

DAVID HAWKINS

John David Hawkins

11 September 1940 – 17 December 2023

elected Fellow of the British Academy 1993

by

A.R. GEORGE

Fellow of the Academy

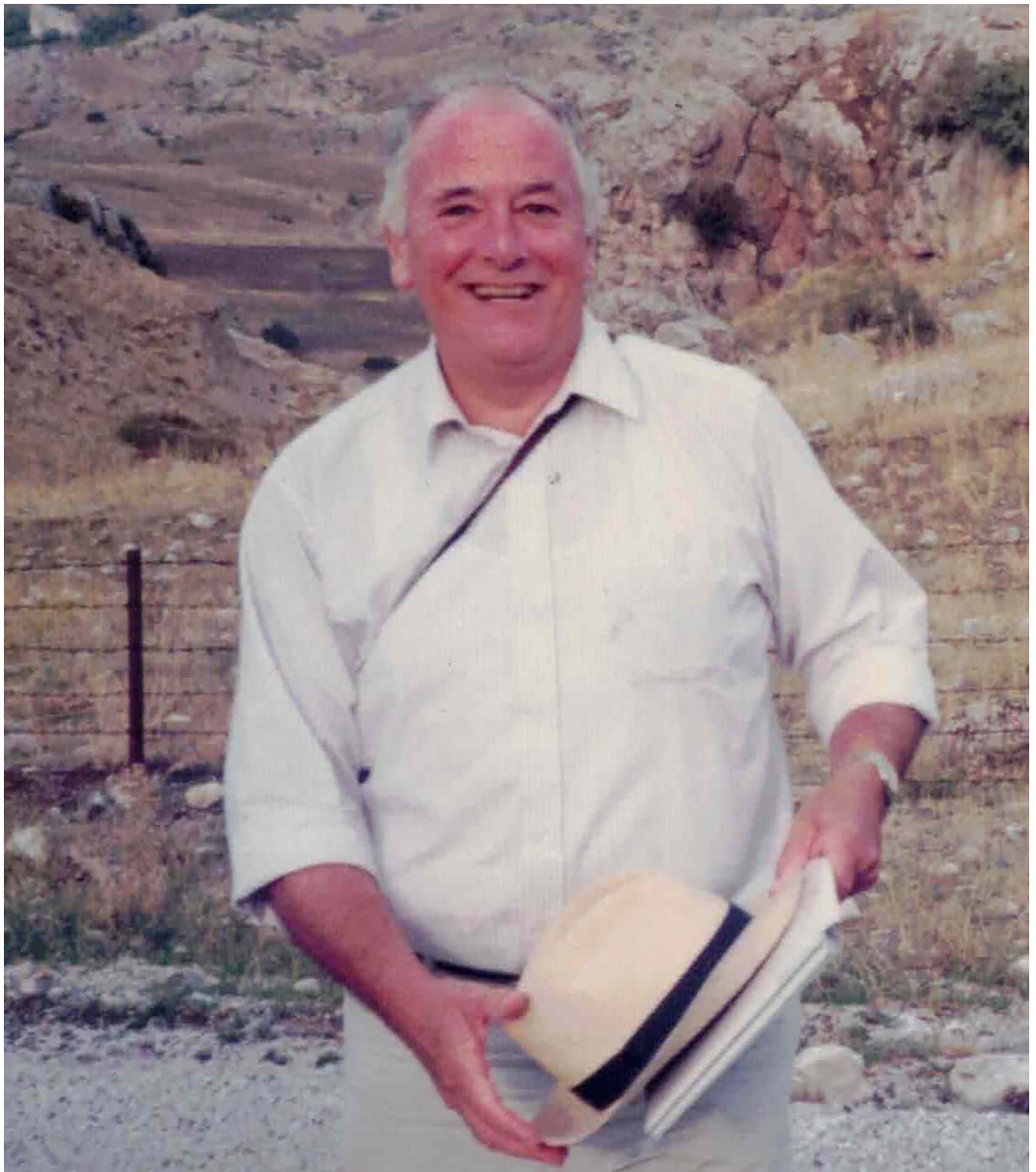
MARK WEEDEN

Summary. David Hawkins was for five decades an outstanding figure in international Hittitology. He was known especially for his pioneering scholarship in the decipherment and elucidation of Hieroglyphic Luwian and his advancement of knowledge of the political history and historical geography of the Neo-Hittite states in early Iron Age Turkey and Syria. His main output was the *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions*, a monumental three-volume work which established the definitive text of the inscriptions and placed the study of the Luwian language in hieroglyphic transmission on a firm footing for the first time.

