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MULTIMODAL MEANING-MAKING IN CLASSIC MAYA INSCRIPTIONS

ABSTRACT

Maya glyphic inscriptions of the Classic Period (250-900 AD) are usually pairings of text and image which were created as one communicative act by expert users of semiotic resources. Maya scribes used a wide repertoire of literary and artistic means to encode the information they intended to send. Based on the methodology proposed by Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiippala (2017), and building on my previous project on multimodality (Hamann 2017), this paper proposes a multimodal approach to the analysis of Maya inscriptions. In particular, it focuses on how the identified modalities cooperate to deliver the message, while also analysing the text/image pairings. It argues that the text and image cannot be separated and need to be analysed together, as they may change the reading of one another. To capture the entirety of the message in the selected inscriptions (Emiliano Zapata Panel, Sculpted Stone 1 from Bonampak and Altar 5 from Tikal), it analyses four dimensions of each text: the layout of the image and text and their interaction, highly conventionalized gestures adopted by the depicted persons, pictorial signs used within the image, and, last but not least, the text itself. This proposed methodological approach demonstrates that Maya texts were indeed multimodal products of culture, where the reader/viewer had to perform the composition of meaning-making possibilities, with each modality contributing towards the common communicative goal.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 1980s and 1990s saw unprecedented developments in the decipherment of Maya glyphic writing, which made it possible to identify the language recorded in inscriptions and, consequently, read the texts (Law & Stuart 2017: 128-129; Houston, Robertson & Stuart 2000). However, the full cognitive context of these texts still remains unclear: the authors certainly belonged to the literate elites of the society, but what was the purpose and the intended audience of the texts? The monumental inscriptions, three of which will be analysed in this paper, were carved in stone and mostly describe dynastic histories and royal lives and rituals. Some of them were looted from historical sites, so their archaeological context is entirely unknown. Some were found *in situ*. Thus, we know that they were displayed in relatively public places, such as plazas in ceremonial centres of cities, and that they were potentially accessible to the general public, or, at the very least, to parts of the society. However, many were located in places accessible to very few. For example, Stela 35 from Yaxchilan was not only placed in a building on top of a pyramid (Structure 21), but also with its carved back close to the wall with practically no access. Even more interestingly, Panel of 96 Glyphs from Palenque has small holes anciently drilled in its sides, which suggests it might have been covered with a cloth or jaguar pelt, so the beautiful calligraphic writing would not be visible at all. Who, then, were the texts created for? It is unlikely that they were addressed at the general public (Houston 2000: 156, Houston 2004: 308), and one can only speculate if gods, ancestors or future generations were the intended target audience. Therefore, in the case of Maya glyphic inscriptions, one of the main challenges is analysing the texts without understanding their full context.

An extensive body of research shows that Maya writing exhibits significant stylistic parallelism between text and image, thanks to which “text and image had tremendous potential for interaction, including on a basic level the back and forth borrowing of pictorial and symbolic elements” (Stone & Zender 2011: 10–11). First of all, most glyphs are believed to have pictorial origin (Macri &Looper 2003: 4; Houston 2004: 284; Stone & Zender 2011: 11), which enables the migration of elements between modalities, blurring the borders between them. Secondly, it has been shown that Maya writing and iconography employed a shared inventory of logographic signs and iconographic symbols, which “permitted a free flow of pictorial elements between Maya art and writing” (Stone & Zender 2011: 12; also Houston 2004: 290) and further facilitated the interaction. Thirdly, it was the same individuals who produced the text and image amassing skills, education and imagination in hands of one artist (Tedlock 2010: 6; Stone & Zender 2011: 12), never having developed the very European notion of di-

Key words

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Cognitive
Linguistics

vision between art and script (Tedlock 2010: 6). Thus, writing and painting was in fact one (see also Hamann 2017 for the discussion of the concept of *tz'ihb* 'writing/painting').

Having said that, there is still little research which follows this line of thought and investigates in detail the actual interaction of image and text in Maya glyphic inscriptions. Stone and Zender (2011) in their *Reading Maya Art. A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Maya Painting and Sculpture* trace 100 glyphic signs through their textual and visual uses, effectively producing a sort of encyclopaedic dictionary, extremely informative and enlightening, but focusing on single signs. *The New Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs* (Macri &Looper 2003; Macri & Vail 2009) is exactly what the title says — a comprehensive catalogue of written signs, including the history of their decipherment, but focused on the text only. In their seminal book *The Blood of Kings. Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art*, Schele and Miller (1992) offer an insightful study of Maya art together with some readings of accompanying texts but the book lacks insights from major decipherments which came after its publication. Furthermore, Miller & Houston (1987) present a general overview of the relations between text and image, Palka (2002) provides anthropological analysis of the left/right symbolism and the significance of spatial organization in Classic Maya iconography, while Ancona-Ha et al. (2000) offer a catalogue of 16 recurrent hand gestures and make an attempt at explaining their significance. Among works discussing or mentioning the inscriptions analysed in this paper, Stuart (2012) provides the first epigraphic analysis of the Emiliano Zapata Panel together with a short discussion of its iconography. Mathews (1980: 71–72) discusses the calendrical information of the Sculpted Stone 1 from Bonampak, Stone & Zender (2011: 59) analyse the ruler's gesture, while Schele & Miller (1992: 67, 112–113) examine some aspects of its iconography. Grube & Schele (1994) provide epigraphic analysis of the text and its historical context of Tikal Altar 5.

