

= Cutzinas =

Cutzinas or Koutzinas (Greek : ?????????) was a Berber tribal leader who played a major role in the wars of the East Roman or Byzantine Empire against the Berber tribes in Africa in the middle of the 6th century , fighting both against and for the Byzantines . A staunch Byzantine ally during the latter stages of the Berber rebellion , he remained an imperial vassal until his murder in 563 by the new Byzantine governor .

= = Life = =

Cutzinas was of mixed stock : his father was a Berber , while his mother came from the Romanized population of North Africa . Following the reconquest of North Africa by the East Roman (Byzantine) Empire in the Vandalic War (533 ? 534) , several uprisings by the native Berber tribes occurred in the North African provinces . Cutzinas is mentioned by the eyewitness historian Procopius of Caesarea as one of the leaders of the rebellion in the province of Byzacena , alongside Esdilasas , Medisinissas and Iourphouthes . In spring 535 , however , the rebels were defeated by the Byzantine military commander Solomon in the battles of Mammes and Mount Bourgaon , and Cutzinas was forced to flee west to Mount Aurasium in Numidia , where he sought the protection of the local Berber ruler , Iaudas .

Cutzinas disappears from the record until 544 , by which time , according to the epic poem Iohannis of the Roman African writer Flavius Cresconius Corippus , he was an ally of the Byzantines and a friend of Solomon . In that year , the Berber rebellion , suppressed by Solomon after his pacification of the tribes of Mount Aurasium in 540 , flared up again in Tripolitania and quickly spread to Byzacena , where the Berbers rose up under the leadership of Antalas . This time , Cutzinas opposed the revolt , and brought his own people , the " Mastraciani " (the reading of the name is uncertain) on the side of the Byzantine military .

In 544 , Solomon was killed in battle , and over the next year the Byzantine position in Africa crumbled before the rebels . In late 545 , Cutzinas and Iaudas joined Antalas in a march against Carthage , the capital and main stronghold of the Byzantine government in Africa . Cutzinas secretly agreed with the Byzantine governor , Areobindus , to betray Antalas , when battle was joined ; Areobindus , however , revealed this to Guntharis , a Byzantine commander who was in turn in contact with Antalas and planned to betray Areobindus himself . To gain time to prepare , Guntharis advised Areobindus to take Cutzinas ' children hostage ; in the event Guntharis launched an uprising in Carthage which the thoroughly unwarlike Areobindus failed to suppress , resulting in his execution and the usurpation of the governorship by Guntharis . After his plans were revealed by Guntharis to Antalas , Cutzinas changed sides once more and allied himself with Guntharis , giving his mother and son as hostages . Along with the Armenian commander Artabanus , he was sent to pursue Antalas , scoring a victory over the rebel forces near Hadrumetum .

In winter 546 / 7 , when the new Byzantine governor and commander @-@ in @-@ chief , John Troglita , arrived in Africa , Cutzinas and his followers joined him , and participated in the expedition that saw the defeat and submission of Antalas . Shortly after , Cutzinas received the supreme Roman military rank of magister militum from Troglita . In the summer of 547 Cutzinas accompanied Troglita in his campaign against the Tripolitanian tribes under Carcasan . Before the Battle of Marta he advocated attacking the rebel forces , but the Byzantine army was heavily defeated by Carcasan and Antalas , who had once more risen in revolt . In the same winter , Cutzinas quarreled with another pro @-@ Byzantine Berber leader , Ifisdaias . Their dispute threatened to spill over into open armed conflict , but the intervention of Troglita prevented this and the official John effected a reconciliation between the two .

In spring 548 , he participated once more in Troglita 's campaign , according to Corippus at the head of no less than 30 @,@ 000 men , divided into units a thousand strong under a Berber dux each . This number possibly also includes Byzantine troops placed under Cutzinas ' command as well . During the campaign , Cutzinas and the other Berber leaders were crucial in suppressing a near @-@ mutiny of the Byzantine troops due to Antalas ' scorched earth strategy . The Berbers '

steadfast support enabled Troglita to overcome the crisis and lead his army against the forces of Carcasan and Antalas . Cutzinas fought in the ensuing Battle of the Fields of Cato , which was a decisive Byzantine victory : Carcasan fell , and the Berber revolt was crushed as Antalas and the surviving leaders submitted to Troglita .

After this , Cutzinas remained as a vassal chieftain , receiving regular pay from the Byzantine authorities . In January 563 , however , the new prefect of Africa , John Rogathinus , refused to hand over the money and had Cutzinas murdered , prompting an uprising from the latter 's children .