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Jeff Hansen's

John David Hawkins, always known as David, died at home in Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, on 17 December 2023 at the age of eighty-three. He was Professor Emeritus of Ancient Anatolian Languages at SOAS University of London, where he taught for forty-one years. He was one of the world's foremost scholars of Hittite and Luwian, the oldest-known Indo-European languages. His principal achievement was to lead the international effort to decipher the Anatolian Hieroglyphic script, which had defied identification since the dawn of Hittitology. This script was written not on clay, in the cuneiform writing that the Hittites imported from Mesopotamia, but on stone. The language that it encoded turned out to be Luwian, a close relative of Hittite.

Hawkins proudly maintained that he was conceived on a sandspit in the Indian Ocean, while his father was serving in the British army at Quetta, then in India. His mother, with him yet unborn, made a perilous journey back to England in the early summer of 1940. They were among the last to cross France from the Mediterranean to the Channel before the country fell. They lived for a time in Devon, where Hawkins was born in his grandmother's house at Exmouth on 11 September 1940. Following a posting to Berlin at the end of the war, Hawkins' father left the army and took up farming near Okehampton. Hawkins grew up in the lee of Dartmoor, which engendered in him a strong preference for country over town and upland over lowland.

After preparatory school Hawkins attended Bradfield College in Berkshire, where he excelled at Greek and Latin. There he was inspired by a young classics master, David Raeburn, who organised regular play readings in Greek and later translated Sophocles and Ovid for Penguin Classics. In 1958 he went up to University College, Oxford, to read Greats. There he studied ancient history with George Cawkwell. At university he played chess with the physicist Stephen Hawking, then a fellow undergraduate at University College. He also developed his talent for caricature, taking aim at a wide variety of tutors and contemporaries. Academically he was attracted to archaeology and, after graduating from Oxford, enrolled on the postgraduate diploma in Western Asiatic Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology in London. His principal teacher there was the archaeologist Seton Lloyd (FBA 1955). He remembered Lloyd very fondly and recorded his long life in a biographical memoir for the British Academy (Hawkins 1997). Among his fellow students at the Institute were Lloyd's niece, Dominique Collon, and Georgina Herrmann (FBA 1999), who both became firm friends and also fellow London academics.

In those days the Institute of Archaeology's syllabus required students to study the relevant ancient languages. Hawkins' interest in the archaeology of Western Asia – Mesopotamia, Anatolia and the Levant – thus introduced him to biblical Hebrew and to Akkadian, the language of the Babylonians and Assyrians, written on clay in cuneiform script. Akkadian was then taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies, across Gordon Square from the Institute of Archaeology. At this time his ambition was to be a political cartoonist, at which he surely would have excelled. He had a distinctive and

aesthetically pleasing drawing style and a sharp instinct for political vanity, tuned by a love of the work of James Gillray (1757–1815), which he collected and studied all his life.

Fate had other plans. It was a time when universities enjoyed more generous grants from government than they do now, and were beginning to expand their intellectual and academic horizons dramatically in the immediate wake of the Robbins Report (1963). So much did Hawkins excel in Akkadian at SOAS, that on graduating with his diploma in 1964 he was offered a post there to teach Akkadian alongside D.J. Wiseman (FBA 1966) and H.W.F. Saggs, and to initiate research and develop teaching in Hittite.

Before he knew it, Hawkins was swept into an academic career at SOAS as Fellow in Hittite, and reluctantly placed his cartoonist ambitions on hold. He took two approaches to learning Hittite. The first approach was to study the language, which he did with Professor O.R. Gurney (FBA 1959) at Oxford. Oliver Gurney became Hawkins' mentor and firm friend; Hawkins wrote Gurney's biographical memoir for the British Academy (Hawkins 2003). The second approach was to study the historical geography and topography of the Hittite world, which meant travelling to the Near East, first of all to Turkey and later also to Syria and Iraq. This two-pronged approach remained with him all his life.

He first went to Turkey in 1965, when he was invited to put his archaeological training into practice at Kayalıdere, a fortified Urartian citadel west of Lake Van. The excavation team was led by Seton Lloyd, his teacher at the Institute of Archaeology, and Charles Burney of the University of Manchester. Hawkins' first task was to drive the expedition's Land Rover overland to Van. At the dig he was the epigraphist and archaeological assistant. Another junior member of the team was Dominique Collon, who was responsible for conservation. The season's work was written up by Burney in *Anatolian Studies* (Burney 1966). Forty-four years later Collon assembled Hawkins' wonderful colour caricatures of some of his fellow members of the Kayalıdere team and published them in one of the volumes that celebrated his seventieth birthday (Collon 2010).

