



SRII AUTUMN LECTURE SERIES 2019

## CONTINUITY & CHANGE

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Istiklal Caddesi 247 (Beyoğlu – Tünel)

### Pernilla Myrne

Gothenburg

## Premodern attitudes to female sexuality: Sexual advice and gender norms in Arabic-Islamic sex manuals

Marriage and sex manuals constituted a flourishing genre in the premodern Islamic world, with a number of books written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. While always positive to matrimonial sexual pleasure, the authors adopted different approaches to more contentious issues, such as same-sex desire, extramarital affairs, and women's sexual agency. In this lecture, I discuss how Arabic sex manuals can help us understand shifting gender norms and attitudes to female sexuality in societies across time and place. Only a few of these manuals are available in reliable editions and we therefore have to consult manuscripts. The manuscripts inform us about textual variants, in addition to other valuable information, such as the spread and readership of the different books. In the lecture, I give examples of how reading tools were used to direct readers' attention, and how marginal notes can inform us about the reception of the books by different readers.

Admission only after registration to [event@sri.org.tr](mailto:event@sri.org.tr) !