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Sommario/riassunto	The book draws a brief profile of Italian linguistic history and addresses some current problems linked to globalization, the values of the mother tongue and multilingualism and the need to re-establish Italian and European linguistic policy on new foundations. Contemporary Italian is a particularly stratified cultural asset, in which one can grasp, alongside the many new elements, the evident and precious signs of a very strong link with the past. In the European panorama, Italy today stands out, in fact, for the accentuated multilingualism and the long duration of the national language. On the one hand, the extraordinary animal and plant biodiversity in our country corresponds to an extraordinary cultural and linguistic diversity; on the other hand, we all feel that Dante's language, Petrarch and Boccaccio still belong to us, and coincide in the fundamental features with ours. Such wealth, particularly appreciated abroad (as shown by the growing demand for Italian in the world), deserves to be better known by the younger generations, and also protected and enhanced with appropriate tools, starting with a decisive rethinking of the national language policy.