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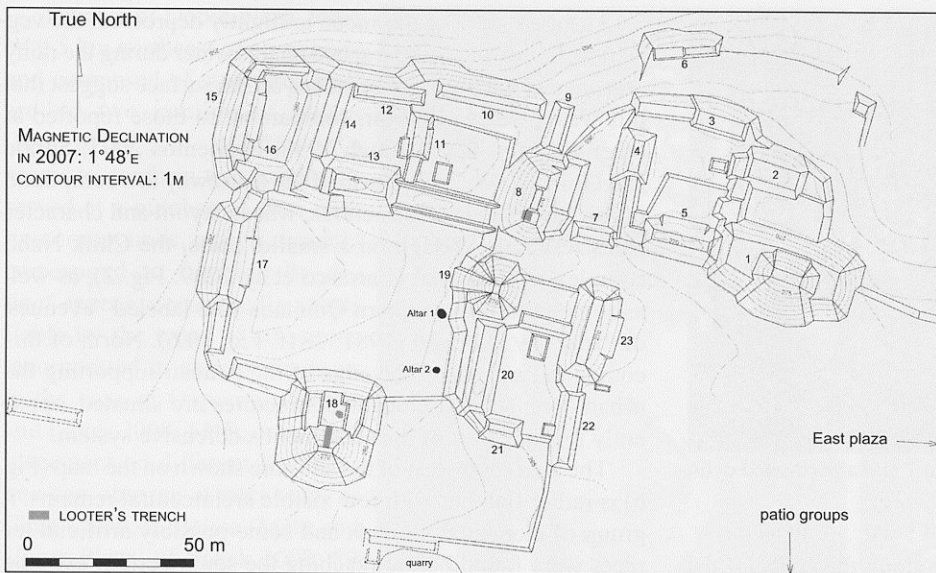


Fig. 2. Los Hornos, map of the North Complex.

The larger North Complex (N18°00'46.7", W89°55'29.3": Structure 1; all coordinates, taken with a hand-held GPS receiver, are in WGS84 datum) consists of a number of structures built on several platforms and arranged around plazas and patios (Fig. 2). While most buildings are nowadays reduced to mounds, a looters' trench excavated in the central upper building of a triadic group on Structure 18 exposed a narrow and partially ruined vaulted room, with remains of stucco plaster on its walls. As a consequence of plunderers' activity, parts of another vaulted room are exposed on Structure 8. Lying on the plaza west of Structures 19 and 20 are roughly circular Altars 1 (ca. 3 m × 2.42 m × 0.4 m) and 2 (c. 2.08 m × 1.90 m × 0.4 m), with no traces of relief. South of the plaza extending east of Structure 18 is a depression, most probably a quarry, with a natural rocky shelter; two worked stones, possibly altars in an advanced state of decay, were observed just north of this cavity and east of an elongated mound. Another similar depression is located about 150 m to the west-southwest. Smaller structures continue beyond the area shown on the map in Fig. 2: east of the largest plaza flanked on its north side by the 10-m tall Structure 1, a few rectangular mounds delimit a smaller plaza, while south of it is a group of structures enclosing several patios.

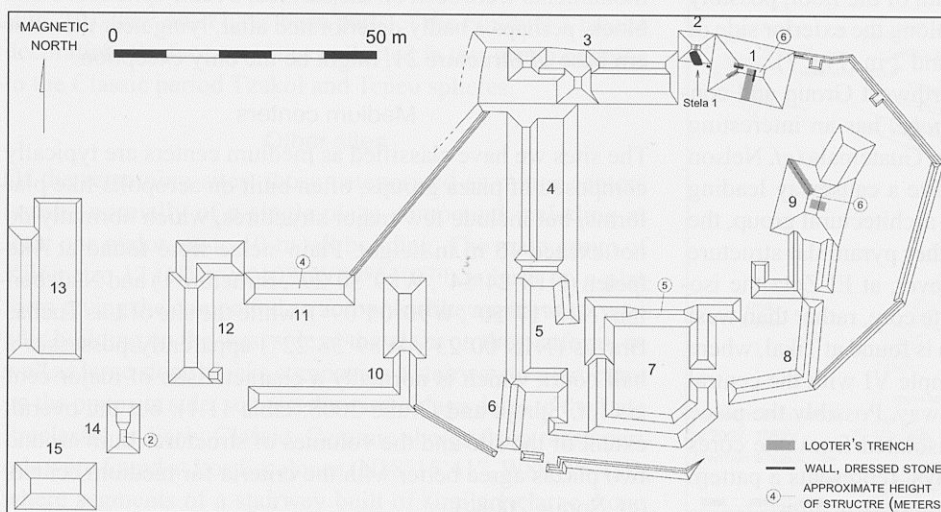


Fig. 3. Los Hornos, sketch map of the South Complex.

