

NIT lecture

Thursday May 10 (18:00, Auditorium)

Being Termessian: local elites in the Roman East

Prof. Dr. Onno van Nijf (Groningen University)

In this paper I shall discuss the various modes of social identification that were available to the elite of the small mountain city of Termessos. Elite families would use the city centre to identify themselves through honorific monuments with the essential qualities on which civic life was based. But in the funerary area of the city, the picture was more complex. Social status and distinction were of course prominently in view. But through their funerary monuments Termessians were also able to identify themselves in various and complex ways as belonging to different cultural traditions, (Greek, Pisidian and Roman) which should help us to nuance simplistic views of elite identity. Finally we shall see how Termessians were keen to emphasise family traditions and genealogical thinking. It is important, however, not to look for one common identity: the rich epigraphic material of Termessos will show that personal identities, then as now, were multiple and in flux.

Netherlands Institute in Turkey
Istiklal Caddesi, Nuru Ziya Sokak 5
Beyoğlu, Istanbul