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**MATASUNTHA OR MASTINAS:
A REATTRIBUTION**

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To Professor Schramm,
with his notes.
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MATASUNTHA OR MASTINAS: A REATTRIBUTION

I

THE death in A.D. 534 of Athalaric, king of the Ostrogoths, left his mother and sister, named respectively Amalasantha and Matasantha, as the only surviving descendants of the great Theoderic. Athalaric was succeeded by a cousin Theodahad, who murdered Amalasantha and was in turn (536) overthrown and murdered by Witigis. The latter allied himself to the house of Theoderic by marrying Matasantha, and for four years they reigned together in Italy. Witigis surrendered to Belisarius in May 540, and his death two years later in honourable captivity left Matasantha a young and attractive widow. In 550 she was remarried to Germanus, nephew and possible successor of Justinian, and it was hoped by some that their union would hasten the end of the Gothic war and reconcile the Goths to imperial rule. But Germanus died in Autumn 550, as he was on the point of invading Italy, and his posthumous son, another Germanus, was born too late to fulfil these aspirations. He lived to hold high rank at the Byzantine court, where his daughter married the son of the Emperor Maurice, and he ultimately shared the latter's fate in being put to death by the tyrant Phocas. The date of Matasantha's death is unknown.¹

In 1835 Joachim Lelewel published a silver coin in the Cabinet des Médailles at Brussels which he attributed to the Gothic queen.² The obverse bore the head and title of Justinian, or rather what in the poor state of that particular specimen had to be construed as such; the reverse showed a monogram within a wreath. The general appearance of the coin was Ostrogothic, where a common reverse type is a monogram-in-wreath, but the letters of this monogram (Fig. *a*), which include MTDA for certain and perhaps N, I, and V, and which are supplemented by an S below, correspond to that of no known Gothic monarch. Matasantha (reading MATASVNDA) was an obvious suggestion, and Lelewel looked forward to the discovery in due course of coins bearing Amalasantha's monogram as well.

¹ The authorities for Matasantha's life are Procopius' *De Bello Gothico* and Jordanes' *Getica*. It is dealt with at length by all modern historians who have been concerned with the period. There is a good article in *RE*, s.v. 'Matasantha'.

² *Numismatique du moyen-âge* (Paris, 1835) i, 7 (pl. i, 36).

This identification was accepted without discussion by Pinder and Friedlaender,¹ by Sabatier,² by Wroth,³ by Sambon,⁴ and by Tolstoi.⁵ Wroth raised, but without attempting to decide, the question of when and where the coins were struck. In his text he attributed one specimen of apparent Ravennate fabric to the mint of Ravenna and four others of differing fabric to that of Pavia, but in the latter case he admitted to an element of doubt and in his introduction he suggested that the coins might not have been struck in Italy and during the joint reign of Witigis and Matasuntha but at Constantinople in



FIG. a



FIG. b

550 as part of a propaganda campaign to support the projected invasion of Germanus.⁶ It was left to Kraus to suggest that they should rather be ascribed to Amalasantha, despite the apparent absence of an 'L' in the monogram, since it would be curious to find coins of Matasuntha and none of her more formidable mother who had been effectively co-regent with Theodahad. The monogram would then be interpreted as DNAMALASUNTA, the cross-bar of the T providing, even if upside down, the missing L.⁷

In addition to the silver coins, there also exists a large bronze half-follis which some scholars have attributed to Matasuntha. The obverse shows the name and bust of Justinian, as does the silver coin,

¹ M. Pinder and J. Friedlaender, *Die Münzen Justinians* (Berlin, 1843), 63 (pl. vi, 8); J. Friedlaender, *Die Münzen der Ostgoten* (Berlin, 1844), 42.

² J. Sabatier, *Description générale des monnaies byzantines* (Paris, 1862) i, 204 (pl. xix, 2).

³ W. Wroth, *BMC Van.* xxxvi-xxxvii, 80-81 (pl. x, 11-14).

⁴ G. Sambon, *Repertorio generale delle monete coniate in Italia* i (Paris, 1912), 12, no. 71.

⁵ J. Tolstoi, *Monnaies byzantines*, fasc. iv (St. Petersburg, 1913), 392-3, nos. 574-8.

⁶ This idea had been put forward, only to be rejected, by Friedlaender. Modern Byzantine historians have tended to look on it with favour; cf. J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (1923) ii, 179, n. 1 and 254, n. 1, though E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-empire* ii (Paris, 1949), 596, n. 1, is sceptical.

