CHAPTER SIX

THE IRON AGE AT DINKHA TEPE, IRAN

To the memory of Rodney S. Young, 1907–1974

In 1966, The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, working together as the Hasanlu Project, began excavations at Dinkha Tepe, a site in the Ushnu valley, near Lake Rezaiyeh (Urmia), in northwestern Iran. Background information about the site and the reasons for excavating there, as well as a preliminary report on the 1966 season, were presented in 1968 (Muscarella 1968, pp. 187–196). The reader is referred to that report to avoid repetition of the information here.¹ In 1968 a second campaign was conducted at Dinkha Tepe. The field work was mainly concerned with Bronze Age remains, but part of an Iron II structure was excavated and is discussed below.

It will be recalled from the earlier report that an Iron Age cemetery, containing burials of both the Iron I and II periods, was discovered, that the cemetery overlay Bronze Age strata, and that there were no architectural or burial remains of the Iron III period. A terminology for the levels was established in which the Iron II period was called Dinkha II (counting from the top down; Dinkha I was the Islamic period), the Iron I period, Dinkha III, and the Bronze Age strata, Dinkha IV.


¹ The staff for the 1966 campaign is listed in Muscarella 1968, p. 187. In 1968 the staff consisted of the writer and Robert H. Dyson, Jr., as Co-Directors, Christopher Hamlin, Carol Hamlin, Matthew Stolper, Elizabeth Stone, William Sumner, and Harvey Weiss as site supervisors, and Marie Sherman Parsons as Registrar. Most of the drawings were made by Mary Voigt and Maude de Schauensee (1966). John Alden and Elizabeth Hopkins inked the drawings; their expenses were paid for by a generous grant from the Schimmel Foundation. I wish to thank all the individuals mentioned as well as the Schimmel Foundation for their cooperation in the production of this report. I also wish to thank Robert H. Dyson, Jr., Louis D. Levine, and T. Cuyler Young, Jr., for discussions and opinions exchanged over the years about Iron Age problems, and for reading this report in manuscript. Of course, I alone assume responsibility for the format and the conclusions expressed, and for not always following their advice.
This paper first reports on the Dinkha III cemetery, its burials and their contents, and its relations with contemporary sites. Following this is a report and discussion on the Dinkha II architecture and burials. No attempt is made here to write a history of the Iron Age or a definitive summary of that period. Not enough information is available at present and several good summaries already exist (Dyson 1964a, pp. 34–40; 1965, pp. 195–213; 1968a, pp. 29–32; Young 1965, pp. 55–59, 62–68, 70–83; 1967, pp. 22–29; Bur-ney, Lang 1972, pp. 113–126). Rather, the emphasis here is on Dinkha Tepe itself.

The mound was first divided into large grid-squares one hundred meters to a side, and these were then subdivided when necessary into ten-meter excavation squares. In addition to these squares, shorter test trenches and wells were opened at various parts of the mound (Figure I; Stein 1940, p. 369, fig. 23 for a contour plan).