

NAACHTUN

LATITUDE 17° 48.3' N.

LONGITUDE 89° 44' W.

Range of Dates: 9.3.10.0.0-9.16.10.0.0

Naachtun was first visited and reported by the Carnegie Institution's 1922 Central American Expedition, concerning which Morley wrote (1922, p. 312): "On April 18, Doctor Morley and Mr. Sopena left El Cayo for a month's trip across the northeastern corner of the Department of Peten, penetrating to within 5 miles of the Mexican boundary at a point almost due north of Flores. Two new sites were discovered: Xmakabatun (a city of Class 3) with 4 sculptured stelae and 7 plain ones, and Naachtun (a city of Class 2) with 11 sculptured stelae and 7 plain ones; the party returned to El Cayo on May 14 and to Belize on May 18."

The site was next visited January 5, 1932, by Lundell, then employed by the Chicle Development Company. He did not recognize the city as Naachtun, reported 10 years earlier, and named it Nohoxna (Lundell, 1932, pp. 399-403; 1933a, pp. 159-63).

The Second Campeche Expedition was at Naachtun May 1-12, 1933, having heard of Nohoxna from Lundell. Thinking it to be new, the expedition went in to report on the epigraphy and architecture and to make a surveyed map. Upon arrival the site was recognized as Naachtun. Of its 45 stelae, 18 were found by the Institution's expedition of 1922, 8 by Lundell in 1932, and 19 by the Institution's Second Campeche Expedition of 1933. The city proved so much larger than at first reported that a new and more inclusive map was made.

The 1922 expedition reached Naachtun from the south, coming in from El Cayo, British Honduras, and proceeding north through Guatemala via Laguna de Yaloche, San Clemente, Esperanza, Dos Hermanos, and La Gloria. At that time chicle operations in the northern part of the Department of Peten afforded open trails. In 1932 Lundell went in from the north. Leaving Central Buenfil January 3, he passed through Villahermosa and reached Naachtun on January 5. This route from the north is the shorter and is probably preferable, although the trails from either direction may now be closed.

The Second Campeche Expedition came to the site from Alta Mira, camping the first night at Villahermosa (lat. 17° 56.3' N., long. 89° 40.6' W.), which was

reached in five hours. Here the expedition stopped April 25-28 in order to send scouts ahead to look for water at Naachtun. Before water was found, the aguada at Villahermosa, which is not covered with vegetation of any kind, dried up and the expedition was forced to move on to Monterrey, one and a half hour's travel to the southwest. Some mounds were examined 4.5 km. northwest of Villahermosa and on the Central Buenfil trail. The first indication of the ruins is a long, high, artificial mound crossed by the trail. The major group lies to the west and contains many plazas, courts, and mounds but no standing walls. Three chultuns were seen.

The aguada at Monterrey is very large and is shaded with lechuga and a tall water grass. Along the trail, about a kilometer before the aguada is reached, are many mounds, some of which were examined. A characteristic of this site is a great rectangular platform with stairway to the north. Rising on the platform at the south is a second one, also with stairway to the north. The second platform seemingly supported a building. Three structures of this class were noted.

It is three and a half hours' ride from Monterrey to Naachtun. Not over 2 km. after leaving Monterrey a right fork in the trail leads to La Fama. When Morley and Lundell were at Naachtun, there was water in the low area north of Structure XX. In 1933 it was dry and water had to be hauled a distance of 6 km.

The site was named Naachtun by Morley (1922, p. 312n.): "*Naachtun*: 'Distant stone'; *naach*, 'distant' or 'far off' and *tun*, 'stone'. This name was given to the new Class 2 site found that year because of its extreme remoteness, being at the very center of the Yucatan Peninsula, far removed from every point of approach."

Naachtun, not over 1.30 km. south of the Campeche-Guatemala border, lies in a heavy stand of ramon and sapodilla; there is no guano palm. The underbrush is very sparse. The topography around Naachtun consists of great rolling hills with apparently no prominent ranges on the skyline. Their seeming absence may be due to the fact that when the expedition was at the site smoke blown in from milpa fires greatly reduced visibility.

