

## ALTA MIRA

LATITUDE 17° 57.1' N.

LONGITUDE 89° 32.1' W.

The Second Campeche Expedition left the abandoned chicle camp of Placeres April 19, 1933, followed a trail southward, camped at Delicia for the night, and arrived at the deserted chicle camp of Alta Mira April 20. There are mounds scattered on either side of the trail for a distance of 4 km. out from Alta Mira; one, supporting the back wall of a building is described at the end of this chapter. The native workmen did not know of any definite large group of ruins but had seen those near the trail and knew of others in the general area. The following day three parties set out to examine the territory on both sides of the trail. Many mounds were encountered; Denison and O'Neill, found the main part of the city with its 16 stelae.

The ruins are most easily reached from the camp of Alta Mira by proceeding along the Alta Mira-Central Buenfil trail for about an hour, then to the left through the bush for 15 or 20 minutes. The site was named after the camp of Alta Mira, as it was thought that this as-

sociation would more readily identify it and facilitate its relocation. Camp was maintained at the chicle station April 20-24, as here is a large aguada. None was found near the ruins so that it was necessary to haul water for drinking purposes. There is a good stand of ramon throughout the area and especially in the vicinity of the ruins; this, with the pasture at Alta Mira, furnished sufficient food for the mules. The mounds surveyed cover an area roughly 280 m. north and south by 360 m. east and west (fig. 54). The general plan includes a North and a West Quadrangle, an East and a South Plaza. The paucity of standing buildings and the dearth of epigraphic material makes it very difficult to determine the relation of this city to others visited. Owing to the poor quality of the limestone and the great extent of weathering, only eight of the sixteen stelae at the site show any sign of carving and that unfortunately is so fragmentary that no dates are recorded.

## NORTH QUADRANGLE

STRUCTURE XII, the North Quadrangle, furnishes most of the architectural data, although even here it is scanty. Transversely dividing the interior of the quadrangle is an east-west mound rising about 5 m. A north-south mound, somewhat lower, further divides the south section into two equal parts. Occasional wall fragments, noted on the outlining and transverse mounds, suggest the former existence of two parallel series of chambers.

At the northeast corner of the quadrangle is an exposed end of a room; the north and west walls are 1.90 m. and 1.60 m. thick respectively. A section of the exterior north wall, rising 3 m. and faced with veneer-like stones averaging 42 by 49 cm. and 18 cm. deep, carries an apron molding overhanging 9 cm. The north vault soffit rises at an angle of 60° from a 5-cm. offset. There are two beam holes 33 cm. above the spring line and 50 cm. and 1.70 m., respectively, from the end of the room.

The south range of the quadrangle can be described in more detail, for here was found the greatest amount of standing masonry in the city. As well as can be de-

termined the building was 35 m. long and 8 or 8.50 m. wide, rested on a platform 4 m. high, and in plan contained three parallel ranges of longitudinal chambers.

Sections of the inner soffits of the vaults of the outer series of chambers and of the vault of the middle chamber were found intact (fig. 55). The walls on either side of the middle chamber are 1.30 m. thick; the chamber is 1.05 m. wide at the floor level and 95 cm. wide at the spring line, 3.40 m. above the floor. There is an offset of 3-4 cm. at the spring line, whence the vault rises 75 cm. at an angle of 70°. Above this point it rises vertically 60 cm.; the vertical faces are 35 cm. apart (pl. 14a). The distance from the soffit of the capstones to the roof of the building is 50 cm.

Beam holes at the spring line are spaced at approximately 2.25-m. intervals. One beam, now much weathered but still in position, has a diameter of 15 cm. and extends 18 cm. into the wall. The masonry of the walls is of worked and unworked blocks and slabs laid with no regularity so that the surface is uneven and wavering;

it had been covered with rough, untinted plaster. The first course of the vault is of blocks set horizontally and beveled on the exposed face. The subsequent courses are of slabs, not beveled but set at an angle (fig. 55). The stones facing the vertical section of the vault are squared blocks (pl. 14*a*).

Above the central chamber are the remains of a roof

comb formed of two parallel walls inclined toward each other (fig. 55). They rise 2.30 m. from a masonry base. Portions of a masonry tie-wall, 50 cm. in vertical thickness, extend between the walls, 40 cm. above the basal construction. The horizontal extent of the tie-wall could not be determined as the roof comb is now in a poor state of preservation.

