



Netherlands Institute in Turkey

Annual Report 2025



*UHL 2025 Yazılıkaya Living Lab course participants, organizers, and guest lecturers at Midas Han in Çukurca
(Photo by Tuğçe Halıcı).*



The Netherlands Institute in Turkey in 2025

Building on 67 years of experience as an organization dedicated to initiating and fostering scholarship on the history, cultures, languages, and societies of Türkiye, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey in 2025 continued to be a place for academic study, dialogue and interaction, between disciplines and between countries. Since 2021, NIT has worked towards this mission in a close affiliation with Leiden University, albeit still with a national scope.

As you can see from this Annual Report, in 2025 NIT carried out a full program of conferences, research and education projects, and cooperative projects with societal partners, including memory walks and exhibitions. Its fellowship program supported junior researchers coming to Istanbul for work on theses, dissertations and grant applications. It assisted Leiden University BA education programs in Turkish Studies and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, taking place on-site in Istanbul. Its heritage project brought together graduate students, PhD candidates as well as young professionals from the Netherlands and Türkiye to collaborate on concrete issues at the intersection of heritage and contemporary rural/urban societal challenges, and its excavations trained students in archaeological fieldwork and documentation techniques. International scholarly debate was promoted through its journal *Anatolica*, edited by NIT staff and published by Peeters, and by journal articles authored and co-authored by NIT staff.

For NIT, 2025 was also marked by the decision of Leiden University to cut the future budget of the institute, as part of a broader drive to ensure the future financial durability of the university. NIT's already very modest budget is hit twice by this decision, because not only the regular annual budget decreases, but also because the funding for the BA semester Turkish Studies in Istanbul has been cut. Even though efforts began right away to forge new partnerships and explore new ways to ensure that the institute can continue to work towards its mission, it is unavoidable that the impact on the programs of the institute in 2026 and beyond will be significant.

Many, if not all, of NIT's activities happen in partnership with organizations in the Netherlands and Türkiye. Our deep appreciation goes to long-time partners, including our host on İstiklal Caddesi, Koç University's ANAMED, our heritage partner, Middle East Technical University's Graduate Program for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage, the diplomatic mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Istanbul and Ankara, as well as the Netherlands Institute for the Near East and the Institute for Area Studies at Leiden University.

Research Projects & Fieldwork

NIT initiates research projects within its own areas of expertise, archaeology and heritage studies, and fosters and facilitates research by others in a broad range of disciplines that have an interest in the history, cultures, languages, and societies of Türkiye. NIT's own ongoing research projects, especially the Tell Kurdu Excavations and the NIT Urban Heritage Lab, contribute greatly to NIT's international visibility and academic reputation.

Tell Kurdu Excavations

The 2025 season of the Tell Kurdu Excavations took place from July to October. This year witnessed many exciting discoveries, some of which made it to the national and international news! The Tell Kurdu Excavation Project investigates a large settlement site dating from the sixth and fifth millennium BCE in the Amuq Plain in the southern province of Hatay. The excavations are co-directed by Rana Özbal (Koç University) and Fokke Gerritsen (Netherlands Institute in Turkey). The excavations have been ongoing since 2022. Funding for the fieldwork is primarily provided by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, supplemented by funding from NIT and Koç University. In 2025, the team consisted of some 25 archaeologists and students from Türkiye, the Netherlands and elsewhere. For archaeology students, participating in fieldwork projects such as the Tell Kurdu Excavations provides critical fieldwork skills and teamwork experience.



Tell Kurdu Excavations 2025 team.



We continued excavating the Amuq E (late 6th/early 5th millennium BCE) and Amuq C (early 6th millennium BCE) occupations. Two new grill-plan structures, separated by a wide street and dating to the 5th millennium BCE, were uncovered at the top of the mound. Here, we also made a rare discovery: 7000 year-old footprints of a group of people walking together with their animals. These footprints were on a rather muddy area that dried up and was quickly covered with a sandy deposit, which enabled their preservation throughout the millennia. Many media outlets shared this discovery.

We also continued to excavate the Amuq C occupation to the east of the mound. This area appears to be a neighborhood with several buildings, separated by streets, alleys, and courtyards. Several burials of infants and adults were also uncovered in this area. This season, we also opened new trenches dating to the Amuq D occupation, which temporally links the Amuq C (Halaf) and E (Ubaid) occupations. This is a relatively unknown period, referred to as the Halaf-Ubaid transition. The excavations of these trenches did not yield any architecture, but several pits and some fireplaces were found.



Excavations of the Amuq E occupation, the dig house compound is visible in the corner (top left); excavations of the Amuq C occupation (top right); complete vessels unearthed during the 2025 season (bottom).



NIT Barcın Höyük Research Project

Based on the excavations that were directed by Fokke Gerritsen between 2007 and 2015, the Barcın Höyük Research Project continues to produce scientific output in the form of journal articles, dissertations and lectures by members of the team. Ongoing work directed by a genetics team of Middle East Technical University published a major article in *Science* on the population genetics of early farmer societies in Anatolia, partly based on full genomic analyses of Neolithic human remains from Barcın Höyük. Another co-authored article analyzing Neolithic Barcın infant burials appeared in *World Archaeology*. The results of the excavations featured in lectures by team members at national and international conferences. Furthermore, archaeobotanist Hüreyla Balcı successfully defended her PhD dissertation on the plant remains from Barcın Höyük at Koç University. Valuable work on analyzing the Neolithic architectural remains from the site was carried out by Ersin Çilek, BA archaeology student at Saxion University of Applied Sciences.



A busy day in the trench at Barcın Höyük.

