

in memoriam DOM REMACLE ROME (1893-1974)

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Joseph Rome was born in Stavelot, Belgium on the 30th of August 1893. He studied at the Athénée de Malines where his father was a teacher. On the 3rd of October 1911 he entered the Abbey of Maredsous. He then took the name of Remacle after the Saint of Stavelot, and his acceptance to the noviciate occurred on the 2nd of January 1912. The First World War interrupted his studies of Philosophy, started at Maredsous and Saint-Anselme. During that war he acted as a chaplain, often beside his brother Paul, and he also spent some time at the Catholic Cathedral of Westminster in England. In January 1919, he started his studies of Theology in Louvain and continued this until 1922, the year he was finally ordained at Liège. After his ordination he was asked to work as a teacher, a tutor or an accountant for the School of Arts and Trades at the Abbey of Maredsous. It is then that Dom Rome started to make violins, having found an old formula for a special varnish as he hoped to perfect these instruments. However, his future did not lie in this direction although he left a few valuable instruments, still kept at the Abbey.

In 1932, Dom Grégoire Fournier died and Dom Remacle Rome continued caring for the Museum of Natural Sciences of the Abbey and it is through that avenue that he came into contact with various people at the University of Louvain. In 1934, at the suggestion of Professor Demanet, curator of the Museum of Natural History in Brussels at the time, Dom Remacle Rome was asked to work as curator of the Museum of Geology at the University of Louvain, left abandoned since the death of Professor de Dorlodot. For forty years, Dom Rome served the University of Louvain by painstaking work classifying the collections of the Museum as well as working on ostracodes.

Father Rome was a self taught scientist; he was interested in palaeontology and, through readings and personal investigations, he became a world known specialist on ostracodes which he called : "mes bestioles, mes animalcules, mes ostracodes". He visited various countries in relation to his studies on ostracodes. For example he went to the Oceanographical Institute of Monaco from which he sent the following letter : "... On a mis à ma disposition un grand laboratoire, un microscope et une loupe binoculaire, tables en lave, etc. Le musée est construit sur un rocher à pic au-dessus de la mer; de ma fenêtre, j'ai l'impression d'être en bateau ... J'ai pu faire recueillir les algues sur lesquelles vivent les animaux que je cherche par 50 mètres de profondeur, et depuis près de huit jours, je secoue des algues et des racines dans de l'eau, puis après filtrage j'étudie les résidus.

Il y a de tout et très peu de ce que je cherche. Je n'ai encore que quatre de ces animalcules et on semble trouver que ce n'est pas mal. Il va sans dire qu'il m'en faut plus avant de commencer une étude ...".

Some of his manuscripts and galley proofs on ostracodes from the surroundings of Monaco were passed on to him by the Resistance during the blockade by the Germans during the Second World War. Acting as a military priest at the beginning of the war, he was taken prisoner and liberated soon after that. He then returned to the University of Louvain where the Institute of Geology had suffered little from bombings and lootings. He immediately started his work on ostracodes and, by the end of the war, he had almost completed his important monograph on external morphology and nervous system of *Herpetocypris reptans* for which he gained a world-wide reputation as an ostracode worker.

Until his death, Dom Rome continued working on these tiny crustaceans, illustrating and describing them minutely and with great care, leaving on his desk an almost completed manuscript on ostracodes from Lake Kivu. Between 1956 and 1958, Father Rome also published the result of some studies he had done on Nicolas Stenon.

Handicaped by poor health, Dom Rome was always found working assiduously and even followed the transfer of the Institute of Geology to Louvain-La-Neuve and reinstalled his laboratory at the age of eighty. Until the last week preceding his death on the 8th of May 1974, he kept working and generously helping his colleagues.

The volume of the Ostracode Symposium held in Hull in 1967 was dedicated to him as well as to Professor Henry Howe who died six months before him.



Dom Joseph Remacle ROME, éminent biologiste et paléontologue s'est éteint le 8 mai 1974 à l'âge de 80 ans. Moine de l'Abbaye de Maredsous, cet homme érudit autant qu'affable et généreux passa une grande partie de sa carrière scientifique à étudier les ostracodes et à organiser les collections paléontologiques du Musée de l'Université. Sa compétence lui valait la visite et les sollicitations de nombreux spécialistes étrangers; le volume du symposium sur les ostracodes tenu à Hull en 1967 lui avait été dédié conjointement avec le professeur américain F.V. HOWE.

Handicapé par une santé fragile, Dom Rome suivit cependant l'Institut de Géologie dans son déménagement à Louvain-la-Neuve et y réinstalla son laboratoire en 1973. Jusqu'à la semaine précédant son décès, il continua à travailler et à aider ses collègues géologues. Ses premières publications sur les ostracodes datent de 1936; il laisse un important manuscrit sous presse et diverses notes en cours de rédaction.