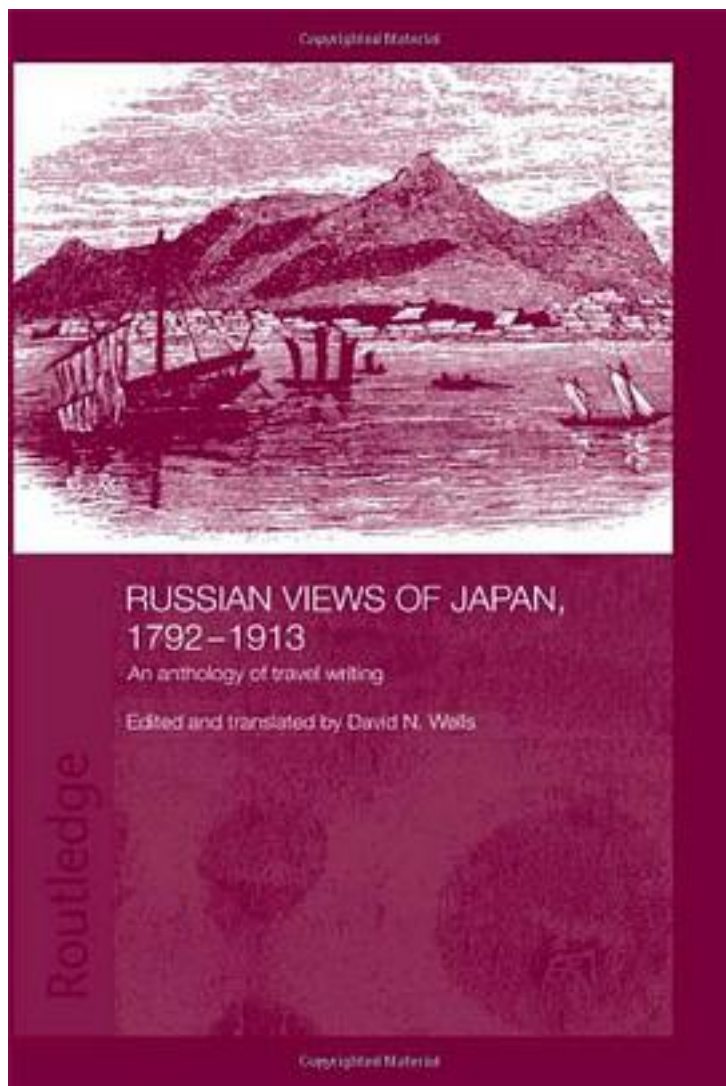


Russian Views of Japan, 1792-1913



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著者:David N. Wells

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Before Japan was 'opened up' in the 1850s, contact with Russia as well as other western maritime nations was extremely limited. Yet from the early eighteenth century onwards, as a result of their expanding commercial interests in East Asia and the North Pacific, Russians had begun to encounter Japanese and were increasingly eager to establish diplomatic and trading relations with Japan. This book presents rare narratives written by Russians - explorers, official envoys, scholars and, later, tourists - who visited Japan between 1792 and 1913. The introduction and notes set these narratives in the context of the history of Russo-Japanese relations and the genre of European travel writing, showing how the Russian writers combined ethnographic interests with the assertion of Russian and European values, simultaneously inscribing power relations and negotiating cultural difference. Students of Japanese history, nineteenth-century Russia, literature and cultural studies will find this book an invaluable insight into the contact between two civilisations at a time when they were particularly ignorant of each other.

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