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CABBAGE

CABBAGE (Pers. *kalam*) *Brassica oleracea* L. vars. The word *kalam* (and its obsolete variant *karam*; see below) seems to be cognate with Greek *krámbē*, from which comes Arabic *karanb/koronb* (see Maimonides p. 92 n.; see also Kendī, p. 326 n. 262, where Levey refers also to Skt. *karambhā* on the authority of Löw, I, p. 482; see also Mayrhofer, *Dictionary* I, p. 165).

The common "garden-grown" (*bostānī*) varieties and races of cabbage are derived—through selection and cultivation—from the wild cabbage, *Brassica oleracea* L., which, according to Zargarī (I, 2nd ed., p. 156), grows "in central Iran around Isfahan." The cabbage varieties most commonly grown and consumed nowadays in Persia are the following:

Kalam-e pīč (lit. kinky cabbage), the common head(ing) cabbage, *B. oleracea* var. *capitata*, sometimes also called *kalam-e barg* (lit. leaf cabbage; see, e.g., Ṭabāṭabāʾī, I, p. 485; but Zargarī, p. 153, reserves this name for the var. *acephala*). (When used without any complement, *kalam* refers to this variety, which is the most widely cultivated and consumed one.) The *karam-e rūmī* (lit. Roman/Byzantine cabbage), one of the two varieties of *karam* the cultivation of which Abūnaṣrī Heravī (p. 144) describes for the Herat area in the early 10th/16th century, is probably this variety. Its main culinary uses nowadays include: *kalam-polow* (cabbage pilaf, with fried pieces of cabbage leaves, small meatballs, and tomato sauce); *dolma-ye kalam* (stuffed cabbage leaves, hence the name *kalam-e dolmaʾī* "cabbage for stuffing" sometimes given to this variety); *āš-e kalam* (formerly, *karanbā*, i.e., *karam-bā* [Jorjānī, p. 135], used in Hindi/Urdu, too; an *āš*, with pieces of cabbage leaves as main ingredient); in

various western-style dishes, especially *borš* “borsch.”

Kalam(-e) qomrī, the kohlrabi, sometimes called *kalam(-e) sang(ī)* (stone cabbage, probably a calque of Azeri Turkish *dāš-kalam*), in Shiraz, *kalam-e sar* (head[-forming] cabbage). As already guessed by Majlesī (LXIII, p. 218), the word *qomrī* seems to be an alteration of Arabic *qonnabīṭ/qannabīṭ* itself from Greek *kōnōpídi/kōnopída*, etc. (see Maimonides, p. 92 n. 1; cf. Tonokābonī who gives *qomrīt* [p. 218, s.v. *karanb*] or *qomrīd* [p. 340, s.v. *laʿūq-e karanb* “cabbage linctus”] as the equivalent of Ar. *karanb* in the Persian dialect of Isfahan, and [p. 694] equates *qonnabīṭ* with *kalam-e rūmī* = *kalam-e gerd* “round cabbage”). The *qonnabīṭ*, however, has traditionally been taken for the cauliflower by many classical and modern authors (cf. its inaccurate description by Ebn Māsūya, apud Ebn al-Bayṭār, pt. 4, pp. 57-61, s.v. *karanb*; among the moderns, see Ghaleb, s.vv.; *qonnabīṭ/qarnabīṭ* = the cauliflower, and *koronb* = both the drumhead cabbage and the kohlrabi). On the other hand, in addition to Majlesī, who seems to equate the *qonnabīṭ* with the *qomrī*, Mīrzā ʿAlī-Akbar, chef at the court of the Qajar Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah, stresses several times (pp. 13, 32, 44) that “*kalam-e qenbīṭ*, [*sic*] is known as *qomrī*,” referring to the cauliflower as *gol-e kalam* and *kalam-e gol* (p. 66; see below). The *kalam-e bīḵī* (lit. “root cabbage”) mentioned by Abūnaṣrī as the equivalent of Arabic *karanb* (p. 135), refers probably to the kohlrabi.

This variety has long been grown on a limited, local scale by most villagers, especially in Azarbaijan, Isfahan, Kermān, Shiraz, Arāk, Kurdistan, and around Tehran (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, I, p. 539). Its main culinary uses include: cut into small pieces, instead of cabbage leaves in *āš-e kalam* (see above), especially in Azarbaijan villages; instead of the same in *kalam-polow* and also together with lentils (*ʿadas*) in *yaḵnī-e ʿadas-kalam*, both mainly in Shiraz.