The South Complex is located less than 500 m to the south (N18°00'33", W89°55'37": Structure 1). Two small and possibly artificial *aguadas* were observed in the intervening area. The perimeter of the main part of the South Complex is defined by remains of a wall, which are up to 0.5 m tall and 2 m wide. The wall, which may have been surmounted by a palisade, protecting or symbolically delimiting the core area, is along certain segments substituted by buildings that apparently served the same purpose (Fig. 3). Various ceramic fragments pertaining to the Middle Preclassic Mamom and the Classic Tzakol and Tepeu complexes were found along the southern section of

the wall. One of the looters' trenches in Structure 1 exposed a wall built of finely dressed stones, as well as remains of a floor. Leaning against the southern slope of the adjacent Structure 2 is a plain stela, approximately 1.5 m wide and 3 m tall; a perforated cylindrical stone, with a diameter of about 0.5 m, was found east of it and at the base of Structure 1 (Fig. 4). At the southwestern corner of the quadrangle composing Structure 7, several stone blocks with geometrical ornaments carved in relief were observed (Fig. 5).

Another sizable group of structures occupies a natural elevation located 1.5 km northeast of the North Complex (N18°01'06", W89°54'42"). A quadrangular platform, measuring around 70 m along its sides, supports a plaza dominated on its north side by a pyramidal structure rising to the height of about 14 m.

Uitzilna

The core area of this site, located around 27 km south of the town of Constitución and a few kilometers west of the western limit of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (N18°22'59.2", W90°05'01.8": Structure 6), occupies a "peninsula" of elevated terrain, a rocky outcrop with steep slopes and surrounded by a *bajo* on all sides except to the east, where a narrow ravine separates it from the elevated terrain continuing in that direction: from the wetland to the north, this gully runs in a southeasterly direction along the eastern edge of the Northwest Group and, after turning south near the southeastern extreme of the East Acropolis, descends again into the *bajo* (Fig. 6). A markedly defensive aspect of the site, alluded to in the name we chose to baptize it (meaning "fortress" or "castle" in Yucatec Maya, according to Vienna Dictionary), is indicated not only by the placement of the urban core on the referred "peninsula" delimited by the gorge, which may have been artificially

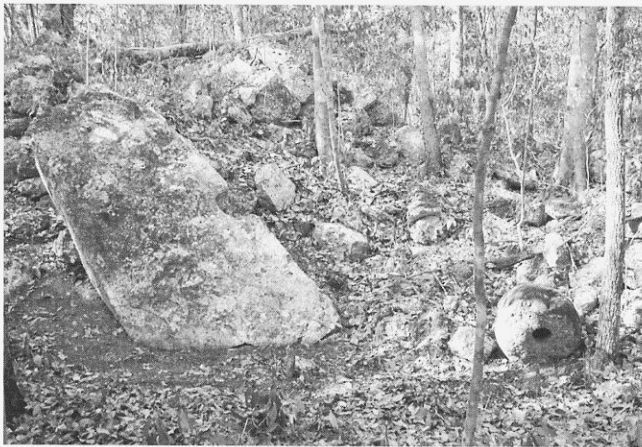


Fig. 4. Los Hornos, South Complex, Stela 1 and a perforated cylindrical stone drum, looking north.

modified, but also by a wall running along the edges of the East Acropolis (see below) and by other structures strategically placed along the ravine. Due to these characteristics, Uitzilna resembles sites such as Punta de Chimino, in the Petexbatun region in Guatemala, whose center occupies a defensible peninsula in a lake separated from the mainland by at least two ditches protected by palisades (cf. Escobedo 1997; Demarest 2004: 249ff).

