

Biography of Kenneth Ronald Atkinson

s/o Ronald Atkinson & Carol June Lambert

**See Chapter 4 – Jones M. Birdwell for complete family listing.*

Kenneth Atkinson website:

<http://www.uni.edu/atkinson/index2.html>



I was raised in the Detroit area in the suburb of Sterling Heights, Michigan. My family, including two brothers, still resides in the northern Detroit area and I frequently visit the region. Like many students, I worked my way through school in a variety of jobs. Being from an industrial area, the majority of my work experience occurred in factories related to the automotive industry making such items as brake parts and dashboard panels. Operating the large machines required to manufacture car parts was a difficult, demanding, and scary job. I also worked as a grinder of aluminum, as a machine operator in a spaghetti factory (a position that was unbearable in the summer due to the heat of the giant ovens), and in a restaurant (midnight shift). After completing my undergraduate studies at Oakland University, I spent four years as a soldier in the U. S. Army during the Cold War. During this time, I was privileged to serve as a member of the Berlin Brigade, in the former West Berlin. One of my jobs in the military was to serve as a courier transporting documents across the Iron Curtain. While stationed in Berlin, I frequently visited the archeological museums of East Berlin and traveled widely through Europe and the Middle East.

After leaving Germany, I moved to Israel, and lived on Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi for six months, where I worked as an avocado picker, chicken handler, and as a grinder in the foundry. I then spent over two years both traveling and serving as staff member on the following archeological excavations in Israel: Tel Haror (3 seasons; Philistine and Middle Bronze Age periods); Eilat (Prehistoric religious sites); Banias (Roman, Islamic, Crusader periods); Gamla (2 seasons; Roman, Bronze Age periods); Hayonim Terrace (Prehistoric period); Meroth (Byzantine, Roman periods). I have also excavated at London's Guild Hall with the Museum of London's Department of Urban Archaeology. My journeys took me to over seventeen countries where I visited many sites related to the Bible, humanities, and world religions. My travel and archaeological work proved quite informative and exciting, given such unusual experiences as attacks by wild boars, the discovery of a bomb at an excavation site, finding a Canaanite Temple, terroristic threats, illness, storms at sea, and the extremes of desert heat. I was also fortunate to spend time with Bedouin, Druze, and Kurds, whose lifestyles remain in many respects similar to the ancient cultures of my present research. After many years of travel and archaeological fieldwork in Israel and England, I have come to realize that historical, textual, and archaeological studies cannot be separated. In my courses I like to share some of my experiences with students,

through photographs and artifacts, in order to help them learn about the past and present.

Following my travels, I earned a Master of Divinity degree at the University of Chicago, focusing upon ancient languages, history, classics and the Dead Sea Scrolls. I then studied at Temple University in Philadelphia, where I received an M.A. and Ph.D., concentrating in Biblical Literature and world religions.

Burial site of Antiochus I of Commagene
Nemrug Dag, Eastern Turkey

Harbor of Alexandria Troas, Turkey
Photographs by Kenneth Atkinson

I have been a member of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Northern Iowa since August, 1999, where I teach courses in biblical studies, world religions, and humanities. I became interested in religion, ancient history, and archaeology while living and traveling overseas. My areas of interest include the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament); the New Testament; Jewish and Christian non-canonical literature; the Dead Sea Scrolls; Archaeology, and World Religions. My recent publications examine the connection between religion and violence by focusing upon the development of the violent messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls. My other works include articles on Herod the Great, the Psalms of Solomon, women in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the archeology of early synagogues, and the history of biblical archeology. At present I am writing commentaries on the Psalms of Solomon and the Assumption of Moses (Testament of Moses). I am currently involved in an excavation of the Roman city of Alexandria Troas in Turkey in partnership with the Crisler Biblical Institute (Carmel, CA), the Canakkale University (Turkey), and the Canakkale Museum (Turkey).

