two separate books. The author himself must have been aware of this problem when he wrote that part 1 "may be skimmed or skipped by those already familiar with the situation, or who find themselves depressed by philological minutiae" (p. 10). He warns such blasé or lazy readers, however, that their skimming or skipping will be done at their own risk. For it is in part 1 that the "many figures associated directly or indirectly with Kazantzakis" are introduced. The result may well be what Bien himself calls a "tiny and perhaps eccentric history of the language question"—eccentric because of the emphasis placed on those who affected Kazantzakis the most. This reviewer toyed with the idea that the author could have left out the first part of the book and still have an opus of monographic size and scope, consisting of the second part moderately revised. This possibility is all the more conceivable since the book almost requires a knowledge of Greek, which usually entails some familiarity with the language question. Although several Greek words and passages in Greek are translated, many are not. Moreover, I doubt that someone with no knowledge of Greek would be able to savor much of Bien's discussion of stylistic matters. Still, I for one am grateful for one of the most informative accounts in English of the Greek linguistic muddle.

In part 2 the author provides us with a well-reasoned and superbly sensitive account of the linguistic side of the complicated man that was Nikos Kazantzakis. Bien's verdict, partly shared by other students of the subject, is that Kazantzakis was at his best in prose, not poetry. He was a relatively minor figure in the struggle for the triumph of demotic in Greek literature. In Bien's words, "In the long run, the significance of his demoticism will most likely appear to be more private than public, more artistic than cultural—namely, the way in which it expressed the excessive and intransigent soul of a man whom fate had thrown right into the eye of an extraordinary linguistic storm. Kazantzakis' continuing importance for the development of the Greek language may perhaps be questioned; the importance of the Greek language for the development of Kazantzakis may not" (p. 264).

The book is attractively printed and almost free of errors and infelicities.

Kostas Kazazis
University of Chicago

BYZANTINE AESTHETICS. By *Gervase Mathew.* New York: Icon Editions, Harper & Row, 1971. xii, 188 pp. 25 black and white plates. $2.95, paper.

In this fascinating book, originally published in 1964, the author has produced in extraordinarily brief compass a penetrating summary of Byzantine culture as a whole. Although he emphasizes the visual arts, Mathew gives what amounts to a chronological outline of Byzantine civilization with remarkably incisive references to literature, philosophy, science, and general history. It is one of the great merits of this book that he makes a special and remarkably successful effort to relate the arts to other aspects of Byzantine intellectual and political life.

Following a suggestion of André Grabar, he makes a good case for holding that Byzantine art in general was based on the view of Plotinus that the artist does not merely reproduce the objects he sees but also exercises creativeness in going back for inspiration to the ideas that lie behind the material object. Thus Phidias' statue of Zeus, as Plotinus had said, was not based on a physical model

https://doi.org/10.2307/2495947 Published online by Cambridge University Press

so much as the artist's conception of the form in which Zeus would have to be presented if he were to be made visible.

In a very original chapter Mathew explains (pp. 23–37) the relation of Byzantine art to Greek mathematics, and gives an excellent summary of the Byzantine theology of the use of icons, in which, among other things, he rightly repudiates the notion that an image was considered to be a magical counterpart of the prototype and had a magical identity with it (p. 104).

Of great interest is Mathew's treatment of the Byzantine use of color, and the twenty-three plates he has chosen are both apposite and eminently satisfactory in themselves. In short, this is a most remarkable volume, which deserves careful study. I recommend it enthusiastically to both laymen and Byzantinists.

MILTON V. ANASTOS
University of California, Los Angeles

LEON BAKST. By *Charles Spencer*. London: Academy Editions, 1973. Illustrated. 248 pp. $40.00. Distributed by St. Martin's Press, New York.

The last decade has witnessed a strong revival of interest in the choreographic and scenic achievements of Russian ballet, culminating in the celebrations associated with the centenary in 1972 of Sergei Diaghilev's birth. Once again the artistic importance of designers who worked with him, such as Anisfeld. Bakst, Bilibin, Goncharova, Larionov, and Iakulov, has been widely acknowledged. It is opportune, therefore, that Mr. Spencer presents us with a book that concentrates on perhaps the most histrionic of the ballet artists—Lev Samoilovich Bakst. Although as a pioneer study the book has more value for the layman than the specialist (leaving unanswered many questions of Bakst's artistic and "philosophical" evolution), it does serve as a preview of more exacting analyses, not least the Soviet monograph scheduled for publication in 1967–77.

The book is a chronological biography which encompasses the artist's childhood and education, his association with the World of Art group, his professional and personal relations with Diaghilev, and his independent work after their rupture in 1917. The biography, however, lacks new data, a failing which could have been rectified by recourse to Soviet and Western archives, many of which are now accessible. Patient examination of such sources, or even of Russian and Soviet publications pertaining to Russian art of the early twentieth century (the bibliography covers only Western titles), would have shed light on the still umbrageous questions of Bakst's teaching experience at the Zvantseva art school in St. Petersburg, his relationship with Viacheslav Ivanov and with the *Apollon* circle, and his work on *intérieurs* for St. Petersburg villas. In particular, the book lacks a clear perspective on the World of Art group as it existed both in Russia (1898–1906, 1910–24) and in Paris (1920s). A lengthier account of basic ideas within the framework of the World of Art—its passion for antiquity and the neoclassical era, its general emphasis on the decorative and applied arts and on technical mastery, and its alliance with Symbolist writers—would have done much to explain why Bakst developed as he did and why, in turn, his stage designs were at once so innovative and so successful. The sections which deal with the ballet productions themselves are comprehensive, though they also rely on known material. On the other hand, the chapters "Ida Rubinstein" and "Woman, Fashion, and Decoration" are of the utmost value and expose aspects of Bakst's creative career previously

https://doi.org/10.2307/2495947 Published online by Cambridge University Press