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In January 2012, Ghana’s President John Evans Atta Mills unveiled an imposing statue of “Osagyefo (‘The Redeemer’) Kwame Nkrumah,” as the inscription reads, at the forecourt of the new African Union building in Addis Ababa. The three-and-a-half meter high bronze statue was cast in Ghana,¹ but modelled on the very first Nkrumah statue, which had been created by the Italian sculptor Nicola Cataudella and inaugurated in front of the Old Parliament House in Accra at the eve of the first independence anniversary in 1958. The statue shows Nkrumah dressed in his famous *fugu*, the popular Northern Ghanaian smock, which he was wearing when he declared independence, his right hand lifted in greeting, his left hand holding a walking stick, and his eyes gazing into the distant future (Fig. 1). The dedication at the base of the Addis Ababa monument quotes a pronouncement that Nkrumah made during the opening conference of the Organisation of African Unity in May 1963: “Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God, Africa must unite.” Not all Ethiopians, however, were as content with the monumental recognition of Nkrumah’s “greatness” and of his “leading role in the African liberation struggle” as the Ghanaian delegation.² Critics launched a petition that a statue of the late emperor Haile Selassie, the “longer-standing supporter of African liberation,” and thus true “father of Africa,” should join the Nkrumah monument, or that the latter should be removed. But Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi countered that Selassie had been a “feudal dictator” and that it was “crass” to question the choice of Nkrumah as the appropriate African symbol for the new AU headquarters.³

Just as the debate on the Nkrumah statue in Addis Ababa has reflected and further intensified conflicts between the Ethiopian government and

1. Information from Dr. Don Arthur, the Presidential staffer and commissioned architect who oversaw the statue’s production in Ghana. Interview with D. Arthur, 12 March 2014, Accra.
2. Ghana News Agency (GNA), “Kwame Nkrumah statue unveiled [sic] in Addis Ababa,” 29 Jan. 2012, <<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=228808>> (accessed 19 April 2016).
3. D. Howden, *The Independent*, “Ethiopians give lacklustre welcome to Kwame Nkrumah statue,” 14 Feb. 2012, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/>

the opposition, the Nkrumah monument in Ghana has been, since the very beginning, the object of veritable “monument wars,” to use Kirk Savage’s (2009) fitting expression. Nkrumah’s heroisation had already begun during his regime, even before the declaration of independence. It is an interesting example both of top-down measures that aimed at establishing a charismatic national “founder” in order to stabilise a new nation-state’s first government and popularise the idea of “independence,” as Harcourt Fuller (2014) has convincingly shown in his analysis of Nkrumah’s politics of “symbolic nationalism,” and of the limits and risks of such policies. From the very start there was vociferous criticism of a “personality cult” and “hero worship” (Birmingham 1998: 81), and Nkrumah’s heroisation as “the redeemer” went hand-in-hand with his “demonization [...] as [...] dictator.”⁴ Nkrumah’s opponents condemned plans to erect his statue as a “presumptuous gesture of self-aggrandizement,”⁵ and published cartoons on Stalin’s fate after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union (1956), insinuating that monuments of Nkrumah would suffer a similar fate.⁶ And indeed, like many Stalin statues, Nkrumah’s effigy in Accra did not last nearly as long as its sponsors would have hoped. It was severely damaged by a bomb attack in 1961, and beheaded and deposed in the wake of the 1966 *coup d’État*. A decade later, under the Nkrumah-friendlier government of General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong (1972–1978), the damaged sculpture was re-erected in the garden of the National Museum, and a new statue, to be put up at the Old Polo Ground, the very site where Nkrumah had declared independence, was commissioned in Italy. President Rawlings finally unveiled this statue in 1992, in the course of the inauguration of the newly built Nkrumah mausoleum. However, this did not put an end to the debates and contestations, on the contrary. To celebrate Ghana’s fiftieth independence anniversary in 2007, for instance, the then ruling “anti-Nkrumaist” government decorated Accra’s urban landscape with a series of monuments commemorating their own political ancestors, and for the centenary of Nkrumah’s birthday in 2009 erected the original damaged Nkrumah statue just behind the mausoleum, a gesture that many Nkrumaists regarded as an outright attack on the dignity of their hero. All these conflict-ridden moves reflect Ghanaian political struggles between the ruling and the opposition parties, which still portray themselves

ethiopians-give-lacklustre-welcome-to-kwame-nkrumah-statue-6917350.html>.

4. M. A. Awuni, “Traitors’ Jubilee was in 2007: now is the Founder’s Day!”, *Modern Ghana*, 19 Sept. 2009, <<http://www.modernghana.com/print/239613/1/traitors-jubilee-was-in-2007-now-is-the-founders-day.html>> (accessed on 20 July 2016).
5. *Ashanti Pioneer*, 18 Feb. 1957, quoted in HESS (2006: 23).
6. For examples, see the references quoted in FULLER (2014: 73–79, 129) and HESS (2006: 23).

as successors either to the Nkrumaist project or to Nkrumah's opponents. Monuments of Ghana's national heroes were, and continue to be, "active voices" in the "negotiations of power," Kodzo Gavua argues (2015: 97-98), and contested symbols in the quest to propagate a particular reading of the nation's political heritage.

More generally, the history of the Nkrumah statue(s) in Ghana bears out the typical paradox that characterises monuments. "Nearly always are the reasons that bring about their construction deeply enmeshed in social and political conflicts," Dietrich Erben (2011: 235, author's translation) observes, "but they compel the observer, according to the intention of the founders, to identify positively with the past." Monuments are not affirmative expressions of a well-established order, but rather instruments to legitimise and stabilise precarious claims to power. They are built as lasting memories, but remain embedded in a history of social and political conflict. Ever since monuments have been constructed, their destruction, or renovation, by annexation into new monuments, resisting, modification, or renaming, are common means to resignify the past in light of changing contemporary agendas (Erben 2011: 239; Speitkamp 1997). The case of the Nkrumah statue is also an instructive example of how, over the past six decades, the politics and aesthetics of commemoration have been transformed, developing from straightforward veneration, confrontation and destruction to subtler forms of re-contextualisation and "pluralisation" (Petersen 2015). These changes in commemorative symbols and practices have been due in part to the fact that the "object" of veneration died and no longer constituted an immediately active political force to reckon with, but could be re-interpreted and invested with new political meanings,⁷ and in part reflect shifting global fashions of remembering and contesting heroes.⁸

In this article, then, I will discuss the Nkrumah statue as a site of intense debate about Nkrumah's political programme and his legacy for Ghana's social

7. For an interesting study of a similar continuous reinterpretation and recent positive re-valuation of a "national hero," see the case study on Julius Nyerere by M.-A. FOUÉRÉ (2014).

8. The works by J. HESS (2000, 2006) and, particularly, H. FULLER (2014: 126ff, 163ff) on the history of the Nkrumah statue(s) have been extremely useful for developing my arguments in this article. However, these authors have addressed the controversies surrounding the monuments in terms of a rather simple dichotomy of hero veneration versus straightforward opposition while I suggest exploring also the more subtle forms of critique and appropriation through strategies of re-contextualisation and pluralisation. This article is based on unexploited sources, namely the many letters, minutes and memoranda concerning the statue, filed by the Public Works Department responsible for the erection of the statue and now available in the Public Records and Archives Administration (PRAAD), Accra. Furthermore, I conducted a number of interviews with the architect of the Kwame Nkrumah

and political order. At the same time, I will explore the statue as an object of aesthetic considerations and administrative activities. Finally, monuments do not speak for themselves but depend on the co-creation of meaning through a variety of other media, including further iconographic representations as well as performances, such as wreath-laying ceremonies or re-enactments of historical moments, accompanied by speeches and newspapers reports that offer competing readings of the statue and the hero it portrays. I cannot analyse all of these aspects in great detail, but hope to demonstrate that the making and remaking of monuments such as the Nkrumah statue are multifaceted processes that sometimes lead to unexpected outcomes in which multiple actors, often with conflicting intentions, participate.