The city occupies an area 1200 m. east and west by

500 m. north and south (pl. 66), and reaches its greatest elevation at the east. It is laid out in many courts and plazas, some related to each other but most as independent units. The greatest concentration of structures is in the eastern half of the city, which has been divided into Groups A and B, although there is no clear

demarcation between the two. Group B lies to the east and extends south of Group A. Group C, rather small, is 285 m. west of Group A.

For the most part, the structures are now represented only by mounds; seven, however, show portions of standing buildings.

GROUP C

This group contains Structures I-VI.

STRUCTURE I, at the southwest is a terrace about 4 m. high, 30 m. wide, and 44 m. long, the longitudinal axis extending southwest-northeast. On the northwest side, at the base of a stairway indicated by the talus, are Stelae C5, C6, C7, and 24 and Altar 9. On top of the terrace rise four small platforms, each supporting a building. The one to the southwest is 3.70 m. high and carries Structure Ia. The exposed portion of the platform facing rises in two sections, both having the same batter but the upper overhanging the lower by 10 cm. The facing stones are large beveled blocks.

STRUCTURE Ia has fallen, except for the rear wall, so that the plan could not be made out, but it probably did not contain more than two parallel longitudinal chambers. The entire first, and a portion of the second, zone of the rear façade are in a fair state of preservation. The central 3 m. of the first zone project 18 cm. and contain a sunken panel 5 cm. deep (fig. 58). The second zone overhangs the first by 16 cm., rises with a slight batter, and has a projection of the central section corresponding to the one in the lower zone.

On the southeast side, the building is set inward 25 cm. from the edge of the platform. The rear portion of the façade has a length of 2.20 m.; the wall is then set inward 60 cm., whence it continues for only a short distance, the front part of the building having fallen. This inset section has its base 35 cm. lower than the rear portion of the same façade (fig. 58).

The northwest façade (pl. 14*b*) is similar to the southeast but is in a much better state of preservation. The inset portion shows a sunken panel 6 cm. deep.

STRUCTURE Ib, standing on the southeast side of the terrace on a platform 4.20 m. high, is in ruin except for portions of the southeast (rear) and southwest façades (fig. 59). The rear wall has a depth of 1 m., and the lower zone rises 2.25 m., in which the central section projects 15 cm. In this projection is a long sunken panel; the dimensions were not taken but it is similar to the one in the rear façade of Structure Ia. Two ventilators open at the base of this section and two above the sunken panel. The portion of rear façade southwest of the projection is also perforated with four ventilators located

at the same levels as those just described. The second zone, overhanging the lower by 16 cm., has practically all fallen; enough remains to show that the projecting section is carried up into this zone.

The southwest façade is similar to that of Structure Ia in that the front part of the wall is inset from the rear. The latter is 2.40 m. long and is pierced by four ventilators, two at the base of the lower zone and two near the top. A sunken panel is 53 cm. from the base of the zone and 85 cm. from the back wall. The front portion of this façade, inset 60 cm., is now only 1.10 m. long. Its base is 35 cm. lower than that of the section to the rear. At the top of the inset zone, which is 25 cm. below that of the rear section, is a band overhanging 15 cm.

STRUCTURE Ic, at the northeast end of the terrace, rests on its own platform 3.70 m. high. Only the lower portion of the rear façade and adjacent sections of the sides are standing. The plan and elevation are similar to those of the other buildings described (fig. 60).

STRUCTURE Id, on the northwest side of the terrace at the head of the stairway, is represented by a mound rising about 4 m.

STRUCTURE V, at the east end of Group C, is an irregularly shaped terrace 4 m. high. It supports ten mounds, of which only three show standing walls. Stelae C2 and C3 on the west side and Stela 21 on the north are definitely associated with the structure. Stela 20 is 40 m. to the east.

STRUCTURE VA, at the northeast corner of the terrace, faces west and is somewhat similar to the first three buildings of Structure I. It is now fallen except for the east and portions of the south façade. The plan, no doubt containing three parallel longitudinal chambers, has an indentation on the south side as well as a slight projection of the central part of the back wall.

