

# A Flood at Tarsus

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The historian John of Nikiu, writing in the 690s C.E., offered in his *Chronicle* (chapter 100) a list of natural disasters that occurred in the time of the Byzantine emperor Maurice (582–602 C.E.). Among them was a flood at Tarsus:<sup>1</sup>

And likewise in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia the same befell; for the river, named Euphrates, which flows through the city, rose at midnight and submerged one division of the city, named Antinoaea [ *'ensena* ], and destroyed many buildings. And a stone tablet was found in the river

<sup>1</sup> H. Zotenberg, *La chronique de Jean, évêque de Nikiou* (Paris, 1883), 301 (Ethiopic, on the basis of two of the four manuscripts), 416 (French); R. H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu* (London, 1916), 163 (quoted here, modified). On John's text, see W. E. Crum, "Notes of Recent Publications," *JEA* 4 (1917): 207–209; M. Rodinson, "Notes sur le texte de Jean de Nikiu," in *IV Congresso internazionale di studi etiopici* (Rome, 1974), 127–37; J.-M. Carrié, "Jean de Nikiu et sa *Chronique*," in *Événement, récit, histoire officielle*, ed. N. Grimal and M. Baud (Paris, 2003), 155–72; G. Fiaccadori, "John of Nikiu," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* I, ed. D. Thomas and B. Roggema (Leiden 2009) 209–18; A. Soldati, "Copto apotrits: greco topoteretes?" *ParPass* 65 (2010): 127–36. I am most grateful to Gianfranco Fiaccadori and Lucas von Rompay for guidance about the Ethiopic, the manuscripts, and the bibliography. Abbreviations used here follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 2012), xxvi–liii.

with the inscription: "This river will destroy many of the buildings of the city."

The passage seems to have escaped the notice of students both of Tarsus and of Antinous, perhaps justly. Against John's report stands a formidable obstacle—Mt. Amanus, and the 250 kilometers that separate Tarsus from the Euphrates. The Euphrates cannot ever have flooded Tarsus,<sup>2</sup> which instead was divided by the Cydnus River. And Byzantine readers knew an epitaph for Julian, who died in Mesopotamia, his body carried from there by the army to be buried in a suburb north of Tarsus:<sup>3</sup> "by the silvery Cydnus from the waters of Euphrates" (Κύδνω ἐπ' ἀργυρόεντι ἅπ' Εὐφρήταο ῥοάων), decidedly separate.<sup>4</sup> In John's account, either the Euphrates is wrongly identified, or Tarsus in Cilicia.

The book of John of Nikiu hangs by a slender thread. We have neither his Coptic original from the 690's nor its Arabic translation of unknown date, but

<sup>2</sup> H. Zotenberg, "Mémoire sur la Chronique byzantine de Jean," *JourAsiatique* VII.13 (1879): 318, called "Euphrates" a "strange error."

<sup>3</sup> Amm. Marc. 23.2.5, 25.9.12; at 25.10.4–5, in *pomerio situm itineris quod ad Tauri montis angustias ducit*, and in sight of the Cydnus.

<sup>4</sup> T. Preger, *Inscriptiones graecae metricae* (Leipzig, 1891), 30, no. 35; the poem is known from Zonaras and Cedrenus.

an Ethiopic translation of the lost Arabic, made in 1601 by the cleric Mehreka Dengel and known from four manuscripts dating ca. 1700. The Arabic version would have been unpointed.<sup>5</sup> The Ethiopic is unambiguous about both Tarsus in Cilicia and the Euphrates, *ṭorsos zakileq(e)yā* (manuscript B; manuscript A: *zakālek(e)yā*) and *ʾéfrātos*. But there is much room for error in transmission and translation.

What John reports would befit the true river at Tarsus. The Cydnus flowed through the middle of the city, as was well known,<sup>6</sup> and was prone to flooding. Procopius gives a list of natural disasters in the reign of Justinian, in one of which the Cydnus flooded “nearly all” of Tarsus (*Anec.* 18.40 *σχεδόν τι πᾶσαν*). In his laudatory and longer version in *Aed.* (5.5.14–20 *σχεδόν τι ὅλον*), he describes Justinian’s engineering solution, the partial diversion of the Cydnus into a second stream.<sup>7</sup> The flood under Maurice implies that the solution was insufficient; thus the error in John of Nikiu would seem likely to be “Euphrates” rather than “Tarsus.”