Still, this extensive body of epigraphic, anthropological, archaeological and linguistic research on Classic Mayan language and Classic Maya culture seems to be lacking input from, on one hand, multimodality studies, which would systematically investigate the interaction of different aspects of the communicative act, and, on the other hand, from Cognitive Linguistics, which offers uniform tools to analyse both text and image as products of human cognition. This paper offers a multimodal approach to the analysis of Maya inscriptions, built on my previous project on multimodality (Hamann 2017). It explores how the different modalities interact and collaborate in three Maya inscriptions: Emiliano Zapata Panel, Bonampak Sculpted Stone 1 and Tikal Altar 5, and demonstrates how, in these three text/image pairings, the composition, gestures, pictorial signs and written signs influence and alter the reading of one another.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Multimodality, as defined by Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala (2017: 7), is “a way of characterising communicative situations (considered very broadly) which rely upon combinations of different ‘forms’ of communication to be effective”, e.g. “the book uses written language, pictures, diagrams, page composition and so on.” It “seeks to address what happens when diverse communicative forms combine in the service of ‘making meanings’” (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 8). Multimodality is an extremely common phenomenon, and, what is more, it “needs to be seen as *always having been the norm*” (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 15, emphasis original).

The analysed examples are monumental inscriptions describing dynastical histories and royal rituals with the ruler and some nobility being the main participants. They are a sort of “one-page” posters carved in stone. Therefore, in Bateman et al.’s terms (2017: 104-109), they are immutable (static), intransient and basically two-dimensional representations, although some of Maya inscriptions are carved in deep relief, which makes the image and/or glyphs almost three-dimensional (see, e.g., Lintels 24 and 25 from Yaxchilan, or the main text in Panel 3 from Cancuen). It is less obvious if, in ancient times, they were necessarily or exclusively observant-based and non-ergodic (non-interactive): for a contemporary recipient, these are definitely observant-based representations with which we do not enter into any other interaction than observing or reading. However, in the ancient Maya culture, important objects and architecture could be vested with sacred powers and agency, which even required their ritual killing after the period of use to prevent an uncontrolled release of such powers (Schele & Miller 1992: 74, note 3). Thus, it can be hypothesized that, originally, the inscriptions might have been participants of certain social events, which would open space for interaction and meaning construction beyond what is accessible to modern recipients.

The affordances of the medium obviously limit the relevant modalities to visual ones. The choice of particular semiotic dimensions to be analysed was motivated by the assumption that they should exhibit both a material dimension and a semiotic dimension, “i.e. the material used is given some kind of significance by its users” (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 113). Therefore, the modalities discussed in this paper include (see also Hamann 2017: 40–41):

- the layout (composition) understood as the spatial organization of elements of the image in relation to each other and to the text, as well as details of imagery which are not recognizably pictorial in nature; this dimension seems to be particularly relevant in cases of reversed or non-standard reading order where the scribe’s conscious choice of breaking the norm must be expected to be meaningful; the

significance of the reversed reading order has not been satisfactorily explained yet, but its inclusion in the analysis will hopefully lead to future developments;

- gestural modality — extremely conventionalized and therefore apparently highly meaningful gestures adopted by primary and secondary figures; although their specific meaning is not always clear to modern readers of those ancient texts, gestures will be at the very least described;
- pictorial signs — basically glyphic signs or their diagnostic features embedded in the image to convey certain properties, such as colour, material or social function, called *property qualifiers* by Stone & Zender (2011: 13–15);
- written signs — sequences of glyphic signs recording language with its whole complexity, i.e. syntax, grammar, etc.

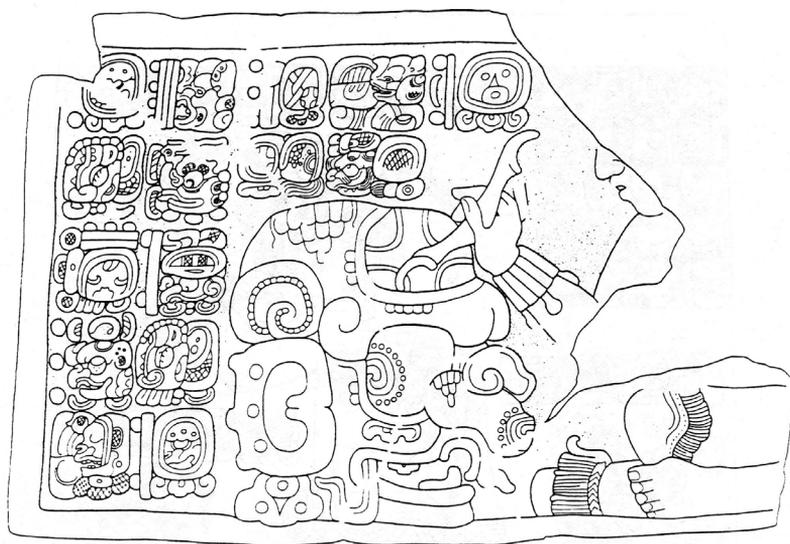


Figure 1. Emiliano Zapata Panel (drawing David Stuart in: Stuart 1990: 10, Figure 1)