While several impressive buildings dominate the site (Fig. 6), with the largest one (Structure 6) rising 14/17 m high above the west/east plaza floors of the South Acropolis, only few architectural elements are visible on the surface. In the upper part of Structure 2, in the Central Group, a vaulted room was exposed by looters. Its walls, on which fragments of stucco plaster survive, are built of finely cut stones joined by mortar, among which small stone “wedges” are inserted; portions of the floor are also preserved along the walls. On the East Acropolis, delimited on its northeast side by the aforementioned ravine and consisting of two plaza groups on different levels, parts of walls are visible on top of Structure 16 and in Structure 27, which was severely looted. Segments of the defensive wall referred to above, which originally must have supported a palisade, are preserved along the northern and eastern edges of the East Acropolis. A few looters’ trenches exposed portions of the outer face of the wall, built of finely cut stones, as well as considerable extents of a stuccoed floor abutted to it; the width of the floor, possibly constituting a walkway of some sort along the exterior side of the parapet, seems to have been around 2 m (Fig. 7).

Structure 29, dominating the Northwest Group and connected to the Central Group by a *saché*, has an interesting analogue in Structure M7-1 of El Zotz, Guatemala (cf. Nelson 2008: Figura 5): in both cases we have a causeway leading from an isolated pyramid to a central architectural group, the entrance to which is flanked by another pyramidal structure and a low rectangular mound. However, at El Zotz the isolated pyramid is located east of the site core, rather than west of it, as at Uitzilna. A similar situation is found at Tikal, where the Méndez Causeway connects Temple VI with the central compound of the site, some 500 m away. Possibly the placement of these pyramids, relatively isolated from site cores but connected to them with causeways, represents a pattern reflecting some specific function of these structures.

The area south of the *saché* is slightly depressed; the vegetation, indicating that the space retains water during the rainy season, and the presence of stones on the surface suggest that this was a water reservoir, comparable to those reported at other sites (cf. Scarborough 1998; Barrientos 2007; Šprajc and Grube 2008: 267). North of the causeway is a compound of low and elongated structures, whose layout and characteristics resemble, though on a smaller scale, the Chiik Nahb complex of Calakmul (Carrasco et al. 2009: Fig. 2), as well as some groups in southern Quintana Roo labeled “avenues” or “*vías*” by Harrison (1981: 281f, Fig. 10.6). North of this compound and along the edge of the plateau supporting the urban core, several elongated structures are situated, apparently forming part of the settlement’s defensive system.

The area southwest of the site core shown on the map (Fig. 6) is rather flat, but with few visible architectural remains. A group of elongated mounds and some possibly artificial terraces were found before reaching the southwestern extreme of the elevated “peninsula”, and two depressions were observed on the edge of the *bajo* near the westernmost tip of the promontory; as suggested by vegetation (*tintal*) and the stones observed on the surface, these may have been artificially modified *aguadas*. Another possible *aguada* lies on the wetland edge north of the site core.

Surveying the area east and northeast of the monumental core, on the other side of the ravine, we found a number of mounds of different sizes, mainly arranged in patio groups, as well as three quarries, several *chultunob*, including one with a rectangular ground plan (N18°23’32”, W90°04’34”), and a roughly square platform, about 4 m high and measuring some 50 m along its sides (N18°23’30”, W90°04’36”). A larger compound labeled Northeast Acropolis is situated on a natural elevation about 650 m northeast of the site core (N18°23’25”, W90°04’48”): a basal platform supports a courtyard flanked by three low mounds and a pyramidal structure rising some 10 m above the surrounding terrain (Fig. 8).

Abundant quantities of surface ceramics collected at various spots, mostly in looters’ trenches, indicate a continuous occupation of the site from the Middle Preclassic to the Terminal Classic period. Even if Uitzilna, to judge by its longevity, extent and characteristics of the urban core, must have been a rather important center on a regional level, no sculpted monuments were seen on the surface; a semi-spherical stone block, perhaps a badly deteriorated altar, lying near the western base of Structure 21, might be the only exception.

Medium centers

The sites we have classified as medium centers are typically composed of plaza groups, often built on acropolis-like platforms, but include few major structures, which normally do not exceed 15 m in height. Plain stelae were found at Akalpeten (N18°24’54”, W89°50’29”, Structure 1) and Nadzbeiltun (N18°17’50”, W90°05’09”), while the site of Las Tucas Bravas (N18°00’23”, W89°38’22”) apparently possesses a ball court, which is normally a characteristic of major centers (cf. Šprajc and Grube 2008: tabla 11.1), but the overall extent of the site and the volumes of structures built around two plazas agree better with the criteria for medium centers (cf. Šprajc 2008c).

