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## Uses and Values of the Term Kurd in Arabic Medieval Literary Sources

I'm going to open this presentation in claiming that this paper is a proposal and not a definit theory on what was the use of the term "Kurd" during the medieval period. I'm only here to share with you what occurred to me in those matters. I'll be pleased to have your input and your remarks.

### **How does the question of the Use and the value of the term "Kurd" rises ?**

My field is the social and political History of the ayyubid and Mameluk periods (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century). My main job is the prosopographical survey : that is to say following through the sources the careers of high ranking characters as well as secondary figures that took part in the social and political configuration of those periods. For that I go through the Arabic sources seeking for informations : Chronicles, universal histories, King biographies (târîkh, Siyar), Biographical dictionaries and obituaries (tabaqât, wafayyât), geographical dictionaries, works on topography, travel narratives...

First of all the Zankid period and the Ayyubid period that follows it (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century) are very important for the knowledge of the Kurds during the medieval period.

The Zankids, a turkish dynasty ruling over Mawsil has started to recruit Kurds after taking over the kurdish inhabited hinterland of their capital. This resulted in unleashing an important flow of kurdish population in Syria and Palestine.

The Ayyubid period is the climax of the kurdish integration within the main cities of Syria and Egypt to the extent that the highest religious, administrative or judicial authorities in Egypt could be kurdish even very late during the mameluk period. Many big cities of the near east at the end of the Ayyubid period had a kurdish quarter<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> On the Kurds during the ayyubid period see Eddé Anne-Marie, 1999, *La Principauté ayyoubide d'Alep (579/1189-658/1260)*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, Freidburger Islamstudien, 727 p. and James Boris, 2006, *Saladin et les Kurdes ; perception d'un groupe au temps des croisades*, Etudes Kurdes, Hors série II, Paris, L'Harmattan, 228 p.

The Kurds appear in the Middle ages mainly in the sources of those two periods, not to talk about what Minorsky<sup>2</sup> calls the iranian intermezzo (the period of the kurdish principalities).

To paraphrase Ismet Cheriff Vanly<sup>3</sup>, kurdish medieval history didn't attract many scholars in comparison with, for exemple, what has been done for the armenian history. Of course a huge work has been made by Minorsky. But after him nobody took over the task.

Several reasons can explain that reluctance :

- The political or ideological reason (Kurds are not interesting at all/ The islamic period doesn't bare any interest for the fact that Islam had undermined the kurdish national destiny.)
- The technical point : the alleged paucity of the sources and the fact that those sources are written by non kurdish people or from a non kurdish prospective might have been a central problem in apprehending the kurdish reality during the middle ages.
- Linked to that point the question of the use and the value of the term kurd as it reveal a problem of categorisation must have been an other reason.

### **Why adressing the question of the use and the value of the term Kurd ?**

This is not an obligation. One can always do a useful and relevant work without it. This is not a reflexion on the origins of the term Kurd, work already done by the well reknown kurdologist Minorsky, but rather a discussion over the association of a word to an alleged reality. This is the basics of the historical work : not taking for granted what you read and by extent rejecting an essentialist and nominalist approach of history.

In the study of the Kurdish group in Arabic medieval sources one is easily confused in considering the use made of the word "Kurd" (*Kurd*, pl. *Akrâd*). Most of the time it doesn't fit into our comtemporany social and "ethnical" categories.

### **Why the uses of the term 'Kurd' are confusing ?**

I'm going to give here some occurences of the term kurd that seem confusing to me. First of all from the ethnic point of view:

Yâqût al-Hamawî, *Mu'djam al-buldân*, ed. Dâr Ihyâ' al-turâth al-'arabî, 1979, "Lurr".

"Al-Lurr : This is a Kurdish group living in the mountains between Isfahan and the Khuzistân. This region is well known for their presence there and is called the country of the Lurr or Luristân ..."

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<sup>2</sup> Minorsky Vladimir, 1953, *Studies in Caucasian history*, Londres.

<sup>3</sup> Vanly Ismet Cherif, 1976, « Le déplacement du pays kurde vers l'ouest du X<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, recherche historique et géographique », in *Rivista degli studii orientali*, n° 50.

Nowadays the Lor people is not considered as Kurdish. Mainly for linguistic reasons: Lor is always considered to belong to the south-western group of the Iranian languages while Kurdish language (whether kurmandjî or sorânî or pahlawanekî) is considered a north western Iranian language. The trials that had been made in the 70's and the 80's by the Kurdish nationalism failed to gather the two "people".

