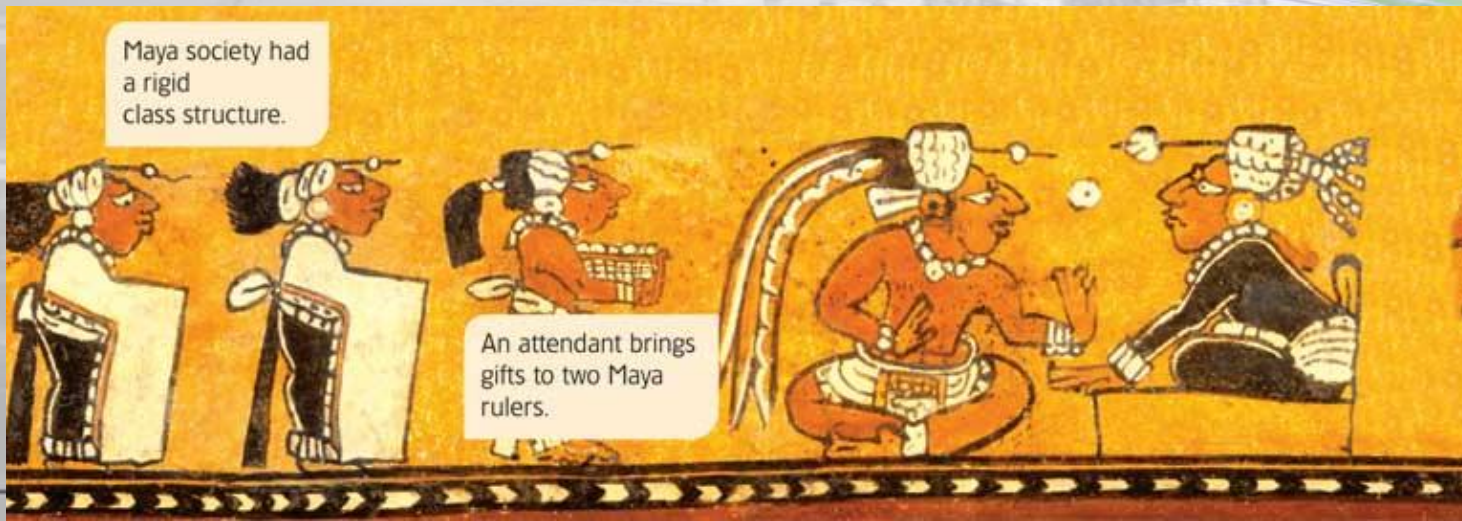


# Maya Life and Society



# Roles in Maya Society

- The Maya had a complex social structure. The upper and lower classes led very different lives.
- Kings held the highest position.
- Priests, warriors, and merchants made up the upper class.



# Roles in Maya Society

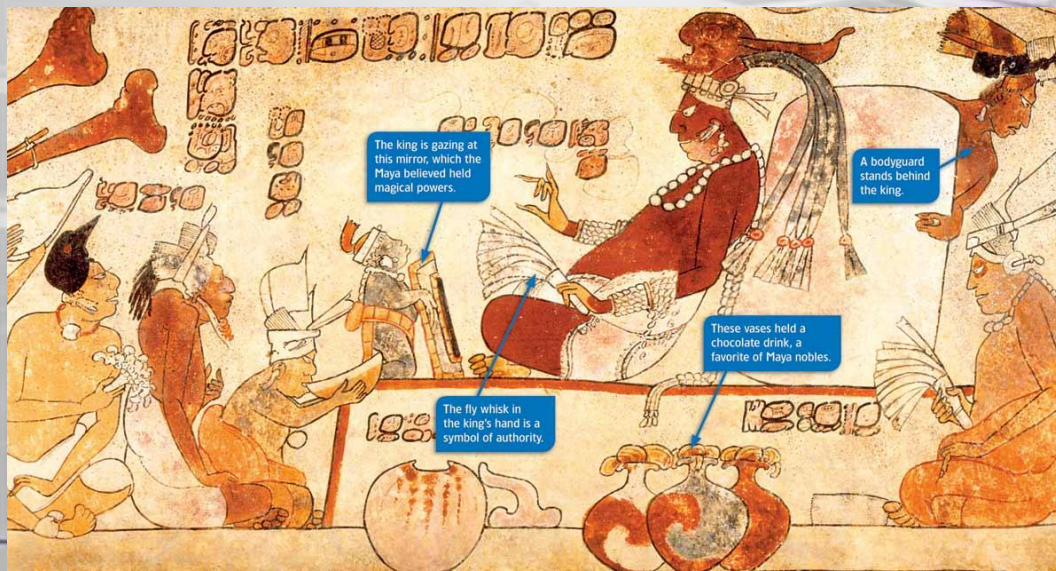
- The Maya believed that their rulers were related to the gods.
- Men and women could be rulers, but they had to have been born into a royal family.
- Priests were also born into their roles. Priests were highly educated. They used their knowledge of astronomy and mathematics to plan religious ceremonies.
- The warriors fought the battles and the merchants directed trade. Together, these four groups controlled political, economic, and religious life for the Maya.

