

Maya were one of the great civilizations of the Middle America. They lived in the regions of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras. Mayan history reaches back some 4,000 years to what is called the Pre-classic period, when civilization first began in Central America. However, it was during what came to be known as the Classic period (AD 250 to 900) that Mayan culture reached its peak and the Maya achieved their celebrated advances in architecture, mathematics, agriculture, astronomy, art, and other areas. What is my main interest in my work is the conception of time of this great civilization. In 19th century, the study of Maya science and religion has progressed by leaps and bounds. Archaeologists continued to uncover ancient ruins and excavated thousands of carved monuments, jade artifacts, rich burial tombs, painted ceramic vases, and examples of the hieroglyphic writing invented by the Maya. Scholars made enormous progress deciphering the Maya script. Specialists can now read almost all of these hieroglyphs, which reveal detailed histories for each Maya kingdom. In addition, scholars found and deciphered sacred texts that described events that occurred during the world's creation and successive recreations. Maya creation myth describes those astronomical events. The Creation myth of the Maya, the Popol Vuh, recounts the adventures of their most important deities and culture heroes. Since these Maya deities represent astronomical objects such as stars and planets, their activities thus describe astronomical processes. These processes were inscribed via complex system of calendars which were fitting together in several calendar rounds. What is most important about Maya conception of time was its cyclical nature. Because of this nature of time, Maya engaged into several activities to ensure the renewal of the cycle. In my thesis I want to mainly focus on the system of measuring each time period