Constructing the Prime Minister's Statue (1956-1958)⁹

The idea of using Nkrumah's portrait as a central symbol of the soon-to-be nation-state apparently came up first in October 1955, in the course of deliberations on the issue of Ghana's new stamps. The chairman of the Postage Stamps Committee suggested that the first commemorative stamp was to feature a map of Africa, with Ghana marked on it, a rising eagle, and a vignette with Nkrumah's face. Nkrumah initially opposed the idea of having his portrait on a stamp, but was eventually persuaded.¹⁰ With regard to subsequent plans to commission a statue of Nkrumah as the "Founder of the Nation," as the inscription of the monument was to read, no further hesitations are on record. On the contrary, the Prime Minister's office and Nkrumah himself, supported by his long-standing political ally, the Minister of Trade and Labour, Kojo Botsio, pursued the monument project vigorously, to the extent of bypassing all the usual bureaucratic procedures. The documents on the execution of the statue plans thus read like an exercise in bureaucratic (mis-)communication and repeated attempts to shift responsibility and blame.

In August 1956, the Independence Celebrations Officer asked the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works to "investigate the possibility of erecting a statue of the Prime Minister in Accra," a "one-third larger than

Memorial Park, the former Mayor of Accra, President John Jerry Rawlings, and others, which allowed me to learn more about the various aesthetic and political considerations surrounding the statue and Nkrumah commemoration more generally. Finally, my analysis also covers the controversies concerning the erection of the mutilated original statue (and its head) in 2007 and 2009—aspects not explored until now.

9. For a fuller discussion of the bureaucratic procedures and political discussions surrounding the construction of the first Nkrumah statue, see LENTZ (2016).

10. On the Postage Stamp Committee's discussions, see FULLER (2014: 39-53).

life" sized monument either of bronze or stone,¹¹ which was to be unveiled in the course of the independence celebrations in March 1957. The Director of Public Works reported that according to the Crown Agents in London "a comparable statue of sculptural merit in bronze" would cost approximately £13,000, with an additional £3,000 for packing, shipment, provision of a pedestal, and erection. The completion of the project would take at least twelve months, and thus not be ready for the independence ceremony¹². Concerning artistic details, the Crown Agents suggested contacting the Royal Society of British Sculptors. The Ministry of Works, however, also considered commissioning the statue with an African sculptor, and sought advice from the Gold Coast Arts Council. The "fabrication of the Prime Minister's Statue as a public monument should not be sculptured in haste," the Arts Council Secretary cautioned and promised to invite African sculptors to "submit specimen of their art for judgment" before recommending who should be commissioned to create the statue.¹³

Before any of these plans could be taken much further, however, the Prime Minister's Office made its own arrangements. As Honourable Botsio later explained, "an Italian sculptor, Professor Nicola Cataudella, was [...] invited to this country at Government's expense for discussions and directions on the execution of this project."¹⁴ The contact with Cataudella was apparently made through the mediation of the Director of Public Works in Monrovia, Dr. Ing. Sergio Barbeski, and the Italian Vice-Consul in Accra, A. Michelletti, himself a building contractor who was later involved in the construction of the statue's pedestal. Stipulated at 15,000 US dollars (the equivalent of £5,360), the Italian sculptor's fee was considerably lower than what a British artist would demand,¹⁵ and a contract between Minister Botsio and Cataudella was

11. Independence Celebrations Officer, Prime Minister's Office, to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, 20 Aug. 1956; Public Records and Archives Administration, Accra (PRAAD), RG 5/1/97.

12. Director of Public Works to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, 11 Sept. 1956; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97. Crown Agents were appointed by the British Treasury and, until Nkrumah abolished the office after independence in 1957, served as intermediaries between the Colonial Office in London, the authorities of the Crown Colony (in this case: the Gold Coast Colony) and the (British or foreign) suppliers of goods and services to the colonies. The above-cited documents do not contain any information on the identity of the Crown Agents or whether they expressed their opinion on the question of the statue.

13. Organizing Secretary, Arts Council of the Gold Coast, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, 8 Oct. 1956; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

14. Memorandum of the Minister of Trade and Labour on the Statue of the Prime Minister, no date (probably shortly before 12 March 1957); PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

15. Draft by Standing Development Committee, Memorandum on Statue of the Prime Minister, no date, probably mid-November 1957; PRAAD RG5/1/98.

signed in November 1956. As Cataudella later explained, he immediately set out to work on the statue, and travelled to Accra “to execute a study from nature of the portrait of Prime Minister Nkrumah,” because this would be “very useful for a better result of the work.” Cataudella also claimed to have left no doubt that he could not deliver the statue before the independence celebrations, and that Nkrumah, Botsio, and Michelletti themselves suggested “to postpone the date of completion since the artistic issue of the work was more important.”¹⁶ In July 1957, Honourable Botsio eventually travelled to Rome to inspect the mould before the statue was cast, and in October 1957, the statue was finally shipped to Takoradi.

It was not until several weeks after the contract with Cataudella had been signed that the Minister of Works and the Director of Public Works were officially informed about the new arrangements. A series of resentful exchanges between the Ministry of Works and the Prime Minister’s Office as well as the Ministry of Trade and Labour ensued concerning the responsibility to “take delivery of the Statue as government property,” examine the monument’s “condition for breakages,” and evaluate its artistic value as a “powerful, vigorous statue” of “first quality bronze.”¹⁷ Furthermore, it remained unclear as to who was “responsible for the layout of the site, the erection of the pedestal and the placing thereon of the statue,” where the “money [was] coming from,” and who was to transport the statue from Takoradi to Accra.¹⁸ Minister Botsio declared that he had “personally been in charge of directing the execution of the project” in order “to avoid delay,” and the statue project had therefore not been “specifically assigned to any Ministry” but that now, the Ministry of Works should officially assume its oversight. The cabinet confirmed this proposal in mid-March 1957 after the frantic activities of the independence celebrations had gradually subsided.¹⁹

Nevertheless, additional unresolved questions surfaced, among others, the siting of the monument. It was only clear that the statue should not be placed on or near the “National Monument of Independence” that was to be

16. Nicola Cataudella, Rome, to Director of Public Works, Accra, no date, but probably between 10 and 22 Sept. 1957; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

17. Director of Public Works to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, 14 Dec. 1956; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

18. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, to Independence Celebrations Officer, 31 Dec. 1956 and 8 Jan. 1957; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

19. Memorandum of the Minister of Trade and Labour on the Statue of the Prime Minister, no date (probably shortly before 12 March 1957); PRAAD, RG 5/1/97; Minutes of Cabinet Meeting on 12 March 1957, Item 7; PRAAD, ADM 13/1/26.

unveiled on the eve of independence.²⁰ This imposing triumphal arc, crowned by the Black Star of African Freedom, was erected on Christiansborg Road, "a perfectly adequate ceremonial drive," linking the legislative assembly building (after independence: Parliament House) and Christiansborg Castle, the residence of the British Governor (after independence: of the Ghanaian Prime Minister).²¹ During the discussions over the statue in 1956, three alternative locations had been suggested: at the Old Polo Ground across Parliament House, at "the top of the drive to the State House," or "at the triangle at Christiansborg Crossroads."²² All three were highly symbolic sites: the Old Polo Ground had been a colonial club once reserved for whites where Nkrumah was to declare Ghana's independence, the State House was the seat of the executive branch of government, and the Crossroads site recalled the February 1948 shooting of protesting war veterans that had set off the political processes leading to independence.

