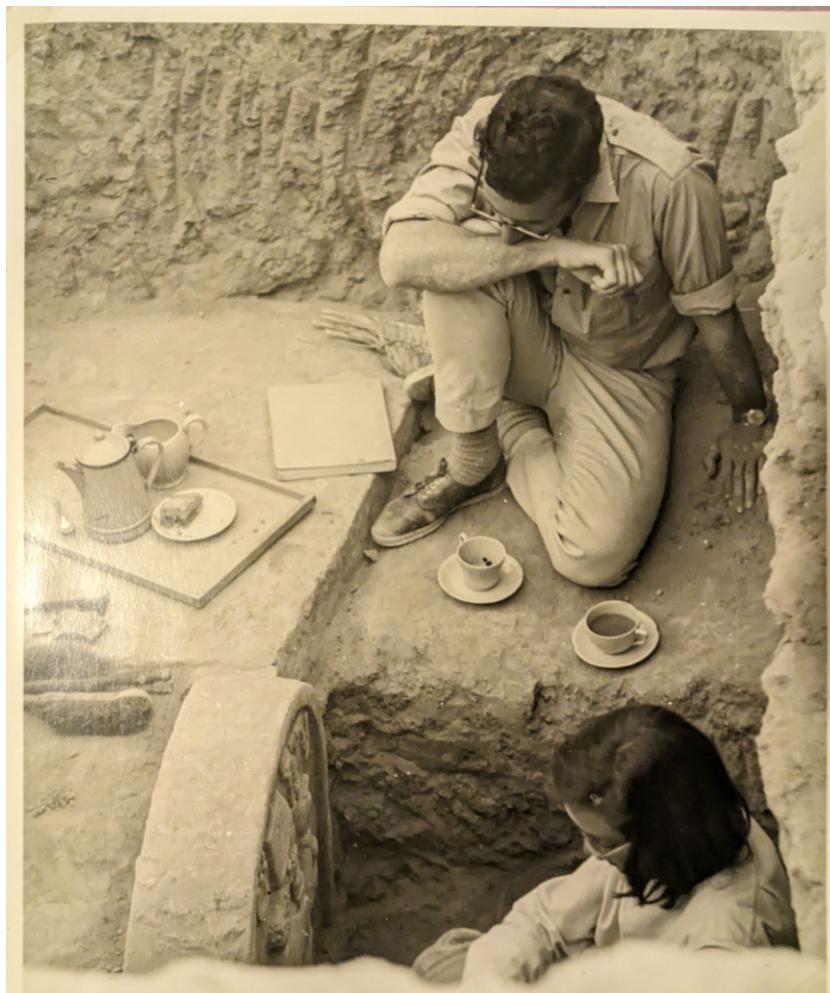


OBITUARY

PROFESSOR J. D. HAWKINS, MA, FBA (1940–2023)



Photograph by Peter Dorrell, courtesy Stephanie Dalley

John David Hawkins, always known as David, died at home in Minster Lovell on 17 December 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. 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 Hieroglyphic Luwian, a language related to Hittite but written, not on clay in the cuneiform script that the Hittites imported from Mesopotamia, but on stone in seemingly impenetrable hieroglyphs.

After preparatory school David attended Bradfield College in Berkshire and in 1958 went up to University College, Oxford, to read Greats. Academically he was attracted to archaeology and after graduating enrolled on the postgraduate diploma at the Institute of Archaeology in London. In those days the Institute of Archaeology's syllabus required students to study ancient languages. David's 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. So much did David excel in Akkadian at SOAS, that in 1964 he was offered a post there to initiate research and, in due course, teaching in Hittite.

David took two approaches to learning Hittite: one, to study the language, which he did with Professor O. R. Gurney at Oxford; and two, 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. In 1965 he put his archaeological training into practice at Kayalıdere, an Urartian citadel west of Lake Van, excavated by Seton Lloyd and Charles Burney. David's wonderful colour caricatures of some of the members of the expedition team were published in the volume of this journal that celebrated his seventieth birthday (*IRAQ* 72: pls. 1–9).

