

THE HISTORY AND USE OF PERFUME IN HUMAN CIVILIZATION

Gâdea Ștefania¹, Anamaria Vâtcă², Sorin Vâtcă^{1*}

¹*Department of Plant Physiology. University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Agriculture, Cluj-Napoca, România*

²*Department of Fundamental Sciences. University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Husbandry, Cluj-Napoca, România*

**Corresponding author: stefigadea@yahoo.com*

Abstract. The fragrance is a liquid mixture of aromatic oils or aromatic compounds, fixatives and solvents, used to give the human body, objects or living space a pleasant smell. This mixture is directed directly at one of the senses, or the smell, but the implications of its action go beyond the simple act of detecting a certain miracle, changing states of mind, changing behaviors, motivating moods or giving pleasure. Originally perceived as a bond between mortal and divinity, then considered to be a cure and a protector against moths, perfumes are a symbol of civilization and their secrets gradually reveal as you penetrate into their universe. Based on this argument, it is not advisable to exaggerate quantitatively when used.

Keywords: perfume, aromatic oils, solvents, essences, human civilizations

INTRODUCTION

The word perfume (fragrance), used in nowadays, comes from Latin *per fumus* and means through smoke. The art of perfume preparation was born in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, being later refined by the Romans and Persians. The fascinating history of perfumes begins, according to the researchers, from prehistory. Sufficient evidence has been found to support this theory, from traces of aromatic oils to dishes containing essences extracted from plants and flowers. Therefore, the history of perfumes is as old as the history of humanity.

The first form of perfume was incense. It was discovered by the Mesopotamians about 4000 years ago. In ancient cultures many types of resins, leaves and wood were burnt in religious ceremonies. Often people soaked the aromatic wood and resin in water with oil and massaged their body with the liquid so obtained. Also, natural fragrances were used to embalmerize inanimate bodies.

THE ART OF PARFUM IN MESOPOTAMY, EGYPT AND ISRAEL

Mesopotamia. Still from the period of the Mesopotamian culture, perfumes, oils and essences begin to be used as a symbol of nobility, but also of pure pleasure. Perfumes have come to be used daily, becoming a symbol of the development and evolution of Mesopotamia for rival civilizations. There were also true masters selling their loving, high-priced creations, to the extent of their effort. The archaeological discoveries have shown that a genuine cosmetic industry has developed in the region of the Mesopotamian civilization, and the written sources are today an important source of information. Due to the famous mesopotamian tablets, it was found that the Schubab queen of the Sumerian used cosmetics and perfumes, and in her tomb was found a small jar for casting essences and a jar with a golden watermark holding the lip paint. Sumerian literature does not lack reference to

fragrances and aromatic oils, the most famous writing remaining the famous epic of Ghilgamesh. In the rich library left by the Sumerians, the researchers also deciphered an impressive number of prescriptions for oils and perfumes, other notes telling the role played by them in ceremonies, but also in everyday life.

Egypt. The art of perfume was also to be transmitted to Egypt, the first historical evidence dating back to 100 dHr. Essences and perfumes were used predominantly in religious rituals and funeral ceremonies. After the invention of glass in Egypt, it would be used to make the first perfume bottles and containers. This fashion was later exported to Greece, where the variety of terracotta and glass containers grew rapidly, as the charm of the perfumes conquered new civilizations. Ancient Egypt has developed one of the most impressive cosmetic industries in those times, and perfumes have played an essential role. Cosmetics and perfumes played an important role in religious life, but also in profane life. The masters of these arts were the priests of the temples, who had their labs installed there, from where they could buy perfumes, oils and essences. Many brought them as a gift to the Gods, others used them for their pleasure, or paid with them. Creating the most suitable, practical and hermetic containers (Figure 1) has become a real challenge in Egypt. Making them was a real craft. Materials such as ebony, porcelain, glass, stone, and some more precious recipes made from gold were also used.

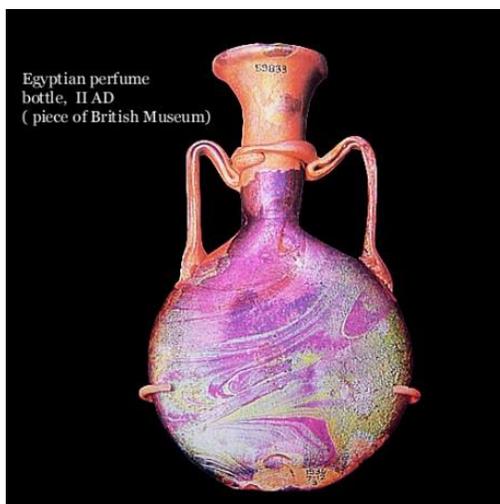


Fig.1. Egyptian pot for Fragrance
(<http://flickrhivemind.net>)

