

## FROM TRIBE TO TOWN: THE EARLY HISTORY OF KAMAN

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Kaman, a district center in the province of Kırşehir in Central Anatolia today, is located about 25 km. northwest of Kırşehir on the ancient route from Kırşehir to Ankara. As far as it is known, the history of Kaman has not been a direct research subject for any scholars until now. However, in some studies that have indirectly touched on the subject, researchers express that its history goes back to the ancient period studies, especially by comparing the name of Kaman with some ancient names. In this connection, it has been suggested that the word of Kaman originally comes from the name of Kamana, which derives from the name of Komana, the “holy mother” country in the Luwi language<sup>1</sup>. It is also said that the name of Kaman is probably given because of the name Chamanene in the Roman period<sup>2</sup>.

In contrast to these ideas, it is possible to give some new information and some new aspects about the name and emergence of Kaman, especially by using historical sources and materials. In this connection, the name of Kaman is found not only in Anatolia, but also in Central Asia. First of all, this name appears as the name of a legendary hero known by the names “Kaman”, “Köz Kaman”<sup>3</sup> and “Kal Kaman” in the epics of Manas and Semetey of the Kyrgyzs. “Kaman” or “Kaban” in Turkish dialects firstly means “wild male boar”, and secondly “hero” and “brave man”<sup>4</sup> even today in Central Asia. It is considered that the name Kaman could be given as personal names in these meanings.

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<sup>1</sup> On the use of the meaning of this word see Bilge Umar, *Türkiye'deki Tarihsel Adlar*, İstanbul 1993, pp. 369-370.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance, Besim Darkot, “Kırşehir”, *İA*, vol. 6, p. 764.

<sup>3</sup> For general information about “Köz Kaman”, see Arthur T. Hatto, “Köz-Kaman I-II”, *Manas Destanı Üzerinde İncelemeler (Çeviriler I)*, translated by M. Noyan Çengel, G. Ertuğrul and F. Çubuklu, Ankara 1995, pp. 153-215; D. Saaliyeva, “Közkamandar”, *Manas Ensiklopediya*, I, Bışkek 1995, pp. 333-334.

<sup>4</sup> See W. Radloff, *Opyt Slovaria Tiurkskih Narechii*, vol. II/1, St. Petersburg 1899, p. 439 and 480. Besides, for the other meanings and expressions related to “Kaman” or “Kaban”, see K. K. Yudahin, *Kirgizsko-Russkii Slovar*, Moskva 1965, p. 335.

In the compilations of the Manas epic by W. Radloff, one of the forty closest friends of Manas was known as “Kaman”<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, the name of “Köz Kaman” is encountered in the Sagımbay version of the Manas epic. According to this version, Nogoy, grandfather of Manas, had four sons named Orozdu, Bay, Cakıp and Üsön. Of these brothers, Cakıp was the father of Manas<sup>6</sup>. As for Üsön, he was taken captive by the Chinese in an event and taken away to China. Here he grew up as an enemy against Manas and began to be known as “Köz Kaman”. We do not know exactly why Üsön was given the name of “Köz Kaman”. As the part “Köz” of Köz Kaman means “eye”, perhaps it was used to stress the eyes of Üsön. The “male boar” is also described as sharp-eyed, aggressive, bold, and very strong. This might be the reason why Üsön was called “Köz Kaman”.

In spite of being an rival of Manas, Köz Kaman (Üsön) was invited to the hometown of Manas, and was given land, a home, a garden and some animals. On the contrary, although Köz Kaman did not desire, his sons attempted to kill Manas, but fortunately they were unsuccessful<sup>7</sup>. It is understood from the Sagımbay version that after Köz Kaman escaped to China, his sons started to quarrel with each other about why they did not kill Manas. According to this version, “Kökçököz Köz Kamandın uluu uulu”, that is, Kökçököz was the elder son of Köz Kaman<sup>8</sup>. At the end, they killed each other with knives. At present, there is a famous proverb known as “Köz Kamandarça bıçaktaşkan tuugandar” among the Kyrgyzs that means brothers who stab each other like the *Köz Kamans*<sup>9</sup>.

