

Should this distinctive character be constant in the two African species, there is a double reason for naming the ancient *Mimusops* *M. Schimper*. The fruit of *M. Elengi* is very distinct from that found in the tombs. I think it very likely that this species, of which we so often find the fruits and leaves in the tombs of the ancient Egyptians, may be the *Persea* of the old authors, which modern botanists have erroneously referred to *Balanites* and *Diospyros mespiliformis*.¹ The latter has not hitherto been found in the ancient tombs; neither does it occur depicted on the monuments. Diodorus (i. p. 34) has transmitted to us a valuable tradition concerning the *Persea*. He states that it was introduced into Egypt with the first colonists coming from Ethiopia, which clearly implies that the ancient authors regarded it as having been introduced from the regions of the Upper Nile and not as belonging to the indigenous flora. *Balanites*, however, grows wild in the valleys of the Eastern Thebaid and on the borders of the Red Sea, and in Nubia this shrub is of general dispersion. True its fruit has been found in the funeral repasts in the tombs, yet that of the *Mimusops* has been found much more frequently, and, in support of my hypothesis, the thick leaves of the *Balanites* are always wanting in the wreaths.

According to Theophrastus, the *Persea* had a black wood, and he compares the flowers with those of the apple-tree. I do not know the wood of the *Mimusops* sufficiently, but with regard to the flowers it must be

admitted that no ancient authors ever made a more unmistakable comparison, while the flowers of the *Balanites* have nothing in common with those of the apple. Pliny (lib. xiii. p. 9) does not speak of the *Persea*, but of the *Persica*, and the only surprising thing in it is that he treats it as indigenous in Egypt. He mentions, too, the peculiarity of the Egyptian variety of the peach-tree, which consists in its persistent foliage. Even now in the middle of winter we see the peach-trees in blossom while still carrying their leaves. The same author (lib. xv. p. 13) expressly points out the difference between the *Persica* and the *Persea*. On Egyptian monuments we often see a tree diagrammatically represented, though the distichous, elliptical, acute leaves are evident. This tree, sacred to Hathor or Isis, and often drawn with these divinities, probably represent the *Mimusops* in question. The fruit of *Mimusops Kummel*, of Central Africa, resembles in appearance as well as in taste that of the wild rose; and it may be that under cultivation a still more palatable fruit could be obtained. Indeed, the fruit of specimens of this species collected in Abyssinia appears to be much more pulpy.

All the wreaths of the find at Deir-el-Bahari are of one and the same pattern. The leaves are folded lengthwise in the middle,² then folded again in the contrary direction over a string or strip about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, of a leaf of the date-palm. In the fold of each leaf, single flowers, or parts of flowers (sepals and petals), are inserted in

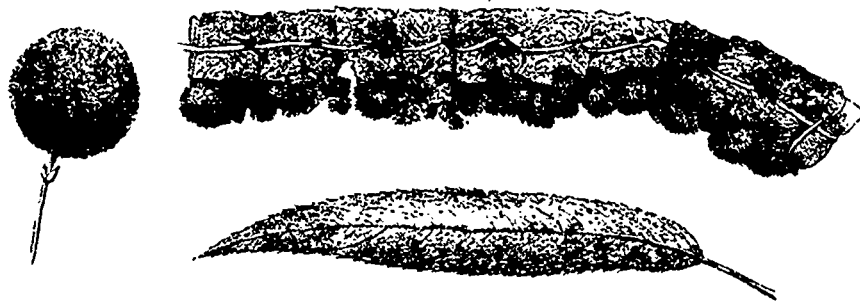


FIG. 2.—Portion of a Funeral Wreath from the tomb of Amenhotep I. (1300 to 1700 B.C.), composed of the folded leaves of *Salix infusa* and the flower-heads of *Acacia Nilotica* strung together with strips of the leaves of the Date Palm. A separate leaf of the *Salix* (the teeth represented too sharp) and a flower-head of the *Acacia*.

such a manner that they are fixed in the leaf as in a pair of pincers. Then with a finer strip of the date-leaf than the central one, they are stitched through and securely fastened together in long rows side by side, and all pointing in the same direction. These wreaths are arranged in semicircles on the breast of the mummy, so that their disposition is like one sees in the necklaces of the present day. Their thinness rendered them suitable for using in large numbers, and sometimes they occur in several layers one above the other, filling up the limited space between the mummy and the lid of the coffin.

It is probable that it is to this kind of wreath that Pliny alludes (lib. xxi. p. 2) as the "so-called Egyptian wreaths," of which Plutarch and Athenius praised the beauty. Unfortunately these wreaths, which, with ordinary care, might have been removed entire from the mummy when the coffin was first opened, were broken and reduced to powder in several places. The specimens I send you attached to cardboard are the most perfect that I could procure after those selected for the Museum of Bouiak. On placing them in boiling or cold water,

according to the species, the leaves, &c., recover their original flexibility, especially in *Nymphaea carulea*; and with proper precaution one succeeds in spreading them out and drying them again effectually. The fragility of these objects is only due to the extreme state of dryness they have reached during the thirty to thirty-five centuries they have lain in the tombs. It is at the same time the principal factor in their wonderful preservation.

The wreaths of the other kings of this vault I have at present only partially examined. From their general appearance, however, as well as from the flowers and leaves of which they are composed, which also indicate a different season³ of the year, one would be justified in attributing them to a different period from that during which the wreaths of Ramses II. were renewed. If they really date from the time when the bodies of the kings of the eighteenth dynasty were first deposited in the vault, we have here to do with specimens four or five centuries older than the wreaths of Ramses II. In any case these objects are at least contemporaneous with the time commonly assigned to the Trojan war, if not several centuries more ancient.

The wreaths of Amenhotep I. (who was found during

¹ Kunth took the stones of *Mimusops* found by Passalacqua to be this plant.

² It may be mentioned that Kunth published his determinations of the records found by Passalacqua in the *Annales des Sciences Naturelles*, viii. (1868) p. 418. Unfortunately it is not known to what period they belonged. Among them were seeds of a palm, *Arcaea (?) Passalacqua*, Kunth, which was subsequently identified by Unger with *Hyphane Argun*, Mart., a palm which inhabits some of the valleys of the Nubian desert in the bend of the Nile between Korosko and Abou Hammed.—W. B. H.]

³ Or when they were too large they were torn in two.

⁴ The records to which I have alluded indicate the day and the month; and these flowers will one day serve to fix the season with which the month of that epoch coincides. The *Carthamus* could only be had from the end of March to the middle of May; the *Water-lilies* from July to November; while the young leaves of *Salix* indicate the spring. The *Acacia* and *Casbania* flower at all seasons.