

PAPERBOUNDS

THE INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE OF ANCIENT MAN: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East. By Henri Frankfort et al. Univ. of Chicago, 1977. 401 pp. \$4.95

Not so long ago, our forefathers believed that there was nothing much worth noticing in the ancient world except Greece and Rome. Later, when Western scholars started studying Egypt, Mesopotamia, Babylon, and other civilizations, the prevailing conviction for some time was that these cultures were emotion-ridden, irrational, illogical. This work, now republished with an updated bibliography, first appeared in 1946. It has become a landmark in the interpretation of ancient cultures. Steering clear of the old snobberies, the authors also avoid ascribing modern beliefs to the ancients. They present an excellent introduction, especially to "mythopoeic" thought—the product of minds that concentrated on ordering perceptions and on explanation but could not view cause and effect in the impersonal, secular way to which we are accustomed.

CHINA POLICY: Old Problems and New Challenges. By A. Doak Barnett. Brookings, 1977. 131 pp. \$2.95 (cloth, \$8.95)

In U.S.-China relations, the rapprochement of the early 1970s has slowed to a standstill; political uncertainties on both sides of the Pacific raise new obstacles to progress toward full "normalization" of relations. Barnett surveys the issues on the Peking-Washington agenda—trade, cultural exchange, military-security relations, arms control. He

outlines the probable impact of Washington's future China policy choices on Russia, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, and participants in the "North-South dialogue," then sets forth this controversial proposal: The United States should withdraw all its servicemen (now 17,500) from Taiwan, adopt the "Japanese formula" of unofficial diplomatic representation in Taipei, and issue a "strong, unilateral, public statement" of the long-range U.S. commitment to Taiwan in lieu of the current defense treaty. Such a statement, he assumes, would receive the "tacit" acceptance and respect of Peking.

THE LORD'S OYSTERS. By Gilbert Byron. Johns Hopkins, 1977. 330 pp. \$3.95

This evocation of a 1920s boyhood spent in the small towns and on the tidal rivers of Maryland's Eastern Shore has been reissued in the wake of new literary interest in the Chesapeake sparked by William Warner's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Beautiful Swimmers* (*WQ*, Autumn 1976). *The Lord's Oysters*, first published in 1957, is as fresh as an April breeze off the Bay. The reader follows a young boy, Noah Marlin, through the slow rituals of a mischievous boyhood, reminiscent of the novels of Twain and Tarkington. Byron's prose is relaxed. Here the observant Noah sets off with his father for a day of crabbing: "We walked along the oyster-shell path, listening to the birds waking in the trees. . . . When we reached the cover an old heron flew out of the marshy fringe with a loud squawk, just like he might have been clearing the mist from his throat."