The comprehensive version of the Manas epic relates this event differently than the Sagımbay version. According to the comprehensive version<sup>10</sup>, “Köz Kaman” had a brother, known as “Kökçököz”; his three closest relatives were named “Celtiybes”, “Çangdayak” and “Orozon”. Thus, they constituted a group of five relatives. Therefore, they were called “Beş Kaman”, which means a group (tire). It is seen from here that they came to the hometown of Manas from China in order to kill Manas, and “Köz Kaman” had given the poison to Manas, but he was not succesful. So, “Köz Kaman” escaped to China. A phrase in the comprehensive version of Manas epic which is related to this event states:

*Beecinge kaçtı, köç alçı  
Belsenip çıgıp sayışıp*

<sup>5</sup> See Naciye Yıldız, *Manas Destanı (W. Radloff) ve Kırgız Kültürü İle İlgili Tespit ve Tahliller*, Ankara 1995, Indeks “Kaman”.

<sup>6</sup> See Sagımbay Orozbek uulu, *Manas*, vol. I, Frunze (Bişkek) 1978, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> See Sagımbay Orozbek uulu, *Manas*, vol. II, Frunze 1980, pp. 438-440.

<sup>8</sup> See Ibid, p. 439. It is very interesting that the name Kökçögöz is seen as a sub-tribe among the “Munduz uruu” in the provinces of Jalal Abad and Narın of the Kyrgyzstan (see S. M. Abramzon, “Etničeskiy Sostav Kirgizskogo Naseleniya Severnoy Kirgizii”, *Trudi Kirgizskoy Arheologo-Etnografičeskoj Ekspeditsii*, vol. V, Moskva 1960, p. 81).

<sup>9</sup> See Sagımbay Orozbek uulu, *Manas*, vol. II, p. 440.

<sup>10</sup> *Manas*, vol. I, Frunze 1958, p. 267-285. Besides, this event is expressed similarly in the Sayakbay version of the Semetey epic, too (See Sayakbay Karalaev, *Semetey*, vol. I, Frunze 1987, pp. 189-211).

*Tetigi Beş Kaman'dan öç alçı!*

As for the name of “Kal Kaman”, this name appears in the Manas epic as one of the forty closest friends and adviser of Manas<sup>11</sup>. The part “Kal” of the word “Kal Kaman” has two meanings: firstly a spot on the human body or face and secondly to stay or wish a long life, in Kyrgyz and Kazaks.

Apart from the Manas and Semetey epics, the names of “Kaman” and “Beş Kaman” are seen under the various sub-nomadic groups (*uruks*), of the larger Kyrgyz nomadic groups (*uruus*). In this connection, a group of “Kaman” is found in the “Talkan uruk” that belonged to the “Solto uruu” in the villages of Kürpüldök and Çolok-Kayındı in the district (rayon) of Panfilov (Oyron), as well as in the village of Keper-Arık (Baybolot) in the district of Moskovski (Petrovsk) in the province of Çüy (Chu) in Kyrgyzstan<sup>12</sup>. Another Kaman group appears in the “Basız uruu”<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, a group of “Beş Kaman” is seen in the “Arık uruk” that tied to the “Bugu uruu”. They live in the village of Maman in the district of Karakol (Prjevalsk) of the province of Issık-Köl and in the villages of Semizbel and Kara-Küngöy in the district of Koçkor of the province of Narın<sup>14</sup>.



Figure: 1  
The villages and regions belonging to the Kaman Uruk in Kyrgyzstan

<sup>11</sup> “Kalk tekşergen Kal Kaman”, that is, he was an adviser of the people (see Sagımbay Orozbak uulu, *Manas*, vol. III, Frunze 1981, p. 49 and 176). Besides, see Sayakbay Karalaev, *Semetey*, vol. I, Frunze 1987, p. 173.