Hawkins drove the Land Rover out to Turkey again the following summer in advance of a second season, but as it was about to get underway disaster struck. He wrote in his biographical memoir of Seton Lloyd, 'while the excavation team were waiting [in Van] for the permit, in August 1966 a major earthquake destroyed the local town Varto and severely damaged the village of Kayalıdere, including the school-house which had served as dig-house for the expedition' (Hawkins 1997). In the circumstances, with about 2,500 people killed, it cannot have been surprising that plans for further excavation at Kayalıdere were abandoned.

In 1967 Hawkins qualified for research leave at SOAS and used it to explore the Near East further. For that purpose he was provided with a Volkswagen Beetle and a ticket for the car and himself on the steamer from Genoa. Universities, in those days, were not

strapped for cash. Also on board was a senior archaeologist en route to Jordan. It was Diana Kirkbride, who was on her way to her long-running excavation at Beidha. The dignity of this lady, travelling steerage as her funds permitted, was perhaps no little offended when she found that her new acquaintance's university had provided him with a first-class ticket.

During this first trip to the Near East Hawkins spent some time at Tell al Rimah in northern Iraq, where David and Joan Oates were excavating several impressive monumental buildings. He was present when the beautiful stele of Adad-nirari III was uncovered in the Late Assyrian temple. The late Peter Dorrell's photograph of him watching the epigraphist Stephanie Dalley (then Page) working on the stele while it was still in the ground, is published above Hawkins' obituary in the journal *Iraq* (George & Weeden 2024). He was also present when cuneiform tablets came to light in the palace and the main temple. In conversation Hawkins often recalled the thrill of seeing clay tablets emerge from the ground. His main occupation at the site was helping Stephanie Page with the cleaning, decipherment and study of the Old Babylonian tablets. In his preliminary report, Oates acknowledged the contribution of 'Mr David Hawkins who gave very valuable help with the cleaning and study of the tablets and drew the seals and seal impressions' (Oates 1968: 115). Work at Rimah was interrupted by the outbreak of the Six-Day War on 5 June 1967. Two days earlier the diplomatic advice had come to close the dig and leave the country. Hawkins jumped in the Beetle and, with Miss Page and Christopher Dalley as passengers, drove across the Iranian border and headed home. During this journey the men shared a tent, leaving Page in the back seat of the Beetle, where she suffered what she later described as 'several crampy nights'. Nevertheless, the journey had a happier and lasting outcome: in due course Miss Page became Mrs Dalley.

The academic outcome of Hawkins and Dalley's collaboration at Rimah was the edition of the cuneiform finds in a volume entitled *The Old Babylonian Tablets from Tell al Rimah*, published by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq in 1976; a third contributor was Christopher Walker (Dalley, Hawkins & Walker 1976). Hawkins' share in the book was the edition of forty-eight Old Babylonian tablets discovered in fill near the temple stairway, presented as texts nos. 278–335. In his introductory analysis he showed that, though the tablets came from a disturbed context, they were nevertheless the remnants of a single archive. The archaeological context suggested a date some time before the death of the 19th-century Assyrian king, Šamši-Adad I. The contents of the archive – letters and administrative documents – showed that it probably belonged to an individual called Warad-šarrim. This concern for understanding cuneiform tablets by studying both archaeological context and textual content is now routine, but sixty years ago it can be said to have been at the cutting edge of cuneiform studies.

In addition to meticulous editions of the tablets from near the temple stairway, Hawkins also introduced and edited the inscriptions of eighteen seal impressions found

at the site. Two came from his own temple stairway archive and sixteen from locations in the palace. His talent for drawing is on display elsewhere in the book. He made beautifully elegant and convincing drawings of sixty-six cuneiform tablets, a major contribution to the permanent visual documentation of the 341 tablets from Tell al Rimah.

Hawkins again joined the Rimah excavations as epigraphist for the last season in 1971, when he shared a tent with John Curtis (FBA 2003), later Keeper of the Middle East department at the British Museum. With them on the excavation team were Julian Reade, also later of the British Museum, as Assistant Director, and his wife, S. Nan Shaw, as conservator. One night they were all participants in a high drama, as Curtis recalled:

[Reade and Shaw] ‘adopted’ an unruly local dog (in the way that some people do on excavations) and they called it ‘Bear’. This dog barked a lot in the night and this upset David terribly, so that one night he rushed out of our tent and ordered the guard to shoot the dog. I have a memory of Bear running around the camp followed by the guard with his gun, followed by David exhorting him to shoot the dog, followed by Julian trying to reason with David. In the event the dog was not hurt because the guard was a very bad shot, and the next morning there were no hard feelings and all was forgiven. Another time the Rimah team was invited to join the Russian expedition at Yarim Tepe to celebrate May Day. There were many toasts and much vodka was drunk, and on occasions like this David used to regale us with risqué songs.

