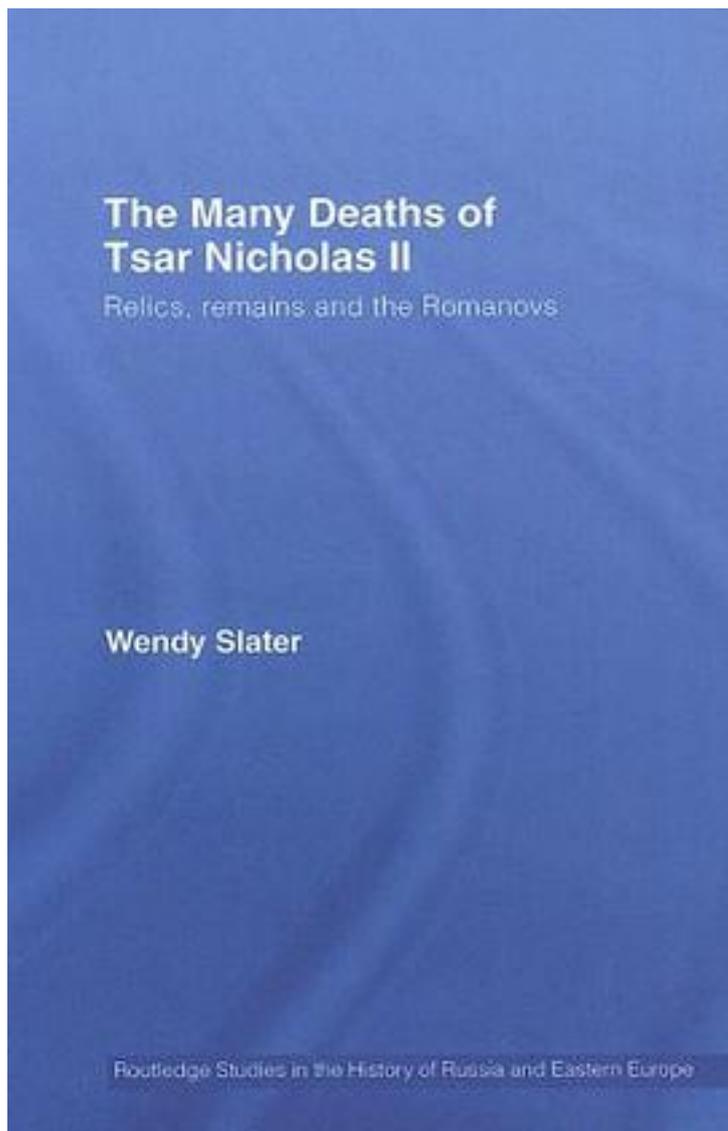


The Many Deaths of Tsar Nicholas II



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How did Nicholas II, Russia's last Tsar, meet his death? Shot point blank in a bungled execution by radical Bolsheviks in the Urals, Nicholas and his family disappeared from history in the Soviet era. But in the 1970s, a local geologist and a crime fiction writer discovered the location of their clandestine mass grave, and secretly removed three skulls, before reburying them, afraid of the consequences of their find. Yet the history of Nicholas' execution and the discovery of his remains are not the only stories connected with the death of the last Tsar. This book recounts the horrific details of his death and the thrilling discovery of the bones, and also investigates the alternative narratives that have grown up around these events. Stories include the contention that the Tsar's killing was a Jewish plot, in which Nicholas' severed head was taken to Moscow as proof of his death; tales of would-be survivors of the execution, self-confessed children of the Tsar claiming their true identity; and accounts of miracles performed by Nicholas, who was made a saint by the Russian church in 2000. Not least among these alternative narratives is the romanticization of the Romanovs, epitomized by the numerous photographs of the family released from the Russian archives.

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