⁷ F. F. Kraus, *Die Münzen Odovacers und des Ostgotenreiches in Italien* (Halle, 1928), 130-4, 162-6.

but the monogram on the reverse (Fig. *b*) has no more than a general resemblance to that of the silver—it includes only the letters TAND for certain, with S and K outside, and it does not include an M—and there is no smooth line inside the wreath, as there is on the silver. The coin was published by de Saulcy from a specimen in his own collection; he recognized its markedly Italian fabric, interpreted the monogram as DNIVSTINIANVS and the isolated K as a mark of value (20 nummi), and attributed the coin to the mint of Rome shortly after the Byzantine reconquest.¹ This attribution was queried by Pinder and Friedlaender,² who doubted if DN could be incorporated in a monogram and drew attention to the similarity between the monogram and that on the silver coin attributed to Matasuntha, but it was accepted without question by Sabatier³ and much later by Sambon.⁴ The ascription to Matasuntha was strongly pressed by the compiler of the catalogue of the Thomsen collection, now in the Royal Cabinet at Copenhagen, who believed that a cross stroke completing an M in the monogram on his specimen was just visible and the monogram was consequently closer to that of the silver coins than in fact it is.⁵ Wroth repeated this attribution, despite the clear absence of an M from the monogram in the British Museum specimen,⁶ as also did Tolstoi,⁷ but Kraus, though including it in his list of the coins of Matasuntha, declared in his text that he believed it to be simply a coin of Justinian.⁸

There are, then, three series of coins to be considered: (1) silver coins of 'Ravenna' fabric and 'Matasuntha' monogram, (2) silver coins of indeterminate fabric and the same monogram, and (3) bronze coins of Italian fabric with a slightly different monogram. They will be found conveniently described and illustrated by Wroth.⁹

¹ F. de Saulcy, *Essai sur la classification des suites monétaires byzantines* (Metz, 1836), 17 (pl. ii, 8). A specimen of the coin had already been described by P. F. Caronni in his catalogue of the Wiczay collection (*Musei Hedervarii in Hungaria numos antiquos graecos et latinos descripsit . . . M. A. Wiczay* (Vienna, 1814) ii, 390, no. 4456).

² *Op. cit.* 55.

³ *Op. cit.* 184, no. 48 (pl. xiv, 7).

⁴ *Repertorio*, no. 118.

⁵ *Description des monnaies du moyen-âge de Christian Jürgensen Thomsen* [by K. Erslev] i (Copenhagen, 1873), no. 1013 (pl. ii, 1013). Dr. G. Galster, the Keeper of the Royal Cabinet, has been kind enough to inform me that this cross-stroke does not really exist and that the monogram is of the normal type. Thomsen's specimen had previously been in the Münter collection, through the catalogue of which (*Museum Münterianum*, Par III [by C. J. Thomsen], Copenhagen, 1839, p. 41, no. 8993) it had been known to Friedlaender.

⁶ *BMC Van.* 81, no. 6; cf. *Intro.* xxxvi.

⁷ *Monnaies byzantines*, fasc. iv, 393–4, nos. 579–80.

⁸ *Op. cit.* 165–6.

⁹ *BMC Van.* 80–81, nos. 1–6 (pl. x, 11–15).

The first series need not detain us long, for the coins are forgeries. They are the work of a famous Italian forger, Luigi Cigoi (1811–75) of Udine. His products cover a wide field, but two of his particular interests lay in the fabrication of the smaller silver and bronze coins of the fifth and sixth centuries and in the production of coins attributable by reason of mint-mark or style to such local mints as Aquileia and Ravenna.¹ His models for these were the normal issues of mints elsewhere in the Roman Empire, and it was therefore natural for him to produce 'Ravennate' specimens of the coins of 'Matasuntha' based on published illustrations or perhaps specimens of normal fabric which he had seen. Wroth was aware that forgeries existed,² but his source, unfortunately, described and did not illustrate them and it never occurred to him that his 'Ravennate' specimen might be one. Cigoi's private collection, which contained many of his forgeries, passed in due course to the Museo Civico at Udine, and when I visited it in 1953 to inspect the forgeries I found there two further specimens from the same dies. The condemnation of this coin carries with it an anomalous coin attributed to Witigis, which Wroth noted as being identical in style with the 'Matasuntha' coin.³