Israel. From the Old Testament pages, it appears that in Israel perfumes and oils have arrived as imports from the Egyptians. At that time, they constituted very popular and sought-after goods but well-paid. Fragrances and fragrances are mentioned very often in the Old Testament, demonstrating how precious they were for Jews. According to the research, it seems that the Israelites, although they were shepherds and cultivators, learned the secrets of perfume making from the Egyptian priests. In the time of Moses, after receiving the Tablets of the Law, a special perfume was made for religious ceremonies, forbidden to most people, except for this rule being made by priests. The New Testament also does not lack the references to perfumes, just to mention the scene in which Mary- Lazarus's sister anointed with the feet of the Savior or the body of Jesus anointed according to the burial

rituals of the time. Another scene is where the three magicians from the Fawn bring to the babe incense, myrrh and gold.

THE ART OF PARFUM IN GREECE, ROME AND ISLAM

Greece. A major role in the history of perfumes was played by Greece, where the ideals of beauty, harmony, proportion and balance played a fundamental role not only in art, but also in everyday life. It was no surprise to anyone that perfumes and oils would become the favorite elements of those who assigned them a divine origin. According to Homer, the Olympian Gods taught people the secrets of perfume making and use, and in many Greek mythology scenes, perfumes, aromas and essences are created by goddesses, nymphs and other characters.(Figure 2).



Fig. 2. Greek Bottles for Perfume
(<http://flickrhivemind.net>)

In Greece, a real industry has grown rapidly, especially in Crete and the colonies, but also in other Mediterranean cities where perfumers came from all over the world. Soon the first Greek masters appeared, who had their workshops in the Greek cities, selling their merchandise on the street, in the agora or in the public markets. Many were very well known and appreciated, especially those who invented new perfume recipes.

Rome. From Greece, in a natural evolution, perfumes reached Rome during the Republic. It is said that the first barbarians and perfumers arrived in Rome coming from a Greek colony in southern Italy. In the beginning, Rome was far from later shadow, being a poor and defensive settlement, inhabited more by shepherds and farmers, who were at the same time obliged to defend themselves against the repeated attacks of tribes and neighbors. Later, surprising military victories and their relationship with Etruscans and Greeks will radically change the lives of the Romans. Rome became, in time, a rich and prosperous city, an absolute symbol of civilization and power, but also a city where luxury, elegance and beauty were of great value (Photo 3). In this context, perfumes could not be missed, and gradually this fashion extended to the borders of the empire. Consumption increased greatly, while perfumers barely faced demand.

In Rome, the special smells of the common pool water attracted a large number of people. Another trick used in renowned bathrooms was that there was a wide range of beautiful smells available to those who used the public spaces in question. If at first, perfumes and other cosmetics were reserved only for the nobles, then their price declined so much that they became accessible to everyone. Soon, perfumes began to be used not only for personal use, but also for ceremonies to refresh the air in palaces or theaters.



Fig. 3 The interest for perfume of Romans
(<http://flickrhivemind.net>)

Fragrances have been added to wines, and they are also used to fragrant animals. At religious ceremonies, the number and variety of fragrances were impressive, similar to the diversity encountered in bottles containing them. (Figure 4).



Fig. 4. Set of Roman Bottles
(<http://flickrhivemind.net>)

Islam. The Byzantine Empire was the great successor of the glory of Rome, from which it also took on the fashion of perfumes. Instead of simply using the aromas and scents, Islam has transformed this fashion into an impressive art and then into an industry that has surpassed everything that has ever been done. With easier and cheaper access to raw materials, including rare flowers and spices, as well as a skilled workforce, with many perfumers who have quickly learned the secrets of this art, the Islamic world has proven to be a cutting-edge producer. Soon the world no longer talked about the flavors and aromas created in the Roman Empire, but the waxed fragrances of the Arabs. Various spices and plants made a realm of fragrance from Arabian lands. From here, caravans carried perfumes, oils, rose water, expensive spices, and spicery on the Mediterranean coast.

Beginning with the 7th century, the art of perfume was for the Mohammed, and a strong religious charge, and a believer could not imagine life without perfumes. Even in the Koran, the paradise promised to the faithful one was a fragrant garden, with rivers, trees, and dream gardens scattered in splendor. Arabic perfumers knew how to capitalize the experience of the forefathers and created many recipes that have lasted for centuries, as well as new techniques for extracting precious flavors. It seems that they were the first to combine old and new perfumes with alcohol, but also those who created rose water and musk perfume.

