



Ghana - Art

Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972) is revered as the founder of Ghanaian independence. Educated in the Gold Coast (later renamed Ghana), the United States, and Great Britain, Nkrumah became acknowledged as a leader of Ghanaian nationalism and pan-Africanism. He was Ghana's first prime minister in 1957 under a democratic constitution. However, after 1960, as president, he undermined Ghana's constitution to become a dictator until overthrown in 1966. Despite his abuses of power in his later years, Nkrumah is respected for his leadership and writings in support of African independence from colonialism. His tomb reflects the man himself -- a bridge between African roots and Western influences. The statues before the tomb are Africans wearing traditional clothing and blowing a West African horn; however, the artistic style of the sculptures is Western representational. Traditional West African sculptures are stylized with exaggerated body parts. Furthermore, the statues at the tomb are carved from stone or cast in bronze, whereas West African statues are carved from wood. Also, the concept of a memorial tomb with statues in a garden setting is Western, not African, in origin.

ART: Question 1

Describe the manner in which the statue in the image is dressed.

Question 2

Why was a memorial tomb dedicated to Kwame Nkrumah?

Question 3

How does the memorial tomb reflect Western artistic influences in Africa?

Question 4

Why has Africa adopted Western art forms when it has strong native artistic roots?