

TE'UDA

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XXIII

CANON AND HOLY SCRIPTURES

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Yaacov Shavit

TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY • 2009

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RESEARCH SERIES
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Moshe Dorf

(June 2, 1907 — October 3, 1987)

Moshe Dorf was born in Poland and emigrated to Belgium at an early age.

Together with his brother, he founded a diamond processing enterprise.

The personality of Moshe Dorf reflects the embodiment of initiative and action which received their concrete expression in the industrial enterprise that he established and continued to cultivate throughout his life. Concurrently, he possessed an intense spiritual wealth as well as an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and wisdom from the rich sources of the Jewish heritage. He was an active participant in various study groups and conferences devoted to Jewish Studies, especially in the field of biblical research, and an avid member of the Israeli Society for Biblical Research as well as the World Jewish Society for the Study of Bible.

Moshe Dorf will be remembered by friends and relations for his congeniality and amiability, his unstinted devotion to his family, and his munificent philanthropy to numerous cultural and charitable institutions in the State of Israel.



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Foreword

Volume 23 of *Teuda* is devoted to a discussion of a central phenomenon in the history of religion and culture: sacred books and canonical writings. The chronological scope of the discussion is extremely broad, ranging from ancient Egypt to the present day. Nevertheless, the diverse papers in this volume share a methodological point of departure regarding the nature of the processes of canonization: All agree that the creation of a book with a special status or a distinct collection of sacred, authoritative, or select writings involves complex processes of selection and winnowing; determination of the final wording of the texts; and reception, sanctification, and interpretation. These complex processes determine the place of the canonical text.

By their very nature, the processes of canonization, which are important in shaping the world and identity of societies, also reflect the history of religion, culture, and society. This volume, therefore, sheds light on the multifaceted phenomenon of sanctification and canonization of diverse texts in diverse literary communities in different periods, and the struggles that accompany the establishment of sacred and canonical status, continuing even after it has been established. Herein lies the great interest of these papers.

As this volume appears, we must rethink the future of the *Teuda* series. The recent volumes have been published during the most difficult period in the tradition of printing that developed and became institutionalized between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries. At the turn of the twenty-first century, electronic publishing is taking over more and more publications, including in the academic sphere. The economic crisis of the past two years also requires a fresh look at how to maintain the annual publication

Foreword

of the School of Jewish Studies. *Teuda* has no canonical status, but it is well established in the tradition of the school. Let us hope that we will succeed in keeping it alive under the new conditions.

Yaron Tsur