No definite decision had been reached, but a year later the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works noted that Honourable Botsio had apparently decided singlehandedly to have the statue erected at yet another location, namely at the Post Office Square, in the midst of the central business district.²³ A cabinet meeting eventually decided against the post office site, "where traffic was heavy" and "passers-by might be involved in motor accidents whilst viewing the statue."²⁴ A committee set up to inspect alternative sites finally concluded that the statue should be placed in front of Parliament House.²⁵ A location at the Old Polo Ground would have been ideal, the Minister of Works explained, since this would have allowed the statue to be surrounded by "a park, with terraces and ponds and an ornamental fountain," which would "greatly improve this part of Accra, making it, indeed, of notable architectural and aesthetic appeal." But unfortunately, the requisite funds were not available. With regard to the location at Parliament House, the cabinet members themselves were to decide whether the statue was to be erected in the centre of the pathway leading to the main gate, or, as the committee preferred, on the

20. Independence Celebrations Officer, Prime Minister's Office, to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, 20 Aug. 1956; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

21. Draft Cabinet Memorandum by the Minister of Works, Independence Building Programme, Dec. 1955, PRAAD, RG 5/1/84.

22. Independence Celebrations Officer, Prime Minister's Office, to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, 20 Aug. 1956; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

23. Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works to Minister of Works, 15 July 1957; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

24. Extract from the minutes of a Cabinet meeting held on 30 July 1957; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

25. See Cabinet Committee for the Selection of a Site for the Erection of the Prime Minister's Statue, notes of meetings on 12 Aug., 28 Aug. and 21 Sept. 1957; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

lawn east of the pathway.²⁶ The cabinet endorsed the committee's suggestion. Although no explicit reasons for this decision were recorded, it is likely that cabinet members wanted to avoid potential accusations from the opposition that the Prime Minister, by having his statue placed symbolically in front of the main gate, wanted to set himself above parliamentary procedure.

Further issues awaited clarification, such as the inscriptions on the pedestal of the monument. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works asked Cataudella for suggestions, proposing that the Garibaldi monument in Rome might serve as a source of inspiration.²⁷ Cataudella's friend Sergio Barbeski, the Liberian public works official who was in Rome at the time, informed his Ghanaian colleague that the Garibaldi monument carried only brief inscriptions: "Giuseppe Garibaldi" on the front, "Il Governo Italiano" on the right, "Roma o Morte" on the left, and "xx settembre 1895," the date of the erection of the monument, on the rear side. Barbeski suggested that in the case of Nkrumah's statue, too, only the name should be placed on the front, and on the sides brief quotations from speeches, like "Give us a freedom (*sic*) and we will do the rest."²⁸ The Prime Minister's Office decided for somewhat wordier inscriptions, celebrating Nkrumah as "Founder of the Nation" and quoting famous slogans as well as a few lines from the independence speech, the lettering of which was to be fabricated by Cataudella and "forwarded by air freight, as soon as possible."²⁹ Only a week before the statue was to be unveiled, however, the Prime Minister himself demanded a final correction of one of the inscriptions, and the Director of Public Works rushed to ask Cataudella to send the required additional lettering³⁰—which he apparently managed to do just in time.

The protocol arrangements for the inauguration of the monument gave rise to another incident of bureaucratic miscommunication when the Official Functions Officer at the Ministry of External Affairs finalised the programme before having consulted the chairman of the occasion, Honourable Botsio, and, most importantly, Chief Justice Sir Arku Korsah, who was to unveil

26. Minister of Works, Cabinet Memorandum, no date (early Oct. 1957); PRAAD, RG 5/1/98; see also Permanent Secretary to Minister of Works, concerning the draft of the cabinet memorandum, 3 Oct. 1957; PRAAD, RG 5/1/97.

27. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, to Nicola Cataudella, 27 Nov. 1957; PRAAD, RG 5/1/98.

28. Sergio Barbeski, Rome, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, 26 Dec. 1957; PRAAD, RG 5/1/98.

29. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, to Sergio Barbeski, Rome, 8 Jan. 1958; PRAAD, RG 5/1/98.

30. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, to Director of Public Works, 26 Feb. 1958; PRAAD, RG 5/1/98.

the statue.³¹ But last-minute adaptations were made, and on 5 March 1958, from four thirty to five o'clock in the afternoon, the ceremony transpired as scheduled. The Chief Justice arrived at Parliament House, inspected a guard of honour formed by the Naval Volunteer Force from Takoradi, was greeted by Honourable Botsio, and, after a brief address by the Minister of Works, unveiled the statue. At six o'clock, Prime Minister Nkrumah gave a broadcast talk. This was followed by bonfires at the Old Polo Ground, opposite Parliament House, and by a torchlight procession of "voluntary and national organisations" from the Old Polo Ground along Christiansborg Road to the Independence Monument, where the evening concluded with a display of fireworks.³² Thus, although the personalised statue that commemorated Kwame Nkrumah's leading role in the achievement of independence was not to be placed near the impersonal, triumphal and overpowering National Monument of Independence, the ceremonial procession connected the two memorial sites, demonstrating the inseparableness of the nation and its founder, Kwame Nkrumah.

Contesting, Repairing and Replicating the Prime Minister's Statue (1956-1966)

Unlike the considerably larger, gold-coloured sculpture of Nkrumah, majestically clad in an Ashanti *kente* cloth that was later commissioned for the mausoleum, the original Nkrumah statue can be described as almost modest and of human dimensions³³. Nkrumah is dressed not in royal attire, but in a worker's or farmer's smock. He stands stepping forward, with his right arm raised in greeting, the palm facing forward, and his left hand holding a walking stick (Fig. 2). The *contrapposto* that Cataudella employed—first developed in classical Greek statues, the counterpoise had become a time-honoured convention in European sculpture—gives the figure a dynamic, and at the same time relaxed, appearance. The Garibaldi monument on Janiculum Hill in Rome, a huge equestrian statue, was consulted for the inscription, but certainly did not serve as a model for the Nkrumah sculpture. Cataudella

31. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, to Parliamentary Secretary and others, 31 Jan. 1958; Official Functions Officer, Ministry of External Relations, to Chief Justice, 27 Feb. 1958; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, to Official Functions Officer, 3 March 1958; PRAAD, RG 5/1/98.

32. Ghana Independence Anniversary Celebrations, Official Programme, March 1958; PRAAD, ADM 14/6/90.

33. The characterisation of the statue as "monumental" by HESS (2000: 35) or "giant" by FULLER (2014: 126) is misleading.

may have drawn some inspiration from the Augustus of Prima Porta statue in the Vatican museum, which shows the Roman emperor making a similar gesture, raising the right hand in salute. Quite clearly, however, the pose that Cataudella chose for the statue reproduces the one that Nkrumah adopted when he declared “Ghana, your beloved country is free forever.” This moment was captured in a press photograph that rapidly became *the* icon of independence, and has since then been reproduced innumerable times, on posters, calendars and stamps. It is very likely that, contrary to the declarations he made to reassure his clients, Cataudella produced the final model of the statue after March 1957, and had seen this image. That the statue was to immortalise the very moment of declaring independence was also borne out in the inscription on the rear of the pedestal that quoted Nkrumah’s independence speech: “To me the liberation of Ghana will be meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa.”³⁴

Nkrumah’s heroic self-stylisation and the use of his portrait for national paraphernalia—not only the statue, but also coins and stamps—came under criticism as soon as the respective plans transpired, and the statue project in particular was heavily attacked. Protest against the monument never concerned the aesthetics of the statue, or, for that matter, his portrait on stamps, coins and bank bills, but the very fact that Nkrumah should be commemorated by such works of art. Joe Appiah, for instance, a renowned Asante lawyer and opposition politician, insinuated that Nkrumah’s statue “would suffer the same fate as Joe Stalin’s statue in Hungary, where the people with an insatiable desire to free themselves from the thralldom (*sic*) of the Kremlin are today on the warpath.”³⁵ Nkrumah’s critics gleefully reproduced a letter to London’s *Daily Telegraph* by a British Conservative Member of Parliament who attacked the decision to change the Ghanaian currency and stamps as “gross abuse of political power [...] that must be unique in the annals of the British Commonwealth, of which the new State of Ghana aspires to be a member.”³⁶ Until Ghana became a republic in 1960, its Head of State was the Queen, and in all countries that were members of the Commonwealth postage stamps, bills and coins featured the Queen’s portrait. The only exception thus far had been Ceylon (Sri Lanka) which had become independent in 1948 and had printed commemorative stamps showing Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake

34. The other quotations were, on the right side of the pedestal: “We prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquillity,” the slogan which the newly formed Convention People’s Party adopted in 1948; and on the left side: “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto it,” another motto coined by Nkrumah in the run-up to independence; the front read: “Kwame Nkrumah Founder of the Nation.”

35. *Liberator*, 15 Jan. 1957, quoted in FULLER (2014: 128).