Barcın Höyük Publications and Lectures

Arslan, A. *Unveiling the Makers: A Dermatoglyphic Study of Clay Objects from Neolithic Anatolia. Embedded in Clay. Identity and Performance in Figurines and Ceramic Objects from Ancient Societies Conference*, 4-6 February 2025 in Pisa – Oral Presentation.

Arslan, A. *Kil Ustalarının İzinde: Arkeolojide Parmak İzi Analizleri. Kültür Bilinci Pazartesi Konuşmaları Lecture Series at Kültür Bilincini Geliştirme Vakfı* on 28 April 2025.

Balcı, H., 2025: *The Plant Subsistence Strategies of Neolithic Northwest Türkiye*, PhD Dissertation Koç University.

Cveček, S., F.A. Gerritsen, R. Özbal, Y.S. Erdal, S. Stefanović, M. Koruyucu Şimşek, A. Aydoğan, 2025: *Cradled by architecture: infancy and delayed personhood in Neolithic Anatolia and the Balkans*, *World Archaeology*, 1–22. (online first) DOI:10.1080/00438243.2025.2596697

Koptekin, D., A. Aydoğan, C. Karamurat, N.E. Altınışik, K.B. Vural, D. Kazancı, A. Küçükakdağ Doğu, D. Kaptan, H.C. Gemici, E. Yüncü, H.M. Moots, G. Umurtak, R. Duru, E. Fidan., Ö. Çevik, B. Erdoğan, T. Korkut, C.J. Knüsel, S. Haddow, C. Spencer Larsen, R. Özbal, F. Gerritsen, E. Özdoğan, A. Akbaba, U.O. Usanmaz, Y.C. Derici, M. Uçmazoğlu, F. Jay, M. Özdoğan, A. Götherström, Y.S. Erdal, A.S. Malaspinas, Ç. Atakuman, F. Özer, and M. Somel, 2025: *Out-of-Anatolia: Cultural and genetic interactions during the Neolithic expansion in the Aegean*, *Science* 388, eadr 3266, DOI:10.1126/science.adr3326.



Anthropomorphic figurines from Barcın Höyük.

Research by NIT Fellows

Modest in scale, the NIT fellowship program forms one of the sparse possibilities for young researchers of universities in the Netherlands to conduct part of their research in Istanbul. While for some the rich holdings of the NIT library make a stay at the institute imperative, others benefit from the opportunity to explore the historical sites, archives, and museum collections in the city, discuss their research with international colleagues or find inspiration by participating in the lively and diverse academic climate of the institute. Below are brief summaries of the research topics addressed by the 2025 fellows. More extensive blogposts written by the fellows can be found at www.nit-istanbul.net.



Kee-Lou Ooyman



Rana Kelleci

Kee-Lou Ooyman (Radboud University, Nijmegen) focused on exploring Istanbul's millennium-long struggle with freshwater supply during her fellowship at NIT. Despite being surrounded by saltwater, the city has imported drinkable water from outside sources throughout its Byzantine and Ottoman history. Kee-Lou helped develop Istanbul's Water Heritage tour, which was launched in February, highlighting remnants of ancient water infrastructure, from Emperor Valens' aqueducts to Mimar Sinan's Ottoman expansions, and connecting historical challenges to today's climate change concerns.

Rana Kelleci (Dutch Art Institute/ArtEZ University) spent February 2025 as a research fellow at the NIT, investigating the Ottoman Tulip Period (1718-1730). Her research focused on the vanished Sadabad Palace in Kağıthane through 16th-20th century maps. Analyzing Ottoman and European cartographic representations, Rana explored how the palace's absence from today's landscape reflects broader questions about collective memory, identity, and belonging to place.

Giorgos Polychroniadis (Leiden University) studied 3rd-4th century Greek funerary epigrams during his fellowship. His research examined how Christian elites in Asia Minor, particularly in Phrygia and Lycaonia, blended classical paideia with Christian doctrine in their epitaphs. Giorgos made use of the Turkish publications at NIT and ANAMED libraries, investigating how bishops negotiated identity by appropriating Homeric and pagan literary traditions during Christianity's emergence as the Roman Empire's official religion.

Yasmin Saghafi (Leiden University) studied medieval Persian Sufi poetry manuscripts during her fellowship at the Netherlands Institute in Turkey. Her research explored how 13th-14th century Sufi narratives developed in Anatolia's bilingual environment, particularly through the Mawlawiyya order in Konya. Yasmin examined manuscripts in Istanbul's Süleymaniye collection and Konya's Mevlana Museum, investigating how these texts represent communal Islamic history and Sufi tradition in the socio-political context of medieval Anatolia's manuscript culture.

Ediz Hazır (University of Groningen / Charles University in Prague) worked on his doctoral research on Catholic diplomacy, expanding archival work on the Assumptionist congregations. It enabled publications, archival reassessments in Istanbul, and progress on his dissertation's core phase, preparing him for further research in Athens and strengthening his comparative transnational project.

Aslı Aydoğan's (Leiden University) project examined how algorithmic and data-driven systems in public administration affect key public values such as transparency, accountability, and equality. Using Dutch cases and exploratory research in Turkey, she investigated institutional challenges, compares governance traditions, and aimed to support broader discussions on safeguarding public values in the digital era.



