



# Camel (Animal)

*Robert Irwin*

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A distinct symbol of the desert and the Middle East, the camel was once unkindly described as 'half snake, half folding bedstead'. But in the eyes of many the camel is a creature of great beauty. This is most evident in the Arab world, where the camel has played a central role in the historical development of Arabic society. Beauty pageants are still held for camels in some Arabic countries, and an elaborate vocabulary and extensive literature have been devoted to them.

In *Camel*, Robert Irwin explores why the camel has fascinated so many cultures, including those in places where camels are not indigenous. He traces the history of the camel from its origins millions of years ago to the present day, discussing such matters of contemporary concern as the plight of camel herders in the Sudan's war-torn Darfur region, the alarming increase in the population of feral camels in Australia, and the endangered status of the wild Bactrian in Mongolia and China. Throughout history, the camel has been appreciated worldwide for its practicality, resilience and legendary abilities of survival. It has been featured in the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Poussin, Tiepolo, Flaubert, Kipling and Rose Macaulay, among others. From East to West, Irwin's *Camel* is the first survey of its kind to examine the animal's role in society and history throughout the world.

Not just for camel aficionados, this highly illustrated book is sure to entertain and inform anyone interested in this fascinating and exotic animal.

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