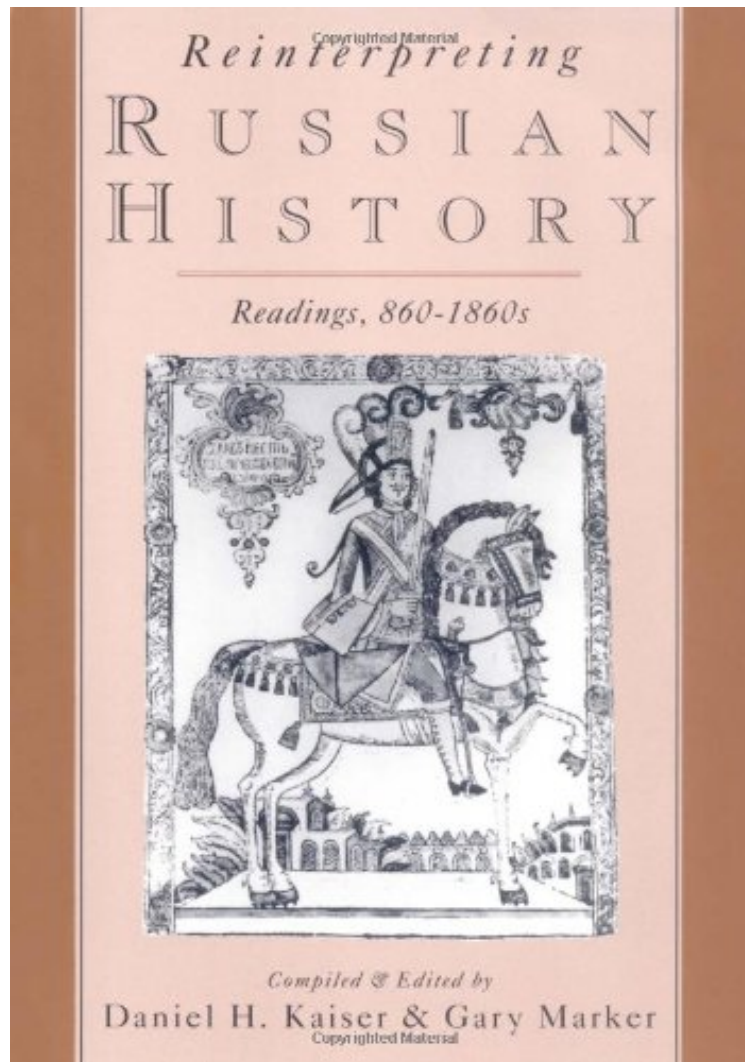


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Reinterpreting Russian History: Readings 860-1860s

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understood and allows quick reference. each section is composed of primary documents and then articles by various historians on the subjects raised in the primary documents. The discussion is interesting, and brings together both Russian and Western Historians. The primary documents are well chosen and run the gamut from childrens scratchings in birchbark from what is presumably a school room to the text of some of Alexander II's public statements on serfdom. Combined with a large selection of images from the periods, the book gives a good feel of what the time was like. The primary sources also show a sensitivity to different ways of looking at and for history. there are some transcriptions of folk tales, and some law codes, (rather more of the latter than the former). For students interested in seeing what the big names in historical reaserch are using to write their learned texts, this is an excellent introduction to the world of primary sources from early history; and since the literature discusses the sources which have already been shown, the student can see how they were incorporated. There are two reasons i gave this book 4 stars rather than 5. first, its hard to get a good grasp of history from the book, since it feels vaguely disjointed and eposodic rather than flowing. this is not anything that could not be solved with a good companion (i recommend Gregory Freeze's "Russia: A History") but it makes reading it on its own difficult for a person not well versed in the history, which is a pity since the writing is easy to read and would otherwise make a good book for the lay person. Secondly, (and this isn't a flaw for me, but some of my friends who read it with me in the class i took with this book as a text thought it was) was that the book spends a lot of time looking at law codes. i happen to like that, but some of my friends who are more interested in the "story" of history found it deadly dull. if you look at the rest of Kaiser's work, you will notice a certian tendancy toward law codes. so that is something to keep in mind. on the whole, this is definitely one of the best history books i have read on russia in general and on pre imperial russia it is one of the best. 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Russian history By Dr. Kathryn P. George This is an excellent text offering commentary and translations of original historical documents. Easy to read and understand.

The first comprehensive reader in Russian history in almost two decades, this collection includes primary and secondary material, much of which has never before been published in English, reflecting the latest scholarship on the subject. Supplemented by over 70 illustrations, selections are introduced by placing them in the context of the work's major themes: state structure, the economy, society, and culture and everyday life. From the multi-ethnic peopling of early Russia to the elite society of the nineteenth century, original sources illuminate such topics as state-building, government and politics, the peasantry and the countryside, clergy and religious communities, and women and gender, making this comprehensive text vital for students of Russian history.

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"An excellent collection of readings. A definite possibility for outside reading."--Bernard Kiernan, Concord College
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"Some unusual (and I think well chosen) primary sources; the secondary sources are sometimes challenging for undergraduates but nicely reflect recent scholarship."--Paul Teverow, Missouri Southern State College
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"Excellent coverage of all the key topics for the years 860-1860."--Alan Levy, Slippery Rock University
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About the Author Daniel H. Kaiser is at Grinnell College. Gary Marker is at State University of New York at Stony Brook.