THE ART OF PERFUME IN THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD AND IN FRANCE

Renaissance period. Venice and Florence, the most important cultural, military and economic centers, have become the new capitals of the perfume industry. Formulas and old recipes, gathered around the world or reinvented and improved, have made perfume fashion come back to power in Europe. The nobles of that time could not have imagined their lives without these delicate flavors, and those in the Medici family were renowned for it.

France. France has always been an authority in the world perfume industry, and the first perfume shop was founded in the 12th century by Philippe-Augustine. Becoming the new perfume brand, France first had only small perfumery laboratories in Paris and other places where the masters of this art already had a list of clients, each with its preferences. Every nobleman or merchant wanted another type of perfume, and perfumers came to have real catalogs of preferences. Gradually, the fashion of perfume has expanded, and the kings of France, especially Louis XIV and Louis XV, have been among the biggest perfume consumers. During King Louis XV, his tribunal was dubbed the "Perfumed Court." Madame de Pompadour made excesses in the amount of perfume used, but her gesture was based on the fact that King Ludovic wanted a different smell for his apartment every day.

What is less known is that fragrances used in abundance only superficially managed to mask the lack of hygiene of the nobles at a time when it was believed that the baths often bring plague and other diseases. The golden age of perfumes would end with the French Revolution, when virtually this important market was paralyzed. Considered a noble mood, many of which came under the edge of the guillotine, perfumes were virtually forbidden. But a perfume, even the name of Guillotines, was very fashionable among the revolutionaries. With the Napoleon climbing on the throne, a great lover of flavors and essences, a new chapter began in the history of French perfumes. Soon they would evolve from the status of small manufactures to true industrialists, setting the foundation for an impressive industry that has long been remarkable for its dynamic dynamics.

Napoleon was also a fragrance for perfumes. It is said to have used over 60 bottles of jasmine fragrance every month, and Josefina had an affinity for musk essences. Her scent, as in Tutankhamon's case, was a particularly persistent one. It is known that at the age of sixty years after its death, in its boudoir, the smell of musk was still noticeable.

THE ART OF PERFUME IN MODERN EPOCH

Today's perfumes are prepared by specialists trained in the spirit of Renaissance tradition. These craftsmen, who spend many years in apprenticeship, come to very fine observations and talk about the quality of the amber notes or white flower arrangements.

Since 2000, perfumers have been talking about the complexity of their products, referring to the affinities of the molecular bonds of recipient floral proteins.

The city of Grasse in Provence, France, has been established since 1724 as the largest production center of raw materials for the perfume industry. It has been named the capital of the world in terms of perfumes and, despite the passage of centuries, the area still preserves its status as a perfume queen. The importance of perfumery in the history of Grasse is brought to life by the International Museum of Perfumery. It provides details of the perfume manufacturing process and covers 3000 years of history in this industry. Two very important festivals take place each year in Grasse as a tribute to the city's most important assets: Fête du Jasmin, which takes place in August and the Rose Festival, held in May. After 1920, many other countries began producing fragrances, but the French perfume is still considered the best in the world by connoisseurs.

The perfume industry has undergone several changes in technique, materials and style. All this has created a modern flavor industry that incorporates creativity, mysticism and romance. These fragrances contain the best oils from around the world and revive the passion for perfumery. The last revolutionary stage in the history of the perfume is placed at the end of the 19th century, with industrial development, the consequences of which are considerable: the production of serial products, the establishment of large stores, but especially the appearance of the first synthesis products, determined by the development of organic chemistry. At the beginning of the 20th century were introduced the abstract aromas, which were no longer related to the floral bouquets. This progress brought a revolution to the perfumery industry, and in 1921, Gabrielle Chanel launched Chanel No.5, the first perfume in which only synthetic essences were used.

Today, the perfume industry is one of the most powerful and constantly evolving. It is marked by a strong and fierce competition between producers, with a growing market and new formula invented each year.

REFERENCES

1. Coifan, O., 2005, Perfume. Small Encyclopedia, Ed. Old Court, Bucharest;
2. Constantinescu, D. Gr., Elena Hațieganu-Buruiiană, 1986, To know our medicinal plants, their therapeutic properties and their use, Ed. Medicală, Bucharest;
3. John Oakes, 1996, The Book of Perfumes, Ed. Humanitas, Bucharest;
4. John Oakes, 2008, All about perfume, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest;
5. Pârveu, C., 2000, Encyclopedia of Plants, Technical Publishing House, Bucharest.