

**KATAONIA, MELITENE, KUMMANI,  
AND THE PROBLEM OF KOMANA\***

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*Pour René Lebrun, mon Ami, mon Frère,  
et pour tout le Clan, les chiens compris,  
avec mon éternelle Amitié*

**KUMMANI**

The Komanas, *ta Komana* in Greek, were two very important sanctuaries located in Pontus and in northern Kataonia. Komana of Kataonia has been identified by many scholars with Kummanni, which was the main metropolis of Kizzuwatna, mainly Smooth Cilicia, during the Hittite period<sup>1</sup>.

How was this identification made ?

1. The name Komana could derive linguistically from the Hittite Kummanni.

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\* I thank very much my friend Charles Gates (Bilkent University, Ankara) for commenting on an earlier version of this article.

1 The classical texts relating to the two Komanas are gathered, translated in French and commented in Lisbeth FRANCK, *Sources classiques concernant la Cappadoce (Revue Hittite et Asianique 24)*, Paris, 1966 (*passim*). About the Komanas as “state-temples”, see Pierre DEBORD, *Aspects sociaux et économiques de la vie religieuse dans l'Anatolie gréco-romaine*, Leiden, 1982; Laura BOFFO, *I re ellenistici e i centri religiosi dell'Asia Minore*, Firenze, 1985. For the identification Kummanni/Komana, see (e.g.): Albrecht GOETZE, *Kizzuwatna and the Problem of Hittite Geography*, New Haven, 1940; René LEBRUN, *Kummanni et Tarse, deux centres ciliciens majeurs*, in É. Jean, A. Dinçol, S. Durugönül (eds.), *La Cilicie: espaces et pouvoirs locaux*, Actes de la Table Ronde internationale d'Istanbul (novembre 1999), Varia Anatolica 13, Paris-Istanbul, 2001, pp. 87-94. The Pontic Komana is located at Gömenek on the Iris River (Yeşil Irmak); Komana of Kataonia at Şa(h)r, close to the spring of the Saros (Seyhan nehri-Göksu). Komana Pontika: Michel AMANDRY and Bernard RÉMY, *Comana du Pont sous l'empire romain, Étude historique et corpus monétaire*, Glaux 14, Milan, 1999; Emine SÖKMEN, *Komana Pontika ve Zela: Pontos Bölgesi'ndeki Tapınak Devletleri/Comana Pontica and Zela: Temple States in Pontus*, in D. Burcu Erciyas and E. Koparal (eds.), *Karadeniz Araştırmaları Sempozyum Bildirileri/Black Sea Studies Symposium Proceedings (Ankara, April 2004)*, Sempozyum Bildirileri 1, Istanbul, 2006, pp. 119-128. Komana of Kataonia: Louis ROBERT, *Noms indigènes dans l'Asie Mineure gréco-romaine*, Paris, 1963, pp. 436-438 (especially about the great-priests of the sanctuary); Richard P. HARPER, *Tituli Comanorum Cappadociae*, in *Anatolian Studies* 18, 1968, pp. 93-147; Richard P. HARPER and İnci BAYBURLUOĞLU, *Preliminary Report on Excavations at Şar, Comana Cappadociae, in 1967*, in *Anatolian Studies* 18, 1968, pp. 149-158; Richard P. HARPER, *Inscriptiones Comanis Cappadociae in A.D. 1967 Effossae: Titulorum Loci Supplementum*, in *Anatolian Studies* 19, 1969, pp. 27-40.

2. Kummanni was, as its name indicates, a holy town. In Anatolian Hurrian-Luwian language, *Kumme-/i-* means “holy”. Komana of Kataonia was known during the Hellenistic and Roman times as a *hierapolis*, a sacred city. So, according to many scholars, the country Kizzuwatna extended from eastern Cilicia to northern Kataonia<sup>2</sup>.