There is however another possibility to be considered. Near the Euphrates and on one of its tributaries stood the town of Tarsa, some twenty-eight kilometers west of Samosata, on an important east-west road and by the bridge that carried that road over the tributary.<sup>8</sup> Our earliest reference to the town is in the *Parthica* of Asinius Quadratus, written under Severus Alexander: “down river from Samosata 150 stades is Tarsa, a populous village (*Τάρσα κώμη πολυάνθρωπος*) situated

<sup>5</sup> Charles, *The Chronicle of John*, vi.

<sup>6</sup> Xen. *An.* 1.2.23 *διὰ μέσσην*; Strab. *Geog.* 14.5.12 (quoted below); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.17 *διὰ μέσσην*; Philostr. *V.Apol.* 1.7 *ποταμὸς τε αὐτοῦς διαρρεῖ Κύδνος, ᾧ παρακάθηνται, καθάπερ τῶν ὀρνίθων οἱ ὕγροί*; Procop. *Aed.* 5.5.14 *κατὰ πόλιν μέσσην*; Leo Diac. *Hist.* 3.10 *κατὰ μέσον αὐτό*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. John of Ephesus in W. Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre* (Liverpool, 1996), 112: “most of Tarsus, the great city of Cilicia, was overwhelmed, submerged and destroyed by the water.” Zotenberg, “Mémoire”: 318, wondered whether John of Nikiu had mistaken the date and transferred the flood under Justinian to the time of Maurice. But Procopius and John of Ephesus both describe more extensive flooding under Justinian than to a single neighborhood, hence a different event from John of Nikiu’s flood—which perhaps was ameliorated by Justinian’s canal.

<sup>8</sup> References at E. Honigmann, “Tarsa,” *RE* 4A (1932): 2409–10, and F. Hild and H. Hellenkemper, *Kilikien und Isaurien, TIB* V.1 (Vienna, 1990), 428–39. Cf. T. A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey* IV (London, 1990), 172. D. Kennedy, “Greek, Roman and Native Cultures in the Roman Near East,” in *JRA* Suppl. 31.2 (1999): 91 fig. 2, gives a good photograph of the tributary and its bridge.

fifteen stades from the river [i.e., the Euphrates].”<sup>9</sup> In its westward course from Samosata, as the valley widens, the Euphrates is at its most treacherous; spring floods are many (cf. Amm. Marc. 18.7.9), and the riverbed has shifted repeatedly. Flooding at Tarsa can be expected when the Euphrates is at its highest; indeed, the site is under water today, owing to the construction of dams on the Euphrates. It is possible that one of the copyists or translators of John’s text took the obscure “Tarsa” to be Paul’s city and hyperemended it, explaining it by adding the familiar “of Cilicia” (especially as the ending of the name seemed to him wrong).<sup>10</sup> But this probably attributes too much initiative to the transmitter. Moreover, only a *polis*, not Quadratus’ village, could possess John’s “division of a city” and bestow on it an honorific name; the consular historian is likely to have known the facts, perhaps at first hand. Thus in John’s account, Tarsus is surely right, and Euphrates wrong.

If John wrote “Euphrates,” he might in fact have been echoing an ancient scientific claim: Damastes in the fifth century B.C. had reported that one could sail up the Cydnus to Persia and the Euphrates; this was denied by Eratosthenes, whose denial in turn was cited by Strabo (*Geog.* 1.3.1).<sup>11</sup> But we must doubt that John had read any of those three geographers. Again, the error “Euphrates” might instead reflect a simple lapse of thought, whether by John or a copyist; similarly, in a paragraph of Strabo (*Geog.* 12.2.8), the manuscripts twice give “Euphrates” where the Halys has been recognized.<sup>12</sup>

But in the case of John’s Cilician Euphrates, I suggest that an error of the eye is the most likely, for a cause can be surmised in the Arabic intermediary. The Arab geographers knew Tarsus’ river as *al-baradān*, “the cold one.”<sup>13</sup> By contrast, Euphrates was simply

<sup>9</sup> *FGrHist* 97 F 11, from Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. *Τάρσος*.

