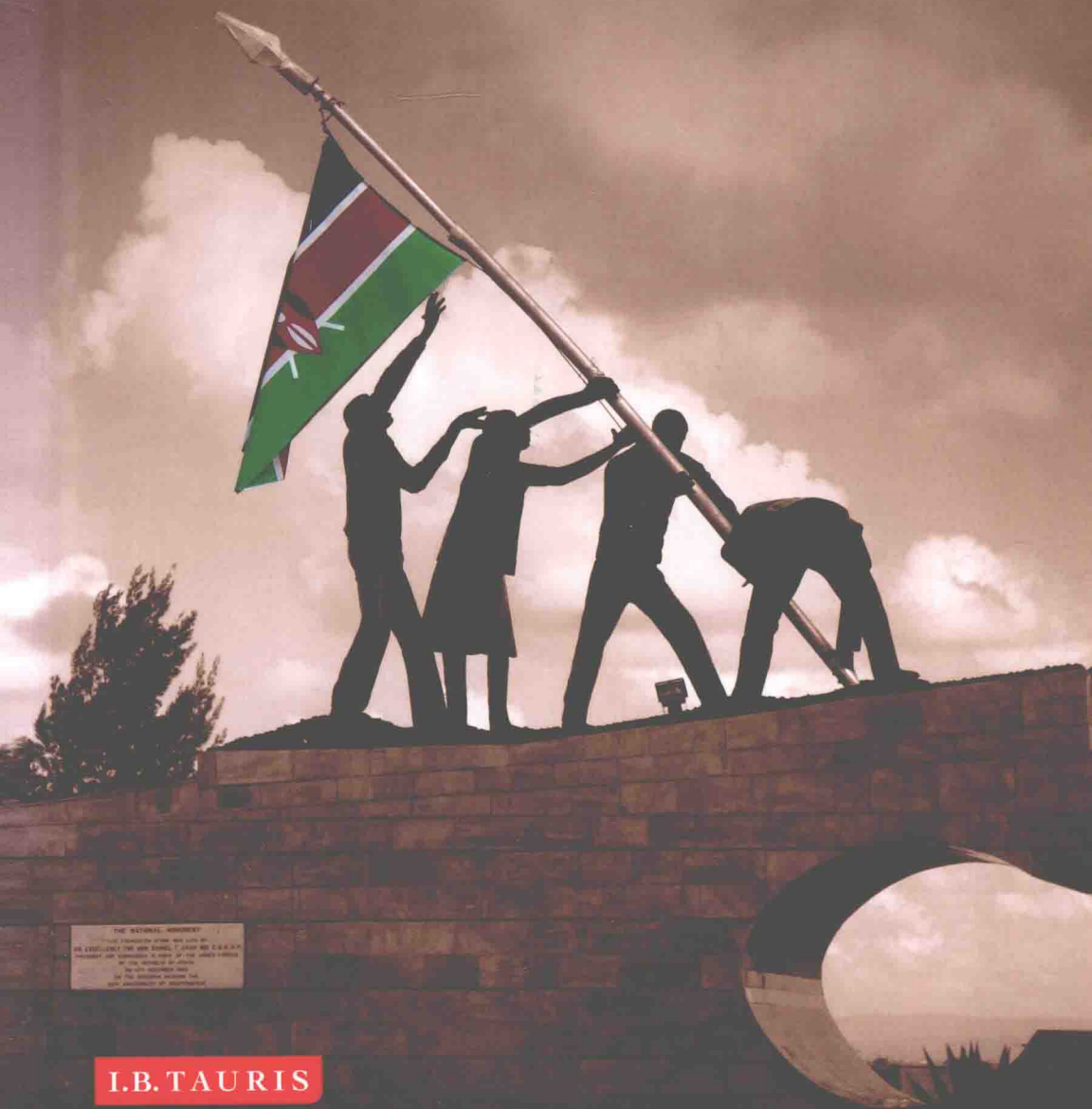


Managing Heritage, Making Peace

HISTORY, IDENTITY AND MEMORY
IN CONTEMPORARY KENYA

Annie E. Coombes, Lotte Hughes and Karega-Munene



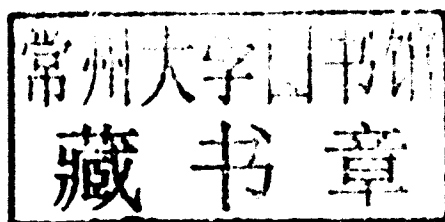
THE NATIONAL MONUMENT
The Kenyan people have come to
the realization that the only way to
achieve peace is through the
unity of all Kenyans.
The monument is a symbol of
the unity of all Kenyans.
The monument is a symbol of
the unity of all Kenyans.

I.B. TAURIS

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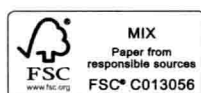
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List of Illustrations

Figures

- 1 Waihenya Njoroge, the curator of the museum standing in the doorway to the Lari Memorial Peace Museum at the shopping centre in Kimende before it moved premises. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2008. 57
- 2 Inside the Lari Memorial Peace Museum. The back wall contains the list of those killed in the Lari massacres compiled by Waihenya Njoroge with the help of elders and others in the community. The laminated photographs on the walls are taken from various sources including British propaganda intended to shock the British public, in the wake of the massacres. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 63
- 3 Tobacco containers and other objects from a variety of ethnic groups displayed at the Lari Memorial Peace Museum. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 66
- 4 Honey containers from a variety of ethnic groups on display at Lari Memorial Peace Museum. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 67
- 5 A comparative display board from the *mũkwa* project, showing different versions of head carrying straps used worldwide, Agikuyu Community Peace Museum, Nyeri. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2011. 69
- 6 Wamweya wa Kinyanjui beside the sign he made outside his homestead and *shamba*, Lari. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 74
- 7 Side entrance to the outhouse containing Wamweya wa Kinyanjui's personal museum. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2010. 77
- 8 General view of Wamweya wa Kinyanjui's collection of Gikuyu artefacts. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2010. 78
- 9 Wamweya wa Kinyanjui locking the door to the partition which houses his artefacts collection (Waihenya Njoroge in the foreground). Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 79
- 10 Interior of the Agikuyu Community Peace Museum, Nyeri. Photo Heather Scott 2010. 81
