

not believe, either, that Russian *šolk* ("silk"), as is usually stated (even by Dal'), is derived from Mongol *širgek*: first of all, the alleged phonetic coincidence is conspicuous by its absence; and, secondly, an ancient Russian word cannot be directly associated with Mongol; it would be necessary to trace the same or a similar word in Turkish, but there it does not exist; "silk" in Turkish is *ipäk*, *torgu*, *torka*, etc. It is more probable that the Russian word (Old Slavic *šelk*, Lithuanian *szilkai*), in the same manner as our *silk*, is traceable to *sericum*. There is no reason to assume that the Greek words *ser*, *Sera*, *Seres*, etc., have their origin in Chinese. This series was first propagated by Iranians, and, in my opinion, is of Iranian origin (cf. New Persian *sarah*, "silk"; hence Arabic *sarak*).

\* Persian *kimxāw* or *kamxāb*, *kamxā*, *kimxā* (Arabic *kīmxāw*, Hindustānī *kamxāb*), designating a "gold brocade," as I formerly explained,<sup>1</sup> may be derived from Chinese 錦花 *kin-hwa*, \**kim-xwa*.

3-4. Of fruits, the West is chiefly indebted to China for the peach (*Amygdalus persica*) and the apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*). It is not impossible that these two gifts were transmitted by the silk-dealers, first to Iran (in the second or first century B.C.), and thence to Armenia, Greece, and Rome (in the first century A.D.). In Rome the two trees appear as late as the first century of the Imperium, being mentioned as *Persica* and *Armeniaca arbor* by Pliny<sup>2</sup> and Columella. Neither tree is mentioned by Theophrastus, which is to say that they were not noted in Asia by the staff of Alexander's expedition.<sup>3</sup> DE CANDOLLE has ably pleaded for China as the home of the peach and apricot, and ENGLER<sup>4</sup> holds the same opinion. The zone of the wild apricot may well extend from Russian Turkistan to Sungaria, south-eastern Mongolia, and the Himalaya; but the historical fact remains that the Chinese have been the first to cultivate this fruit from ancient times. Previous authors have justly connected the westward migration of peach and apricot with the lively intercourse of China and western Asia following Čan K'ien's mission.<sup>5</sup> Persian has only descriptive names for these fruits, the peach being termed *šaft-ālu* ("large plum"), the apricot *zard-ālu*

<sup>1</sup> *T'oung Pao*, 1916, p. 477; YULE, Hobson-Jobson, p. 484.

<sup>2</sup> XV, II, 13.

<sup>3</sup> DE CANDOLLE (Origin of Cultivated Plants, p. 222) is mistaken in crediting Theophrastus with the knowledge of the peach. JORET (Plantes dans l'antiquité, p. 79) has already pointed out this error, and it is here restated for the benefit of those botanists who still depend on de Candolle's book.

<sup>4</sup> In Hehn, Kulturpflanzen, p. 433.

<sup>5</sup> JORET, *op. cit.*, p. 81; SCHRADER in Hehn, p. 434.