The east façade is 6.36 m. long (pl. 14*c*). The first zone rises vertically and the second overhanging the first by 16 cm., has a slight batter. The central area of the back wall projects 15 cm.; this is carried up into the second zone. Figure 61*c* shows the position of the ventilators in the east façade. Set inward 40 cm. from the upper edge of the second zone and now rising

1.70 m. is a masonry wall, the remains of a roof comb. The east face rises vertically and is of carefully finished stones. The west side is rough-faced and contains two niches, 1 m. apart, which extend the height of the standing wall and are each 40 cm. wide by 18 cm. deep.

The south elevation of the structure shows the east or rear section as being 2.45 m. long. The second zone overhangs the first and, as on the east side, it rises with a batter. An indentation in this south façade may correspond with the middle of the possible three parallel chambers (fig. 61). The existence of three chambers is further substantiated by the stepping upward, from front to rear, of the base of the façade, indicating rooms on different levels. (This also occurs in buildings at Tikal and Uaxactun. "The rooms usually

number three, one behind the other, and the floor of the two back ones raised slightly above the level of that of the room in front" [Tozzer, 1911, p. 97]. Cf. Smith, 1937a.) The lower zone in each of the three sections rises 2.25 m. The second zone of the recessed section overhangs 17 cm. and rises vertically. The same zone in the section to the west has a slight batter.

A mound, supporting Structure Vc, rises at the southeast corner of the terrace. A portion of exposed masonry is 80 cm. thick and may be the medial wall. At the south end of the terrace is Structure Vd (pl. 156), apparently a block of masonry, 12 m. square at its base and 9 m. high. The contour of the debris surmounting the platform does not suggest a building, although one may have existed.

GROUP A

On the north side of Group A is a plaza defined by Structures XIX, XX, XXI, and XXIII, with Structure XXII in the middle.

STRUCTURE XIX, at the south, has a stairway about 25 m. wide indicated on the north slope by the contour of the debris. Stela A6 is at the base of the stairway. Stelae 6-9 are at the south base of the structure. The building resting on the mound apparently had two parallel longitudinal rooms, each 22 m. by 80 cm. Only small sections of wall rise above the detritus and all but fragmentary portions of vault have collapsed. The rear and medial walls have thicknesses of 1.50 m. and 1.25 m. respectively. Exterior masonry on the south side is of uniformly shaped blocks, averaging 18 by 20 cm., by 20 cm. deep. The chinks between the courses are large and filled with spalls. In contrast to the exterior masonry that of the interior is very irregular; the stones are not surfaced and only crudely chipped. Those of the vault are large slabs set at a slight angle. The stones at the spring line overhang 5 cm. Two beam holes were noted at this level.

STRUCTURE XX, on the west side of the plaza, is a large pyramidal mound measuring 54 by 59 m. at its base and rising to a height of 33 m. Its facing has fallen or is covered with detritus. A stairway is definitely indicated on the east and there may have been one on each of the other three sides. The pyramid, as suggested by its contour, may have risen in a number of terraces and it is possible that there were great blocks of masonry on either side of the stairways. On top of the pyramid is Stela 12; no evidence exists to suggest that there was also a building. (At Rio Bec, Group II, Structure III, a large pyramid on the west side of a plaza supports a single stela.) Stelae A7, A8 and 10 and Altar 6 are at the southeast base

STRUCTURE XXI, a mound on the north side of the plaza, has no exposed masonry.

STRUCTURE XXII, a platform in the middle of the plaza, is 7 m. square and not over 2 m. high.

STRUCTURE XXIII, a long platform mound defining the east side of the plaza and supporting three buildings, is of the Uaxactun, Group E, type (cf. Calakmul, Structure IV; Uxul, Structure XIII). The platform is 80 m. north and south, 15 m. wide, and 4 m. high. Stairways, in line with each of the three buildings, probably gave onto the platform; only the middle one is unquestionably indicated by the contour of the debris. The three buildings, XXIIIa, XXIIIb, and XXIIIc, are very similar in plan and elevation; each has three parallel longitudinal chambers with floor levels stepped upward from front to back (cf. Structure V), an indentation in the outer wall at each side of the building, and a slight projection of the central part of the back wall. The west (front) façade of each has fallen; now only the back wall, portions of the side walls, and some vaults are standing. Each building rests on a low independent platform (cf. Oxpeul, Structure V). The one to the north is about 3 m. high. Most of the facing has fallen; remnants suggest two battered zones, with the lower rising 1.55 m. and the upper overhanging 5-7 cm.

