



SRI AUTUMN LECTURES 2022

Searching for the Sacred

Thursday, September 29, 7 p.m.

The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul
İstiklal Caddesi 247 (Beyoğlu - Tünel)

Religious Plant Behavior

- or What Did Christian Trees Do in Byzantium?

Dr. Thomas Arentzen, Lund University, Sweden

Our current time has been dubbed “the Anthropocene,” an era of vast human impact on the ecosystems of the earth, and our own kind has turned out to be an invasive species. While this development is biological, it is of course not unrelated to cultural and religious attitudes among human beings. Christianity, along with Islam and Judaism – especially in its modern receptions – tends to favor a relatively anthropocentric worldview. In this lecture I trace examples of religious plant behavior in the Byzantine world, suggesting that trees may have played (and may yet again play) a more active role in the Christian religion and its *imaginaire* than present-day catechisms allow for. What would it mean to take the plants’ part in religious life more seriously?

We kindly request that you do not attend if you are not fully vaccinated against COVID or if you are experiencing any COVID-related symptoms. Limited seating 50 persons. Registration is necessary. Please register at event@sri.org.tr.