- 11 Joseph Kaboro Tumbo standing by the unfinished headstone intended for the monument at the Githunguri stadium. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 84

- 12 Wooden crosses marking the site of those Mau Mau killed on the gallows erected by the British at Githunguri in the aftermath of the Lari massacres. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 85
- 13 Schoolchildren climbing Karima Hill with indigenous tree seedlings to plant, during an alternative World Environment Day organised by Porini Association, June 2008. Photo Lotte Hughes 2008. 103
- 14 Mau Mau veteran Paul Thuku Njembui, now a member of the pacifist Akorino faith group, addresses local residents about the importance of saving Karima Forest, after an eco-mapping exercise. Photo Lotte Hughes 2008. 105
- 15 The late Kariuki Thuku, communing with one of his beloved sacred fig trees. Photo Porini Association, date unknown. 109
- 16 Agikuyu Community Peace Museum, Nyeri, as it is today. Photo Heather Scott 2010. 111
- 17 Enjoying the calm of the peace tree garden planted by Kariuki Thuku next to the museum he founded in Nyeri. From left: Heather Scott (Open University), Lotte Hughes (co-author, Open University), Terence Ranger (University of Oxford), curator Francis Muritu, Paul Thuku Njembui, Beatrice Wanjiku and Kimunyi Gitau (the latter three all from Karima Forest). Photo Harun Muraya 2010. 113
- 18 Basilius Kagwi (foreground) with Paul Thuku Njembui to the right (in a white turban, an indicator that he is a member of the Akorino faith group), talking to schoolchildren in Karima Forest, before planting trees on World Environment Day, June 2008. Photo Lotte Hughes 2008. 116
- 19 The Ngong Hills, sacred to the Maasai people, form a backdrop to the 'gravestone' that marks the spot where murdered politician J. M. Kariuki's body was found dumped in March 1975. For many Kenyans, 'J.M.' is an unsung hero who ought to be officially commemorated. Photo Michael Tiampati 2009. 118
- 20 From left: museum curator Francis Muritu, Terence Ranger (University of Oxford) and Kimunyi Gitau (a Mau Mau veteran from Karima Forest) in Agikuyu Community Peace Museum, Nyeri. In the background is a small display on Mau Mau. No weapons are on display, in contrast to other types of memorial museum. Photo Heather Scott 2010. 126
- 21 The National Monument in Uhuru Gardens officially inaugurated 12 December 1986, Nairobi. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 144