The half-folles of Italian style need also not long detain us. Their Italian origin is indisputable. They have the heavy wreath characteristic of the mints of the peninsula and sometimes found in Africa but never at any eastern mint. They are not African, however, for the style of bust has no affinity with any of those used at Carthage. This fact, coupled with some scanty indications regarding provenance, allows us to assign the coins to Italy.⁴ Whether they should be ascribed to Ravenna or Rome cannot at present be stated with confidence, but I incline to regard Rome as the more likely of the two. De Saulcy's interpretation of the monogram as DNIVSTINIANVS can be accepted in default of anything better, though I am not happy about it. In any event, it is clear the monogram lacks an M and can have nothing to do with Matasuntha, so it need not be further discussed here.

¹ The essential articles on Cigoi's work are F. Trau, 'Neue Fälschungen römischer Münzen', *NZ* iii (1871), 105–42; B. Willner, 'Moderne Fälschungen römischer Münzen des Luigi Cigoi in Udine', *ibid.* xxvii (1895), 115–24; and L. Brunetti, 'Ultimata la monografia sul falsario Luigi Cigoi', *RIN* lix (1957), 105–19.

² *BMC Van.* 80, n. 3. His source was Willner, art. cit. 123, no. 84.

³ *BMC Van.* 78, no. 7 (pl. x, 4) and n. 1; cf. *Introd.* l.

⁴ One of Tolstoi's specimens was bought in Venice, and my own, which comes from Lord Grantley's collection, was accompanied by a note in his handwriting saying that it came 'from Italy'. No hoard evidence is known to me.

There remains, then, only the second series of silver coins. Wroth and other scholars who have discussed them have admitted that they are not obviously Italian in style and fabric; they are only attributed to Italy because a monogram-in-wreath is a common reverse type of Ostrogothic coins and the monogram can, though not without some difficulty,¹ be interpreted as that of Matasuntha. The identification of the latter would break down completely if the non-Italian origin of the coins could be demonstrated. It can in fact be shown that they were minted at Carthage, or at any rate by moneyers from the Carthage mint.

This assertion is based mainly on grounds of style and fabric, but is supported by what little is known regarding the provenance of these rare coins. The stylistic resemblance to coins of Carthage can be most clearly seen by comparing the busts of *BMC Van.* pl. x, 12-14, with those of *BMC Byz.* pl. ix, 11, 13, 14, 17; x, 5-8; there is exactly the same treatment of the emperor's robe, with a clearly marked 'epaulette' on each shoulder and evenly spaced folds of drapery between. Nothing like it is found on Italian coins of the period. The same is true of the 'wreath'² on the reverse, with a plain inner line separating it from the monogram in the field. Such an inner line is never found on Italian coins, but it occurs on a fairly common series of pentanummia, which by chance are not represented in *BMC* but of which a good specimen is illustrated in Tolstoi (pl. 26, 471) and which, on grounds of style, provenance, and overstriking, can be shown to be African in origin,³ and it is also found on the nummi with *Vot. XIII* and *Vot. XIV* (i.e. *Anno XIII* and *Anno XIV* of Justinian's reign, 539/40 and 540/1) which correspond to the dated folles and their fractions of these years.⁴

There are also two aspects of the fabric of the 'Matasuntha' coins

¹ Kraus, *op. cit.* 132-3, has correctly noted that there is a real phonetic difficulty, since a *p* in this position in the word would be unlikely to be rendered as *d*.

² It should really be termed a pseudo-wreath, for the leaves are indicated by hatching and are all in the same direction, so that it has neither top nor bottom. A true wreath is composed of two separate halves, tied together below, so that the lines of the leaves run upwards on each side and meet at the top, often in an ornament of some kind.

³ Cf. the style of the bust of Tolstoi 471 with that of the 'Matasuntha' coins. Tolstoi 470 shows one of these coins overstruck by another pentanummium of the Carthage mint, and I have seen other specimens with the same overstriking. I have also records of these coins having been found at Carthage.