Yasmin Saghafi



Giorgos Polychroniadis

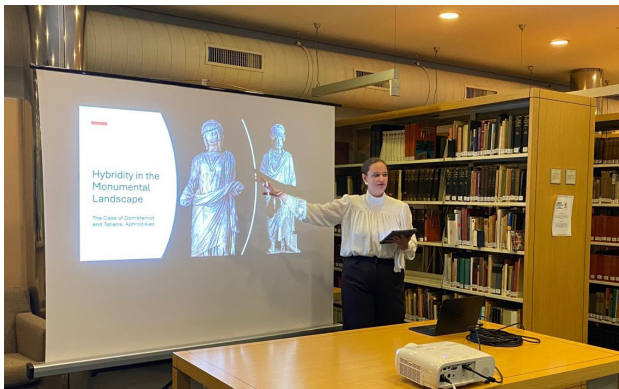
Senna Feliüs's (SOAS University of London & University of Amsterdam) project examined how Cem Sultan's image circulated between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, focusing on Ottoman chronicles, court-library inventories, and European depictions. During her research stay at NIT she consulted key manuscripts, helping reconstruct how Cem's captivity was narrated, suppressed, and reshaped across early modern trans-Mediterranean cultural networks.

Ebubekir Düzcan (Utrecht University) examined the multicultural entertainment world of late Ottoman Istanbul and the spread of the cinematograph across Pera and Direklerarası. A month at the NIT enabled archival research, site-based analysis, and collaboration, supporting both his academic study and his related screenplay on Istanbul's early cinematic culture.

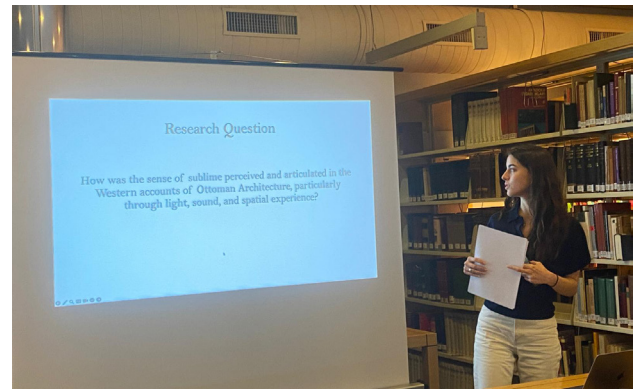
Britt Postema (University of Groningen) worked on her PhD proposal that focused on the hybrid and dynamic identities of communities in Western Asia Minor during the Principate, examining how urban monuments communicated local culture within the Roman Empire. Focusing on four cities, it explored identity formation beyond Romanisation debates, supported by research opportunities and resources at the NIT.

Besime Alikışioğlu's (Leiden University) project investigated how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman imperial mosques created experiences of sublimity through sound, light, and scale. Focusing on the Süleymaniye and Sultanahmet Mosques, it analyzed Ottoman and European writings alongside field observations, aiming to broaden the concept of the sublime beyond Eurocentric frameworks through cross-cultural and sensory analysis.

Julia Benedetti's (University of Groningen) project explored Izmir's long Jewish history and the decline of its community, focusing on major restoration efforts, including synagogue rehabilitation, a heritage route, and digitization of the Hidden Rabbinic Library. Her research analyzed preservation challenges and benefited from research access in Istanbul, including connections with experts and resources at the NIT.



Britt Postema



Besime Alikışioğlu

Feriköy Protestant Cemetery Initiative

The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery continued to be an area of interest for NIT in 2025. Two of our interns, Öykü Maya Erkan and Berken Vis, conducted projects that focused on the Cemetery. Öykü created a photogrammetric digital reconstruction of the gravestones of the 17th century Dutch Leytstar family while Berken conducted archival research on the Keun family buried at the Cemetery. You can read about their research in the internships section.

Many of the residents of the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery are diplomats, researchers, and merchants who traveled from abroad to the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the Cemetery served as the perfect location for an excursion for the *Travelers in Ottoman Lands 3, Places Forgotten, Places Remembered Conference*. One of the conference sessions was dedicated to those buried at the Cemetery, and it was held at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery Chapel. You can read more about the TIOL conference on pages 19-20.



Archival documents related to the Keun Family Berken Vis conducted his research on.



A Dutch Funerary Monument at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery. Photo by Öykü Erkan.



A view from the excursion to the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery for the Travelers in Ottoman Lands 3 Conference.

Education

In addition to hosting students that come to NIT on an individual basis for theses, internships and fieldwork projects, the institute also offers a small program of courses at undergraduate and graduate levels. Regularly, students and their professors also visit NIT and Istanbul in the context of courses at their respective universities.

NIT Urban Heritage Lab

NIT has been organizing heritage-focused courses as one of the institute's core educational programs since 2021, under the NIT Urban Heritage Lab. The previous four programs: Industrial Heritage for Sustainable Cities, Water Heritage for Sustainable Cities, Archaeological Heritage and Liveable Cities, and Historic Ports, Future Cities: Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Urban Development focused on Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. During these courses, the possibilities and challenges of refunctioning, adapting, and reusing the remains of heritage sites and landscapes to address contemporary urban challenges were investigated. In five years, 100 graduate students and junior professionals completed the course. Each year, participants' proposed projects were published in an open-access book. As in previous years, the 2025 NIT Urban Heritage Lab was made possible by the generous support of the Netherlands Consulate-General in Istanbul.

Yazılıkaya Living Lab: Adaptive Futures for Rural Heritage Course



The fifth edition of the NIT Urban Heritage Lab Autumn course, Yazılıkaya Living Lab: Adaptive Futures for Rural Heritage, started in October 2025 with the *Sustainable Futures for Rural Heritage: Opportunities and Threats in Türkiye and the Netherlands Symposium*. This year, the Lab expanded its geographic and conceptual scope, focusing on the Phrygian Highlands (Mountainous Phrygia), a culturally and ecologically significant rural region in west-central Anatolia. Listed on UNESCO's Tentative List since 2025, the Highlands host a unique concentration of archaeological remains alongside layers of vernacular architecture, living rural traditions, and landscapes shaped by millennia of human-nature interaction.

