

*espinaca*, Portuguese *espinafre* or *espinacio*, Italian *spinace* or *spinaccio*, Provençal *espinarc*, Old French *espinoche* or *épinoche*, French *épinard*.<sup>1</sup> The Persian word was further adopted into Armenian *spanax* or *asbanax*, Turkish *spanák* or *ispanák*, Comanian *yspanac*, Middle Greek *spinakion*, Neo-Greek *spanaki(on)* or *spanakia* (plural). There are various spellings in older English, like *spynnage*, *spenege*, *spinnage*, *spinage*, etc. In English literature it is not mentioned earlier than the sixteenth century. W. TURNER, in his "Herball" of 1568, speaks of "spinage or spinech as an herbe lately found and not long in use."

However, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, spinach was well known and generally eaten in England. D. REMBERT DODOENS<sup>2</sup> describes it as a perfectly known subject, and so does JOHN GERARDE,<sup>3</sup> who does not even intimate that it came but recently into use. The names employed by them are *Spanachea*, *Spinachia*, *Spinachæum olus*, *Hispanicum olus*, English *spinage* and *spinach*. JOHN PARKINSON<sup>4</sup> likewise gives a full description and recipes for the preparation of the vegetable.

The earliest Persian mention of the spinach, as far as I know, is made in the pharmacopœia of Abu Mansur.<sup>5</sup> The oldest source cited by Ibn al-Baitār (1197-1248)<sup>6</sup> on the subject is the "Book of Nabathæan Agriculture" (*Falāha nabaṭīya*), which pretends to be the Arabic translation of an ancient Nabathæan source, and is believed to be a forgery of the tenth century. This book speaks of the spinach as a known vegetable and as the most harmless of all vegetables; but the most interesting remark is that there is a wild species resembling the cultivated one, save that it is more slender and thinner, that the leaves are

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specific reference. It is a gratuitous theory of his that the spinach must have been brought to Europe by the Crusaders; the Arabic importation into Spain has escaped him entirely.

<sup>1</sup> The former derivation of the word from "Spain" or from *spina* ("thorn"), in allusion to the prickly seeds, moves on the same high level as the performance of the *Min šu*. Littré cites Ménagier of the sixteenth century to the effect, "Les espinars sont ainsi appellés à cause de leur graine qui est espineuse, bien qu'il y en ait de ronde sans piqueron." In the Supplément, Littré points out the oriental origin of the word, as established by Devic.

<sup>2</sup> A Nievve Herball, or Historie of Plants, translated by H. LYTE, p. 556 (London, 1578).

<sup>3</sup> The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantés, p. 260 (London, 1597).

<sup>4</sup> Paradisus in sole paradisus terrestris, p. 496 (London, 1629).

<sup>5</sup> ACHUNDOW, Abu Mansur, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> L. LECLERC, Traité des simples, Vol. I, p. 60.