Already in the 1960s Hawkins’ main research preoccupation was Hieroglyphic Luwian, a close relative of Hittite. While a research fellow at SOAS he had registered for a PhD on the topic of the site of Karkamiš on the river Euphrates. This never materialised, because it grew into something much bigger. The research plan soon developed into a project to study all the monuments bearing inscriptions in Hieroglyphic Luwian and produce a corpus of reliable and accurate editions of them. This meant making accurate drawings of the inscriptions. The inscriptions were carved on stone monuments and on rock faces, scattered widely across Turkey and northern Syria in museums and in the open countryside, and he began a programme of visiting each one at least once, to draw and photograph them. This programme was facilitated in the first decade by his invitation to participate in excavations at sites in Turkey in 1968 and 1970, and by the award of a Travelling Scholarship by the British Institute for Archaeology at Ankara in 1971.

Back at SOAS Hawkins enjoyed the society of colleagues and liked to cultivate friendships with those who were in tune with him. His method of determining their compatibility was an invitation to lunch. Nicholas Postgate (FBA 1993) was among those put to this test. He became Hawkins’ colleague at SOAS when he taught Akkadian there for four years from October 1967. He later recalled,

My recollections of David when introducing me to SOAS on my first day were first, advising me that the brush I was using on my hair in the gents was intended rather for clothes . . . [SOAS at that time was a collegiate place, with something of the style of a gentlemen's club] . . . and second, immediately after, watching him down four pints at lunch and suffering later in the day from my two pints.

In those days SOAS gave its staff free use of more than just a clothes brush. It employed a typing pool who were available to type up research papers and other documents for those who felt no need to use a typewriter. Hawkins was one of the typing pool's regular customers, for he never mastered any kind of keyboard, either in the 1960s or at any time in his life. His handwriting was beautifully calligraphic, each word an aesthetic masterpiece, and he never lost the pleasure of deploying this talent in setting down his thoughts in pen and ink. One day he handed in for typing a beautifully written manuscript which made repeated mention of the 'king of the Urartians'. He was hugely amused when the typescript came back, with frequent mention of the 'king of the Martians'. In telling this story, he always wondered whether the typist let on to her colleagues that at least one member of the School's academic staff was plainly off their rocker.

At SOAS Hawkins became, in time, an eminence grise in our department, but never served as its head. He avoided tiresome administrative responsibilities by maintaining strict silence in meetings. He knew well that, if you opened your mouth but once in such a forum, you would be immediately identified as a candidate for service in the School's bureaucratic machine. He had too much on his plate in teaching and research to find that prospect appealing. His preferred contribution to the department's management was instead the annual lunch. Under his benign leadership and unimpeachable example the lunch was often extended into the late afternoon and then, under its own impetus, into the late evening, usually changing venue at least twice in the process.

Already in the 1970s Hawkins taught Hittite, Luwian and Akkadian to undergraduates and masters students; he pretended to believe Sumerian was not a real language and left it to others. Among his doctoral students were Dorit Symington (PhD 1990) and Jacqueline Pringle (PhD 1993). In 1971 he took on the editorship of the journal *Iraq*, serving in that capacity for more than two decades, until 1994. He also filled the role of Honorary Secretary for the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, the journal's publisher, from 1976 to 1984, and was a long-term Member of its Council. He served on the council and executive committee of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, and was its President from 2008 to 2022, by which time it had become the British Institute at Ankara.

In the 1970s Hawkins' selfless commitment to the needs of these learned societies, and his continuing work on the tablets from Tell al Rimah, undoubtedly ate into the time available to him to spend on the Anatolian Hieroglyphs, but archaeological excavation

continued to exert a strong draw on him. When the British School of Archaeology in Iraq resumed work at Tell Brak in north-east Syria, he joined the Oates there as epigraphist and registrar for four seasons between 1976 and 1981. In terms of cuneiform inscriptions, even the modest success of the excavations at Tell al Rimah was not repeated. No inscribed object came to light, save for a solitary seal impression and one Late Uruk numerical tablet, which was documented by photograph (Oates 1982: pl. XVc) and did not need an epigraphist's skillset. Hawkins' successors at Tell Brak had more luck, for the three seasons of 1984–86 brought forth a small but interesting range of cuneiform tablets, published by I.L. Finkel and N.J.J. Illingworth in *Iraq* 47 and 50. He never lamented their good fortune.

