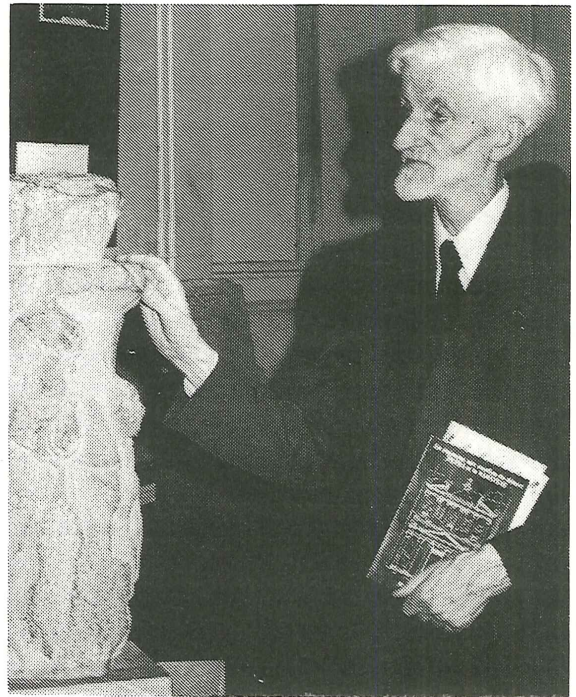


IN MEMORIAM
FATHER JEAN STARCKY (1909-1988)

The bearded ascetic profile of Father Jean Starcky was familiar to many archaeologists and friends in Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem and Amman, since this great scholar spent a substantial part of his productive life in the Near East.

Jean Starcky was born in Mulhouse (Alsace) on February 3rd, 1909 and did his studies in Theology and Biblical Sciences at the *Institut catholique de Paris*. At the same time he received a diploma in Semitic Languages from the *École des Langues Orientales anciennes*. In 1935 he was ordained priest for the Archdiocese of Paris. Later he left for Jerusalem and stayed at the *École biblique et archéologique française* in 1936-37 where he trained in biblical studies, archaeology of Palestine and epigraphy under Fr. Vincent, Abel, Jausen and Savignac. Two years later he went to the *Institut Pontifical* of Rome and received a *Licence* in Holy Scripture. As he was eager to return to the east, he accepted an offer to be professor of Holy Scripture at the Jesuit University of St. Joseph in Beirut from 1938 to 1941. He was also appointed as parish of the French troops in Palmyra. This was a good opportunity for him to study the ruins and inscriptions of the famous caravan city in the Syrian desert. He published the first guide to Palmyra in 1941, recently re-edited in cooperation with Michel Gawlikowski. However, while he was in Lebanon, a more important duty called: World War II was raging between the Allies and Germany. Although he was exempted from military service by the Red Cross, due to his fragile state of health, he decided to respond to the appeal of General de Gaulle and courageously joined the Free French Forces in Syria. This was a difficult time for Jean Starcky, as the French troops in the East were divided between the Petinists of General Dentz and the Gaullists. He took the "good" side and although he was mocked by his colleagues at the University of St. Joseph, he joined the Free Forces in Palestine. He



embarked with the *Bataillon de Marine XI* to Egypt and participated in the 1943 campaign in Libya. Nobody could believe that this frail intellectual young man could be so distinguished in his outstanding courage. As he was a most peaceful human being, he was very reserved concerning his military exploits. However he told me once that he entered the tent of the Italian general in Libya. He received, as a booty after the battle, an Italian-German dictionary which he used with pride! By a special decree of General de Gaulle, Jean Starcky was promoted to captain. After he embarked in Tunis, he participated in the operations in Italy and revealed to one of his friends that he never risked his life more than the day he crawled under heavy shelling to assist a wounded German soldier on the front-line. For his battalion, he became the legendary chaplain, always ready for self-sacrifice. As stated by his superiors, he exercised his high moral influence on the troops and received their consideration. In August 1944, he disembarked in France and participated in the liberation of his own home province, Alsace, from the Nazi oppression. This was the natural

reaction of a man fond of human justice. He even continued with the troops into the Alps, until he was wounded in April 1945. He was rewarded four decorations: Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Croix de la Libération, Croix de Guerre and Silver Star.

