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Sommario/riassunto	This book covers an important period in the study of the Mediterranean Sea. An understanding of the fundamental ocean processes occurring in this important body of water has crucial implications for climatic studies, pollution mitigation, and fisheries management. During the 1980s, several large-scale, long-term international experiments were conducted in the Western Mediterranean, providing a wealth of oceanographic information. The current volume is an outgrowth of these field campaigns and the related data analysis. It describes the seasonal and interannual variabilities of the sea and its sub-basins and the forcings related to these variabilities, it examines what is known (and not known) about the western portion of the sea, and it provides in a convenient format a basis on which future investigators can build.