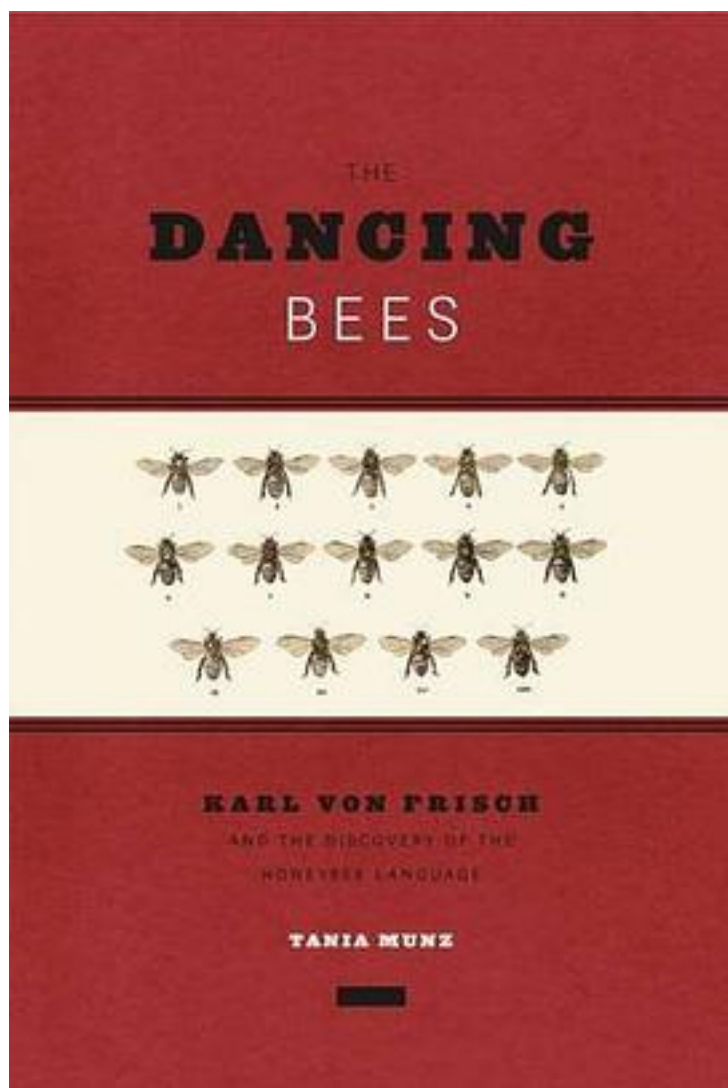


The Dancing Bees



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We think of bees as being among the busiest workers in the garden, admiring them for their productivity. But amid their buzzing, they are also great communicators—and unusual dancers. As Karl von Frisch (1886–1982) discovered during World War II, bees communicate the location of food sources to each other through complex circle and waggle dances. For centuries, beekeepers had observed these curious movements in hives, and others had speculated about the possibility of a bee language used to manage the work of the hive. But it took von Frisch to determine that the bees' dances communicated precise information about the distance and direction of food sources. As Tania Munz shows in this exploration of von Frisch's life and research, this important discovery came amid the tense circumstances of the Third Reich.

The *Dancing Bees* draws on previously unexplored archival sources in order to reveal von Frisch's full story, including how the Nazi government in 1940 determined that he was one-quarter Jewish, revoked his teaching privileges, and sought to prevent him from working altogether until circumstances intervened. In the 1940s, bee populations throughout Europe were facing the devastating effects of a plague (just as they are today), and because the bees were essential to the pollination of crops, von Frisch's research was deemed critical to maintaining the food supply of a nation at war. The bees, as von Frisch put it years later, saved his life. Munz not only explores von Frisch's complicated career in the Third Reich, she looks closely at the legacy of his work and the later debates about the significance of the bee language and the science of animal communication.

This first in-depth biography of von Frisch paints a complex and nuanced portrait of a scientist at work under Nazi rule. *The Dancing Bees* will be welcomed by anyone seeking to better understand not only this chapter of the history of science but also the peculiar waggles of our garden visitors.

作者介绍:

Tania Munz is the vice president for research and scholarship at the Linda Hall Library in Kansas City. Previously, she was a lecturer at Northwestern University and a research scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. She holds a PhD in the history of science from Princeton University.

目录: Introduction: Sensational Findings

Bee Vignette I: Victorian Bees

Chapter 1: Coming of Age in Vienna

Chapter 2: The Bees That Could

Bee Vignette II: Sensing the Senses

Chapter 3: Calm before the Storm

Chapter 4: In the Service of the Reich

Bee Vignette III: Deep inside the Hive

Chapter 5: State of Grace

Chapter 6: Picking Up the Pieces in Postwar Germany

Chapter 7: Coming to America

Bee Vignette IV: Seeing Bees

Chapter 8: Attack on the Dance Language

Conclusion: 180/60

Acknowledgments

Notes

Bibliography

Index
• • • • • ([收起](#))

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标签

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