# Roles in Maya Society

- Most Maya belonged to lower-class farming families. They lived in little houses outside the cities.
- Girls were taught to run the household. Men hunted and farmed.
- Maya farmers were required to serve the upper class. They had to give up some of their crops and make goods for the upper class.
- They were also used as labor to build temples. Slaves held the lowest position in Maya society.

# Religion

- The Maya worshipped many gods.
- They believed that each god represented a different area of life.
- The Maya believed that their kings spoke with the gods.

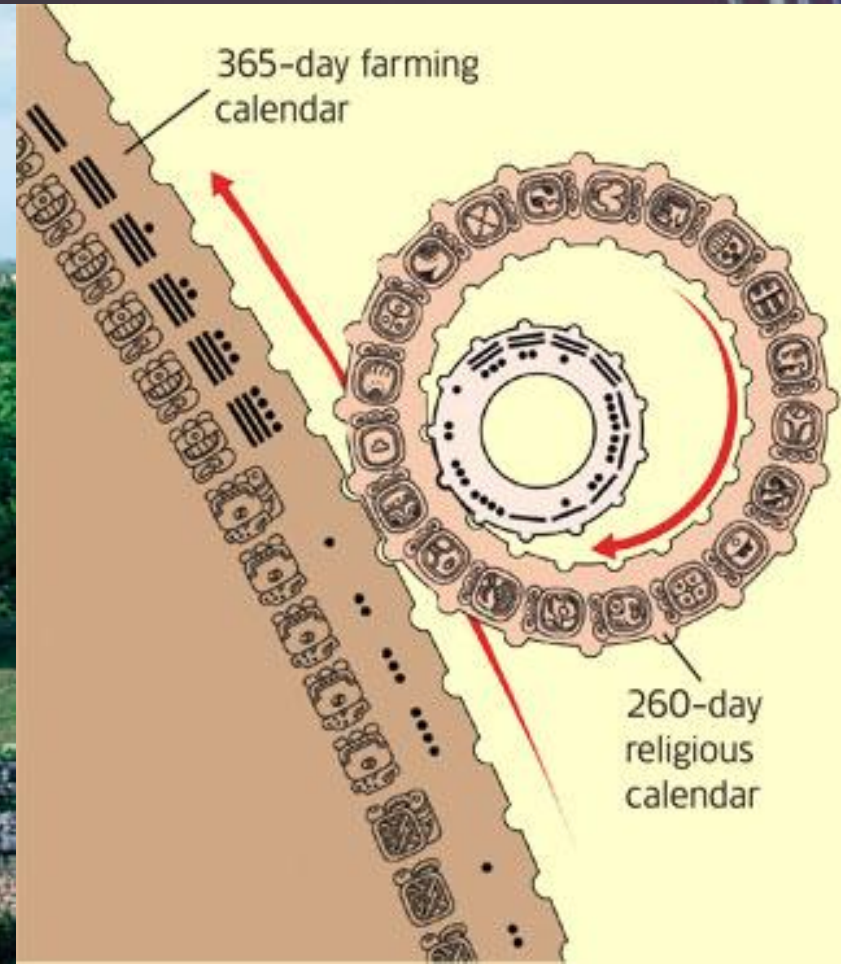


The king and his court were the center of Maya government and religious life. This vase painting shows a Maya king relaxing with some of his servants. Kings enjoyed all the luxuries of Maya life, such as music, fine clothing and food, and even chocolate.