36. *Ashanti Pioneer*, 18 Feb. 1957, quoted in FULLER (*ibid.*: 48-49).

as the new nation's founding father. And it was indeed to this example that Nkrumah pointed when justifying the use of his image. In an article written for a British newspaper, he explained that he was neither "power-drunk with success," nor planning "sedition against the Queen," but had his portrait put on stamps and coins, and erected a statue, "because many of my people cannot read or write" and have to be "shown that they are now really independent. And they can only be shown by signs."³⁷

The opposition in Ghana, however, was convinced neither by these explanations nor more generally by the Convention People's Party (CPP) government's politics, and continued to accuse Nkrumah of dictatorial leanings. Some critics went beyond verbal and written protests, and took to violent measures. From the end of 1958 on, Nkrumah became an almost regular target of bomb attacks and other assassination attempts. One bomb attack that received worldwide publicity targeted not Nkrumah himself, but his statue in front of Parliament. It happened on 5 November 1961, shortly before Queen Elizabeth II and her husband were to visit Ghana. Clearly, the persons behind the attack, "certain unpatriotic elements," as the Minister of Constructions and Communications called them,³⁸ aimed at preventing the royal visit and showing the world that Ghanaians did not respect Nkrumah as a legitimate head of state. However, after a British inspection of the security situation gave a green light, the Queen's eleven-day stay, with parades on the newly built Black Star Square, visits to many public institutions, garden parties, and a tour through various of Ghana's regions, took place as scheduled.³⁹

After the grand ceremonial event was over, the Division of Public Construction drew attention to the fact that the provisional repairs that had been undertaken for the Queen's visit could not guarantee "the stability of the

37. Kwame Nkrumah, "Why the Queen's Head is coming off our Coins," *Daily Sketch*, 20 June 1957, quoted in FULLER (2014: 76-77).

38. Minister of Construction and Communications, Draft Cabinet Memorandum on Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's Statue, no date, probably early Dec. 1961; PRAAD, 5/1/99. The attack was immediately blamed on NLM activists because of nature of the explosives that were used; see the report in the *Daily Graphic*, 6 Nov. 1961, "Massive Police Hunt for Statue Bombers." For an example of international reports, see *Glasgow Herald*, 6 Nov. 1961, <<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2507&dat=19611106&id=Rd09AAA AIBAJ&sjid=LUGMAAAAIBAJ&pg=1630,765691&hl=de>> (accessed 30 May 2015).

39. For a short film on the damaged statue, and the replacement of the feet, as well as further preparations and security checks for the Queen's visit, see the BBC news clip "Queen Goes To Ghana: Despite Recent Bombing the Royal Trip to Ghana Goes Ahead," broadcast before 9 November 1961, the date of the royal couple's arrival in Accra, <<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/queen-goes-to-Ghana>> (accessed 20 July 2016).

statue.”⁴⁰ Cataudella was invited to Accra to inspect the damage and propose what should be done. In the course of these consultations, the cabinet also adopted an ambitious plan to erect statues “of Osagyefo the President” across the entire country⁴¹—as if the bomb attack had made government even more determined to make Nkrumah’s image an inescapable presence everywhere. All regional commissioners and urban councils were to forward suggestions of suitable sites for the new monuments, which they eagerly did.⁴² Eventually, however, the cabinet decided to restrict the erection of additional statues to the regional headquarters, “as well as important industrial and nationally significant centres,” and to put up only one new statue in Accra, on the Black Star Square.⁴³

Cataudella advised that it was more effective and economical to replace the damaged statue at Parliament House with a fresh cast from the original mould than to attempt further repairs. He would only charge £1,000 for the new cast—a pleasant surprise for the statue committee, which had expected much higher charges and now proposed to order all additional statues for the regional headquarters as such copies. The Italian sculptor also agreed to submit plans for the new statue for the Black Star Square which should, according to the cabinet committee’s wishes, show not only Nkrumah’s effigy, but also “portray the contribution of the masses in the struggle for the independence of Ghana.”⁴⁴ Cataudella’s sketches for the Black Star Square project offered four alternative arrangements of a new bronze statue and relief with mass scenes, with cost estimates ranging from £13,500 to £33,460. The cabinet favoured the most elaborate and costly proposal, but asked for an adjustment of an important artistic detail: the statue “should depict Osagyefo in a dynamic attitude pointing

40. District Architect East to Chief Architect, Division of Public Construction, Ministry of Construction and Communications, 13 Dec. 1961; PRAAD, RG 5/1/99.

41. Extract from the minutes of a meeting of the cabinet held on 26 Jan. 1962; PRAAD, RG 5/1/99.

42. Committee on the selection of sites for Osagyefo’s statues, minutes of first meeting, 12 Feb. 1962; PRAAD, RG 5/1/99.

43. Minister of Communications and Works, Memorandum on Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s statues, no date (probably early 1963); PRAAD, RG 5/1/99 (the relevant cabinet meeting took place 17 April 1962).

44. Secretary to the Cabinet to Permanent Secretary Ministry of Communications and Works, 8 Feb. 1963; PRAAD, RG 5/1/99. At some point, it was also considered to surround the President’s image by a “relief portraying typical scenes of Ghanaian life, some aspects of the principal activities of the people of Ghana (occupational and cultural), e.g. farming, fishing, national festival with dancing, etc. etc.” (L. K. Apaloo, Ministry of Communications and Works, to Secretary to the Cabinet, 12 Feb. 1963; PRAAD, RG 5/1/99). However, as a response from cabinet made clear, the relief should rather be related to the struggle for independence (Secretary to the Cabinet to Principal Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Works, 15 Feb. 1963; PRAAD, RG 5/1/99).

forward to the future, and not skywards as in the designs," and the figures on the relief "should also look forward in the direction pointed by Osagyefo."⁴⁵ The "dynamic attitude" of the new sculpture obviously so pleased cabinet members that they decided to have all statues for the regional headquarters also cast from that mould, not from the one for the original statue at Parliament House.

In October 1963, Cataudella informed the Minister of Communications and Works that he had started work on the Black Star Square project, but was still waiting for a contract. At the end of November 1963, the replacement for the Parliament House statue was expected to arrive at the new Tema Harbour very soon, and must have been erected before the end of the year.⁴⁶ There was no further mention, however, of the Black Star Square project, and probably none, or only very few, of the statues intended for the regional headquarters were actually delivered⁴⁷. But the regime's monumental ambitions continued despite the severe economic crisis that Ghana was facing. The cabinet committee enlisted the support of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, whose director proposed to expand the "national statues project," creating not only Nkrumah effigies, but also "small statues of prominent citizens of this country and of Africa."⁴⁸ Cataudella was invited to organise a training programme for Ghanaian sculptors and artisans to be sent to Rome to learn about modern foundry techniques.⁴⁹

Before any of these plans materialised, however, the Nkrumah regime was overthrown in February 1966. One of the first measures of the new military government was to ban all images of the former president from the public sphere, rename streets that bore Nkrumah's name, burn Nkrumah's books, and forbid all CPP symbols and paraphernalia. The statue in front of Parliament House

45. Excerpt from the minutes of a meeting of cabinet held on 23 July 1963; PRAAD, 5/1/99. For more details on the proposals and cost estimates, see Cataudella to Minister of Communications and Works, 9 June 1963; and Minister of Communications and Works, Draft Cabinet Memorandum on Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's statues, no date (probably July 1963); PRAAD, 5/1/99. Unfortunately, I could not find copies of the sketches or photographs of models in the PRAAD files.

46. Cataudella to Minister of Communications and Works, 5 Oct. 1963; Managing Director, Ghana National Construction Corporation, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Works, 25 Nov. 1963; PRAAD 5/1/99. I found no records on the erection of the monument, but it must have taken place as scheduled, and the new/old statue was immortalised on a Five-Cedi banknote issued in 1965.

47. One statue was erected in front of the CPP offices in Kumasi, but it is not clear whether it had been made by Cataudella. The statue put up at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute in Winneba was created by the Polish sculptor Alina Slesinka in 1965. On these statues, see FULLER (2014: 126-127, 130).

48. Director of Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) to Cataudella, 14 March 1963; GMMB Statues File No. 0244; quoted in FULLER (2014: 129).