Al-'Umarî, Masâlik al-absâr fî mamâlik al-Amsâr, ed. Sezgin, Frankfurt, 1988, vol. 3, p. 124.

"There is a group [of these Kurds] in the mountains of Hamadhan and the Shahrazûr called the Kûrâniyya (gurani)".

For the Gurani it is quite similar. Their language is nowadays distinguished from the Kurdish languages or related, if I am not mistaken to the pahlawaneki group. However Kurdish nationalism is successfully luring this group into the Kurdish "nation". This might open a very long discussion.

Ibn al-Athîr. *al-Kâmil fî l-ta'rikh*, Dâr al-Kutub al-'ilmiya, Beirut, 1998, vol. 10, p. 20.

"He gathered the army, equipped it and then left [for the Fârs]. Zankî b. Daklâ intended to meet him. A war broke out between them. Zankî's officers betrayed him. Therefore he fled with a little group of the army. He sought the Kurds Shawânîkâr (Shabânkârah) and took refuge with them..."

Here Ibn al-Athîr quotes the Shabânkara as Kurds. But sometimes medieval authors don't. While describing the configuration of Kerman al-'Umarî and Ibn Balkhî distinguish them from the Kurds and put them in another section. We'll come back to that point when we'll tackle the question of the value of the term 'kurd' according to Jean Aubin.

From the social perspective some other occurrences attracted my attention:

Ibn Khallikân, *Kitâb wafayât al-a'yân wa anbâ' Abnâ' al-zamân*, éd. 'Abbâs, Beirut, 1968-72, vol. 5, p. 128.

Around 454/ 1062, the amir Artuq b. Aksab, the master of Hulwân, sought Malik Shâh in the direction of Diyâr Bakr: "With him were a group of Turcomans, Kurds and amirs".

Strange! Is not there any Kurd or Turkmen among the Amirs? I would rather assume that most of the amirs were here either Kurd or Turkmen though I can't prove it. One can always claim that the author here only lacks of meticulousness and that this reflexion is somehow awkward.

Another case give is more explicit:

Ibn al-Athîr. *al-Kâmil fî l-ta'rîkh*, Dâr al-Kutub al-'ilmiya, Beirut, 1998, vol. 10, p. 207.

In 587/1193, after the negotiation between al-Mashtûb and the Franks for the surrender of the citadel of Acre, the latter promised to free immediately some amirs against a ransom. They finally broke their word and kept all the inhabitants locked in. After some negotiations, Saladin made a first payment. However the Franks claimed the right to free whoever they wanted : "They would free the military slaves (*ghilmân al-'askar*) the poor (*al-fuqarâ'*) the Kurds (*al-akrâd*) and the people without importance. They would keep in captivity the amirs, the owners (*arbâb al-amwâl*) and would ask a ransom for them".

Ibn al-Athîr who makes this use of the word knows that al-Mashtûb, the chief of the garrison, is *amir kabîr* and a Kurdish tribal leader immensely rich. We know as well that al-Mashtûb, a Hakkârî Kurd, was released a year after that. Here the term Kurd gets into the frame of social categorisation. The term 'Kurd' is used in opposition to the words 'amir' and 'owners'. This use of the term 'Kurd' is confusing because we would expect an ethnical categorisation. The Kurds as we know, are not the poorest group at that period but the word is used to designate a poor group. We will come back to that later on.

Yâqût al-Hamawî, *Mu'djam al-buldân*, "Shahrazûr".

In the description of the Shahrazûr, Yâqût al-Hamawî (574-626/ 1179-1229) explains that "the inhabitants of that region are all Kurds". Later he writes about the large walls of Duzdân, a town in Shahrazûr : " [this town] is built the same way as Shîz. There is a lake. The walls are so large and vast that the horses can walk on the top of them. The Kurds, the governors and masses cannot enter."

Strange once again ! The Kurds seem to be only outside while the inhabitants of the Shahrazûr, wether nomad or sedentary, are supposed to be all kurdish. The ethnical composition of the other cities of the Shahrazûr are never discribed.

As well: "They [the inhabitants of Nîm Azrâî, a city of the Shahrazûr ] are clients of 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Azîz. The Kurds encouraged them to rise against the amirs and to oppose the caliphs". (SR)

We notice a problem of social and ethnic categorisation. A same word refers to two different things at two different periods. Then at the same period and then by the same author.

