



Walther Nernst and the Transition to Modern Physical Science

Diana Kormos Barkan

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One of Germany's most important, productive and often controversial scientists, Walther H. Nernst (1864-1941) was at once the first "modern" physical chemist, an able scientific organizer and a savvy entrepreneur. The winner of the 1920 Nobel Prize for Chemistry, Nernst was a key figure in the transition to modern physical science with his contributions to the study of solutions, of chemical equilibria, and of the behavior of matter at the extremes of the temperature range. This volume provides a scientific biography of the man who was a director of major research institutes, the rector of the Berlin University, and the inventor of a new electric lamp. It also addresses the work of many prominent scientists, such as Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Wilhelm Ostwald and Svante Arrhenius. A wealth of new archival material and recent scholarship reveals how Nernst's career exemplified the increasing connection between the German technical industry and academic science, between theory and experiment, between concepts and practice, providing a rich portrait of the history of science in the period preceding the Second World War. This book also details a set of specific scientific problems that evolved at the intersection of physics, chemistry and technology during one of the most revolutionary periods of modern physical science.



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