This course provided participants with direct experience of these heritage layers through an intensive program of seminars, fieldwork, and collaborative study. It built on a long-standing history of Dutch-Turkish collaboration in the region, particularly the pioneering work of archaeologist Emilie Haspels, and explored methods for preserving, reimagining, and activating cultural heritage in the face of climate change, depopulation, and shifting land use patterns.

Participants from diverse backgrounds, including architecture, urban planning, heritage conservation, sociology, cultural heritage, archaeology, conflict analysis and resolution, and history, came together to develop heritage-based strategies that promote sustainability, conservation, and revitalization, engaging with the following interrelated heritage challenges: 1) Climate Change and the Resilience of Rural Heritage, 2) Heritage-Led Rural Development, 3) Legacy of Emilie Haspels, 4) Interpretation, Access, and Heritage Communication.



Guided tour in Yazılıkaya with Yazılıkaya Living Lab course participants (left), group presentations in brainstorm session at Midas Han (right).

During the field survey in Yazılıkaya Village and the Phrygian Highlands on 23-25 October, the participants had the opportunity to interact with the rural community to better understand the social and cultural life and the challenges the locals face in this region. They also came together and began working on their final group projects under the guidance of Dutch and Turkish scholars. The participants have been following the weekly online public lectures and case study presentations on sustainable conservation and development of rural heritage sites in Türkiye and the Netherlands. The course participants presented their final project proposals in a public meeting on December 12, 2025.



Emilie Haspels. Archive Allard Pierson, 1937-1939.

The following lectures were organized as a part of the Yazılıkaya Living Lab:

Walking, Ruins, and Rural Communities: The Making of the Pisidia Heritage Trail by Işıl Gürsu (BIAA)

Weeping Brides: A conversation with Tom Tieman about his documentary on rural heritage in decline

Harnessing Vernacular Landscapes for Climate Resilience by Gül Aktürk (Leiden University)

Rural Landscapes in Transition: What Cultural Geography Reveals by Esra Ekşi Balcı (Kocaeli University)

A Discussion about the Future of Depopulated Historic Rural Landscapes from the Perspective of Heritage Conservation by Koray Güler (Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University)

Managing Natural and Cultural Values in the Nature Reserves of the North Holland Landscape by Mark Reysoo (Landschap Noord-Holland)

Yazılıkaya Living Lab: Adaptive Futures for Rural Heritage Final Presentations by course participants

BA Semester Turkish Studies in Istanbul

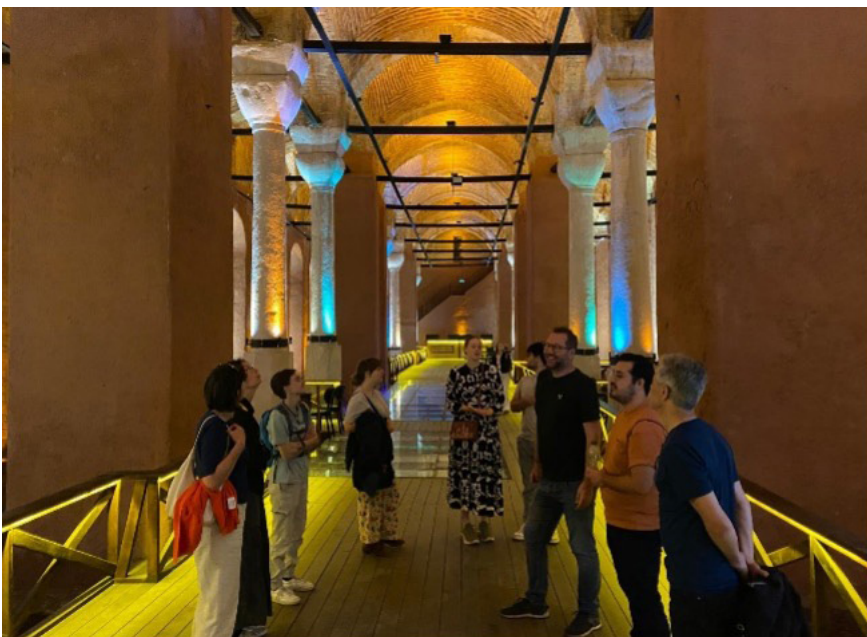
The final edition of the Turkish Studies in Istanbul Semester took place in the spring of 2025. Organized specifically as part of the regular BA curriculum of Middle East Studies of Leiden University, the program included intensive Turkish language acquisition and courses on Turkey's international relations, Istanbul's history, and contemporary Turkish society and culture. Due to budget cuts and revisions of the curriculum, the semester will not be offered in future years. Efforts are underway to develop another semester-long BA program taking place at NIT, to be offered from autumn 2027 onwards.



Maud Stam and Umut Azak at a field trip in Istanbul.

Leiden University Students Visit Istanbul

In late September, NIT hosted students and professors of the Ancient Near Eastern Studies track at Leiden University. As part of their course on Critical Heritage Studies, they visited Istanbul to see firsthand the diverse ways in which a city rich in world class heritage deals with the past as a resource for the future.



Visiting the newly restored Byzantine-era Zeyrek cistern.

Internships



A Dutch Funerary Monument at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery. Photo by Öykü Erkan.

Berken Vis (BA student at Utrecht University) is about to finish his BA in history. He spent the last two and a half months at NIT, focusing on the Dutch people buried in the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery in his research. He conducted archival research on the Keun family, a prominent Dutch-Levantine family embedded in the social and diplomatic landscape of the late Ottoman Empire. His research took him to the Dutch National Archives as well as the Ottoman Archives.

Julia Benedetti (MA student at the University of Groningen) was at NIT for two months between February and April. She was immensely helpful with various tasks during her internship, with a primary focus on collecting and editing texts for multiple research projects, including chapters from two upcoming Urban Heritage Lab books and working on the documentation and digitization of Dutch funerary heritage at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery in Istanbul.