At Tell Brak in 1976 and 1978 Hawkins again shared a tent with John Curtis. Curtis writes,

His role at Brak was of course as the epigraphist but we didn't find any tablets in those years. Our main task was locating and identifying Mallowan's trenches [from the 1937–38 seasons]. This was incredibly difficult, but we managed to do it in the end. In the absence of tablets David used the opportunity to become familiar with eastern Syria and we visited places like Tell Halaf and Tell Arban. He generally made himself very useful on the excavation in every respect but one and that was the processing of potsherds, which he thought to be a complete waste of time. He often used to say they should all be destroyed or reburied as far away as possible. Respite from tasks such as these was found in the local spirit which was known as Uncle Henry's whiskey and was something akin to rocket fuel!

Other commitments also served to divert Hawkins from the monumental work now established in his mind as the *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions*. Early in the 1970s he had been invited to contribute to the new edition of the long-antiquated third volume of the *Cambridge Ancient History*. His chapter was a study of 'The Neo-Hittite States in Syria and Anatolia'. The Syro-Hittite states of the early Iron Age were a historical phenomenon that, for lack of evidence, was completely ignored in earlier editions of *CAH*. The essential tool in revealing the history of these states was the Luwian language, which was rapidly becoming understood thanks to the linguistic and philological work of Hawkins and his collaborators. His pioneering chapter gave him the opportunity to embed the historical knowledge that he was beginning to obtain from the Luwian inscriptions into the broader history of the region. It was eventually published in 1982 (Hawkins 1982).

In 1973 Hawkins achieved, in collaboration with Anna Morpurgo Davies (Oxford) and Günter Neumann (Göttingen), the first of the breakthroughs that eventually saw the Anatolian Hieroglyphic script well understood. This involved the identification of the sound-values of four extremely common hieroglyphic signs, which had previously been identified as two vowels with or without length marks (*i*, *ī*, and *a*, *ā*), but which it turned

out were in fact one consonant and one vowel with marks indicating whether they were followed by an *a*-sound or not (*zi*, *za*, and *i*, *ia*). They were able to make this identification due to quasi-digraphic inscriptions from the site of Altuntepe that had been published a few years earlier, where measures in the Urartian language were written in the hieroglyphic script. The amount of knowledge needed for this of several different languages and scripts of the ancient Near East was impressive. This collaborative publication started a trend of working with others that Hawkins continued throughout his life, particularly with Anna Morpurgo Davies. The identification of these signs put beyond all doubt that the language behind the hieroglyphic inscriptions was not Hittite but Luwian, a closely related but different language, much like Spanish is to Italian.

1973 was also the year in which Hawkins met his lifelong partner, the science fiction writer Geoff Ryman. After changes in the law they were able to enter into a civil partnership in 2006.

Regular publications on aspects of lexicon in the hieroglyphic inscriptions and the interpretation of individual hieroglyphic signs continued throughout the 1970s. Particular mention should be given to a 1975 article identifying the negatives in Hieroglyphic Luwian, as it was now called. Identifying how to express negatives is an important step in the decipherment of any language or script, but this same article also managed to pave the way for understanding the terms for ‘running’ and disambiguating the sign for the relative pronoun from a group of similar looking signs (see later Hawkins & Morpurgo Davies 1993).

In the 1980s university budgets began to be squeezed and some at SOAS questioned the need for subjects like Hittite and Akkadian. One Director told a national newspaper that, while he could understand why his university should teach, say, economics, he found the ‘case for hieroglyphic strewn languages less compelling’. Hawkins observed with some contempt that there was no such thing as a ‘hieroglyphic strewn language’ but, if there had to be one, it was surely Luwian – and took no notice.

Unlike many academics, Hawkins was confident that he had another string to his bow. He was a talented cartoonist. His sister, Denzil Verey, explained:

At Oxford he contributed regularly to the University magazine *Isis* and in 1960 he was billed alongside Willie Rushton as a cartoonist for Richard Ingram’s magazine *Mesopotamia*. He would have gone to work with them on *Private Eye* if he hadn’t been grabbed by the academic profession. On several occasions he had cartoons published in the *Daily Mail*. When there were severe cuts at SOAS in the 1980s and the possibility his job might be cut, he was not too concerned, as he thought he could pick up his career as a political cartoonist.

