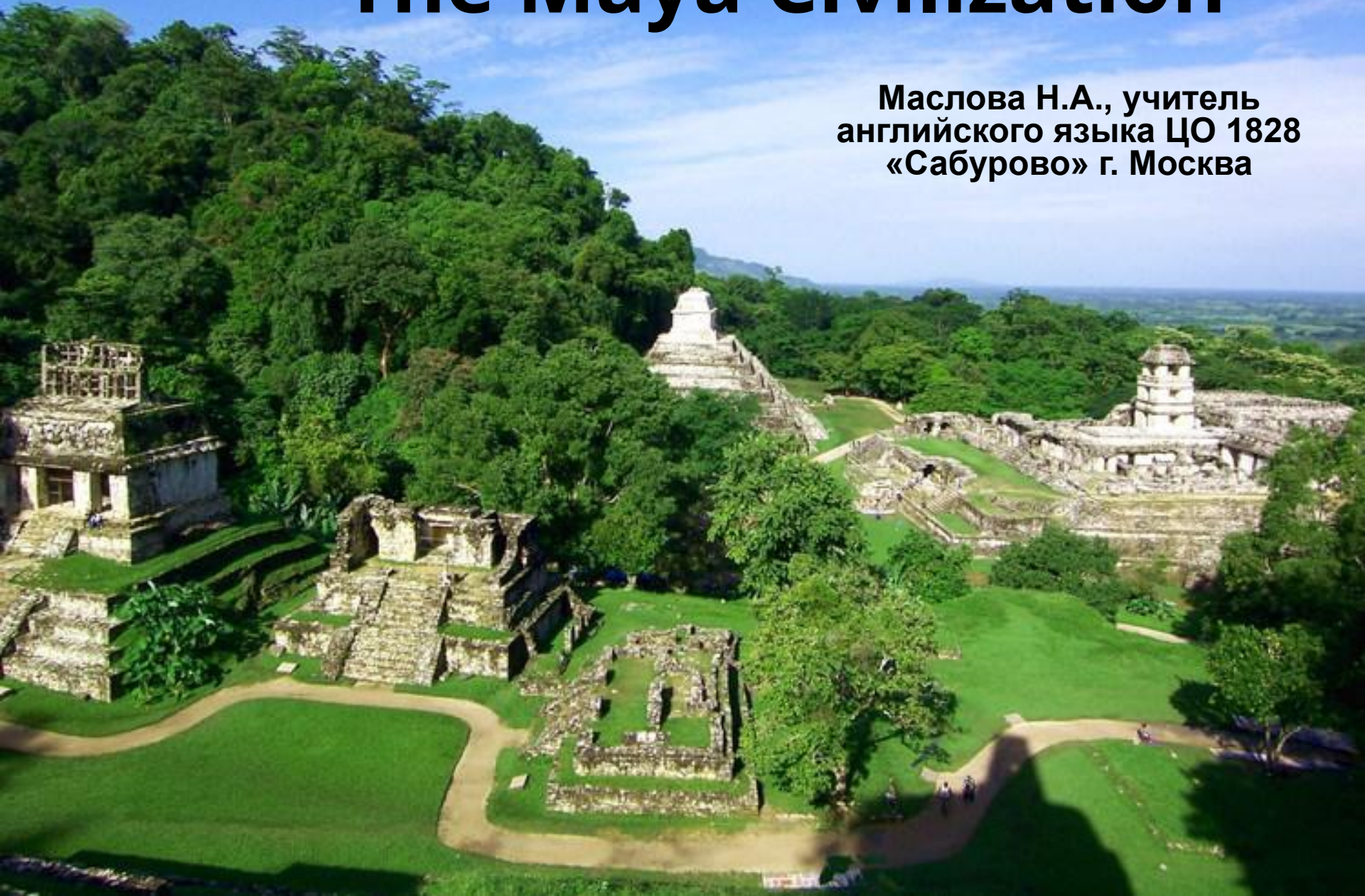


The Maya Civilization

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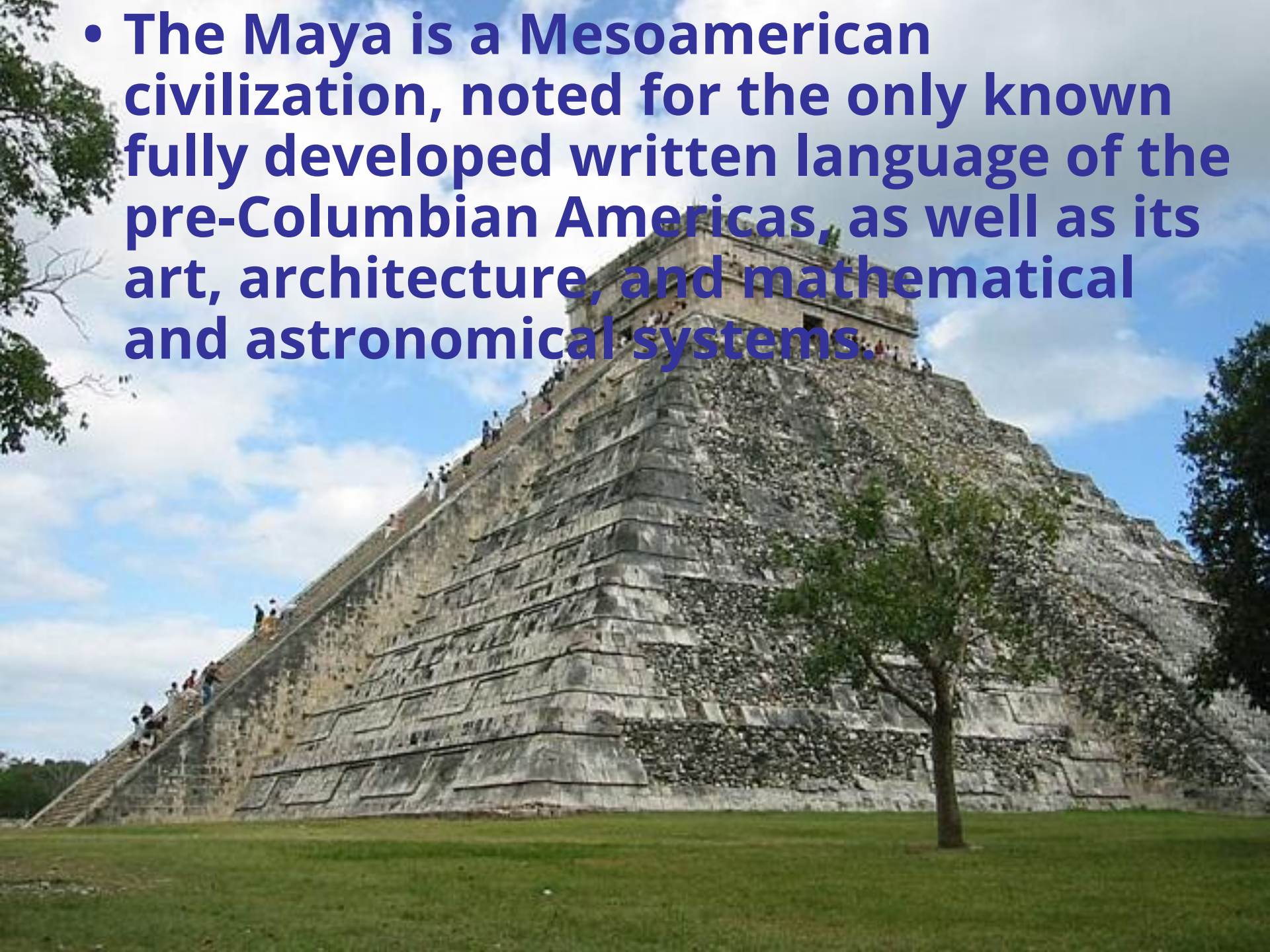


The geographic extent of the Maya civilization, known as the Maya area, extended throughout the southern Mexican states of Chiapas, Tabasco, and the Yucatán Peninsula states of Quintana Roo, Campeche and Yucatán.

