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Sommario/riassunto	This book is the first full-length study in English on the St. Petersburg Free Economic Society, Imperial Russia's most prestigious non-governmental association. It examines the Society from a wide variety of perspectives of the men and women who took part in its work-the St. Petersburg aristocrats and academics who established it in the 1760's, the budding intelligentsia, Catherine the Great and her court, its correspondents in Western Europe and the Russian provinces, and the wider Russian public.