

BOOK REVIEWS

The Wages of Accommodation

The Soul of the American University. From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief. GEORGE M. MARSDEN. Oxford University Press, New York, 1994. xiv, 462 pp., illus. \$35.

Our prevailing political orthodoxy, which celebrates diversity, pluralism, and toleration of differences, contradicts itself terribly when it comes to religion, according to George Marsden. Marsden made that point in a *New York Times* op-ed contribution of 26 April this year, arguing that religious schools and colleges face pressures to dilute their identities. It is something of a dilemma. Government agencies force religious schools to show that their functions are basically secular as a condition for receiving aid. But the Supreme Court last year ruled, on the other hand, that a religious school that was not actually owned by a church could not exempt itself from laws against religious discrimination in hiring. Ultimately, Marsden contended that religious schools and colleges are not treated fairly and are not accorded the right to true autonomy. If we are serious about diversity, he insisted, that standard ought to include diversity among, and not just within, institutions.

A reader familiar with the op-ed piece might expect that Marsden's book, *The Soul of the American University*, is history with an axe to grind. It does, to be sure, have a point of view, and it does reflect a bias to which the author freely admits. It is an important book nonetheless, both for its strengths and for its weaknesses.

At the outset, Marsden reminds us that as recently as the 1890s many state universities in the United States required attendance at chapel services. They had presidents who unabashedly proclaimed that their institutions sought to fulfill religious ideals, broadly considered. But in little more than a half century the religious identity of American universities, and the place of religion in higher education's curriculum, virtually disappeared. Marsden wrote this book, he tells us, to understand why this transformation occurred. Disavowing any lament for a "lost golden age" of religious identity in this history, Marsden takes us back to Harvard's beginnings in the 1630s and carries us through several cycles of college and university development in the United States. He focuses mainly on

college presidents—their ideals and stated purposes, the particular challenges they addressed and what their outcomes meant for the religious substance of American higher education. Readers not familiar with such names as Thoms Clap, Henry Tappan, Noah Porter, James Burrill Angell, Charles William Eliot, or Daniel Coit Gilman will find illuminating introductions here.

Many readers taking up this book may expect to find another history of the conflict between religion and science. But the matter is not that simple. Marsden, for one, has no disrespect for science. Rather, he gives careful attention, and the heaviest censure, to liberal Protestantism. In each successive stage of this history, he argues, liberalism showed itself anxious to merge religion with its larger milieu, to accommodate to every new cultural advance and change, to join its cause with the larger social forces shaping the world. And at every successive stage it introduced a new Trojan horse into its camp.

By liberalism, Marsden means essentially non-Calvinist Protestantism. (Marsden himself identifies with the Calvinist tradition.) Thus, in the early 19th century, evangelical Protestantism identified itself with Whig ideals of science and culture, the moral kingdom of God, and republicanism. In the mid-century Tappan at Michigan promoted German notions of scholarship, rooted in the romantic movement and its model of the free, active, discovering intellect. Gilman at Johns Hopkins defined the religious mission in terms of the material improvement of humanity, to which the new university made its contribution. And in Marsden's most suggestive chapter, we learn how William Rainey Harper at Chicago applied his own model of the "low church" university. Here, for Marsden, the lesson is particularly instructive. For Harper was a formidable biblical scholar, determined to save religion from unscientific scholarship and all the while at Chicago constructing the largest educational enterprise in the United States. Under

a governing missionary zeal, Harper made his university the model of educational bureaucracy, corporate efficiency, and entrepreneurial drive. And he cloaked his educational goals in the ideals of democracy, individualism, and Christianity.

Marsden thus finds that in each new era American academic leaders could offer specific Christian rationales for the changes occurring in American culture and society. But however earnest this spirit of accommodation, it prepared the way for the eventual irrelevance of religion to American higher education. For whether it was the Baconian standards of science or the ideals of free inquiry or the mission to serve society, all of these new forms of collegiate purpose could function quite independently of Christianity itself. In the end, it was not so much that the colleges abandoned a distinct and separate religious identity, it was that religion fostered its own deposition.

In a "concluding unscientific postscript," Marsden returns to his more polemical position. Throughout the book he complains that increasingly "religious" perspectives in academic subjects became illegitimate, unworthy of inclusion. This he considers unjust. But Marsden does not help us much here. He needs to show what constitutes a legitimate religious perspective in scholarship. What, for example, would be a "religious" interpretation of the American Revolution? What evidence would be used to support it? How would one argue on behalf of it or in criticism of it?



Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, University of Chicago.

More compelling, I believe, is Marsden's charge that since the 1960s, first with the New Left and more recently with postmodernism, the ideal of rational, unbiased scholarship has come under heavy assault and even, in the strongest charges against it, become associated with the oppressive forces of modern, technological society. If the standards of an impartial, scientific methodology no longer compel, Marsden asks, why may religion not claim an equal legitimacy with other partisan explanations? A fair question, but it does not put Marsden in good company, at least not in the company I think he would like to keep. For certainly much of Marxist scholarship, feminist scholarship, and now the argumentation of Afrocentrism has not met the standards of empirical research and demonstration important to any scientific community. If universities have succumbed to the politics of subjectivity and political warfare by groups, one has to wonder, rather, whether we have not too readily abandoned at least the ideal of an objective scholarship.

