



DENKA TEPE

DENKA (DINKHA) TEPE, a Bronze and Iron Age site situated in the Ošnū valley of Azarbaijan (q.v.), southwest of Lake Urmia, and 15 miles west of the major Iron Age site of Hasanlu (Ḥasanlū) in the Soldūz valley. The mound is 20 m high and 400 m in diameter, but much of the northern side has been washed away by the Gadār river. In 1315 Š./1936 Sir Mark Aurel Stein (1940, pp. 367-76) excavated on the northern slopes for six days, recording only Bronze Age material. A team from The University of Pennsylvania and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, excavated there in 1345 Š./1966 and 1347 Š./1968 as part of regional research connected with the Hasanlu project. These excavations revealed Islamic remains (Dinkha I), below which a cemetery (missed by Stein) was found on the north side; the burials (Dinkha II and III) contained cultural material paralleling that of Hasanlu periods IV and V respectively (Muscarella, 1968; idem, 1974; idem, 1988, pp. 15-19, 80). This material belongs to what is known as the Late Western Gray Ware (Iron II) and Early Western Gray Ware (Iron I) periods (see CERAMICS vi) in northwestern Persia, dating from the 14th century to ca. 800 B.C.E. All the evidence suggests that both periods represent the same culture, which continued to occupy the area for centuries. The Iron Age remains from Dinkha have been fully published (Muscarella, 1974).

Directly below the Iron Age cemetery and at the center of the mound Bronze Age (q.v.) architecture and burials (Dinkha IV) parallel to those of the Bronze Age culture of Hasanlu VI were recovered; this period began about the 18th century B.C.E. and terminated in the 16th or 15th century. Except for the



pottery most of the finds from this period have not been published (Muscarella, 1968; Kramer, 1974). At the center of the mound the Bronze Age remains consisted of a massive fortification wall over which a later settlement had been built. The Bronze Age architectural remains below the Iron Age cemetery included two stone tombs containing multiple burials. The pottery associated with the architecture and tombs includes painted and buff ware, including Khabur (Kābūr) wares similar to those encountered in Hasanlu VI and at many sites in Anatolia, northern Syria, and northern Mesopotamia. These finds indicate that in the Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian periods Hasanlu and Dinkha together constituted the easternmost extension of a large cultural zone that was more prominently represented in the west. The presence at Dinkha but not at Hasanlu of polychrome pottery related to that from northern Persia (Haftavan [Haftavān] Tepe), Anatolia, and the Caucasus remains to be investigated (Edwards, 1986). It seems to postdate the Khabur-ware level at Dinkha and may indicate a new cultural presence there. Its occurrence also suggests that the social orientation of the occupants of the site had shifted from the west to the north.

The succeeding Iron Age at Dinkha and Hasanlu reflects a major cultural break with the Bronze Age, attested by completely new pottery forms, mainly monochrome gray and gray-orange wares, which continued in use throughout the Iron I and II periods; extramural burials in a separate cemetery area; and different architectural plans. These features most probably indicate the entry of a new population, whose ethnic background and language remain unknown, though various suggestions have been put forward: Iranian, Hurrian, Mannean. One hundred five Iron Age burials were excavated, thirty-three from period III, the rest from later period II. Dinkha III burials consisted of ten brick-lined tombs and twenty-three inhumations; all contained the characteristic monochrome wares. Four burials included weapons, thirty jewelry; only one yielded a cylinder seal, of Mitannian style, and only one burial included gold, in the form of earrings. There appears to have been no special relation between the type of tomb and the quantity or type of grave goods. No iron artifacts were found, and thus technologically Dinkha III belonged to the late Bronze Age. The Dinkha II burials consisted of nineteen infant burials in urns, twelve inhumations, thirty-one brick-lined tombs, and six stone-built tombs. The burials were richer in pottery and other goods than those of the preceding period, and both bronze and iron artifacts were common: 171 pieces of bronze and eighty-one pieces of iron jewelry, as well as sixteen iron and three bronze weapons. As in Dinkha III, there was no



correlation between burial goods and type of tomb. One burial contained horse bits, and the fragmentary skeleton of a horse was found just outside. Very little Dinkha II and no Dinkha III architecture was encountered in the limited excavations. Although Hasanlu remains the northern type site for Iron Age architecture and a vast array of different artifacts, the pottery from Dinkha is the largest corpus of Iron Age wares published to date.

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