The site of Doble Plaza, located 0.5 km northeast of an *aguada* and composed of structures built around two contiguous plazas (N18°15'54"; W89°56'54"), seems to conform to a pattern observed at a number of sites with two compounds, which possibly correspond to functionally distinct spaces, occasionally identifiable by the types of structures incorporated in each of them, as in the case of Oxpemul (Šprajc and Flores 2008: 51ff), or by their placement on different levels, as one can observe at sites such as Chan Chich, in Belize (Main and Upper Plaza; cf. Houk 2003: 59, Fig. 5.4), and Dzibanché, Quintana Roo, Mexico (Plaza Gann and Plaza Xibalbá; cf. Nalda 2000: 56). At Doble Plaza, the larger (west) plaza apparently represented an open or public space, while the eastern plaza, which is smaller but rests on a higher platform, seems to have been of a more restricted access. A comparable spatial arrangement was observed at Unachililbe and La Lucha de Los Ángeles, two other medium centers in southeastern Campeche.

While the main quadrangle of Pared de los Reyes, reported by Lundell (1933: 166f) and Ruppert and Denison (1943: 69f, Figs. 85 and 86, Pls. 27, 28a, 28b), was relocated in 2005, and other architectural groups apparently pertaining to the same site were found in 2004 (Šprajc and Flores 2008: 101ff), in 2007 we located four additional compounds in the same general area. Consisting of patio groups with evidently residential function, they also include some major elongated and pyramidal structures, apparently elite residences and shrines. In one of these groups, located just south of the abandoned trail Villahermosa – La Esperanza (N17°58'45"; W89°49'49"), fragments of small cylindrical stone columns are scattered in the courtyard east of a ruined elongated building; together with an interesting stone element found at its western base (Fig. 10), they must have been parts of the building's facade decoration. Surface ceramics collected in this group pertain to the Classic period Tzakol and Tepeu spheres.

Other sites

Of the remaining sites, those categorized as minor centers consist normally of a single plaza compound including at least one major, up to 10-m tall building. The main group of Kilómetro 12 (N18°26'10", W89°53'27") is built on a platform giving the compound an acropolis-like appearance; a triadic building on the west side of the plaza on the platform, as well as large stone blocks composing a stairway to a structure on the opposite side, suggest the assemblage dates to the Late Preclassic or Early Classic. Ceramic sherds from these periods were found at Los Escalones (N18°15'41", W89°49'48"), where segments of a stairway built of similarly large stone blocks are exposed. At Los Tamborcitos, composed of two



Fig. 5. Los Hornos, South Complex, stone blocks with geometric decoration at the southwestern corner of Structure 7.



quadrangles with structures up to 5 m high, the western and larger one, measuring around 90 m along its sides (N18°17'24"; W89°59'19"), incorporates an elongated structure with several cylindrical stone blocks lying on the plaza in front of it, possibly parts of small columns similar to those reported at the site of Kaynikte, located south of the Escárcega-Chetumal road (Nondédéo 2003: 141ff).

Several architectural groups occupying natural elevations 2.5 to 3.5 km northeast of Las Tucas Bravas (*v. supra*) probably pertain to the site reported by Karl Ruppert in 1934 and recorded with the name Marihuana on the Tulane Map (M.A.R.I. 1940), since the coordinates given in the cor-

