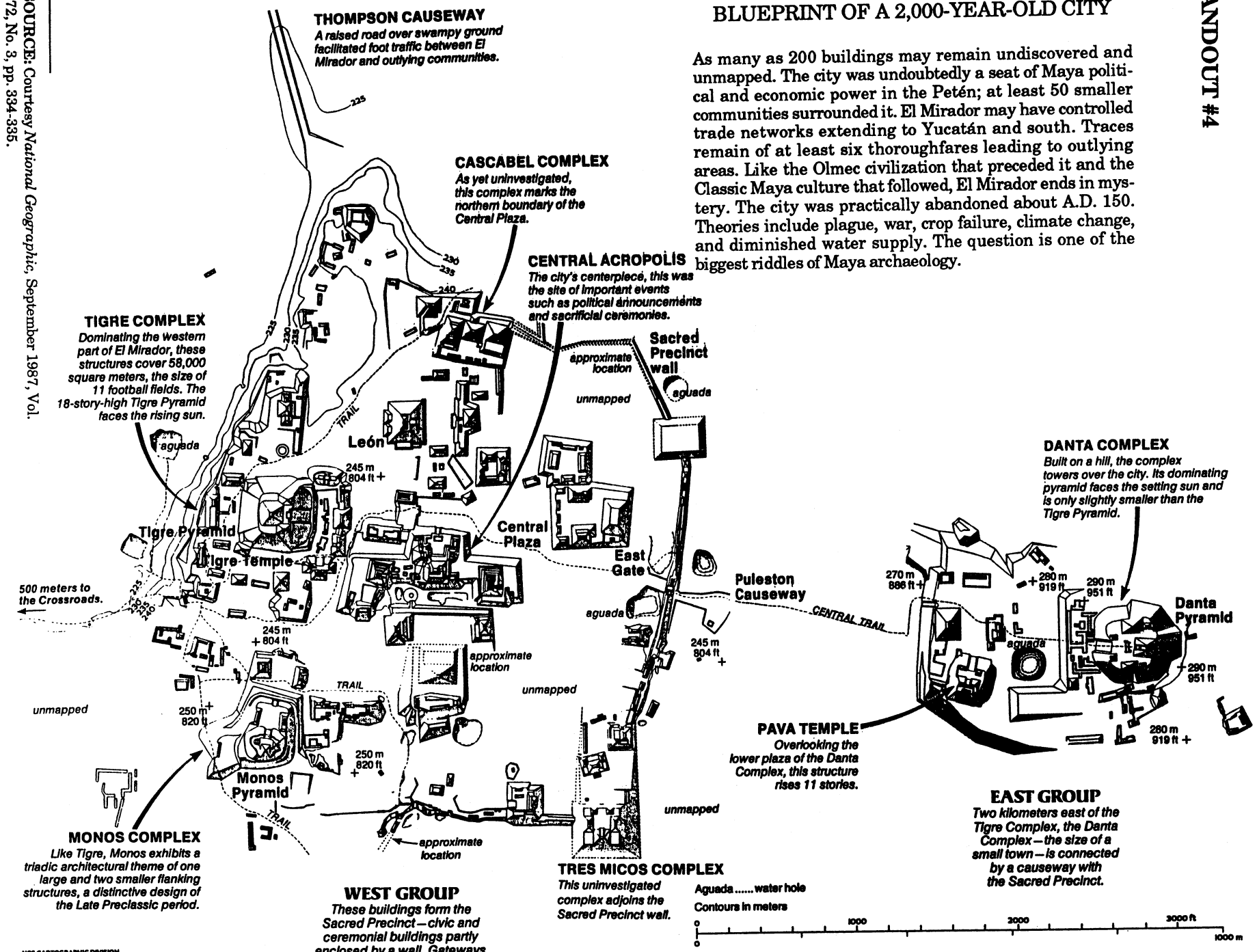
HANDOUT #4

EL MIRADOR
BLUEPRINT OF A 2,000-YEAR-OLD CITY

As many as 200 buildings may remain undiscovered and unmapped. The city was undoubtedly a seat of Maya political and economic power in the Petén; at least 50 smaller communities surrounded it. El Mirador may have controlled trade networks extending to Yucatán and south. Traces remain of at least six thoroughfares leading to outlying areas. Like the Olmec civilization that preceded it and the Classic Maya culture that followed, El Mirador ends in mystery. The city was practically abandoned about A.D. 150. Theories include plague, war, crop failure, climate change, and diminished water supply. The question is one of the biggest riddles of Maya archaeology.



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