

# A New Reading of *Method* Proposition 14 : Preliminary Evidence from the Archimedes Palimpsest (Part 1)

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To the memory of Wilbur Knorr (1945–1997)

## I Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The Archimedes Palimpsest, referred to in Heiberg [1910–1915] as ‘Codex C’, had a complicated history that is understood only in part (see e.g. Netz [2000]). Originally a tenth century manuscript containing several works by Archimedes, it was palimpsested as a Greek prayer book in the twelfth or thirteenth century, and then remained unknown to the scholarly world until it was rediscovered in Istanbul at the end of the nineteenth century. The manuscript was then briefly studied by Heiberg, mostly during a visit made in 1906.<sup>2</sup> This led to Heiberg’s second edition of Archimedes’ works. The manuscript then disappeared from Istanbul, perhaps in the aftermath of the First World War. Following a long period of obscurity it finally re-appeared in 1998 in a Christies’ sale in New York. The current owner has deposited the manuscript at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, for the purposes of conservation, imaging and research, which will lead to a complete facsimile and edition of the manuscript.

As is well known, the manuscript is unique in several ways: it provides our only Greek text for *On Floating Bodies* and for the *Stomachion*, and, most important,

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<sup>2</sup>Heiberg’s study was mostly based on an incomplete set of photos taken during that 1906 visit. This set of photos is in the Royal Danish Library, Ms. Phot. 38, currently on loan to the Walters Art Museum, and provides important insight to Heiberg’s approach as an editor.