Fortunately the axe did not fall and a change of career turned out to be unnecessary. The loss would have been not just a terrible blow to Hittite and Luwian studies, but also

one keenly felt on the London teaching scene. Hawkins was a dedicated teacher and often took on duties that were supplementary to his post at SOAS. When James Mellaart retired from the Institute of Archaeology in 1990, and the prospect loomed of his courses in Anatolian archaeology lapsing, Hawkins stepped in unasked to fill the gap and, until the appointment of Roger Matthews in 2001, put to good use his considerable collection of photographic slides of Anatolian sites and antiquities, and his unrivalled first-hand knowledge of the country's topography and historical geography. He had a trenchant preference for upland Anatolia – indeed, all things Anatolian (ancient and modern) – over its lowland neighbours, which became more marked as he grew older. On a mountain in Anatolia was where he liked to be. This and other strong views made him an entertaining and diverting companion, especially when travelling in Turkey.

Travelling in Turkey often occupied the month of September, before the start of the academic year. One of Hawkins' favourite travelling companions was the late Hatice Gonnet-Bağana, a Turkish archaeologist who lived in Paris with her husband, the artist Tony Gonnet, and shared Hawkins' professional interest in Hittite monuments. They visited many sites and museums together. Hawkins told stories of how, when site guards were over-zealous, or distrustful of an Englishman, Hatice deployed her unique charm to win them over and gain him access. Near one monument they met a group of teenagers armed with rifles, who suspected them of having found buried treasure, and pointed their guns at them with shaking hands. She was able to placate them by reminding them of their mothers' shopping habits, which served as a better explanation for the jewellery she was wearing than that they had just dug it up near the monument. Together they were wonderful company to any passenger invited along in the back of the car. One of their favourite travel jokes, repeated whenever appropriate, arose from a time when they perceived themselves momentarily lost. Both would simultaneously cry, 'Où sommes-nous exactement?' After a short pause came the answer in unison, 'Et pourquoi?' Then suppressed giggles. The combination of English practical curiosity and French existential anxiety was irresistible.

For a period of some thirteen years during the 1970s and 80s (precise dates unclear) Hawkins found that all his applications to study the hieroglyphic inscriptions were turned down by the Turkish authorities. This significantly hindered the progress of his work. Inquiries made at the time through Hatice Gonnet-Bağana revealed that someone had sent the ministry in Ankara a letter accusing him of being an activist for Kurdish independence. Anyone who knew Hawkins would be able to attest that nothing could be further from the truth, and the poisoned missive should likely be chalked up to professional jealousy on the part of a colleague. Who sent the letter remains unclear, as Hawkins himself did not like to talk about it, nor about how he managed to resolve the situation.

By the 1990s Hawkins was able at last to focus all his attention on the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions. The extraordinary merit of the work he was doing was soon

recognised at the British Academy by election as Fellow (1993), belatedly at SOAS by appointment to a personal chair in Ancient Anatolian Languages (1993), and internationally at the American Philosophical Society by election as a Foreign Member (1998).

In the late 1980s the excavation of the Phrygian Südburg at Boğazköy, the Hittite capital, had resulted in the reconstruction of a Hittite chamber with a hieroglyphic inscription, the blocks of which had been used as spolia to build the later fortification in the Iron Age. In 1995 Hawkins published *The Hieroglyphic Inscription of the Sacred Pool Complex at Hattusa (SÜDBURG)*, which contained his first attempt at a comprehensive edition and translation of not only this new inscription, but the other longer hieroglyphic inscriptions from the Late Bronze Age, YALBURT and EMİRGAZİ (Hawkins 1995a). He had previously been warned against publishing the YALBURT inscription and referred in conversation to a heated exchange he had in Boğazköy with Raci Temizer and Emilia Masson, in which he was urged to sign a document saying he would not publish it. A few years later YALBURT was published by Massimo Poetto anyway (Poetto 1993), so Hawkins felt he could include a treatment of it in the SÜDBURG volume. These initial publications discussing the Empire period inscriptions of the Late Bronze Age formed an important step towards his final treatments that were published posthumously in 2024.

A cache of more than three thousand clay bullae, inscribed in Hieroglyphic Luwian and found at Boğazköy in 1990, soon provided plentiful examples of the use of the script in a non-monumental context, and Hawkins was asked to participate in the publication. They were eventually published in 2005 in *Die Prinzen- und Beamtensiegel aus Nişantepe-Archiv in Hattusa* (Herbordt 2005), and in 2011 in *Die Siegel der Grosskönige und Grossköniginnen auf Tonbullen aus dem Nişantepe-Archiv in Hattusa* (Herbordt *et al.* 2011). Especially the first of these volumes is a treasure-trove of data on the reading and interpretation of the hieroglyphic signs as attested on the sealings, and served as the reference work on a large number of signs and their interpretation until the posthumous publication of Hawkins' signary and syllabary in 2024. The second volume contains key data for the discussion of the dynastic relations of the Hittite royal family. Throughout his life, Hawkins had a keen interest in what he regarded as his specialism, family history, and his knowledge of the family relations of large parts of the history of the British monarchy, which he could describe and discuss fluently from memory, was prodigious.