Öykü Maya Erkan (BA student at Istanbul Technical University) is an architecture student who has been working on digitizing the old grave monuments at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery since late April 2025. She has already completed the 3D modeling of a funerary monument in the Dutch section and is currently working on the 3D digitization of some of the cemetery's oldest gravestones. She will upload her scans to Sketchfab upon completion of the project.



Grave of one of the Keun family members at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery in Istanbul. Photos by Berken Vis.



Ersin presenting his research at the NIT Library.

Ersin Çilek is a BA student at the Saxion University of Applied Sciences. He was at NIT for two months, working on the Barcın Höyük excavation data. His research focused on the Neolithic structures. During this study, he analyzed four Neolithic structures to understand and visualize their life cycles. As the Barcın Höyük excavations ended about a decade ago, he used the database and short daily reports to compile crucial information about each structure.

Conferences, Lectures and Other Events

Throughout the year, large and small meetings were organized to facilitate scholarly exchanges and conversations between academia and the public. The focus of these meetings ranged from the prehistory and archaeology to contemporary issues of cultural heritage, showcasing the wide range of interests of the institute. We have also expanded our umbrella of activities by preparing a walking tour that focuses on water heritage and by preparing a travelling exhibition on the Dutch archaeologist Emilie Haspels.

First Anatolian Chalcolithic Workshop

The Netherlands Institute in Turkey hosted the inaugural First Anatolian Chalcolithic Workshop on January 10, 2025, marking the successful launch of an exciting new academic platform. This online event brought together researchers studying the Chalcolithic Period in Anatolia.

The workshop featured three comprehensive sessions showcasing cutting-edge research from across Turkey. Highlights included presentations on newly discovered sites, such as Büyük Deller in Central Anatolia, technological studies of ceramics from Zeytinli Bahçe Höyük, and insights from ongoing excavations at Mersin-Yumuktepe and Tell Kurdu. The program spanned diverse geographical regions from Eastern Anatolia to Cilicia and Hatay Province.



FIRST ANATOLIAN CHALCOLITHIC WORKSHOP

10 JANUARY 2025
10.30 - 18.00 (GMT+3)
ONLINE



Please scan the QR or go to
nit-istanbul.org for more
info & registration



KOC
UNIVERSITY



Netherlands Institute in Turkey



Leading archaeologists presented findings on cultural transitions, settlement patterns, and technological innovations that shaped Anatolian societies during this crucial prehistoric period. Topics ranged from Ubaid expansion to early urban development and agricultural economies.

This initiative represented a significant step forward in Anatolian prehistoric research, providing scholars with a dedicated forum for sharing discoveries and fostering collaboration across institutions studying this transformative period in human history.

Istanbul's Water Heritage Tour Launch



A successful collaborative project between the Netherlands Institute in Turkey, Hrant Dink Foundation, and Radboud University, with support from Vrije University, has resulted in a new addition to the KarDes: Multicultural Memory Tours Guide mobile application. The launch event for “Istanbul’s Water Heritage Tour” took place on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at the Hrant Dink Foundation, showcasing the significant contribution to preserving and promoting Istanbul’s multilayered water heritage. This project aims to raise awareness about water supply and management issues in Istanbul, from the past to the present. Despite the city being surrounded by the sea on three sides, it has always lacked freshwater sources.



Left to right: Damla Barın, Kee-Lou Ooyman, Mariette Verhoeven, Fokke Gerritsen, Alvise Cecchetti, Aysel Arslan, talking about the preparation of the tour at the launch.

This innovative tour invites users to explore Istanbul's rich water heritage, from the Zeyrek Cistern to Çinili Hamam, and from the Valens Aqueduct to the Ayşe Sultan Fountain. The tour includes stops at cisterns, aqueducts, baths, fountains, sebils, mosques, and churches, alongside stories of Istanbul's fire brigades, water carriers, bath attendants, and fishermen. The voices of İlksen Mavituna and Jennifer Hattam accompany users.



Seyyid Hasan Paşa Sebil and Fountain.



Çinili Hamam.

Conference Travelers in Ottoman Lands, Places Forgotten, Places Remembered



**TRAVELLERS
IN OTTOMAN
LANDS**

Places forgotten, places remembered

ISTANBUL, 9-12 APRIL 2025

Three days of presentations in the historic neighbourhood of Karaköy and Beyoğlu with excursions of the Friday and Saturday

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

DR AHMET ERSOY Boğaziçi University, Istanbul
PROFESSOR REINA LEWIS University of the Arts, London

SEMINARS	EXCURSIONS
SABANCI UNIVERSITY – Minerva Han: Bereketzade, Bankalar Cd., Beyoğlu	THE TULIP GARDENS Emirgan Korusu
NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE IN TURKEY ANAMED Auditorium, Merkez Han İstiklal Caddesi 181, Beyoğlu	THE FERİKÖY PROTESTANT CEMETERY Cumhuriyet, Abide-i Hürriyet Cd No:5, 34380 Şişli

The third Travellers in Ottoman Lands Seminar (TIOL3) “Places Forgotten, Places Remembered” took place in Istanbul from April 9-12, 2025. This prestigious symposium brought together international scholars, researchers, and enthusiasts to explore the rich history of travel in former Ottoman territories. Several former NIT fellows also had the opportunity to present their research during the symposium.

Over the course of three days, presentations took place in the historic neighborhoods of Karaköy and Beyoğlu, at Minerva Han and the ANAMED Auditorium. The conference concluded with excursions to the Tulip Gardens at Emirgan Korusu and the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery. Distinguished keynote speakers included Dr. Ahmet Ersoy from Boğaziçi University, a specialist in Late Ottoman cultural history, and Professor Reina Lewis from the University of the Arts London, who focuses on gender and orientalism in travel narratives.



