



The Perfume of Cyprus: from Pyrgos to François Coty the route of a legendary charm

Maria Rosaria Belgiorno

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The Perfume of Cyprus is an interesting and through-provoking read. Maria Rosaria Belgiorno demonstrates the significance of the production and use of perfumes from the Bronze Age to the present day with the case study of the wonderful archaeological site of Pyrgos; a site which has in situ examples of the differing implements and ceramics involved in perfume production. Notably she places Cyprus into the broader context which is an important aspect when considering the production and use of perfumes that clearly held significance. This is clear from the extensive trade of Cyprian perfumes which gives the island of Cyprus a central role in the trade of perfume and cosmetics. Indeed, the similarities and connections with Egyptian perfumes, in both their production and traditions, demonstrate the areas of contact and influences as well as allowing for a wonderful comparison. Whilst the production and trade perfumes has seen a continuation even to this day with a specific olfactory family. Additionally a significance of the specific ingredients has been made clear, although it is a shame the exact quantities and process of the production of the most ancient Cyprian perfumes is still unknown. (Perhaps this is scope for further research?) Certainly the importance held by certain key ingredients, such as wine, imbues further significance onto the perfumes themselves, not to mention the clear skill and knowledge needed in the choice of ingredients and the production. As such the ingredients are of interest when considering the modern day; even though presently chemicals are often used in the production of perfume, the significance and persistent use of wine, for example, in differing recipes and as a popular drink has been maintained throughout the centuries until the present day. Moreover the connection Maria Rosaria Belgiorno draws upon between scent, perfumes and cosmetics with divine powers, gods and goddesses, such as Aphrodite, brings the focus towards the beliefs and aspects important to contemporary prehistoric society. As well as the powerful connection of the human mind and scent which overall demonstrate the significance perfume held and therefore the importance of research into its production at Pyrgos and across Cyprus. The Perfume of Cyprus: from Pyrgos to François Coty the Route of a Millenary Charm is a fascinating read which will allow the reader to really understand the world of scent both today and in the past. Amber Roy

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