- 22 Cover of *Msanii* (July–September 2007) showing the Dedan Kimathi statue surrounded by a selection of public monuments in Nairobi: (top left moving clockwise), First World War monument; Nyayo Fountain; Jomo Kenyatta and Queen Victoria. 148
- 23 Paul Ngei Mausoleum at his home in Mbilini village, Kangundo. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2011. 150
- 24 Tom Mboya Mausoleum in the form of a bullet (a reference to his assassination) on Rusinga Island. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009. 151
- 25 The statue of Dedan Kimathi in Kimathi Street, Nairobi. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2010. 157
- 26 Display case on the capture of Dedan Kimathi in the History of Kenya exhibition at the Nairobi National Museum. Representations of Kimathi's capture usually show a prone and handcuffed Kimathi, in fact a detail from a larger photograph. When caught, Kimathi was apparently found wearing leopard skins as a coat or cloak. In the archive photograph it is clear that the skins are being foregrounded by the British, almost like a bizarre prop, to reinforce (at its most banal level) the association of a 'wild' man. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2011. 158
- 27 Front cover of *Jabazi* magazine (1/2, 2007) showing Kevin Oduor's statue of Dedan Kimathi. 162
- 28 Back cover of *Jabazi* magazine (1/2, 2007) showing Sam Wanjau's freedom fighter. 163
- 29 View of the Dedan Kimathi statue showing the deteriorating plinth designed by the Fine Art Department at Kenyatta University. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2010. 164
- 30 Detail of Miriam Syowia Kyambi, 'Infinity: Flashes of the Past', mixed media, 2007, at Nairobi National Museum, showing the juxtaposition of different genres of photographs. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009 by kind permission of Miriam Syowia Kyambi. 175
- 31 Detail of Miriam Syowia Kyambi, 'Infinity: Flashes of the Past', mixed media, 2007, showing Moi in a deliberately domestic setting with his granddaughter on his knee. Photo Miriam Syowia Kyambi. 176
- 32 Detail of Miriam Syowia Kyambi, 'Infinity: Flashes of the Past', mixed media, 2007, showing Kenyatta (with stick in hand) exasperatedly directing attempts to pull his car out of heavy mud. Photo Miriam Syowia Kyambi. 177
- 33 The grand entrance to Nairobi National Museum, after its EU-funded transformation. Photo Karega-Munene 2008. 199

- 34 Colonial-era photographs of Kenyans from different ethnic groups in the Identity section of the History of Kenya exhibition, Nairobi National Museum. Photo Lotte Hughes 2011. 201
- 35 Model of a 'traditional' Kuria elder in the Identity section, History of Kenya exhibition, Nairobi National Museum. Photo Lotte Hughes 2011. 202
- 36 Interactive display of the migration routes of different ethnic groups, in the Identity section, History of Kenya exhibition, Nairobi National Museum. Photo Lotte Hughes 2011. 203
- 37 A hit with schoolchildren: a reconstruction of part of the Uganda Railway, History of Kenya exhibition, Nairobi National Museum. Photo Lotte Hughes 2011. 207
- 38 Home-made guns used by Mau Mau fighters, a video featuring interviews with war veterans, and other items in the Armed Struggle section, History of Kenya exhibition, Nairobi National Museum. Photo Lotte Hughes 2011. 209
- 39 Many items on display in the History of Kenya exhibition are placed too high up to be read easily by children and short-statured visitors. Photo Lotte Hughes 2011. 210
- 40 Video entitled 'Mau Mau: the Unsung Heroes', produced by National Museums of Kenya, featuring Mau Mau war veterans from former Central Province. This was playing in the Armed Struggle section of the History of Kenya exhibition, but by early 2013 it had moved to the auditorium and been replaced by a filmed interview with Achieng' Oneko. Photo Lotte Hughes 2011. 211

