

Gardens and plants in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece

Start date 20 January 2023**End date**

22 January 2023

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ**Tutor** Caroline Holmes**Course code**

2223NRX018

Director of ISP and LL

Sarah Ormrod

For further information contactinteng@ice.cam.ac.uk

Tutor biography

Caroline Holmes lectures regularly for the Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge; as well as The Arts Society, nationally and internationally, and online for The Gardens Trust; many of her special interest lectures are delivered online. Guest speaker on Greece and Arabia for the cruise companies Seabourn and Viking including Viking TV.

She is the author of 12 books, her latest *Where the wildness pleases – the English Garden celebrated* was published in 2021. In 2019 she was keynote speaker at the International Water Lily Symposium at Giverny based on the research for her book *Water Lilies and and Bory Latour-Marliac - the genius behind Monet's Water Lilies*. Her RHS *Herbs for the Gourmet Gardener* was finalist in the 2014 Garden Media Guild Reference Book of the Year Award. Other titles include *Monet at Giverny* and *Follies of Europe - architectural extravaganzas*.

Currently consulting on creating landscapes including paths and cycle routes around a new housing development in Norfolk, drawing on its local history. She is planning two areas, to be planted in October 2022, as parts of the 'Queen's Green Canopy' marking the royal Platinum Jubilee. Past design consultancies include Tudor-inspired gardens for a Humanist Renaissance 'journey' around Notre Dame de Calais, 16th-18th-century orchards and gardens with modern operatic borders at High House for the Royal Opera House, and the poisons planting in The Alnwick Garden.

Caroline co-presented 'Glorious Gardens' on Anglia TV and has presented several series for BBC Radio 4. Recipient of 'The Gertrude B Foster Award for Excellence in Herbal Literature' in 2011 and 'The Elizabeth Crisp Rea Award' in 2017 from the Herb Society of America. www.horti-history.com

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Introduction and overview of the plant worlds of Ancient Egypt and Greece
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	The afterlife as an insight into everyday life in Ancient Egypt Special reference to the Tomb of the high official Nebamun in the British Museum
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Groves of learning and philosophy - Plato and Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Floreat – Greeks immortalised in plants
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	An evening of classical writings – please bring poetry, prose or medicinal advice written before the Common Era
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	Kill or cure – the lives (and death) of Socrates and Hippocrates
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Arabian Nights and Discoveries – the tomb of Tutankhamun
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will allow you to:

1. Identify symbols in Egyptian tomb and temple paintings
2. Explore how the sea fostered the development of philosophy in Ancient Greece
3. Appreciate how the ancient cultures of Egypt and Greece influenced Ancient Rome

Content:

During the weekend we will explore an intriguing but sometimes overlooked aspect of the Ancient World: the significant role of gardens and plants. The key source to our understanding is exactly that water, the long course of the Nile and the seas of the Eastern Mediterranean, which sowed the seeds of mythology, beliefs and culture as well as food, travel and diplomacy. We start by placing the kingdoms of Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece in the then known world. Tomb paintings and architectural ruins are rich in evidence of status gardens along the Nile, from the delta and Memphis to ancient Thebes (modern Luxor) to the upper Nile boundary with ancient Punt. Temple plantings and groves were of religious and philosophical importance in the city states of Ancient Greece, without the city walls essential market gardening to feed the body. Both kingdoms strived to discover and formulate the use of medicinal plants, to improve food crops for sustenance and to enjoy flowers for the senses. Why did Socrates choose hemlock for his death sentence? In 1922 after many years of archaeological searches, Lord Carnarvon and Howard Carter discovered the tomb of the forgotten Tutankhamun. An untouched site which has also continued to reveal extraordinary plant-related treasures long after the death of Lord Carnarvon. A wide-ranging analysis of gardens and plants in the Ancient World beyond blue water lilies, plane trees and intoxication with a selection of the writings of Hippocrates.

Summary subjects/topics covered on course

- Identifying trees, plants and herbs and where possible their origins.
- Examining design styles both on the ground and in architectural detail.
- Rediscovering known personages, their lives and status.
- Listening to contemporary voices through inscriptions and translations.

Presentation of the course:

The lectures will be illustrated with historic and contemporary images, allowing time for comment and discussion throughout. Apart from the course handout the Course Director will bring in some classical writings including the Aphorisms of Hippocrates, and some fresh plant material to identify and gain the sense of what made some so important. All students are invited to select prose, poetry or songs to share with the group on Saturday night which provides an excellent opportunity to widen the scope of the weekend.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. To have a greater appreciation of the settings and symbols of Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece
2. To understand the importance of horticultural introductions and trading
3. To explore the impact of ancient garden design on contemporary landscapes

Reading and resources list

There is no book that can be especially recommended but a basic knowledge of Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Greek mythology, architecture and philosophy will enhance the course. Linda Farrar's main research has been on Ancient Roman Gardens but their development can be clearly traced back to Egypt and Greece.

Desroches-Noblecourt, Christiane. *Tutankhamen* (sic), Penguin 1963

Farrar, Linda. *Gardens and Gardeners of the Ancient World*, Windgather Press 2016

Homer, *The Odyssey* (any edition)

Wilkinson, Alix. *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*, Rubicon Press 1998

Online resources:

British Museum

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/egypt>

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/egypt/explore-rosetta-stone>

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/hieroglyphs-unlocking-ancient-egypt> relating to an exhibition running 13 October 2022 to 13 February 2023

The Gardens Trust publish a weekly blog by Dr David Marsh, the subjects are wide ranging relating to garden history:

<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2020/02/01/hatshepsut-and-thutmosis/>

<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2019/10/12/sneferu-and-his-garden/>

BBC Radio Four In Our Time – discussion between Melvyn Bragg and guests in descending chronological broadcast order

The Rosetta Stone <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000s2qd> 2021

Herodotus <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000zv33> 2021

Tutankhamun <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000cng6> 2019

The Greek Myths <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0093z1k> 2008

Socrates <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007zp21> 2007

The Odyssey <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y297> 2004