Kalam-e gol (flower cabbage), cauliflower (i.e., the plant). Seldom used in native Persian dishes, it was popularized after World War II due to increasing social contact between Iran and the West (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, I, p. 517). The main uses of the *gol(-e) kalam*, cauliflower, include: pickled in vinegar (*toršī-e gol-e kalam*) or in brine (especially as one of the ingredients of the popular *maḵlūṭ* (mixed vegetables); in Shiraz, a *ḵᵛoreš* (q.v.) is sometimes made with *gol-e kalam*. (Other varieties such as *kalam-e ḡoṇčaʾī/fandoqī/tokmaʾī*, Brussels sprouts, and *kalam-e qermez*, the red cabbage, introduced after World War II, are seldom used; see Ṭabāṭabāʾī, I, p. 532).

Historically, the medico-pharmacological authors of the Islamic period have

mentioned or briefly described several species and/or varieties of *karanb*, which cannot be always identified with certitude because of inadequate descriptions or confusion in terminology, e.g.: (ʿAlī b. Moḥammad [?], apud Ebn al-Bayṭār, loc. cit.) *karanb nabaṭī* (Nabatean) = *andalosī* (Andalusian/Spanish), probably the common garden cabbage; *šāmī* (Syrian) = *mawṣelī* (from Mosul), most probably the rutabaga (*Brassica napobrassica*); *qonnabīṭ/qannabīṭ* originally probably the kohlrabi (but usually taken to be the cauliflower; see above); ("the author of *al-Felāḥa*" [?], quoted ibid.) *karanb nabaṭī*, which "is the well-known cabbage," and *ḵūzī* (from Ḵūzestān); (Maimonides, p. 22, no. 184) *karanb* = *baqlat al-anṣār*, and *karanb šāmī* = *qonnabīṭ*; (Mowaffaq Heravī, naming five kinds without any explanation, p. 262, s.v. *karanb*) *nabaṭī*, *barrī* (wild), *baḥrī* (maritime), *qonnabīṭ*, and *mawṣelī*, for which Laufer (pp. 380-81) has provided the following unwarranted equivalents respectively: "Nabathaean, *Brassica silvestris*, *B. marina*, *B. cypria*, and Syrian from Mosul"; (Tonokābonī, pp. 715-16) *bostānī* (including the *qonnabīṭ*), *barrī*, and *baḥrī* (adapted from Dioscorides, Ar. tr. apud Ebn al-Bayṭār, loc. cit.); "the well-known variety (*qesm*) of [the *bostānī*] has a green beet-like rooṭ . . . , and Syrian, Hamadānī, Mawṣelī, and Andalosī subvarieties (*aṣnāf*), differing in form" (concerning the confusion about the identification of the *barrī* and *baḥrī* cabbages, see also Leclerc's note, II, p. 159).

Many medicinal properties and uses have been attributed in the Islamic period to the leaves and, to a lesser extent, to the seeds of the *karanb*, most of which can be traced to the writings of the Greek masters Dioscorides, Galen, etc. ʿAlī b. Sahl Ṭabarī, author of the oldest known medical compendium in this period (comp. 236/850), has only the following brief statement about it (p. 379): "The *karanb* is hot, pungent, cleansing (*ḡassāl*). Anyone who eats the core of its *qożbān* (leafstalks?) will become capable of drinking [a lot of] wine. Cooking it with fat meat will reduce its harmfulness." On the contrary, Aḵawaynī (4th/10th century) has a lot of uses for the *karanb*, most of which seem to derive from his personal practice and experience. For example, he prescribes its juice in a gargle against croup (p. 308), in different poultices against "cold gout" and "cold pains in the joints" (p. 563), and against suppurating gastric ulcer (p. 354), in an emetic to throw up the phlegm collected in the stomach (p. 378), with spinach in a diet against ileus (p. 429), with bitter almond oil against the jaundice caused by the obstruction of the biliary duct (p. 467), in a linctus with honey in the treatment of tuberculosis (p. 340) and "phlegmatic cough" (p. 316). He uses *karanb* seeds in various plasters against pleurisy (p. 333), suppurating gastric ulcer (pp. 354-55), and renal calculi (p. 489).

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