

HORMIGUERO

LATITUDE 18° 24.2' N.

LONGITUDE 89° 39.1' W.

The site was reported to the Second Campeche Expedition by the workmen's cook, who several years before, had camped at the aguada of Hormiguero. The chicleros told her fantastic tales of some ruins which were very near the water hole: that some of the houses were standing; that the doors closed, each with a single stone slab; and that strange noises were heard within the buildings. The city was visited by the expedition April 9-14, 1933. It may be reached from Rio Desempeño via the San Lorenzo trail, a distance of about 25 km. The expedition, however, came to the ruins from Rio Bec. Although it was only a five hours' trip, it was necessary to stop over for a day at the aguada of Pasadita, three hours' travel from Rio Bec, while the workmen were sent ahead to open the overgrown trails or make new ones. Leaving Pasadita on the trail to the aguada of Corozal and proceeding one hour and 20 minutes, we took a side trail to the right (north). It is only 50 minutes from this turnoff to the aguada of Hormiguero.

The site bears the same name as the water hole which lies 513 m. S. 63° 15' W. The name Hormiguero, meaning "anthill" in Spanish, was probably given to the aguada because of the great number and large size of the anthills in this locality. The surrounding country is fairly flat, broken only by rolling hills, with some small ranges to the south. The aguada was rather small the year the expedition examined the ruins as it had been an especially dry season; another year the water supply might be more plentiful. A heavy growth of lechuga kept the water cool and fresh.

The ruins occupy a more or less flat area measuring approximately 275 m. north and south by 200 m. east and west, and were laid out in three major groups, the South, Middle, and North. Each contains a number of small units, in some cases including courts or plazas, which seem closely associated, but apparently there was no carefully thought-out plan for the city as a whole (fig. 41).

SOUTH GROUP

In the southwest corner of this group are a number of mounds and small courts.

STRUCTURE I measures 18 m. square at the base and rises to a height of 5 m. It probably supported a superstructure, although no standing remains of one were seen. To the southwest are two parallel mounds having their long axes north and south. Although these may be remains of a ball court, such an identification seems extremely doubtful as the contour of the debris does not indicate benches; excavation would be necessary to determine the nature of the mounds. North of Structure I are two other very long parallel mounds, of which the eastern 22 m. also suggest a ball court. This again seems highly questionable owing to the proximity of the two mounds to each other and the contour of their slopes.

STRUCTURE II, lying along the north edge of this group, is the largest and, no doubt, was one of the principal buildings in the city. As seen in the plan (fig. 42), it is a complex structure containing eight chambers. It

rests on a platform 4-5 m. high. The greater portion of the elaborately decorated south façade (pl. 11a) and much of the north façade are in position, and one chamber has its vault intact.

The most outstanding features of the south façade are its two towers, each supplied with a purely ornamental stairway. The central doorway is 2.38 m. wide and, though the three wooden beams forming the lintel are *in situ*, its height is not known as the sill is covered with debris. The motif of the façade decoration above the doorway is a mask with the teeth projecting down over the lintel (pl. 11a), and to either side is an elaborated serpent face in profile (pl. 11b,c).

Each tower projects from the face of the south wall and rises 6.70 m. above the level of the lintel of the central doorway. Except for the ornamental stairways, they rise in a series of plain zones and bands (fig. 43b,c). The masonry is of small stones (pl. 12a), carefully worked and closely fitted. The corners of the towers were

rounded by fashioning the exposed face of the individual stones with a slight curve.

The ornamental stairways have widths of 4.70 m.; under the lower portion of each extends a vaulted passage, the one underneath the east stairway being the better preserved. It has a width of 69 cm. (fig. 43c); the floor is covered with debris so that the height of the vertical walls is not known. The vault, rising 40 cm., is of two courses of very carefully cut stones. Some have a slight curve on the beveled face. At either end of the passageway the vault stones were still further specialized, their outer faces being accurately worked to form a continuous surface with the vertical side walls of the stairway (pl. 12a). The capstones have a span of 47 cm.