To provide a unified approach to analysing both image and text, the paper draws on the cognitive approach which “places central importance on the role of meaning, conceptual processes and embodied experience in the study of language and the mind and the way in which they intersect” (Evans 2007: 22). Thus, image and text — as two products of human mind — may be analysed in a parallel manner. The meanings produced by the different modalities and their interaction are analysed with a particular emphasis on identified image schemas, conceptual metaphors and conceptual metonymies, as basic and indispensable instruments of thought. Image schemas are understood as “a relatively abstract conceptual representation that arises directly from our everyday interaction with and observation of the world around us”, e.g. UP-

DOWN, FRONT-BACK, LEFT-RIGHT, NEAR-FAR, CENTRE-PERIPHERY, CONTACT (Evans 2007: 106, 108). Metaphor is understood as “a form of conceptual projection involving mappings or correspondences holding between distinct conceptual domains (...) to provide structure from one conceptual domain, the source domain, by projecting the structure onto the target domain” (Evans 2007: 136). Metonymy is understood as “a conceptual operation in which one entity, the vehicle, can be employed in order to identify another entity, the target, with which it is associated” (Evans 2007: 141).

The three glyphic texts analysed below were chosen for: (1) their availability for further research, (2) good state of preservation, (3) the variety of communicative means employed by ancient Maya scribes. They illustrate how the signs of the script can invade the image, how the image may guide the reading order of the text, and in what ways the imagery may illustrate the verbal narrative.

2.1. CASE STUDY 1: EMILIANO ZAPATA PANEL

Layout

The layout of the panel is relatively simple: it can be divided into three vertical columns — the left one is all text, the middle one is divided between the final portion of the text in its upper part and an image in its lower part, the right one is occupied by a human figure. The person occupying the prestigious right side and performing an action with his right hand (see Palka 2002: 425, 430) can be expected to be the agent of the main event described in the text. The object in the centre is not easily recognizable, as its rendition is not realistic, but highly figurative — it is derived metonymically (via the SIGN FOR CONCEPT METONYMY) from glyphic signs spelling out its name (see Pictorial modality).

Gestural modality

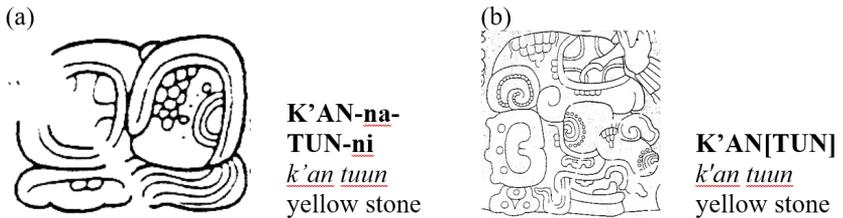
The right hand of the depicted person is holding a kind of chisel (Stuart 1990: 13, Stuart 2017) in a gesture illustrating the main event of the text — carving a monument, which further supports the claim that the person depicted is the agent. Stuart (2017) also hypothesizes that the gesture might correspond to a rare logographic variant of *tz'ihb* ‘write/paint’, which places the gesture on the border between the categories of image and writing.

Pictorial modality

As has already been mentioned, the focal object is not depicted realistically. The image, in fact, is a head-like conflation of two glyphic signs, exactly the same ones as in the text (see Figure 2): the *k'an* sign is embedded in the “forehead” of the head in 2b, while the diagnostic features of the *tuun* sign

(“grapes” on top and sun-like circles on the side) are identifiable in the “face” area of the stone. They identify it as *k’antuun* ‘a yellow stone’, which according to Stuart (1990: 13) might be self-referential, as the panel is indeed made of yellow stone. The image is zoomorphised, as typically geographical features, such as mountains or caves, are depicted as zoomorphic heads or maws. Thus, the image of the stone stands on the boundary between imagery (that is pure image) and pictorial modality (that is written signs used within the image; see also Section 2 above), though basically it could even be treated as its own caption and read out loud, which would move it closer to the textual modality.

