

LA MUÑECA

LATITUDE 18° 13.1' N.

LONGITUDE 89° 33.4' W.

Range of Dates: 9.13.?.0.0-10.3.0.0.0

While at Calakmul in 1932 one of the workmen reported that two years before he had seen a group of ruins seven or eight leagues by trail northeast of Central Buenfil. Bolles and I, having completed our studies at Calakmul a day before the other members of the expedition, planned an overnight trip to this new site, which was accordingly first visited by Carnegie Institution's First Campeche Expedition on April 23, 1932 (Kidder, 1932, p. 96; Morley, 1933, p. 204). Bolles made a sketch map of the western section of the city and a hasty examination of the eastern portion. In 1933 the Second Campeche Expedition was able to remain at La Muñeca March 11-18, when the site was surveyed and carefully explored.

The site is most easily reached through Rio Desempeño and the now abandoned chicle station of Central Buenfil, from which it lies approximately five leagues northeast. There is a cenote on the right side of the trail two and a half hours' ride from the latter camp. The water is very bitter and is used by man only when there is no other available, but it serves very well for stock. La Muñeca lies two and a half hours' ride beyond this cenote. About four hours' travel from Central Buenfil a branch trail to the north leads to La Muñeca and San Lorenzo. It is possible to reach La Muñeca by way of Rio Desempeño and San Lorenzo, but this route is perhaps the least preferable as the trails are much more overgrown than via Central Buenfil.

The ruins have the same name as the chicle camp which was located a few kilometers to the north. It is said that the camp of La Muñeca was so named because one of the chicleros had a victrola and continuously played the disk, "La Muñeca de Trapo" (The Rag Doll).

The guide to the site in 1932 said that the name was given to the ruins because a small stone figure or *muñeca* was found there. The figure was later taken to Central Buenfil and subsequently lost. Either or both stories may be true.

About 2 km. before reaching the chicle camp the trail passes between two low flat-topped hills which support the ruins. The natural terraces, which have been artificially enlarged and leveled, rise to an average of 10 m. above the trail. Some mounds, two hours' walk to the west and apparently artificial, were visited by Denison and found to be a natural formation. This was the expedition's first encounter, later repeated many times, with the odd local formation of hills rising in terraces, which were readily mistaken for artificial constructions. No aguada was found near the site, but the workmen stated that during the rainy season there are small pockets of water at no great distance from the ruins. Although water may at times be found in the aguada at the chicle camp of La Muñeca, anyone visiting the site during the dry season must be prepared to haul water from El Cenote or Central Buenfil.

The map of the site (pl. 62) shows its compactness, careful orientation, and the close relation of one courtyard to another. The western section of the city is larger than the eastern and is readily divided into three groups, enclosing three distinct plazas. For convenience they have arbitrarily been called the South, Middle, and North Plazas. The one to the south is probably of least importance because the structures surrounding it are few and, with one exception, all small, and also because stelae are absent.

SOUTH PLAZA

STRUCTURE I, the second highest pyramid at La Muñeca, defines the south side of the plaza. It rises about 20 m. and is now represented by only a mound. Although no stairway was found, it appears from the slope of the debris that a short succession of steps on the north

side rose to a low platform, from which, in turn, a long steep flight of stairs led to the top of the pyramid. Even though no walls were observed on top of the structure, the steepness and contour of the slope suggest that it was surmounted by a temple. A bit of heavy plaster

decoration in the form of a scroll was found near the northeast base of the pyramid. It had presumably fallen from higher up, perhaps the temple proper.

STRUCTURE II, formed by a number of low mounds, lies along the west side of the plaza. Several other small ones define the north and south sides.

MIDDLE PLAZA

This plaza is 2 m. higher than the one to the south and measures 66 m. north and south by 76 m. east and west. The southeast corner is occupied by a group of mounds, of which Structures III and IV are the largest. The west side of the plaza is defined by a large terrace, surmounted by a number of small mounds, and Structures XI and XII. On the north is Structure X. Structure IX occupies the northeast corner and on the east side of the plaza, extending from south to north, are Structures VI, VII, and VIII respectively. There are six stelae in this plaza and a seventh rests on the northeast corner of the great western terrace.

The southeast group of the Middle Plaza is made up of two courts; the more southern one is enclosed, except at its southeast corner, by low mounds. Entrance to it may have been on the west and north. Structures IV and III define the north and east sides, respectively, of the more northern court, in the center of which is a depressed area.

STRUCTURE III probably faced west, and STRUCTURE IV north, onto the Middle Plaza. There are no standing walls in the group.

STRUCTURE V, a pyramid having Stela 1 at its northern base, measures roughly 25 by 29 m. On top of the pyramid is a section of wall, 2.75 m. long, which rises 70 cm. above the debris. It is faced on the south and east and has a thickness of at least 1.14 m. This bit of masonry may represent the medial wall between two chambers, the portion faced on the east being the west jamb of a doorway leading from the outer to the inner chamber. At a distance of 90 cm. east of this section of wall is a second, probably the east, jamb of the doorway. The masonry is of irregularly shaped blocks with long tenons. The chinks are filled with chips.

