Research based on the written word has a good chance of discovering the author’s intention and even his emotions, though remoteness in time and changes in society can make this a very difficult task. For all the progress in understanding the Mycenaean world, the phenomenon of oral poetic tradition, the possible historical background and the dialectical components of the Homeric poems, their interpretation remains problematic. Yet, in the last instance, we possess at least one concrete thing: the text. The same is true of Greek pottery, in that it gives us a fair idea of the Greek art of painting. Music, however, is an art-form which neither description nor accurate notation can preserve. Its essence and its emotive content do not outlive its performance, let alone the passing of an age. There is only one way to gain some imperfect idea of the authentic realization of the music of the past, and that is through the study of a living tradition. Certain societies and groups (e.g. the church, ethnic minorities or certain folk-festivals) have provided an environment for a continuous musical tradition; it is sometimes possible for the musicologist to speculate more plausible on the basis of modern practice about the interpretation of the documentary evidence.

This is the method adopted by Baud-Bovy in his fascinating study. The five chapters discuss, respectively, the possibility of a relationship between ancient and modern rhythms and melodic patterns (‘Grèce antique et Grèce moderne’); the intertwining of religious and profane celebrations in the earlier Greek communities, whereby church and folk music often acquired a double function, given that the performers were usually the same for both (‘Chant d’église et chant profane’); the division of Greek folk-music (proposed by Sotirios Chianis) into two major classes, continental and insular, the former being anhemitonic, an observation which might be the basis of Plato’s preference for the Doric as the only ‘truly Greek’ scala (‘Grèce maritime et Grèce terrienne’); the characteristics of folk music among the Greeks in outlying regions such as the Pontus, Cappadocia, Northern Greece and the Ionic islands (‘Les marches de la Grèce’); and, finally, the influence of urban centres (e.g. Constantinople, Smyrna, Ioannina) on the
development of Greek folk music (‘La chanson urbaine’). Arabic and Persian features were adopted, according to Baud-Bovy, by Phanariote circles in Constantinople and exported to the Balkans; Smyrna was the cradle of a genre that has become very popular in its (twice?) revived form: the *rembetika*; and Ioannina was a disseminator of cultural innovation under the half-baked ‘independent’ régime of Ali Pasha.

In a mere 80 pages Baud-Bovy sketches an impressive overview, which is supplemented by a survey-map of Greece and Asia Minor, an ample bibliography and an index and illustrated both pictorially and (by means of two cassettes and a separate booklet containing the transcription of the 66 recorded examples) musically. Baud-Bovy has devoted his life to this field, so he, if anybody (as Fivos Anoy-anikis remarks in his foreword), is qualified to write this essay. He is a disciple of the famous neograecist Hubert Pernot (who, as early as 1898, used advanced techniques to record the Chiot dialects) and he established his own musicological and literary reputation about fifty years ago with his studies on the folk-songs of the Dodecanese). Many of his articles, mostly written in the late sixties and seventies, cover the subjects presented here under the banner of ‘continuity’, a keyword which is stressed again in the epilogue. But the analogy with the ‘exceptional continuity’ of the Greek language is a weak argument for the assumption of musical continuity: there are important respects in which the language has changed radically, and precisely in its musical elements, intonation and accent. The transition from the pitch accent of ancient Greek to the dynamic accent of the *Koine*, for example, made it impossible to reconcile ancient and modern rules of prosody in reading classical metres. The ancient differentiation of long and short syllables probably implies in musical terms an analogous variation of longer and shorter notes, but a consequent interpretation of long: short = 2 : 1 leads to metrical schemes which most of the time frustrate any reasonable musical interpretation.

Whether or not the metre makes this clear, strophes and antistrophes must in any case have used the same melody, and because music is also an art with its internal coherences, in which e.g. rhythmic and/or melodic motifs tend to recur within a particular piece of music, one may assume that if any melody of an ancient chorus chant had survived entire, our metrical interpretations would certainly have taken a different course. That is not to say, of course, that ancient music corresponded to two-four, three-