



RUTH DIXON TURNER

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It is with great pleasure that this volume of *Occasional Papers on Mollusks* is dedicated to Professor Ruth Dixon Turner, *Emerita*. During over four decades of association with the Department of Mollusks, she has steadily contributed to the field of malacology, frequently made contributions to this series, and steadfastly supported the efforts of staff and students of the Department in their research and scientific endeavors.

Professor Turner began her professional career in biology as Assistant Curator of Birds at the New England Museum of Natural History of the Boston Society of Natural History (now the Boston Museum of Science). After completing the degrees of Bachelor of Science and Master of Science, she had a chance meeting with Dr. William J. Clench that led to her becoming interested in mollusks. With his encouragement, she received a Ph.D. from Radcliffe College (Harvard University) in 1954. Unlike Ph.D. candidates in biology today, who are often given their tuition and expenses, Professor Turner had to support herself and do her graduate work while serving as an instructor of biology at Vassar College and as biologist at the William F. Clapp Laboratories in Duxbury, Massachusetts, where she began to study the shipworms or bivalve family Teredinidae and other substrate boring bivalves. In 1946 she became Research Assistant in the Department of Mollusks and has served as Lecturer in Biology, Research Associate, Alexander Agassiz Fellow in Zoology and Oceanography, and since 1976 as Professor of Biology and Curator of Mollusks. Her academic kudos include two honorary Doctor of Science degrees. In 1985, she formally entered retirement status as Professor of Biology, *Emerita*; but this has not diminished her research activities and she continues to carry on a vigorous program of scientific investigation, contributing significantly to the intellectual and curatorial activities of the Department of Mollusks.

In pursuit of her researches on the Teredinidae, Professor Turner has had longstanding support from the Office of

Naval Research which has enabled her to study the life cycles of these animals in the laboratory, to perform extensive observations in the field, and to travel extensively to collect samples; she has produced a long series of outstanding contributions on the biology of these bivalves, not the least of which include her critical *A Survey and Illustrated Catalogue of the Teredinidae* (1966) and her revisionary monograph of the generic level taxa in the *Treatise of Invertebrate Paleontology* (1969). Although her studies on these animals have been seminal investigations and central to her work, she has never been limited to these alone because of her broad interest in malacology and in marine biology. Thus, often in co-authorship with Dr. William J. Clench, she contributed several distinguished monographs to the series *Johnsonia*, especially on such prosobranch groups as the Volutidae, Epitoniidae, Tonnidae, Cymatiidae, and Melongenidae. Similarly, she pursued studies of terrestrial pulmonates with her contributions to the Austro-Melanesian cam-aenoids.

A list of her travels comprises a veritable delineation of the continents and oceans of the world, but especial mention needs to be made of her particularly successful and numerous visits to the Indian subcontinent, Australia, and the Soviet Far East, most often as an invited guest of the foreign government involved. Of great import has been her nearly two dozen expeditions at sea with vessels from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, particularly on board the deep-diving research vessel *Alvin*; she was among the first of women scientists to study the fauna of the deep-sea *in situ*, and she has made many dives to investigate experimentally the unique organisms of the hydrothermal vents; these deep-sea explorations have taken place in the West Indies, eastern North Atlantic, and the Pacific Ocean, particularly off the Galapagos Islands.

A member of numerous professional organizations, she has been particularly active in the American Association for the Advancement of Science where she was elected a Fellow in 1976 and served as Chairman of the Biology Section of the



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