⁴ *BMC Van.* 28-29, nos. 86-93 (pl. iii, 43, 44). All but three of these are of known African provenance, though similar coins are sometimes found in Italy and even in the Balkans. The movements of Justinian's armies account for the unusually wide dispersal of the small denominations, a normal characteristic of which is their extremely local use. The appearance of a line within a wreath is occasionally also found on later issues of Carthage, e.g. *BMC Byz.* pl. xiii, 3 (Justin II).

which bear out their African origin. The first is the matter of die-positions. The dies of late Roman and Byzantine coins were normally adjusted $\uparrow\downarrow$, sometimes $\uparrow\uparrow$, and virtually never, except at Carthage, $\uparrow\rightarrow$. Whatever the cause may have been—probably the use of square-headed dies aligned by eye¹—the appearance of the die-position $\uparrow\rightarrow$ can be regarded as absolutely specific of North African origin; when the phenomenon is found at another mint, as it is at Alexandria and Seleucia on coins struck during the reign of Heraclius, there are good historical reasons for postulating a migration of moneymen from Carthage as the explanation.² The normal die relationship on Ostrogothic mints is also $\uparrow\downarrow$, while the prevalence of $\uparrow\rightarrow$ is found at Carthage under both Vandalic and Byzantine rule. The fact that $\uparrow\rightarrow$ is common on the 'Matasuntha' coins—e.g. 3 out of the 4 BM specimens and both the specimens in the author's collection—argues strongly for Carthaginian origin.³ So does the fact that the dies are often so badly centred that much of the design is off the flan, sometimes leaving a substantial rim of flattened metal. This feature can be clearly seen by comparing *BMC Van.* pl. x, 13 ('Matasuntha') with pl. i, 8, 11 or pl. ii, 15, 19, all of these being Vandalic. Though less specifically 'Carthaginian' than abnormality of die-position, it is sufficiently characteristic to be useful in picking out coins of this mint without looking at the mint-mark if one is sorting coins quickly.

Finally, what little I have been able to discover regarding the provenance of the 'Matasuntha' coins supports an African origin. The British Museum acquired a specimen in 1849 as part of the Doubleday purchase of coins from Tunis which supplied it with a substantial part of its Vandalic series,⁴ and another specimen (no. 3) came to it in the company of a silver coin of Gunthamund;⁵ the specimen in the Royal Collection at Copenhagen was acquired from C. J. Falbe, who was Consul-general in Tunis 1820–33 and 1835–8;⁶ and I was shown some years ago a specimen bought by a soldier in Constantine during

¹ Cf. J. G. Milne, *Greek and Roman Coins and the Study of History* (1939), 45.

² Cf. my article 'The Isaurian Coins of Heraclius', *NC* 1951, 61–62.

³ Of the 30 Ostrogothic coins in the author's collection, 21 have die positions $\uparrow\downarrow$ and 9 have $\uparrow\uparrow$, with no $\uparrow\rightarrow$. Of 17 Vandalic coins, 4 have $\uparrow\downarrow$, 8 have $\uparrow\uparrow$, and 5 have $\uparrow\rightarrow$.

⁴ This specimen is mentioned in the register but is not one of those now in the museum, and was presumably discarded as being a duplicate of those acquired in 1853 and 1854. The Doubleday collection had been formed in north Africa by Sir T. Reade.

⁵ *BMC Van.* 9, no. 8.

⁶ This specimen is not Thomsen 1012, which the Museum did not retain, but Dr. Galster has suggested to me that the Thomsen specimen probably also came from Falbe.

the last war. Too much stress cannot be laid on such isolated pieces of evidence, for relations between Italy and North Africa were at that time so close, especially in view of the coming and going of armies during the 530's and 540's, that coins originating in one country are quite commonly found in the other, but they do at least afford a modest element of support to the view which on stylistic and technical grounds must I believe be accepted, that the 'Matasuntha' coins were struck in North Africa and not in Italy. This being the case, all possibility of ascribing them to Matasuntha must be abandoned and a new explanation for them must be found.

II

Such an explanation is not far to seek. The coins can be well ascribed to Mastinas, whom we hear of as king of Mauretania in 535, shortly after the overthrow of the Vandal kingdom. The monogram can be satisfactorily interpreted as *d(ux) Mastinas* or *d(ominus) n(oster) Mastinas*, either of which accounts for all the letters which it contains, or possibly as *Mastinadis*, assuming a genitive form of the name which is conceivable if not very likely. It is true that Mastinas was never master of Carthage, but this was not necessarily a condition for their striking. The fact that the coins bear both the name and portrait of Justinian and the monogram of a Moorish king can be understood when we take account of the circumstances of the time.