The equation Kummanni/Komana now must be rejected for several reasons:

1. There are two Komana and only one Kummanni, even if it seems that Kataonic Komana existed first. The two Komanas are nevertheless old and similar (Strabo XII.3.32). In addition, they could have been administered by the same great-priest and clergy during the pre-Hellenistic times. Strabo (XII.3.32) mentions the “exoduses” of the goddess Mā in the two Komanas. These “exoduses” could correspond to the travel of the goddess from one Komana to the other, and vice versa, twice a year, probably during some equinoctial feast. We know well that this kind of festival occurred during the Hittite period<sup>3</sup>.
2. A Neo-Assyrian text dating to the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C. mentions that Šalmanesar III crossed the Amanus Mountains into Cilicia and conquered three fortified cities in 839-838: Abarnani, Luzanda, and Kisuatni. Kisuatni clearly corresponds to Hittite Kizzuwatna, which was not only the name of Hittite eastern Cilicia but also the other name of Kummanni. So, Kummani-Kizzuwatna is to be located in eastern Cilicia, quite close to the Amanus. I have proposed to identify it with Kastabala, an important sacred city during the Achaemenid period according to an Aramaic inscription; in Hellenistic and Roman times, it was known as a *hierapolis*<sup>4</sup>.
3. Moreover, Jean,<sup>5</sup> pointing out a Hittite text (KUB 40.2) that might attest the existence of olive trees in the territory of Kummanni, noted that the cultivation of olive trees

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2 See quite recently the maps in *Die Hethiter und ihr Reich, Das Volk der 1000 Götter*, Catalogue of the exposition held in Bonn (2002), Bonn, 2002, pp. 302-307.

3 Olivier CASABONNE, *Syro Anatolica Scripta Minora* IV.I, *Les deux Komana et les exodes de Mā*, in *Le Muséon* 116 (fasc. 3-4), 2003, pp. 281-283.

4 For a location of Kummanni-Kizzuwatna in eastern Cilicia, see Shigeo YAMADA, *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire, A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmanesar III (859-824) Relating to His Campaigns to the West*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2000, pp. 200-205; Marie-Claude TRÉMOUILLE, *Kizzuwatna, terre de frontière*, in Jean et alii (eds.), *Op. Cit.* (n. 1), pp. 57-78. For my proposal to locate Kummanni at Kastabala and Luzanda (Hittite Lawazantiya, another important metropolis and sacred city in Kizzuwatna) at Sirkeli Höyük: Olivier CASABONNE, *Notes ciliciennes* 12: *Quelques villes et capitales ciliciennes à l'âge du Fer: toponymie et géographie historique*, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 10, 2002, pp. 185-195; *id.*, *La Cilicie à l'époque achéménide*, *Persika* 3, Paris, 2004, pp. 138-142; Ekin KOZAL, Mirko NOVAK, Olivier CASABONNE and Éric JEAN, *Sirkeli Höyük Kazıları ve Hitit Kenti Lawazantiya (Kilikya)*, in *Haberler (Türk Eskiçağ Bilimleri Enstitüsü)* 23, ocak 2007, pp. 14-15.

5 Éric JEAN, *Archéobotanique et géographie historique: l'olivier en Kizzuwatna*, in A. Süel (ed.), *Acts of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Hittitology (Çorum 2002)*, Ankara, 2005, pp. 453-470.

was not possible in northern Kataonia, the region of Komana, which is at an altitude of ca. 1500 m. Of course, we well know that, if encouraged by market condition, olive trees can be cultivated at this altitude, despite cold and long winters<sup>6</sup>. It was for example the case at Sagalassos in high Pisidia (altitude: between 1000 and 1500 m.) during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It was not the case in Kataonia, and I totally agree with Jean<sup>7</sup>. In the *Geography* of Strabo an important passage, which has not been remarked by commentators, not even by Jean in his important article, tells us that “Kataonia is a broad hollow plain, and produces everything except evergreen-trees” (XII.2.2). What are these “evergreen-trees” (*aeithala* in the Greek text) ? They cannot be of course conifers, which are evergreen. Kataonia lies in the mountainous Antitaurus, which is full of these kinds of trees. For me, the evergreen-trees mentioned by Strabo have to be identified as typical Mediterranean trees such as the holm oak (or ilex) and the olive tree. So, even in the time of Strabo, at the beginning of the Roman empire, when the olive tree and olive oil market were so important, there were no olive trees in Kataonia. This means very probably that it was also the case during the Hittite period and so that Kummanni cannot be Komana.