Figure 2. *K’antuun* ‘yellow stone’ in two modalities: (a) textual, (b) image. Details of the Zapata Panel (drawing D. Stuart in: Stuart 1990: 10, Figure 1)



Additionally, the headdress might have identified the person, as headdresses frequently spell out the names or functions of protagonists (Tuszyńska 2016). Unfortunately, this part of the panel is lost and as the text does not mention the subject of the third clause (see Example 1), there is now no way to identify the person.

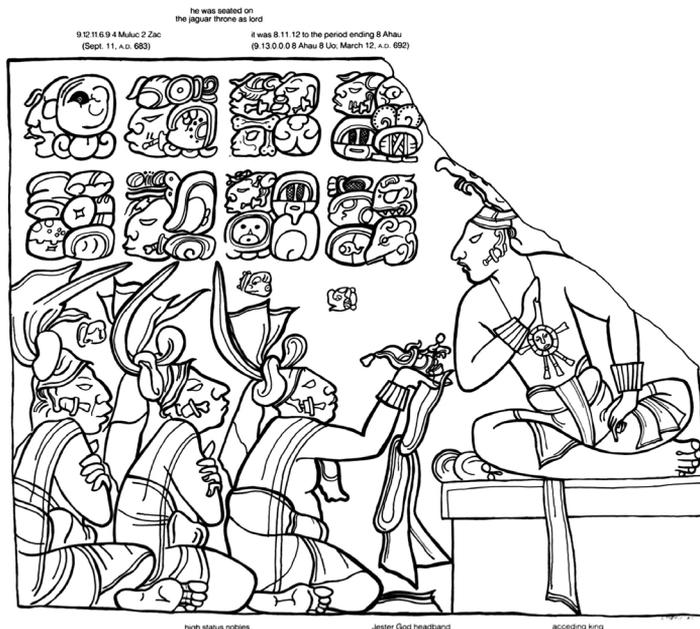


Figure 3. Bonampak Sculpted Stone 1 (drawing Linda Schele in: Schele & Miller 1992: 116, Fig. II. 8)

Textual modality

Finally, the text offers a broader context for the event depicted in the image. It consists of 3 clauses describing 3 events (see Example 1), the birth and death of Kan Bahlam and the carving of the monument, most likely executed by the now unidentifiable person in the image. It seems Maya scribes deemed it redundant to mention agents of events who are anyway portrayed in the accompanying iconography (see Hamann 2018 for the discussion of the theme-orientation of Classic Mayan).

(1)

2 KIMI 19 SOTZ' <i>cha' kimibolonlaju'nsootz'</i> [date] (on) 2 Kimi 19 Sotz' KanBahlam is born	SIY-ya-ja <i>siy-aj-ø</i> be.born-DI ¹ -3SA	ka-KAN-BALAM-ma <i>kanbahlam</i> [name]		
0-13-WINIK-ji-ya 7-HAB-ya 3-WINIKHAB-ya <i>mih [k'in] wclaju'wviniikjiiyhukhaabiyucwviniikhabyi</i> [Distance Number ²] 67+ years after he was born, he dies	SIY-ja-ji-ya <i>siy-aj-ø-iy</i> be.born-DI-3SA-PST	i-CHAM-mi <i>icham-i-ø</i> thendie-I-3SA		
7 KIMI 3 K'AN-JAL-wai-yu-xu-lu-li <i>hukkimi ox k'anjalaw i y-uxul-il</i> <i>hukajaw</i> [date] (on) 7 Kimi 3 Pop it is the carving of the yellow stone on the back of 7 Ajaw	K'AN-na TUN-ni <i>k'antuun</i> yellow stone	tu u-pa-ti <i>tu u paat</i> PREP-3E-back	7 AJAW [date]	

2.2. CASE STUDY 2: BONAMPAK SCULPTED STONE 1¹²

Layout

The layout of this panel can be divided into three asymmetrical parts: the left upper one is textual, the left lower one depicts three secondary figures, the right one shows the primary figure. In asymmetrical arrangements, the layout is governed by a set of conceptual metaphors such as MORE IS UP, SIMILARITY IS PROXIMITY, and SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE (see Winter & Matlock 2017 for the discussion of these in contemporary contexts), in particular: (1) higher position in space means more social status — the ruler is seated on a throne while the nobles are sitting on the floor; (2) persons of similar social status are clustered together while the person with a different social status is removed from the group; and (3) persons of similar status are placed extremely close to one another with no intimacy zone retained, while the ruler is not only higher but also away from the group with no physical contact. As Winter & Matlock (2017: 103) argue “the amount of space separat-

1 Abbreviations used in the morphological analysis: 3E — 3rd person ergative prefix, ABST — abstractivizer, DI — derived intransitive, FUT — future-tense verb form, I — root intransitive, PST — past-tense verb form, PREP — preposition.

