

call it *Batiec Indi*, which means 'melon of India,' and Avicenna so calls it in many places."¹ Nor does Persian *herbuz*,² Middle Persian *harbōjīnā* or *xarbūzak* (literally, "donkey-cucumber") favor the assumption of an indigenous origin. VÁMBÉRY³ argues that Turkish *karpuz* or *harbuz* is derived from the Persian, and that accordingly the fruit hails from Persia, though the opposite standpoint would seem to be equally justifiable, and the above interpretation may be no more than the outcome of a popular etymology. But Vámbéry, after all, may be right; at least, by accepting his theory it would be comparatively easy to account for the migration of the water-melon. In this case, Persia would be the starting-point from which it spread to the Turks of Central Asia and finally to China.⁴ A philological argument may support the opinion that the Turkish word was derived from Persia: besides the forms with initial guttural, we meet an alternation with initial dental, due to phonetic dissimilation. The Uigur, as we know from the Uigur-Chinese vocabulary, had the word as *karpuz*; but the Mongols term the water-melon *tarbus*. Likewise in Turkī we have *tarbuz*, but also *qarpuz*. This alternation is not Mongol-Turkish, but must have pre-existed in Persian, as we have *tarambuja* in Neo-Sanskrit, and in Hindustānī there is *xarbūza* and *tarbūza* (also *tarbūz* and *tarmus*), and correspondingly *tarbuz* in West-Tibetan. In Puštu, the language of the Afghans, we have *tarbuja* in the sense of "water-melon," and *xarbuja* designating various kinds of musk-melon.⁵ Through Turkish mediation the same word reached the Slavs (Russian *arbúz*,⁶ Bulgarian *karpúz*, Polish *arbuz*, *garbuz*, *harbuz*) and Byzantines (Greek *καρούσια*), and Turkish tribes appear to have been active in disseminating the fruit east and west.

It would therefore be plausible also that, as stated by JORET,⁷ the fruit may have been propagated from Iran to India, although the date of this importation is unknown. From Indian sources, on the other hand, nothing is to be found that would indicate any great antiquity of the cultivation of this species. Of the alleged Sanskrit word *chayapula*,

¹ C. MARKHAM, *Colloquies by Garcia da Orta*, p. 304.

² From which Armenian *xarþzag* is derived.

³ *Primitive Cultur des turko-tatarischen Volkes*, pp. 217-218.

⁴ Vámbéry, of course, is wrong in designating Persia and India as the mother-country of this cultivation. The mother-country was ancient Egypt or Africa in a wider sense.

⁵ H. W. BELLEW, *Report on the Yusufzais*, p. 255 (Lahore, 1864).

⁶ In the dialects of northern Persia we also find such forms as *arhuz* and *arhoz* (J. DE MORGAN, *Mission en Perse*, Vol. V, p. 212).

⁷ *Plantes dans l'antiquité*, Vol. II, p. 252.