

two and stitched together, and serving as clasps for the sepals and petals of *Nymphaea carulea*, Savi, and *Nymphaea Lotus*, Hook., the whole strung on strips of the leaves of the date palm. Besides the wreaths, there were in the coffin at the side of the body, and fastened between the bands encircling the mummy, whole flowers of *Nymphaea carulea* on stalks eighteen or twenty inches long. The water-lilies thus scattered separately on the mummy were all of the blue-flowered species. An examination of these entire flowers and the sepals and petals in the wreaths, whether of the white or of the blue-flowered species, leaves no doubt whatever respecting their identity with the living plants so common in ditches at the present day, especially in Lower Egypt, where they blossom from July to November.

The *Nymphaea carulea*, Savi, which figures on all the ancient monuments of Egypt and among the offerings painted on the walls of the temples is often recognisable from the blue colour of its petals. In the temple of Ramses II. at Abydos the colour is remarkably well preserved, and besides there is always a leaf associated with

each cluster of flowers, clearly demonstrating by its entire (not toothed) margin that the species represented is *N. carulea* and not *N. Lotus*. The latter, whose sepals and petals occur abundantly in the wreaths taken from the coffins of Ramses II. and Amenhotep I., has not been found by me on the ancient monuments, though Unger records an instance at Beni Hassan where the white flower could be recognised. With regard to the question to which of the species the old name *Lotus* properly belongs, I have been able to ascertain the following facts. No design on the ancient monuments is referable to *Nelumbium*; neither the fruits nor the leaves, so easily characterised, are recognisable. Further, no remains of *Nelumbium* have been found either in the coffins or among the offerings and funeral repasts deposited in the vaults of the Pharaohs. The *Lotus* was not referred to *Nelumbium* until a very much later epoch. This plant has not been found among the wild plants of any part of Africa. It is eminently Asiatic, and was perhaps not introduced into Egypt before the Persian invasion. At the time of Ramadus it was probably cultivated every-

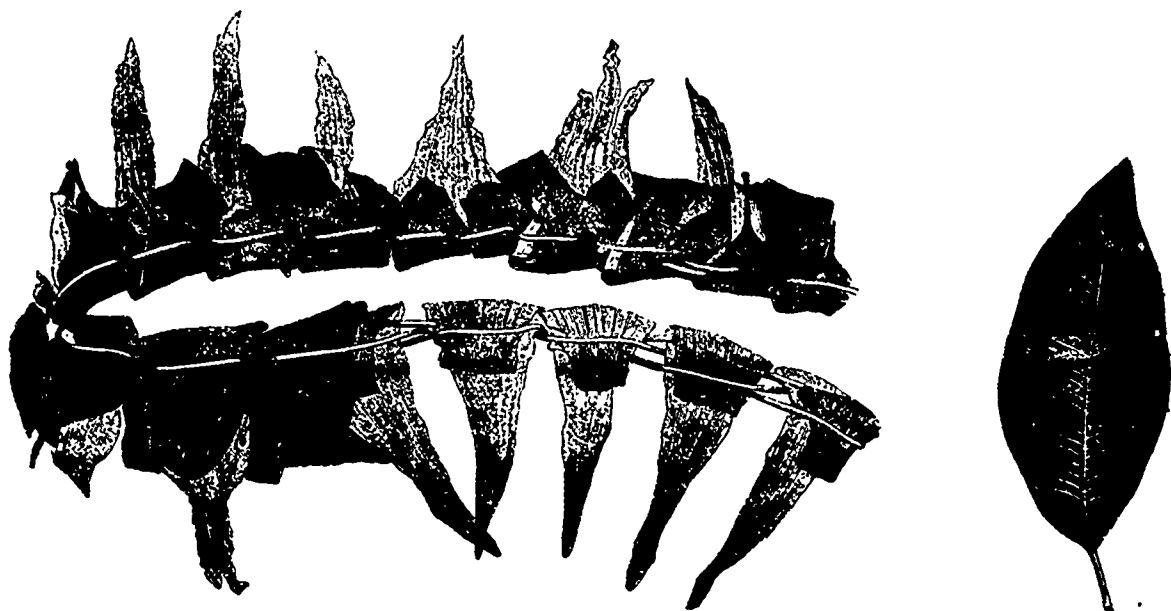


FIG. 1.—Portion of a Funeral Wreath from the tomb of Ramses II. (1000 to 1200 B.C.), composed of the folded leaves of *Mimosa Schimperii* and the petals of *Nymphaea carulea*, Savi, stitched together with strips of the leaves of the Date Palm. A separate leaf of *Mimosa Schimperii*.

where in Egypt, for we often find it in the mosaics, sculptures, &c., of that period, associated with papyrus and animals characteristic of the Nile, and easily recognised by its fruit.

The most ancient writer who treats of the Egyptian *Lotus* in such a way as to leave no doubt that he meant the *Nelumbium*, and not a species of *Nymphaea*, is Herodotus (lib. ii. cap. 92); after him Theophrastus ("Hist. Plant." lib. iv.), and then Strabo, while Pliny (lib. xiii.) clearly alludes to a *Nymphaea* in a comparison of the fruit with the capsule of a poppy.

The *Mimosa* was evidently a sacred tree to the ancient Egyptians. The fruits, or the stones of the fruits, which had been eaten, are often found in the funeral repasts in the vaults; and the leaves not only occur in the wreaths of the ancient empire but likewise in those of later times, even down to the Græco-Roman epoch, as specimens in the Leyden Museum testify.

The fruit of *Mimosa* found in Egyptian tombs<sup>1</sup> exactly resembles—except that the stones are a little thicker

—that of *M. Kummel*, Bruce, a species spread throughout Abyssinia and the region of the Upper Nile; yet no species of the genus is found wild in Egypt. The leaves forming the wreaths in question should belong to the same species as the fruits found in the tombs. Nevertheless, in comparing them with numerous specimens of *Mimosa Kummel*, I did not meet with the perfect identity one would have expected from the resemblance of the fruits. In Central Africa, and especially in Abyssinia, an allied species, *M. Schimperii*, exists, the leaves of which are much more like those of the wreaths. A longer, and especially a slenderer, weaker petiole, and a more acute, less abruptly acuminate blade characterise these leaves. With regard to the fruit of *M. Schimperii*, I have not had an opportunity of studying it. Moreover the two species under consideration are not sufficiently established as distinct species. But an anatomical character came to my aid. Dr. Westermaier of Berlin has ascertained that the leaves of *Mimosa Schimperii* and of *M. Elengi*, L., have a double layer of epidermal cells, a character they possess in common with the leaves from the ancient tombs; whereas in the leaves of *M. Kummel* there is only a single epidermal layer of cells.

<sup>1</sup> The ancient fruits, however, have usually a thicker stone, the three angles of which appear to be more prominent than in that of *M. Kummel*, Bruce.