the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II - By Richard S. Wortman.
Praise for Princeton's original edition: "The formidable variety of evidence Wortman has amassed in this volume for his novel conclusions about the nature of Russian autocracy and downfall of the Romanovs puts Scenarios of Power at the top of the reading list not just for the serious students of Imperial Russia but for all scholars interested in the power of cultural symbols. Wortman has distinct views on the nature of myth as policy that maintainanced Romanov power, and is less inclined than some to focus on the spiritual underpinnings of imperial Russia. Wortman's tone seems often dispassionate, and overall I'd perhaps rather read Figes or King, but Scenarios of Power is a powerhouse of a book. DAVID ALAN RICH Washington, D. C. Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy. Vol. 2, From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas H. By Richard Wortman. He succeeds admirably in his main thrust, "to restore the monarchy as an active, conscious factor to the history of Russia's political evolution before 1917" (4). To coin a catchphrase, he "returns agency" to Alexander II, Alexander III, and Nicholas II, describing them as active participants in the demise of their empire rather than as simple reactionaries to modern politics. Beginning with their coronations, the tsars practiced power more articulately through ritual than speech because of the centrality of performance to politics in this setting, establishing their "scenarios of power."