At the date of Belisarius's arrival and the Roman reconquest (533-4) the influence of Roman civilization in North Africa was a shadow of what it had once been. Only in northern Numidia, Zeugitana, Byzacium, and parts of Tripolitania were there still large tracts of country inhabited by Latin-speaking provincials, and even these settled areas were subject to constant encroachments and Moorish raids. Farther afield the Byzantines, like the Vandals before them, were able to hold on to only a few ports which could maintain contact with Carthage by sea. The Moors were themselves divided into numerous tribes or confederations, whose bad reputation for disloyalty and untrustworthiness was fully justified by their incessant feuds and the ever-changing patterns of their alliances. Each of the former Roman provinces was menaced by its own particular group of enemies. Tripolitania was permanently threatened by the Louata. Zeugitana and Byzacium, particularly the latter, were terrorized by miscellaneous bands ruled by such chieftains as Coutzinas, Esdilas, Iourphouthas, Medisinissas, and Antalas, of whom the first and the

last were the most important. Southern Numidia was ruled by Iaudas from his strongholds on Mt. Aurès and much of central Numidia and eastern Mauretania (*Mauretania Sitifensis*) by Ortaias and perhaps Massonas. Farther west, by now virtually beyond the range of Roman influence or interests, Mastinas was king of the Moors of central Mauretania (*M. Caesariensis*). The region south of Oran had been ruled earlier in the century by a certain Masuna, but his kingdom may have passed by the time of Belisarius' arrival to Mastinas, since Procopius calls the latter king 'of all the barbarians in Mauretania'. The position of *Mauretania Zeugitana*, still farther to the west, is almost completely obscure; since only Ceuta (*Septem*) and a few isolated localities remained in Roman hands.¹

The relationship between the Moorish chieftains and the Roman government was a curious one, since they regarded themselves as subjects of the emperor even when they were at war with him and engaged in ravaging imperial territory. Antalas, during the campaign of 544, wrote to Justinian protesting his loyalty; as soon as an obnoxious governor was recalled and the payment of customary subventions was resumed he would be only too happy to return to his allegiance.² Their normal title was that of *dux* or *rex*, though one of them, probably only during the Vandal period, called himself *imperator*. They regarded Moors and provincials equally as their subjects. Masuna, in an inscription found at Lamorcière (*Altaua*) which is dated 508, styles himself *rex gentium Maurorum et Romanorum*,³ and a certain Masties, an undated monument to whom was found at Arris in Numidia in 1942,⁴ is entitled *dux et imperator* and vaunts himself as ruling impartially over both peoples ('nunquam periuravi neque fidem fregi neque de Romanis neque de Mauris'). They did not

¹ The chief sources are Procopius and Corippus, helped out by a few inscriptions. The best modern accounts are C. Diehl, *L'Afrique byzantine* (Paris, 1896), 41 ff., 299 ff., 333 ff., and C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955), 65 ff., 325 ff. There is some diversity of opinion regarding the precise location and extent of the lands ruled by the various Moorish 'kings'. A sketch-map indicating some of the possibilities will be found in Courtois, 334.

² Procopius, *De Bello Vandalico* ii. 22, 7-10 (Loeb edn. ii, 402).

³ *CIL* viii, 9835. It is conveniently reproduced by Courtois, op. cit. 378, no. 95. Courtois doubts, I think correctly, the widely accepted identification of this *Masuna* with a *Μασωνᾶς* who appears in Procopius (*B.V.* ii. 13, 19) under 535. Wroth, *BMC Van.* xx, xxvii, 39, conjecturally attributes some nummi with blundered legends to *Masuna*, but this is certainly incorrect. The coins in question were presented to the Museum by Mr. Jesse Haworth, who financed an early archaeological expedition of Flinders Petrie, and they come from excavations in Upper Egypt. The legend which Wroth read as *MNASMA* is blundered from *DNANASTA(sius)*.

⁴ J. Carcopino, 'Un "empereur" maure inconnu, d'après une inscription latine récemment découverte dans l'Aurès', *Rev. ét. anc.* xlvi (1944), 94-120. Courtois dissociates himself from a number of Carcopino's conclusions.

feel fully secure unless they had received investiture from the emperor or his representative. When Belisarius first arrived in Africa, the Moors of Mauretania, Numidia, and Byzacium sent envoys to him declaring their readiness to submit and demanding in return the symbols of office—a staff of silver gilt, a silver crown, a white burnous and tunic, and gilded boots—to which they were accustomed.¹ They were in a real sense client kings, if in practice highly recalcitrant to obeying imperial commands.