<sup>10</sup> T. τῆς Κιλικίας: e.g. John Malalas *Chron.* 15.13; Theophanes *Chron.* pp. 29.30, 46.14, 128.32, 467.15 de Boor; Amm. Marc. 23.2.5 *Tarsum Ciliciae*. The phrase had been made canonical by scripture: Acts 21:39 *Ταρσεὺς τῆς Κιλικίας*, 22:3 *ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας*.

<sup>11</sup> On the passage, see A. B. Breebaart, “Eratosthenes, Damastes, and the Journey of Diotimos to Susa,” *Mnemosyne* IV 20 (1967): 422–31.

<sup>12</sup> See F. Lasserre, *Strabon* IX (Paris, 1981), 153–54.

<sup>13</sup> Hild and Hellenkemper, *Kilikien*, 327, citing Yaquṭ I 553, 558, III 526 *Wüstenfeld*. The iciness of the Cydnus was notorious: Strab. *Geog.* 14.5.12 *ψυχρόν τε καὶ τραχὺ τὸ ῥεῦμά ἐστιν*, Plut. *Alex.* 19.1 *καταπαγέντι*, Leo Diac. *Hist.* 3.10 *ψυχρὸς τε καὶ διεϊδής*.

transliterated, *al-furât*. In an unpointed text, confusion of the two names could be easy enough:

*al-baradân* البردان

*al-furât* الفرات

Faced with the unfamiliar name, the Ethiopic translator mistook it for the most famous river of Asia.

So the city is Tarsus and the river is the Cydnus, and the error “Euphrates” is not John’s but the translator’s. We know that Maurice rebuilt or repaired the church of St. Paul at Tarsus;<sup>14</sup> perhaps that was in the train of this flood (though the location of the church in Tarsus is not known). John’s addition to our geographical knowledge is not a novel path for the Euphrates, but rather the name of a district of Tarsus: the city had a region seemingly named “Antinoeia.” Here lies the more difficult and interesting problem; and again the rub is textual.

H. Zotenberg in 1879 rendered *’enṣena*, the name of the flooded district, as: “Antoniana or Antoniopoli?”<sup>15</sup> The implication would be that Tarsus changed the name of a district to honor Antony at some time in the 30s B.C. His favors to the city are on record: Tarsus had supported him and was rewarded with freedom (Cass. Dio *Hist.* 47.30–31) and tax immunity (App. *B.C.* 5.7). But how likely is it that this name survived to the sixth century C.E.?

Only a very few cities in the Greek world changed their names to honor Roman commanders in the late Republic.<sup>16</sup> As to Antony, Apollonia on the Maeander in Caria was for a time renamed Antonioupolis; but already under Augustus (not surprisingly), the name was repudiated and replaced by “Tripolis,” although it is twice mentioned (as past) in the time of the Flavii.<sup>17</sup> Strabo, moreover, represents Tarsus as suffering under a dictator imposed by Antony, then being saved by one imposed by Augustus (*Geog.* 14.5.14); doubtless this is mere Augustan propaganda, but even propaganda gives us grounds to think that a toponym honoring

Antony would not have survived the Augustan regime. In general, we should doubt that such renamings for Antony, if there were any besides Carian Apollonia, survived his *damnatio*,<sup>18</sup> and especially doubt that any endured to the time of Maurice in the sixth century.

Four years later, in his edition, Zotenberg translated instead “Antinoaea.” He did not say what reading or thought led him to this change: his apparatus does not indicate a difference or a difficulty in the texts of his two manuscripts (the other two have not been collated). In any case, behind Ethiopic *’enṣena*, he then sought to recognize Arabic *’anṣinā*, the Arabic name of the city Antinooupolis/Antinoe in Egypt; in this he was followed by R. H. Charles. The implication is that Tarsus renamed one of its neighborhoods for the late Antinous. Again, how likely might that be?

