



ARZAN

ARZAN, millet (Pahl. and modern Pers. dialects also *ālum*). The main species of millet probably originate from the Far East (A. Haudricourt and L. Hédin, *L'homme et les plantes cultivées*, Paris, 2nd ed., 1943, pp. 151-52) and seem to have been introduced into Iran from India (H. Wulff, *The Traditional Crafts of Persia*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1966, p. 242) in early times.

The Persian word *arzan*, like *doḵn* in Arabic, means both ordinary millet *Panicum miliaceum* Linné (J. L. Schlimmer, *Terminologie médico-pharmaceutique et anthropologique franco-persane*, Tehran, 1874, p. 424), which might be “nearly spontaneous” in Transcaucasia and Ṭāleš (A. de Candolle, *L'origine des plantes cultivées*, Paris, 5th ed., 1912, p. 303), and panic-grass *Setaria italica* Beauvois, or *Setaria viridis* according to E. Ehlers (“Anbausysteme in den Höhenregionen des mittleren Elburz/Iran,” in C. Rathjens, C. Troll, and H. Uhlig, eds., *Vergleichende Kulturgeographie der Hochgebirge des südlichen Asien/Comparative Cultural Geography of the High-mountain Regions of Southern Asia*, Wiesbaden, 1973, Erdwissenschaftliche Forschung, vol. V, p. 67).

Millet seems to have been more widely grown in Persia in the past, but is now a crop of minor importance, always included in statistics in the item “other cereals,” together with maize, which has partly taken its place. It is found in two main areas:

In southeastern Zagros and Makrān (W. B. Fisher, “Physical Geography,” in *Camb. Hist. Iran* I, passim) and especially in the coastal plain around Mīnāb



and in the Rūdbār and Manūjān-Bašākerd districts (G. Stöber, *Die Afshar, Nomadismus im Raum Kermān (Zentraliran)*, Marburg (Lahn), 1978, Marburger Geographische Schriften 76, pp. 95, 199 and map no. 33), *Panicum miliaceum*, well adapted to arid environment, is a quick-growing, irrigated crop, sown in August and harvested in October.

In the northern highlands, stretching from Caucasus, where the Ossetes call millet *yāu* (from the IE. word for “cereal,” and the same word as NPers. *ǰow* “barley,” see A. Haudricourt and L. Hédin, op. cit., p. 99), to western and central Alborz, the peasants grow mainly *Setaria viridis*; its grain is mixed up with rice in human diet, and its leaves are used as fodder (Ehlers, “Anbausysteme,” p. 67). In Kalārdašt, millet patches, sown in late April and harvested in October, are protected by strong fences against flocks and herds grazing on the open wheat stubble-fields (X. de Planhol, “Recherches sur la géographie humaine de l’Iran septentrional,” *Memoires et documents* 9/4, 1964, pp. 42-43).

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