49. See FULLER (2014: 130-131) for references.

was of particular symbolic importance. Newspaper reports insinuated that an angry mob attacked and pulled the statue down, and a press photograph showed a group of children standing around the decapitated sculpture⁵⁰. In the account of the *coup* that he wrote from his Guinean exile, however, Nkrumah (1968: 130) insisted that the alleged spontaneity of the destruction of his effigy was a propaganda ploy of the *coup* makers who wanted to convince the world of the unpopularity of his regime (Fig. 3). Indeed, the large hole in the right leg of the headless statue, which now stands behind the Nkrumah mausoleum, suggests that explosives were used to bring the statue down.⁵¹ Be that as it may, the statue “disappeared” from the public eye, but only for a little more than a decade.

Rescuing the Original Statue(s) and Creating the Nkrumah Mausoleum (1972-2000)

It was not until Nkrumah died in April 1972 that his image was to reappear in the public sphere in Ghana. In his Guinean exile, Nkrumah was mourned as “the greatest African,” as the words on his coffin read, and buried in an impressive state funeral that attracted thousands of friends and followers from all over Africa. In Ghana, the military regime had been replaced by an elected government under Prime Minister Busia, one of the leaders of the Nkrumah opposition. But Busia’s government, in turn, had been overthrown earlier in 1972 by another military coup, led by Colonel I. K. Acheampong, a man with a vaguely Nkrumaist ideology of economic nationalism, but no intentions of reinstating former CPP politicians in power. Acheampong sent a small delegation to Nkrumah’s funeral, and eventually agreed to the Guinean president’s entreaty to bury Nkrumah in Ghana. In mid-1972, Nkrumah was thus given a second state funeral in Accra, before being buried in his hometown Nkroful, an arrangement that, according to June Milne (2006: 266), “suited the Acheampong government as well as successive regimes, which felt threatened by a revival of Nkrumaism.” For Ghana’s silver jubilee of independence, however, Acheampong intended publicly to “honour the memory of [...] Ghana’s First President and the torchbearer of Africa’s freedom and unity,” and discussed the possibility of creating a mausoleum, adorned with

50. Photo by H. Dempster, *Express*, March 6, 1966, Getty Images; the photograph can be consulted on, for instance, <<http://ghanarising.blogspot.de/2010/05/ghanas-history-in-black-and-white-from.html>> (accessed 2 June 2015); see also FULLER (2014: 155-157) for further references.

51. My interview partners confirmed that it would be difficult to decapitate a sturdy bronze statue without suitable tools; interviews with Dr. Don Arthur, 12 March 2014, Accra; and with Prof. Henry Wellington, 4 March 2014, Accra.

an imposing new statue, on the Old Polo Ground where the ex-president had declared independence.⁵² The statue was actually commissioned in Italy and arrived at Tema Harbour,⁵³ but before it could be erected, the Acheampong government was toppled in another military *coup* by Flight Lieutenant Jerry J. Rawlings. In addition, the continued economic crisis militated against any large-scale investment in the monumental landscape.

One gesture of the "symbolic resurrection" of the nation's founder was nonetheless realised under the Acheampong regime (Fuller 2014: 169-173). In 1975, the Director of the Museums and Monuments Board was informed that the ex-President's statue, which had been removed in the wake of the 1966 *coup*, was still being kept at the central police station in Accra and would be better off if transferred to the National Museum for preservation. In fact, not only one, but two damaged statues—one headless and one armless—had been safeguarded at the police barracks and were now transported to the National Museum⁵⁴. Ghana's twentieth anniversary of independence in 1977 offered an occasion to exhibit one of the original statues, the armless one, in the museum garden, where it still stands today, on a renewed pedestal, but with the initial plaque:

The original statue of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah which stood in front of Parliament House, Accra, attacked by a mob in the wake of a military and police coup d'État on 24th February, 1966, recovered for the National Museum in 1975, mounted by the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, and unveiled on Thursday, March 3, 1977, by Mr. E. Owusu Fordwor, Commissioner for Education and Culture (Fig. 4).

The headless statue, on the other hand, was kept inside the museum (Hess 2006: 19), until it was finally re-erected behind the Nkrumah mausoleum in

52. Interview with Dr. Don Arthur, 12 March 2014; on the commission which Acheampong appointed to plan appropriate commemorative measures, see "Nkrumah Statue Sent to Museum," *Ghanaian Times*, 19 Sept. 1975.

53. "Nkrumah statue in," *Daily Graphic*, 19 Nov. 1976.

54. GMMB, Memorandum 0739/16, "Mounting of Nkrumah's Statue," 28 Feb. 1977, quoted in FULLER (2014: 170). According to a GMMB source, one of the statues had stood in front of Parliament House, and the second one at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute in Winneba; see "Nkrumah Statue Sent to Museum," *Ghanaian Times*, 19 Sept. 1975. However, he probably erred, since both statues seem to have been cast from the same mould, while the Winneba statue had not been produced by Cataudella, but by Alina Slesinka. I suggest that the armless statue is the one damaged in the 1961 bomb attack, perhaps first kept at the Public Works Department and then further damaged and transported to the police barracks in 1966; while the headless one was probably its replacement, mounted at Parliament House in 1963 and then toppled in 1966. This would also explain why both monuments can legitimately claim to be "the original statue [...]" which stood in front of Parliament House," as their inscriptions read.

2007 (see below). Announcing the ceremonial inauguration of the statue in the garden, the Acting Director of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board declared that it was important to present it with all its historical scars, “as it was when it was retrieved from the Central Police Station in Accra,” because “any repairs will make it lose its historical importance.”⁵⁵ Staunch Nkrumaists, however, requested that the statue be fully restored and felt that “the decision [...] to leave the statue in its macerated state [was intended] to serve as proof of the fall of Nkrumah” (Fuller 2014: 173).

Acheampong’s memorial project at the Old Polo Ground finally came to fruition in 1992, commissioned by the Rawlings government, financed with a Chinese grant, and based on the design of a Ghanaian architect, Dr. Don Arthur. Its heart is the mausoleum, surrounded by water basins, with fountains and figures of Asante elephant-horn blowers that traditionally accompany royal processions, and which stands in a landscaped park that is successively greened by commemorative trees planted by important international visitors. The mausoleum is complemented by a small museum, decorated with an Egyptian-style frieze, exhibiting memorabilia of Nkrumah, such as the famous smock in which he declared independence, his desk at Flagstaff House, and numerous photographs. The mausoleum itself, made of Italian marble, evokes a gigantic tree stump, but also draws on the imagery of Egyptian pyramids, the Taj Mahal and the Eiffel Tower. It is an “eclectical synthesis,” the architect explained, that uses an “African vocabulary,” while its “language is universal”⁵⁶ (Fig. 5).

The ensemble’s architecture celebrates Nkrumah as a kind of chief, an allusion sustained by the bronze statue erected in front of the mausoleum that shows Nkrumah clad in royal *kente* cloth, pointing forward, as if symbolising the CPP slogan: “We face neither East nor West, we face forward. Forward ever, backward never.” The pose very much resembles the “dynamic attitude” of the sculpture which Cataudella had proposed for the Black Star Square monument, and Dr. Arthur insinuated that it was indeed one of the sculptures cast by Cataudella in the 1960s, shipped to Ghana, and stored in a warehouse where faithful Nkrumah followers salvaged it from the 1966 iconoclastic attacks (Fig. 6). There is no evidence to support this assertion, but most likely the statue was in fact produced according to Cataudella’s earlier designs, or even in his workshop. It may even be the one commissioned by the Acheampong government and shipped to Takoradi in 1976. In any case, as Dr. Arthur asserted, the statue was “found,” polished and varnished, and integrated into the mausoleum complex. Since then, this portrait of a

55. “Nkrumah’s Statue to be on Show,” *Ghanaian Times*, 5 Jan. 1977.

56. Interview with Dr. Don Arthur, 12 March 2014, Accra.

triumphant and energetic Nkrumah has been reproduced over and over again on thousands of photographs which Ghanaians and foreign visitors shoot in front of the monument, on postcards, posters, calendars, T-shirts and coffee mugs (Fig. 7). It has become the new icon of the national hero and of Ghana's independence. It seems as if with the increasing temporal distance from the original events this much larger statesmanlike statue has eventually supplanted in the public imagination the more modest, populist statue of 1958, despite the fact that the new statue has been erected on the very spot where Nkrumah declared independence, a moment and posture that was immortalised by the older sculpture.