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Education

Ph.D. Temple University, Philadelphia, PA (Hebrew Bible and Post-Biblical Literature), 1999.
Dissertation: "Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon: Implications for Understanding the Sitz im Leben of an Unknown Jewish Sect," Committee: Dr.

Robert Wright (Chair), Dr. Vasiliki Limberis, Dr. Katie Cannon, Dr. John Collins (University of Chicago).

M.A., Temple University, Philadelphia, PA (Religion), 1996.

M.Div., The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL (Religion/Hebrew Bible), 1994.

B.S., Oakland University, Rochester, MI (Human Resources Development), 1982.

Teaching Experience

Assistant Professor of Religion, University of Northern Iowa, 1999-present. I teach all the biblical studies classes (Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and New Testament) at the university. I also teach the following courses, "Judaism and Islam," "Religions of the World," and Humanities I (Ancient Civilizations and Literature).

Instructor in Religion, Temple University, 1995-1998.

Writing Intensive courses in "Introduction to the Bible," "Religion in America," and "Introduction to World Religions."

Other Professional Experience

Administrative Specialist, Headquarters and Service Company, Combat Support Battalion, Berlin Brigade,

U. S. Army, West Berlin, Germany, 1983-87.

Major Awards: Army of Occupation Medal; Army Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal; Good Conduct Medal; Expert Marksmanship Medal

Publications: Books

An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon: Pseudepigrapha. Studies in Bible and Early Christianity No. 49 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

The Assumption of Moses: A Commentary. (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, forthcoming).

The Psalms of Solomon, New International Commentary on the Septuagint (Philadelphia: International Organization of Septuagint and Cognate Studies, forthcoming).

Publications: Articles

"Queen Salome Alexandra and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Period of Enlightenment for Women in Ancient Judea During the First Century B.C." in Proceedings of the Central States Regional Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and the

American Schools of Oriental Research, vol. 4. J. J. Johnson Leese, ed. (Kansas City, MO: Central States Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 15-29.

"Herod the Great as Antiochus Redivivus: Reading the Testament of Moses as an Anti-Herodian Composition" in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity, Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*, no. 9, Craig A. Evans, ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming).

"The Psalms of Solomon: An English Translation of the Greek Text." In *The New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

"On the Use of Scripture in the Development of Militant Davidic Messianism at Qumran: New Light from Psalm of Solomon 17," in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series*, no. 33; *Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*, no. 7, Craig A. Evans, ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 106-123.

"Dancing at Qumran?: Women and Worship at the Dead Sea," in *Proceedings of the Central States Regional Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Oriental Research*, vol. 3. Scott S. Elliott, ed. (Kansas City, MO: Central States Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 39-54.

Invited Contributor for the *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. David Noel Freedman, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). Author of the following thirty articles:

Abiel; Adoni-Zedek; Ahijah; Amraphel; Ararat; Asher; Barzillai; Chileab; Doeg; Elhanan; Gera; Gershom; Gomorrah; Hanan; Harosheth-ha-Goim; Heldai; Hopher; Hill- Country; Japhia; Meroz; Millo; Moses, Testament of; Ner, Obed-Edom; Ophel; Synagogue; Sibmah; Zaananim; Zeboim; Zeboim

"On the Herodian Origin of Militant Davidic Messianism at Qumran: New Light from Psalm of Solomon 17," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 135-60.

"Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon: Implications for Understanding the Sitz im Leben of an Unknown Jewish Sect," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 17 (1998): 95-112.

"On Further Defining the First Century CE Synagogue: Fact or Fiction?" *New Testament Studies* 43 (1997): 491-502.

"Herod the Great, Sosius, and the Siege of Jerusalem (37 B.C.E.) in Psalm of Solomon 17," *Novum Testamentum* 38 (1996): 313-322.

"An Archaeologist Before His Time: George Reisner and the First American Dig in the Holy Land," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 22 (Nov./Dec. 1996): 68-69, 76.