### **Ethnographic and ethnologic values:**

This incongruity disturbed me to the point I couldn't sleep anymore. I started to read some books. Both this problem and the incoherence of establishing a continuity between the medieval period and the 21<sup>st</sup> century regarding the use of the

term “Kurd”, led some scholars to consider that this word had an “ethnographic value” and that only the life-style of the populations considered (nomadism and pastoralism) determined the way in which the term was used.

Vasili Nikitine quoting Vladimir Minorsky says “Very early in the Arab historiography the word kurd became a synonyme for nomad”<sup>4</sup>. The anthropologist Van Bruinessen says “Medieval arab geographers used the term ‘Kurd’ (in its arabic plural form ‘Akrad’) to denote all nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes that were neither Arab nor Turkish”<sup>5</sup>.

I opened my heart to Denise Aigle who was at that time a “pensionnaire” at the IFPO. To relieve my anxiety she gave me a Jean Aubin Text on the Shabânkâra<sup>6</sup>. In a more complicated way he says what Van bruinessen and Nikitine write. In dealing with this iranian dynasty of the 13th century Jean Aubin shows how Kurdish proto-nationalists exploited the “ethnographic value of the Term Kurd” (nomadic and pastoral life-style) in the medieval texts and claimed that Kurdistan stretched over the strait of Ormuz. So what sounded interesting to me was this ethnographic notion. I quote Jean Aubin: “We know that the generical Term of Kurd has in the medieval texts an ethnographic value rather than an ethnological one. It involves a pastoral and tribal life-style rather than a racial and linguistic belonging”<sup>7</sup>.

At that point according to the most prominent scholars’ statement I should have stopped considering the Kurds as a group in the Middle Ages. I could have had a nice rest. Though a few days later I started turn over in my bed. May be because I couldn’t bear the idea that the Kurds don’t exist. I really felt that something didn’t fit in Jean Aubin’s statement with the texts I was reading. On the one hand the opposition he establishes between ethnographic and ethnologic value was not satisfying to me. It occured to me that the distinction he makes is more evidently a distinction between a value based on tangible criteria (That is to say : language and race/ which might mean for J. Aubin an alleged biological perpetuation of the group) and a value based on intangible criteria (that is to say the life-style). Of course he implies a hierarchy between those two values. Tangible (what he calls ethnological) criteria are more important. However in opposing the two adjectives ethnographical and we imply a distinction between a value based on pseudo-objective criteria that is to say descriptive criteria (a discourse on the Kurds : he’s Kurd because he speaks kurdish) and a value based on criteria that reveal the subjectivity of the actors (collective and individual representations: I’m kurd because I speak kurdish/ I’m a nomad etc.). Cultural content or tools are less important than the prospective from which people call them upon. We’re reaching an deadlock because this is impossible now to gather the informations regarding the representations that these groups had of their own identity in the Middle ages.

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<sup>4</sup> Nikitine Basile, 1956/1975, *Les Kurdes, étude sociologique et historique*, Librairie Klincksiek, Paris, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Van Bruinessen Martin, 1999, *Agha, Shaykh and State. The social and political structures of Kurdistan*, New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd, p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> J.Aubin, « Une société sous domination : l’exemple du Shabânkâra », « Emirs mongols et vizirs persans dans les remous de l’acculturation » in *Studia iranica*, cahier 15, 1995, 69-73.

## Tangible and ethnologic criteria of the kurdish ethnicity

Although looking for alleged tangible criteria is by no means relevant to apprehend ethnicity at any time, some examples show us that it exists in Arabic Medieval sources such representations on the language and the race. These representations are sometimes mobilized by the sources that describe the Kurdish group.

Al-'Umarî, *Masâlik al-absâr fi mamâlik al-Amsâr*, ed. Sezgin, Frankfurt, 1988, t. III p. 124.

“A population (Qawm) called Kharkasiyya (Jarkisiyya) lives in their houses. They are not of Kurdish “race” (Samîm al-Akrâd)”.(MK)

“Among [the Kurds] we find the Djûlmarkiyya. This is a population that gets its name from a country and not from a person. It is an Omeyyade group. People say that they are the Hakamiyya that took refuge in the mountains after their defeat... They mixed with the Kurds”.