Ahmet Ersoy giving his keynote at the ANAMED Auditorium.



The TIOL3 participants at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery.

This interdisciplinary seminar was supported by leading institutions including the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of Sabancı University, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT) and the Koç University Research Centre for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED), the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA), the Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East (ASTENE), the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT) the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, and Cornucopia Magazine, continuing the mission of fostering research into Ottoman travel history and creating networks among scholars worldwide.

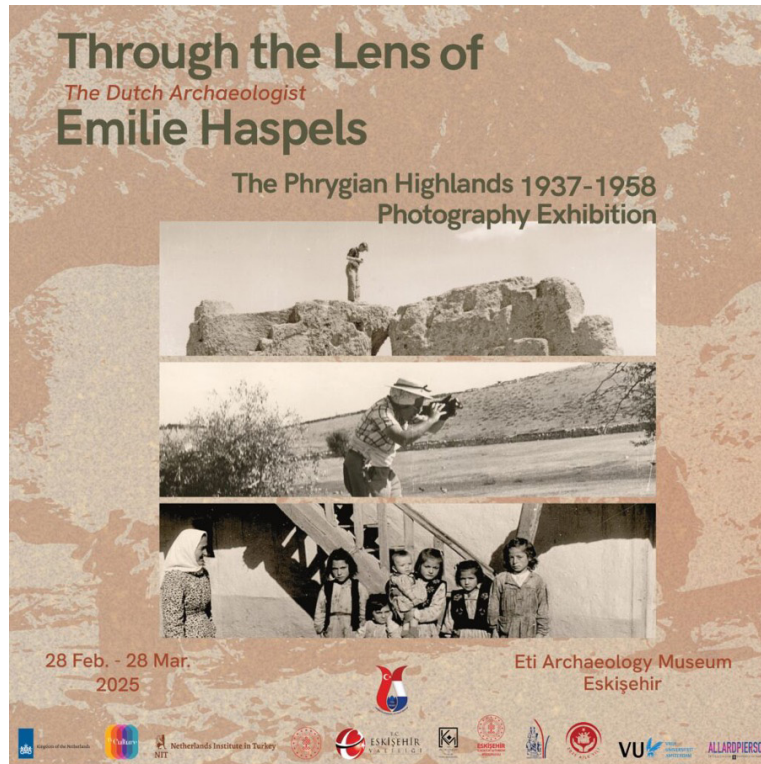


TIOL 3 presentations at Minerva Han (left) and at the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery Chapel (right).



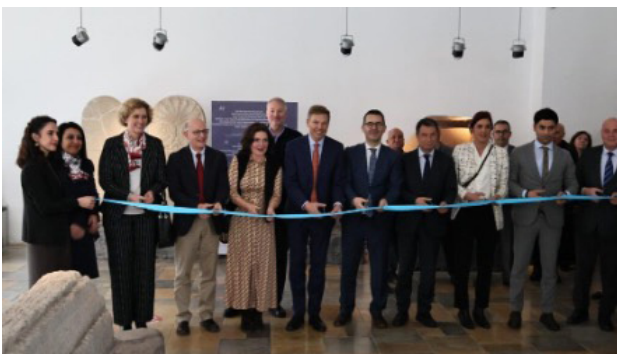
View of Istanbul by Luigi Mayer.

Exhibition Through the Lens of Emilie Haspels: The Phrygian Highlands 1937-1958



In a joint project, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey, the Netherlands Embassy in Ankara, production company TV Culture, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Allard Pierson Museum, created a photo exhibition dedicated to Emilie Haspels, *Through the Lens of Emilie Haspels: The Phrygian Highlands 1937-1958*. Charlie Smid (VU Amsterdam) and Wolter Braamhorst (TV Culture) were the curators of the exhibition.

It was first presented between February 28 and March 28, 2025 in Eskişehir's Eti Archaeology Museum. After Eskişehir, the exhibition traveled to the archaeology museums in Afyonkarahisar and Kütahya.



Ribbon cutting ceremony of the exhibition at Eskişehir Eti Archaeology Museum (left); Fokke Gerritsen giving a tour of the exhibition (right).

This remarkable exhibition showcases the pioneering work of Dutch archaeologist Emilie Haspels, who systematically documented Phrygian archaeological monuments across central Anatolia over a period of more than two decades. Born in 1894, Haspels first arrived in the region in 1937 to study the Midas Monument at Yazılıkaya and became captivated by the area's ancient Phrygian heritage. Her innovative regional survey approach and meticulous documentation, including detailed photographs, drawings, and descriptions, culminated in her seminal 1971 publication "The Highlands of Phrygia." The exhibition featured archival photographs that were mostly taken by Haspels herself, stored at the University of Amsterdam's Allard Pierson Museum, showcasing not only archaeological sites but also village life and landscapes of mid-20th-century Anatolia.

Publication:

Smid, C., F.A. Gerritsen, 2025: Emilie Haspels en de bovenmenselijke wereld van Anatolië, *Archeologie Magazine* 2025/2, 56-59.

Workshop Connecting Constantinople: Objects, Empire, and Inter-Civic Relationality

Convened by Utrecht University ancient historians Rolf Strootman and Kay Boers, the *Connecting Constantinople: Objects, Empire, and Inter-Civic Relationality* workshop took place at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul on June 12-13, 2025. This interdisciplinary workshop examined how objects shaped the complex relationships between Constantinople and other cities throughout history.

The workshop explored how tangible and symbolic objects served as mediators in inter-urban connections, from Constantine's transfer of the Palladium from Rome to Sultan Selim I's acquisition of the Ka'aba keys. Scholars investigated the movement, accumulation, and distribution of objects that contributed to Constantinople's development as an imperial and cosmopolitan space.