#### WEST QUADRANGLE

The basal platform of this quadrangle rises 3 m. above the terrace to the east.

STRUCTURE I, a large irregular mound on the north side of the quadrangle, has Stela 1 at its south base.

STRUCTURE II. On the east side of Structure II, the debris indicates a flight of stairs approximately 42 m.

wide ascending from the South Plaza. Stelae 2, 3, and 4 are at its base.

STRUCTURE III, two parallel mounds each about 10 m. long, is on the south side of the quadrangle. An examination of these mounds did not indicate a ball court, although the parallel walls suggest one.

#### SOUTH PLAZA

The west side of the South Plaza is defined by Structure II; the north by Structures VIII, IX, and X; the east by Structures V and VI; and the south by Structure IV.

STRUCTURE X, a small pyramid 20 m. square at the base and rising 8 m. above the plaza, supports the remains of a building (fig. 56). The outer measurements were, perhaps, not over 5 by 10 m., and in plan the building presents a single chamber with a small niche in the back wall (see Notes on Outlying Mounds at end of chapter). The exterior facing of the back wall has fallen. Stela 16 is at the south base of the pyramid.

STRUCTURE IX has a stairway on the south side, approximately 20 m. wide. The treads and risers measure 50 cm. and 23 cm. respectively. The building surmounting the platform was most likely of two parallel series of three longitudinal rooms. Only a small section of wall supporting a bit of vault is exposed above the debris. There is no offset at the spring line nor at the end of the room; a section of vault, three courses high

(65 cm.), rises at an angle of 53°. The stones, roughly beveled on the face, measure 20 by 35 cm.

STRUCTURE VIII, a small pyramid lying east of Structure IX, has Stela 15 at its north base. No wall surfaces were noted.

STRUCTURE V is closely related to Structure VI as the former rests on a low terrace in front of the latter. Stelae 6-10 are at the west base of the terrace. Stela 11 is at the west base of Structure V. This mound, 18 by 20 m., has a height of 4 m.

STRUCTURE VI, rising 22 m., is the highest pyramid in the city. No faced surfaces were noted. The debris indicates a stairway on the west, although the plan (fig. 54) suggests one on each of the four sides. A building no doubt surmounted the pyramid but no remains of it are visible. Stela 12 is at the north base of the structure.

STRUCTURE IV, a low mound, is on the south side of the plaza, toward the east. It probably supported a building of two parallel series of longitudinal rooms.

#### EAST PLAZA

This plaza is defined by Structure XI on the north, Structure VII on the east, and Structures VIII and IX on the south. A declivity at the west end of the plaza leads to the court in front (south) of Structure XIII.

STRUCTURE VII has some unusual features. The platform, 4-5 m. high, is roughly 32 m. square. There is a stairway on the west, 10 m. wide, built into the substructure. On either side of the stairway are elevated areas, perhaps chambers, which now rise a meter above the top of the platform and extend a distance of 4 m. east of the stairhead. On top of the platform and ex-

tending across the east side is a mound which may well represent a single series of longitudinal rooms. This mound, with those at either side of the stairway, suggests a prototype of Structure F at Nakum (Tozzer, 1913, p. 171). Stela 13 is at the west side of the long mound and Altar 9 is at the head of the stairway. A low wall has been built across the south side of the top of the platform, projecting westward from the long mound. Directly north of this wall is a sunken area 4 m. in diameter.

## NOTES ON OUTLYING MOUNDS

The structure noted on the west side of the Delicia-Alta Mira trail apparently contained a single chamber, of which now only the back wall is standing. The exterior facing of this wall is of large, veneer-like stones averaging 30 by 40 cm. by 15 cm. deep. The interior is of roughly worked blocks. A recess in the back wall of the chamber is 1.32 m. wide and 60 cm. deep (cf. Alta Mira, Structure X; Uxul, Structure II). The base is covered with debris but its walls extend upward to the

spring of the vault (fig. 57). At the top and in the center of the recess is a rectangular opening 20 cm. high, 15 cm. wide, and 60 cm. deep. The small section of the north vault soffit still in position is stepped and of slabs with many small chips.

On the other side of the trail, farther from Alta Mira than the structure just described, are many mounds, platforms, and terraces. Areas to the west and north of camp were examined revealing small artificial mounds.