It is possible that under the debris at the base of the stairway some of the steps may be in good condition; five *in situ* near the top of the east stairway have risers and treads averaging 29.5 cm. and 10 cm. respectively. Approximately 1.60 m. below the head of this stairway and in line with its vertical axis is the base of a niche 42 cm. deep, 49 cm. high, and 50 cm. wide (fig. 43b,c); on either side is a plain zone the same height and 54 cm. wide. Above the niche and overhanging the face of the plain zone by 12 cm. is a section of beveled molding. The niche and its flanking plain zones, with overhanging molding, suggest the façade of a native hut in miniature, a subject sometimes used as a decorative motif (cf. Uxmal, Monjas Quadrangle, south range; also see Wauchope, 1934, p. 122). A niche with plaster ornamentation on either side was found in approximately the same position by Hay (1935, p. 31) at Rio Bec B. Rising from the top of both towers are four blocks of masonry, perhaps walls (fig. 43). These now have a height of 1.80 m. and are faced on all four sides. Although the blocks of masonry may have stood as independent units, their arrangement suggests that they may be parts of a single construction, perhaps simulating a temple at the top of the ornamental stairway. A sculptured stone was re-used in the facing of one of the blocks on the east tower (figs. 43a, at x; 44).

East and west of the towers the façade continues the line of the central portion. The section abutting the west tower rises without decoration to a 71-cm. compound molding (fig. 45b). Above this the wall is badly ruined but seems to have risen with a slight batter. Joining the plain zone on the west is a panel 1.51 m. wide by 3.02 m. high, with stone and plaster decoration (pl. 12b). Traces of a second decorated panel rise above the first, separated from it by a 16-cm. band.

Beyond the decorated panel is an engaged column, its curve joining the jamb of the doorway opening into the end chamber. Remains of a similar column were seen

in the eastern end of the south façade. The columns, like the rounded corners of the tower, are of carefully worked stones, the exposed face of each cut with a slight curve. The far jambs of these doorways have fallen, as has the remainder of the south façade.

Room 1, the central chamber of the south side of the building, has the west, south, and east walls standing; the north wall has entirely fallen or is covered with debris. The central doorway of the south façade, leading into this room, is spanned by three rectangular wooden beams, identified by the workmen as *sapodilla*. In section they have average measurements of 16 by 30 cm. and the soffit is 1.50 m. below the spring of the vault. A cordholder in the form of a horizontal tongue worked in a single stone (fig. 46) was observed on each side of the doorway. The one to the east is 34 cm. below the lintel and 52 cm. from the jamb; the other is 28 cm. below the lintel and 60 cm. west of the doorway. The jambs of the doorway are made of small stones measuring from 13 by 14 by 32 cm. to 15 by 16 by 26 cm.

The height of the vertical wall of the chamber is not known, as the floor is covered with debris. Rising at an angle of 60°, the vault has a height of 1.75 m. and the capstones have a span of 47 cm. There is no offset at the spring line or at the end of the chamber, but the end of the vault slopes inward (cf. Becan, Structure IV, Room 8). There are six beam holes in the south vault soffit, all at the spring line. The first is 13 cm. from the west wall; measuring eastward, the other five are spaced at intervals of 3.55 m., 2.70 m., 70 cm., 2.50 m., and 3.80 m.

Room 2. The south, east, north, and west walls have a thickness of 1.30 m., 80 cm., 1 m., and 70 cm. respectively. Entrance to the chamber was from Room 1; such portions of the door jambs as may remain are covered with debris. The east and west walls of the room are built against the north face of the south wall, the latter extending through to Room 3 (fig. 47) and Room 6. The north wall and the north half of the vault are standing. No beam holes were seen in the wall; those in the vault are located and spaced as in Room 1. It is of interest to note that here again two beam holes are relatively near each other on either side of the transverse axis of the room.

The masonry of the walls is of blocks varying greatly in size, chinked with many spalls (pl. 12c). The vault stones are rather flat slabs curved on the exposed face (fig. 47b).

