

ANCIENT
CIVILIZATIONS

ANCIENT

MAYA



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「PLAY BALL!」



POK-TA-POK COURT

A Maya boy sits with his family above a ball court.
A game called *pok-ta-pok* is beginning. Two teams of men
wearing padded clothing enter the court. The crowd cheers!



POK-TA-POK



JOIN THE TEAM!

Pok-ta-pok is making a comeback in Mexico.
Both men and women play today!

For

A heavy rubber ball is tossed into the air. The players must keep it off the ground without using their hands or feet. One player bounces the ball off his hip. His teammate bats it hard with a forearm. Playing pok-ta-pok is a great honor. One day, the boy hopes to join a team!



「WHO WERE THE ANCIENT MAYA?」



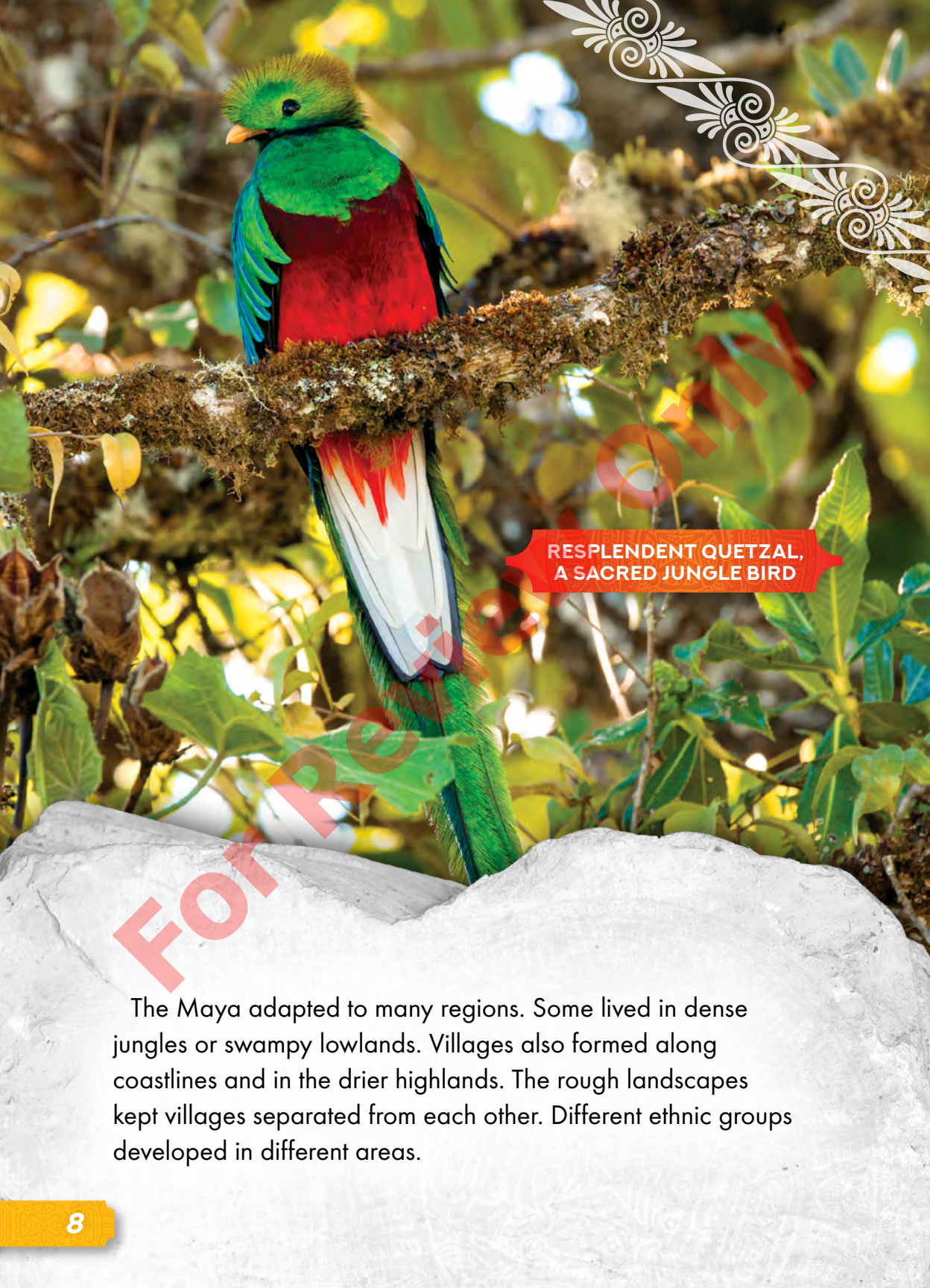
RUINS OF PALENQUE,
CHIAPAS, MEXICO

The ancient Maya lived in **Mesoamerica** from around 1500 BCE to 1500 CE. The civilization reached its height of **culture** and size during what is known as the Maya **Classic Period**. During this time, more than 40 **city-states** rose to power. The Maya population may have numbered more than 10 million!

