The collection of the miracles of Saint Artemios offers fascinating material for life and belief in the Byzantine empire of the mid-seventh century. Their importance is reflected in the regularity with which they have been cited in recent discussions of urban development, daily life, church architecture, worship of icons and legal practices in Byzantium. The current volume is intended to make this material more widely available, both by reproducing the standard edition of the Greek text by Papadopoulos-Kerameus and by providing a close translation accompanied by notes that elucidate points of linguistic as well as social and historical interest. It is a laudable aim of the collaborators, John Nesbitt and Virgil Crisafulli, that the publication of a modern translation should not deter readers from consulting the Greek original; rather, the ready availability of an interesting text with parallel translation and basic grammatical explication in the notes may encourage students to look more frequently and closely at the Greek.

The general background, cultural, religious and historical, to the miracles is expounded both in the collaborators’ preface, introduction and commentary and in a separate supplementary essay by John Haldon. One of the intentions of this dual provision is to open up different perspectives on this miracle collection, and to encourage readers to think through for themselves some of the debateable issues that the text raises: as Haldon’s essay makes clear the miracle collection was assembled at a time of considerable social and cultural change, a complex process whose understanding will be furthered by more informed discussion of sources such as the Miracles of Artemios. The on-going nature of the debate on Byzantium in the seventh century means that there are inevitably differences of emphasis between the scholars involved in this project, for example about the precise significance of anti-heretical or anti-medical harangues, and even the occasional contradictions. Thus the collaborators and Haldon disagree about the unity of the text, and hence its date of composition: Crisafulli and Nesbitt present the case for a unified collection, compiled during the early 660s with the single reference to the Patriarch Sergios as a heretic as a scribal intrusion (Miracle 39: he was condemned at the Sixth Council in 680); Haldon, on the other hand, lays emphasis on internal differences within the collection, with a progression from relatively brief and plain stories to much longer narratives, and identifies the exegetical harangues at the end of Miracles 32, 34, 38 and 41 as evidence for later additions, perhaps after the Quinisext Council of 692.
Both views merit attention. Any collection of miracles is likely to have been built up gradually over a period of years, and a defining moment would come when a first redactor decided, for whatever motives, to compile a formal collection of the best stories within the collective memory of his circle of informants. Such a collection might already be arranged on certain organisational principles, for example a progression from simple to more complex stories. On the other hand, the collection was most unlikely to be regarded as a static entity, a sealed book: Gregory of Tours gradually expanded his collection of St. Martin’s miraculous achievements, of which he incorporated some in *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi ii-iv* and others in *In gloria confessorum*; the miracles of St. Demetrios of Thessalonica were first collected by Bishop John in the second decade of the seventh century, but were then expanded into a second book by his episcopal successors over the next half century. The *Miracles of St. Artemios* do show a definite progression in narrative complexity and theoretical content, but at the same time the practice of launching into doctrinal harangues at the end of a story is not a firm sign of later interpolation, since such an arrangement is a standard structure in sermons and other forms of ecclesiastical writing where narrative and polemical analysis are being presented: thus in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius, attacks on the pagan Zosimus (i.11; iii. 40-41) are loosely tacked onto the narrative sequence that has prompted them (the Robber Synod of Second Ephesus; the *chrysargyron* tax), but are not therefore to be regarded as afterthoughts.

Scholarly debate is healthy, and we present this collection to the public in the confident expectation that Saint Artemios will rapidly secure a new band of devotees to his text.

Michael Whitby
Professor of Classics and Ancient History
University of Warwick