STRUCTURE XXIIIa. The lower zone of the east façade (rear) rises with a batter. The central part of this wall projects 15 cm. and contains a sunken panel 10 cm. deep. There are eight ventilators in the wall: four are in the projecting central part and two each in the façade at either side (fig. 62a). The upper zone overhangs the lower by 20 cm. and rises with a batter; the angle could not be measured as much of the facing has fallen and the portion remaining is in poor condition.

The south façade is standing only in part (fig. 62c, pl. 15c). The lower zone of the rear section contains a sunken panel 10 cm. deep. The north façade is only slightly better preserved (fig. 62b). The rear section shows the orifices of two ventilators and has a sunken panel varying from 10 to 15 cm. deep. Some untinted plaster remains near its upper margin. The second zone overhangs 15 cm.

The indented areas on the north and south sides are similar. The relation of zone heights in the rear section to those of the indented area of the north façade are shown in figure 62d.

STRUCTURE XXIIIb is in a better state of preservation than either of the other two and is somewhat larger. The central part of the back wall projects 10 cm. and rises with a slight batter (fig. 63). It contains a 10-cm.-deep sunken panel, which is slightly wider at the bottom than at the top (pl. 15a). Ten shafts or ventilators have their exterior openings in the first zone (fig. 63a). The second zone rises at an angle and at its base overhangs the first 12–28 cm. A third zone, possibly a roof comb, is set inward 12 cm. from the top of the second and rises vertically 1.10 m. to its fallen upper margin.

The masonry is of large blocks. Arcas of plaster on the façade show traces of red paint where protected by the overhang of the second zone. Within a year or so a trench had been cut through the south end of the third zone; the debris was thrown over the east side.

The north façade of this building is the best preserved in the group (pl. 16a). The first zone of the rear section rises with a trace of a batter and contains a sunken panel 8 cm. deep (fig. 63b). Around the edges of the face of the second zone are fragments of a plaster

band 25 cm. wide (fig. 63b, pl. 16a). Above the second zone and set inward 12 cm. from its edge, the third rises vertically and is 1.85 cm. wide. The relation of zone heights and form of moldings of the three sections of the north façade are shown in figure 63b. Block-type masonry is used and in some places is coated with plaster; where protected it is tinted red. Most of the south façade has fallen (pl. 16b). Structure XXIIIb gives the clearest idea of the relation of chambers, floor levels, spring lines, and vault heights to the zones of the façade (fig. 63b). The floor levels are stepped upward from front to rear and the vaults spring at correspondingly higher levels. In both the front and middle rooms the east vault soffit springs at a higher level than the west soffit. Thus in the front room, beam holes which appear 28 cm. above the offset of the west half of the vault are at the spring line in the east half. Other beam holes in the same room are 7 cm. below the capstones.

The rear chamber, almost filled with debris, has only the top of the vault exposed. Above this room, as above the middle one, is a passageway apparently forming some part of the roof comb. Although their poor state of preservation does not allow much analysis of the passageways, the general design suggests the upper-story rooms in Structure A-XVIII, Uaxactun (Smith, 1937a, pl. 22).

STRUCTURE XXIIIc is far less well preserved than XXIIIa or XXIIIb to the north. The entire back (east) wall has fallen. The north and south walls of the rear chamber are 85 cm. and 70 cm. thick respectively. The north façade is in a fair state of preservation, but it is so like those of the other two buildings that only the photograph and the drawings of the elevations and sections are given (fig. 64 and pl. 16c).

GROUP B

STRUCTURE XXXIX, a low platform supporting a solid mass of masonry, is the only structure in this group sufficiently intact to permit description. The platform, its facing now fallen or covered with debris, measured about 20 by 21 m. at the base and rose with a slight batter to 3 m. Abutting it to the west is a terrace, not over 1.60 m. high, 10 m. wide, and 20 m. long, on which stood plain Stela B4 (fig. 65). A stairway is indicated on the west side by the contour of the debris.