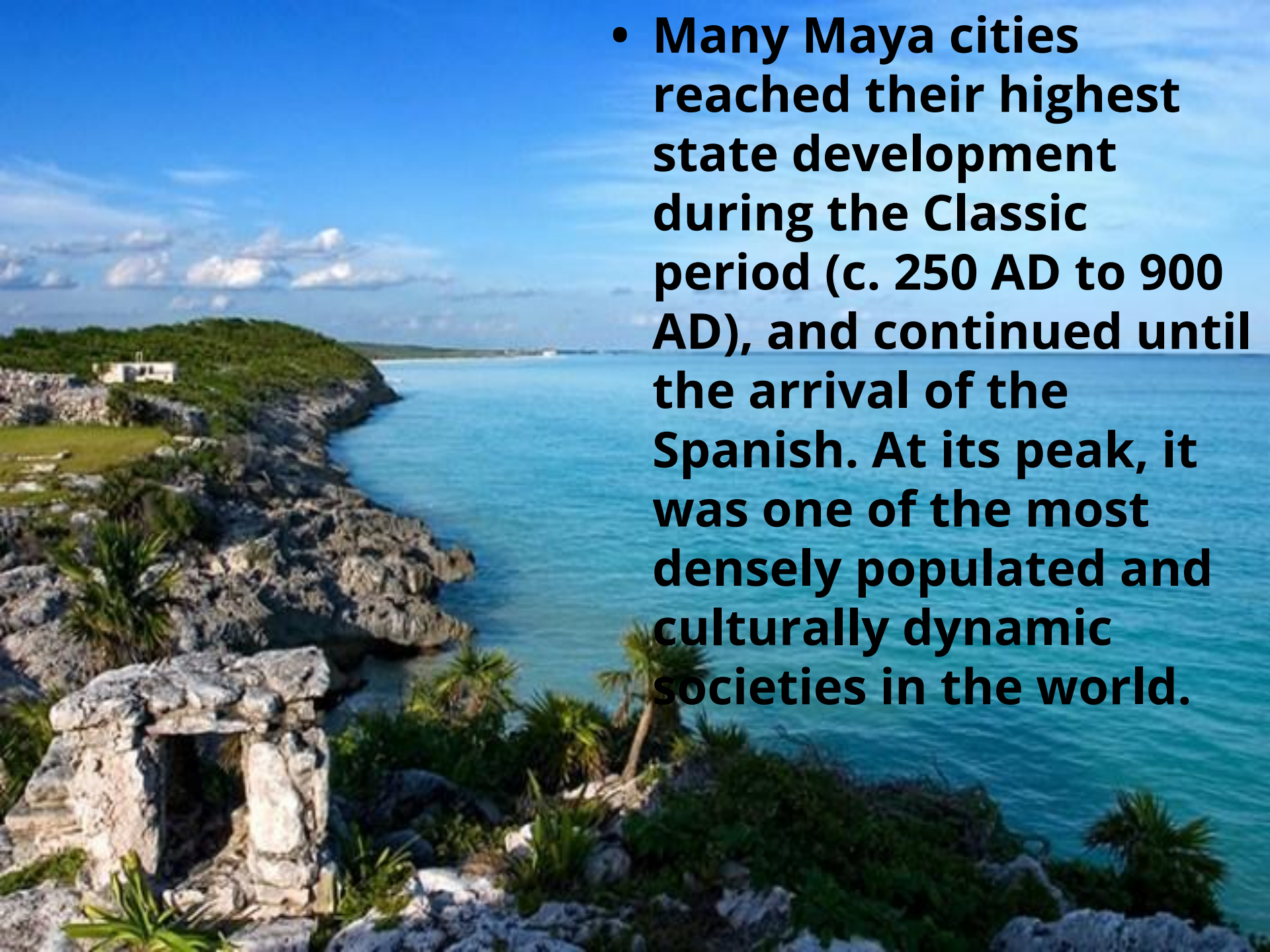


The Maya area also extended throughout the northern Central American region, including the present-day nations of Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and western Honduras.

