



Gary A. Rendsburg

Friday, July 23, 2021

Dear Friends,

There are no upcoming lectures during the next four weeks, as it is time for our summer vacation. We are off to Maine for two weeks, with a stop in Salem, Mass., en route, and a stop in Newport, R.I., on the way home.

The perfect Gary & Melissa vacation: the raw nature of the Maine coast and two towns with deep Jewish and American history.

If you would like to follow our explorations, you can do so at Gary's Facebook page, via the regular upcoming postings.

<https://www.facebook.com/grendersburg>

But there are a few announcements to make.

Announcement #1

SAVE the DATE!

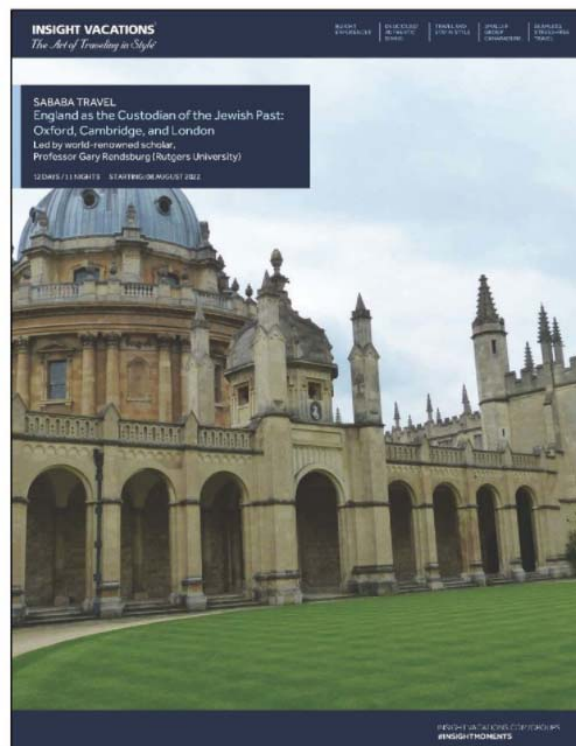
STUDY TOUR to ENGLAND

August 8–19, 2022

“England as the Custodian of the Jewish Past”

First, and most importantly, please consider joining us on a specially designed tour one year from now, August 8–19, 2022, “England as the Custodian of the Jewish Past,” with a focus on Oxford, Cambridge, and London, especially the unsurpassed Hebrew manuscript collections held in all three academic centers.

The tour is organized by [Sababa Travel](#), with Gary as tour leader and scholar-in-residence. Details still forthcoming, but if you are interested, consider this your “Save the Date” announcement.



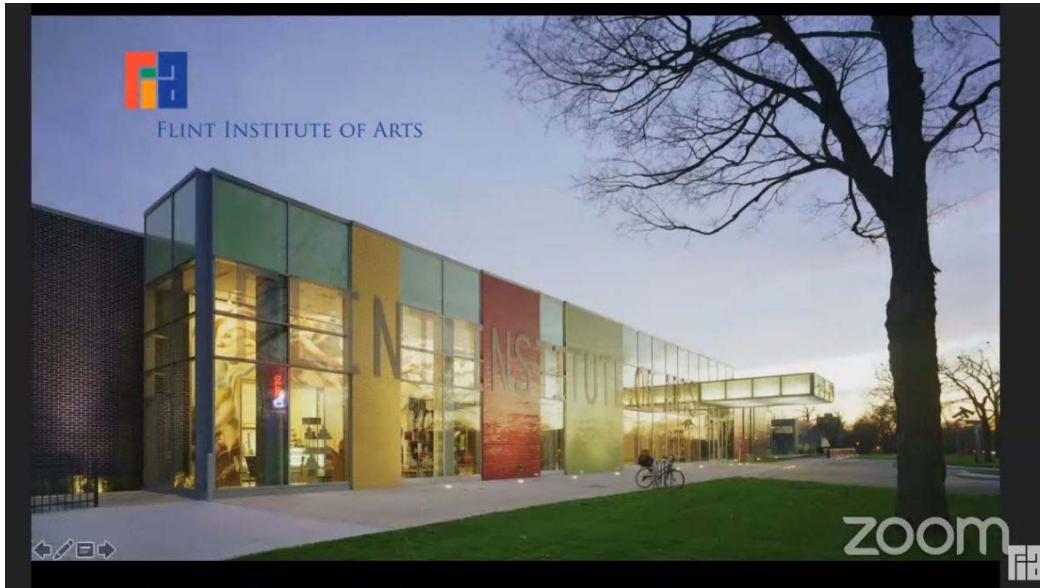
For now, see Gary’s website for more information:

<https://jewishstudies.rutgers.edu/people/core-faculty/gary-a-rendsborg>

Announcement #2

As you read in a previous email blast, last week Gary presented a lecture, “The Greatest Bible Ever Written: Kennicott no. 1, La Coruña, Spain, 1476,” sponsored by the Flint Institute of Arts.