The name *Maya* came from Spanish **conquistadors** in the 1500s CE. It may have come from the Maya city of Mayapan. The Maya people called themselves by their **ethnic** group, language, or region.

「MAYA CLASSIC PERIOD」

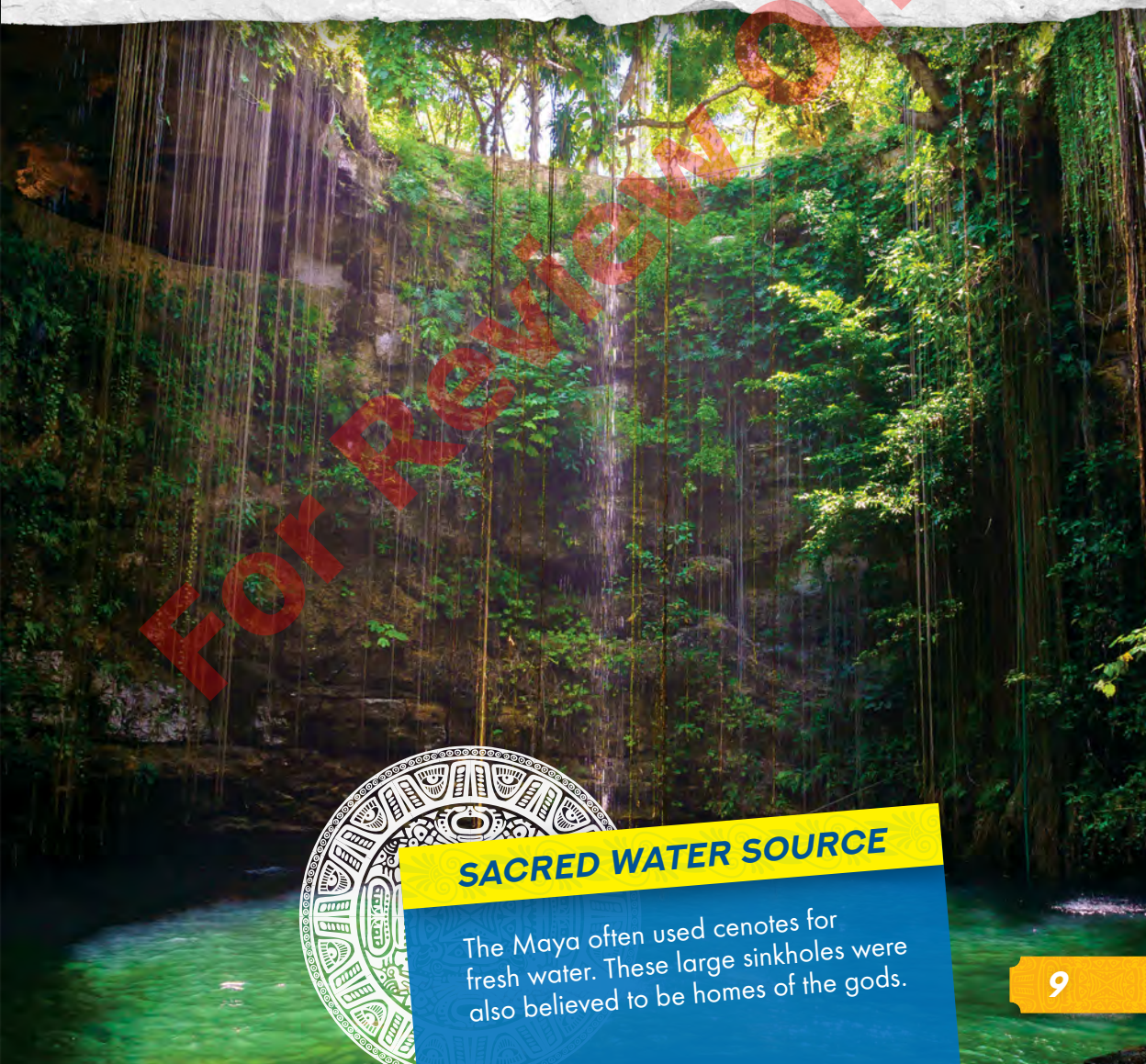




**RESPLENDENT QUETZAL,
A SACRED JUNGLE BIRD**

The Maya adapted to many regions. Some lived in dense jungles or swampy lowlands. Villages also formed along coastlines and in the drier highlands. The rough landscapes kept villages separated from each other. Different ethnic groups developed in different areas.

People learned to **irrigate**, grow food, and store water where they lived. In swampy regions, farmers built small islands that floated on the water. These raised fields had rich mud to grow healthy crops. In dry areas, the Maya built large underground lakes. These saved rainwater for times of **drought**.



SACRED WATER SOURCE

The Maya often used cenotes for fresh water. These large sinkholes were also believed to be homes of the gods.