J. David Hoeveler Jr.
Department of History,
University of Wisconsin,
Milwaukee, WI 53201, USA

Reptilian Offspring

Dinosaur Eggs and Babies. KENNETH CARPENTER, KARL F. HIRSCH, and JOHN R. HORNER, Eds. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1994. xiv, 372 pp., illus. \$79.95 or £55.

Paleontologist Walter Granger, a member of the American Museum of Natural History's 1923 Central Asiatic Expedition to Mongolia, is widely thought to have been the first person to recognize dinosaur eggs for what they were—a legend that the museum and perhaps generations of American paleontologists have been happy to publicize. But dinosaur experts have long known that eggs large enough to dwarf even the elephant-bird's were recovered from southern France and described 50 years earlier. More than a decade before that, the first eggshell fragments were identified from there by J.-J. Pouech but were not recognized as such: other scientists assured Pouech they could not be eggshells. His successor, Matheron, knew they were eggshells but thought their bearer was a giant crocodile. It seems to have taken Granger's discovery to confirm the suspicions about the French eggs, but even today it is not absolutely certain that the egg-layer is the widely suspected contemporaneous sauropod *Hypselosaurus*.

So science proceeds in fits and starts, and

these historical vignettes form only a part of the interest of this remarkable new volume. This is the first book to review comprehensively the knowledge to date of the eggs, nests, and young of dinosaurs, and it is an impressive effort with some 50 authors and a strong international flavor. Although one of its major messages, as might be expected, is that there is still much to learn, a good indicator of the lurching pace of this field and its recent acceleration is the plain fact that this book could not have been written ten years ago—or at least, it would have been much slimmer. This is evident, for example, from perusing Carpenter and Alf's opening chapter, which surveys the global distributions of dinosaur eggs, nests, and babies. It is a superb compilation along the lines of D. B. Weishampel's compilation of standard dinosaur remains in *The Dinosauria* (University of California Press, 1990) and just as useful, complete with maps and ornamented by skeletal reconstructions of the better-known neonates.

Generally the first question about a fossil egg that springs to mind is who laid it. This is difficult to determine unless it contains an embryo, and even then there are problems because newborns of related species differ from each other less than adults do. Most fossil eggs and shell fragments lack embryonic material, and associated bones of larger animals could represent parents, predators, or neighbors of different species. Even without embryonic verification, though, there turn out to be a lot of data in eggshell, which can be stored and compared when better finds emerge.

The contributors to this book include the foremost specialists who have taken the study of fossil eggs to the microstructural level, analyzing eggshell architecture, protein, organics,

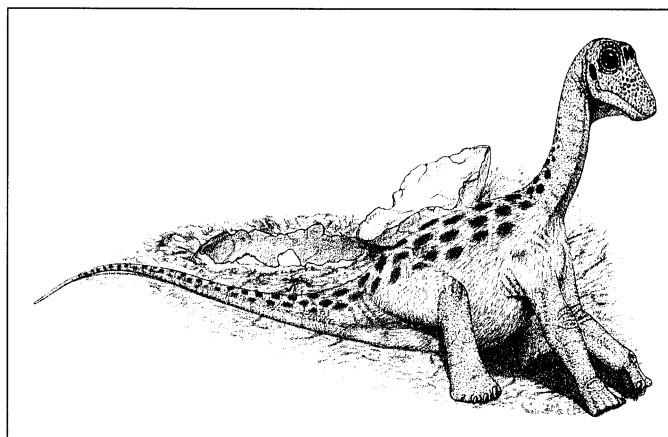


"Philippe Matheron (1807–1899) who discovered the first dinosaur eggs in the Upper Cretaceous of Provence." [From E. Buffetaut and J. Le Loeuff's paper in *Dinosaur Eggs and Babies*; photograph courtesy of Robert Fournier, Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Marseille]

and isotopic ratios. These latter factors are also important in understanding the environment of the nest (and indirectly something about the biology of the egg-layer), the physical conditions of the locality, and diagenetic factors of preservation. Again and again, authors return to features of gas exchange, calcite balance, crystalline structure, and development in the eggs of living animals and their evidence in fossil eggs, making this volume of substantial paleobiological interest. The studies of dinosaur embryos and nestlings, pioneered by J. R. Horner, R. R. Mankala, and D. B. Weishampel among others, have used comparative

bone histological features to determine differences in life-history syndromes among contemporaneous species. Studies of the dynamics of dinosaur growth and metabolism are necessarily rooted in this kind of data.

It is worth citing a few examples from this uniformly excellent collection. One that stands out for sheer comprehensiveness is the review by Vianey-Liaud and her colleagues of French eggshells, which includes stratigraphy, microstructural anatomy, and taxonomy (also well detailed by Zhao and Hirsch in their respective chapters) with chemical analysis of the calcites and amino acids in what should be a standard for further work. Curiously, despite



A three-kilogram titanosaur sauropod hatchling. The "small size of dinosaur hatchlings made possible large clutch sizes and high reproductive rates that rendered even the largest dinosaurs r-strategists with exceptional population recovery and dispersal potential." [From G. S. Paul's paper in *Dinosaur Eggs and Babies*]