Nervous Conditions, to her impossible position at the intersection of patriarchy and colonialism. As in Pamela K. Gilbert’s discussion of Victorian reading, here the literal ingestion of food and the metaphorical ingestion of knowledge are both emblematic of the exercise of power. Thomas argues that even as Nyasha “consumes” Englishness through her compulsive studying, she also tries to deny herself nourishment as a futile form of rebellion against her parents’ colonial (and in the case of her father, his patriarchal) control. Similarly, Linda Schlossberg’s “Consuming Images: Women, Hunger and the Vote” describes how the political strategy of the hunger strike as utilized by the suffragettes ironically employed a familiar image of feminine self-denial, although for seemingly more radical ends. Schlossberg concludes provocatively that “[t]he fact that even during the struggle for women’s equality self-abnegation could function as a kind of political resistance suggests that for women, there is more than a casual relationship between the vanishing of self and the making of history” (p.102).

Moran’s essay on contemporary women’s culinary memoirs demonstrates that, in the books’ descriptions of maternal (and, via the mother, larger ethnic and cultural) traditions, cooking becomes a form of cultural survival and perhaps an alternative, female-centered history. Yet she also cannily notes the moments at which such idealizations of the private sphere and women’s labor within it reproduce similar tropes of self-denial as well as judgments about women’s proper roles and places, ones that simultaneously echo and challenge patriarchal assumptions. Like most of the other critics in the volume, Moran struggles to see the value in forms of agency that reiterate just as they resist stereotypes, even though she acknowledges the risks involved in such dual endeavors. This recognition of the complexity involved in exploring and sometimes revaluing women’s relationship to food and body is what makes this volume as a whole very compelling.

—Kathryn R. Kent, Williams College

Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail
Deborah Barndt
Aurora, Ontario: Garamond Press, 2002
267 pp. $29.95 (paper)

Some science-fiction writers suggest that the citizens of Mexico, the United States, and Canada might one day come from a place simply called NAFTA, named after the North American Free Trade Agreement. Deborah Barndt would recoil at the thought, but her insightful foray into one link in the NAFTA food chain by way of the “corporate tomato” tells us that this future is in some ways near.

The tomato trail runs from Mexican agribusiness to Canadian supermarkets and restaurants. The object of study passes along a tangled route, from the hands of indigenous women in the Mexican fields all the way to single Canadian moms scanning product codes in checkout stalls, some of which (express aisles) are so narrow that they suggest factory farming.

The roots of the issue are just as tangled, as global agricultural history intersects with Mexican sociopolitical history, with the international passages of the colonial “love apple,” the inevitable loss of varieties, and the emergence of the “technological object” in the era of globalization. Along the way there are many border crossings and dramas as the big trucks roll into and through the United States—some held back as commodity prices rise and demands for certain colors and ripeness levels fluctuate (when necessary, blasts of ethylene gas speed ripening). Monocultural production generates homogenous consumption: designer tomatoes for designer supermarkets.

Tomatoes are especially rich objects of study because they have been subject to many forms of technology-based needs and consumer-driven packaging. Start with the obvious hand-applied stickers with the PLU (product look-up) codes (Roma = #4064) found in food retailing surveillance regimes; next, consider the corporate demands for firm tomatoes that won’t be squashed by machines in the production of ketchup, or for sliceable, cardboard-like products that make possible the construction of an Arch Deluxe burger for McDonald’s. Remember the Flavr Savr, that famous biogenetic failure whose softness did it in? It is a long way from the Aztec tomatl.

Like most social scientists, Barndt is attached to her methodologies: the frames, filters, dichotomies, tensions, analytic-critical perspectives (gender, ecology, race, age, region) that inform her study. Her book has a crowded conceptual toolbox that does not so much damage the object of the analysis but sometimes draws attention away from it. Thus, this is a busy book made additionally complex when pursuing an activist’s agenda regarding the exploitation of migrant workers and outlining new lines of alliance between politically progressive organizations within NAFTA, not to mention regaining noncorporate tomatoes in the face of the monocultures (psychological, social, economic, ecological) of neoliberal politics. This book is a call for globalization made from the workers’ perspectives below against the dictates of globalization from above.
Barndt is at her best in detailing, with exquisite clarity, the gender-based division of labor, all the way from maquila- 
ization in the south (based on a feminized labor force, segmented skills, low real wages, and nonunionization) to 
McDonaldization in the north (efficiency, predictability, 
calculability, technocentricity, control). Work and technolog-
ical change converge in gendered tomato work: men drive 
the tractors, women care for the seedlings; men deliver the 
seedlings, women plant them; men hoe, irrigate, and bore 
while women prune and tie; men manage, women record; 
men make boxes, women pack them. This strict division of 
labor maintains a series of “distances” all along the food 
chain, from producers to consumers: alienation of indigenous 
workers, disconnection from the land, and separation from 
the technological processes that created the fruit itself. 