The cities of the empire mourned noisily upon the death of Antinous in September 130 C.E.; of statues and cults there were many.<sup>19</sup> Tarsus did commemorate Antinous on several of its coins; but more than two dozen other cities did likewise.<sup>20</sup> Renaming civic tribes for royal personages was an established form of honor already in the Hellenistic period. Some emperors and their kin were so honored: thus the tribes *Hadrianis* at Athens,<sup>21</sup> *Agrippensis* and others at Nysa, *Hadriane* and others at Ephesus, *Antonina* at Prusa, *Antoniane* and others at Prusias ad Hypium and at Nicomedeia.<sup>22</sup> But how many cities, apart from Hadrian’s new foundation Antinooupolis/Antinoe in Egypt, made for Antinous the grand gesture of renaming a geographical part of the city and not just a group of persons? Only one seems to be on record: Athens in 131/2 added a deme the *Antinoeis* to the tribe *Hadrianis* that had been created in the 120s.<sup>23</sup> But the Athenians had an

<sup>18</sup> On which see J.-L. Ferrary, “Contribution à l’histoire du sanctuaire de Claros,” *CRAI* (1999): 838–39. See Plut. *Cic.* 49.4, *Ant.* 86.5.

<sup>19</sup> Various illustrations in L. Robert, *A travers l’Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1980), 132–38, and P. Goukowsky, “Sur une épigramme de Thespies,” in *L’épigramme de l’Antiquité au XVIIe siècle*, ed. J. Dion (Nancy, 2002), 217–46.

<sup>20</sup> G. Blum, “Numismatique d’Antinoos,” *Journal international d’archéologie numismatique* 16 (1914): 33–70, who held that all these issues date from 134 and later.

<sup>21</sup> Dimly reflected at *HA Hadr.* 20.4, *multas civitates Hadri-anopolis appellavit, ut ipsam Karthaginem et Athenarum partem.*

<sup>22</sup> References in N. F. Jones, *Public Organization in Ancient Greece* (Philadelphia, 1987); for Ephesus, cf. D. Knibbe, *Forschungen in Ephesos* IX.1.1 (Vienna, 1981), 107–109.

<sup>23</sup> See S. Follet, *Athènes au IIe et IIIe siècle* (Paris, 1976), 119–21; M. Zahrnt, “Die ‘Hadriansstadt’ von Athen,” *Chiron* 9 (1979): 393–98.

<sup>14</sup> Theophyl. Sim. *Hist.* 8.13.16 (“built,” δέμασθαι).

<sup>15</sup> Zotenberg, “Mémoire”: 318.

<sup>16</sup> See C. P. Jones, “Appia in Phrygia and Appius Claudius Pulcher,” *Studi ellenistici* 13 (2001): 233–41.

<sup>17</sup> Chr. Habicht, “New Evidence on the Province of Asia,” *JRS* 65 (1975): 83–84, Ἀντωνιοπολεῖται νῦν δὲ Τριπολεῖται [*I.Ephesos* 13.ii.26–7]; Plin. *HN* 5.111 *Tripolitani iidem et Antoniopolitae*. Cf. L. Robert, “Documents d’Asie Mineure,” *BCH* 107 (1983): 505 = *Documents d’Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1987), 349. This is the only city renamed for Antony in Jones’s survey (“Appia in Phrygia”: 235).

extraordinarily close relationship to Hadrian—he was their former eponymous archon, with a gymnasium named for him (Paus. 1.18.9), and recently initiated at Eleusis.

No such relationship could be claimed for Tarsus. In early 131, on his way to Greece from Egypt, Hadrian might have debarked in order to visit Tarsus, but there is no report of this.<sup>24</sup> It is certain, however, that he stopped in Athens, and was busy there: during this visit he must have set about two of his famous initiatives, the completion of the Olympieion and the foundation of the Panhellenion. Athens had good reason now to create or rename a deme *Antinoeis*. For Tarsus to vote such an unusual honor, by contrast, might have seemed an arrogation.

Moreover, Christian writers, beginning already with Justin Martyr in the 150s, were vocally contemptuous of Antinous and his deification.<sup>25</sup> And Tarsus, no mean city, claimed a special place in Christian history, as the city of Paul. Still in the time of Maurice, Tarsus gave birth to its second great apostle, Theodore, who would become the energetic and trilingual Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>26</sup> Christian Tarsus is unlikely to have maintained any commemoration of Antinous.

