

Those who are engaged upon studies where Palestinian research is involved will find Dr Thomsen's encyclopaedic work exceedingly useful. In order to facilitate the preparation of the next volume, publishers and writers, it is hoped, will forward copies, or at least details, of relevant works to the author at Dresden A 1, Christianstrasse, 37.

STANLEY A. COOK.

*L'Ecclésiaste*, by E. PODECHARD. (V. Lecoffre, Paris, 1912.)

FRANCE has not in recent years contributed much to the study of Ecclesiastes, but the deficiency has been amply supplied by Prof. Podechard's commentary, which is issued as a volume of P. Lagrange's *Études Bibliques*. It is written with a lucidity and a sureness of touch which make it very pleasant reading. The long Introduction starts with the question of Canonicity, the reasonable conclusion being reached that the book was revered as sacred before the school of Shammai raised their opposition to it, i. e. not later than the first century B.C. After a sketch of the history of its interpretation, and a short analysis of its contents, the vocabulary of the book is examined, its late words, Aramaisms, and neo-Hebraisms are noted, and the supposed Graecisms which some have found are decisively rejected. There follows a comparison of Ecclesiastes with B. Sira and the Book of Wisdom: its priority to B. Sira is shewn to be probable, and the antagonism which the writer of Wisdom displays to the spirit of Qoheleth is well drawn out. In chap. vii the author is at pains to slay the dead in opposing P. Condamin's explanation of Eccl. iii 19-21 by reference to the beliefs of the Essenes and to the eschatological teaching of the apocalypses. The valuable sections on Greek philosophy lead to Zeller's safe conclusion that Qoheleth 'did not come into direct and immediate contact with the works of the Greek philosophers, but he did not entirely escape the effects of the spread of their methods and ideas'. With regard to the date of the book, M. Podechard thinks that the allusions in it to contemporary historical events suggest broadly the period of its composition, but that the meaning of the allusions can in no case be precisely determined; the Solomonic authorship is dismissed in a few words, and the writing is assigned to the period between 290 and 190 B.C., probably in the second half of the third century. M. Podechard prudently opposes the idea that Ecclesiastes is a poem, and that numerous drastic emendations must be permitted in order to make it such; some rhythmic passages are, of course, discernible, especially in the *me'shālîm* inserted

at various points, but Koheleth's work 'is, in fact, written in prose, and bad prose'. The composition of the book is carefully dealt with; the author joins me in recognizing the work of a *ḥākām*, who inserted proverbial maxims drawn from various sources, and of a *ḥāsīd*, who sought to correct Koheleth's statements by adding remarks about the fear of God and divine judgement; also of a disciple of Koheleth who first recommended the book to its readers, speaking here and there of Koheleth in the third person. The analysis, however, presents one or two new features: in the Epilogue (xii 9-14) *vv.* 9-12 are the work of the disciple, and speak not of Solomon but of Koheleth himself; iv 17-v 6 is an isolated addition from the pen of a member of the priestly circles; and the poetical fragment xii 2-6 is due to a young man (Koheleth was that no longer) who could write somewhat artificial poetry on the miseries of old age, because he had not experienced them himself. The genuine words of Koheleth form a consistent whole, enlarging upon the theme that life is not worth living. The Introduction ends with a chapter on the text and versions. Here I join issue with M. Pödehard on the question of the Aquilean authorship of the 'LXX' version, and remain unconvinced by the arguments which he adduces against my conclusion that the 'LXX' version was made by Aquila, and that the fragments of Aquila preserved by Origen represent his revised edition.

The Commentary proper is preceded by a Translation, in which, unfortunately, there is no indication as to the passages assigned to the several writers. It is not possible here to deal with the comments. They give evidence of very wide reading. The author generally prefaces his own views by recording those of former writers, often citing an army of names which might, in many cases, have been curtailed with advantage. The largeness of the number of details on which opinions differ only shews that Ecclesiastes is a difficult book, for the careful handling of which M. Pödehard deserves much gratitude.

A. H. MCNEILE.