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## BORDERS

In Neo-Assyrian texts, Melitene is known as Meliddu. This important Neo-Hittite kingdom, although integrated into the Assyrian empire, often tried to break free with the help of Urartean and Cappadocian (Cimmerian as well) kingdoms between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.<sup>8</sup> Meliddu is also the name of the main metropolis of this kingdom, the present Malatya. In one Neo-Assyrian text another name of Melitene is Kammanu. Few scholars have linked this name with Komana. Could it be possible that Kataonia and Melitene formed at this time a single administrative entity ? It is very possible. Once more, let us read Strabo, who tells that “the ancients (...) placed Kataonia after Cappadocia, and then the Euphrates and the tribes beyond it so as to include in Kataonia Melitene (...)” (XII.1.2).

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6 A very good example about the so-called “Little-Ice Age” in western Europe is given by Emmanuel LE ROY LADURIE, *Histoire du climat depuis l'an Mil*, Champs-Flammarion, volume I, Paris, 1983, p. 29.

7 *Loc. Cit.* (n. 5) with references to Sagalassos archaeological surveys and studies.

8 For Meliddu, see (e.g.): Paul NASTER, *L'Asie Mineure et l'Assyrie aux VIIIe et VIIe siècles av. J.-C.*, Bibliothèque du Muséon, Louvain, 1938; Askold IVANTCHIK, *Les Cimmériens au Proche-Orient*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 127, Fribourg, 1993; Anna Margherita JASINK, *Gli stati neo-ittiti. Annali delle fonti scritte e sintesi storica*, Studia Mediterranea 10, Pavia, 1995.

What was the political situation of the combined Melitene and Kataonia during the Achaemenid period, that is, after the Neo-Assyrian period and before their integration into the Hellenistic kingdom of Cappadocia in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. B.C.? Herodotus tells us that the Halys River flows through the country of the Cilicians and that the border between Cilicia and Armenia is the Euphrates River (Hdt. I.72 and V.52). The Cilicia in question is not the sub-Tauric classical one but the later Cappadocian *strategeia* called Cilicia, the metropolis of which is Mazaka/Cesarea, the present Kayseri (Strabo XII.2.7). This Cappadocian Cilicia is perhaps attested in a Hittite text as well as in a Neo-Hittite inscription from Gurgum (Karaman Maraş). Moreover, the Euphrates as the border between this Cappadocian Cilicia and Armenia is very probably not the great Euphrates but an eastern Cappadocian affluent of the Halys River, quite close to Kayseri. So, it seems plausible that during the Achaemenid period Melitene and Kataonia were integrated within the Urartean/Armenian satrapy, which could lie as far west as the longitude of the Antitaurus and of the Pontic Komana. The Pontic Komana would continue to be connected with Armenia, according to Strabo XII.3.36 (“Now Komana is a populous city and is a notable emporium for the people from Armenia”), even as it became a city of the kingdom of Pontus<sup>9</sup>.

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#### THE NAME KOMANA

Let us return to the other name of Melitene in Neo-Assyrian texts, Kammanu. It could be a good intermediary name on the etymological ladder, between the early form and the eventual Komana. According to Thuillos (*Etym. Magn.* 526.33<sup>10</sup>), the name Komana has to be interpreted as “shady”. It could be why the Greek word *komē* means “hair”, because hair shades the head. From this Kataonian gloss the great Hittitologist Neumann proposed to compare Komana with Hittite *kamar(ra)-*, which according to him means “shade, darkness” (“Dunkelheit, Schatten”)<sup>11</sup>. This conclusion is no longer acceptable. We well know today that the Hittite word *kamar(ra)-* means “mist, fog”<sup>12</sup>, something unclear, far, quite elusive and

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9 For this question and references to documents and studies, see: Olivier CASABONNE, *Notes ciliciennes 17: À propos de la Cilicie cappadocienne et des régions adjacentes*, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 12, 2004, pp. 43-44.

