This is the conclusion of a three-volume study on the Near-Eastern Tale of Ahiqar and its Greek reception by Ioannis Konstantakos, Assistant Professor of Classics at the University of Athens. As its title suggests, the final volume addresses the relation of Ahiqar to the Vita Aesopi, a novel-like narrative on the life, the adventures and the death of the legendary euretes of Greek fable, which was composed sometime between the first century B.C. and the second century A.D. Konstantakos focuses on a particular aspect of Ahiqar’s literary and cultural reception, its use as the matrix upon which the so-called “Babylonian section” of the Vita Aesopi was modeled.

The whole study is a Herculean task, a voluminous work of approximately 1360 densely printed pages in total, with many inserted digressional discussions on particular subjects in much smaller fonts, which constitute in their own right separable and outstanding essays. To aid the reader, the third volume is preceded by translations of the main texts that K. shall compare, the Aramaic version of Ahiqar that survives in a fifth century B.C. papyrus from Elephantine in Egypt (based on Bezalel Porten’s and Ada Yardeni’s 1993 edition of the text), the Syrian recension of Ahiqar (following Frederick Conybeare’s, James Rendel Harris’ and Agnes Smith Lewis’ text) and the Babylonian section of the Vita in K.’s translation, an accurate, refreshing and flowing one, although a few of its selections might puzzle the non-native Greek speaker (such as the idiomatic expression “τὰ μυαλά σου καὶ μιὰ λίρα” for ἀμαθὴ καλεῖσθαι — § 109.17 — as for the text, K. mostly follows Franco Ferrari’s edition).

In the introductory chapter K. provides a condensed, yet particularly profound overview of the state and the textual tradition of the
**Vita** (1.1). The surviving redactions and papyrus fragments suggest a tradition that was quite rich in late antiquity. K. sides with most scholars and he too considers the G redaction (the ‘Grottaferrata’ or ‘Perriana’) as the oldest full version that we possess and the one that is most representative in form and content of the now lost archetype, which was composed some time between the first century B.C. and the second century A.D. Accordingly, it is this redaction that he resorts to for his comparative study of the Babylonian section (G 101–123), i.e. the episodes that narrate Aesop’s adventures and intellectual triumph in Babylon and in Egypt. He also rejects, with good arguments and in agreement with most scholars, alternative suggestions on the original composition of the *Vita* as early as the fifth century B.C. or in the Hellenistic period (pp. 62–64, cf. pp. 78–82). As for the provenance of its author K. examines the various hypotheses (an Egyptian according to Ben Edwin Perry, a Syrian, following Antonio La Penna) to conclude that no definite answer can be put forward yet, although his study clearly points (as in 4.2, cf. pp. 553–554) to the author’s special knowledge and interest in Egyptian culture, especially under Roman rule. K. proves that he was a well-educated man and a connoisseur of Greek literature, particularly so with respect to popular narratives, didactic and gnomic literature and material on renowned Greek intellectuals.

As for the reception of *Ahiqar* in Greece, a good part of the first volume and the whole second volume of *Ἀκίχαρος* have already provided the reader with a detailed study on the matter (especially the second volume, e.g. on Democritus’ supposed translation of *Ahiqar* and on the Peripatetics’ special interest for that text and Theophrastus’ *Ahiqar*) and on the place in Greek culture and literature of specific themes in the *Ahiqar* narrative (like the building of imposing constructions up in the air, riddle contests and stories on the original unrighteous disfavour and the ensuing restoration of a sage’s fame and status in a royal court). This volume culminates K.’s study on the textual field, with an exhaustive philological, comparative reading of the Babylonian section and the extant redactions of *Ahiqar*. K.’s reading also opts for stylistic, aesthetic, ideological and other differentiations of the *Vita* from *Ahiqar* that point to its author’s tactics and predilections in his integration of his oriental model. Thus they draw his artistic identity and reveal the essence of his art, which in turn shall facilitate the future study of the *Vita*. This point of view in K.’s research might argue for his constant labeling of that particular com-