Room 3 has a doorway on the north side. The wooden beams of the lintel have fallen and with them a small section of the north vault soffit; otherwise the room stands intact. The spring line is 50 cm. above the top

of the doorway. No cordholders were seen. The vertical walls have a height of approximately 3.10 m., although no well-defined floor could be made out. It had unquestionably been broken through, perhaps by chicle gatherers who at one time camped in the room. The vault rises 1.45 m. at an angle of 54° and the capstones have a span of 44 cm. The vault stones are similar to those in Room 2. There are three beam holes in both vault soffits at the spring line: two, each 25 cm. from the end of the room and the third, midway between these two.

Room 4. The east wall has fallen. The north wall has a length of 8.90 m. to its evenly broken east end, which probably marks its original extent, so that this measurement may be assumed for that of the room. From the well-defined floor to the spring line is 3.10 m.; the vault rises 1.58 m. at an angle of 59° and the capstones have a span of 45 cm. The west end of the vault slopes inward. As this was also noted in Rooms 1 and 5 it seems likely that it was intentional. There are four beam holes in the north vault soffit at the spring line. The first is 28 cm. from the west end of the room, following which they are spaced at intervals of 2.98 m., 2.88 m., and 1.78 m. respectively. The diameters of the holes vary from 6 to 12 cm. and the depths from 35 to 48 cm.

Room 5 has a width of 2.28 m. and a length of 8.25 m., if the assumed length of 8.90 m. for Room 4 is correct. Only a small section of the vault at the west end of the chamber is in position. It rises 1.45 m. at an angle of 59° (pl. 12d) and the capstones have a span of 47 cm.

A beam hole in the south half of the vault at the spring line is 26 cm. from the west wall. It has a diameter of 7 cm. and a depth of 45 cm. In the north vault soffit the beam hole is 23 cm. from the west wall, has a diameter of 9 cm. and a depth of 55 cm.

Room 6 lies north of the west tower. The original height of the doorway in the north wall can not be determined as the jambs have almost entirely fallen.

Rooms 7 and 8 are poorly preserved.

The interior masonry does not differ from chamber to chamber. That of the exterior of the north side is of interest as some variation is seen. From a point 1.46 m. east of the doorway of Room 3 and continuing to the northeast corner of the building, the north façade is set back 9 cm. The setback rises vertically from the base of the façade to the level of the lintel of the doorway, thence rising 1.70 m. with a gradual outward slope to join the main façade and continue vertically upward. A similar setback appears 1.20 m. west of the doorway to Room 6. The lower 1.70 m. of the section of façade between the doorways is of carefully selected stones, the chinks filled with spalls; the stones of the upper portion are less carefully dressed and squared and consequently there are large chinks. The faces of the stones have an average measurement of 16 by 30 cm. The masonry of the setbacks has the lower 1.70 m. made up of small blocks very evenly laid in courses without chinks. The faces of the stones measure 9 by 22 cm., 11 by 25 cm., and 15 by 26 cm. In the upper section of the façade the masonry is similar to that between the doorways.

MIDDLE GROUP

This group, made up of a number of mounds and some partially standing buildings, appears to lack formal planning.

STRUCTURE III, the easternmost, rises approximately 8 m. and measures 19 by 30 m. at its base. Near the top and at the west end is the entrance of a passageway which leads downward to a chamber within the mound. The entrance was so ruined that its original form could not be ascertained. It seems likely that a building surmounted the pyramidal structure. Whether the entrance to the passageway was on the outside or inside of the building can not be said with certainty, but it may, as in Structure VII, have been on the outside. The portion of the passageway remaining has a length of 2.42 m. and a width of 66 cm. It is partly choked with debris but probably contains a flight of stairs corresponding somewhat with the stepped vaulted ceiling. The top of the passage where it opens into the room, is 1.66 m.

above the floor of the chamber. The chamber (fig. 48) is wider at the east than at the west. The walls slope inward at an angle of approximately 86° and the capstones have a span of 41 cm. Beam holes were noted at the spring line arranged in four groups of two each.