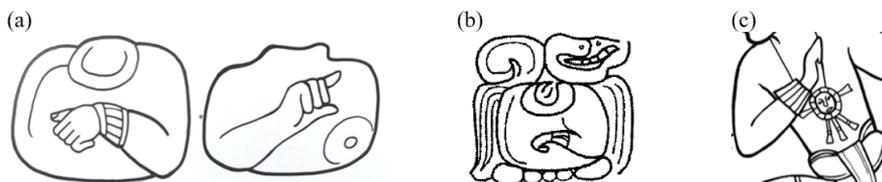
2 Count of days, months and years that elapse between the described events.

ing people reflects the nature of their relationship, such that larger distances indicate larger degrees of estrangement/alienation, etc.” (Winter & Matlock 2017: 103). And, indeed, Maya royalty were “stranger kings” — “both within society and outside it”, essentially “other” from their subjects (Houston 2000: 167), “a divine being among humans” (Stuart 2011: 45, 254–255). Thus, the organization of figures in the image precisely defines the kind of relationship that holds between the participants of the event.

Gestural modality

All four persons adopt characteristic gestures (Ancona-Ha, Perez de Lara & Stone 2000; Miller 1983). The secondary figures on the left adopt the neutral or submissive posture with their hands on their arms, suggestive of passive participation in the event. The secondary figure in the middle is handing over a royal headband to the ruler (Schele & Miller 1992: 116), obviously as part of the accession event mentioned by the text. The ruler himself is sitting in a very characteristic position: cross-legged, with his left hand pointing down and his right hand bent in front of the torso in a gesture which Stone & Zender (2011: 58–59) dubbed the “presence pose.” It closely resembles the *ichon* ‘in front’ logograph, which may also be part of a variant of the *yichnal* ‘in the presence of’ expression (see Figure 4). It seems to be irrelevant for the accession event, therefore it may possibly illustrate the second event which happens in the presence of the ruler (see the Textual modality section).

Figure 4. (a) *ichon* ‘front, in front of’ (Stone & Zender 2011: 59); (b) *yichnal* ‘in the presence of’ (Johnson 2014: 123); (c) the ‘presence pose’ in Bonampak Sculpted Stone 1 (drawing Linda Schele)



Textual modality

The text mentions two events (see Example 2): the ruler’s accession and the celebration of a Period Ending (an 8 Ajaw event with the second part of this expression still without secure decipherment). The former is described by an equative clause, which situates the event in the general present, the latter — by the rather infrequent future verb form *utoom* ‘it will happen’ linking the current event with a future Period Ending.³

So which event is illustrated in the accompanying image? The left-hand part seems to correspond to the accession event with the main actor handing over what might be the white paper headband traditionally tied on the head of the newly installed ruler (Schele & Miller 1992: 116; Stuart 2012: 119) and

³ 9.13.00.00.00 in the linear calendar, 8 Ajaw 8 Wo in the cyclical one, 18 March 692 in the Gregorian calendar.

other nobles witnessing the ceremony. However, the right-hand part does not seem to fit an accession scene, as the ruler is already seated on the throne with a headdress on his head and seems to be performing an action of his own. Consequently, this part of the imagery might be illustrating the second event which will happen ‘in front of’ the ruler, so under his supervision.

(2)

4-MULUK? 2-SAK-SIHOM-ma CHUM-TZ'AM?-ta-AJAW-le AJ-IXIM?-k'e-yi

chanmuluk cha' sihoom chum-tz'am? ta-ajaw-lel ajixim? k'ee'y

[date] seat-throne PREP-ruler-ABST [name]

(on) 4 Muluk 2 Sak it (is) the throne-seating into rulership (of) AjIxim? K'ee'y

1-10-11-WINAL 8-HAB- u-to-ma 8-AJAW-?-yi tu-KAB-CH'EN-u-USIJ[WITZ]

junlajuunk'inbuluchwinikwaxakhaabuht-om-ø waxakajaw? tukabch'eenusijwitz

[DistanceNumber] happen-FUT 8 Ajaw? PREP-earth-cavevulturehill

8+ years (later) 8 Ajaw “event” will happen in the earth-cave of Vulture Hill

Thus, the primary figure and secondary figures seem to create two different communicative spaces with their different contributions, since they perform various activities. This creates a certain interpretive gap which needs to be filled inferentially to provide coherence to the whole. This means that “there is still substantial work to be done by the sign interpreter”, though “the work of the reader/viewer is accomplished ‘internally’, by perception and interpretation” (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 107). This makes such depiction micro-ergodic, so the reader/viewer must perform the composition of meaning-making possibilities (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 108).

