"Occident and Orient in Retrospect",
a review by Carroll Quigley in The Washington Sunday Star, March 13, 1965,
of two books:

**A HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD**,  
by Chester G. Starr.  
New York: Oxford University Press, 1965

and  

**THE AGELESS CHINESE: A History**,  
by Dun J. Lu.  
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965

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A HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD. By Chester G. Starr.  
Oxford University Press. 742 pages. $12.50.

The long period extending from the age of the cave men, when life was dangerous and short, to the establishment of Christian civilization 1,500 years ago offers a severe challenge to any historian: Prof. Starr has handled the problem about as well as anyone. The task requires firm establishment of an overriding chronology in terms of cultural stages and equally clear distinctions of the roles played by a variety of historical entities, such as tribes, societies, or civilizations within that chronology. The present work does these things for the whole Old World, including India and the Far East, as well as the more familiar areas of Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Levant, the Mediterranean, and Europe. Thirty-two plates, twenty maps, and ten chronological tables illustrate and embellish a narrative style which is itself firm and clear. The whole provides an interesting and understandable story of the human adventure down to about 500 A.D.

Prof. Starr makes a good deal of two pervasive thresholds in man's early history: (1) the spread of the knowledge of agriculture in the neolithic period from about 6000 B.C. to 2000 B.C. and (2) the arrival, about the middle of the first millennium B.C., of what he calls the "New Outlooks," associated with the teachings of Buddha and Confucius in farther Asia, about the same time as the achievement of full ethical monotheism by the Hebrews in the period of the later prophets (such as Amos, Jeremiah, second Isaiah, and Ezekiel), and the intellectual revolution which stirred the Greeks in the generations on either side of the Persian Wars (492-479 B.C.).

Prof. Starr's presentation of this intellectual transition period would have been much strengthened if he had recognized the very significant role in this whole process, both at that time and since, played by the
teachings of the Persian religious prophet Zoroaster. Unfortunately, this very significant teacher is mentioned only late and in an incidental way, although his impact upon the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the whole history of Christianity is of major importance and has been too long neglected by American classicists.

Fortunately, this is the only significant lacuna in Prof. Starr's narrative. Although his presentation of his subject remains admirably chronological throughout, at each successive stage he views the scene with a broad vision.

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THE AGELESS CHINESE: A History.
By Dun J. Lu. Charles Scribner's Sons. 586 pages. $8.95 (paperback, $5.95).

This is a masterly book. The author was born and educated in China and obtained advanced degrees from the University of Wisconsin. He has an intimate and detailed knowledge of the history of his own country, but the real virtue of his book rests in his recognition of how to communicate his knowledge to an alien audience. He goes through the long and complicated story of four thousand years of Chinese history with full awareness of how to convey such a strange society and such alien events to Americans. The arrangement is strictly chronological, but the emphasis is on changing patterns of social organization rather than on political or dynastic history.

The author begins with an adequate explication of Chinese geographic and climate conditions as elements which have exerted a permanent influence on Chinese history. Each successive period is then explained, chiefly in terms of social structure, ideology, and general culture. When the story is finished, the reader can see which cultural elements persisted and which changed from period to period, until all them were destroyed in the cataclysm of the last 60 years. Until this final collapse, Chinese culture persisted for millennia in what is surely one of the most successful societies ever developed by man.

Please email the editors (editors@carrollquigley.net) with corrections, questions, or if you have other works by Professor Quigley you would like to see posted.

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