From the point of view of the Roman government at Carthage, however, all these kings were not equally important. Those of Tunisia and the regions immediately adjacent had to be kept in some sort of subjection if Byzantine Africa was to be viable at all; those farther afield could be treated with a greater show of courtesy as the semi-independent potentates allied to the empire which in fact they were. They were less like the Ostrogoths in Italy, who remained in theory subject to imperial authority and whose rulers claimed to be acting on imperial behalf, than like the Franks or Burgundians, whose 'clientship' was only a mask for complete independence. Clovis might be gratified by an honorary consulate² and Sigismund of Burgundy with the rank of patrician,³ but these were courtesy titles, and the independent rulers of these remote provinces only appear in the pages of Byzantine historians when, like Theodebert of Austrasia, they themselves ventured to attack what the government in the sixth century regarded as being still imperial territory. The same unfortunately for us, is true of Africa, and the Moors produced no John of Bicular or Gregory of Tours who might have supplemented the inadequacies of Procopius and Corippus, Byzantine writers who very naturally describe the two Moorish wars of 534–9 and 544–8 simply as they affected the still Byzantine provinces of Numidia, Zeugitana, and Byzacium. The names which figure in their story are those of men like Antalas and Coutzinas and Iaudas whose importance was relative, arising from their proximity to the Roman settlements, rather than that of a more distant chieftain like Mastinas, whose absolute importance may well have been much greater than theirs.

¹ Procopius, *B.V.* i, 25, 1–9. There is an excellent discussion of the status of these chieftains in Diehl, *op. cit.* 319 ff.

² Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* ii, 38. He received not merely a patent of nomination but the appropriate robes, and went so far as to imitate at Tours the ceremonial of a consular procession.

³ Avitus, *Epist.* 9 (ed. R. Peiper in *Mon. Germ. Hist., Auctores Antiquissimi* vi (2), 43). The context, a letter to the patriarch of Constantinople, implies that the title was acquired by imperial grant and not self-assumed.

The little that we know of Mastinas¹ can be briefly told. The ruler of *Mauretania Caesariensis* was, by implication, one of those who made their submission to Belisarius in 533, receiving in return his staff of office and other insignia,² and though the old provincial capital of Cherchel (Caesarea) on the coast was occupied by Byzantine naval forces in 534 the hinterland was left undisputedly in Moorish hands.³ It is at the opening of Solomon's first campaign in the Aurès (535) that we hear by name of Mastinas 'who rules the barbarians in Mauretania', for he had allied himself with Iaudas to deprive another chieftain Ortaias of his kingdom,⁴ but although Solomon attacked Iaudas we hear nothing of operations against Mastinas, presumably because he was too far away to be easily molested. Nor do we hear of hostilities against Mauretania at any subsequent date,⁵ even though it offered a safe refuge for defeated Moors and rebel Romans: Stotzas, one of the latter, fled to Mauretania in 537 and married one of its ruler's daughters,⁶ and Iaudas was a refugee in the country between 539, when Solomon expelled him from the Aurès, and 545 or 546, when he returned to associate himself with the revolt of Antalas.⁷

The power and importance of the native kings of Mauretania at this time can fortunately be judged by evidence independent of the partial narratives of Procopius and Corippus. There exist near Tiaret two great groups of funerary monuments known as the *Djedar*, thirteen pyramidal structures, some of them over 100 ft. high, with bases of squared stones and elaborate tomb chambers in their interiors.⁸ Their approximate date can be deduced from the fact that two of them include re-used stones bearing inscriptions of A.D. 466

¹ The identity of the *Μαστινῶς* of *B.V.* ii. 13, 19, with the *Μαστιγῶς* of ii. 20, 31 is scarcely open to question. Diehl prefers the form Mastigas, but Courtois notes that the root MSTIN is attested by Libyan inscriptions and that Mastinas must be the correct form (op. cit. 336, n. 7). The name is presumably identical with that of two kings of the Massyles in the first century B.C. who appear on their coins as MSTNS (in Punic characters) and one of them in Cicero as *Mastaneosus*; it is usually rendered *Mastennis* in modern works (J. Mazard, *Corpus nummorum Numidiae Mauretaniaeque* (Paris, 1955), 55-56). The further identification of Mastinas with the *Masties* of the Arris inscription is unlikely on chronological grounds.

² Above, p. 127, n. 1.

³ *B.V.* ii. 5, 5; ii. 20. 31-32.