<sup>12</sup> See S. M. Abramzon, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> See Vinnikov Ya. P., “Rodo-Plemennoy Sostav i Rasseleniye Kirgizov na Territorii Iujnoy Kirgizii”, *Trudi Kirgizskoy Arheologo-Etnografičeskoj Ekspeditsii*, vol. I, Moskva 1956, pp. 154-155; S. Attokurov, *Kirgiz Sancırası*, Bıřkek 1955, p. 155.

<sup>14</sup> Abramzon, p. 17.

Another Beş Kaman group is found in the “Kırk uul (Kırk Oğul) uruk” that belonged to the “Saruu uruu” in the village of Sarı-Kuuray in the district of Bakay Ata (Leninpol) of the Talas province<sup>15</sup>. Some studies have pointed out that “Beş Kaman” in the “uruu of Munduz” is related to the “Köz Kaman”<sup>16</sup>. Besides, at present, some of Kaman groups live in the villages of Calgız-Cangak, Kök-Cangak, Üç-Malay and Kalmak-Kırçın in the district of Suzak and in the village of Atay in the district of Toguz-Toro in the province of Jalal Abad and so on (see Figure 1)<sup>17</sup>. In addition, the name of Kaman is seen as “Kal Kaman” among the Kazaks in Central Asia<sup>18</sup>.

As for the name of Kaman in Anatolia, the name Kaman is seen in Ottoman archival survey registers not only in nomadic groups, but also in villages and *mezraa* names, that is, arable lands. In this matter, there are a number of examples in the above-mentioned registers. For instance, there was a *mezraa* known as “Kaman Firuz” attached to the district of Yenişehir in the province of Hüdavendigâr<sup>19</sup>. There were also two villages called “Kamanlu”, one belonging to the district of Kestel, the other to the region of Urla in the province of Aydın<sup>20</sup>. In addition, there was a large nomadic group named “Ulu Kamanlu” that belonged to the *Ulu Yörük Turks* (Etrâk-i Yörükân-ı Büzürg) in the regions of Tokat and Sivas<sup>21</sup>. Besides, two nomadic groups were named “Kamanlu”. One of them belonged to the Yörüks of Dulkadirli in the province of Maraş. It is understood from the Ottoman survey registers that this group was engaged in agriculture as supplementary to animal husbandry<sup>22</sup>. The other was tied to the tribe (kabile) of Bozkırlu in the district of Koşhisar (Koçhisar) of the province of Aksaray (See Figure 2)<sup>23</sup>.

Apart from these examples, there is another important group called “Kaman” in the region of Kırşehir in Central Anatolia. In the following pages, we will focus on this group.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 70.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 81.

<sup>17</sup> Thanks to Dr. Olcobay Karataev for giving me this knowledge.

<sup>18</sup> Şakarim (Şah-Kerim) Kudayberdi-uli, *Rodoslovnaia Tiurkov, Kirgizov, Kazahov i Hanskih Dinastii*, Alma-Ata 1990, pp. 80-81. At present, there is also a quarter belonging to Almaty in Kazakistan named “Kalkaman”. Besides, the words of “Kaman” or “Kal Kaman” are seen as the personal names among the Kazaks.

<sup>19</sup> See *166 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Anadolu Defteri (937/1530)*, Index and Exact Copy, Ankara 1995, p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 400, 453.

<sup>21</sup> See *387 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Karaman ve Rûm Defteri (937/1530)*, II, Index and Exact Copy, Ankara 1997, p. 487. Here is seen that this group had 13 *kışlaks* (winter quarters), 13 *imamş*, 160 *hanes* (households) and 71 *mücerreds* (single males who were above the age of puberty).

<sup>22</sup> See *998 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Diyâr-ı Bekr ve Arab ve Zü'l-kâdiriyye Defteri (937/1530)*, II, Index and Exact Copy, Ankara 1999, p. 425, 439, 456.

<sup>23</sup> See *387 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Karaman ve Rûm Defteri (937/1530)*, I, Index and Exact Copy, Ankara 1996, p. 143. Among present-day village names, there are also some villages called “Kaman” or “Kamanlar” in Turkey (See *T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı İller İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü Köylerimiz 1981*, Ankara 1982, p. 307).

