



The Franz Boas Enigma: Inuit, Arctic, and Sciences

Ludger Müller-Wille

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Addressing, for the first time, the enigma of how Franz Boas came to be the central founder of anthropology and a driving force in the acceptance of science as part of societal life in North America, this exploration breaks through the linguistic and cultural barriers that have prevented scholars from grasping the importance of Boas's personal background and academic activities as a German Jew. Muller-Wille argues that to fully appreciate Boas's complete scientific and literary opus and deep emotional and intellectual attachment to the upbringing that shaped his life, it is crucial to become familiar with his publications in German on Inuit and the Arctic as related to environmental, geographical, and ethnological questions, which have remained largely unknown and neglected in North America. These writings represent his emerging scientific interpretations of Inuit culture and the Arctic, and provide insight into the crucial period of Inuit history dominated by European and North American colonial expansion into their homeland more than 130 years ago. With detailed documentation that will be of great use to academics, this book is also written in a lively prose that will prove accessible even to lay readers as they gain a deeper understanding of the eminent cultural anthropologist's academic background and thinking as well as his personal and intellectual life path.

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