

## CULUCBALOM

LATITUDE 18° 34.5' N. (ESTIMATED)

LONGITUDE 89° 27.1' W. (ESTIMATED)

Culucbalom lies about 10 km. by trail north of west of Xpuhil. From the latter site the trail, at first much overgrown, is generally northwest to the camp of Arco Bec where it branches, one way leading north to Cibelchen (a seven-day trip for pack mules), the other west to Aguada Carolina (lat. 18° 34.1' N., long. 89° 27.7' W.). At time of our visit (February 26–March 6, 1938) the aguada was 643 m. long and 268 m. wide. Water was low and there was no lechuga but a good stand of ramon. About half an hour before reaching the aguada the trail passes through the ruins of Culucbalom, a small group consisting of a quadrangle and two large outlying mounds (pl. 73). As there is no water hole at the site, camp was made at Aguada Carolina. Along portions of its north margin are artificial mounds with no masonry exposed; to the south lies Becan, which was discovered in 1934.

STRUCTURE I, the largest and best preserved at Culucbalom, defines the north side of the quadrangle. It consists of three groups of two parallel longitudinal chambers (fig. 112): one group at the east and one at the west base of a pyramidal substructure which supports the third (fig. 113). Each lateral unit supported a roof comb of the single-wall type. The one on the west now rises 2.80 m. and is 90 cm. wide. The lateral units are similar, but more of the west one is standing. Rising from a plain podium, the first zone is unornamented. Exterior masonry is of well finished stones, the faces averaging from 14 by 18 cm. to 24 cm. square (pl. 41a). The first member of the second zone, rising with a batter, overhangs 14 cm. and is of blocks 38–46 cm. long.

The spring line of the north vault soffit of Room 1 is 50 cm. higher than the spring line of the south half of the vault. Similar differences were noted in Room 2 and in the chambers of the east unit. A secondary wall 70 cm. in thickness is built across Room 2, 1.19 m. from its east end. The wall is pierced by an opening 73 cm. wide. On each jamb directly below the stone lintel is a single 5-cm. offset (fig. 113). The interior masonry is not carefully coursed and the stones vary in shape. An old metate, its grinding surface worn through, is used as a wall stone in the west end of the vault of Room 3.

The central pyramidal substructure, 3.40 m. high, had a stairway on the south approximately 8 m. wide with risers and treads averaging 30 cm. and 37 cm. respectively. From the substructure rises a podium in which the central zone is ornamented with alternate groups of three colonnettes and plain areas. Built against the podium and directly in front of the doorway to the building are two masonry steps.

The ornamentation of the first zone of the south façade of the central building consists of four engaged columns, each set in a niche (pl. 41b). Stucco decoration on each column depicts two seated human figures (pl. 42a-d). (The native workmen gave the name Culucbalom to the site because they said that the name meant, "men seated at a conference.") Set in recesses above and below each column (fig. 114), as though forming its base and capital, are sections of three-member moldings (cf. Channa, where three-member molding forms capital of column).

Room 5 with sections of the vault intact is better preserved than Room 6. The spring line of the south vault soffit is 20 cm. above the base of the second zone of the façade and 33 cm. higher than the spring line of the north vault soffit. On the latter is a small section of plaster molding. The jambs of the doorway between Rooms 5 and 6 have the unusual construction also seen at Becan, Structure VIII, and Rio Bec, Group V, Structure IV. This construction reported as far north as Dzibiltun. Lizardi Ramos (1940, p. 17) shows a similar treatment at Higuera, east of Bacalar. The jambs and 1.15 m. of the adjacent walls rise vertically 70 cm. and 97 cm., respectively, above the spring line of the north vault soffit, whence this section of the north half of the vault rises without an offset and joins with the other at the capstones (fig. 115a,b, pl. 43a). A similar construction was suggested but not fully confirmed by the partially standing jambs of the interior doorways of the lower chambers.

The roof comb above the central section of the building, as on the lateral units, is a single wall perforated with transverse openings. It was ornamented with masks and human figures in stone and stucco. Above the masks, on the north face, high relief human figures are stand-

ing in full front. Between two of them are smaller human figures also standing but in a less formal posture (pl. 43*b*). On the south face of the roof comb the major figures above the masks are now lacking and the minor figures are seated cross-legged (pl. 41*b*).

Structures II and III form the east and south sides, respectively, of the quadrangle, IV and V the west.

STRUCTURE II, a series of five longitudinal chambers, rests on a platform not over 50 cm. high. Due to almost complete collapse, details of architecture are lacking.

STRUCTURE III somewhat suggests the building to the north in that two parallel chambers are indicated on either side of a pyramidal platform. On the north side of the platform is a stairway 5 m. wide with the lower four steps of stones averaging a meter in length. The treads and risers measure 65 cm. and 30 cm. respectively. The platform may not have supported a building and it does not extend to the southern margins of the lateral chambers. The complex is in a poor state of preservation or possibly it had not been completed.

STRUCTURE IV rests on a platform 80 cm. high with a wide stairway of three treads on the east side. The building, two parallel chambers, has portions of the outer chamber and façade intact. The latter was orna-

mented with inset panels on either side of the doorway. A large stone on the platform east of the building is probably from the first course of the second zone. It is beveled on one face, and on the under side, 20 cm. from the edge, has been worked with a groove, 12 cm. wide by 4 cm. deep, probably serving as a rain-drip (cf. La Muñeca, Structure XII; Calakmul, Structure III; Uxul, Structure XIII).

STRUCTURE V, a series of three longitudinal chambers, rises from a low platform and a podium. The latter as seen on the west side is plain (pl. 44*b*). The east façade of the building has inset profile mask panels on either side of the central doorway (pl. 44*a*). Exterior masonry is of carefully worked blocks laid in regular courses with practically no chinking (pl. 44*b*). The relation of moldings to spring line and the position of cross poles in the vault are shown in figure 116. Vault stones in Room 2 are slightly rounded on the lower edge of the exposed face; ten courses of stones form the west vault soffit.

STRUCTURE VI, the three-chambered building north of the quadrangle, is almost entirely in ruin. The masonry and the relation of moldings to the spring line are similar to those of Structure V.