STRUCTURES VI, VII, and VIII are on the east side of the Middle Plaza. The first two do not rise over 2 m. Stela 2 and Altar 1 are at the west base of Structure VI, Stela 3 at the west base of Structure VII, and Stela 4 at the west base of Structure VIII. These three structures on the east side of the plaza, together with Structure XI on the west somewhat suggest the Uaxactun, Group E, arrangement (cf. Balakbal, Structure VIII; Calakmul, Structure IV; Oxpemul, Structure V; and Naachtun, Structure XXIII).

STRUCTURE IX, west and north of Structure VIII, rises very steeply to a height of 10 m. Stelae 5 and 8 are at

the south and north bases, respectively, although the latter is probably associated with Structure XVI.

STRUCTURE X, a long low mound west of Structure IX, has an east-west length of 27 m. and rises not over 3 m. Stela 6 stands at the south base.

STRUCTURE XI. Defining the west side of the Middle Plaza is a great terrace 3 m. high. Resting on its eastern edge is Structure XI, now seen as a platform 4 m. high supporting six low mounds, each roughly 2 m. square. In one is a section of wall made up of much weathered stones. There are many slabs and rectangular blocks lying about, but no specialized vault stones were noted. North of Structure XI, and at the northeast corner of the great terrace, stands Stela 7.

STRUCTURE XII, the best preserved of any at La Muñeca, occupies the northern edge of the great terrace (pl. 62). It faces south and has as its substructure a pyramid rising, perhaps in terraces, to a height of 8 m. The upper limits seem to be finished with a 50-cm. band overhanging 20–25 cm. (fig. 20). On this basal pyramid rests a platform 3 or 4 m. high. Both pyramid and platform are in poor preservation but a stairway on the south slope of each is indicated by the contour of the debris. The platform facing, as shown by small sections, on the north is made up of unusually large blocks, the exposed faces beveled and averaging 35 by 40 cm. with tenons 1.14 m. long (pl. 3a). The hearting of the pyramid and platform is of irregular, unworked and worked stones very solidly packed and bound together with much lime mortar.

A building, surmounting the upper platform, now practically fallen or buried in detritus except for the back or north wall, had a length and width of approximately 13 m. and 4 m. respectively, and shows a single range of three longitudinal chambers (fig. 21). The only part of the façade not covered with fallen material is on the north. Here the building is set inward 60 cm. from the edge of the platform and the lower zone rises with a batter to a height of 1.30 m. (fig. 20). The facing stones, 12 by 30 cm. and 16 cm. deep, are nicely worked.

The second zone rises with a similar batter to a height of 1.35 m. At its base it overhangs the top of the first zone 25–30 cm. The stones used in the facing are very large and heavy and greatly resemble those of the pyramid. The ones forming the overhang have been worked

so that there is a low ridge, 10 cm. wide at the edge of the under side, which may have served as a rain-drip. (Somewhat similar fashioning of stones was observed at Calakmul, Structure III, and at Uxul, Structure XIII.) The third zone is set inward 20 cm. from the top of the second and rises with a batter to a height of 2 m. The masonry is much like that of the first zone (pl. 3a).

The central part of the north façade of the building projects in the first, second, and third zones (cf. Calakmul, Structure III; Naachtun, Structure XXIII; and Uxul, Structure XIII). The projection at the base of the first zone is 7.15 m. long and juts out 10–15 cm. The third zone and the roof comb are now so fallen that it is impossible to determine exactly how they may have been fashioned. There are six ventilators in the projection of the first zone and three in the third. Their relative positions are shown in figure 20. This is the only example encountered in the reconnaissance, of a building having a single range of rooms with an offset in the rear façade. How the second zone was carried across the front is not known. Since a doorway would probably have a height of more than 1.30 m. (the height of the lower zone) the lower margin of the second zone may have been raised over the entrance. Such a construction has not been reported from other sites in this area. Moldings are raised over doorways in northern Yucatan sites as Kabah, Structure 1 A 5; Sabacche, Structure I; Chichen Itza, Monjas, east wing, east façade; Xtampah, Cuartel.

Room 1 is 1.75 m. wide. There are 2 m. of the north wall *in situ*. This may have been the original length of the room as with the addition of a west wall, 1 m. thick, the end of the building would have been near the edge of the platform. The north and south walls each have a depth of 1.10 m. and the east wall a depth of 80 cm. In the northwest corner of the room near the top of the wall is a stone so cut as to form the facing on both the east and north walls.