2.3. CASE STUDY 3: TIKAL ALTAR 5

Layout

The circular shape of the monument dictates its organization. As Bateman et al. (2017: 305) put it, “the layout of a page also clearly plays an important role in shaping communicative engagement with the artefact.” The main text is carved on its rim, forcing the reader to walk around the altar (a flat-top round stone) to read it all. The centre is occupied by the image with two additional portions of text. As it is the case with symmetrical images, the composition of the image is governed by image-schematic conceptual metaphors CENTRAL IS IMPORTANT, PERIPHERAL IS LESS IMPORTANT, so the

focus of the image is a skull and a pile of bones, which point to a funerary context, flanked by two figures in elaborate ceremonial dresses. Both men are depicted in frontal view, which suggests their high status, and they are facing each other or the central axis of the monument. They both carry staffs in their right hands and other objects in their left hands, the right being the correct, powerful and dexterous side and the left — weak, incorrect and secondary (Palka 2002: 428–429). What is not typical is that parts of the image seem to be cut, namely the men's feet disappear behind the support holding the skull and bones and part of the text, while ends of their staffs, although obviously important to the event because held in their right hands, disappear under the circle of glyphic text which surrounds the image. Such anomaly can be expected to be meaningful, and indeed its significance will become clear when discussing the textual modality.

Figure 5. Tikal Altar 5
(drawing Linda Schele in: Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993: 263, Fig. 6.7)



Textual modality

In this type of arrangement, the expected standard reading order would be to read the rim text first, then the clearly delineated text at the bottom of the image and finally the two glyph blocks placed casually between the headdresses. And, indeed, textual analysis reveals the beginning of the text “at 12.30” (if the top of the image is 12 o'clock). The narrative starts with *Ix TuunTe'* (Lady Stone

Wood) leaving her town and continues with her death almost 12 years later (at 5.30), followed by certain ceremonies. The next clause begins with a date and a verb in passive (*pahsaj* ‘opened is’), but it seems to lack a subject which should be at 11, but because the next glyph block is another date followed by a predicate and subject, so it must be a new clause. This is exactly where the image comes to help: the missing end of the left staff draws the reader’s attention to the bottom passage which reveals what is opened — *u baakjol* ‘the bones and skull of’ the lady, whose list of titles is partly eroded. And this is exactly what is depicted just above the bottom passage, from where the second staff leads our gaze to the first clause and specifically the name of Lady *TuunTe*, which confirms that the text still refers to the same person. If we then follow the conspicuous headdress of the owner of this staff, we find the last argument of the passive clause, namely the agent introduced by the agentive expression *ukabjiy* ‘by, overseen by’. The expression may be used both literally to denote the physical agent who performed an action or metonymically “to express obliquely the argument that has or had institutional authority for a particular action” (Law & Stuart 2017: 164), which is an instance of the CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED metonymy. Finally, a return to the rim text (the glyph blocks remaining at the top) renders the last clause which explains that the protagonist arrived in the company of *Kaloomte* (a title of a highest rank).

Not all the fragments of this text are fully readable due to erosion and the lack of secure decipherments of some less frequent glyphs (see Grube & Schele 1994 for a full epigraphic analysis of the text). However, the general reading and the dynamic interaction of text and image are very obviously clear. The text describes a series of events which followed the death of Lady *TuunTe* when her tomb was opened and most likely her remains were moved, which is a documented custom in Maya and other American cultures (Freidel, Schele & Parker 1993: 262, 279; Houston 2000: 166; Ardren 2015: 96). The main event of the text is illustrated in the image which receives an additional function of guiding the reader through the inscription, focusing their attention on appropriate parts of the image and text. It is a truly interactive relationship, and it is simply unfeasible to separate one from the other.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The three examples above demonstrate that Maya texts were indeed multimodal products of culture with each modality contributing towards the common communicative goal. Maya scribes, who designed and executed the monuments, enjoyed a great deal of *licentia poetica* in how they organized the text and image, exploiting them in creative ways. In Emiliano Zapata Panel, the yellow stone that is being carved is not drawn but spelt out with glyphic signs. In Bonampak Sculpted Stone 1, different parts of the image create a

kind of “comic book” with its different parts illustrating different stages of the events of the textual narrative. Finally, Tikal Altar 5 is impossible to be read if we do not investigate the interaction and interference between the text and image. Generally, images seem to focus on people and activities performed by them, while texts focus on events that happen in time and space but usually avoid mentioning agents.

What is more, the image/text pairings might purposefully have been constructed this way, taking into account different levels of literacy in the Classic Period Maya society. At the basic level, the layout is mostly governed by the simplest image-schematic conceptual metaphors discussed above, so an illiterate person might have recognized the depicted social situation, characteristic gestures or cultural artefacts and understood the general nature of the event. A partially literate person might be able to decipher pictorial signs, such as the *k'antuun* ‘yellow stone’ and possibly *tz'ihb* ‘write/paint’ in Zapata Panel or names hidden in headdresses and identify specific participants of the event. Finally, a fully literate person would have been able to complement their understanding with all the additional information offered by the verbal narrative. As Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala put it, “[j]ust as power and knowledge are distributed within society, so is the ability to deploy particular semiotic modes. Thus, expert user of a semiotic resource (...) might use those resources in a way that composes distinct material effects to create meanings that are simply not available to the novice” (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 115), which seems to be true not only for modern societies, but also for the Classic Maya civilization. Thus, the multimodality of glyphic texts seems to achieve a new purpose: not only do the modalities cooperate to create meaning, but it also serves to reveal and hide information for different groups of readers.