The video recording of that lecture is now available at the museum’s YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vd-ga0WTEo&t=2s>

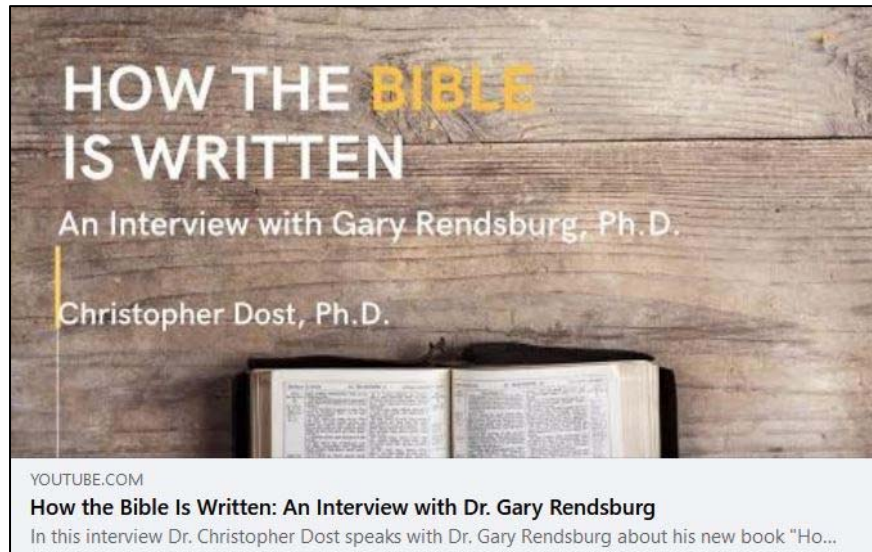


Announcement #3

One of Gary’s colleagues, Chris Dost, conducted a long interview with Gary regarding his most recently published book, *How the Bible Is Written*.

The interview is posted at Chris’s YouTube page:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl-niLZAm3Y>

Chris holds a Ph.D. in Bible from the Jewish Theological Seminary (New York), has taught at various seminaries (both Jewish and Christian), and currently serves as pastor of Northville Baptist Church (Northville, Conn.).



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As indicated at the outset, no lectures in the four weeks ahead, but then a flurry of events is scheduled for the second half of August:

Upcoming Lectures: (via Zoom)

“The Early Synagogue”

Wednesday, August 18, 11:00 a.m. (EDT)

Jewish Historical Seminars (Jerusalem)

“In Search of Ancient Israel”

Wednesday, August 25, 7:00 p.m. (EDT)

Siegal Lifelong Learning / Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland, Ohio)

“The Book of Genesis: Tracing the Origins of the Ancestral Narratives”

Thursday, August 26, 8:00 p.m. (EDT)

Biblical Archaeology Society (Washington, D.C.)

Details will be provided with registration links in the next email blast during the second week of August.

We wish you all an enjoyable August, and we will be back in touch soon.

With fond regards, - Gary & Melissa



GARY'S CORNER



Towards the end of the Smithsonian program last Saturday, July 17, 2021, “England as the Custodian of the Jewish Past,” I mentioned that John Milton tutored Roger Williams in Hebrew.

We forget how many of the early American colonial leaders knew Hebrew, including Williams.

For those who wish to know more about this fascinating topic, see the engaging book by my long-time friend and colleague, Shalom Goldman (Middlebury College), [*God's Sacred Tongue*](#) (2014).

John Milton tutored Roger Williams (1603 – 1683) in Hebrew

Roger Williams:
1631 – to America
1636 – establishes Providence Plantations (Rhode Island)

John Milton (1608 – 1674), great poet and leading Puritan theologian (portrait: 1629)

1658 – first Jews arrive in Newport

Image used during Gary's PowerPoint presentation last week.

Williams was first an Anglican and then a Puritan, but he took a more liberal stance than his co-religionists in Massachusetts. And thus he decamped for what is today Rhode Island, where he founded Providence Plantations, with its more tolerant stance. Baptists, Quakers, and Jews, for example, all found a haven in Rhode Island.

The First Baptist Church in Newport, R.I., co-founded by Williams in 1638, is the oldest Baptist congregation in the U.S.

The Jews arrived in Newport twenty years later, in 1658, making it the second oldest Jewish community in the U.S. (after New Amsterdam / New York – 1654).

We look forward to our explorations in the weeks ahead!



The Touro Synagogue, Newport, R.I., built in 1763 (which we will visit in the weeks to come), the oldest synagogue building still in use in the U.S., and the only synagogue building remaining from the colonial period.

photo credit: Kenneth C. Zirkel / CC BY-SA 4.0

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Touro_Synagogue