# Religion

- The Maya believed the gods could either help them or hurt them, so they tried to keep the gods happy.
- They thought that the gods needed blood, so everyone gave blood by piercing their skin or tongue. Special rituals of blood giving were held at births, weddings, and funerals. On special occasions the Maya believed the gods needed extra amounts of blood. They made human sacrifices to the gods.

# Maya Astronomy and Calendars



This photo shows the observatory at the Maya city of Chichén Itzá. The diagram shows the Maya religious and farming calendars. The Maya used these two calendars together to coordinate planting, harvesting, and important religious events.

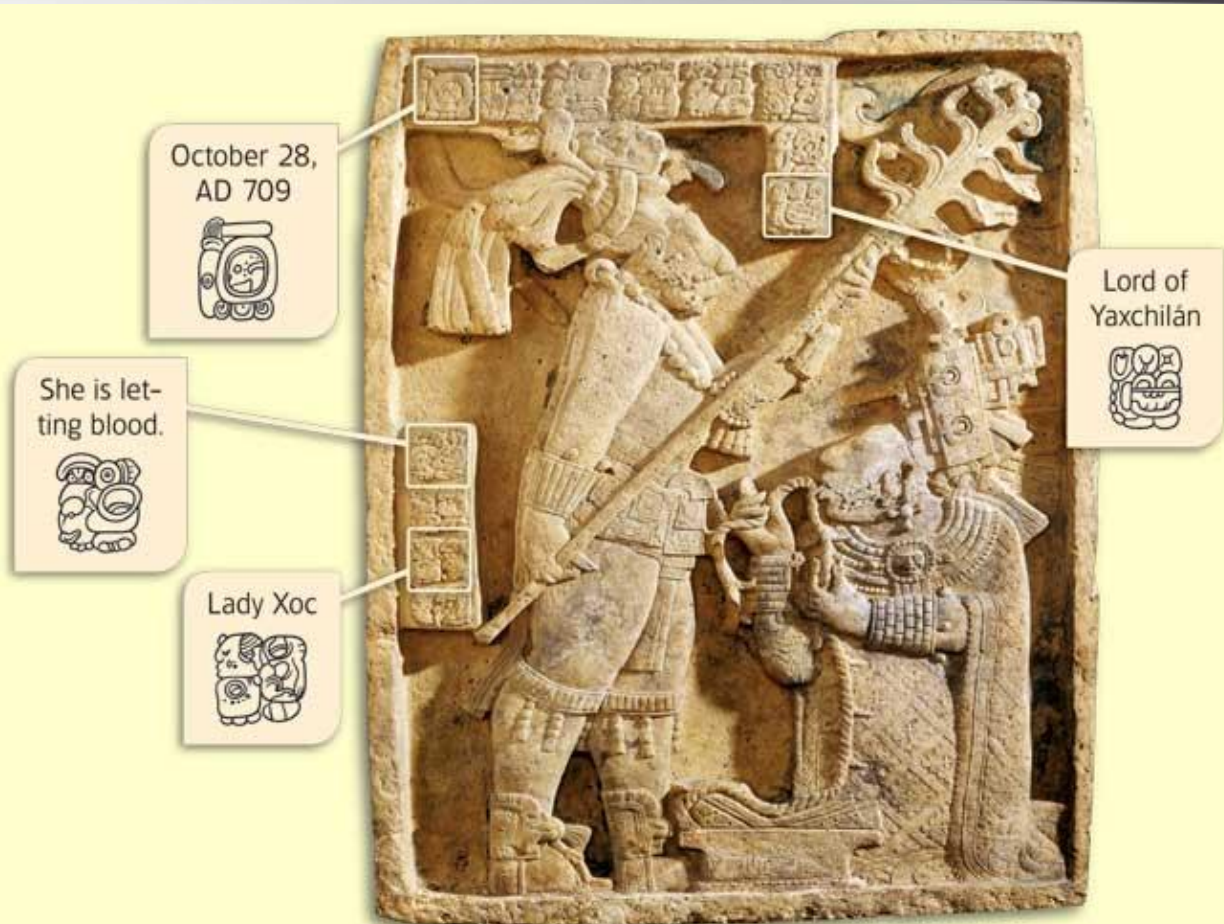
# Achievements

- Maya achievements in art, architecture, math, science, and writing were remarkable.
- They did not have metal tools or wheeled vehicles, but they built huge stone structures.
- They are known for their stone carvings and jade and gold jewelry.

Monkeys were common subjects in Maya carvings.



# A Maya Carving



**This carving comes from the palace at Yaxchilán (yahsh-chee-LAHN). The Maya recorded historical events on carvings like this one. Historians can now translate most Maya writing. They study the pictures and writings to learn about events in Maya history.**

# Achievements

- More important, though, are the advances the Maya made in astronomy and the development of the modern calendar.