After the war, Jean Starcky was happy to return to his archaeological activities. He went back to Beirut and became, with Henri Seyrig and Ernest Will, one of the first members of the French Archaeological Institute. This quiet period allowed him to publish several articles on the inscriptions of Palmyra (see bibliography). Between 1949 and 1952, he worked at the *Institut catholique* in Paris as professor of Aramaic and New Testament. Meanwhile, he became a member of the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and was selected as a member of the editorial board of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He went back to Jerusalem in 1960-61 to work with other scholars on the decipherment at the *École biblique*. He published several texts from Cave IV at Qumrân and a Nabataean contract from the Dead Sea caves. His most illuminating studies dealt with the evolution of Messianism at Qumrân and the Teacher of Righteousness, who was the founder of the Essene community. Many theories were advanced concerning his personality, spiritual career and dating of his activities. Some scholars have intentionally exaggerated his role, comparing him to Jesus Christ, but the position of Father Starcky was most reasonable: The Teacher of Righteousness was a priest, probably of the Oniad family. He left Jerusalem when Jonathan the Maccabee (152-143) was nominated High Priest by King Alexander Balas, although he was not of the official priesthood. He was followed by many priests and partisans who refused the "illegal" High Priest and the Judaism of the Temple. This community settled at Qumrân, on the shore of the Dead Sea. As the head of the new sect, the Teacher of Righteousness presented himself as a prophet and as a restorer of the Law, but although he was persecuted by his enemies and endured sufferings, he never consi-

dered himself the saviour of mankind, the Messiah.

I met Father Starcky at the time he was working on the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Palestine Archaeological Museum. I was at the *École biblique* as student and assistant to Father de Vaux. It was certainly difficult for me at the time to follow the passionate discussions about the Scrolls and the Teacher of Righteousness, but Father Starcky with his proverbial kindness and patience encouraged me to study archaeology in Paris. He welcomed me when I arrived in that big city and helped me follow my field of interest. We organised in 1962, with the support of Fr. Daniel Pézeril, now auxiliary bishop of Paris, the first exhibition of Palestinian archaeology at *St. Jacques du Haut Pas*. It was in the basement of this parish that many pottery vessels, figurines, stone objects, metal weapons and inscriptions were presented to the Parisian public. Father Starcky was happy to explain, to many visitors, the material culture of Palestine from the Chalcolithic up to the Islamic periods. During his life he always tried to make archaeology available to the public at large and to show its bearing on Christian life. At an advanced age, he guided groups to Petra, Palmyra and the holy places of Palestine.

While he was working in Jerusalem, Father Starcky got attracted to the rose-red city of Petra. In 1964, Dr. Auni Dajani, then director of the Department of Antiquities, invited him to publish some funerary stelae exposed at the entrance of the Siq of Petra. One inscription bore the name *Reqmu*, the Semitic name of the ancient caravan city. During the same year, he published in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*, VII, the most exhaustive article on Petra and the Nabataeans. It still is the only reference in French for students and archaeologists, although it is 25 years old.

In 1965/66 Fr. Starcky returned to Jerusalem and I met him at Samaria-Sebaste, where I was in charge of the excavations. After the Six Day War, he never accepted to return to the Holy City,

under military occupation. He who fought for the freedom of his country was very sensitive to the sufferings of the Palestinian people. When I left the West Bank, he helped me go to the French Institute of Beirut, where he was acting as deputy director to Pr. D. Schlumberger. He suggested to me to work on the rock-cut monuments of Petra for a dissertation. At that time, he knew that UNESCO had allocated the sum of \$8000 for a museum of traditional art in Jerusalem, but as the Holy City was under military occupation, he asked the Department of Antiquities and UNESCO to shift this sum to a photogrammetric survey of Petra. We went to Petra in December 1969 with a team from the National Geographic Institute of Paris (IGN). The site was almost deserted because of the 1967 war and we had to content ourselves with the canned food available at the Rest House. He never complained. In 1975 he returned to Petra with another team from the IGN to prepare a map of the site. J.T. Milik accompanied him to survey the Nabataean inscriptions. I remember how he went out at six o'clock in the morning with his camera and an orange for lunch, to return in the evening in a happy mood because he had discovered new inscriptions. His tireless energy aroused the admiration of his young

companions. In Paris he continued to follow up the work on the Petra map until his last days. Meanwhile he helped many Jordanian students and was eager to communicate his vast knowledge to them. All his students knew his intellectual and material generosity. Many researchers, even if they do not acknowledge it, are indebted to him for several ideas in history and archaeology. To them he even offered his books and financial support. When he was invited to come to Petra, for the last time, in 1985 to participate in the Symposium on the Caravan Cities organised by the Department of Antiquities and sponsored by UNESCO, he accepted the invitation but insisted on paying his own expenses.

Father Starcky died in Paris on October 9, 1988, at the Val de Grâce hospital. In his distinction as one of the last *Companions de la Libération*, he received military honours. He will remain in the memories of his friends and students not only as an outstanding scholar, but also as a holy man of our materialistic world. During his bountiful life he was so modest that he never accepted a Festschrift. May this volume of the *ADAJ* be but a small tribute to this most outstanding man.

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A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
of
Jean Starcky

Father Starcky is the author of about a hundred articles and monographs. We present here a selection of his most important works for the Archaeology of the Middle East.

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