

XPUHIL
Campeche

BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

The area of the pre-Hispanic Xpuhil site is open to the public and it is guarded by the INAH. It is just an architectural complex known as the Group I comprised of some of the many buildings of the archeological site. Actually, to this date, approximately 25 architectural complexes have been reported on a total land extension of 24 km². As it is located on the current Xpuhil village, the head of the Calakmul municipality, a site where other complexes of the ancient ***pre-Columbian Mayan*** *communities existed, the influence of several hills on the site's surface is evident.*

Pre-Columbian Mayans established themselves in Xpuhil at the beginning of our time. Initially, they settled in a small village whose existence depended on the waters they prepared there. The use of natural resources and the building of important works of agricultural infrastructure led to demographic growth and to the development of a prosper community, specially between A.D. 600 and 800.

Furthermore, its strategic location at the peninsular geography between the Caribbean coast and Laguna de Términos allowed Xpuhil and other centers along the Río Bec to establish a relationship between them as well as with other neighboring areas regarding commercial and cultural aspects.



TOPONYM	"Cat's tail"
CULTURE	Mayan
PERIOD	Classic
TIMESPAN	A.D. 250 –1150

GETTING THERE

The Xphuil archeological zone is located 153 kilometers to the east of the Escárcega village in Campeche driving through the 186 federal highway, Escárcega-Chetumal.

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00p.m.

ADMISSIONS

In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Law of Rights: Free entrance for children under 13, students and teachers with current ID cards, senior citizens, retirees and pensioners, as well as workers and researchers of INAH.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The use of any video-shooting device must be paid in accordance with the authorized provisions of the Ministry of Finance; taking non-professional photographs, without a tripod, has no cost.

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CULTURA
SECRETARÍA DE CULTURA

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DISCOVER IT YOURSELF

Group I

It is the architectural complex open to the public and guarded by the INAH. Most of the explored structures so far are located in this site. All monumental buildings are placed in a straight line running from east to west. Most of them show their main facade facing the east. The tallest structure is the Three Towers, dating back to A.D. 760. Apparently it had a ritual function. Other buildings face the opposite side of the latter, such as the 2 and 2A, which, together with 3, define an open public square at the north and east sides. Their architecture was mainly chosen as residence by the governing class of the region during the Terminal Classical period.





Group III

It is located at the Aviación neighborhood on the current head of municipality. However, it is not the same mentioned by American researchers during the 1970s. Seven hills defining two public squares are observed on this group. One of them is open and the other one is closed by its south side. Based on the registered evidence, the building complex was designed and built within a constructive period between the Late Classic and the beginning of the Terminal period (A.D. 830 – 950). The buildings numbered 1 through 5 surround a first open courtyard, whereas the hills 5, 6 and 7 define another open courtyard by the south side. The III-7 structure is the only one that has been currently explored and its purpose may be related to public administration.

Group XX

Also known as Kitam. It is located at the Central neighborhood and it bears a massive foundation where eight buildings are built around three courtyards. The one at the center is the largest and it contains the main buildings. Other constructions are associated to the foundation. They are big and small in size and there are even terraces on the adjacent land along with water reservoirs. Pre-Columbian structure nomenclature is based on the names of the region's trees. For instance: Huayas, Chintok, Chacá, Amapolas, Ramones and Zapotes structures. They also receive the name of the artificial elements that distinguish them. Thus, we have the Metate or the Roadway (now vanished) structures.

Two of the most preserved buildings are the Huayas and Chacá structures. The former is located at the west side of the main courtyard and it displays two construction stages. The earliest shows Petén architecture, whereas the second and most recent one displays Río Bec features. On the other hand, the Chacá structure displays during its latest constructive period some features that link it to the late Río Bec tradition that may date back to A.D. 830 - 950. The facade's main access was flanked by masks made of stone mosaics placed as cascade, although only their lower part is preserved.

OUTSTANDING STRUCTURE

Building of the Three Towers

The structure 1 of Group I is the most important archeological site and it is named after the three towers that make it stand out from the other Río Bec structures as they only have two of them. The central tower is the highest and all of them display distinctive features of the region as they are formed by staggered bodies and unreachable staircases that lead to a simulated pavilion on the top.

The building has a platform placed on a limestone ground outcrop with a facade facing towards the east with twelve double passages and benches. A central niche may be seen in some of them. Both sides of the main spans have a decoration based on tiered stylized masks placed laterally in which serpent's bifid tongues and fangs as well as curls are identified. Among the decorative elements we observe mats or pop symbols linked to power. From the style point of view, it has been dated as belonging to the end of the Late Classic, around A.D. 760 and it is considered as one of the last examples of the Classic Río Bec architecture.

ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of this site belongs to the Río Bec tradition that is characterized by its monumental structures endowed with solid towers in each side of the building. Each one of these towers represents a tiered pyramid with an inaccessible staircase and a simulated or at least semi-functional pavilion. The facade decoration shows an influence from the sub-North Chenes area, which may be a complete or partial zoomorphic facade or masks placed in cascade on both sides of the main accesses. It is considered that buildings having integral zoomorphic towers and facades may have served as links between the royal lineages and Itazmná in order to provide the divine power through purification and investment rites to the governing priests.

The cut of each stone was carefully made on the pre-Hispanic period and the walls were originally lined by a thin and delicate stucco plaster. Other features specific of the area, except for Becán, are the restricted presence of stelae and the distribution of its buildings on rather scattered patterns instead of being integrated as observed in Petén.





MUST-SEE

- A *Structure I*
- B *Structure II*
- C *Structure II-A*
- D *Structure III*
- E *Structure IV*
- F *Structure V*
- G *Structure VI*

At the heart of the Mayab, among the exuberant jungle, Xpuhil is an important archeological center which displays the longest and most populated period of the Mayan empire.



DID YOU KNOW?

- *It was formally reported during the 1930s by an American expedition lead by the Carnegie Institute of Washington.*
- *As it is located in uninhabited jungle area, it was only known by the people working on the explorations for the gum tree.*
- *The settlement was based on an aguada or water reservoir in order to use this supply. Subsistence was based on the construction of agricultural terraces.*



SOME FIGURES

25 — It is comprised of 25 architectural complexes distributed within and around the urban settlement in the head of municipality.

10 — 10 buildings located in the open.

3 — 1 building contains 3 towers.

1000 — It remained 1000 years hidden within the jungle