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Sommario/riassunto	The synagogue was one of the most central and revolutionary institutions of ancient Judaism, leaving an indelible mark on Christianity and Islam as well. This commanding book provides an in-depth and comprehensive history of the synagogue from the Hellenistic

period to the end of late antiquity. Drawing exhaustively on archeological evidence and on such literary sources as rabbinic material, the New Testament, Jewish writings of the Second Temple period, and Christian and pagan works, Lee Levine traces the development of the synagogue from what was essentially a communal institution to one which came to embody a distinctively religious profile. Exploring its history in the Greco-Roman and Byzantine periods in both Palestine and the Diaspora, he describes the synagogue's basic features: its physical remains; its role in the community; its leadership; the roles of rabbis, Patriarchs, women, and priests in its operation; its liturgy; and its art. What emerges is a fascinating mosaic of a dynamic institution that succeeded in integrating patterns of social and religious behavior from the contemporary non-Jewish society while maintaining a distinctively Jewish character.