Around this time (1992–93) he also spent a number of weeks working on the NIŞANTAŞ inscription at Boğazköy, under invitation from the director of the excavation, Peter Neve. This is an extremely worn monument known since the dawn of Hittitology, but only the first line had been read with any success. Hawkins managed to get a surprising amount of sense out of the inscription, but recognised that he could only get so far with his eyes alone. He conceded that technological approaches might be able

to get further, as has now come to pass with the progress currently being made on the inscription by Massimiliano Marazzi, Natalia Bolatti Guzzo and Leopoldo Repola. The work Hawkins did on this inscription was not published until 2018, when Jürgen Seeher saw into print Peter Neve's excavations in the Upper City at Boğazköy after the latter's death (Hawkins 2018). This was where it had always been supposed to appear, but Neve was unable to bring the project to completion during his lifetime.

The late 1980s and '90s also saw Hawkins' discovery and integration of the king Kuzi-Teššub into the history of the post-Hittite world, after this king's name had appeared on seal-impressions published by Dietrich Sürenhagen. The historical importance of this figure lies in the recognition of fact that the Late Bronze Age did not suffer an almighty collapse around 1200 BC as had previously been thought, mainly on the basis of an overly naïve reading of Egyptian records, but that there was a continuity reaching through into the Iron Age (Hawkins 1988). Further work during the 1990s also had ramifications outside the field of Hittitology. His decipherment of the KARABEL inscription and identification of the king appearing in it with that of the so-called Tarkondemos-seal cleared up a mystery that had persisted since the very discovery of the Hittites in the 1870s. It also had relevance for the political geography of western Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age, with consequences for the location of the site of Wilusa, commonly associated with Homeric Ilion (Hawkins 1998).

The end of the 1990s brought the triumphant publication of the first two parts of the *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions*: part 1 (*Inscriptions of the Iron Age*, in three volumes) published in 2000 and written solely by him, and part 2 (*Karatepe-Arslantaş*) written by Halet Çambel with Hawkins' assistance and under his editorship, published in 1999. He was much aided in bringing the volumes to publication by Sanna Aro. They amply demonstrated to all that Hawkins had established the writing system, grammar and vocabulary of Hieroglyphic Luwian on a secure basis. But the publication of all these inscriptions in one place led over the next few years to a new wave of decipherments and breakthroughs, some led by Hawkins or based on suggestions made by him, others made by younger colleagues. The publication of the *Corpus* was so momentous for Luwian studies and the number of advances made by using it as a basis was so large, that when it came to publishing the third part of his *Corpus* he decided to include in it a complete reworking of all the transliterations and translations from the original work published in 2000.

While most of Hawkins' energies were directed towards the Luwian inscriptions, his work on the political history and historical geography of Syria and Anatolia continued to be a productive avenue of research. At conferences in Istanbul in 1987 and again in Rome in 1993, he updated colleagues in papers entitled 'Hittites and Assyrians at Melid (Malatya)' and 'The political geography of north Syria and south-east Anatolia in the Neo-Assyrian period'. Both were published in the conference proceedings, respectively

XXXIV. *Uluslararası Assirioloji Kongresi* (Hawkins 1987) and *Neo-Assyrian Geography* (Hawkins 1995b).

The history of the city of Karkamiš, his point of entry into research in Hittite, continued to absorb his especial attention. In the 1970s he had established himself as the international authority on this important place by collecting what was known about it – textual attestations, history, archaeology, topography, buildings, monuments and inscriptions – in a magisterial contribution to the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* V (Hawkins 1976–80). In 1981 he gave a conference paper in Ankara on ‘Rulers of Karkamiš: the house of Astiruwas’, published five years later in *Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Hawkins 1986a). A few years later he advanced understanding of another local dynasty in a paper entitled ‘Kuzi-Tešub and the “Great Kings” of Karkamiš’, published in *Anatolian Studies* (Hawkins 1988, referred to above).

Hawkins was exceptionally pleased when excavations at Karkamiš, begun by Sir Leonard Woolley, reopened in 2011, after an interval of a century. The new excavators, Nicolò Marchetti and Hasan Peker, fed him new inscriptions, which were published by Peker, and hosted him at the dig. He was present at the time of the discovery of the Sargon cylinder in an Iron Age well at the site, and was graciously permitted by Gianni Marchesi, head of the epigraphic team, to read it before publication. It was very moving when Marchetti organised some workers to pick him up by surprise and carry him down into the excavation trench. He was utterly delighted. However, the new hieroglyphic inscriptions from Karkamiš were not included in the third part of his *Corpus*, because there were so many and Peker had published them so well (e.g. Peker 2016).