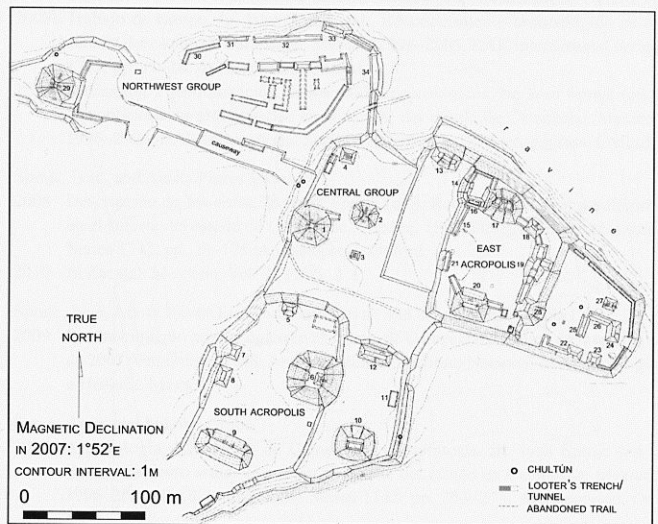


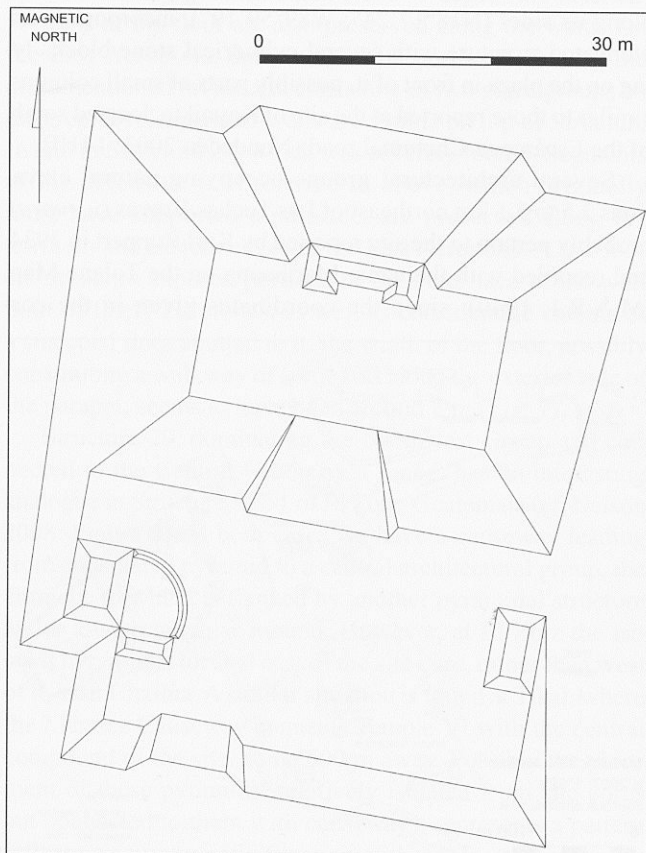
Fig. 6. Uitzilna, map of the core area.



Fig. 7. Uitzilna, East Acropolis, exterior face of the defensive wall, with fragments of an abutted floor, looking west.

responding card index (N18°00.0', W89°37.2'; estimated) fall about 2 km south of the largest group visited by us (N18°01'14", W89°37'04"). While the latter consists of several structures enclosing a plaza on a quadrangular platform, whose sides measure around 50 m, other groups of low mounds were observed in the area to the south and the east.

A few architectural groups that could not be associated to any nearby center were classified as small sites. One of these, lying 5.4 km south of the former La Esperanza *chicle* station, is undoubtedly identical to the one recorded on the Tulane Map as Sasilha (M.A.R.I. 1940) and discovered by Karl Ruppert during his Third Campeche Expedition in 1934: both Ruppert's (1934, No. 41: 43ss) field notes describing their ride from La Esperanza to the *aguada* of Sasilha and the lat-



152 Fig. 8. Uitzilna, sketch map of the Northeast Acropolis.

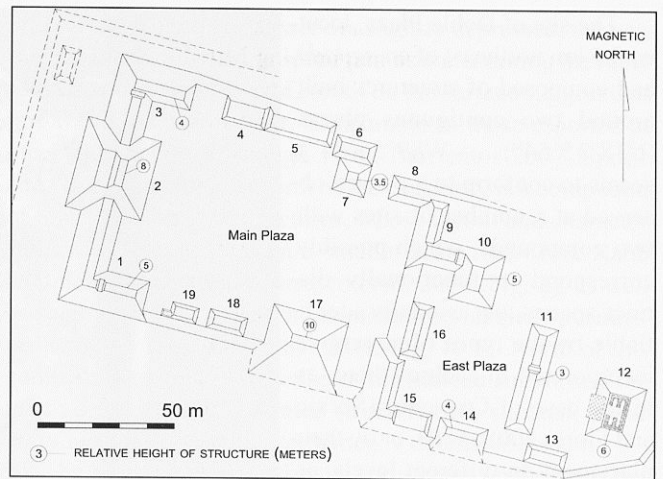


Fig. 9. Doble Plaza, sketch map of the main compound.

ter's coordinates (N18°08.3', W90°05.0') given by Ruppert and Denison (1943: 74) suggest that the *aguada* of Sasilha corresponds to the one observed on aerial photographs (CONABIO 1995–96) at N18°07'41" and W90°05'19", i.e. 1.7 km northwest of the group visited by us and consisting of a concentration of medium-sized structures arranged in several patio groups. Ruppert (1934, No. 41: 43ss) mentions they saw various groups of mounds, both before they arrived to the *aguada* and after continuing their way to the southeast.