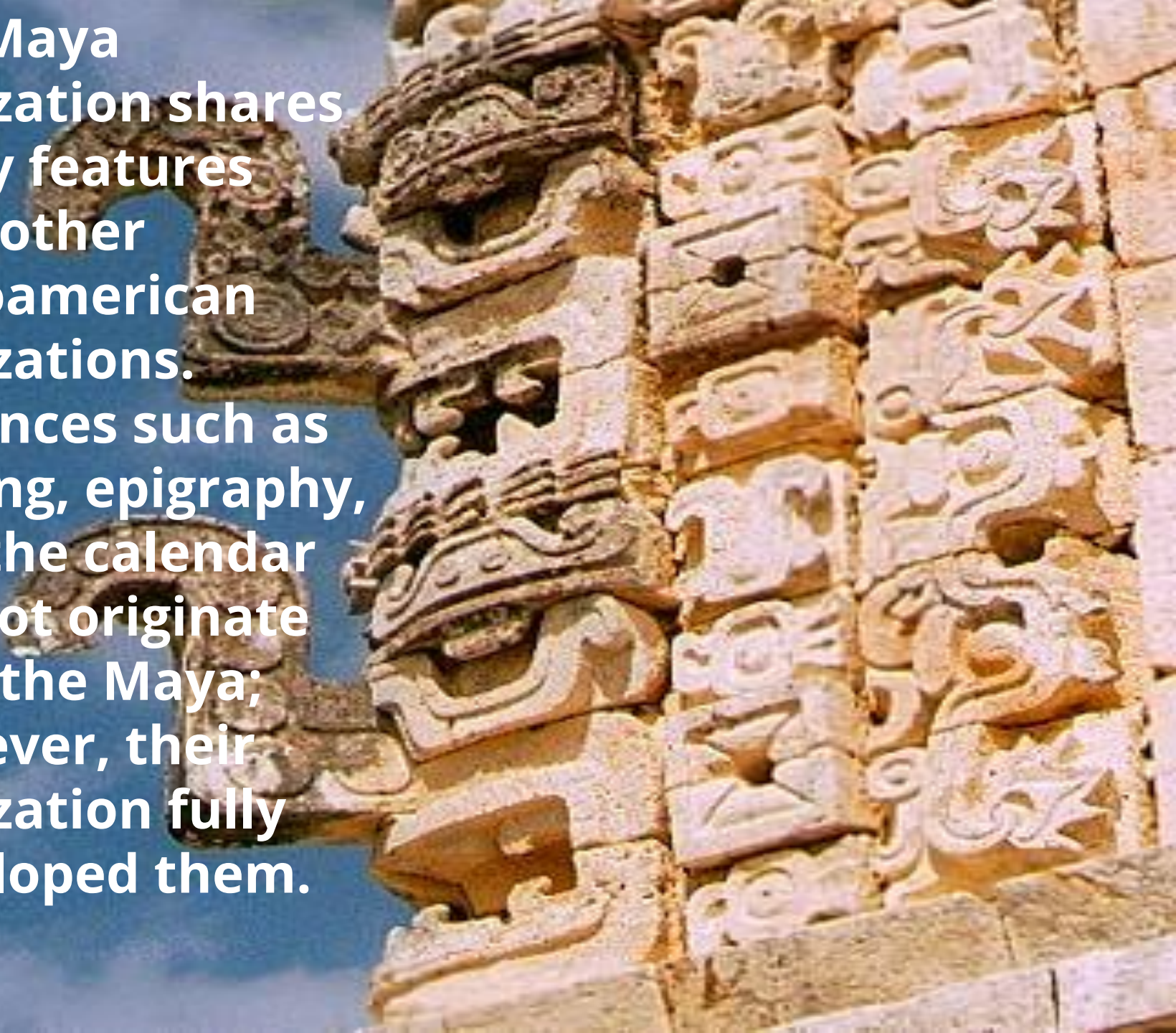
- The Maya is a Mesoamerican civilization, noted for the only known fully developed written language of the pre-Columbian Americas, as well as its art, architecture, and mathematical and astronomical systems.



- **Many Maya cities reached their highest state development during the Classic period (c. 250 AD to 900 AD), and continued until the arrival of the Spanish. At its peak, it was one of the most densely populated and culturally dynamic societies in the world.**



- The Maya civilization shares many features with other Mesoamerican civilizations. Advances such as writing, epigraphy, and the calendar did not originate with the Maya; however, their civilization fully developed them.



The Maya peoples never disappeared. Today, the Maya and their descendants form a sizable population throughout the Maya area.



- Many Mayan languages continue to be spoken as primary languages today; the Rabinal Achí, a play written in the Achi' language, was declared a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2005.





- As Maya cities spread throughout the varied geography of Mesoamerica, site planning appears to have been minimal. Maya architecture tended to integrate a great degree of natural features.

- The Maya writing system (often called *hieroglyphs*) was a combination of phonetic symbols and logograms. It is the only writing system of the Pre-Columbian New World which is known to completely represent the spoken language of its community.





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• In common with the other Mesoamerican civilizations, the Maya used a base 20 and base 5 numbering system. Also, the preclassic Maya and their neighbors independently developed the concept of *zero* by 36 BC.

- They produced extremely accurate astronomical observations; their charts of the movements of the moon and planets are equal or superior to those of any other civilization working from naked eye observation.