Another research interest was the history of writing, motivated by the presence in ancient Anatolia of both Hittite cuneiform and Luwian hieroglyphs. This interest had already led to an invitation to give one of the Wolfson College Lectures in 1978, soon published as ‘The origin and dissemination of writing in western Asia’, in *The Origins of Civilization* (Hawkins 1979). A second paper on this topic concentrated on his specialisms of Hittite and Luwian writing and was published in the journal *World Archaeology* as ‘Writing in Anatolia: imported and indigenous systems’ (Hawkins 1986b).

Cuneiform inscriptions remained important to his research, especially where they were contemporaneous with the Luwian monuments and touched upon the history of north Syria after the collapse of the Hittite empire. Already in 1969 he published the fragments of a broken Assyrian stone stele discovered seventy years earlier by Lehmann-Haupt in the village of Babil on what is now the Turkish-Syrian border. He was able to study it first hand at Adana Museum in Turkey in the late 1960s. His meticulous decipherment of its ‘worn and broken text’ in *Anatolian Studies* (Hawkins 1969) has not been improved and formed the basis for Kirk Grayson’s subsequent edition for the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia project (Grayson 1991: A.0.101.20).

Thirty-five years later, in the *Festschrift* for Grayson, Hawkins gave the first edition of a broken stele inscribed with a monumental text of Sargon II of Assyria, probably set up in Hama in 708 BC (Hawkins 2004). It had first come to his notice in the hands of an antiquities' dealer in Beirut in 1974, while he was travelling in Syria and Lebanon. Later it became part of the Borowski Collection, now in the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, and he was able to study it and make a drawing of the inscription while Borowski's choicest pieces were exhibited in Ottawa in 1983. His masterly decipherment of the stele's text and discussion of its historical and geographical context could not be improved in the recent volume of the Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (Frame 2020: no. 105).

David Hawkins retired from SOAS in 2005. In London he adapted himself to a new role as mentor of his successors in post, first Daniel Schwemer and then Mark Weeden. It was a measure of the esteem and warmth of feeling for him among colleagues and friends, young and old, that five years later, on a fine afternoon in September 2010, he was surprised with not one, but two volumes of papers celebrating his seventieth birthday. The presentations were organised by his lifelong partner, the science fiction writer Geoff Ryman, and took place in the garden of their house at Minster Lovell. This garden was for four decades a source of joy for its owners, as the backdrop for very many memorable festivities, at which Hawkins' ability to recite from memory hundreds of lines of scurrilous verse astonished a fascinated audience. It was also where he engaged in a relentless struggle against Gaia, pulling nettles (bare-handed) and lamenting the success of landscaping moles, voracious rabbits and other pests who competed with him for fresh asparagus and broad beans.

On the afternoon of the party Ryman managed to maintain to the last moment the pretence that only a select few were coming to celebrate the septuagintennial. But then Hawkins was truly staggered to see, emerging from the bushes, borders and vegetable patch, a mighty throng of friends and colleagues, old and new, who were well-wishers on the day and contributors to the twin volumes. One *Festschrift* was on Anatolian themes, and reflected Hawkins' status as the doyen of Luwian studies and one of the foremost Hittitologists of his generation. It was edited by Itamar Singer and published in Tel Aviv as *Ipamati kistamati pari tumatimis* [Famed to the East and West]: *Luwian and Hittite Studies Presented to J. David Hawkins on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday* (Singer 2010). The second set of papers was published in Vol. 72 of the journal *Iraq* under the editorship of Dominique Collon and Andrew George, in recognition of Hawkins' important contributions to the study of ancient Mesopotamia and long years of service to the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and its journal.

Further inscriptions continued to emerge in Turkey and Syria. For the rest of his life, Hawkins gave most of his time to the projected third part of his *Corpus*, subtitled *Inscriptions of the Hittite Empire and New Inscriptions of the Iron Age*. Aided by grants

from the Leverhulme Trust and the Thriplow Charitable Trust, his vast handwritten manuscript was digitised and prepared for publication by Junko Taniguchi. Despite failing health and restricted mobility he saw the book through successive proofs. It was printed in two volumes a few months after his death (Hawkins 2024).

Together the three parts of the *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions* provide a meticulous record of almost all known Luwian inscriptions. They form one of those rare achievements: an enduring monument of scholarship which sets a whole academic field on firm footings for the first time.

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