context of how she was to conduct herself in her marriage and in society. The book’s sections of marketing instructions, menus, and recipes are, like the rest of the book, very helpfully footnoted, and there is a glossary of culinary terms as well. These sections comprise a detailed exposé of how the medieval upper bourgeoisie indulged themselves in the pleasures of eating, drinking, and entertaining. Where the previous translation by Eileen Power (The Goodman of Paris, 1928) rendered the medieval French into a slightly tortured English, Greco and Rose have made their translation far easier to read, helping to attract an audience that should include interested amateurs who are not medieval specialists.

—Kyri Watson Claflin, Boston University

NOTE

**Tomato Rhapsody: A Fable of Love, Lust & Forbidden Fruit**

Adam Schell

New York: Delacorte Press, 2009

340 pp. $25.00 (cloth)

A delight to read, this book follows in the medieval-Renaissance literary tradition of Italy, even in the author’s cleverly penned chapter titles: “In which we learn of Truffles and other Mushrooms” (p.27) or “In which we learn the Recipe for Insalata di Pomodoro e Menta” (p.58). Set in sixteenth-century Tuscany, the book is both a fable and a love story with a villainous stepfather, Giuseppe; a lovely maiden, Mari, who is Christian; and the sweet, innocent Jewish boy, Davido, who is meant for another. With imagination and humor Schell weaves their story with that of the tomato—*pomo d’amore*. Nonno, Davido’s grandfather, sails with Christopher Columbus to the New World and is abandoned there. But he discovers the tomato and ultimately brings it back to Italy, cultivates it, and transforms it from a shunned poisonous fruit to a sweet love apple embraced first by the Jews and then by Christians.

Without any attempt or desire to re-create history, Schell is clearly aware of such figures as Cosimo I de’ Medici, who becomes the misunderstood and reluctant Cosimo de’ Pucci de’ Meducci III, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. He runs away from his stressful life to become a peasant farmer, if only for a short time, before he is discovered by his chef and must return to the Meducci estate. This is at once a parody, spoof, and satire of historical characters. Schell cleverly incorporates into the fable the tradition of Italian *feste* (festivals), patron saint’s-day celebrations and processions, and even the *palio* (horse race), but with a twist. Here, the *palio* becomes a donkey race in which the rider has one arm tied behind his back, and it is held at the Festa del Santo Ubriaco.

The overriding theme of the book is not just the tomato—it is food. The Meducci chef, Luigi Campoverde, cleverly procures giant truffles, olives, and tomatoes not with money but with objects he borrows from the Meducci household (pp.77, 128, 129), while the Good Padre fantasizes on what he will do with an eggplant he’s about to pick from his garden:

…the eggplant, cut width-wise into finger-thick slices…dip the slices into egg batter and then dredge them in chestnut flour with coarsely crushed walnuts, pignoli, sea salt and red pepper flakes. Filling a skilet half-knuckle deep with olive oil…fry until their outsides are golden and their insides soft…lay slices of particularly pungent, semi-firm cow’s milk cheese upon the fried eggplant…oven to soften the cheese and back the eggplant. (p.22)

We learn two different ways that pizza was invented—first by accident, when a focaccia spattered with bits of tomato and cheese is slipped onto a hot brick near a fire (pp.293–294); then by plan, when chef Luigi makes a “pizea” for little Margarita (pp.309–310). We also learn how olives were cured (pp.171–172, 186–187), how the tomato was accidentally turned into a lovely sauce (pp.274–275), and much more. In *Tomato Rhapsody* not only is the history of the tomato re-created, but Italian food is, too. Read it with pleasure.

—Katherine McIver, University of Alabama at Birmingham

**Swindled: The Dark History of Food Fraud, From Poisoned Candy to Counterfeit Coffee**

Bee Wilson


384 pp. $26.95 (cloth)

Readers will learn in Bee Wilson’s engaging new book about food fraudsters through the ages that fishmongers in nineteenth-century northern England sold their catch to the working poor by candlelight on Saturday evening. Sounds romantic, doesn’t it? The truth, however, is that the wealthy had already bought the freshest fish that morning, long before workers, who had only just got their weekly pay in late afternoon, finally had a chance to shop.