The four sides of the solid mass of masonry resting on the platform are faced, except for areas on the east and west, and composed of two compound zones. The first zone now has a lower element, rising at an angle of 84°, on which rests a 16-cm. band overhanging 6 cm. Above this and set inward 4 cm. from its face is a second

battered element. It is 90 cm. high, rises at an angle of 95°, and is topped by a 16-cm. band overhanging 5 cm. Extending inward from the upper edge of the band is a terrace 1.20 m. wide, which slopes upward 20 cm. to the base of the second compound zone. This zone is similar to the first. The masonry facing of the structure is vincer-like, the stones measuring 9 by 34 cm., 23 by 24 cm., 18 by 40 cm., and 20–25 cm. deep. Courses are maintained with more or less regularity and, as the stones have been carefully worked and squared, only occasional chinking was necessary (pls. 16d, 17a). The corners of the structure were probably square.

A number of openings, presumably weep holes, averaging 8 by 10 cm., show on the façade of the structure. Six are at regular intervals across the base and top of

the lower element of the first compound zone on the north and south sides (fig. 65*b*, pl. 17*b*). In the second compound zone only five openings were noted at the top of the first element. Similar orifices were also seen on the east and west sides, but because of the condition of the structure their number is not known (pl. 17*c*).

The unfaced area on the west, 7.10 m. wide, extends from the debris at its base to the top of the great mass of masonry (pl. 17*c*). It is of rough, unworked slabs, blocks, spalls, and great deal of mortar, and projects irregularly a little beyond the line of the façade. No stairway was definitely indicated, nor were typical structural stones of one noted in the debris at the base of this area; the debris itself appears insufficient for a stairway. The unfaced area on the east side, 7.70 m. wide, is similar to that on the west.

The eastern half of the top of the solid mass of masonry supports a platform 50 cm. high and apparently having the same north and south length as the top of the structure. Rising from the platform, in the middle of the west side, are remains of a block of masonry, perhaps an altar, 1 m. high, 3 m. wide, and 5 m. long. The platform, as well as the altar, was faced but is now covered with detritus. A pit north of the altar appears to be recent. The structure, with its possible stairways on the east and west, and the masonry altar on top suggest Structure VI at Calakmul.

STRUCTURE XXXVIII, a single pyramid with no faced stones exposed, definitely has a stairway indicated on the west side. At its base are Stelae 18 and 19 and to the west are Stela 16 with Altar 4, Stela 17, and Stela B5 with Altar 3.

May 8, O'Neill visited Maabal which lies about 12 km. north of east of Naachtun. No stelae or standing buildings were seen. There are many mounds and sections

of walls, some rising 2 m. with one supporting a portion of beveled molding. The masonry is reported as *vencer-type* with the faces of the rectangular stones carefully worked.

While at Naachtun two of the workmen reported a ruin known to them as Mirador, southwest of La Fama; May 9 they were sent to locate it. The work at Naachtun was completed May 12 and the expedition moved on to Monterrey, where it met the men as they were returning from the new ruins. The next morning the party traveled to La Fama and May 14 started for Mirador. The first-night camp was made at the water hole of Chilar, seven hours' ride from La Fama. Mirador (lat. 17° 47.8' N., long. 89° 57.4' W., estimated) lies an hour's ride southwest of Chilar, the nearest known source of water to the ruins. Mirador was first thought to be the site seen by Mr. Percy Madeira during his aerial survey (lat. 17° 40.0' N., long. 89° 50.0' W. [1931, p. 121]), but further observation indicated his site to be more probably at or near Zacatal. Due to the absence of water only half a day was spent at Mirador making a hasty reconnaissance, which showed nine lofty pyramids. The biggest and highest supports seven mounds, of which the largest rises not less than 20 m. above the great pyramid. On the west side of this mound is a stone 80 by 30 cm., which has two holes drilled in its face similar to those in the doorjambs of Structure XV, Rio Bec, Group I. Looking southeast from the top of the mound, we saw a large structure rising above the bush. Our guide said it was 16-20 km. away. The second largest pyramid at Mirador supports five mounds. On its south talus lies a fallen cornice stone with a rain-drip worked on one face (Calakmul, Structure III). No stelae were seen; much of the site unquestionably remained unexplored.