10 FRANCK, *Op. Cit.* (n. 1), p. 94.

11 Gunter NEUMANN, *Untersuchungen zum Weiterleben hethitischen und luwischen Sprachgutes in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden, 1961, p. 32.

12 See the reference to a report by A. KAMMENHUBER of Neumann's study (*Op. Cit.*) in FRANCK, *Op. Cit.* (n. 1), p. 94, n. 193.

imperceptible. But the word *kamarra-* is a good candidate as an etymology for Komana. How can the transformation from *kamarra-* to Komana be linguistically possible ?

Firstly, the alternation r/n is possible. We can note such Hittite words as *uttar* (“deal, matter, word”), which becomes *uttanas* in the genitive; *watar* (“water”), which becomes *we/itenas* in the genitive<sup>13</sup>; *pahhur* (“fire”), which becomes *pahhuni* in the dative. We can easily find more examples<sup>14</sup>.

The problem now is the alternation a/o. It is linguistically difficult to explain. But we well know the example of the Hittite toponym Paduwatta, transformed into Podandos in late antiquity and the Byzantine period, and into Pozanti in modern times: a town close to the Cilician gates<sup>15</sup>.

So we could have the evolution *kamarra-* > \*Kaman(n)a (which could correspond to the Neo-Assyrian Kammanu) > later Komana. I write “later Komana” because this toponym is not attested before the early beginning of the Roman imperial period, in Strabo and in the Pseudo-Caesar<sup>16</sup>. Unfortunately, a place-name Kamarra or Kaman(n)a is not attested in any Hittite or Neo-Hittite texts, as much as I know; and none archaeological level dating to pre-Hellenistic period has been found in the two Komanas<sup>17</sup>. But we can consider that at the beginning it is not a toponym, but it concerns the deity of the two Komana.

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13 We might recognize this word in the Hittite name Kizzuwatna < *kez-watna* “the waters from this part/side”: Marie-Claude TRÉMOUILLE, *Kizzuwatna, a Land of Exchanges*, in *European Union Mosaic Programme, Mersin Region Steeped in Ancient History*, Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mersin, 2004, pp. 25-26, especially p. 25. This hypothesis is very interesting: during the Iron Age (Neo-Hittite period), in a local inscription found not far from Adana and dating probably to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, eastern Cilicia is called “the country of the river”: René LEBRUN and Julien DE VOS, *À propos de l'inscription bilingue de l'ensemble sculptural de Çineköy*, in *Anatolia Antiqua* 14, 2006, pp. 45-64, especially pp. 53-56; Olivier CASABONNE, *From Cappadocia to Cilicia: Two Anatolian Notes*, in O. Tekin (ed.), *Clemens Bosch, Sabahat Atlan, Nezahat Baydur Festschrift*, Istanbul (forthcoming). The Saros and the Pyramos are such very important and impressive rivers in eastern Cilicia that we can use the expression “Mesopotamian Cilicia”: Claude MUTAFIAN, *La Cilicie au carrefour des empires*, Paris, 1988, vol. 1, pp. 10-12; Olivier CASABONNE, *La Cilicie à l'époque achéménide*, *Persika* 3, Paris, 2004, pp. 35-36.

14 I thank René Lebrun for this grammatical information.

15 NEUMANN, *Op. Cit.* (n. 11), p. 30. For a>o, see also the hypothesis concerning Luwian/Hittite *ura* (“big, great”) > Latin *uro*, which is proposed by François MICHEL and Éric RAIMOND, *Remarques sur deux anthroponymes indigènes de Sardaigne*, in *L'Africa Romana* 14 (Sassari 2000), Rome, 2002, pp. 1617-1626, especially p. 1619.

