

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	page vii
<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	xi
1 INTRODUCTION	1
The Preclassic Maya	2
Overview of the Ancient Maya	3
Pushing the Limits	5
Constructing Social Meanings	6
Urbanism and Politics	9
Social Transformations: Gathering, Monumentalization, and Abandonment as Resilience	12
2 SETTING	15
Preclassic Cultural Traditions	16
Central Lowlands	18
Petén Lakes and Eastward	19
Southern Plateau Boundary	22
El Mirador Area	23
El Palmar, Guatemala: Case Study	24
3 MESOAMERICAN AND MAYA MONUMENTALITY, IDENTITY, AND POLITICS	26
The Archaeology of Monumentality	27
Mesoamerican Monumentality and Kingship	28
Maya Monumentality	30
Maya Invisible Dwellings and Invisible Gatherings	31
The First (Detectable) Settlements: 1000–700 BC	33
The Rise of Rectangularity: 700–500 BC	34
Conclusions	36
4 MIDDLE PRECLASSIC MAYA E-GROUP PLAZAS: DISTRIBUTION AND GEOPOLITICS, 800–300 BC	37
Early Maya Construction Techniques	39

E-Groups	42
E-Group Chronology	47
E-Group Form	58
E-Group Distribution and Early Maya Politics	59
Constructing E-Group Meaning in the Middle Preclassic	63
Religious Implications	63
Conclusions	69
5 THE ARCHITECTURE AND SPACES OF THE EARLY AJAW, <i>ca.</i> 300–1 BC	71
Late Preclassic Maya Architectural Techniques	72
Central Lowlands Monumental Architecture and Sculpture	75
The Monumentalization of E-Groups	75
Late Preclassic El Palmar E-Group Chronology	79
Central Lowlands Triadic Groups	81
Investigations in the El Palmar Triadic Group	88
Triadic Groups and Late Preclassic Site Planning	90
Prior Research on Maya Site Planning	90
The Triadic Group and Preclassic Maya Site Planning	91
Meanings of Late Preclassic Site Planning	95
Monumental E-Groups: Under Whose Authority?	103
Conclusions: Motivations for and Effects of Maya Monumentalization	106
6 MIGRATION AND ABANDONMENT	109
The Archaeology of Abandonment and “Collapse”	111
The First Maya “Collapse”: The End of the Preclassic	112
Settlement Rupture: Abandonment and Continuity in the Central Lowlands	114
Unsustainable Buildings: Monumental Triadic Groups	123
Material Changes: The Elusive Protoclassic	125
Incomplete Collapse of El Palmar: Abandonment and Resilience	129
Conclusions	139
7 THE PRECLASSIC BIG PICTURE	140
Conclusions	140
Archaeology of Emerging Maya Politics	143
Final Considerations	145
<i>Bibliography</i>	147
<i>Index</i>	168