿa groups abound[ed]” (104). In response to repression, the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the followers of his family, scattered to the farthest reaches of the Islāmic world for the sake of self-preservation. Speaking of the suffering inflicted upon his family, Imām ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (658-713), the great grandson of the Prophet, and the son of Imām Ḥusayn, the martyr of Karbalāʾ, said: “We have become like the Israelites among the people of Pharaoh: they were slaughtering their children and

sparing their women” (Balagh, *Imām Zain al-Abideen* 38). His son, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (677-743), said that when al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (661-714), the Umayyad governor of Iraq, came to power:

He killed them (the followers of the *ahl al-bayt*) in the most horrible ways. He punished them on the slightest suspicion. Things were so bad that a man would like to be called “atheist” or “infidel” rather than “follower of ‘Alī.” (Balagh, *Imām Zain al-Abideen* 71).

In fact, during his twenty years in power, al-Ḥajjāj is reported to have butchered tens of thousands of people, including fifty thousand men and thirty thousand women (Balagh, *Imām Zain al-Abideen* 71).

As Edward Gibbon explains (1737-1794), not only did the persecutors of the Prophet usurp the inheritance of his children, these former champions of idolatry (and debauchery) became the supreme heads of his religion and empire (qtd. Razwy 180). Summarizing early Islāmic history, Robert Payne (1911-1983) observes that “Again and again we shall find Muḥammadans mercilessly destroying the living descendants of Muḥammad” (qtd. Razwy 180). As Payne describes:

For three hundred and fifty years, the descendants of Abū Sufyān and those who claimed descent from ‘Abbās had made war on the descendants of Muḥammad’s flesh... Throughout all the centuries of Islām, a strange fate had hovered over the descendants of Muḥammad. It was as though that part of the world which eagerly accepted the Messenger of God had turned forever against his living descendants. (qtd. Razwy 181)

While some descendants of the Prophet attempted to endure the persecution as best as they could by practicing *taqiyyah* or pious dissimulation, in conformity with the Qur’ān (16:106), many were forced to flee, scattering throughout the Muslim world. “Although these migrations had started during the time of Ḥajjāj (b. Yūsuf),” explains Ghulam Ḥasan Muḥarramī, “they were accelerated during the ‘Abbāsīd period” (138). As Najam Ḥaider has pointed out, “The failure of the revolt at Fakhkh [June 11, 786],” in particular, “prompted a Zaydī migration to the physical (and intellectual) margins of the Islāmic world... such as North Africa” (461). Although some descendants of the Prophet had Sunnī and Ṣūfī inclinations, most of them had no faith other than Shī’ism. In the estimation of Muḥarramī, “it can certainly be stated that most of the *sādah* had been Shī’ah, their suffering at the hands of anti-Shī’ah governments clearly substantiate this contention” (138).

The migration and scattering of the *sādah* or descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad to different parts of the Muslim world was the result of three factors: a) the defeat of the ‘Alawī uprisings; b) the pressure exerted by the agents of the government; and c) the existence of good opportunities for migration (Muḥarramī 140-141). This migration of the *sādah* and the ‘Alawīs played a significant role in the spread of Shī‘ism through most parts of the Muslim world from Transoxiana and India all the way to North Africa. As Muḥarramī explains:

The scattering of the Shī‘ah during the ‘Abbāsīd period was very obvious. In the east, in addition to Iran, the Shī‘ah went to Central Asia, India, and the Caucasus, among others, and with the collapse of the Umayyad dynasty, the Shī‘ah were also able to exert influence in the west, especially in Africa where a Shī‘ah government of the Idrīsids was established during the second century AH. Although their government was a Zaydī one, it can be regarded as a ground for the efforts of the Shī‘ah. Of course, their contact with the capital (Baghdād) and Medina had been less due to the existence of the Aghlabī government in Egypt which was formed to counter them. In this manner, Shī‘ism during the second century AH was spread in both the eastern and western parts of the Muslim world, and in addition to Khūzestān, the mountainous region (*jabal*) (the regions around the Zagros mountain ranges) and central Iran, Shī‘ism was also spread in far-flung regions such as Central Asia, present day Afghanistan, Azerbaijān, Maghrib (Morocco), India, and Ṭabaristān. (169)

While there were Umayyad Sunnīs in the Maghrib and al-Andalus, there were also Ibādī Khawārij, Imāmī Shī‘ites, Zaydī Shī‘ites, Ismā‘īlī Shī‘ites, Mu‘tazilites, Masarrites, and so-called Ghulāt Shī‘ites, not to mention Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, polytheists, and animists. While some Muslims may have been strict in following their school of thought, others seem to have practiced a syncretistic form of Islām which combined elements from various schools of law and theology, and which exhibited varying degrees of pre-Islāmīc cultural influence.

