Book Announcement: Authors as Readers in the Mamlûk Period and Beyond (ed. Élise Franssen, Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2022).

Discussion published by Elise Franssen on Monday, March 14, 2022

Dear colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to announce the publication of Authors as Readers in the Mamlûk Period and Beyond (ed. Élise Franssen, Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2022).

The whole text is freely available from here: http://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-560-5

Abstract:
Authors read. They read to inform themselves and stay up-to-date, they read for their pleasure and to get inspired. And they write, by definition, using their readings in the course of their writing process. Authors often keep written traces (sometimes dated) of what they have read: a short statement on a manuscript page, a blurb, an anecdote in a letter to a colleague or friend, a résumé or notes jotted down in a notebook, a reading journal, an explicit quotation in their own work or the use of information unknown elsewhere than in a specific source.

Scrutinising authors’ readings is informative on a variety of levels. It provides information on their tastes and interests, on the subjects of their work at a given period, on their methodology and possible note-taking strategies, or on their scholarly milieu. It also brings a lot to intellectual history, giving information about the texts and manuscripts circulating at a certain period, in a certain place and milieu.

The research project RASCIO (Reader, Author, Scholar in a Context of Information Overflow, Marie Curie Grant Agreement no. 749180, 2018-21, Élise Franssen) aimed at getting a better sense of al-Ṣafadī’s (d. 764/1363) working method, his scholarly network, his habits as a reader and as a scholar in the extremely rich context of the beginning of the Mamlûk period. Reaching the end of the project, an international conference was to be organised in order to share the results of RASCIO and to broaden the scope by confronting these results to other situations: other authors, other periods, other places... The world pandemic of COVID-19 obliged us to cancel the event, and to turn it into a thematic volume.

Authors as Readers in the Mamlûk Period and Beyond gathers eight contributions investigating the readings of different authors from different points of view. The studied authors are mainly from pre-modern Islam - al-Qâdî al-Fâdîl, Ibn Taymiyya, al-Ṣafadî, al-Subkî, al-Maqrîzî - with three notable exceptions: an incursion in the Ottoman nineteenth century with Es'ad Efendi, a detour by the French court of King Charles V with his physician Evrart de Conty working as a translator, and a preface mentioning the papyrus of Philodème de Gadara, from Greek Antiquity.

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Do not hesitate to spread the news and share the book!

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