The reburial and the inauguration of Memorial Park were celebrated twenty years after Nkrumah's death, on 1 July 1992, Republic Day, which commemorates Ghana's transformation into a republic in 1960 and the conversion of Prime Minister Nkrumah into an executive President and Head of State. The 1992 celebration fell shortly after a successful referendum on the constitution of the Fourth Republic and thus marked the transition from the military government under Rawlings to a multiparty democracy. Rawlings' opponents interpreted the mausoleum project as an astute attempt to exploit the growing nostalgia for Nkrumah in his electoral campaign, and to style himself and his party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), as worthy heirs to Nkrumah's ideas. Another major motivation behind the project was certainly to show the world that Ghanaians now, after many years of neglect, respected Nkrumah as great African leader. The guest of honour, Namibia's President Sam Nujoma, praised Nkrumah as the champion of "the struggle for the liberation of the African peoples" and urged the "present generation" to complete his "unfinished work [...] building the economic and political might of Africa." Rawlings, too, emphasised the revolutionary "battle" that Nkrumah had fought "to restore the historical destiny of the continent," and commended Nkrumah's capacity "to rouse the people into action to transform their condition." Nkrumah's son Dr. Francis Nkrumah, by contrast, was less combative and pleaded with Ghanaians to regard his father's re-interment "as a forum of reconciliation," he asked "those who harbour any ill-feelings against the late President because he might have wronged them to forgive him."⁵⁷

This was actually the first time since his overthrow that Nkrumah was publicly commemorated with such splendour. Shortly after the ceremony,

57. All quotations from reports in *People's Daily Graphic*, 13 June 1992; for brief descriptions of the ceremony, see also FULLER (2014: 176-177), and HESS (2006: 25). The reburial incorporated elements both of chiefly funeral ritual and state protocol, with its military ceremonial. The Chief State Linguist poured traditional libation, the Asante royal drums were beaten and horns made from elephant tusks blown. The casket, draped in national

the 1966 decree that had banned all things Nkrumah from the public sphere was finally repealed. Official statements reminded of the necessity to no longer “obliterate the greatness of our leaders as we only do so at the peril of distorting our history and our reality,” as the *Graphic*’s editorial summarized,⁵⁸ even calling Nkrumah by his long-suppressed praise name Osagyefo.

Constructing New Monuments, Continuing the “Monument Wars” (2000-2014)

The reburial, inauguration of the memorial park, and erection of the statue conferred on Nkrumah an incontestable place in the dominant national narrative. Nevertheless, intense controversies about Nkrumah’s regime and political legacy continued, particularly after the New Patriotic Party (NPP), a party that regards itself as legitimate successor to the opposition against Nkrumah, won the elections in 2000 against the NDC. Yet unlike the 1966 *coup*-makers, the new government under J. A. Kufuor no longer attempted to raze the Nkrumah monument, but found other ways to leave a lasting imprint on Ghana’s commemorative landscape. On the one hand, the government created a series of new monuments commemorating politicians of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), who had later become opponents of and were persecuted by Nkrumah. On the other hand, the Kufuor administration expanded, modified and re-contextualised the Nkrumah mausoleum and other existing monuments in ways that attempted to superimpose its own reading of Ghana’s political heritage on the Nkrumah-centred narrative.

The preparations for celebrating the golden jubilee of Ghana’s independence in 2007 provided a welcome opportunity for the Kufuor government to launch a veritable campaign of constructing new statues all over Accra to commemorate its own political heroes. Most prominently, a monument with bronze-coloured busts of the “Big Six,” the six UGCC leaders who had been imprisoned in the course of anti-colonial protests in 1948, was inaugurated at a circle near the international airport (Fig. 8). The “Big Six” did, in fact, include Nkrumah who was the UGCC secretary,⁵⁹ but the expression refers to a historical moment before Nkrumah began advocating a more radical course of action under the motto “self-government now” and broke away from the UGCC

colours, was driven on a gun carriage by a group of marines, military fanfares were sounded, and the national anthem sung.

58. “Comment: They Live,” *People’s Daily Graphic*, 13 June 1992.

59. The other five prisoners were J. B. Danquah, who later headed the oppositional United Party; Dr. Ebenezer Ako Adjei; Emmanuel Odarkwei Obetsebi-Lamptey; Edward Akuffo-Addo and William Ofori Atta.

to found his own party, the CPP, in 1949. Furthermore, individual members of the "Big Six" were honoured with their own monuments. J. B. Danquah, an opposition leader who had died in prison under the Nkrumah regime, was honoured by a new sculpture at a lively and centrally located traffic roundabout. While plans for the Danquah statue date back to the Busia government, the first monument was actually erected under Rawlings, in the 1990s, probably in an attempt to appease the political opposition. However, the statue was deliberately placed low, as the responsible architect Dr. Don Arthur explained, because Rawlings "did not want this man [...] for all the bad things that he had done [...] to be exalted so high?"⁶⁰ The Kufuor administration saw to it that the new sculpture was placed in a more elevated position and thus became visible from afar. The statue shows the politician dressed in traditional *kente* cloth, leaning on a stack of books, and surrounded by Romanesque pillars as well as folkloristic Asante figures. Danquah is thus portrayed as learned scholar-politician, but also an Asante traditionalist (Fig. 9). The co-founder of the UGCC, Emmanuel Obetsebi-Lamptey, who died in prison under the Nkrumah regime, was also commemorated by a statue; interestingly Obetsebi-Lamptey stands in the same pose, with the right hand lifted in greeting, as the first Nkrumah statue.⁶¹ Further sculptures were constructed for Edward Akuffo-Addo, a member of the "Big Six," and Dr. Kofi Busia, another important leader of the opposition against Nkrumah, who went into exile in 1959, returned to Ghana in 1966 after the *coup* and served as Prime Minister from 1969 until 1972, when he was toppled by the military *coup* led by Acheampong.

In short, "the Kufuor group decided that they were also going to build monuments to celebrate their heroes," the architect and former mayor of Accra Nat Nuno-Amarteifio explained⁶². In the same vein, the Bank of Ghana presented new bank notes with portraits of the "Big Six," the Ghana@50 programme offered a special biopic on the "Big Six," a presidential gala dinner honoured "distinguished statesmen and citizens of the land who have given selfless and meritorious service to the nation," and the museum at Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park launched a multimedia and photographic exhibition "of the 50 heroes of 50 years of Ghana."⁶³ Expanding the pantheon of national heroes was also the aim of repeated NPP attempts to turn Founder's Day, celebrated

60. Interview on 12 March 2014. See also FULLER (2014: 178-180).

61. For photographs of this and other new statues erected by the NPP, see <<http://africanurbanism.net/2013/06/30/nationalism-iconography-history-big-six-monuments/#gallery-1077-1-slideshow>> (last accessed 8 June 2015).

62. Interview on 3 March 2014, Accra.

63. All quotes from the report by the Chief Executive of the Ghana@50 Secretariat, Charles Wereko-Brobby, "The Ghana@50 Celebrations," Accra (October 2009) 23-24 (personal

on 21 September in honour of Nkrumah's birthday and declared a national holiday by the NDC government in 2009, into Founders' Day, honouring important UGCC politicians who, in the eyes of the heirs of the Danquah-Busia tradition, had significantly contributed towards independence.⁶⁴

While this proliferation of monuments can be read as an attempt to neutralise the commemoration of Nkrumah by "pluralisation," there were also more direct interventions into the existing commemorative landscape. Most notably, the NPP government supported plans of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board to transfer the original 1958 Nkrumah statue from the National Museum to Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, and erect it behind the mausoleum, close to the museum (Fig. 10). This statue, showing Nkrumah without his head and left arm, was inaugurated in June 2007, in the course of the "Heroes of Ghana Month," as the organising secretariat of the Ghana@50 Celebrations had designated this month, and unveiled just before the interment of the body of Madam Fathia Nkrumah, the first president's Egyptian wife, in the mausoleum. Fathia Nkrumah had died in May 2007 in Cairo, but her wish was to be buried next to her husband, and the Kufuor government, "regarded by some as the traditional rival of the Nkrumaist socialist ideology," agreed to organise a state funeral for her, as her son, Dr. Gamal Nkrumah, gratefully acknowledged in his tribute.⁶⁵ Others, such as former President Jerry Rawlings, however, thought that the very fact of burying Fathia Nkrumah inside the

copy). Generally on controversies surrounding the Ghana@50 celebrations, see LENTZ (2013).

