Liquid Gold: Symbolic & Spiritual Significance of the Olive Oil in Cyprus

Constantia Constantinou
Dean of University Libraries, SUNY Distinguished Librarian
Stony Brook University

This presentation traces the importance of the symbolic representation and the spiritual significance of the olive tree in the Mediterranean region, with particular emphasis in Cyprus from the 9th millennium BC representing a clear outline of the Cypriot history and religion from the Neolithic period to the present. Olives and olive oil was an important commodity for trade and export that contributed to the economic prosperity of Cyprus during antiquity. It was considered a sacred symbol in ancient worship that continued to inspire clergy and laypersons during liturgical ceremonies and church practices. Nutritionists and healers thought highly of the natural healing properties and dietary importance of the olive oil.

Constantia Constantinou is the Dean of University Libraries at Stony Brook University. As the Dean of the University Libraries, she leads the SBU Libraries strategic vision in becoming an essential partner in the University’s mission of global leadership in research, discovery and learning. Constantinou is a Fulbright Scholar and a SUNY Distinguished Librarian. As an established public speaker, Constantia has been invited to present her research at library conferences in the United States and worldwide. Her recent presentations include, The Olive Oil Chronicles at the International Conference of Mediterranean Studies, 2017; and the Discovery of Karamanlitika: Disappearing Literature, Artifacts and Cultural Heritage at the Library of Congress, Africa and Middle Eastern Division, 2017. Constantinou holds Master’s Degrees in Library Science, as well as in Music Theory, from Queens College, CUNY. She is a native of the city of Famagusta, Cyprus.

Wednesday, January 31 2018
4:00pm
Special Collections Seminar Room
E-2340 Melville Library
(2nd floor)