Upcoming Programs in April

(1) 2024 Bishop Lecture, Rutgers University

(2) The Dead Sea Scrolls, Somerset Library

(3) The Passover Haggadah, Kol Rina Congregation
Friday, March 29, 2024

Dear Friends,

Gary will be presenting three different lectures in the weeks ahead, per the headline above and the details below.

We hope to see you at one or more of these programs.

“The Robison Hebrew Manuscript Collection: 50 Yemenite Treasures in Our Midst”
Rutgers University Libraries
2024 Bishop Lecture
Tuesday, April 2, 2024
4:00 p.m. (EDT)
Alexander Library, Rutgers University - New Brunswick
hybrid event: in-person and via Zoom

Details and registration here:
https://libcal.rutgers.edu/event/12100082
Every year, the Rutgers University Libraries hosts the annual Bishop Lecture, devoted to an aspect of book culture, medieval manuscripts, the history of printing, etc., with special attention to items held at Special Collections housed at Alexander Library, the flagship library in the Rutgers system.

The series is named in memory of Louis Faugères Bishop III, a prominent New York City physician and book lover. Although he was educated at Yale and Columbia, Dr. Bishop had close family ties to Rutgers, where his father had studied and where the family name lives on, with Bishop House and Bishop Place on our campus.

Gary is truly honored to be this year’s Bishop Lecturer, as he looks forward to sharing all that he has learned during his years of studying the Robison Hebrew Manuscript Collection housed at Rutgers.
“The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Texts, Their Contexts, and the Coalescence of Jewish and Christian Scholarship”
Wednesday, April 10, 2024
7:00 – 8:15 p.m. (EDT)
via Zoom

Details and registration here:
https://sclsnj.libnet.info/event/9208453

In 1947, a Bedouin shepherd was tracking a stray goat near Qumran, an isolated location near the Dead Sea, when he stumbled upon one of the most remarkable archaeological finds of the 20th century.

This remarkable find consisted of seven ancient Hebrew manuscripts housed in clay vessels and stored inside a cave. These precious
documents led scholars to explore other caves in the area – an effort which eventually yielded 800+ documents, now known collectively as the Dead Sea Scrolls. These discoveries from the late 1940s and early 1950s led to nothing less than a revolution in our understanding of ancient Judaism, early Christianity, and the relationship between the two religious movements.

The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Texts, Their Contexts, and the Coalescence of Jewish and Christian Scholarship

Gary A. Rendsburg
Blanche and Irving Laurie Chair in Jewish History
Rutgers University

(opening image of the PowerPoint presentation)
“The Passover Haggadah through the Ages: Jewish Text, Christian Surprises”
Kol Rina, South Orange, N.J.
Sunday, April 14, 2024
10:30 a.m. (EDT)
via Zoom

Details and registration here:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-passover-haggadah-through-the-ages-jewish-texts-christian-surprises-tickets-862504262467
Today Jews read the Passover Haggadah from a printed book, with each person at the table holding his or her own copy. But how did that text reach us? And how did Jews observe the Seder before the age of printing?

This talk presents the evidence: from the most basic Haggadah texts found in the Cairo Geniza through the most lavishly produced illuminated Haggadah manuscripts from the Middle Ages.

Along the way, as we shall see, certain Christian influences are present: both in the artwork of the illuminated haggadot and perhaps most surprisingly of all in the so-called Monk’s Haggadah, replete with Latin commentary, housed for centuries at the Benedictine Monastery in Tegernsee, Bavaria.

Through it all, presented via PowerPoint, we will marvel at the work of dedicated scribes, who transmitted the text generation after generation, century after century – while also acknowledging the ongoing work of curators and librarians who serve as the custodians of these treasures, in London, Manchester, Munich, Jerusalem, New York, and Washington.
The Passover Haggadah through the Ages:
Jewish Text, Christian Surprises
Gary A. Rendsburg
Blanche and Irving Laurie
Chair in Jewish History
Rutgers University

Prato Haggadah (JTS MS 9478)
Spain, c. 1300

(opening image of the PowerPoint presentation)
Did you know that Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558 – 1603) knew Hebrew? In truth, we have only one contemporary individual who states this, namely Giulio Cesare Paschali, who dedicated his *De’ sacri salmi di Davidde* (Geneva, 1592) to Her Majesty – but there is no reason to doubt his testimony.

For how else can we explain that Oxford dons wrote Hebrew poems to honor the Queen during her celebrated visit to the University in 1566. My colleague Aaron Rubin (University of Georgia) and I have been working on these poems for the past several years, as they are a delight to read, even at a distance of four and a half centuries.
For a short article on one of the poems housed at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, see our article in Sundial, the in-house magazine of the College, now posted at my Publications page:  
https://jewishstudies.rutgers.edu/docman/rendsburg/989-edward-burdon-poem-sundial

For the entire Sundial issue, see here, at the Corpus Christi College website:  
How the Bible Is Written

(April 2019)

(Hendrickson)