The masonry is rough, showing many chinks. The walls and vault had been covered with good-quality plaster, which, at the spring line and at the top of the vault, was fashioned into a simple molding. Fine, hard-packed plaster forms the floor and curves up against the wall. In both instances the plaster is untinted and is unstained by smoke. Extending across the east end of the chamber is a bench on which lay seven planks (fig. 48). Each is 1 m. long, 16 cm. wide, and 3 cm. thick. They are arranged in two groups of three, placed in horizontal parallel rows in opposition to one another with one plank of each group near a side wall; the seventh lay diagonally, northeast to southwest, between

the two groups. Although their position on the bench is definitely orderly rather than haphazard, no explanation can be offered as to their purpose or the significance of their arrangement.

A recess in the south wall, 21 cm. above the floor of the room, rises to the height of the spring of the vault. The flat ceiling is formed of small, round poles. A recess in the north wall is 1.48 m. wide. Here the ceiling has collapsed and the debris on the floor made it impossible to determine either the depth of the recess or its floor level.

STRUCTURE IV, lying west of Structure III, is now only a mound measuring roughly 15 by 23 m. at its base.

STRUCTURE V, a platform supporting a building, is rather well preserved and occupies the southern side of the western half of the Middle Group (fig. 41). The substructure rises about 7 m., with its facing fallen or covered with debris, except for portions visible on the south and west (pl. 13*b*). On the south the basal zone of the substructure is approximately 10.50 m. long and over 2 m. high. The masonry is of large blocks laid in even courses. Above this zone is a second, 2.30 m. high, set inward 25 cm. from the face of the first. The facing stones are laid with the same care but are smaller than in the first section. The substructure now supports a one-room building closely flanked on the west by a tower-like block of masonry. It is possible that a second block may have occupied a similar position to the east of the building. The existing tower has rounded corners forming a number of narrow zones separated by plain bands (pl. 13*b*), somewhat similar to the ornamental buttress of Structure VI (pl. 13*d*). It still stands to a little above the level of the spring of the vault of the adjoining building (pl. 13*a*), but its facing has now practically all fallen above the level of the building's floor.

Access to the building was by a stairway (on the north side of the substructure), now indicated only by the contour of the debris. The building rests on a podium, 90 cm. high. The facing is plain on the south side; the north side (front) is decorated with masks of stone and heavy plaster at the two corners, with a plain area, 2.66 m. long, beneath the doorway.

The north façade of the single-chambered building is elaborately ornamented (pl. 13*a*) with masks at the corners; on either side of the doorway is a serpent face in profile; over the lintel a row of teeth projects downward from a mask. Scrolls and geometric elements are used to fill the remaining space, except for fragmentary traces of human figures at either side of the doorway and at the height of the sixth corner mask. On the south, the lower zone of the building is set inward 3.50 m. from the edge of the podium and rises, undecorated, to a height of 2.26 m., where there is a 1.10-m. molding.

The masonry of the lower zone is of veneer blocks closely fitted together.

The chamber is 1.70 by 4.61 m. The east wall has fallen (pl. 13*c*); the south wall is 90 cm. thick, the west wall 59 cm. thick. Between the exterior west wall of the building and the block of masonry or tower there is a 30-cm. passageway. The vertical walls of the chamber rise 2.53 m. The interior masonry is crude and irregular, the blocks vary in shape and workmanship, and the many interstices are filled with spalls and chips. Some plaster still remains, in which, on the north, 1.38 m. below the lintel of the doorway and 18 cm. west of the jamb, a figure has been incised (fig. 49).

The doorway is 1.05 m. wide, 2.20 m. high, and 84 cm. deep. Jamb stones are small blocks, uniform as to size and carefully worked. Three wooden beams (identified by natives as *sapodilla*) are semicircular in section and serve as the lintel, with an average diameter of 18 cm. and an average length of 1.63 m. The soffit of the lintel is 33 cm. below the spring of the vault. The vault, of crudely fashioned stones like those in Structure II, Room 1, with much chinking, rises 1 m. at an angle of 55° to the capping blocks, whose span measures 34 cm. There is a single beam hole in the north vault soffit at the spring line slightly west of the center of the doorway; a corresponding hole appears in the south vault.

STRUCTURE VI (fig. 50) forms the north range of a small court at the west end of the Middle Group. Only an occasional wall or vault stands above the debris. Fragmentary sections of exterior masonry are *in situ*, with the exception of the west ornamental buttress which is practically intact (pl. 13*d*).