Two years after Kayalıdere he spent some time at Tell al Rimah in northern Iraq, where David and Joan Oates were excavating several impressive monumental buildings. David was present when the stele of Adad-nirari III was uncovered in the Late Assyrian temple, as illustrated above, and when cuneiform tablets came to light in the palace and the main temple. 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” (*IRAQ* 30: 115). The outcome of David's time at Rimah was the edition of forty-eight Old Babylonian tablets discovered in fill near the temple stairway, presented as nos. 278–335 and pls. 86–109 in *The Old Babylonian Tablets from Tell al Rimah*, a collaborative volume published by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq in 1976; the other contributors were Stephanie Dalley and Christopher Walker.

Already in the 1960s David's main research preoccupation was hieroglyphic Luwian, a close relative of Hittite. His plan was to study all the monuments bearing inscriptions in hieroglyphic Luwian and produce a corpus of reliable and accurate editions of them. The inscriptions were scattered across Turkey and northern Syria in museums and outside, on stone monuments and rock faces, and he began a programme of visiting each one at least once, to draw and photograph them. This programme was facilitated 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.

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 David and Joan Oates there as epigraphist and registrar for four seasons between 1976 and 1981. Other commitments also diverted him from his Luwian corpus. Early in the 1970s he had been invited to contribute to the third edition of the long-antiquated third volume of the *Cambridge Ancient History*. His chapter, on “The Neo-Hittite States in Syria and Anatolia”, gave him the opportunity to embed the historical knowledge that he had already obtained from the Luwian inscriptions into the broader history of the region. It was published in 1982. In London he took on the editorship of this journal, serving in that capacity for more than two decades, from 1971 to 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 Council. He was also the president of the British Institute at Ankara from 2008 to 2022.

Despite these many commitments, David pushed on with the Luwian corpus. In 1973 he achieved, in collaboration with Anna Morpurgo Davies (Oxford) and Günter Neumann (Göttingen), the first of the breakthroughs that eventually saw Luwian well understood. There followed his identification of the negatives in Hieroglyphic Luwian in 1976, which contributed a significant advance in the understanding of script and language.

In London, David taught Hittite, Luwian and Akkadian to undergraduates and masters students. When James Mellaart retired from the Institute of Archaeology in 1990, and the prospect loomed of his courses in Anatolian archaeology lapsing, David 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.

By the 1990s David was able at last to focus all his attention on the Luwian inscriptions. The extraordinary merit of the work he was doing was soon recognized at the British Academy by election as Fellow (1993), at SOAS by appointment to a personal chair in Ancient Anatolian Languages (1994), and at the American Philosophical Society by election as a Foreign Member (1998). In the same year he was able to present a decipherment of the so-called Tarkondemos seal and the related KARABEL inscriptions, which had been instrumental in the identification of the Hittites in the nineteenth century, and had resisted attempts to read them for over a hundred years. The consequences of this decipherment impacted on neighbouring disciplines, bringing crucial evidence for the location of Wiluša, commonly associated with Homeric Troy. The end of the decade saw the triumphant publication of the first two parts of the *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions*: part 1 (*Inscriptions from the Iron Age*, in three volumes) written solely by him, and part 2 (*Karatepe-Arslantaş*) written by Halet Çambel with David's assistance and under his editorship.

The volumes amply demonstrated to all that David had finally established the writing system, grammar and vocabulary of Luwian on a secure basis. A cache of some three thousand clay bullae, inscribed in hieroglyphic Luwian and found at Boğazköy, the Hittite capital, in 1990-1991, soon provided plentiful examples of the use of the script in a non-monumental context. David published the seals of the princes and officials in 2005 and those of the kings and queens in 2011 in collaboration with Suzanne Herbordt and Daliah Bawanypeck.

Meanwhile further inscriptions continued to emerge in Turkey and Syria, which David published with many collaborators. Up to his retirement from the university in 2005, and afterwards for another eighteen years, David gave most of his time to the projected third part of his *Corpus: Inscriptions of the Hittite Empire and New Inscriptions of the Iron Age*. Despite failing health he saw the book through successive proofs. It was printed in two volumes a few weeks after his death. Together the three parts of the *Corpus* provide a meticulous record of almost all known Luwian inscriptions, forming one of those rare achievements: an enduring monument of scholarship which sets a whole academic field on firm footings for the first time.

ANDREW GEORGE
Buckhurst Hill

and

MARK WEEDEN
University College London