Al-Maqrîzî, *Kitâb al-mawâ'iz wa 'l-i'tibâr fi 'l-khitat wa 'l-athâr*, éd. Sayyed Ayman Fuad, Londres, 2002, vol. 3, p. 751:

“You have to know that nobody concur in defining the Kurds. The 'ajam indicate that the Kurds were the favorite food of the king Bayûrasf. He was ordering people to sacrifice for him two human beings which flesh he was consuming. He had a Vizir called Armâ'il who was sacrificing one and was sparing the other and sending him in the mountains of the Fârs. The Kurds perpetuated in the mountains and multiplied.”

The arabic medieval litterature has a representation of an alleged biological perpetuation of the Kurdish group.

Other examples show that the life-style of the kurdish group (ethnographic criterium) is not the only criterium that determines the imputation of kurdish identity.

Ibn Shaddâd (Bahâ' al-dîn), *Al-nawâdir al-sultaniya* in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades (RHC)*, or. vol. 3, 1884, Paris, p. 313.

A Kurdish amir, Abû 'l-Haydjâ' al-Hadhbanî sent a letter to Saladin after the latter left Jerusalem at the end of 588/ 1193 leaving all the military troupes in this threatened city : “If you want us to stay in the Holy City you will have to stay with us or leave a member of your family, because the Kurds will never obey the Turks and no more the Turks will obey the Kurds”.

It is quite clear here that the opposition between the two groups is not an opposition between two life-styles. The author knows what he is referring to by Kurds or Turks. This imputation of identity is probably the result of a common self-attribution/ self-representation.

More interesting is when the mobilization of the sense of belonging is at stake.

Ibn Khallikân, *Kitâb wafayât al-a'yân wa anbâ' Abnâ' al-zamân*, vol. 7, p. 153, 155.

During the negotiations relating to the investiture to the Fatimid vizierate, 'Isâ al-Hakkârî, a Kurd, persuaded Qutb al-Dîn Tulayl to drop his candidacy in favor of Saladin: "Saladin and you are both from the same group. He is from kurdish origin (*inna aslahu min al-akrâd*). Then you won't let the power pass to the Turks. He promised to increase his income. So he obeyed Saladin (*atâ'ahu*)".

The value of the generic term of Kurd seems here to be ethnologic. 'Isâ is not describing a life-style. In imputing this identity he is mobilizing a useful item. Did this argument really lead Qutb al-din to drop his candidacy? The fact that 'Isâ promised to increase his income might have been the reason for his involvement with Saladin. Of course these two elements are not dissociable. More than an irrepressible sense of belonging to the group ethnicity is very often a tactical choice a mobilizable resource.

The most interesting occurrence is the following.

Al-Isfahanî, *Conquête de la Syrie et de la Palestine par Saladin*, Paris, 1977, trad. Henry Massé éd. Geuhtner, p. 375-6.

"When al-Mashtûb went out from jail, [in rabî' II 588] he was welcomed by his son happy and in good shape. Yet he found him with a turkish hair-style - that is to say with braids - he showed his displeasure, he took on a serious tone and said: "The Kurds don't have those manners with their hair"; Then he cut the braids and trimmed the hair. People thought this was a bad omen for the father: "This announces a misfortune that will strike him".

Here is the clearest manifestation of Kurdish ethnicity. What is important here is not the hair style but the fact that the character considers it peculiar to his group. He sets boundaries between his group and the rest of the world. This statement leads us to consider Frederik Barth's work (*Ethnic groups and boundaries*). The cultural content is not the most relevant element in envisaging ethnicity. The individual inserted in the group establishes boundaries and for that calls on cultural and ethnic tools (language, race, life-style, hair-style).

Of course this is a little more complex and the ethnicity has to be studied from two other perspectives: The mesosocial level (the internal functioning of the groupe) and macrosocial level (the relationship of the group with the other groups and the State) where the cultural content is very important and formalized.

Regarding that point the two latter examples are significant. They both involve an opposition between the kurdish and the turkish groups. We quote here a flare statement by Danielle Juteau, a scholar inspired by F. Barth's work: "It is in the relationship to the others that the group's culture and history acquire a specific meaning for the agents and open the ground to ethnic communalisation".

The term Kurd doesn't have either an exclusive ethnographic value (descriptive) or a value based on alleged intangible criteria. What this demonstration shows to us is that we should be very careful in dealing with imputation or self-attribution of identity in medieval literary sources.

For the question of the value of the term kurd and the incongruity we encountered in the face of the first occurrences we're back to square one. What bases the use of the Term kurd ? What can we say about these confusing uses that prevented me from sleeping ?