The structure faced south and shows in plan two parallel longitudinal chambers with a transverse chamber and a masonry tower at either end. Little remains of the south facing of either tower, but their inner rounded corners retain portions of stone and plaster masks. Ornamental buttresses with rounded corners formed by portions of the towers cause the southern half of the east and west façades of the building to project beyond the line of the northern half. The facing of the western buttress is of plain zones separated by double bands. Where the first zone is exposed above the debris it is 3.50 m. long and 50 cm. high. The first band is 18 cm. wide and overhangs the zone below it by 3 cm. The arrangement of the succeeding bands and plain zones is similar (fig. 51*a*, pl. 13*d*).

On the east façade (the exterior wall of Room 3) is a small section of molding formed of a 37-cm. apron member overhanging 13 cm., surmounted by a 12-cm. band overhanging 6 cm.

Room 1. The east end is standing to the height of

the capstones, which have a span of 38 cm., and the vault rises 1.58 m. at an angle of 64°. The wall between Rooms 1 and 2, 1.35 m. thick, was probably pierced by a doorway; remnants of jambs, if standing, are covered with debris.

Room 2. A portion of the southeast corner is *in situ*.

There are two beam holes in the south wall 91 cm. below the spring line. They are 42 cm. and 72 cm., respectively, from the east end of the chamber.

Room 3. A molding at the spring line, carefully worked in plaster, is shown in figure 52. Beam holes also occur in the molding.

NORTH GROUP

This group embraces five or six mounds closely associated with each other and clearly demarcated from those of the Middle Group.

STRUCTURE VII is the only one that shows any exposed wall surfaces. It contains two parallel longitudinal rooms and faces north. Very little of the building is standing, except a portion of the east wall and the jambs of the doorway between the outer and the inner chamber. There are some indications that it was supported by a podium (fig. 53*b*).

Although the building is poorly preserved, we can state that the chambers were approximately 2.50 by 13.50 m. The jambs of the north doorway are standing 2 m., so that the doorway shows a width of 2.20 m. and a depth of 1.10 m. The masonry of the jambs and of the east wall is very good. In both cases the stones are small, having an average measurement on the face of 7 by 15 cm., well cut and so closely fitted together that there are no chinks.

The most interesting feature in Structure VII is the subterranean chamber which lies under the southeast quarter of the building (fig. 53). It is entered by a passageway opening on the south side of the structure 1.20 m. from the east wall. The entrance is 55 cm. wide and at present only 73 cm. high. The top of the opening is 80 cm. above the level of the uppermost band of the podium.

The passageway extends northward and down. Only the four lower steps in this north-south passage are clear

of detritus. These treads and risers average 21 cm. and descend to an irregular landing from which a second flight to the left (west) leads into the chamber. The passage at the landing has a height of 87 cm., and an irregular recess in its north wall is 68 cm. high and 50 cm. deep. The second flight, of five stairs, descends into the chamber through an opening 1.10 m. high by 70 cm. wide.

The walls of the chamber rise vertically 1.45 m. and the vault rises 68 cm. at an angle of 44°, where the capstones have a span of 15 cm. The masonry is very crude and rough, and retains traces of plaster. A stone gutter-spout, found on the floor at the west end of the room, is 65 cm. long, 14 cm. thick, and tapering from 24 cm. to 18 cm. wide. The trough is 5.5 cm. deep by 12 cm. wide.

The eastern half of the floor was covered with debris which had no doubt rolled down the stairs. In the southwest corner of the room an oval opening, 45 by 57 cm., in the floor leads to a lower chamber. The entrance, closed by a carefully fitted stone lid, admits directly downward 77 cm. and has on its west side an opening 57 cm. square giving into the chamber whose floor is 68 cm. lower (fig. 53*b*). The lower chamber is oval and the top of the ceiling, somewhat domed, is 1.25 m. above the floor. The room was hollowed out of solid limestone and only the floor had been plastered. In the 30-cm. debris which covered the floor was a fragment of a metate.