Although Wasserstein claims that the Islām in al-Andalus was “completely Sunnī,” he immediately contradicts himself by saying that “There was hardly any evidence of Shī‘ism or of other forms of heterodoxy during the fifth / eleventh century, and such evidence as there is concerned with newcomers to the Peninsula” (1985: 174). If Andalusian Islām was “completely Sunnī,” one cannot say that “There was hardly evidence of Shī‘ism.” Either it was entirely Sunnī or it was not. Either there were Shī‘ites or there were not. Since the author mentions some evidence for Shī‘ism in Islāmīc Spain, we can assume that his initial claim about the Sunnī uniformity in Spain was an overgeneralization.

According to Wasserstein, the slight evidence for Shī'ism in Islāmīc Spain is concerned with newcomers to the Iberian Peninsula, an argument lacking in precision. Who were the newcomers? To which period is he referring? In the eyes of the indigenous inhabitants of al-Andalus, namely, the Iberians, the Visigoths, the Celts, and the Basque people, it was the Arabs and the Berbers who were newcomers or foreigners. Even after they embraced Islām and became increasingly Arabian in language and culture, the Iberian Peninsula's original people continued to view the Arabs and Berbers as invaders and foreigners. The initial waves of Berbers and Arabs who decided to remain permanently in al-Andalus, as opposed to returning to their native lands, came to view themselves as *baladiyyūn* or "people of the country." According to these Arabs and Berbers, anyone who did not descend from the original conquerors and colonists of al-Andalus was a newcomer or an outsider. Evidently, the waves of Arab settlers who came later did not view themselves in such terms, and their descendants considered themselves to be as Andalusian as anyone else. Who, then, were these newcomers who were Shī'ites?

The first Umayyad armies to conquer al-Andalus included Shī'ite Muslims, several of whom were disciples of the Prophet's companions. The Muslim forces that conquered al-Andalus consisted primarily of Berbers from the Maghrib, some of whom were Shī'ites. Some of the earliest Arab tribes to settle in al-Andalus were Shī'ite. And some of the succeeding Berber and Arab tribes that settled in al-Andalus were equally Shī'ites. Furthermore, some of the indigenous Spanish Muslims had embraced Shī'ite Islām, as opposed to the official Sunnī Islām of the authorities, as much as an act of faith as an act of defiance. Wasserstein's words give the impression that Shī'ism was some type of outside ideology brought in to contaminate the pristine pure Mālikī Sunnī Islām of the Andalusians. Nothing can be further from the truth. Shī'ite Islām did not arrive in al-Andalus by means of newcomers: it was already there, firmly established throughout the Iberian Peninsula by some of the first conquerors and settlers who came to al-Andalus.

According to Wasserstein, Shī'ite Islām was not a means of expressing difference in al-Andalus. Rather than embracing Shī'ite Islām, "the way to express divergence from the religious behavior of the majority was through adherence to a different Sunnī *madhhab*, and even this remained very slight throughout the *tā'ifah* period" (1985: 174). Although this is quite a claim to make, the author has not supported it with any evidence. Where are the instances of Mālikī Muslims who became Ḥanbalīs, Shāfi'īs, or Ḥanafīs to express difference? Where are the cases of Ḥanbalī, Shāfi'ī, or Ḥanafī revolts or rebellions against Mālikism? Rather than embrace another Sunnī

school, marginalized Muslims, be they Muwallads, the sons of Arab fathers and Spanish or Berber mothers, expressed their alterity, difference, and defiance, by siding with Shī'ism, a revolutionary religion if there ever was one.

As those familiar with Islām will concede, shifting between Sunnī schools is not necessarily an expression of difference or dissent. When Sunnī Muslims are dissatisfied with the version of Islām they have been presented, they tend to embrace Šūfī Islām, to compensate for the supposed lack of spirituality they were suffering under legalistic Sunnism. Otherwise, they embrace Shī'ite Islām to combine their quest for both spirituality and revolutionary political activism. Unlike Wasserstein's claim, this argument is supported by fact. If one examines the history of al-Andalus under Umayyad rule, one notes that Shī'ism inspired most rebellions and insurrections, and sometimes, Šūfism.

To support his claim that there were there were virtually no Shī'ites in Spain, Wasserstein quotes Régis Blachère (1900-1973), the French orientalist and translator of the Qur'ān, who said that Islāmīc Spain was "à peu près pure d'influence schismatique" (1985: 175, note 30) [more or less free of schismatic influence]. Although the term "pure" can mean "devoid," it literally means "pure" and could have a pejorative meaning in the passage in question. The implication seems obvious: the Sunnī Islām of al-Andalus was not contaminated by Shī'ism. Such value judgments have no place in academic discourse. They reflect prejudiced, pre-conceived notions, which impede any attempt at objectivity.

Like Wasserstein and Lomax, Bernard F. Reilly uses a confusing combination of tempered and absolute statements. In *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain: 1031-1157*, he writes that "the Muslim community itself was fairly homogenous," (12), words that are mostly unobjectionable although the term "fairly" is challenging to qualify empirically. After that, however, he startles the informed reader by speaking in absolute terms: "In strictly religious terms it was solidly Sunnite without even a tincture of Shias" (12). Such statements are always disconcerting coming from people who present themselves as objective and rational academics. It seems as absurd as claiming that "Latin America is a Catholic continent," as if there were no Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, or other religions represented in the region. It seems as absurd as claiming that "Ireland is a completely Catholic country without a tincture of Protestants." It is almost as if such scholars fail to see the trees due to the forest. They seem to see their subjects as a monolithic mass, blind to the various elements it contains. Socio-ecological systems are not uniform. They are complex adaptive systems composed of interacting entities.