Presentations at the auditorium of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

The presentations covered a diverse range of topics, including relics and martyrs, sculpture, icons, diplomatic gifts, and cultural restitution. The event featured a keynote by Karin Krause from the University of Chicago on “Venice and Genoa in late medieval Constantinople.” The workshop concluded with a book launch, *Constantinople through the Ages. The Visible City from Its Foundation to Contemporary Istanbul*, edited by Diederik Burgersdijk, Fokke Gerritsen, and Willemijn Waal.



Coffee break at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.



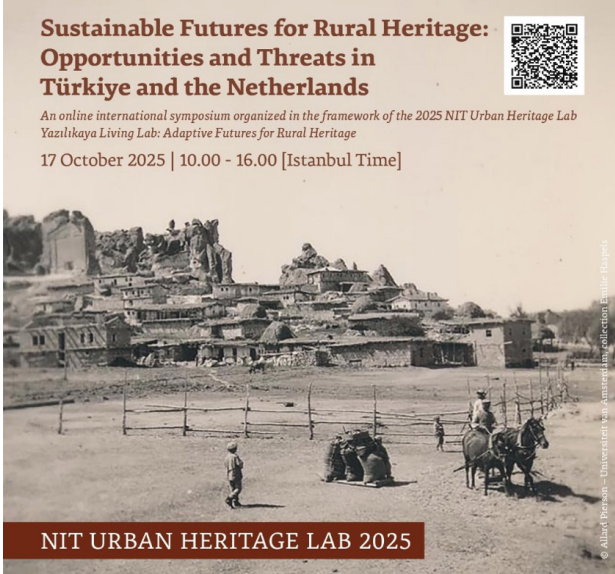
Diederik Burgersdijk presenting the Constantinople Through the Ages book.

This workshop was made possible through the generous support of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey, Utrecht University, the University of Amsterdam, and the National Research School in Classical Studies, fostering new interdisciplinary perspectives on urban connectivity and mobility.

Conference Session Participatory Practices in the Adaptive Reuse of Industrial Heritage: Intersections of Industrial Archaeology, Community, and Design

As a part of the NIT Urban Heritage Lab, we organized a session in the Seventh International Conference (online) *Challenges and Opportunities in the Conservation, Promotion and Adaptive Reuse of the Industrial Heritage*, 25-26 September 2025 Bucharest, Romania. This session, organized by Deniz Çevik (Tsingua University), Aysel Arslan (NIT), Fokke Gerritsen (NIT) and Özgün Özçakır (METU) aimed to explore the intersections of industrial archaeology, community engagement, and design in the adaptive reuse of industrial heritage. The symposium attracted scholars from around the globe leading to insightful discussions on adaptive reuse of industrial heritage.

Symposium Sustainable Futures for Rural Heritage: Opportunities and Threats in Türkiye and the Netherlands



The Sustainable Futures for Rural Heritage: Opportunities and Threats in Türkiye and the Netherlands Symposium, held online on October 17, 2025, explored the potential of tangible and intangible heritage in rural settings to contribute to sustainable developments. As part of the 2025 Urban Heritage Lab, the event facilitated a dialogue among researchers on the issues affecting rural landscapes and their potential to foster sustainable, community-oriented prospects.

The symposium examined historic rural landscapes as dynamic, multilayered environments, emphasizing that their preservation is inextricably linked to the residing communities. Case studies from the Netherlands and Türkiye highlighted the value of regionally contextualized research methodologies and the critical need for fostering trust among policymakers, heritage professionals, and local communities, illustrating how ecological knowledge, vernacular architecture, and adaptive reuse interact with current political, economic, and environmental pressures.

The symposium's key message was that the sustainability of rural heritage relies on collaboration, community participation, and a more holistic approach to heritage interpretation, considering both its tangible and intangible elements. The preservation of rural heritage requires maintaining conditions that sustain life, memory, and significance in these environments.



Stolp farmhouse in Hoogwoud by Mart Groentjes (2013).



Traditional Dwelling in Değirmenaltı Village, Hüyük, Konya by Özlem Karakul.

NIT Day in Amsterdam

On 3 December 2025, we organized the NIT Day in Amsterdam at the Chirurgisch Theater at the new University Library of University of Amsterdam. The participants followed the presentations by the NIT staff and fellows, heard from former fellows about their experiences in Istanbul, and met with NIT staff and alumni. It was a good opportunity for those interested to learn about the activities and programs of the Netherlands Institute in Turkey. The NIT day is organized every year in December at and in partnership with a Dutch university.




NIT Urban Heritage Lab site visit to the Temple of Augustus and Rome in Ankara, October 2023

The Netherlands Institute in Turkey invites you to the
NIT Day in Amsterdam
3 December 2025 | 13.00 – 18.00
 University of Amsterdam, University Library,
 Chirurgisch Theater, Vendelstraat 2, Amsterdam

with:
Fokke Gerritsen
Daniëlle Sloodjes
Gert-Jan van Wijngaarden
Jitte Waagen
Dries Daems

Kay Boers
Kee-Lou Ooyman
Berken Vis
Mara Elif Schön



SCAN ME

Please register to attend the event by filling out the **registration form** by November 30, 2025, 23:59 NL time



Presentations by Daniëlle Sloodjes (left) and Fokke Gerritsen (right) at the Chirurgisch Theater at the new University Library of University of Amsterdam.

