We think of the Seder as a ritual retelling of the Exodus story at a scripted meal. But both the script and the menu changed over time. What did the Sages bring to the Seder table? Which elements of the meal did they discuss and emphasize? Why, for example, are side dishes discussed at length? Prof. Clemens Leonhard, a renowned specialist in Jewish liturgy and Jewish influences on early Christian liturgy, looks at the Pesach with fresh eyes. Situating the Seder in its Greek and Roman context, he explores the role that scholarly discussion among the Sages and the celebration of the memory of the Temple and its liturgy played in the performance of a uniquely festive meal.

Clemens Leonhard, Professor of Liturgical Studies at the University of Münster in Germany, studied Theology in Vienna, and Near Eastern and Jewish Studies in Vienna, Toronto, and Jerusalem. He has received many prestigious awards, including the Humboldt and a Fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin. His publications on the interaction of Jewish and Christian festivals and liturgies include The Jewish Pesach and the Origins of the Christian Easter: Open Questions in Current Research (2006), and numerous articles in edited volumes and journals.

Dr. Leonhard will be speaking at the COLONIE LIBRARY on SEPTEMBER 12 at 6:00pm.

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