Reilly inaccurately explains that “within the Sunnite tradition itself, the Mālikite school of interpretation of the *ḥadīth* was the only one followed among the usual four variants within the orthodox Sunnite world” (12). To make matters worse, he proceeds to make the following prescriptive statement:

In the Peninsula, then, Islām itself was not a source of division among Muslims, but rather one of unity; indeed, it was a relaxed sort of cult which did not even bother itself over much with the absence of a caliph. (12)

This value judgment demonstrates a flawed understanding of the Muslim faith. Islām is not viewed as a source of division by most intelligent Muslims. The various expressions of Islām, be they jurisprudential, legal, theological, or philosophical, demonstrate the rich diversity of the Islāmic experience. Reilly seems to imply that uniformity is the only source of unity. For many Muslims, diversity is a source of unity. As the Qur’ān says: “We created you from a single (pair) of male and female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other” (49:13).

In the Qur’ān, Almighty God stresses that Islām has been made easy for the people: “He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion” (22:78); “On no soul does God place a burden greater than it can bear” (2:286); “God desires to make things lighter for you. Human being was created weak” (4:28); and “God does not want to make things difficult for you, but He does want to purify you and to perfect His blessing upon you so that hopefully you will be thankful” (5:6).

In the *ḥadīth* literature, the Prophet Muḥammad stresses that Islām has been made easy for the people. He is cited as saying: “Make things easy for the people, and do not make it difficult for them. Make them calm, and do not repulse them” (Bukhārī); “God did not commission me for clerical duties. The most pleasing thing in the sight of God is to choose the easy way of God’s Oneness” (Kamushkhanawī) and “Avoid exaggeration while practicing your religion. The ones preceding you perished for this reason” (Kamushkhanawī). Furthermore, Muslim scholars from all schools of thought agree on the basic principle that “differences of opinion are a form of mercy.”

Islām, by nature, is designed to be easy for Muslims. Only extremists, heretics, literalists, and fundamentalists make it impossible for the people to endure. Reilly’s description of Andalusian Islām as a “relaxed sort of cult” is imprecise: relaxed compared to what and according to what standards? According to Reilly, it was relaxed because it did not concern itself too much with the absence of a caliph, words that do not make any sense.

According to Sunnī Muslims, the Prophet died intestate and supposedly wanted communities to select their leaders. For Sunnī Muslims, then, the caliphate was primarily political. In other words, the caliphs could not claim in good faith that God and His Prophet directly appointed them. The early Umayyads made no pretensions regarding their political ambitions. They did not even try to justify their rule based on religion. It was only at a much later date that they started to falsify prophetic traditions in a vain attempt to legitimize their rule along religious lines. The Sunnīs came to accept only four caliphs, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī. For the Sunnīs, that was the end of righteous rule. If the rightly guided caliphs had religious legitimacy, those that followed them varied in credibility.

According to many Shī‘ite Muslims, the Prophet explicitly appointed ‘Alī as his successor upon divine command. Although he was passed over three times, he eventually became the fourth caliph. For the Shī‘ites, however, ‘Alī was always the first Imām. Although the Shī‘ites split into scores of parties, disagreeing as to which descendants of the Prophet should be followed, they made a clear distinction between the caliphs, who were the political authorities over all Muslims, and the Imāms, who were the religious authorities for their Shī‘ites.

From the early days of Islām to the present, many Muslims have lived without a caliph or an Imām, and this has never posed a problem. Reilly seems to confuse Islām, both Sunnī and Shī‘ī, with Catholicism, and the caliphate and the Imāmate with the Papacy. Islām, however, is not an organized religion. Islām does not have a clergy although the Twelver Shī‘ites have developed a clerical hierarchy. Islām does not have a Pope although the sources of emulation of the Twelver Shī‘ites play a similar role. And Islām does not have a Vatican or Magisterium although some Twelver Shī‘ites would view their religious seminaries as such. For most Muslims, however, both Sunnī and Shī‘ī, the presence or absence of a political caliph has little to no relevance religiously and is inconsequential when it comes to believing and practicing the religion of Islām. Whether the Imām is manifest or hidden, or whether the Imāmate is vacant, does not prevent the continuity of religious practice.

As for the few scholars who admit that there were Shī‘ites in al-Andalus, they tend to minimize their importance. Dominique Urvoy, for example, admits that “there were, in Muslim Spain, a number of cases of more or less profound adherence to Shī‘ism” (853). Unlike other historians, Urvoy admits that there were Shī‘ites in Islāmīc Spain. However, he is quick to minimize the sincerity of their commitment to the Shī‘ite cause and their contributions to Andalusian society. In his eyes, the cases of Shī‘ite adherence in Islāmīc Spain “remained... sporadic, representing a posture of