The increasing evidence of Islam as Italy’s second religion is an issue of undeniable importance. It has generated an intense and often polarized debate that has involved all the cultural, political and religious institutions of the country. This study examines some of the most significant voices that have made themselves heard in defining Italy’s relationship with Islam and with the Islamic world, from 9/11 to the Arab Spring. It looks in detail at the nature of the arguments that writers, journalists and intellectuals have adduced and at the connections and disjunctions between opposing positions. This book examines how events such as military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq or the protests in Tahrir Square have been represented and it analyses the rhetorical framework within which the issue of the emergence of Islam as an internal actor within Italian civil society has been articulated.

Charles Burdett is Professor of Italian at the University of Bristol. The principal area of his research is the representation of intercultural contact in modern Italian literature and culture. He has written on literary culture in the 1920s and 1930s, travel and travel writing in Italy under Fascism, the history of Italian expansionism and the memory of colonialism. He is currently working on the AHRC-funded project ‘Transnationalizing Modern Languages: Mobility, Identity and Translation in Modern Italian Cultures’.