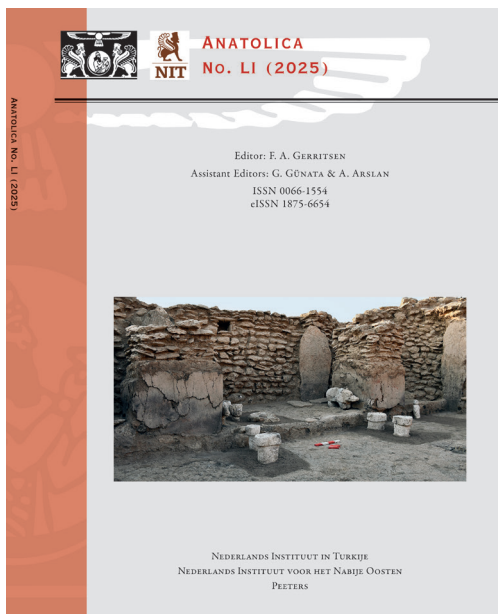
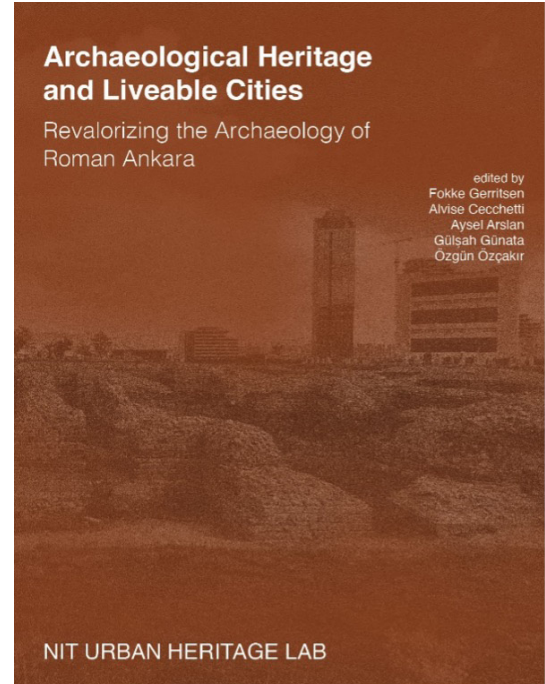
Publications

Two publications appeared under the flag of NIT in 2025.

Archaeological Heritage and Liveable Cities: Revalorizing the Archaeology of Roman Ankara

We are happy to announce the publication of our new book, *Archaeological Heritage and Liveable Cities: Revalorizing the Archaeology of Roman Ankara*.

In the autumn of 2023, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT) offered a graduate-level course program entitled “NIT Urban Heritage Lab: Archaeological Heritage and Liveable Cities.” It revolved around archaeological heritage in urban settings and asked how this particular class of heritage sites can contribute to the liveability of cities and the sustainability of urban life. This book presents proposals that were developed by four interdisciplinary and international teams as part of the course. You can download the PDF version of the book here.



Anatolica

In early 2026, *Anatolica* 51 was published. The journal, which focuses on archaeological and historical research in Anatolia and surrounding regions, is edited by Fokke Gerritsen, Gülşah Günata and Aysel Arslan. Volume 52 will be published in the fall of 2026. *Anatolica* is published by Peeters in Leuven and appears in print and online. Issues (open access until 2021) can be found here: <https://poj.peeters-leuven.be/content.php>

Library

The NIT library has a collection of some 20.000 books on the archaeology and history of Anatolia and the wider region. Throughout the year, a total of 264 (221 books and 43 periodicals) publications has been added to the NIT Library. The library offers workspaces to fellows and guest researchers and is open to students and researchers during weekdays.

NIT continues to participate actively in the network of 13 research libraries located in the Beyoğlu area of Istanbul. The network has a shared online catalogue with over 1 million works. In 2025, a new monthly blog was launched at Bibliopera's website where various institutes contribute. From NIT, Aysel Arslan contributed to Bibliopera's blog with a piece entitled Machiel Kiel Arşivi ile Tanışın: Osmanlı Balkanları'na Bir Bakış. This post introduces Machiel Kiel and his research to uncover Ottoman heritage in the Balkans. Machiel Kiel created a photography archive from the photos of Ottoman monuments and remains he took during his trips to the Balkans between the 1960s and 1980s. His photography collection has been digitized and stored at NIT. You can access the Kiel Archive here: <https://www.nit-istanbul.org/kielarchive/index.php>



The NIT library.



Organization

The Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT), then called the Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in Istanbul, opened its doors in 1958. NIT is governed by a foundation located in Leiden with a representative office in Istanbul and is administratively embedded in the Leiden Institute of Area Studies, Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University.

The mission of the Netherlands Institute is to initiate, conduct and support research on Türkiye through the ages, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and to stimulate scholarly cooperation between academic institutions in the Netherlands and Türkiye.

Staff

The staff of NIT consists of Dr. Fokke Gerritsen (director, 0,8 fte), Dr. Aysel Arslan (institute assistant 1,0 fte), Dr. Gülşah Günata (publications editor, 0,4 fte). Librarian İrem Ünal manages the NIT library on behalf of Koç University. The staff of the BA Semester Turkish Studies in Istanbul consists of Dr. Fulya Hisarlıoğlu, Dr. Seda Altuğ, Dr. Umut Azak, and Lecturer Ömer Rafi Çiçek.

Webpage, blog and social media

Announcements on upcoming events, courses and fellowships appear on the NIT website nit-istanbul.org. The blog nit-istanbul.net reports on ongoing projects. Twice a year, a NIT newsletter is distributed across the institute's networks. For social media communications NIT uses Instagram and LinkedIn. In 2025, the use of Twitter (X) and Facebook was discontinued.



Colophon

Texts: Aysel Arslan, Fokke Gerritsen, Gülşah Günata; design: Gülşah Günata.

The NIT's library and offices are located in the Merkez Han building, the premises of Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations ANAMED.

For more information about NIT activities: www.nit-istanbul.org.