### **Stereotyped representations**

Looking for a frozen value of the term "kurd" resulted unvalid. The notion of representation seems more appropriate and wider. It postulates that we perceive the empirical world through schemes and mental images conscious or unconscious.

It occurred to me that the images the authors draw of the Kurds are established in opposition to some "ideal" norms of the urban and well-read muslim society and that reveal a perspective from the center towards the periphery. These ethos are :

- The reference to a central power guarantor of the earthly order
- Practice of orthodox islam (cosmic order)
- A perfect command of the Arabic language linked with the practice of islam and the necessary refinement of urban societies.

For the Kurds in medieval sources this is the opposite (insubordination/ lack of Islam/ cultural inadaptation)

3 remarks :

These representations can change although they are very often essentialist. These representations are not always wrong. The representations on the life-style are part of the representations on the Kurds.

These representations are essentially négative. I think that the term Kurd is especially used to refer to groups and individuals that correspond to these representations although these are not exclusively involved in the process of imputation of identity. If an individual demonstrate his Kurdity the author will not be able to neglect it. The word Kurd was used outside the well-read circles. These multiple representations probably influenced the use that was made of the word.

### **Nomadism**

Tabarî, *Târîkh al-Rusul wa 'l-Mulûk*, éd. Dâr al-ma'ârif, Cairo, 1960, vol. 1, p. 241.

"... A nomad of the Fars, that is to say a Kurd, said..." (SR)

Ibn Hawqal, *Kitâb Sûrat al-Ard*, J.H. Kramers, B.G.A., Leiden, 1939, p. 271.

“Ibn Durayd claims in his anthology that they [the Kurds] are bedouins and that most of them come from Kurd Ibn Mard b. ‘Amrû b. ‘Âmir’s [...]. People considered his sayings as proof and shared his opinion on those matters as they did for others. [The Kurds] are sheep and mare owners, but few of them possess camels. None of them own thoroughbred horses except the Mazândjân living on the outskirts of Isfahân [...] Their “madhâhib” (schools of thought) are the same as the bedouins”.

## **Link with the mountains**

Ibn Djubayr, *Rihla*, Leiden, 1994, p. 240.

“Our trip extended until the beginning of the afternoon while we remained on our guard fearing the attacks of the Kurds who are the pain of the region between Mosul and Nisibe and between Nisibe and Dunaysir. They cut off the paths and seek only corruption in this world. They live in impregnable mountains in the regions we quoted. But God didn’t grant the sultans to punish them and to get rid of their wrong doings. Sometimes they come down up to the doors of Nisibe and nobody prevents them from that except God, may He be exalted and glorified...”

Ibn al-Sam’ânî, *Kitâb al-ansâb*, Dâr al-kutub al-‘ilmiya Beirut, 1988.

“Al-Kurdî : This nisba refers to a community (*tayfa*) of Irak whose members live in the déserts (*sahârî*), settle in villages but live for the most part in the mountains of Hulwân”.

## **Chronic violence and looting**

Yâqût al-Hamawî, *Mu’djam al-buldân*, “Shahrazûr”.

“This region is today well governed thanks to Muzaffar al-dîn Kûkburî b. ‘Alî Kûdjak, the master of Irbil, although the Kurds remain in the surrounding mountains terrorizing the travellers, stealing and looting. Intimidations, attacks and arrests by no means stop them because it is inherent to the nature of the Kurds”. (SR)

Al-‘Umarî, *Masâlik al-absâr fî mamâlik al-Amsâr*, ed. Sezgin, Frankfurt, 1988, vol. 13, p. 91.

In one of his *Maqâmât*, the satirical poet Al-Wahrânî (m. 575/1179), known for his excesses, reproached in a veiled manner, Sadr al-dîn Ibn Durbâs’ nepotism. He’s a Kurd hadhbânî and the *qâdî al-qudât* of Egypt. He made up the following discussion between Ibn Durbâs and the Caliph about his Kurdish companions : “I took the head of the judicature with some of them. I met them in our country. They make their living only out of stock looting and donkey theft...”

This is interesting to see that these representations are applied to the kurdish judicial elite.

### **Insubordination**

al-Maqrîzî (Taqî al-dîn), *Kitâb al-sulûk li-ma'rifat duwal al-Muluk*, Cairo,1957, Vol. 1/1 p. 231.