- They built **observatories** for their priests to study the stars. They learned that the year had about 365 days.
- They developed a number system to go along with their calendar and record important events in their history.

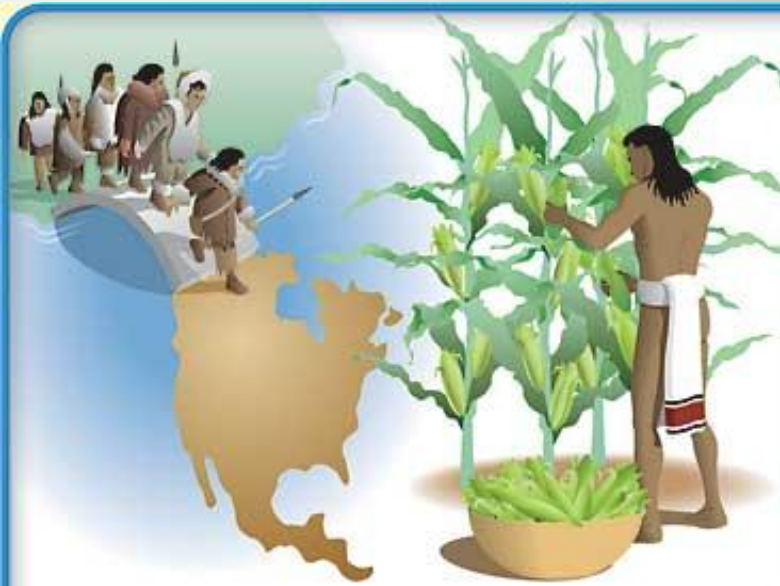
# Achievements

- The Maya also developed a writing system similar to Egyptian hieroglyphics.
- They wrote on bark paper and carved records onto stone tablets.
- After the Spanish arrived, the legends and history of the Maya were written in a book called the **Popol Vuh**.



THE HAAB - month signs from the 365 day calendar

# Chapter 15 Summary



People arrived in the Americas sometime before 10,000 BC.

By 2500 BC people in Mesoamerica had domesticated maize.



The Maya built cities in the Americas during their Classic Age.



The Maya civilization eventually collapsed, but no one knows why.

Chapter Visual Summary: This is the visual summary. The first picture shows people traveling across the Americas. People arrived in the Americas sometime before 10,000 BC. The second picture shows a man standing in front of green plants like he is picking them. By 2500 BC people in Mesoamerica had domesticated maize. The third picture shows the mountainous looking structure of the Mayan civilization. The Maya built cities in the Americas during their Classic Age. The fourth picture shows that structure fall