



Texas Notes on Precolumbian Art, Writing, and Culture

No. 18

September, 1991

The Death of Lady Wak Chan Tzuk of Naranjo recorded at Dos Pilas

by Khristaan D. Villela

In *Texas Note 14*, Nikolai Grube and Linda Schele discussed the "pseudo-God C" head and its substitution set. Each sign—the mirror,¹ GI head, gourd, and pseudo-God C—likely reads *tzuk*. The *tzuk* graphemes also occur in many proper names. Schele and Grube argued that substitution patterns at Naranjo support a reading of Na Wak Chan Tzuk, or "Lady Six Sky, the Center Partition," for the name of the mother of the Naranjo king dubbed Smoking Squirrel (Fig. 1).²

Grube and Schele also noted that inscriptions and icons at several sites referred to benches as a *Chum Tzuk*, or "partition seat." This phrase occurs on Copán Altar K (Fig. 2). The large bench at the rear of Structure 18, at the same site, alternates *Tzuk* heads and Witz Monsters. An earlier



Lady	Chanil-	Divine Dos
Wac	Ahau	Pilas Ahau



Lady	Chanil-	Divine Dos
Wac	Ahau	Pilas Ahau



Lady	Chanil-	Divine Dos
Wac	Ahau	Pilas Ahau

Fig. 1

1. See Grube and Schele 1991: Fig. 2, for the distinction between the *li* and *tzuk* mirrors.

2. Formerly, she was known as Na Wak Chanil Ahau, as in Schele and Freidel 1990.

* The Texas Notes are an running series of commentaries and small reports on Precolumbian art, writing, and culture published for the purpose of quick, limited distribution among interested scholars and students working in the field. The series is published by CHAAAC, the Center of the History and Art of Ancient American Culture of the Art Department of the University of Texas at Austin. Funds for reproduction and distribution of complementary copies are provided by the John D. Murchison Professorship in Art, currently held by Linda Schele. Copyright is held by the authors and the CHAAAC and may be copied for scholarly purposes without further permission. Submissions will be accepted from contributors working in all disciplines and concerning any Precolumbian cultural tradition or its descendant traditions. Contributions may be submitted by anyone working in the field, but they may not exceed ten pages, including references. Any of the major word processors may be used, but final text must be submitted in the IBM format, although any IBM disk size is acceptable. All illustrations must be provided at the finished scale in either line or stippled drawings suitable for scanning. The publisher takes no responsibility for copy editing and the authors must clear all copyright permissions before submission of a manuscript. The editor reserves the right to reject submissions if they are deemed inappropriate or incorrectly prepared. Style conventions should follow Chicago Style B and text should be single column and formatted to conform with the paragraph, sub-titling, and other features of this note. Ventura Desktop Publisher will be used to format the text into this layout, which will then be printed on a Hewlett-Packard Laserjet III. A master copy of the recent notes will be put on file at Kinko's at the beginning of each semester and can be ordered from Kinko's Copies, 2914 Medical Arts St., Austin, Texas (512-476-3242; FAX 512-476-2371).

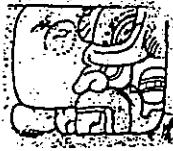


Fig. 2

version of the Grube-Schele note also included a collocation from a recently discovered Dos Pilas bench. While assembling the figures for the latest installment of *Texas* and *Copán Notes*, I realized that this phrase actually records the death of Lady Wak Chan Tzuk, the mother of Smoking Squirrel of Naranjo (Fig. 3).

Peter Mathews and Stephen Houston first argued that Lady Wak Chan Tzuk's father was the Dos Pilas king Malah Chan K'awil and that she was given in marriage to Naranjo (Mathews 1979; Houston and Mathews 1985:11). Schele and Freidel concurred and recently argued that since Smoking Squirrel uses the Naranjo Emblem Glyph, Lady Wak Chan Tzuk likely married a local noble at that site (Schele and Freidel 1990).³

Lady Wak Chan Suk's death statement is standard. Unfortunately, the Tzolkin position of the Calendar Round for this date is lost. The Haab is Pop with a partially destroyed coefficient greater than six.⁴ Events earlier in the bench reference the contemporary Dos Pilas king Malah Chan K'awil. Thus not only does the daughter at Naranjo discuss her father (Fig. 4); but the father at Dos Pilas discusses his daughter. The Dos Pilas bench adds to the evidence in favor of Lady Wak Chan Tzuk's Petexbatun origin.

References

- Grube, Nikolai, and Linda Schele
1991 *Tzuk in the Classic Maya Inscriptions. Texas Notes on Precolumbian Art, Writing, and Culture 14*. Austin: CHAAAC, University of Texas.
- Houston, Stephen, and Peter Mathews
1985 *The Dynastic Sequence of Dos Pilas. Precolumbian Art Research Institute, Monograph 1*. San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute.
- Mathews, Peter
1979 Notes on the Inscriptions of "Site Q." Manuscript in possession of author.
- Schele, Linda, and David Freidel
1990 *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Co.

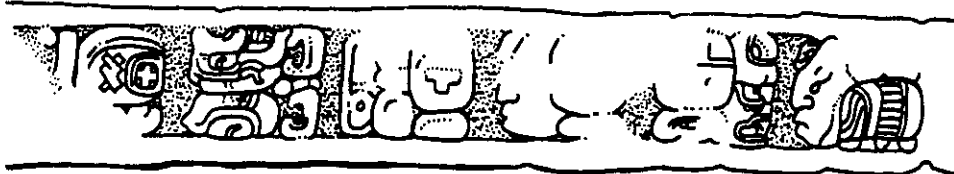


Fig. 3 The death passage from the Dos Pilas bench (drawing by K. Villela)

3. See Schele and Freidel (1990:459, Note 40) for a full discussion of Lady Wak Chan Tzuk and the debate on her home polity.

4. Interestingly, the throne also records a second death event, which occurred on 9.15.10.17.15 7 Men 13 Yaxk'in.