It is understood from historical events that the region of Kırşehir came under Ottoman rule towards the end of Mehmed II's reign<sup>24</sup>. The first detailed information about Ottoman rule in the region of Kırşehir is encountered in a cadastral survey recorded in 1485<sup>25</sup>. In this cadastral survey, Kaman is not cited as a village, town or administrative region. On the other hand, a tribe known by the name of Kaman is seen in the above-mentioned survey<sup>26</sup>. It is understood from this survey that this tribe was tied to the large nomadic group, the Varsak Türkmen, that probably migrated to this area from southern Anatolia at the beginning of the 15th century because of population growth and pressure.



Figure: 2  
The spreading regions of the Kaman groups in Anatolia in the 16th century

At present, we do not know if there is an exact relation between this nomadic group (cemaat) in Kırşehir region in Anatolia, and other nomadic groups in Central Asia. On the contrary, the similarity of the names of persons and nomadic groups, may have been given traditionally. There is no doubt that the first similarity is the common usage of the name of "Kaman" among the Kyrgyzs and Anatolian tribes. In this connection, we can say that the name of Kaman was brought to Anatolia from Central Asia by nomadic groups. Another similarity, as mentioned above, is

<sup>24</sup> For a brief summary information of these historical events, see İlhan Şahin, "Kırşehir Tarihinin Bazı Meselelerine Dair", *II. Uluslararası Ahilik Kültürü Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, 13-15 Ekim 1999 Kırşehir, Ankara 1999, p. 280; İ. Şahin, "Kırşehir", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. XXV, pp. 481-482.

<sup>25</sup> BA, TD, no. 19.

<sup>26</sup> BA, TD, no. 19, pp. 315-316.

that one of the “Kaman” groups of the Kyrgyzs belonged to a large nomadic group (uruu) known as “Saruu (Sarı)”. On the other hand, as cited below, we find a person known as “Sarı Bey” among the people of Kaman in Anatolia in 1485. As far as it is understood from here, “Sarı Bey” was a very well known and distinguished family. Most probably, the name “Sarı” was taken from Central Asia and used by them as the name of their ancestors in Anatolia.

After this information, we can come to the nomadic group known as “Kaman” in the Kırşehir region. In 1485, there were 32 households and 10 single males who were above the age of puberty. Thus, the total population was approximately 170 in the tribe of Kaman in the region of Kırşehir. It is seen from this survey that some people were brothers in this tribe. Though this relationship was understood in this survey, the other relationship ties such as being an uncle, a son of an uncle, etc., were not cited. As a result, it should be said that people in this tribe had very strong family ties. At that time, the name of the leader of Kaman, known by the title of *Kethüda* was Bektaş. Obviously, *Kethüdas* generally belonged to their tribe groups and came from a distinguished family in this group. Therefore, Kethüda Bektaş and his family fit into the same pattern. It is very interesting that there still is a large and well-established family known by the name of Bektaşoğulları in Kaman. No doubt this situation shows that there are historical family ties between Kethüda Bektaş and the Bektaşoğulları. It should be kept in mind that after Kethüda Bektaş lived in 1485s, this family must have given the name of Bektaş to their children traditionally. Therefore, they could remember another Bektaş as their ancestors rather than tracing themselves back to the Kethüda Bektaş, who lived in 1485. In this connection, I would like to highlight the fact, when Mustafa Kemal Pasha was going to Ankara, before the Independence war in Anatolia, he stayed for a night at the home of this established family.

After Kethüda Bektaş, three brothers known by the name Yenisi (or probably Bektaş), Sarı Bey and Yusuf were mentioned at the beginning of the list of the people from the Kaman tribe in the cadastral survey. It is very interesting that their father’s name was Kaman. As far as it is understood from this source, they were Kethüda Bektaş’s brothers or they had very close family ties with Kethüda Bektaş. Thus, this information supplies us with a clue that the Kaman tribe took its name from the name of this person or probably from another person who had the same name and was their ancestor.

