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Diagramming the Maya "Classic Motif": The Nonpropositional Pictorial Reasoning of Eternal Victory at Tikal

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Abstract: The nonpropositional pictorial reasoning of eternal victory is exemplified by the nonnarrative, figural concentricity of a clothed, standing ruler and an unclothed, aerially-suspended captive, on two Classic Maya reliefs at Tikal. This concentricity performs a fractal iteration–or, mise-en-abyme–of corporate dynastic eternality–a Maya-specific, transformational 'fold-ing' of mortal, historical time into immortal, nonhistorical space: the classificatory property-space of Tatiana Proskouriakoff's core conceptualization of Maya sculpture, the "Classic Motif." Investigation of target-domain nonpropositional pictorial reasoning analogizes the source-domain spatial and cognitive constraints of direct, diagrammatic reasoning (vs. indirect, sentential reasoning), and of three diagrammatic models–the classical model called the logical square, with its permutational distribution of categories; the classical model of chiastic logic, with its inversional distribution of categories; and a new model of chiastic logic, with its rotocentric distribution of categories–which share a nonnarrative, metaleptic concentricity of cause and effect. In diagramming the Classic Motif, conceptual innovation proliferates.