study and is a useful reference tool for those who wish to pursue this particular field of study.

Calum Gilmour

Religious Conflict in Fourth Century Rome, a documentary study by Brian Croke and Jill Harries (Sydney University Press), first published in 1982, 155 pages.

The purpose of this attractively produced source-book is to collect together 'in annotated translation much of the material relevant, both directly and as background, to the debate between pagan and Christian aristocrats in the city of Rome in the late fourth century'. Two major incidents in the late fourth century are seen as encapsulating this conflict — the petition to restore the Altar of Victory to the Senate House in 384, and the public revival of pagan ceremonies during the reign of the usurper Eugenius in 394. These incidents are illustrated from documents emanating from both sides of the argument, and they serve to highlight the main points of contention on both sides.

After listing the abbreviations used in the text, the authors provide two clear and helpful Tables. The first sets out the dates of the Emperors of both the Eastern and Western Empires, together with events significant for the religious controversy, from 300 A.D. to the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410. The second Table illustrates the relationships with the house of Valentinian and Theodosius.

The Prologue sets the city of Rome in the context of the fourth century as a pagan and Christian stronghold, and documents are chosen to illustrate how both Christian and pagan felt about the eternal city itself. This leads to chapter 1 and a consideration of how Christianity found acceptance within the state after the Edict of Toleration in 311, and Constantine's victory over Maxentius in 313. With the Edict of Milan and Constantine’s conversion, Christianity becomes an object of Imperial favour and patronage. Here, and throughout the book, each text is introduced succinctly and placed in its context; difficulties are explained and further reading suggested in footnotes. The progress of the acceptance of Christianity is illustrated throughout the fourth century with well-chosen quotes from a wide variety of documents.

Chapter 2 deals specifically with the debate on the Altar of Victory. We are given a summary of the history of the Altar and its accompanying statue, and of the course of the debate surrounding its various removals and restorations. The Bishop Ambrose of Milan and the Prefect Symmachus
represent the two points of view, and we are given substantial quotes from the writings of each. Chapter 3 begins by describing the suspicious circumstances of the death of Valentinian II, and presents further argument on the Altar of Victory. Of particular interest is the considerable influence and prestige of Ambrose as this emerges from the documents quoted.

Chapter 4 illustrates the anti-pagan polemic of the late fourth century, arising from the apparent victory of Christianity over paganism and the belief that the Empire was the instrument of Christ's Kingdom. The writings of Prudentius have prominence here. The sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 changed the emphasis — secular Rome had fallen, and Christian eyes are to be turned to the eternal Rome in heaven. The invective against paganism is represented by material of great interest, including accounts of the pagan mysteries and the taurobolium. The annotation of the documents in this section is particularly well done, and their allusive nature requires a good deal of explanation.

Chapter 5 places the debate in its social context, and we are reminded that although the antagonists are Christians and pagans, they also belong to a common aristocracy, sharing a similar background. It is interesting to observe Symmachus and Ambrose addressing each other as fellow aristocrats and observing the niceties of their position.

The authors provide a bibliographical note which is very helpful, explaining where documents are to be found, and where the reader can go for further information on the history of the period. There is a Glossary of Deities and Rites at Rome, an Index of Documents, and a General Index.

This is a very good book indeed. The summary sections are very readable, the documents are well chosen and well explained, and much material is made readily available here in English for the first time. The setting out and general presentation are excellent.

*Calum Gilmour*