It is also apparent from this survey that there were some distinguished people among the Kaman tribe community. For example, three people were known by the title of *Fakih*. As it is known, *Fakihs* (*Fakıs*) had an important position in early Ottoman frontier society<sup>27</sup>. Besides, six persons were known by the title of *Bey*.

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<sup>27</sup> See Halil İnalçık, “How to Read Âshık Pasha-zade’s History”, *Essays in Ottoman History*, İstanbul 1998, p. 32; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Osmanlı Devleti’nin Kuruluşunda Ahilik ve Şeyh Edebalı: Problematik Açından Bir Sorgulama”, *II. Uluslar arası Ahilik Kültürü Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, 13-15 Ekim 1999 Kırşehir, Ankara 1999, pp. 242-243.

According to the archival registers, this title was used especially for the leader of large groups in the Turkish tribes. Therefore, there is no doubt that they were important among the Kaman tribe, too. Apart from that, another characteristic of the Kaman tribe was that most of the persons had old Turkish names, such as Bektaş, Sarı, Sevindik, Turak, Karaca, Oğul Beyi or Oğul Bey, Atlu, Kutlu, Kuştemür, Yayla, Kara, Tura etc. It is very important that they still maintained their cultural traditions in giving of personal names at that time.

The basic characteristics of the traditional lifestyle for the tribes involved only keeping animals and moving between regions identified as summer pasturages and winter quarters in order to graze them. In spite of this, it is seen from the above-mentioned survey of 1485, that sheep and grain were taxed from the income of the Kaman tribe. In other words, people from the Kaman tribe engaged not only sheep herding, but also in agricultural activity like most of the other tribe groups in this region. As far as it is understood, agriculture among the Kaman tribe was not a primary activity, but a subsidiary activity which is evident in the fact that households and single males were not registered as “çift” or “nim çift”. Therefore, it is seen that the Kaman tribe was not purely nomadic, but was semi-nomadic. An important feature of this type of nomadism was that migrations between summer pasturages and winter quarters were shorter than those in pure nomadism, especially when the geographic and ecological conditions of region are considered. The same situation is also seen in the conditions of the Kırşehir region.

The Kaman tribe used *mezraas*, that is, arable lands, known by the name of Güzeller, Acıpınar and Ziyaretpınarı for agriculture and probably pasture. In addition to this, they used to pay the “kışlak resmi” under the name of “resm-i dūd” that means the tax on winter quarters. As far as it is understood, the place of winter quarters was not so far from their *mezraas*. The mentioned place where they stayed for a long time of the year because of the weather conditions of the region, was probably located in the district of Kaman at the present time.

Archival materials show that the Kaman tribe continued to live a semi-nomadic lifestyle for a long time after the year of 1485. In an *icmal* (summary) cadastral survey written in about 1530, they were registered as a tribe under the name of Kaman cemaati (community)<sup>28</sup>. This survey indicates that there were 98 households, 42 single males, 19 *sipahis*, 2 *pir-i fani* and an *imam*. Although there was no one registered as a *sipahi* in the above-mentioned 1485 survey, it is very interesting that some persons appeared as *sipahis* in 1530. It is possible to estimate that they were mounted auxiliaries, rather than proper *sipahis* (cavalrymen). The total population of the Kaman tribe from the 1530 was approximately 600. In the years between 1485 and 1530, the population of the Kaman tribe grew by 250 percent, which is above the generally accepted rate of growth. One of the reasons may well be that a separate group of *sipahis* had joined the Kaman tribe. Another

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<sup>28</sup> See BA, TD, no. 998, p. 660.

reason could be that the second survey, written in the 1530, was made more carefully than the first survey of 1485.

The name of the Kaman tribe is encountered as a village under the name of Kaman which was also known by the name of Nazlukayası in a cadastral survey made in 1584<sup>29</sup>. We do not know exactly when the Kaman tribe settled there. However, they may well have started to settle between 1530 and 1584. It is possible to say that this place of settlement was a winter quarters for the Kaman tribe. Probably, at the beginning, these winter quarters used to be known by the name of Nazlukayası. Some time, after the Kaman tribe settled, the place began to be known as Kaman. As a matter of fact, in the course of time, the name of Nazlukayası was forgotten and the name of Kaman was exclusively used as the name of the village.