Thus neither “Antoniana” nor “Antinoe” seems a credible name for a district of sixth-century Tarsus. I suggest therefore another rendering. It may well be that the Arabic translator wrote *ʿanṣinā*, as Zotenberg came to think:<sup>27</sup> that is, the translator saw something in the Coptic original that he mistook for an Arabic place-name that he knew well, *ʿanṣinā*, the city Antinoe/Antinoupolis.<sup>28</sup> But what was in John’s Coptic? Consider again unpointed Arabic:

ʿnṣnā اصبا or genitive ʿnṣnī اصسى  
ʿnṣnī اطسى

The two are close enough to allow confusion in the Ethiopic translator. I propose that Zotenberg’s first impression *Antoni-* was right, but that what John wrote was *Ἀπτωπ(ιπ)-* (whatever the ending): that is, the district of Tarsus was called in Greek *Ἀπτωνίη* / *Ἀπτωνιανή* / *Ἀπτωνίεια* / *Ἀπτωνιανή*, or even the condensed *Ἀπτώνεια*. The name derived not from Antonius or Antinous, but from an emperor Antoninus.<sup>29</sup> If there has been syncopation of the ending by the time the word reached the Ethiopic, that is no surprise; already in Greek, all five of these variants are found in the honorific Antonine names of cities and festivals.<sup>30</sup>

Of such honorific titles, widespread but especially frequent in Cilicia, Tarsus, as its coins show,<sup>31</sup> acquired first the names *Hadriane/Hadrianeia*, then *Commodiane, Severiane*, and, from Caracalla, *Ἀπτωνιανή*, which is found also in syncopated form already under Caracalla, *Τάρσου Ἀπτωνιανῆς Σευηριαν(ῆς)*.<sup>32</sup> The short form *Ἀπτωνιανή* is in fact the more common version on Tarsian coins. And in its place some coins offer a noun, Antoninoupolis: *Ἀδρ(ιανῆς) Σεουηρ(ιανῆς) Ἀπτωνεινουπόλ(εως) Ταρσοῦ* (so e.g. *SNG Paris* 1488–93). This, in contrast to the adjectives, is a rarity,<sup>33</sup> but

<sup>24</sup> H. Halfmann, *Itinera principum* (Wiesbaden, 1986), 207–209.

<sup>25</sup> Justin *I Apol.* 29; cf. Athenag. *Apol.* 30, Origen, *C.Cels.* 3.36.

<sup>26</sup> Bede *HE* 4.1.8 for Theodore’s dates; cf. W. Stubbs, “Theodore of Tarsus,” in *Dictionary of Christian Biography* IV (London, 1887), 926–32. As to Tarsian voyagers, recall also Demetrius of Tarsus, who explored the islands off of Britain for the Flavian emperors: Plut. *Mor.* 4.19E and R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright, *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* I (Oxford 1965), 222, nos. 662–63. Strabo noticed that educated Tarsians liked to travel (*Geog.* 14.5.13).

<sup>27</sup> When Antinoe in Egypt is mentioned in John’s *Chronicle*, ch. 73 (Zotenberg, “Mémoire,” 67), it is correctly *ʿenṣina* and not *enṣena* as in ch. 100 about the flood.

<sup>28</sup> Rodinson (“Notes”: 136 n. 33) has stressed what Zotenberg also saw, that the translator “modernized many names of peoples that were unknown to him.”

<sup>29</sup> As to *Antoneia* for Antonine titles: thus regularly the festival in Athens, the name from M. Aurelius and then Caracalla (Follet, *Athènes*, 323–24); one list juxtaposes *Ἀπτινία* and *Ἀπτόνεια*, not confused (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3015, Severan). Cf. at Thyateira, τῶν μεγάλων Ἀπτωνήων (*TAM* V 1024); at Laodiceia on the Lycus, Ἀπτωνῆα Γετέα Ὀλύμπια (*I.Laodikeia* 60); see L. Robert, *Opera minor selecta* I (Amsterdam, 1969), 633 n. 5. A late author claimed that the Gordians were called both Antoninus and Antonius (*HA Gord.* 4.7). In John ch. 74 (p. 67 Zotenberg) where an emperor Antoninus is mentioned, it is as *ʿenṣonagos*.