64. The debate intensified in the course of the centenary celebrations of Nkrumah's birthday in 2009, see, for instance, the following articles in the *Ghanaian Journal*: "NPP to crash Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's Founder's Day Initiative," 22 Feb. 2009, <<http://www.modernghana.com/news/203528/1/npp-tp-crash-dr-kwame-nkrumah-founders-day-initiat.html>> (accessed 8 June 2014) and Gabby Asare Otchere-Darko, "Founders' Day should be August 4," 26 Feb. 2009, <<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=158179>> (accessed 20 July, 2016). See also, "Nkrumah's Birthday Declared a Holiday," *Daily Graphic*, 4 Sep. 2009. With the new NPP government, inaugurated in January 2017, the debate was rekindled. In his inaugural speech, President Nana Dankwa Akufo-Addo declared himself and his fellow Ghanaian as "heirs" of a long list of "forebears," ranging from Mensah Sarbah to Busia, who all helped to establish "the Ghanaian nation" and among whom Kwame Nkrumah was just one of many names, <<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Full-Text-President-Akufo-Addo-s-inaugural-speech-499228#>> (accessed 3 April 2017). Similarly, in his Message on the State of the Nation before the Ghanaian Parliament (on 21 Feb. 2017), Akufo-Addo announced that it was necessary to "have a conversation on how we name things that are of national importance to us all. I speak of [...] Founder's Day," <https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/State-of-the-Nation-Address_2017.pdf, p. 15> (accessed 3 April 2017).

65. "Fathia's Wish is Sealed," *Daily Graphic*, 13 June 2007. Interestingly, while Nkrumah's marble sarcophagus in the mausoleum bears only the inscription "Dr. Kwame Nkrumah,

mausoleum instead of somewhere outside, in the Memorial Park, was an assault by the NPP government on the dignity of Ghana's founder, turning the memorial into a "family grave site" instead of a political monument.⁶⁶ Be that as it may, the newly erected headless statue was not explicitly mentioned by the newspaper reports on Fathia Nkrumah's burial, but it must have caught the attention of those attending the ceremony. Unlike the armless statue, which remains at the National Museum, the inscription on the pedestal of the headless statue in the Memorial Park uses the epithet *Osagyefo* and makes an even more explicit claim to authenticity: "*Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972)*. The original statue of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah which stood in front of Parliament House opposite Old Polo Grounds, Accra, attacked by a mob, vandalised as it stands now in the wake of a military with police *coup d'État* on 24th February 1966, recovered for the National Museum in 1975. This is on loan to KNMP (Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park) from Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, mounted on 11th June 2007."

The opinions on the erection of this statue next to the mausoleum have been mixed. Nat Nuno-Amarteifio, like many others to whom I spoke, felt that it was a "very clever" move in keeping with new, internationally acceptable forms of commemorating a contested past. Nkrumaists, like Dr. Don Arthur, on the other hand, were adamant that it was "morally wrong" and amounted to "insisting on what we did wrong" and repeating the destruction of the original statue. While he felt that it was in order to keep the destroyed statue in the museum, as part of "the heritage of our history," to insert it into the celebratory context of the Memorial Park undermined the commemorative intentions of the new bronze sculpture in front of the mausoleum.⁶⁷ Dr. Arthur was even more appalled when two years later, in honour of Nkrumah's hundredth birthday, the rediscovered bronze head was mounted next to the headless statue, on an extra pedestal decorated with bronze reliefs of crossed state swords and Asante *adinkra* symbols for peace and for mortality (Fig. 11). The inscription explains that this is the original head of the statue that has been "recovered and presented by a patriotic citizen to the Information Services Department which in turn released it to the Park on May 28, 2009. Mounted on the Park on Sept. 1, 2009."⁶⁸ For Dr. Arthur, this amounted to a second decapitation of the statue, and, according

1909-1972," the inscription for his wife is more elaborate as Dr. Francis Nkrumah had engraved: "Beloved wife of a great man, she faced adversity with courage," alluding to the harassment that she, too, suffered after the 1966 *coup*; Fathia's son Gamal added the inscription: "Our mother, the spirit of Pan-Africanism."

66. Interview with President John Jerry Rawlings, 3 March 2017, Accra.

67. Interviews with Nat Nuno-Amarteifio, 3 March 2014, and Dr. Don Arthur, 12 March 2014.

68. According to the director of Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, the head had been kept secretly by "somebody" as a "personal trophy," and was released to the Information

to newspaper reports, he even went to the park personally and used his authority as presidential staffer to stop the workers from mounting the head.⁶⁹ This time, however, the documentary project was not initiated by an anti-Nkrumaist regime, but by the director of Memorial Park who operated under the NDC government that had been voted into power in 2008. Still, Dr. Arthur felt that exhibiting the decapitated head, instead of mounting it on the mutilated body, was a political statement that supported the cause of Nkrumah's detractors. For him and other Nkrumaists, the deconstructivist documentation of the statue's fate was, just like the attempt to reconfigure Founder's Day as Founders' Day, "a matter of trying to falsify history, forcing yourself onto the history." In sum, then, as a newspaper report on the new national holiday put it, "Nkrumah's celebration renews age-old debate," between the two political traditions of the country that have opposed, and sometimes relentlessly persecuted, each other since the late 1940s.⁷⁰ And as long as the political competitors boost their ambitions with rival understandings of the past, the "monument wars" will continue.

In 2013, Ghana's President John Dramani Mahama announced that a replica of the huge bronze copy of the original Nkrumah sculpture which had been unveiled in Addis Ababa in January 2012 would be mounted at the renovated Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra in order to "further incise the memory of Nkrumah which the centenary had helped [to rekindle and] "to put Nkrumah in his proper perspective."⁷¹ In November 2016, shortly before the presidential and parliamentary elections, the new three-tier interchange at the circle was finally inaugurated. The Nkrumah statue had been erected on a large pedestal, surrounded by water fountains and lawns, and Ghanaians soon nicknamed the

Services Department on occasion of the fortieth anniversary of Ghana's independence in 1997, see "Nkrumah's Head Found; Arm Still Missing," *Modern Ghana News*, 2 June 2009, <<http://www.modernghana.com/news/219607/1/nkrumahs-head-found-arm-still-missing.html>> (accessed 20 July 2016) and "Nkrumah's Head and Arm Wanted," 26 May 2009, <<http://www.modernghana.com/news/218301/1/nkrumahs-head-and-arm-wanted.html>> (accessed 20 July 2016).

69. "Mill's Man Goes on Rampage," *Daily Searchlight*, 7 Feb. 2010, <<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHome/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=176315>> (accessed 8 June 2014). From this report, it appears that the head was actually not mounted in September 2009, as the inscription claims, but a few months later.

70. "Nkrumah's celebration renews age-old debate," *Daily Graphic*, 21 Sept. 2009.

71. "Gov't to Mount Giant Nkrumah Statue at Nkrumah Circle – Prez Mahama" (19 Feb. 2013); <<http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201302/101630.php>> (accessed 20 July 2016).

entire ensemble, which was illuminated by an impressive lightshow at night, "Mini Dubai" there has been no further mention of the new statue project.⁷² When I visited the site in February 2017, however, the walled park with the statue was more or less closed to the public and the "dancing fountains" were shut down, even though the lightshow continued to work. Whether this was due to inevitable maintenance work or lack of commitment of the new NPP government, which has an ambivalent attitude towards any veneration of Nkrumah as the nation's founder (as the inscription of the statue reads), must remain an open question.

