

TALES FROM THE THÉBAÏDE

Reflections of a Turtleman

by Peter C.H. Pritchard

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TALES FROM THE THÉBAÏDE

Reflections of a Turtleman



Peter C.H. Pritchard

Dr.

Peter Pritchard, Oxford scholar, conservationist, world traveler, and Renaissance man, is a multifaceted expert on turtles and tortoises. A cheloniological thread thus runs through his *Tales from the Thébaïde*, as he expands the study of his favorite animals into commentaries upon the universe itself, and includes brilliant, erudite, and always humorous accounts of his adventures in many lands seeking further insight into the shelled reptiles. His preoccupation that important players in his life and in his field should not be forgotten led to inclusion of several in-depth obituaries, including one of Florida's own Archie Carr. His wild adventures looking for tortoises in the Galapagos Islands make up a major section of the book, as does his scholarly discourses on the taxonomic status of sea turtles. There is a long section on why he set up his personal Thébaïde, the Chelonian Research Institute, and his delight in the zany, sometimes unbelievable players of the past who launched their own Cabinets of Curiosities. Pritchard's reflections encompass his love of life, and his hope that his readers will share his delight in people, science, culture, conservation, argument, scholarship, and (of course) turtles.

Peter C.H. Pritchard, M.A., Ph.D., is best known as an authority on the biology and conservation of turtles and tortoises. Both before and after receiving his doctorate in 1969, he has undertaken extensive field work with turtles in all continents. He has established a permanent field station for turtle conservation in northwestern Guyana. Since 1998 he has been director of the Chelonian Research Institute in Oviedo, Florida, and is an adjunct professor of biology at Florida Atlantic University and the University of Central Florida. Dr. Pritchard has been recognized as a "Champion of the Wild" by the Discovery Television Channel, and as a "Hero of the Planet" by *Time Magazine*. In 2001, he was declared "Floridian of the Year" by the *Orlando Sentinel* newspaper.

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Reviews

“Professor Pritchard’s accounts of his travels around the world researching and working with shelled reptiles is as fascinating as it is informative. Writing with impeccable scholarship and a genuine knack for storytelling, Professor Pritchard has created a seminal work that is confidently recommended reading for both academia and the non-specialist general reader with an interest in turtles, tortoises, and a scientific life of adventure, discovery, and accomplishment.”—Midwest Book Review


“...uplifting and a joy to read...”—The Herptile

“...Pritchard does an excellent job of giving readers not just information about the science and conservation of turtles, but also a sense of what it is like to be fascinated by them.”—The Quarterly Review of Biology

“There are few scientists today who have visited so many remote places to study turtles in their natural surroundings, or who can match Peter in knowledge about their paleontology, systematic relationships, and natural history. Nor are there many who have seen (and collected in some form) every currently recognized genus. Even rarer still is the scientist who can tell you how those species are surviving in the midst of humans who sometimes revere them, but more often exploit them to the point where their continued existence is seriously threatened. These issues, and a host of other topics and adventures, are covered in his book which, in reality, is about a lot more than just tales of turtles by a “turtleman.”—Marine Turtle Newsletter

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