

PECHAL

LATITUDE 18° 52.0' N.

LONGITUDE 89° 29.8' W.

When the expedition moved from Aguada Carolina to Pechal, camp was made at So Laguna, Guitara, and Halaltun (Sabana Central). So Laguna is slightly over one and one half hour's travel northeast of Carolina. The laguna occasionally covers a large area but at the time of our visit had shrunk to a single small, deep water hole roiled by alligators and fish. The party camped here two nights, allowing two milperos from Porvenir to look for a site which they had reported to be directly south of the laguna and to consist of several buildings, one having 12 rooms with walls rising to a height of 3 m. and doorways intact. Their story seemed to be substantiated by the fact that chicleros were said to have been with them at the time the ruins were discovered, but after searching a day and a half without success the two milperos returned to Porvenir. Whether they had actually seen ruins there or whether they were merely serving as guides on a trumped-up story to make a few extra pesos is problematical.

Camp was next made at Guitara (lat. 18° 42.0' N., long. 89° 22.2' W., the site of a small but very good aguada, covered with lechuga) from where the site of Carmelita lies an hour and 40 minutes' travel to the southwest. The first structure west of the aguada is a pyramid approximately 8 m. high which supported a building, although no faced walls are now visible. In a plaza to the west is a plain circular stone 50 cm. in diameter. Beyond the plaza are low mounds outlining two courts, and near the western limit of the group are remains of a three-chambered building. Portions of the exposed façade, in which three doorways are indicated, have recessed mask panels. The spring line in the chambers has the same relation to the molding of the second zone of the façade as at Culucbalom, Structure V (fig. 116). In the plaza to the south are four circular stones, 50 cm. in diameter, arranged to form a square.

Ruins northwest of Halaltun were examined March 13. *Halal* is given in Motul dictionary as slender cane used for arrows. Lundell (1937, p. 55), identifies *halal* (*Draecena americana* Donn. Sm.) as a small tree 4-8 m. high. One structure not more than 15 m. long faces south and has a series of chambers opening onto a low platform

that rises from a terrace. On the north side and at a lower level is a second series of rooms. There is no offset at the spring line and the vault is not over 1.50 m. high. A second structure, possibly a series of three longitudinal rooms, lies to the north. Some excavations in the building are said to have been made by Salvador Alvalar, a revolutionist who was intercepted here when attempting to flee to Guatemala.

The aguada of Santa Rosaura is four and a half hours' travel west-northwest from Halaltun. The terrain is almost as hilly as north of Guitara and the bush considerably lower. Three hours from Halaltun is the old chicle camp of Xuts where three artificial mounds were examined. One is a partially fallen building, U-shaped in plan, with façade decoration of engaged columns and a recessed panel ornamented with geometric scrolls and stepped designs in stone and plaster.

At the Aguada Purisima, 2.5 km. from Xuts, a trail to the north leads to Peor es Nada, 4.5 km. distant. To the west of Purisima are low mounds defining plazas and courts. The site is on two levels with the eastern section 2 or 3 m. below the western. A broad stairway is indicated leading from the lower to the upper level.

(The group we are concerned with here was known to the workmen and to the custodian of the chicle camp at the aguada of Santa Rosaura as Pechal, which name is retained in this report. Santa Rosaura, shown in the Atlas Arqueologica de la Republica Mexicana—Pub. 41 of the Instituto Panamericana de Geografia e Historia, Mexico, 1939—as reported by H. J. Spinden, is incorrectly located. A photograph of Structure VI has been identified by Spinden as from the site but he did not know of other buildings or monuments.)

The aguada of Santa Rosaura is large and devoid of vegetation. On the north side are the remains of an abandoned chicle camp; the ruins of Pechal are about 20 minutes' walk to the southwest. The same distance north of camp is a small aguada and a group of mounds with no exposed walls. The expedition camped at Santa Rosaura March 15-21. Pechal is a large site, achieved by the inclusion of independent units rather than by the growth of a plan (pl. 74).

STRUCTURE I, although much in ruin, is the best pre-

served. Resting on a platform a meter in height, the building consists of two parallel series of three chambers flanked at either end by a transverse room. Standing sections of the east façade are ornamented with masks and projecting panels (pl. 44*c*). The spring line in Room 4 is 45 cm. above the first zone of the façade. A portion of the vault is shown in plate 44*d*; beam holes appear at the spring line.

STRUCTURE II, a terrace not over 50 cm. high supports a building 21 m. long by 4.80 m. wide now indicated only by the first course of the inner face of the back and end walls. There is a blocked doorway in the north wall. The absence of debris and scant remains of masonry walls suggest that the structure may have been of wattle and daub construction with a thatch roof. There are no indications of post holes or supports across the open front of the building (cf. Structure XI).

STRUCTURE III, a pyramid supporting traces of a building, has lateral chambers at the base (cf. Structure IV, Xpuhil).

STRUCTURE IV, a group of mounds enclosing a small court, abuts the far end of the north wing of Structure III.

STRUCTURE VI is similar in plan to Structure I. Some plaster and stucco decoration on the west façade is well preserved; in places it is 44 cm. deep. Around the central doorway the serpent motif is suggested; to either side are rounded corner masks, each 80 cm. high (pl. 45*a*). The first zone of the rear wall rises 2.40 m. from a podium ornamented with groups of three colonnettes. In the first course the faces of the stones measure from 40 by 46 cm. to 40 by 58 cm. Subsequent courses are of much smaller stones but all are uniformly well worked and there is an absence of chinking (pl. 45*b*).

STRUCTURE IX consists of a pyramidal substructure supporting two parallel ranges of three chambers with a series of three longitudinal rooms (one is definitely indicated by a wall and section of the vault soffit) at its south base (fig. 117, pl. 45*c*). Across the façade of the central chamber of the upper rooms are four masonry columns, 60 cm. in diameter and now 1.10 m. in height. Secondary masonry walls have been built in the lateral

intercolumnar spaces, leaving a single entrance to the room. The means of access to the upper level is not known.

STRUCTURE X comprises a series of three longitudinal rooms with a fourth, as indicated by debris, behind, parallel to, and of approximately the same size as the central chamber. In the rear wall of the latter are remnants of the jambs of the doorway connecting the two rooms. The north façade of the building has corner mask decoration similar to Structure VI; although much weathered the more protected portions still retain red tinting. Some of the stone and plaster ornamentation of the façade between the masks is 30 cm. deep.

STRUCTURE XI is much like Structure II. Here again the wall is represented only by a single course of stones of its inner face. Three column drums, 50 cm. in diameter and 23 cm. in height, are arranged across the façade: one against the end of either anta and the third, roughly, midway between the other two. North of the structure are two circular stones. Four similar stones rest on a low mound near the northwest corner of the plaza and, a single one is at the base of each of two other mounds. The stones vary in diameter from 25 to 68 cm.

The South Plaza, west of Structure VIII, is of particular interest as it may well have been an amphitheater. It has an average width and length of 68 m. and 75 m., respectively, and is surrounded on all sides by continuous mounds broken in only three places, as if for entrances. The inner slopes are lined with steps. On the north side of the great curved mound are a series of 18–20 steps (pl. 45*d*) with the risers and treads averaging 30 cm. and 50 cm. respectively. The flat top of the mound has an approximate width of 4.30 m. The seating capacity of the amphitheater, very conservatively estimated, is placed at 8,000. Five stelae associated with the site are all located in this plaza: three, with two round altars, are in front (west) of Structure VIII; one, at the southeast corner; and one, with a round altar, in the center. All stelae were fallen and only three showed any carving.