

From The Itinerary Of Greece Of Pausanias (c. 174 CE)

Pausanias was a Greek geographer and historian who made references to Seres (or China) in part of his work.

Text "Now, the Land of Elis is not merely fruitful in other products, but also, and it is not the least of them, in Byssus.' Hemp and flax and byssus are sown by such as have soils appropriate to the cultivation of each. But the filaments from which the Seres make their stuffs are the growth of no plant, but are produced in quite another manner ; and thus it is. There exists in their country a certain insect which the Greeks call *Se,o*; but by the Seres it is not called *Sir*, but something quite different. In size 'tis twice as big as the biggest of beetles: but, in other respects, it resembles the spiders that spin under trees ; and, moreover, it has eight legs as spiders have. The Seres keep these creature, and make houses for their shelter adapted to summer and winter respectively. And the substance wrought by these insects is found in the shape of a slender filament entangled about their legs. The people feed them for about four years upon millet, and in the fifth year (for they know that the creatures will not live longer than that) they give them a kind of green reed to eat. This is the food that the insect likes best of all; and it crams itself with it to such an extent that it bursts from repletion. And when it is thus dead, they find the bulk of what it has spun in its inside.'

"Now, *Snare* is known to be an island in a recess of the Erythrman Sea. But I have been told that it is not the Erythrman Sea which makes it an island, but a river which they call *Stn*, just as the Delta of Egypt is isolated by the Nile and not by a sea compassing it all round. And these Seres are of the Ethiopic race; and they hold also the adjoining islands, *ABABA* and *SAKAIA*. Yet others say that they are not Ethiopians at all, but a cross between the Scythians and the Indians. This is what they tell of these matters" (vi, 26).

Cathay and the Way Thither, Vol. 1. Preliminary Essay on the Intercourse Between China and the Western Nations Previous to the Discovery of the Cape Route. London, Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1915, 1913, 1914, 1916.