bicycle did not engage with the life of Asian women, including in Sri Lanka, until a significant revolution occurred in women's fashion there. It is because the traditional dresses of Asian women, from whatever ethnicities they came from, were not suited to the bicycle, for example the *sari* in Sri Lanka and *kebaya* in the Malay world. One cannot imagine how Sri Lankan and Malay women in traditional clothing can ride a bicycle.

It would be interesting to discuss further how such Western machines influenced traditional gender relations in Sri Lanka in particular and in European colonies in the rest of the world in general. This book also speaks a lot more about Sri Lankan Sinhalese rather than about the Tamil minority community. I found no clear explanation in the book whether this was the case due a paucity of available primary sources dealing with Tamils, a reflection of the political atmosphere of colonial Ceylon that influenced the way European machines were distributed among the island's ethnic groups, or the fact that the colonial authorities tended to discriminate against the Tamil minority and favour the Sinhalese majority. Despite these minor critical comments, I find this a readable and valuable book that provides insights into commoners' encounter with modern consumerism and its complex socio-cultural significance in late colonial Sri Lanka.

doi:10.1017/S0165115315000546 Suryadi, *Leiden University*

EUROPE & THE WIDER WORLD

Ferry de Goey. *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783-1914*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014. 240 pp. ISBN: 9781848933163. £60.

Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, by business historian Ferry de Goey, continues the series "Perspectives in Economic and Social History" edited by Andrew August and Jari Eloranta. The book opens with a wry anonymous poem collected by Major Joseph Orton Kerbey, the American consul in the Brazilian port of Belém do Pará in the early part of the twentieth century. Consuls, suggests Kerbey, "must know and do everything" (1). As an opener, the poem is both entertaining and insightful, as Ferry de Goey, from Erasmus University in Rotterdam, spends the remainder of the book enlightening his readers on the many facets of consular duties in the long nineteenth century (indicated by the titular dates of 1783-1914). The introduction provides the rationale for the book: that institutional history, important as it is for understanding the rise of economic and political systems as the bulwarks of global capitalism, has somewhat neglected diplomatic history. Within that sub-discipline the neglect of consular history, in de Goey's view, is even more of a significant lapse. Through a series of broad geographical surveys, with individual case studies embedded into the structure of the overview, de Goey sets out to claim a space for the history of consuls, arguing that, "The institution of consuls was indispensable for the development of global capitalism during the nineteenth century" (7).

Before diving into the narrative that covers the Middle East and North Africa, the Far East, North and South America and sub-Saharan Africa, de Goey provides some useful context that complements histories in companion fields such as imperial, maritime and business history.

He notes the development of consular offices as part of entrepreneurial efforts to mitigate risk in foreign trade and explains the changing patterns of extraterritoriality in Europe and elsewhere. All this is background to the more detailed discussion of the role of consuls: although generally having a lower status than diplomats, the consuls were, nonetheless, often important figures in the intricate commercial and political relations between nations and communities after the Concert of Europe in the early nineteenth century. De Goey then steps back to trace the history of consuls from the ancient world to the modern, focusing in this first chapter on the hallmarks of the modern consular service in Great Britain, the Netherlands, the United States and Germany. Although each country had its own institutional idiosyncrasies, de Goey identifies several trends across the four examples: the change from unsalaried or merchant-consuls in the first half of the nineteenth century to the more professional, salaried consular appointments of the latter part of the century; the uneasy relationship between patronage appointments and the call for professionalization of the services, including selective entrance exams; and the merging with other diplomatic services.

As he explores the role of consuls from these four nations, long established or newly emerging, in the Middle East and North Africa, de Goey begins his compelling case studies of individual consuls. The profile of Henry Salt, the British consul in Egypt in the early nineteenth century, exemplifies one of the tropes of imperial acquisitiveness: the man of letters who negotiates for antiquities while interfering in local politics for profit and political benefit. Similarly, the first Prussian consul to Syria (arriving in April, 1849), Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, was tellingly described by Ingeborg Huhn as "a dreamer, an optimist, an entrepreneur, a humanist, and, alas, an imperialist" (49). Although he lived in Syria for over a decade and became fluent in Persian, Wetzstein was largely unsuccessful in his efforts to increase trade between Prussia and Damascus. Instead, he became embroiled in local politics as conditions between religious groups in Damascus flared into conflict and Wetzstein offered humanitarian protection to groups of Christians and Jews seeking refuge. These case studies, especially the latter, are richly evocative of the period, without neglecting the broader commentary that highlights the flexibility of the consular role depending on personality, place and circumstance.