Meanwhile, the statue at the mausoleum that shows Nkrumah in "dynamic attitude" continues to be the overriding image of the national hero. Most visitors to Memorial Park do not even take notice of the original statue behind the mausoleum. Furthermore, for a number of years now, the statue has been brought to life at every eve of Independence Day, by staging just in front of it a theatrical re-enactment of Nkrumah's midnight declaration of independence by members of the Actors' Guild, a very popular event to which hundreds of people flock in Memorial Park (Fig. 12). As Jesse Weaver Shipley (2015: 223) argues, the re-enactment epitomises a trend of objectifying independence by turning it into a cultural performance that is "no longer a marker of newness and possibilities for Ghanaian modern nationhood but [...] a symbol of tradition, objectified and deployed in the service of the state." At the same time, the ceremony has further contributed to enshrining the gleaming gold Nkrumah statue firmly as the dominant icon of Ghana's independence.

The "monument wars" will certainly continue, but, as I have shown, the issues at stake and the measures with which the opponents make their commemorative claims have changed considerably over the past six decades. The statue(s) at the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park have become a lasting memory. New political turns are not likely to result in further destruction, but rather in more subtle forms of annexing, amplifying, re-inscribing, or otherwise modifying the existing monuments in order to transform their meaning so as to respond to changing contemporary agendas. The Nkrumah statues, and the national hero that they commemorate, have become a "*lieu de mémoire*," a site of memory, to use Nora's (1989) term, in which the memory of historical events crystallises and on which remembrance can focus. The statues have attracted controversial interpretations and become sites of debate that host a "maximum of meanings in a minimum of signs"

72. For some images of the statue and the fountains, see "Completed Kwame Nkrumah Interchange Now a Tourist Attraction – Prez Mahama Officially Inaugurates" (14 Nov. 2016) <<http://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/news/201611/298103.php>> (accessed 3 April 2017).

(Rigney 2005: 18). They have become symbols for conflicting readings of the past and different projects for Ghana's future—ranging from admonitions that the country's democracy must be protected from dictatorial tendencies like those that Nkrumah developed or acknowledgements of Nkrumah as a leader who, despite facing serious internal and external challenges, greatly contributed to building a modern nation to celebrations of Ghana's progress and the necessity to "look forward," embodied in Nkrumah's gesture with his outstretched arm. The history of the Nkrumah statue(s) clearly shows that although monuments are apparently built for eternity, they remain vulnerable, and are open for continuous redefinitions and re-appropriations.

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ABSTRACT

The monuments of Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah that stand today in Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park in Accra have been the object of veritable "monument wars" (Savage 2009). Commissioned in 1956 and unveiled at the first anniversary of independence in 1958, the original statue has been continuously contested. In 1961, it suffered from a first bomb attack by militant opponents of the Nkrumah regime, and was toppled immediately after the *coup* against Nkrumah in 1966. It was not until 1992, under a relatively Nkrumah-friendly government, that the mausoleum and a new statue were constructed. However, contestations continued, and for the "Ghana@50 celebrations," the then ruling Nkrumah-critical government erected the original beheaded statue behind the mausoleum, an act that Nkrumahists regarded as denigration. The history of the Nkrumah statues in Ghana bears out the paradox that generally characterises monuments: built as lasting memories, they remain embedded in social and political conflict. Conflicts surrounding the Nkrumah statues reflect Ghanaian political struggles between

the ruling and opposition parties, which still portray themselves as successors either to the Nkrumaist project or to Nkrumah's opponents. At the same time, they are an instructive example of how the politics and aesthetics of commemoration have been transformed over the past decades, developing from straightforward veneration, confrontation and destruction to more subtle forms of re-contextualisation and pluralisation.

Keywords: Ghana, Nkrumah, political history, politics of commemoration, statues.

RÉSUMÉ

Les « guerres de monuments ghanéens ». L'histoire contestée des statues de Nkrumah. — Les monuments du premier président du Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, se dressent aujourd'hui au Parc mémorial de Kwame Nkrumah à Accra et sont, depuis le tout début, l'objet de véritables « guerres de monuments » (Savage 2009). Depuis son inauguration au premier anniversaire de l'indépendance en 1958, la statue originale a en permanence été contestée. En 1961, les opposants au régime de Nkrumah l'attaquèrent avec une bombe; en 1966, elle fut partiellement détruite et enlevée lors du coup d'Etat contre le Président. Ce n'est qu'en 1992, sous un gouvernement relativement favorable à Nkrumah, que le mausolée et la nouvelle statue furent érigés. Néanmoins, les contestations continuaient. Lors des festivités pour le cinquantenaire de l'indépendance organisées sous l'égide d'un gouvernement de tendance anti-Nkrumah, la statue décapitée fut érigée derrière le musée. Les Nkrumahistes interprétèrent l'acte comme un dénigrement. L'histoire des statues de Nkrumah au Ghana est révélatrice du paradoxe qui caractérise généralement les monuments : érigés pour faire perdurer la mémoire, ils demeurent imbriqués dans les conflits sociaux et politiques. Les conflits autour des statues de Nkrumah évoquent les luttes politiques ghanéennes entre les partis dirigeant et d'opposition. Ces partis, même aujourd'hui, se représentent soit comme les héritiers, soit comme les opposants de Nkrumah. Or, les conflits autour des monuments illustrent la manière dont la politique et l'esthétique de la commémoration se sont transformées au cours des dernières décennies de simples formes de vénération, de confrontation et de destruction en formes plus subtiles de recontextualisation et de pluralisation.

Mots-clés : Ghana, Nkrumah, histoire politique, politique de commémoration, statues.

FIG. 1. — NKURUMAH STATUE IN ADDIS ABABA, UNVEILED JANUARY 2012

Standing in front of the African Union (AU) building (from left to right): Dr. Don Arthur, former Ghanian President Jerry Rawlings, Samia Nkrumah (Nkrumah's daughter), President John Atta Mills, Dr. Francis Kwesi Nkrumah (Nkrumah's son).
Photo source : <<http://uhuruspirit.org/images/nkrumah-statue-au.jpg>>

FIG. 2. — NKURUMAH STATUE, SCULPTURED BY N. CATAUDELLA IN 1958, IN FRONT OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Photo: Courtesy Ministry of Information, Photographic Department, Accra.

FIG. 3. — NKRUMAH STATUE, TOPPLED DURING COUP D'ÉTAT, 1 MARCH 1966

Photo: Courtesy Ministry of Information, Photographic Department, Accra.

FIG. 4. — NKRUMAH STATUE, SCULPTURED BY N. CATAUDELLA IN 1958, ORIGINALLY IN FRONT OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SINCE 1975 IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, ACCRA

Photo: Carola Lentz, March 2014.

FIG. 5. — KWAME NKRUMAH MEMORIAL PARK, THE MAUSOLEUM

Photo: Carola Lentz, March 2014.

FIG. 6. — KWAME NKRUMAH MEMORIAL PARK, NKRUMAH STATUE, DESIGNED CIRCA 1963, CAST IN 1976, MOUNTED IN 1992

Photo : Carola Lentz, March 2014.

FIG. 7. — EXAMPLE OF MEMORABILIA USING THE IMAGE OF THE “NEW” NKRUMAH STATUE, POSTCARD, KWAME NKRUMAH MEMORIAL PARK

Photo: Carola Lentz, March 2014.

FIG. 8. — THE “BIG SIX” MONUMENT AT AIRPORT CIRCLE, ACCRA, ERECTED IN 2007

Photo: Carola Lentz, 2014.

FIG. 9. — STATUE OF J. B. DANQUAH AT DANQUAH CIRCLE, OSU, ACCRA

Photo: Carola Lentz, 2014.

FIG. 10. — NKRUMAH STATUE, SCULPTURED BY N. CATAUDELLA IN 1958, ORIGINALLY IN FRONT OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SINCE 1975 IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, MOUNTED IN KWAME NKRUMAH MEMORIAL PARK 2007

Photo: Carola Lentz, March 2014.

FIG. 11. — ORIGINAL HEAD OF NKRUMAH STATUE (1958),
MOUNTED IN KWAME NKRUMAH MEMORIAL PARK 2009

Photo: Carola Lentz, March 2014.

FIG. 12. — REENACTMENT OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN FRONT OF
THE NKRUMAH STATUE, KWAME NKRUMAH MEMORIAL PARK, 5 MARCH 2014

Photo: Carola Lentz, March 2014.