Yule’s *Treasures* still serves as a timely reminder of the evidentiary potential of material culture, and also how exquisite it looks in such a high quality production.

**Keir Reeves**  
*University of Melbourne*


These days it is fashionable, when writing or reviewing, to declare one’s ‘personal interests’ in the subject under review, whether one’s personal interests are the possession of AMP shares, or being a recipient of government largesse or whatever. I too shall be upfront and declare at the outset that my wife and daughter both teach young Oromos English and I am disposed to greet the first major study of this people’s experiences in Australia with great sympathy. Fortunately, Greg Gow’s book is illuminating, well written and genuinely moving.

As the author points out early in the book, knowledge of the actual existence of the Oromo, prior to the 1990s, was largely restricted to other inhabitants of the Horn of Africa (8). Even today, the fact that there are approximately two thousand people from Oromiya living in Australia, many in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne, where the author himself lives and works, is probably not widely known. The problematic and disputed history of the Oromo is treated with great care by Gow as he traces, quickly and efficiently, a tragic tale of persecution and exile as the Oromo struggle for their political, ethnic and linguistic identity within a ‘greater’ Amharic speaking Ethiopia. Most recently, this struggle occurred under the appalling Mengistu regime, though his less murderous successors also seek to deny the existence of a separate Oromo culture or polity. The Oromo are exiles in their own country, let alone in Melbourne.

In the previous paragraph I said that the author traced the Oromo history ‘quickly’. This was deliberate for Gow’s is not primarily a ‘history’, though it is highly significant for those studying the modern history of East Africa and its diaspora. As MUP state on the book cover, this study falls into three overlapping categories – ‘Immigration Studies, Anthropology and Cultural Studies’. I would be tempted to throw in ‘Family Studies’ as well for that is another theme which emerges in this book – how a group attempts under conditions not of its choosing to re-establish family and community ties. Indeed, this brings us close to Gow’s central thesis as he describes Oromo life in Australia – ‘Oromo cultural formation in Melbourne is constituted as real through the many acts of linking, voicing and living Oromoness, in which language … enables the transformative articulation of “home” even away from “home” ’ (149).

That quotation comes from the last paragraph of the book which in one sense is a pity for such a succinct statement at the start would have
assisted in understanding the author’s main objective. At first reading I was uncertain where the book was proceeding or why chapters were in the order they were. The connecting thread often seemed to be the author’s intimate relations with the Oromo community in Melbourne. Such a problem is less apparent on second reading when the home and language motifs emerge more strongly.

The virtues of the *The Oromo in Exile* are many. It is almost totally free of jargon and is written with commitment and sympathy. At one point Gow, relating one of the many vivid anecdotes and personal stories to be found in the book, says that he and his friends had heard many such sad stories before and generally remained unmoved by them. For most readers that will not be the case as they learn more about what it means to be a refugee and a member of a people struggling to assert its identity.

The MUP paperback is attractively produced, with an excellent and wide-ranging bibliography. The colour photographs are of high quality and aid considerably in a reader’s understanding of the Oromo experience.

RICHARD TREMBATH
*University of Melbourne*


In less than four years *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus* has become a classic and been reprinted, not in the customary softcover of reprints, but in an impressive hardcover edition, with the famed painting ‘Harding’s Nightmare’ present on the cover. This says much for its author Dr. Robert F. Holland, Professor in Imperial and Commonwealth History and head of the Institute for Commonwealth Studies at the University of London. He has produced something all historians desire, a popular and definitive masterpiece, which has already been translated into the Greek language.

Holland’s study is the first to use British Government documents and private papers to cover the Greek-Cypriot nationalist-led revolt by the EOKA in 1955 against British rule in the pursuit of *enosis* – the union of the island with Greece. Hitherto, the major works on this period have been by Doros Alastos (pseudonym of Evdoros Joannides), *Cyprus Guerrilla* (1960); two studies by Stephen Xydis, *Cyprus: Conflict and Conciliation, 1954-1958* (1967) and *Cyprus: Reluctant Republic* (1974); François Crouzet, *Le Conflict de Chypre, 1946-1959* (1973); and journalist Nancy Crawshaw’s *The Cyprus Revolt* (1978). These and other less detailed commentaries did not have access to the British, Cypriot and US archives utilised by Holland.

The study begins with the introductory chapter, which summarises the general tenets of British colonial policy on the island from 1878 to 1950. Although brilliantly written, in an especially entertaining style, this chapter places too great an emphasis on the ‘uprising’ of 1931 and its aftermath, with only a cursory glance at the period before. Holland’s