About Ibn al-Mashtûb

“He’s the leader of a kurdish Hakkâriyya group that supports him and obeys him despite the fact he’s respected by the monarchs and considered as one of them”. (SR)

Yâqût al-Hamawî, *Mu’djam al-buldân*, “Shahrazûr”.

“They [the inhabitants of Nîm Azrâi ] are clients of ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azîz. The Kurds encouraged them to rise against the amirs and to oppose the caliphs”. (SR)

### **Lack of Islam**

Yâqût al-Hamawî, *Mu’djam al-buldân*, “Shahrazûr”.

“In 341/952-3, the people of Nîm Azrâi attacked the inhabitants of this town [Shîz]. They killed them, plundered and burned them because they were religious extremists (*ghulât*) and were only superficially respecting the Shari’a”.

“There are some pleasant anecdotes that one has to apologize for to God ; hence an eccentric found in the Quran that the Kurds are the most heathen and hypocritical – while the quranic verse contains that { The Bedouins are are most heathen and hypocritical } - He has said as well : God in His greatness and His eternity never went to Shahrazûr and then never contemplated the disasters hidden in those parts. But I beg God’s pardon and contrary to that [one can notice] that unnumerable illustrious people, great men, imams, Ulemas, principal qadis and jursits came from that region. So great a number that one cannot record it despite his will”.

### **Cultural inadaptation**

Nushîrwân Shaytân al-‘Irâq’s poem quoted by Yâqût al-Hamawî is significant for the representations on the Kurds and especially to illustrate the alleged lack of cultural refinement in the kurdish regions.

Yâqût al-Hamawî, Mu'djam al-buldân, "Irbil".

"Damned be my devil and what he suggested to me ! / When he took me to Irbil/ I arrived there on a day of misfortune / And I didn't doubt that I had arrived in Kerbela/ I told myself : he's right the one that in mentioning Irbil for exemple says it's a place of latrines/In the market there's a population which looks like disastrous people/ Each Kurd is a donkey/ And all the Irakîs fled the Town because of the inflation of prices/ This is the way the Irakîs express themselves : / (...) This Gap annoyed me and afflicted me/ You would only hear from a Kurd nonsense. No Bûbû 'Allakû Khushtîrî/ Khîlû wa Mîlû Mûsakâ Mankalâ/ Mamû wa Maqqû Mamkî. Then they said : *bû yarkî tajî* ( Come here ?) I said : no ! / Some tough guys scream in the market/ They speak loud and fast, their voices rise up / A gang screams, God is disgusted / *shutarâyam*, They are really stupid / This is a population devoid of all good and covered / with disgrace, and capable of anything reprehensible / God curse the poet that finds people without forage (kind deeds) / I have been mistaken and the one that makes such a mistake should be beaten letting the stick fall from high".

To draw a conclusion to this presentation, I there aren't any frozen value of the term kurd. There are multiple representations that influence multiple uses of this term or various reason for the imputation of the kurdish identity.

I took here the negative aspects because these are the most emergent ones. This can help us to explain the ethnical strategies of the ayyubids who wanted to appear as universal islamic kings. Which phenomenon S. Connermann call the private content of the ayyubid's kurdish identity<sup>8</sup>. Arab historiography is full of these attempts to draw a positive islamic image of Saladin. According to some authors Saladin was the son of Shâdî who was the son of Marwân b. Abî 'Alî b. 'Antara b. al-Hasan until Adam<sup>9</sup>. Saladin is given an arab genealogy as well as he is refered to as knowing very well "the genealogies of the arabs and their glorious battles"<sup>10</sup> at another time. It seems clear to me that the negative essentialist representations of the Kurds drove the ayyubid to renounce the public self-attribution of that identity. As I said before these negative representations are evolving. So one can notice at the end of the ayyubid period a positive change mainly due to the high integration of the Kurds in the urban and well-read circles in Syria and Egypt.

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<sup>8</sup> Connermann Stefan, 2004, "Volk Ethnie oder Stamm Die Kurden aus malûkischer Sicht", in *Asien und Afrika*, Hambourg, EB-Verlag, n° 8, p. 27-68.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Khallikân, *Wafayyât al-a'yân*, R.H.C., vol. 3, historiens orientaux, 1884, Paris, p. 399.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Shaddâd (Bahâ' al-dîn), *al-Nawâdir al-sultaniya wa l-mahâsin al-yusûfiyya*, éd. G. al-Shayyâl, p. 78.