Room 2 has a length of 5.50 m. and the north wall a depth of 1.20 m.; the south one is covered with debris. Traces of a doorway, 80 cm. deep, show in the partially fallen west wall. A doorway in the east wall leading into Room 3 has a depth of 85 cm. The lintel is formed of

two stone slabs; the stone above it, as seen in Room 3, is longer than the lintel itself. The doorway is 60 cm. wide at the lintel and, 90 cm. lower at the level of the debris, it is 90 cm. wide.

There are three beam holes in the north vertical wall, all in the next to the top course of stones. The floor of the chamber is approximately 2.65 m. below the top of the vertical wall.

The most interesting feature of this building is some stone slabs, which formed the vault and are still in position on the north wall. These slabs, of which a great many were also seen in the debris, average 50 cm. long and 25 cm. wide. In section they are wedge-shaped, being 8 cm. thick at one end and 5 cm. thick at the other. Those of the first course have their exposed ends in line with the face of the wall and incline upward toward the unexposed ends (fig. 22, pl. 3b). Each subsequent course overhangs the one below and the slabs are placed at a greater angle. Seven courses were found *in situ*. A section of the vault on which plaster still remains suggests that the finished surface was a carefully smoothed curve.

Figure 22 shows the grouting behind the lower slabs and how it projects outward over the upper ends of those in the higher courses. Resting on the grouting, 1.20 m. above the top of the vertical wall, is a nicely finished lime-plaster surface, the roof of the building. A portion of the north wall of the roof comb rises 80 cm. above this finished surface. Its north face apparently rose as a continuation of the third zone of the building, as it has the same batter. From the south face of the north wall of the roof comb two buttresses, 35 cm. wide, extend 45 cm. southward (figs. 22, 23). They are located approximately above the end walls of Room 2 and each rises 50 cm., where it is stepped back 25 cm. (pls. 3b, 4a). Since the exposed southern ends of the walls are carefully finished they presumably did not continue across to a south wall of the roof comb. The location of the south wall is not known. Temple E-X at Uaxactun, having much in common with this structure, shows the front wall of the roof comb set inward from the front façade of the building itself (Smith, 1937b, p. 137).

NORTH PLAZA

STRUCTURE XIII lies north of Structure XII, forms the west side of the North Plaza, and is the highest in the city. At its base it measures approximately 46 m. east and west by 56 m. north and south. Although now very much in ruin it apparently had a stairway, 13 m. wide, on each side. The pyramid facing seemingly rose

with three levels or terraces, which correspond to three great blocks of masonry on either side of each stairway. The blocks, as indicated by the one on the east side of the south stairway, carried masks modeled in stucco (pl. 4b). The facing of the pyramid is of extremely large and carefully worked stones averaging 40 by 50 cm. on the

exposed face, which is cut with a bevel, and having tenons from 95 cm. to 1 m. in length. A portion of one zone is exposed for a height of 1.20 m. The platform on top of the pyramid measures approximately 22 by 25 m. and, set inward 6 m. from its north and south edges, is a mound 6 m. high. At the eastern base of the pyramid are Stelae 17-19.

STRUCTURE XV, on the north side of the plaza, must have been of considerable importance as Stelae 13-16 and Altars 5-7 were found at its south base. The form of the mound indicates that it contained but a single chamber measuring approximately 1.70 by 7 m. Two courses of the interior north wall toward the west end were visible above the debris. No specialized vault stones were noted. Many slabs were seen, which may have been used in the vault, although they are not the wedge-shaped type used in Structure XII. A small section of the south façade, east of the single doorway, is of rather precisely cut blocks, which now, however, are much weathered.

STRUCTURE XVI. On the east side of the plaza is Structure XVI, with which Stelae 8-12 are associated. The structure rises in the form of a low platform surmounted by a mound, most likely the remains of a building. No standing walls were seen. Near the base of the north-

east corner of the platform is a large, beveled, corner, cornice stone 1.10 m. square by 30 cm. thick. On one side of it a drip has been worked (cf. La Muñeca, Structure XII; Calakmul, Structure III). The facing stones of the platform are large and beveled. On the mound were many large, wedge-shaped, stone slabs which may have been used in the vault (Structure XII).

STRUCTURES XVII-XXI. The section of the city lying to the east of the ravine is much smaller and apparently of less importance than that to the west, as the mounds are comparatively small and low and there are no stelae. The map (pl. 62) shows two main divisions in this section of the city. The portion to the north is a well-defined court; that to the south a somewhat lower, irregular area partially surrounded by very low mounds. Structures XVII-XXI have been numbered because they are the largest of the mounds. Only Structure XVIII warrants any description. At its base the platform measures approximately 10 m. square and a stairway is indicated on the east side. Surmounting the platform is a small building of which only a portion of the east wall is now visible. It has a thickness of 1.05 m. and was pierced by a single doorway. The standing south jamb is made up of small, uniform-sized blocks.

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Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Peten

KARL RUPPERT

JOHN H. DENISON, JR.



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