

«Sēres» (HERRMANN, «Seres» in PAULY-WISSOWA; *Das Land der Seide*, 25); but it does not seem certain that the use of *σηρικόν* is not here due to Strabo himself. In the 2nd cent. A.D., Pausanias (VII, 26, 6) speaks of silk as produced «by a small animal which the Greeks call *σήρ*, although the Seres themselves give it another name». KLAPROTH's suggestion (in 1822) that *σήρ* renders the Ch. 絲 *ssū* (**si*), «silk», especially «silkthread», has generally been accepted, and HERRMANN (*Das Land der Seide*, 26) considers it is «so evident that no doubt ought to exist any longer on the point». Yet there are certain difficulties. LOKOTSCH (*Etymol. Wörterbuch*, No. 1878) derives from Ch. *ssū* both Med. Lat. *sēta* (> It. *seta*, Fr. *soie*, Germ. *Seide*), and, with the addition of the 兒 *êrh* suffix of Northern Chinese (*ssū-êrh*), «Sēres» (> Lat. *sericus*, Fr. Engl. *serge*, Engl. *silk*, Russ. *šëlk*). I do not for one moment believe that the Ch. *ssū* could have developed (through what channels?) into a Med. Lat. *sēta*, «silk», which must merely be the outcome, with a change of meaning, of Lat. *saeta* > *sēta*, «bristle», «coarse hair» (cf. Fr. «*soie de porc*», hog-bristles). On the other hand, although the use of 兒 *êrh* as a suffix is fairly early, going back at least to the 9th cent. (cf. LAUFER, *Sino-Iranica*, 538), *êrh* is an ancient **ńzie*, the initial of which is transcribed *ž*- in mediaeval foreign scripts; *ssū-êrh* ought never to have been adduced to explain *σήρ*. More important are the Corean form *sir* of *ssū*, and Mong. *širkäg* (< **sirkäg* > Kalm. *širkæg* and *širgæg*), Manchu *sirge*, «raw silk», «silk thread». I do not know of any form similar to *širkäg* or *sirge* in mediaeval texts or vocabularies, but that does not prevent the words from being possibly ancient. LAUFER (*loc. cit.*, 538-539) was, in my opinion, mistaken when he denied a connection between Cor. *sir* and Ch. *ssū*. Cor. *sir* stands to Ch. *ssū* (**si*) in the same relation in which Cor. *mar* does to Ch. 馬 *ma* (**ma*), «horse». Although the Ch. **ma* shows no final consonant *c.* A.D. 600, and must not have had any for some centuries before that date, it is extremely probable that the *-r* of Cor. *mar* is etymological, and that the word is fundamentally connected with Mong. *morin*, «horse». So both *ssū* and *ma* may originally have ended with an *-r*, which was dropped in the first centuries of our era; other words, such as 師 *shih* and 酒 *chiu*, seem to be in the same case. But even then the connection between *ssū* and *σήρ* is far from established. Pausanias gives *σήρ* as the Greek name of the silkworm, different from the Chinese name. As a matter of fact, the Chinese name is 蠶 *ts'an* (**dz'âm*), and there is no apparent reason why the silkworm should have been known in Greek by the Chinese name of the silk thread. Another difficulty is that *σήρ* occurs only in the 2nd cent. A.D., two centuries at least after the appearance of the derivative forms «Sēres» and «*σηρικόν*» in Latin and Greek texts. Lastly, there is no other Greek or Latin word which can be traced directly to a Chinese original. Even if it be alleged that the case is exceptional, silk being in ancient times the Chinese product *par excellence*, the word would not have reached the Greeks directly, and we are at a loss to understand how it could have passed and been so well preserved phonetically. This explains why LAUFER rejected the derivation of *σήρ* from Ch. *ssū*. But while he thought «*σήρ*» and «Seres» to be of Iranian origin and connected them with Pers. *sāräh*, «breadth of white silk» (> Ar. *saraq*, «silk», «white silk») in *Sino-Iranica*, 539 (cf. also Y¹, I, 20), he has given up this theory in the index of the same work (p. 612) : there he says that he thought he had meanwhile found what he believed to be the «correct derivation» of the name Sēres. However, he does not seem to have ever published it.