



**“ CYPRUS, A SITE 4000 YEARS OLD AND EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY”  
THE OLIVE OIL, PERFUMES, METALLURGY AND TEXTILES OF PYRGOS/MAVRORAKI**

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**VITERBO ROCCA ALBORNOZ MUSEO NAZIONALE ETRUSCO  
2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL- 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2009**

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*“A me sembra che quelle scienze siano vane e piene di errori, le quali non son nate dall’esperienza, madre di ogni certezza, e che non terminano in nota esperienza, cioè che la loro origine o mezzo o fine non passa per nessuno de’ cinque sensi”*  
(Leonardo da Vinci).

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The names of the goddesses from Olympus, Hera, Athena, Artemis and Aphrodite, are the four prehistoric perfumes composed of olive oil, water, pine and coriander, blended with bay leaves, bergamot, parsley, bitter almonds and mint. You will be able to smell the perfumes, from its display cabinet, during the exhibition which opens on the **2<sup>nd</sup> of April in Albornoza Fortress at Viterbo**, home of the National Etruscan Museum. Here, the prehistoric technical instruments will be exposed, found on the archaeological site of Pyrgos/Mavroraki in Cyprus, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The prehistoric technical instruments, are rebuilt through methodology by the Centre of Experimental Archaeology Antiquitates at Blera. The Exhibition is organized by archaeologist Maria Rosaria Belgiorno, also director of excavation of Pyrgos/ Mavroraki, by Angelo Bartoli, director of Antiquitates Center at Blera, and by archaeologists, Concetta Cappelletti, Tiziana Mastracci, Claudia Fierro, Maria Adamo, Eliana Noviello, Sabrina Moscatelli.

The excavation of Pyrgos/Mavroraki is uncovering a big industrial area probably connected with a part of the Palace, occupying an area of 4000 square meters. The entire complex from 3500 BC, was destroyed by a violent earthquake around 1850 BC. The details of this industrial area build around a large oil mill, where it’s possible to produce olive oil used for these purposes of production: the olive oil was used as fuel for the fusion of metals, like a base for making perfumes and also fluidifying the fibre used in spinning and weaving of clothes. The Centre of Experimental Archaeology “Antiquitates” at Blera is able to reconstruct the production cycle, chopper, metal alloys, different stages of weaving and dyeing clothes, started from the instruments found (alembics, mortars, funnels, various containers, chassis weights and stone tools).

This reconstruction is also possible with the help of chemical and physical analysis, carried out by researchers of CNR of Roma (Alessandro Lentini, Marco Ferretti, and Daniela Ferro). The three cycles of production made “Aphrodite's Island” famous on the past. Cyprus is the home of Powder (Cipria), the oldest cosmetic in the world, origin of the family of Chypre perfumes identified by Francois Coty in 1917. Cyprus is also the source of precious textiles, mentioned in several passages of the Bible, and exported until the Renaissance from Venice merchants, and the home of copper, the most wealthy substance since the prehistoric period. It’s the first time the hypothesis of archaeologists are confirmed in Experimental Archaeology, and its tests join the past with the present and make the past more close and comprehensible for everybody.

## THE PATH OF EXPOSITION

The path of exposition beginning from technical production and conservation of olive oil and continues with three main themes:

Olive oil: Reconstruction of the pressing instrument for squeezing olives, and particular containers (pithoi) are found on the excavation site, focuses are on all of three activities.

Perfumes: Extraction techniques for hot maceration in olive oil, the techniques for distillation in pottery alembics (currently the oldest variety found in the original place) The collection of instruments includes the first funnels found in the world, as well as stone tools used in the manufacturing process.

Textiles: The processing technique of textiles is built in all its processes, from maceration of vegetable fibres to treatment of animal fibre. The weaving is documented from numerous and various weights of chassis and the large chassis found in the biggest room of the Palace. The richness of fabrics is demonstrated from decoration of the famous flat idols of the ancient Bronze period of Cyprus reproduced for the exposition . These idols have traditional patterns used also today in the costume and embroidery tradition of the Cyprus Island.

Metallurgy: The whole process of copper from extraction to minerals to fusion of the pure metal and alloy is perfectly reconstructed. The abundant waste material, the tools ( anvil, hammers, axes, mills, pestles) and the replication of metal objects (forms of fusion, axes, jewellery, needles and knives) are the framework of oven rebuilding perfectly reconstructed as original and tested.

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