"Two Dogs, a Goat and a Partridge: An Archaeologist's Best Friends," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 22 (Jan./Feb. 1996): 42-43, 74.

"Biblical Historical Criticism: A Basis for Jewish-Christian Dialogue," *Paradigms: Theological Trends of the Future* 10 (1995): 6-9.

"Diggers: From Paid Peasants to Eager Volunteers," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 20 (Jan./Feb. 1994): 66-71, 80.

"Excavating In The Desert: Can One Escape the Hermeneutical Circle?" *Criterion* 32 (1993): 2-4.

Reviews

Review of Salomon E. Grootkerk, *Ancient Sites in Galilee: A Toponymic Gazetteer, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East*, no. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000) in *Review of Biblical Literature*(forthcoming).

Review of *The Anointed and His People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba*, Gerbern S. Oegema. *JSP Supplement Series 27* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) in *Review of Biblical Literature* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 303-6.

Review of *The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role In Society And Eclipse*. Nikos Kokkinos. *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series, 30* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) in *Religious Studies Review* 25, no. 3 (July 1999), 311.

Review of *Jesus, Qumran, and the Vatican: Clarifications*. Otto Betz and Rainer Riesner (New York: Crossroad, 1994) in *Critical Review of Books In Religion* 1994, Eldon Jay Epp, ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 392-3.

Review of *A Dictionary of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Expanded Edition*. Leon Klenicki and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995) in *Paradigms: Theological Trends of the Future* (in press).

Review of *Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed*. Abridged with introduction and commentary by Julius Guttmann, Trans. Chaim Rabin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995) in *Paradigms: Theological Trends of the Future* (in press).

Honors/Fellowships/Grants

Summer Fellowship, The Graduate College, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA. (Manuscript Research for a Forthcoming Commentary on the Testament of Moses). Summer 2001.

Travel Assistance, College of Humanities and Fine Arts, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA. (Funds to present a paper to the Pseudepigrapha Section of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN, November 17-21, 2000).

Travel Grant, The Graduate College, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA. (Travel assistance to deliver a speech to the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature Regional Meeting, St. Paul, MN, April 28, 2000).

Travel Grant, The Graduate College, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA. (Travel assistance to deliver a speech to the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Oriental Literature Regional Meeting, Kansas City, MO, April 2, 2000). Spring 2000.

Project Grant, The Graduate College, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA. (Research for two forthcoming books and a forthcoming Greek translation). Fall, 1999.

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. Dissertation Fellowship, 1998-1999.

Distinguished Teaching Assistant, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. College of Arts and Sciences, 1997.

J. Coert Rylaarsdam Award for Interreligious Dialogue, the University of Chicago (inaugural recipient), 1993-94.

Scholar in Religion, Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago, 1991-94.

Henry Barton Robison Scholar in Biblical Studies, Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago, 1993-94.
Professional Papers Presented

"The Phineas Tradition in the Testament of Moses: Martyrdom and the Zeal of Taxo," Paper selected for presentation to the Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity Section of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, November 19, 2001.

"Women in the Dead Sea Scrolls," One of six invited speakers for the conference "The Dead Sea Scrolls: Separating Fact from Fiction for the New Millenium"

sponsored by the Crisler Biblical Institute, Pebble Beach, CA, October 26-27, 2001. Presented both a paper and participated in the scholars' panel discussion.

"Queen Salome Alexandra and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Period of Enlightenment for Women in Ancient Judea During the First Century B.C." Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Oriental Research Regional Meeting, Kansas City, MO, April 1, 2001.

"Replacing Course Packets with Web-Based Materials," Spotlight on Educational Technology Workshop, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA. (Workshop on Teaching Sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Public Television, and the Iowa Educational Technology and Training Institute of the University of Northern Iowa). February, 23, 2001.

"Military and Leadership Aspects of the Roman Siege of Gamla (Israel, 67 A.D.)," University of Northern Iowa ROTC Panther Battalion, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA. December 5, 2000.

