

HERPETOLOGICAL VOLUME, PART 1

THERE'S A SNAKE IN THE GRASS!

About snakes in myths and stories

Marcel van der Voort

From the Preface by prof. dr. Bert Verveen

■ Marcel van der Voort is an expert in Dutch language and literature, a medievalist, thus specialised in Middle Dutch mediaeval literature. He is unusual since next to this specialism he loves snakes, keeping some at home and integrating both fields of interest: herpetology and ancient literature. He is a teacher of Dutch by profession and editor-in-Chief of *Litteratura Serpentina*, the bilingual (Dutch and English) journal of the European Snake Society. This is a rare combination of interests, and the more so because these two fields are closely knit, as is revealed in his writings.

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Medievalist Marcel van der Voort did not restrict his studies to the cultural-historical dimension of 'snakes present and past and in different cultures', but they do form their mainstay and required the necessary detective work: 'I was able to pursue my individual quest for the facts behind the fiction through the course of well over two decennia.' Since 1989, he published many papers about snake literature of the classics in *Litteratura Serpentina*. His writings, as well as his approach as an editor, transformed the journal into a unique cultural-historical phenomenon with respect to snakes. Three of the objectives of the European Snake Society are of particular relevance to the journal (quote):

- 'To encourage an exchange of views on snake keeping and breeding,'
- 'to promote an interest in snakes,'
- 'to give information about the rich cultural-historical background of snakes.'

The cultural-historical approach is Marcel's personal and original contribution to the journal and to the European Snake Society.

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Those, who wanted to know how snakes fared in the eyes of man in the past and present, had to browse the volumes of *Litteratura Serpentina*. In the book before you, a large part of the material dug up and dusted off by Marcel van der Voort has been brought together. Thus, this book may help anyone searching for classic material about snakes, to get started. It is pleasant to sit back in ones armchair with this sound, well written and readable book in one's hands, and productive as well.



144 pages, richly illustrated.

■ You can order your copy by paying € 17,50 + postage (ask the Treasurer for the correct amount) on the bank account number (IBAN): NL96 INGB 0004 4388 55 BIC: INGBNL2A of the Treasurer of the European Snake Society, Brunssum, The Netherlands, mentioning 'Snake in the grass'.