In 1584, there were 30 households in the village of Kaman. At that time, the total population of the village was approximately 150. This situation shows that the population of the village decreased by 300 percent from the 1530' figure. We do not know exactly why the population declined in the 55 odd years between 1530 and 1584. It is possible to say that some of the population in the Kaman tribe migrated to western Anatolia since we know that some groups known by the name of Kaman or Kamanlu are seen there.

The village of Kaman was located on the ancient route from Kırşehir to Ankara, and preserved its position as a village in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. It is seen from the archival materials that there were 110 households in the village of Kaman in 1250 (1834)<sup>30</sup>; that is an estimated total population of 550. By 1840 there were 154 households in the village of Kaman<sup>31</sup>, which means an estimated total population of 750. It is seen from here that a few persons had migrated to the village of Kaman from their places of settlement in the surrounding areas, such as Çağırğan and Mucur. Besides, it seems that among the persons of the village a few families were known under the name of *Kamanlıoğlu* and *Bektaşoğlu*. As above-mentioned, there is no doubt that they were previously a family performing administrative duties. At that time, the village of Kaman was engaged in animal husbandry and agriculture. Among the animals, there were both cows and sheep. Besides, most of the families had vineyards and gardens in their village. In addition to this, there were four *değirmens* (mills) and a *bezirhane* (a lineseed oil press) there. One of the mills and a *bezirhane* belonged to Kamanlıoğlu Mehmed, whose total income at that time was 12170 guruş. He also had seven camels. In other words, Kamanlıoğlu Mehmed was a notable person with the above-cited incomes and foundations. It should be noted that his income was the highest in the entire village. Since this was a well known family in the Republican period, a member of this family, Elvan Kaman, became a member of parliament for Kırşehir, in the

<sup>29</sup> See Tapu Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü, Kuyud-ı Kadime Arşivi, TD, no. 139, 23a.

<sup>30</sup> See BA, *Temettuat Defterleri*, no. 795, pp. 114-123.

<sup>31</sup> See BA, *Temettuat Defterleri*, no. 798, pp. 126-151.



1950 election. Later on, this person was elected as mayor of Kaman.

This situation of Kaman as a village has continued until the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. After Ankara became the capital of the Republic of Turkey, the ancient route upon which the village of Kaman was located, started to play an important role in terms of transportation activities connecting cities, towns and productive areas, especially in regard to central Anatolia's relationship to the capital. Therefore, this situation has affected the village of Kaman; many people started to migrate to Kaman from the surrounding villages. Since the foundation of the Republic, Kaman started to grow both in numbers and in total economically. In the end, Kaman administratively became a town in the province of Kırşehir in 1944. In the 1960s, a dam called Hirfanlı, was constructed near this town, which also positively affected its growth.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the town of Kaman in the Kırşehir region originally emerged from a Türkmen tribe known by the name of Kaman in the Ottoman period. Therefore, it is incorrect to put forward an idea that its history goes back to the ancient period. Moreover, it should be said that there are also some legendary heroes known by the name of Kaman, Köz Kaman and Kal Kaman in the Kyrgyz history. In addition, Kaman and Beş Kaman are seen as some sub-nomadic groups among the Kyrgyzs. Besides, Kaman and Kal Kaman appear as the personal and place names even today in Kazakistan. We do not know exactly what kind of relation there is between "Kaman", seen in Anatolia and those in Central Asia. However, it is known that large and important nomadic groups emmigrated from Central Asia to Anatolia. This fact illustrates the importance of the history of Central Asia to the history of the Turks in Anatolia. This study shows us that Ottoman archival materials are crucial in researching the origin of place names in Anatolia as well as in the other regions of the Ottoman Empire. On the surface, micro-historical studies on a point in Ottoman history can appear unimportant. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that a deeper understanding of general Ottoman history is nearly impossible without such studies.