16 FRANCK, *Op. Cit.* (n. 1).

17 AMANDRY-RÉMY, *Op. Cit.* (n. 1), HARPER-BAYBURTLUOĞLU, *Loc. Cit.* (n. 1). The presence of Hittite reliefs in north-western Kataonia (Firaktin, Hanyeri...: good pictures and descriptions in Horst EHRLINGHAUS, *Götter, Herrscher, Inschriften. Die Felsreliefs der hethitischen Grossreichszeit in der Türkei*, Mainz am Rhein, 2005, pp. 59-80) is not a convincing argument for a location of Kummanni at Komana. They could attest the importance of the Kataonian roads between Central Anatolia and eastern Cilicia: Olivier CASABONNE, *Brèves remarques à propos du Taurus cilicien, des Hittites aux Romains*, in *L'Asie Mineure dans l'Antiquité: échanges, populations et territoires (Actes du Colloque international de Tours, octobre 2005)*, Tours (forthcoming); *id.*, *From Cappadocia to Cilicia*, *Loc. Cit.* forthcoming (n. 13).

## THE GODDESS MĀ

In classical texts the goddess, honoured in the Komanas, is known as Mā. This name could be the abbreviation of an Anatolian mother-goddess known as Mama, a *Magna Mater*, in the second millennium<sup>18</sup>. The Romans compared her with Enyo-Bellone. She appears armoured and radiated on coins struck in the Pontic Komana during the Roman imperial period. The most interesting thing is that the weapon she holds, her symbol, is a club (or a mace)<sup>19</sup>.

Deities with a club (or mace) are not numerous in classical Anatolia. After Hellenization, which really began in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. before Alexander the Great, there was Herakles. Even if he was depicted on coins, seals, and reliefs as the Theban hero, Herakles often corresponds to local native Anatolian deities such as Santa in Cilicia<sup>20</sup>. There is also Kakasbos, the rider-god, especially (but not only) in Pisidia<sup>21</sup>. Moreover the club or the mace seems to be the symbol of the important god of Mt. Argaeus mountain, a protector of horses, possibly the Anatolian god Pirwa<sup>22</sup>: the mace replaces the traditional representation of the sacred Mt. Argaeus on coinage of Mazaka-Caesarea (Kayseri) dating to Hadrian<sup>23</sup>. All these deities with a club are male<sup>24</sup>. It was the same during the Hittite period when the mace was the weapon of the main tutelary (storm-)god of the Hittite monarchy, Tešub, and indeed of other gods<sup>25</sup>. The fact that Mā seems to be the only goddess with a club might indicate her nature and personality. Her mace may point to her mixed nature as both goddess and god, a woman

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18 René LEBRUN, *Synchrétismes et cultes indigènes en Asie Mineure méridionale*, in *Kernos* 7, 1994, pp. 145-157, especially pp. 150-151, but I do not agree with Lebrun when he writes (p. 150) that there could have been a syncretism between Mama and the Hurrian goddess Hebat (see *infra*). The hypothesis of Lebrun is easily understood: when he was writing his article, he thought – like the great majority of scholars – that Komana of Kataonia was the Hittite Kummanni where Hebat was the main goddess. We have seen that the equation Kummanni/Komana is no longer acceptable (*supra*).

19 Representations of Mā: Henri SEYRIG, *Une déesse anatolienne*, in *Antike Kunst* 13, 1970, pp. 76-78; AMANDRY-RÉMY, *Op. Cit.* (n. 1), pp. 19-20. Note the mistake in SÖKMEN, *Loc. Cit.* (n. 1), p. 125 and p. 135: the spear is not the the main weapon of Mā.

20 Emmanuel LAROCHE, *Un syncrétisme gréco-anatolien: Sandas = Héraklès*, in *Les syncrétismes dans les religions grecque et romaine (Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, juin 1971)*, PUF, Paris, 1973, pp. 103-114.