Colour plates

- 1 Display at the Lari Memorial Peace Museum showing the background of tartan cloth known as *shuka*, which is favoured by Maasai *morans* (warriors). Photo Annie E. Coombes 2008.
- 2 Douglas Kariuki Wainana with his wife at their home in Lari. He is holding the Maasai beaded staff presented to him as a gift after he had helped to heal the original owner's wife. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009.
- 3 A cutting from the *Sunday Nation* documenting the reconciliation between Mau Mau veterans and former Home Guard in May 2004, takes pride of place on the walls of the Lari Memorial Peace Museum curator's family home. The top left hand photo shows (left

to right) ex Mau Mau veteran Paul Mungai Kiuria, ex Home Guard Douglas Kariuki Wainana, the museum's curator Waihenya Njoroge and a former gun maker for the Mau Mau, Daniel Wanjema Kung'u. Below Joseph Kaboro Tumbo points to some of the photographic documentation in the museum. On the facing page are two photos of survivors of the violence, Mrs Njoki Kimenia wife of former Mau Mau fighter Kimenia Koigi and on the right the late Anastasia Gaceeri, one of Chief Luka Kahangara's wives who survived the massacres. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009.

- 4 Waihenya Njoroge (left) being shown the spot at Githunguri, where the British erected gallows to hang those Mau Mau convicted of the attacks at Lari, by his grandfather, Joseph Kaboro Tumbo who narrowly escaped death here. They are joined by another Mau Mau survivor, George Gitau Mbugua and field assistant Nicholas Githuku looking at the temporary wooden crosses which commemorate some of those who died on the gallows. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009.
- 5 Dedication plaque at the Lari Memorial Health Centre erected 9 December 1960 at Rukuma. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2011.
- 6 Local schoolchildren planting indigenous trees during an alternative World Environment Day organised by Porini Association at Karima Forest, June 2008. Photo Lotte Hughes 2008.
- 7 Schoolchildren dancing and singing about environmental issues, during an alternative World Environment Day at Karima Forest, June 2008. Photo Lotte Hughes 2008.
- 8 Schoolchildren climbing Karima Hill with indigenous tree seedlings for planting. World Environment Day, June 2008. Photo Lotte Hughes 2008.
- 9 Villagers listen to speakers after an eco-mapping exercise in Karima Forest, which is glimpsed behind them. Photo Lotte Hughes 2008.
- 10 Kariuki Thuku with local schoolchildren at the launch of his book *The Sacred Footprint*, Gatugi village, Othaya District, August 2008. Photo Porini Association 2008.
- 11 Paul Thuku Njembui reading about himself and the struggle for Karima in an Open University course book on heritage, presented to him by contributing author Lotte Hughes, in Agikuyu Community Peace Museum, Nyeri. Photo Heather Scott 2010.
- 12 Maasai women judges of a beadwork competition discuss entries at the annual Olosho-oibor Cultural Show, Kajiado District, with the sacred Ngong Hills behind them. Known as *Oloolaiser* to the Maasai,

after the Il Aiser clan, the first *ol-oiboni* (prophet) is believed to have originated there, hence their sacredness. Photo D.L. Manzollilo Nightingale 2008.