<sup>30</sup> On the indifferent use of these endings, see L. Robert, “Les inscriptions,” in *Laodicée du Lycos*, ed. J. Des Gagniers (Quebec, 1969), 285 n. 3.

<sup>31</sup> See W. Ruge, “Tarsos,” *RE* 4A (1932): 2424–25; W. Leschhorn, *Lexicon of Greek Coin Inscriptions* II (Vienna, 2009), 248–49; in an inscription, we find also *Ἀπτωνειανή* (*I.Cilicia* 30, under Severus Alexander).

<sup>32</sup> E.g. *BM Coins Lycaonia* pp. 195 ff. nos. 182 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Thus Aegeae in Cilicia (Leschhorn, *Lexicon* II, 35–36, under Caracalla) and Constantina in Mesopotamia (Amm. Marc. 18.9.1). Cf. K. Belke, *Pamphylien und Honorias* (*TIB* XI [Vienna, 1996]), 172, about Paphlagonian *Antoniopolis* (*Tab. Peut.* sect. VIII) or *Antoniapolis* (J. Schnetz, *Itineraria romana* II [Leipzig, 1940], 31–38): against the idea of H. Kiepert that this be emended to *An-*

reportedly the Tarsians would have had a precedent in their short-lived name Juliopolis (Cass. Dio *Hist.* 47.26).

An emperor would in any case be a far more likely candidate than Antony or Antinous for the grand honor of renaming a part of a city, and for its survival into the sixth century. It would presumably reflect gratitude for some material benefaction. While a number of emperors were called Antoninus, the coins of Tarsus point to Caracalla as the honorand. Other coins reveal that Caracalla once diverted Egyptian grain to Tarsus, and that he once held the civic office of *demourgos*; it is probable that he visited Tarsus on his

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*tinoopolis* (criticized by Hirschfeld, “Antinoupolis,” *RE* I [1894]: 2441), Belke suggested emending to *Antoninopolis*, from Caracalla. The proposed referent, Caracalla, is convincing; but textual emendation is not needed to achieve this. G. Hill, *British Museum Catalogue of Coins, Palestine* (London, 1914), lxxxi, followed e.g. by E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1981), 492, claimed the noun Antoninopolis for Emmaus-Nicopolis (re-founded by Elegabalus); but the coins do not prove more than the adjective, at fullest Ἀντωνινί(ανῆς) Νικοπόλεως, see Leschhorn, *Lexicon* II, 185–86.

progress through Anatolia in 215, the likely occasion of the office.<sup>34</sup>

Thus the import of the passage of John of Nikiu is that Caracalla sponsored at Tarsus some monument that consequently gave its name to a neighborhood, some donation typical of the age such as a stoa or bath<sup>35</sup> or gymnasium or tetrapylon. It happens that virtually the only topographical detail known about ancient Tarsus is that its Hellenistic gymnasium of the *neoi* stood beside the river.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps this was repaired or replaced by Caracalla.

<sup>34</sup> M. Rostowzew, “ΔΩΡΕΑ ΣΙΤΟΥ ΤΑΡΣΩ,” *NC* iii.20 (1900): 96–107; R. Ziegler, “Münzen Kilikiens als Zeugnis kaiserlicher Getreidespenden,” *JNG* 27 (1977): 34–56; Halfmann, *Itinera* 138, 228.

<sup>35</sup> In Antioch, we are told, Agrippa built a bath, named τὸ Ἀγριππιανόν, and attendant buildings; the area was called “the neighborhood of the Agrippitai”: καλέσας τὴν γεινίαν Ἀγριππιτῶν (John Malalas *Chron.* 9.14). In Nicomedia was a bath named “the Antoninus”: τὸ βαλανεῖον τὸν Ἀντωνῖνον (Procop. *Aed.* 5.3.7).

<sup>36</sup> Strab. *Geog.* 14.5.12 διαρρεῖ δ’ αὐτὴν μέσην ὁ Κύδνος παρ’ αὐτὸ τὸ γυμνάσιον τῶν νέων. In the episode under Justinian, it was the southern suburbs that were the first to be flooded (Procop. *Aed.* 5.5.17 τὰ μὲν Ταρσέων προάστεια πάντα ὅσα πρὸς μεσημβρίαν τετραμμένα ἐτύγγανε).