The main glyphic texts themselves tend to be organized in a linear fashion with an obvious or identifiable beginning and a standardized reading order which guides the reader from the beginning to the end, analogously to traditional European texts, where the reader is only expected to read. However, examples where the information and visual representation is spatially distributed (such as Bonampak Sculpted Stone 1, which seems to be micro-ergodic, so the viewer must engage in meaning composition to understand it, or Tikal Altar 5, where the interaction of text and image forces reinterpretation) move the balance to non-linearity. Thus, ideally any analysis (or a corpus of Maya inscriptions) should allow for non-linear data to be included to be exhaustive and allow for a full interpretation of the non-linear communicative artefacts.

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STRESZCZENIE

Multimodalna semantyka majańskich inskrypcji z okresu klasycznego

Majańskie inskrypcje glicficzne z okresu klasycznego (250–900 n.e.) to zazwyczaj kompozycje składające się z tekstu i obrazu, stworzone jako jeden akt komunikacyjny przez mistrzów operowania środkami semiotycznymi. Majańscy pisarze mieli w repertuarze szereg środków literackich i artystycznych, których używali w celu zakodowania informacji, jakie chcieli przekazać. W oparciu o metodologię zaproponowaną przez Batemana, Wildfeuera i Hiippalę (2017) oraz mój poprzedni projekt dotyczący multimodalności (Hamann 2017) niniejszy artykuł proponuje model multimodalnej analizy tekstów majańskich. W szczególności bada on, jak zidentyfikowane modalności przyczyniają się do zbudowania przekazu, i pokazuje, jak mogą wzajemnie wpływać na swój odczyt, dowodząc, że tekst i obraz muszą być analizowane wspólnie, aby nie utracić treści, która pojawia się na ich styku. Analiza trzech wybranych zabytków (Panel Emiliano Zapaty, Rzeźbiony kamień 1 z Bonampak i Ołtarz 5 z Tikal) skupia się na czterech aspektach semiotycznych: kompozycji obrazu i tekstu, skonwencjonalizowanych gestach wykonywanych przez przedstawione osoby, znakach pisma użytych w obrazie oraz samym tekście. Zaproponowane podejście metodologiczne pokazuje, że inskrypcje majańskie rzeczywiście są multimodalnymi tekstami kultury, a ich odbiorca musiał dokonać kompozycji semantycznej wszystkich modalności, żeby odczytać zamierzony komunikat.

Liczne badania pokazują, że pismo Majów cechuje znaczący paralelizm między tekstem a obrazem, dzięki któremu „tekst i obraz mają niezwykle potężny potencjał interakcyjny, w tym na bardzo podstawowym poziomie – potencjał do płynnej wymiany elementów piktograficznych i symbolicznych” (Stone & Zender 2011: 10–11). Po pierwsze, uważa się, że większość glicfów ma pochodzenie piktograficzne (Macri & Cooper 2003: 4; Houston 2004: 284; Stone & Zender 2011: 11), co już samo w sobie przyczynia się do zatarcia granic pomiędzy modalnościami i pozwala na migrację elementów między nimi. Po drugie, majańskie pismo i ikonografia korzystały ze wspólnego zasobu znaków logograficznych i symboli ikonograficznych, co „pozwalalo na swobodny przepływ elementów piktograficznych między majańską sztuką a pismem” (Stone & Zender 2011: 12; patrz także Houston 2004: 290) i sprzyjało dalszej interakcji. Po trzecie, te same osoby były twórcami tekstu i obrazu, co sprawiało, że umiejętności, wykształcenie i wyobraźnia skupiały się w rękach jednego artysty (Tedlock 2010: 6; Stone & Zender 2011: 12) i nie rozwinęła się nigdy tak typowa dla kultury europejskiej idea rozdziału między sztuką a literaturą (Tedlock 2010: 6). W konsekwencji pismo i rysunek były dla Majów jednym pojęciem (patrz także Hamann 2017 nt. polisemii słowa *tz'ihb* 'pisać/malować').

Jednakże wśród licznych badań epigraficznych, antropologicznych, archeologicznych i lingwistycznych w majanistyce nadal brak – z jednej strony – badań nad multimodalnością, które przeanalizowałyby sposoby interakcji różnych aspektów aktu komunikacyjnego, a z drugiej – językoznawstwa kognitywnego, które zapewnia narzędzia do analizy zarówno tekstu, jak i obrazu. Tak więc niniejszy artykuł ma na celu wypełnienie tej luki, proponując zuniifikowane podejście do analizy wszystkich modalności.

Przyjęta tutaj definicja multimodalności oparta jest na metodologii zaproponowanej przez Batemana, Wildfeuera i Hiippalę (2017: 7), którzy definiują multimodalność jako „metodę charakteryzowania

sytuacji komunikacyjnych (pojmowanych bardzo szeroko), które polegają na kombinacji różnych 'form komunikacji', np. „książka wykorzystuje język pisany, ilustracje, diagramy, kompozycję strony itd.". Jej celem jest zbadanie, „co dzieje się, kiedy zróżnicowane formy komunikacji łączą się w służbie 'budowania znaczenia'" (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 8). Multimodalność jest niezwykle rozpowszechnionym zjawiskiem i – co więcej – od zawsze było to normą (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 15).