- 13 Forest fighters: Kariuki Thuku (right) takes the microphone to address participants in events to mark World Environment Day, Karima Forest, June 2008. His father Paul Thuku Njembui is on the far left. Photo Lotte Hughes 2008.
- 14 The beaded peace tree, showing the labels indicating which ethnic group was responsible for beading different branches, on a table at the Lari Memorial Peace Museum. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009.
- 15 Staff and volunteers at the Aembu Community Peace Museum, beading a branch of the beaded peace tree outside the museum. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2008.
- 16 Detail of the beaded peace tree. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009.
- 17 Bridge into Kibera, Nairobi, showing graffiti by Maasai Mbili. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2010.
- 18 Bridge into Kibera, Nairobi, showing graffiti by Maasai Mbili. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2010.
- 19 Building in Kibera, Nairobi, showing the slogan 'Peace Wanted Alive' made famous by Solomon Muyundu (tag name Solo 7). Photo Annie E. Coombes 2010.
- 20 Miriam Syowia Kyambi, 'Infinity: Flashes of the Past', mixed media: photographs, wooden frames, chains, mirror glass, Nairobi National Museum, 2007. Photo Annie E. Coombes 2009 by kind permission of Miriam Syowia Kyambi.
- 21 Maasai culture on display at the annual Olosho-oibor Cultural Show, Olosho-oibor villages, Kajiado District. Photo D.L. Manzollilo Nightingale 2008.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABN	African Biodiversity Network
AFRIPAD	African Alternatives for Peace and Development
ANC	African National Congress
BM	British Museum
CMK	Community Museums of Kenya
CPM	Community Peace Museum
CPMF	Community Peace Museums Foundation
CPMHF	Community Peace Museums Heritage Foundation
CPMP	Community Peace Museums Programme
EANHS	East African Natural History Society
EAUNHS	East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society
DC	District Commissioner
DCO	District Cultural Officer
LegCo	Legislative Council
KAG	Kenya Assemblies of God
KAIFA	Karima ya Inya Forest Association
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAU	Kenya African Union
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KLC	Kenya Land Commission
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
LMPM	Lari Memorial Peace Museum
MADCA	Malindi District Cultural Association
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NMK	National Museums of Kenya
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
ODM-K	Orange Democratic Movement Kenya
PCO	Provincial Cultural Officer
PNU	Party of National Unity
RaMoMA	Rahimtulla Museum of Modern Art
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
TJRC	Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission

Glossary

Akorino/Akurino – Kiswahili and anglicised form of the Agikuyu word *Akūrinū* (singular *mūkūrinū*). Indigenous African Christian pacifist sect or faith group, members of which belong to the Akorino Church.

Bomas of Kenya – national heritage site catering largely for tourists and schoolchildren, just outside Nairobi, where daily performances of ‘traditional’ dancing and other forms of Kenyan culture can be seen. It comes from the word *boma*, a fortified settlement. ‘Bomas’ is also shorthand for the constitutional review talks, which were held at Bomas of Kenya.

Dorobo – also previously referred to in colonial times as Ndorobo/Wanderobo. A British colonial term, still in use in modern Kenya, given to indigenous former hunter-gatherers who lived in forests. It comes from a derogatory Maa word for ‘people without cattle’.

Karima Ka Inya (Agikuyu) – hill of the four clans. As in Karima Ka Inya Forest Association (KAIFA), a community-based forest conservation group at Karima Sacred Forest, Othaya District. The name is not strictly correct, since it omits the word for clans (*mĩhĩrĩga*, singular *mũhĩrĩga*).

katiba – constitution.

kĩama (Agikuyu) – council of elders.

kipande – registration certificate, which used to be carried by African men during the colonial era. The Agikuyu version, adapted from Kiswahili, is *kĩbandĩ*.

Maa – language of the Maasai and closely-related peoples, e.g. the Samburu.

mũgumo (Agikuyu) – fig tree sacred to the Gikuyu people.

mwananchi – citizen (pl. *wananchi*).

Mzee – old man, a respectful form of address for male elders.

ndemi (Agikuyu) – cutters, as in tree cutters.

porini – at or in the wilderness. As in Porini Association, a Kenyan NGO.

shamba – smallholding.

sheng – a form of slang used largely by youth across different ethnic divides.