Final comments

The surface ceramics collected at the sites surveyed in 2007, ranging from the Middle Preclassic to the Terminal Classic and evidencing a great florescence during the Classic, as well as a drastic population decrease at the end of the latter period, is in agreement with the settlement history of southeastern Campeche based on former surveys (García López 2008). Considering both Preclassic ceramics and some architectural features observed at sites such as El Zacatal (Šprajc and Flores 2010), Los Hornos and Uitzilna, the latter can be added to other major centers whose early appearance and development indicate that considerable population density and relatively high levels of social complexity were reached



Fig. 10. Pared de los Reyes, Group PR-6, fragment of a sculpted stone at the western base of Structure 2.

in the area as early as the Late Preclassic period, paralleling the developments in the neighboring Mirador Basin in Guatemala (cf. Hansen 1994; 2000). The reconnaissance works accomplished so far in southeastern Campeche, providing data on site distribution, chronology, architectural characteristics and urban planning, as well as historical information in hieroglyphic texts, allow a new insight into political history, interaction with the neighboring areas, the impact of specific environmental constraints on settlement patterns, and other aspects of Maya cultural development in the central Lowlands (Flores and Šprajc 2008; Šprajc 2008a).

Particularly interesting architectural features of the sites examined in 2007 are the ramparts of Uitzilna and Los Hornos. While the wall encircling the South Complex of Los Hornos might represent a symbolic boundary of the space reserved for the elite, such interpretation can hardly be applied to Uitzilna, where a system of walls and buildings strategically positioned along the northern and eastern edges of the urban core, as well as its placement on a natural elevation with steep slopes and surrounded by a *bajo*, reveal quite eloquently that the defensive concerns, comparable to those that dictated the location of other hilltop sites (e. g. Oxpemul, Dos Aguadas, Los Alacranes, La Muñeca, Candzibaantun, Las Delicias, Nuevo Paraíso: Šprajc and Flores 2008; Šprajc and Grube 2008: 272), must have been of foremost importance.

Acknowledgments

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RESUMEN: La séptima temporada del reconocimiento arqueológico en el sureste de Campeche se llevó a cabo en 2007 en el sector sur de la Biósfera de Calakmul. Los sitios localizados corroboran la ocupación del área desde el Preclásico Medio hasta el Clásico Terminal, establecida con base en las prospecciones anteriores. En dos centros mayores fueron documentados los restos de murallas que delimitan sus núcleos urbanos; su función defensiva es particularmente evidente en el complejo principal de Uitzilna, situado sobre un promontorio de terreno elevado rodeado por bajos. En algunos sitios también se encontraron estelas lisas y otros monumentos.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Die siebte Feldkampagne des Survey-Projektes im Süden von Campeche 2007 konzentrierte sich auf den Süden des Biosphärenreservats von Calakmul. Die lokalisierten Stätten bestätigten die bereits früher gemachte Beobachtung, dass es eine Besiedlung des Gebiets von der Mittleren Prälklassik bis in die Endklassik gab. In zwei größeren Zentren fanden sich Hinweise auf die Existenz von Mauern, welche die urbanen Zentren abgrenzen; die defensive Funktion ist besonders offensichtlich im Hauptkomplex von Uitzilna, der über ein erhöhtes Terrain gebaut ist, welches von niedrigliegenden Feuchtgebieten umgeben ist. Verschiedene unbearbeitete Stelen und andere Monumente wurden ebenfalls in einigen der Stätten gefunden.