Barndt grounds her study in solid fieldwork focused on a 
large Mexican producer-exporter, Empaque Santa Rosa, and 
she interviews “company girls” in the greenhouses, fields, 
and warehouses. In order to compare and contrast their 
experiences, Barndt also follows women on intergovernmen-
tal exchange programs for agricultural workers between 
Mexico and Canada and connects with Canadian cashiers 
working for food giant Weston, operator of Loblaws food 
stores that provide “Retail Lifestyle Environments.” 
The combination of academic and activist goals gives 
the research urgency. But the ways of de-McDonaldization 
are complex, and the energy and creative initiative required 
for the success of the “alternative vernacular foodscapes” 
that would give us a tasty, safe, fresh, really “red,” and local 
tomato are not yet widely available. To her credit, Barndt 
has gone a long way in, as she puts it, “sprouting solidarity.”

—Gary Genosko, Lakehead University

A King's Confectioner in the Orient: Friedrich Unger, 
Court Confectioner to King Otto I of Greece 
Friedrich Unger 
Translated from the German by Maret Çakmak and 
Renate Işin Ömeroğlu 
Edited with a commentary by Priscilla Mary Işin 
208 pp. Illustrations. $110.00 (cloth)

Occasionally a book emerges from the archives and allows a 
glimpse of a different world and time seen through the eyes 
of some master craftsman. Unger’s work could be seen in 
this category: the author, unrecorded except for this book, 
was once evidently important as a confectioner working in 
the court of King Otto I of Greece in the 1830s. The book 
was originally published in Athens in 1858, after Unger’s 
visit to Istanbul, or Constantinople as it was then called. 
Unger’s (admittedly Eurocentric) observations on Turkish 
confectionery, drinks, and their vendors now make enterta-
ining reading: “Sellers of susam halwa…are usually 
Albanian boys from 12 to 14 years of age. On their heads 
they carry a long rectangular board [on which] there is a 
piece of the coveted halwa, usually looking very disgusting, 
often a small pair of scales and a dirty chopper” (p.44). 
Despite his apparently low opinion of Turkish confection-
ery, he recorded ninety-seven recipes, some of which 
seems to have observed in the making, and comments 
that European confectionery owed a considerable debt to 
that of the orient.

However, as Işin observes, Unger’s instructions could be 
hazy, a problem compounded by changes in confectionery 
terms and techniques. To remedy this, she has added an 
extensive, thoroughly researched, and deeply interesting 
commentary on Unger’s original observations, using com-
parisons from other Turkish cookery texts, some more or 
less contemporary with Unger, and information from con-
fecioners working today. Together with supporting material 
from diaries and memoirs, Işin’s commentary provides 
a clearer, deeper picture of Unger’s work and sets it in a 
widder context, providing more information about sugar 
working and Turkish culinary history. Her discussion covers 
gredients, techniques, and equipment; the Topkapi 
Palace kitchens, which Unger also describes; and observa-
tions about the use of incense, as well as a dissection of 
the recipes. The latter include preparations of fruit or flowers 
(how I wish I had the vital ingredient so I could make the 
lemon-flower glyko, either from Unger’s recipe [p.61] or 
the one in the commentary [p.13]); sherbets; halwas of 
many types; rahatol chulkum, as Unger’s phonetic spelling 
rendered the name for what is known to the West as Turkish 
delight; baklava and other pastries; and several boiled-
sugar confections. The last are of particular interest and 
invite speculations from the editor about sweets such as 
Edinburgh Rock and fondant, which, although lacking 
obvious histories, both became popular in Britain in the 
nineteenth century. Did some wandering confectioner such 
as Unger transmit oriental recipes to the West that became 
the bases for these confections? The precise manipulation 
of sugar was transmitted from confectioner to confectioner 
over years and miles, and it is texts such as this that occa-
sionally illuminate the subject.

The structure of the book, with Unger’s original text 
preceding Işin’s commentary, dictates that one does not