Specyfika omawianego tu medium (inskrypcje rzeźbione w kamieniu) ogranicza relewantne modalności do wizualnych, a ich wybór został umotywowany przez założenie, że powinny wykazywać wymiar zarówno materialny, jak i semiotyczny (Bateman, Wildfeuer i Hiippala 2017: 113), zatem powinny być istotne dla swoich twórców. Tak więc analizowane modalności obejmują (patrz także Hamann 2017: 40–41):

- kompozycję jako przestrzenną organizację elementów obrazu w stosunku do siebie oraz do tekstu, a także szczegóły obrazu, które nie mają ewidentnie piktograficznego charakteru;
- gesty wykonywane przez główne i poboczne postaci – ściśle skonwencjonalizowane, a więc najprawdopodobniej wysoce znaczące, choć ich konkretne znaczenie nie zawsze jest jasne dla współczesnych odbiorców;
- znaki piktograficzne – zasadniczo glicficzne (znaki pisma) lub ich charakterystyczne cechy umożliwiające identyfikację, użyte w obrębie obrazu w celu przedstawienia pewnych jego właściwości, takich jak materiał: *te* 'drewno', *tun* 'kamień'; kolor: *ihk* 'czarny', *k'an* 'żółty, dojrzały';
- tekst – ciąg znaków glicficznych zapisujący język z całą jego złożonością, czyli gramatyką, składnią itd.

Analizowane tu przykłady pokazują, że majańskie teksty w istocie są multimodalnymi produktami kultury, a każdy z kanałów semiotycznych na swój sposób przyczynia się do osiągnięcia celu komunikacyjnego. Na poziomie podstawowym kompozycja scen symetrycznych zasadniczo podporządkowana jest takim schematycznym metaforom pojęciowym, jak WAŻNE JEST CENTRALNE, NIEWAŻNE JEST PERYFERYJNE, WAŻNE JEST NA GÓRZE, NIEWAŻNE JEST NA DOLE, natomiast sceny niesymetryczne generalnie rządzą się zasadami WIĘCEJ JEST NA GÓRZE, PODOBIENSTWO TO BLISKOŚĆ FIZYCZNA I DYSTANS SPOŁECZNY TO DYSTANS FIZYCZNY. Dzięki temu nawet osoba niepiśmienna mogła z pewnością rozpoznać ogólną kompozycję, charakterystyczne gesty oraz artefakty kultury, co pozwalało jej zrozumieć najważniejsze okoliczności wydarzenia. Osoba częściowo piśmienna byłaby w stanie odcyfrować znaki piktograficzne, takie jak *k'antuun* 'żółty kamień' czy być może *tz'ihb* 'pisać/malować' na panelu Emiliano Zapaty czy imiona ukryte w nakryciach głowy i tym samym zidentyfikować uczestników wydarzenia. Wreszcie osoba biegła w czytaniu mogłaby uzupełnić tę podstawową warstwę znaczeniową o dodatkowe informacje przedstawione w tekście. Co więcej, inskrypcje tekstowo-graficzne mogły być celowo konstruowane w ten sposób, biorąc pod uwagę różną znajomość pisma w społeczeństwie majańskim okresu klasycznego, aby celowo ograniczyć lub otworzyć dostęp do poszczególnych elementów przekazu.

Główny tekst glicficzny jest zazwyczaj zorganizowany w sposób linearny: początek tekstu jest czytelny lub łatwo identyfikowalny, standardowy kierunek odczytu z łatwością prowadzi czytelnika od początku do końca, podobnie jak w tekstach europejskich. Jednakże istnieją także przykłady tekstów nielinearnych, gdzie warstwa wizualna i informacyjna są zorganizowane przestrzennie i odbiorca musi zaangażować się w kompozycję semantyczną, żeby odczytać całość przekazu. Na przykład Panel Emiliano Zapaty nie podaje wykonawcy głównej czynności, którego imię prawdopodobnie można było odczytać z obrazu. Na Rzeźbionym kamieniu 1 z Bonampak różne elementy ikonografii tworzą pewnego rodzaju „komiks”, którego poszczególne części ilustrują kolejne etapy wydarzeń opisanych w tekście. Natomiast tekstu z Ołtarza 5 z Tikal nie sposób przeczytać, nie wzięwszy pod uwagę tego, jak ikonografia wskazuje na kierunek odczytu tekstu. Tak więc metodologia opisu tekstów majańskich (czy w dalszej perspektywie — korpusu takich tekstów) powinna uwzględniać potencjalną nielinearność elementów składowych i przewidywać możliwość analizowania relacji między nimi.

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