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The Maya built one of the great ancient civilizations in the New World, between A.D. 250 and 900. Famed for over 150 years for its cities buried deep in the Central American jungle, the origins of Maya culture have nevertheless remained obscure until quite recently. Over the past two decades, a series of innovative research projects has established the Preclassic origins of complex society in the Maya area.

Among the best known of these is the study of Cuello, the earliest known ancient Maya settlement. Excavations at Cuello over several seasons from 1975 to 1987 have yielded an unmatched picture of a pioneer tropical forest community. In this timely volume, the early origins of Maya civilization 2,500 years ago are documented with detailed evidence on the environment, economy, buildings, crafts, ritual practices, burials, and artistic imagery.

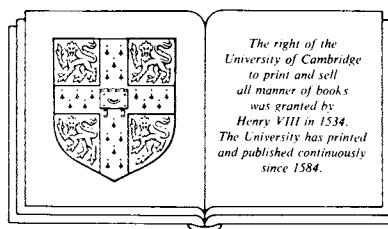
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For Gordon Willey

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