For those who have been privileged to visit Sicily, as for those who hope so to do, perusal of this volume by the Reader in Ancient Social and Economic History in the University of Cambridge should prove a rewarding experience. It embraces the history of the Island from the beginnings down to the Arab Conquest. Part I (pp. 3-27) deals, in perhaps unduly concise form, with Prehistoric and Archaic Sicily. Part 2 (pp. 45-106) is devoted to The Greek Tyrants; and Part 3 (pp. 109-179) is concerned with Roman and Byzantine Sicily. It is with these latter sections that the reader of Prudentia is more immediately involved.

The chapter on 'Sicily under the Roman Emperors' (pp. 148-166) is particularly attractive. The author remarks that 'archaeologists have until recently tended to neglect Roman Sicily, and their conclusions cannot always be blended satisfactorily with the scattered literary and administrative texts.' The defect of the latter is that they 'give a one-sided picture because their sole interest in Sicily, except when something notable took place (the Vandal invasions or the Byzantine conquest) was its role as a supplier of corn to the city of Rome (and of taxes)' (p. 157).

In the villa (or hunting lodge) in the wooded valley of Casale near the modern Piazza Armerina, Finley finds 'the most spectacular evidence, visible today, of wealth and luxury in Sicily.' With regard to the controversial date of its construction he says: 'The most likely answer on present evidence is the first half of the fourth century, stretching over fifty years, if the calculation is right that it would have taken ten teams of craftsmen that long to complete the mosaics' (p. 163). The mosaic pavements are estimated to have covered in all not much less than an acre of floor space, and may be attributed to professionals from North Africa. Finley holds that the question of ownership cannot be settled though it is clear that the owners 'could only have been among the richest men in the Empire.' There is good ground for vesting proprietorship in the imperial family of Maximianus Herculius as suggested by Gino Vinicio Gentili.
With regard to the appearance of Christianity in Sicily, Finley gives reasons for judging that 'the common view that Christianity first took root among the Jewish communities in the eastern cities of Sicily, though plausible, must remain purely speculative' (p. 169). The earliest Christian burials cannot be dated much before 200 AD. With the Edict of Milan the advance of Christianity in Sicily was rapidly accelerated, more slowly in the countryside than in the cities (p. 170). The only issue became the resistance power of paganism, pockets of which still existed about 600 AD. The course of its liquidation cannot be traced in sharp focus.

In some respects, mainly on archaeological and numismatic lines, Finley's book makes quite substantial demands on the previous knowledge of the reader, but in view of the overall merit of its contents criticism on this score would be captious.

There is a most useful chronological table (pp. xiii-xv); and figures, maps and illustrations. Deserving of mention are the 'Notes on the Plates' (pp. 193-198). The view of the south aisle of the Cathedral, Syracuse (facing p. 96), with the colonnade of the original Doric Temple of Athena incorporated in the Cathedral wall, will, for many, awaken vivid memories. The Bibliography leaves nothing to be desired.

It would be courteous to add that Finley's 'Ancient Sicily' is complemented by 'Mediaeval Sicily' (800-1713) and by 'Modern Sicily' (after 1713) by D. Mack Smith, both in the same publisher's list.

H. R. Minn