

CISMOR VOICE 29 (Oct. 2019)
Introduction by the Director, Ada Taggar Cohen

During the Spring semester of 2019, CISMOR held a string of activities, including two large-scale international conferences, each of them taking place over two days of lectures and workshops, with the participation of scholars invited from abroad. Both conferences also offered lectures in Japanese to the general public, who filled the School of Theology's chapel. Both public lectures are now available for watching online through the CISMOR YouTube channel. The first international conference took place on April 13-14 and included Prof. Marina Zorman of Ljubljana University (Slovenia), a scholar of Indo-European and Hittitology, who gave the keynote lecture. The topic of the conference was international cultural contacts in the ancient world, mainly the region of today's Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

The second international conference, held in May in cooperation with the *Heksherim Center* of Ben Gurion University, hosted 12 scholars from Israel, England and the USA, and focused on the cultural aspects of the attitude towards Christianity in Modern Japanese and Modern Hebrew Literature.

The center held a workshop for young scholars conducted in English on topics related to world migrations and studies of the Old Testament. Some of these papers are to be included in the forthcoming issue of the journal *The World of Monotheistic Religions* Vol. 11, expected in March 2020.

The center also held three seminars in English given by visiting scholars on various topics, including studies on the influence of the Holocaust on the second generation of survivors, human rights 70 years after the declaration of Human Rights in the 20th century, and a scholarly study on the way religion is influenced in urban historical developments.

In July the Center held a symposium that dealt with the presentation of the Old Testament story of Joseph in Egypt as it was depicted in later Jewish sources, Islamic texts, Japanese Christian education, and in British musicals. The symposium was open to the general public and closed with a musical performance of Christian gospels.

For details of all these activities please see the summaries and photos in this issue.

Finally, we are mourning the untimely passing away on April 30 of Professor Samir Abdel Hamid Nouh, a long-time member of the CISMOR board, who contributed greatly to the Center's activities through organizing conferences and other events, as well as initiating and editing our publications in Arabic Language. We wish to send our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.