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Sommario/riassunto	The state, which since the middle of the seventeenth century has been the most important and most characteristic of all modern institutions, is in decline. From Western Europe to Africa, many existing states are either combining into larger communities or falling apart. Many of their functions are being taken over by a variety of organizations which, whatever their precise nature, are not states. In this unique volume Martin van Creveld traces the story of the state from its beginnings to the present. Starting with the simplest political organizations that ever existed, he guides the reader through the origins of the state, its development, its apotheosis during the two World Wars, and its spread

from its original home in Western Europe to cover the globe. In doing so, he provides a fascinating history of government from its origins to the present day.