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Annie E. Coombes
Lotte Hughes
Karega-Munene

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	xiii
<i>Glossary</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xvii
Introduction	1
1 Origins and Development of Institutionalised Heritage Management in Kenya	17
2 Object Lessons: Learning from the Lari Massacre(s)	53
3 Sacred Spaces, Political Places: The Struggle for a Sacred Forest	99
4 Monuments and Memories: Public Commemorative Strategies in Contemporary Kenya	139
5 The Production and Transmission of National History: Some Problems and Challenges	185
Conclusion	227
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	239
<i>Index</i>	247

Introduction

Annie E. Coombes and Lotte Hughes

This book argues that Kenya continues to experience a crisis over how national identity and memory are constituted and that this crisis is clearly manifest in contemporary heritage developments. It explores links, which became apparent through our research, between civil society-led heritage initiatives and grassroots peace-building in a country whose citizens are currently striving to heal the wounds of a particularly destructive colonial legacy and regular bouts of post-election violence (notably in 2008) in which ethnic divisions were politically exploited. While the book focuses on the period of the 1990s to the present day, our research foregrounds the interconnections between, on the one hand, the colonial roots of the state museum sector and contemporary heritage management in Kenya, and on the other hand, the legacy of the struggle leading up to independence in 1963 and the events in the decade that followed. We argue that a better understanding of the impact of Kenya's divisive colonial legacy, and how it is remembered or suppressed in Kenya today, is vital if escalating inter-ethnic conflict is to be averted. As the country approached the fiftieth anniversary of independence in 2013, many Kenyans inevitably reflected upon the gains and losses of the post-independence years and as a result there has been a renewed interest in the accounts of key historical events. Our book is partly about the ways in which such histories are being reinvented.

Kenya stands at a crossroads in the reconstruction of its historical memory as it comes to terms with a violent colonial history, a liberation struggle whose memory is highly contested, and the fallout from bouts of post-election violence most recently in 2007/08. The latter erupted after the presidential and general elections in December 2007, which resulted in the re-election of Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU) as President, were challenged by the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) opposition party led by Raila Odinga.¹ The post-election violence became the most visible signifier of a national political and social crisis that shattered Kenyans' collective identity and confidence, and caused people to reflect upon their troubled past and its pervasive influence on the present. After much debate and procrastination, wide-ranging reforms and transitional justice processes were initiated

in response to the crisis. They included the establishment of a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), which began work in November 2009.² Since April 2011, the TJRC has held public hearings³ across the country, highly emotionally-charged events at which thousands of citizens have expressed – often for the first time – personal histories and memories of past abuses dating back to 1963. The hearings, though not subjected to the same media scrutiny and dissemination as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings in South Africa, nevertheless provided an important conduit for public expressions of history, memory and trauma. By August 2012, the TJRC had received 40,098 statements and 1,529 memoranda.⁴

Several other flashpoints since 2000 have triggered a growth in public interest concerning heritage, history and memory in Kenya. It was, after all, only in 2003 that Kibaki issued a proclamation unbanning Mau Mau as an organisation. This prompted many Mau Mau veterans to restate their demands for the history of their role in the liberation struggle to be nationally acknowledged and for their heroes to gain official recognition after years of being ignored (except at cynically opportune moments during election campaigns) by successive post-independence governments.⁵ To this end, a reparations lawsuit, brought by war veterans against the British government in 2009, stoked public and media debate in Kenya and abroad before a landmark settlement was reached in 2013.⁶ While there is a rich body of literature on the historiography of Mau Mau, very little has analysed issues arising from its memorialisation or that of the wider liberation struggle since Marshall Clough's important 2003 chapter.⁷ Since Mau Mau's unbanning there has been a concomitant growth in commemorative proposals and public debate around the history of the struggle for independence and the role of both Mau Mau and Home Guard in Kenya's emergence as a nation state.⁸ Our research concurred with this surge of interest, which became especially acute following the launch of the veterans' claim against Britain. The resurgence coincided with processes, led by the state, veterans associations and human rights groups, to identify and commemorate a wide range of liberation struggle (and other) national heroes and heroines – circumstances which are analysed in Coombes' chapter on the commissioning of the statue to the Mau Mau leader Dedan Kimathi.⁹ Mau Mau memorialisation thus became unexpectedly important in relation to our analysis of contemporary uses of heritage and history, and themes of remembering, forgetting and occluding.

Since so many of the national or local initiatives concerned with Mau Mau commemoration in Kenya remain focused around the Rift Valley and former