⁴ *B.V.* ii. 13, 19.

⁵ Unless Solomon's annexation of *Mauretania Sitifensis* in 539, after the overthrow of Iaudas and his allies, be construed as such (*B.V.* ii. 20, 30). But I doubt if this province was part of Mastinas' kingdom. Procopius certainly does not suggest that it was.

⁶ *B.V.* ii. 17, 35. The ruler in question is not named. ⁷ *Ibid.* ii. 20, 21; 25, 3.

⁸ See S. Gsell, *Les Monuments antiques d'Algérie* ii (Paris, 1901), 418-27, an account largely based on the detailed study of R. de la Blanchère in *Archives des missions scientifiques*, 3rd ser. x (1883), 77-99. Cf. Courtois, op. cit. 335-6 and pls. xi, xii.

and 480, while one of them has a bilingual inscription in Greek and Latin, now unfortunately illegible, in which it is probable that the name of 'Solomon the Strategos' could once be read.¹ It is reasonable to attribute these monuments to Mastinas and his predecessors and successors. 'Évidemment, comme l'a exposé La Blanchère, cet ensemble de grands mausolées est l'œuvre d'une dynastie de puissants princes indigènes, qui vivaient au VI^e et au VII^e siècle. Peut-être souffraient-ils que l'empereur de Constantinople les considérât comme ses sujets, ou du moins comme ses clients; peut-être rendirent-ils hommage à son représentant en Afrique. De fait, ils étaient maîtres du pays.'² This Moorish principality of Mauretania was strong enough to put up a determined resistance to the advance of the Arabs in the second half of the seventh century.

Mastinas, then, whom we know to have been ruling in A.D. 535, was from the Roman point of view a client king too far away to be conquered but close enough to be worth some degree of attention and flattery. His position was analogous to that of Clovis in Gaul and Sigismund in Burgundy, and there is no reason why he should not have had coins analogous to that of the Burgundians and Ostrogoths bearing the emperor's name and effigy on one face and his own monogram on the other. Since the coins formerly ascribed to Matasuntha can be assigned with certainty to Africa, have their closest affinities in coins struck at Carthage in 539/40 and 540/1, and have no other probable explanation for their monogram than that it belongs to some client king,³ it seems reasonable to assign them to Mastinas. The monogram has in it the letter D as well as those required by the name of this ruler, but this may stand for *dux* or *dominus*, since even if it was not very usual there is no insuperable objection to the abbreviated form of a title being incorporated in a monogram.⁴

¹ A medieval Arab historian alleges that the inscription was legible in the tenth century, and that it declared one of the tombs to be a triumphal monument to Solomon. This interpretation must be written off as highly imaginative, but it implies that Solomon's name could be read and gives an approximate date, for an inscription of Mastinas might well refer to the imperial representative at Carthage (Gsell, op. cit. ii, 425-6).

² Ibid. 426.

³ An imperial representative in Carthage seems out of the question, quite apart from the fact that the letters do not fit the names of any of the governors at this period. The monogram could conceivably be that of a mint, like that found on some sixth-century issues of Ravenna, but there is no obvious locality in North Africa which would suit.

⁴ Monograms are frequently in the genitive case, and one is tempted to envisage some such form as *Mastinadis*, which would account for all the letters without requiring the incorporation of a title. But the most probable form used by Latin speaking provincials for the genitive of *Mastinas* would be *Mastinae*.

Whether the coins were struck at Carthage itself, perhaps for the payment of a customary subvention, or by Mastinas himself at some unknown mint, is a point we can scarcely hope to settle. It would be quite unusual for an imperial mint to strike coins in the name of a client king, but Byzantine mints were more flexible in their operations than is often admitted, and the existence of such coins might be held to imply a recognition by Mastinas of imperial authority which could not but be welcome to the authorities at Carthage. On the other hand, we know from Cassiodorus that moneyers from official mints were not above abandoning their proper duties in order to work for private persons,¹ and moneyers from Carthage who settled in Mastinas' service in Mauretania would bring at least their technical skills with them. Either solution is possible, and there for the moment the matter must be left, with the certainty that the coins are not Matasuntha's and at least a strong probability that King Mastinas of Mauretania should take her place.

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¹ Cassiodorus, *Variae* v, 39 (ed. T. Mommsen in *Mon. Germ. Hist., Auct. Antiq.* xii, 165). He is referring to conditions in Visigothic Spain early in the sixth century.