Caballito Blanco, Oaxaca, un estudio del sitio y de su observatorio

Daniel Schávelzon

Existen en Mesoamérica construcciones que salen de lo habitual en sus formas; esto de por sí ha llamado la atención aunque no necesariamente quiere decir algo en particular; es más, es posible que haya casos en que la arqueología haya forzado a esas estructuras a decir más de lo que realmente significan, pero ese es otro tema. En este caso hay dos edificios en Oaxaca que tienen cinco lados, siendo un extremo en punta, lo que de por sí, a nuestra mirada, señala algo. El qué indican ha sido una de las grandes polémicas de esos dos sitios: Caballito Blanco y Monte Albán; pero lo que queremos presentar es el estudio detenido de uno de ellos, que por diversas razones quedó olvidado y en estado de abandono mientras que el otro es visitado por miles de turistas.

Es una curiosa situación la de Caballito Blanco, de abandono pese a estar sobre la carretera a Mitla, en el desvío a la cercana Yagul y a la vista. Si bien existen conflictos que han obligado a dejar este tema de lado (1), no deja de llamar la atención la falta de documentación detallada; eso es lo que hemos tratado de subsanar al hacer un relevamiento detallado antes que nuevas estructuras desaparezcan.

El sitio se encuentra localizado delante de la población de Tlacolula sobre un gran promontorio de roca; por detrás es una meseta que desciende suavemente y que ha sido nivelada para plantíos (2). En el entronque a Yagul se localiza a mano derecha un acceso por el que se inicia una senda para subir a la parte alta de la meseta que lo hace por el acantilado mismo, de tal forma que los escalones tallados en la roca son antiguos en su mayor parte, muy estrechos y con una hermosa vista al valle. Antes de llegar a la cúspide, en un rellano hay una gran cruz, parte del sistema de peregrinaciones del valle. Las coordenadas son: latitud norte 16° 56' 45.3", longitud oeste 96° 27' 9.8" y la meseta está a 1649 metros sobre el nivel del mar.

En la cara frontal de la meseta se divisa sobre la roca una pintura rupestre de colores blanco y rosa con la forma de una posible libélula, conocidas también como caballitos blancos en la región. En realidad es tan confuso el dibujo que ha sido interpretada de diversas maneras, incluso como que

“tiene en la base una hilera de grecas y sugiere la forma de un órgano o un candelabro de cinco brazos” (Bradomín 1978: 17). Además de esa pintura hay otras sobre el talud vertical rocoso lateral de la meseta, a 20 o 30 metros de altura. En la parte superior actualmente hay sólo tres estructuras visibles y fragmentos dispersos de otras, restos de un posible antiguo asentamiento mayor. La extensión analizada tiene un área de 5.600 metros cuadrados.

Una característica del lugar, al contrario de Monte Albán, es que este no está fortificado ni tiene complejidades de acceso salvo por el frente con su gran pared vertical, apreciándose ahora sólo algunos muros o contenciones que forman terrazas útiles para la siembra hechos con las piedras del sitio. Inclusive se observa en un terreno alledaño a las estructuras arqueológicas, el inicio de una casa hecha hace unos quince años, con paredes de piedras tomadas de los viejos edificios.

El trabajo consistió en un relevamiento detallado de todo lo existente con tecnología actual. No se hizo ningún tipo de

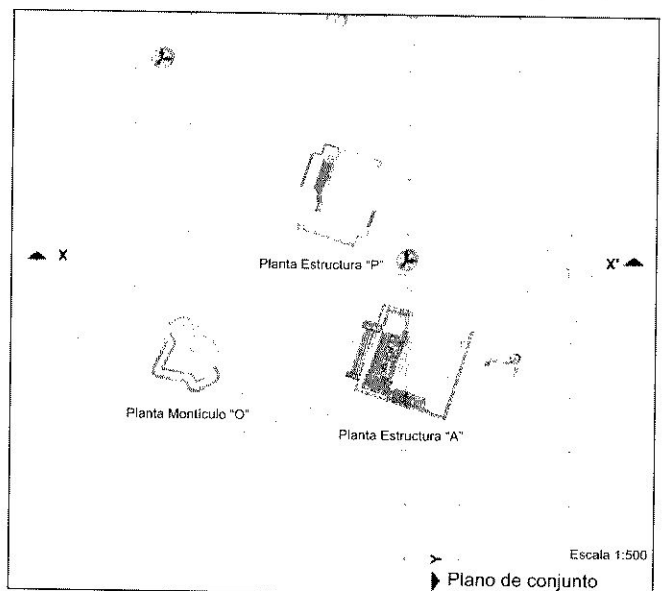


Fig. 1. Plano del grupo central de Caballito Blanco, único conservado del sitio