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Nota di bibliografia  Includes bibliographical references (p. [239]-244) and index.

Nota di contenuto     Front matter -- Contents -- Chapter 1. Algebraic preliminaries --
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                      matter

Sommario/riassunto    This is a state-of-the-art introduction to the work of Franz
                      Reidemeister, Meng Taubes, Turaev, and the author on the concept of
                      torsion and its generalizations. Torsion is the oldest topological (but
                      not with respect to homotopy) invariant that in its almost eight decades
                      of existence has been at the center of many important and surprising
                      discoveries. During the past decade, in the work of Vladimir Turaev,
                      new points of view have emerged, which turned out to be the ""right
                      ones"" as far as gauge theory is concerned. The book features mostly
                      the new aspects of this venerable concept.