"Scrolls, Scandals, and Scholars: A History of the Controversy Over the Dead Sea Scrolls," University of Northern Iowa, Department of History Lecture and Phi Alpha Theta Lecture Series, November 29, 2000.

"Herod the Great as Antiochus Redivivus: Reading the Testament of Moses as an anti-Herodian Composition," Paper selected for presentation to the Pseudepigrapha Group of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 18-21, 2000.

"Opposing Herod the Great: The Jewish and Christian Use of Scripture to Undermine the Authority of Herodian Rule," American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature Regional Meeting, St. Paul, MN, April 28, 2000.

"Dancing at Qumran?: Women and Worship at the Dead Sea," Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Oriental Research Regional Meeting, Kansas City, MO, April 2, 2000.

"Anti-Hasmonean, Herodian, and Roman Polemics in the Psalms of Solomon: A Reevaluation in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls." Paper selected for presentation to the Hellenism and Second-Temple Judaism Section of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Mid-Atlantic Meeting, New Brunswick, NJ, March 1998.

"On the Use of Scripture in the Development of Militant Davidic Messianism at Qumran: New Light from Psalm of Solomon 17." Paper selected for presentation to the Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity Section of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 1997.

"Toward a Redating of the Psalms of Solomon: Implications for Understanding the Sitz im Leben of an Unknown Jewish Sect." Paper selected for presentation to the Pseudepigrapha Group of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, November 1996.

"Jewish-Christian Dialogue and Academic Study: Proposal for a University-Oriented Approach to Interreligious Dialogue." Paper selected for presentation to the Temple University Department of Religion Graduate Student Conference, October 1995.

Archaeological Excavations

Alexandria Troas, Turkey (2001-present). Assistant Director. Excavation Sponsors: Crisler Biblical Institute, Carmel, CA (USA); Canakkale University (Turkey); Cannakle Museum (Turkey).

Tel Haror, Israel, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Eliezer Oren, Director, 1988, 1990, 1992) Excavation Supervisor (Philistine and Middle Bronze Age periods)

Eilat, Israel, Israel Antiquities Authority (Uzi Avner, Director, 1992) Excavation Supervisor (Prehistoric religious sites).

Banias, Israel, Israel Antiquities Authority (Vassilios Tzaferis, Director, 1990) Excavation Supervisor (Byzantine, Roman, Islamic, Crusader periods).

Gamla, Israel, Golan Regional Council (Shmarya Gutman and Danny Sion, Directors; 1988, 1987) Excavation Supervisor (Roman, Bronze Age periods).

Hayonim Terrace, Israel, Center De Recherche François De Jérusalem (François Valla, Director, 1988) Excavation Supervisor (Prehistoric period).

Meroth, Israel, Israel Antiquities Authority (Zvi Ilan and Emmanuel Damati, Directors; 1987, 1988) Excavator (Byzantine, Roman periods).

Guild Hall East, London, England, Museum of London Department of Urban Archaeology (1987 Excavator (Roman, Medieval periods).

Scholarly Languages

Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Latin, Syriac, German, French
Professional Societies

Society of Biblical Literature

International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies

Society of Ancient Military Historians
References

Dr. Betty DeBerg, Chair, Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50614 (319) 273-6221.

Dr. Robert Wright, Professor of Hebrew Bible, Department of Religion, Temple University, 1114 W. Berks Street, Philadelphia PA 19122. (215) 204-1747.

Dr. Vasiliki Limberis, Associate Professor of New Testament, Department of Religion, Temple University, 1114 W. Berks Street, Philadelphia PA 19122. (215) 204-8756.

Dr. Katie Cannon, Professor of Ethics and Theology, Department of Religion, Temple University, 1114 W. Berks Street, Philadelphia PA 19122. (215) 204-1752.

Dr. John Collins, Professor of Hebrew Bible, Yale University, The Divinity School, 409 Prospect St. New Haven, CT 06437. (312) 702-8240.