



We are pleased to announce the next Friends of the Kern Institute lecture:

***Court politics in the Vijayanagara successor states***

by **dr. Lennart Bes**

**Date** : Thursday, April 20, 2023

**Time** : 16.15h

**Venue** : Leiden University, Matthias de Vrieshof 2, zaal 0.04. The lecture will be followed by **drinks** in the basement of Matthias de Vrieshof 3.



Detail of a textile hanging, probably produced in south-east India around the early seventeenth century, depicting a south Indian court (Brooklyn Museum)

This talk discusses court politics in several successor states of the south Indian Vijayanagara empire, which flourished between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The central question is whether these royal courts should be seen as static, harmonious, and hierarchic pyramids (as historiography often portrays them) or rather as dynamic, competitive, and fluid arenas. To address this issue, the talk zooms in on mechanisms behind successions to the throne, the positions and powers of courtiers, and the use of court protocol and insult. These topics are analysed by combining Indian textual and visual sources with records of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which two sets of sources contradict, complement, or confirm one another.

**Lennart Bes**

Lennart Bes is an Indologist and historian researching political culture in South India. He teaches on Asian history, Dutch overseas history, and colonial sources at the Institute for History of Leiden University. He has published about early modern south Indian kingdoms and Dutch sources on Asia. He is presently working on the courts and dynasties of Kerala.



See also: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/staffmembers/lennart-bes#tab-2>