21 Louis ROBERT, *Un dieu anatolien: Kakasbos*, in *Hellenica* III, Paris, 1946, pp. 38-74; LEBRUN, *Loc. Cit.* (n. 18), pp. 147-148. See also in İnci DELEMEN, *Anatolian Rider-Gods, A Study on Stone Finds from the Regions of Lycia, Pisidia, Isauria, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Lydia and Caria in the Late Roman Period*, Asia Minor Studien 35, Bonn, 1999.

22 Olivier CASABONNE, *La divinité du mont Argée*, in *Res Antiquae* 3, 2006, pp. 191-198; *id.*, *Le dieu-taureau et la montagne divinisée: brèves remarques à propos d'un groupe de sceaux de Kültepe-Kaneš*, in M. Alparslan, M. Doğan-Alparslan, Hasan Peker (eds.), *Vita, Belkis Dinçol ve Ali Dinçol'a Armağan/Festschrift in Honor of Belkis Dinçol and Ali Dinçol*, Istanbul, 2007, pp. 133-135.

23 Nezahat BAYDUR, *Anadolu'daki Kutsal Dağlar, Dağ-Tanrılar*, Istanbul, 1994, p. 15, no. 41.

24 A statue of a god/goddess (?) with a mace has been found in Kerkenes Dağ (probably the Herodotus' Pteria), close to one of the entrances of the town: Geoffrey and Françoise SUMMERS, *Kerkenes News/Kerkenes Haberler* 8, METU Press, Ankara, 2005, p. 11. I think it could be the representation of the tutelary god/goddess (?), protector of the city.

25 For an example at Yazılıkaya see: Maurits N. VAN LOON, *Anatolia in the Second Millenium B.C., Iconography of Religions* XV/12, Leiden, 1985, pp. 23sqq.

with a male personality, a kind of Ištar-Šauška, the great Hurrian-Anatolian deity, whose character could be terrifying, dark, obscure, elusive and imperceptible like the meaning of the word *kamarra-*, and the origin of the two Komanas. Mā could have been like the “black goddess” of Samuha, which was another great hittite sanctuary, and where there were also equinoctial festival exoduses to and from Hattušša<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, the character of Ištar-Šauška, as a warrior and frightening goddess, could explain the comparison of Mā with Enyō-Bellone, Athena or Selene by the Romans (Plutarch, *Sylla* IX.4; Pseudo-Caesar, *Bell Alex.* 60; Strabo XII.2.3). Like Athena full of *metis*<sup>27</sup>, she could give light in obscurity. It is maybe why the goddess of the Komanas is radiated. Enyō-Bellone is above all a goddess of war, like Athena, who wears the aegis, made with the Gorgon's head, a symbol of death, darkness and distance, like Selene<sup>28</sup>.

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26 For the “black goddess” of Samuha: René LEBRUN, *Samuha, foyer religieux de l'empire hittite*, Publications de l'Institut orientaliste de Louvain 11, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1976, pp. 28-31. For the exoduses and the location of Samuha (on the Euphrates or in the eastern Pontic Cappadocia: *Ibid. (passim)*, CASABONNE, *Loc. Cit.* (n. 3) and Massimo FORLANINI, *La ricostruzione della geographia storica del Ponto nella tarda età del Bronzo e la continuità della toponomastica indigena fino all'età romana*, in *Istituto Lombardo (Rend. Lett.)* 131, 1997, pp. 397-422, spec. p. 408, n. 39 (with the map).

27 About the Greek notion of *metis* see: Marcel DÉTIENNE and Jean-Pierre VERNANT, *Les ruses de l'intelligence, La mêtis des Grecs*, Champs-Flammarion, Paris, 1974.

28 For the Gorgon, see Jean-Pierre VERNANT, *La mort dans les yeux*, Paris 1985. Selene: Clémence RAMNOUX, *La nuit et les enfants de la nuit*, Champs-Flammarion, Paris, 1986. The Anatolian origin of the aegis (without the Gorgon's head): Calvert WATKINS, *A Distant Anatolian Echo in Pindar: the Origin of the Aegis Again*, in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 100, 2000 (2001), pp. 1-14.