De Goey contrasts the Middle East with the Far East, noting the centrality of China to consular efforts to extend trade. We gain a glimpse of the longer arc of local interactions, with the Middle Kingdom asserting its superiority before being challenged to open trade by a variety of Western nations over the course of the nineteenth century. Here, the author notes the flux of consular relations, veering from competition between nations that occasionally undermined the local role of consuls to cooperative stances for united gain. Nonetheless, China, de Goey suggests, "promised more to Westerners than it delivered" (68). This chapter also offers an intriguing snapshot of the development of Chinese consuls in other places, a complementary image that is too often neglected in this study. Although Western governments blocked the appointment of Chinese consuls in their Southeast Asian colonies until the early twentieth century, Chinese officials were able to complete reports on the state of Chinese labourers dispersed throughout the area—an important contribution to records of imperial exploitation.

Two further chapters deal with North and South America and Sub-Saharan Africa, respectively. In South America, American agents encouraged free trade and American ideals of democracy as well as supplying their government with useful political observations. The disclosure, by the British consul general in Brazil, Roger Casement, of horrific labour practices on rubber plantations in the upper Amazon, provides a compelling humanitarian corollary to the

imperial ideologies that were otherwise typical of Western representatives. Casement, known for his reports on exploitation of labour in the Congo, exposed the British-owned plantations as sites of extreme and gratuitous violence. Sub-Saharan Africa is less well covered, although de Goey notes the existence of consular-like representatives between African peoples before the influx of imperial powers. He dates the development of the European sensibility of superiority, evidenced through consular rituals and the shaping of treaties, from the late eighteenth century—a pattern that was also seen in the Middle East as Western representatives increasingly demanded recognition on their terms rather than the terms of the host culture. Here, too, the author notes the competitive nature of consular representation, as agents reported not only on the economic and political conditions of the local scene, but also on the local activity of other competing nations.

The conclusion reprises much of the content of the introduction and the sweep of the geographical surveys, reiterating the trends that marked the development of consular activity throughout the long nineteenth century. The work is a nimble and engaging synthesis of largely secondary sources that provides a handy comparative reference (although mention of colonies and countries in Oceania is overlooked) to this important field. Sadly, the production values of the book do not do justice to the intriguing information that de Goey offers—no images or maps and just a few tables accompany the text, encompassed within a bland grey cover that somehow inflects the lowly historical status of consuls. Although a valuable addition to the literature on economic and political institutions that shaped the modern world, *Consuls* could go further in uncovering the specific ways that consular services contributed to the spread of both capitalism and institutions during the time of formal and informal imperialism. De Goey is right to conclude that further research is needed, including more studies that complement the Western focus of this book.

doi:10.1017/S0165115315000558 Deborah Breen, *Boston University*

Gareth Williams, Peter Pentz and Matthias Wemhoff, eds., *The Vikings: Life and Legend* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014. 288 pp. ISBN: 9780801479427. $35.00.

The opportunity to begin a review of a history book with the phrase "this is a gorgeous work" happens far too rarely. *The Vikings: Life and Legend* is "gorgeous" on variety of levels: the quality of the scholarship, the soundness of its organization and the wealth of its images each demonstrate incredible quality. This should not be a surprise to the reader given the fact that three separate museums (i.e., the National Museum of Denmark, The British Museum and the Museum für Vorund Frühgeschichte, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) collaborated to create this book. A rich and engaging work that offers insights about the worlds of the Viking Age, for both scholars and general readers, *Vikings* is a joy and a surprise to read.

Produced in conjunction with an exhibit (of the same name) by the three above-mentioned museums, the stated goal of the Vikings is to explore two core themes of the Viking Age. The first is that, "[T]he events and developments of the Viking Age, cannot be understood purely in the context of Scandinavia, or even of northern Europe" (16). The Viking Age, defined by the editors as beginning roughly in the late eight century and lasting until about the middle of the eleventh century, was an ocean-going period. The corresponding reach of the Vikings during this period was vast and resulted first in contact and then in profound cultural interactions that