points are presented too briefly to allow full assessment. Thus, the discussion of Cogidubnus' citizenship (p. 110) suggests that he was probably a Roman placeman under Claudius rather than a son or grandson of Tincommius or Verica, because both 'should have been Julii'. This is certainly a sustainable position but hardly one which is unproblematic. Did they necessarily obtain citizenship from Augustus? If they did, were they sufficiently Romanized to have known to pass it on to their heirs? What assumptions would have been made in their society about the status of those who claimed filial descent from a 'king' or who obtained power through acclamation? We surely know too little about the character of Iron Age society to make assumptions on the basis of analogy alone, especially as our information points towards social organization being highly variable. Here and elsewhere a little more debate of such issues would have been valuable and would have lessened the danger of implicit assumptions developing into new 'factoids'.

Despite these points the text works well and draws attention to Braund's important ideas about the place of Britain within the Empire. In particular, his emphasis on the relationship of the texts to the changing priorities and perspectives of the Imperial House sheds valuable new light on the development of Rome's involvement in Britain. His valuable discussions of Strabo and Cassius Dio demonstrate how they have been misunderstood in the past whilst his comparison of the different accounts of the Boudiccan revolt casts new light on the character of that event. In this sense Braund may be seen to have given new life to the subject. My only real objection is that, like the course of lectures on Roman Britain I attended as an undergraduate, it stops too early! Could we not have these ideas developed on the second, third, fourth and fifth centuries?

University of Durham MARTIN MILLETT

Norma Thompson, *Herodotus and the origins of the political community: Arion's Leap*. Pp. xiv + 193. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996). ISBN 0300 06260 5

In Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, the central character, the Englishman, has a copy of G. C. MacCauley's 1890 translation of Herodotus' *History* which serves a number of purposes. It is a valuable source of information for him in his exploration of the Egyptian desert in search of the lost Oasis of Zerzura in the 1930s; it acts as a commonplace book, as the Englishman pastes in pages cut from other books and adds his own observations; and when Katharine Clinton reads from it the story of Gyges and Candau-

les' wife (1.8-12), it sets in motion the chain of events which drives the whole novel. For the English patient, Herodotus' *History* belongs to the present: it describes the world in which he is living, not the ancient past.

Herodotus has a similar importance for Norma Thompson, but for her the key story is not that of Gyges and Candaules' wife, but of Arion and the dolphin (1.23-24). The last paragraph of her 'Afterword' reads: 'The task then is to fulfil the human vocation, to create history through art and to form community by means of that perception. To be human is to engage history, for history is all we have. What we make of it will shape a common destiny. If shaped well, the community may thrive; if not, it may crumble when out of its element, or confronted with crisis. Arion's story stirs us towards courage, creativity, and a readiness to leap into an unknown future' (p. 167). The story of Arion is only introduced at the very end of the book, but it can be argued that Thompson sees it as an allegory of the role of Herodotus' *History* operating at many levels. In the story, Arion is sailing in a Corinthian vessel to Tarentum, when he is set upon by the sailors. Faced with the choice of being thrown overboard or committing suicide, Anon agrees to kill himself after he has sung his last song, dressed in his bardic robes. Having sung his song, Arion leaps into the sea, in full costume, but is rescued by a dolphin, who brings him ashore at Taenarum, whence he makes his way back to Corinth, and denounces his attackers to the tyrant Periander, who summons the sailors, and establishes their guilt. For Thompson perhaps, Arion stands for Herodotus, who offers us his art in all is poetic splendour, but is set upon by critics, ancient and modern: his leap is through time, to a late twentieth-century world which can appreciate his presentation of society for what it is.

Herodotus' ancient critics are Aristotle and Thucydides. In the first chapter, 'The decline and repudiation of the whole: notes on Aristotle's enclosure of the pre-Socratic world', we are presented with a different metaphor. The subject matter of the pre-Socratic writers, including Herodotus, is a vast expanse of unenclosed common land, over which anyone can let their ideas wander freely: Aristotle introduces notions of theory and specialisation to divide this land into narrow plots that must be ploughed by single-minded individuals. Thucydides is discussed in the last chapter, 'Before objectivity, and after', where he is seen as the initiator of the tradition that historians should aim to be objective - a tradition now in inevitable decline (p. 149). Herodotus wrote before, and therefore outside, this tradition: he can therefore speak to us now, and offer a different vision of the historian's role, one which puts stories, not events, at its centre. The fifth chapter, 'The use of Herodotus in contemporary political and cultural criticism', is where Herodotus' modern critics are investigated. Thompson focuses on three writers,

Martin Bernal, Francois Hartog and Edward Said. The critique of each is valuable.

The heart of the book lies in the three central chapters, 'The development of social memory', 'The formation of Persian political identity', which focuses on the Persian constitutional debate (3.80-83), and 'Political identities in conflict: Herodotus in contention with his characters'. She explores various episodes in the *History*, in order to demonstrate what Herodotus has to say. And it is important at this point to emphasise what Thompson is looking for: as the final paragraph, quoted above, makes clear, this is a book about what Herodotus can mean for us now. This is a contribution to modern political debate, rather than to the historical study of Herodotus. That does not mean that the work is of no interest to Classical scholars - only that they may not find what they expect.

Having, I hope, given an impression of how the book works, I must say something about how it doesn't. It is a short work, but it is not easy to read: the brief introduction does not really prepare the reader for what is to follow, and there is no clear thread of argument running through the book as a whole; instead, stories are discussed, often with interesting digressions (for example on the critical fate of Melville's *Moby Dick* [pp. 155-161]), and then the author passes on; there is no conclusion, but only the discussion of a story to act as a message for the work as a whole. Some might point out that precisely the same criticisms could be made of Herodotus by an unsympathetic reader, but Thompson is handicapped by her prose style. Arion was borne ashore on the back of a dolphin; if Thompson in this book is doing the same for Herodotus, she has found a much less graceful means of conveyance. Some of the chapter headings quoted above give an indication of her way with words. Thompson discusses Aristotle's criticism of Herodotus' 'free-running' prose style (pp. 11-17), but a sentence like: 'At the heart of Herodotean historiography is attentiveness to these diverse amplifications that occur in the discourse about events' (p. 147) is anything but free-running. This is a pity, because an attempt like this to reclaim Herodotus for the present age, and one carried out with an evident love and respect for the *History*, deserves the attention of any Herodotean.

King's College London HUGH BOWDEN