

Arrhidaeus and the Desire to Diagnose: A New Approach to the Heidelberg Epitome

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Abstract: *This paper treats the Heidelberg Epitome (BNJ 155) as a part of the manuscript in which it was found (Codex Palatinus Graecus 129). Several basic features of the manuscript that have gone unnoticed in Classical scholarship offer new light on the obscure text we call the Heidelberg Epitome. First, the identity of the manuscript's creator is known, contrary to what is stated in standard editions of the Heidelberg Epitome. Well-known 14th-century polymath Nicephorus Gregoras created this manuscript as a personal reference tool, and his methods of taking notes and using them later have been observed. Second, many long sections of this manuscript summarize extant texts and, where they depart from their exemplars, they exhibit intrusions of 14th-century intellectual preoccupations. A brief survey of Gregoras' summaries of Arrian's *Anabasis* and *Indica* and his use of scholia to Lucian illustrate his methods of transcription. By comparing this material to Gregoras' arrangement of the Heidelberg Epitome, I argue that several unique features of that text make more sense when seen as the result of the 14th-century context in which it was selected for preservation. In particular, the idea that Philip Arrhidaeus lived with epilepsy is most likely to be a 14th-century conjecture.*

Keywords: *Philip Arrhidaeus, Nicephorus Gregoras, Heidelberg Epitome, epilepsy, diagnosis, textual transmission*

This paper seeks to reevaluate the so-called *Heidelberg Epitome* and its potential contributions to our knowledge of late fourth-century BCE Greek history. This short text has been known to historians of the early Hellenistic period since the 19th century, when the manuscript in which it was found was first an-

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alyzed, and shortly thereafter the two pages containing the *Heidelberg Epitome* were edited into the first edition of the *Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* by Felix Jacoby. Recently re-edited in the much more accessible *Brill's New Jacoby*, the epitome is becoming ever less obscure. While most of the information conveyed by the text can be found in other, better understood sources, its one unique feature potentially offers crucial information about the life of Philip III Arrhidaeus, the immediate successor of Alexander the Great. This text is the only source to name a specific medical condition (epilepsy) for Arrhidaeus that could explain some of the unusual aspects of his reign. As I will argue, however, this is bad information that must be discarded from the historical record of the fourth century BCE. Instead, the diagnosis can be explained by reference to the 14th-century environment in which the manuscript was created. It thus constitutes valuable evidence for late medieval intellectual history as it pertains to the transmission of ancient texts. In what follows, I will explain what the *Heidelberg Epitome* is, and what it has contributed thus far to conversations on Hellenistic history. I will then seek to reorient the discussion of this two-page series of excerpts by restoring it to the context of its original home in a late Byzantine manuscript in order to show that treating this text as an artifact of the 14th-century sheds new light on the information it conveys, especially the physical and mental health of Arrhidaeus.

The *Heidelberg Epitome* is an abbreviated version of an earlier text that appears near the end of a long manuscript currently residing in the Heidelberg University Library (*Codex Palatinus Graecus* 129).¹ The author of the original, non-abbreviated version is not known, and the text covers the years 323–316 BCE in a somewhat less than linear chronology. There are four excerpts, ostensibly from the same original, although potentially drawn from more than one source, as I will discuss below. These excerpts contain little that

¹ Information and high-resolution photos can be found at: <https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.4105>. For the *Heidelberg Epitome*, see BNJ 155 with Meeus's commentary and up-to-date bibliography. The epitome appears on ff. 137v and 138r. For ease of reference, I will use the BNJ numbering (F = fragment) to cite passages from the *Heidelberg Epitome*, and folio (f = folio) and line numbers to cite other parts of the manuscript.

cannot be found in other less enigmatic sources. The major exception is that the *Heidelberg Epitome* is the only source to diagnose Alexander's brother and successor, Philip Arrhidaeus, with epilepsy (BNJ 155 F1.2).

The appearance of a named medical condition that could have affected Arrhidaeus's ability to rule has appealed to many, but there are problems with pursuing this diagnosis that must be dealt with before we can proceed. First, epilepsy was not considered a disqualifying condition for a king in the fourth century BCE, so even if Arrhidaeus lived with epilepsy, we would still need to explain why the principal stakeholders in the Macedonian court (including Arrhidaeus himself) initially excluded him from consideration as Alexander's successor.² Epilepsy is also, despite the consistent use of the term and its cognates, far from a simple diagnosis. Its causes, nature, and implications have been defined differently at different times, sometimes radically so.³ Additionally, there is no supporting evidence for this detail beyond the *Heidelberg Epitome* and no way to explain why a medical condition that was widely known, discussed, and studied throughout antiquity has left no mark on the tradition, while several implausible stories about Arrhidaeus have.

I must address here a passage in Justin that some have seen as corroborating evidence. In their commentary on Justin 13.2.11, Yardley et al. assert that the phrase *valetudo maior* is a synonym for *morbus maior*, which Celsus (3.23.1) identifies as an alternative name

² E. Carney, "The Trouble with Philip Arrhidaeus," *AHB* 15.1 (2001) at 73 n. 48; J. Yardley et al., *Justin and Pompeius Trogus: A Study of the Language of Justin's Epitome of Trogus* (Toronto 2013) ad Justin 13.2.11. G. Squillace, in M. Agostini et al., *Affective Relations and Personal Bonds in Hellenistic Antiquity* (Oxford 2020) 51–61 at 58 offers several parallels for Arrhidaeus's alleged epilepsy, but each of them held an official position (king, general, etc.) and so had not been disqualified from those positions for reasons of mental health; accordingly, we should not presume that Arrhidaeus would have been so disqualified.

³ R. Lo Presti, in W. Harris, *Mental Disorders in the Classical World* (Leiden 2013) 195–222 demonstrates that, in fifth- and fourth-century Greek medical thought, the disease was considered physical and its effects on mental ability were debated; for the Byzantine period, see G. Makris "Zur Epilepsie in Byzanz," *ByzZ* 88.2 (1995) 363–404.

for epilepsy.⁴ While the words *valetudo* and *morbus* certainly can both mean illness, they are not entirely interchangeable, and, when used in a technical or quasi-technical medical phrase, it is not possible to treat them as synonymous without extensive justification.⁵ The phrase *valetudo maior* is quite rare, and I have not been able to find any examples of it used to refer unambiguously to epilepsy.⁶ In an earlier work, Yardley cited a passage in Fronto's correspondence as a possible parallel.⁷ In that passage, which I quote here in full, the adjective *maiores* does not modify the noun *valetudinem*, but instead is part of the prepositional phrase *maiores in modum*:

Cervicum dolores si tertio quoque die remiserint, erit quod meam valetudinem maiores in modum adiuvet, mi magister.

If your neck pains subside, even on the third day, that will be what helps my health the most, my teacher. [Fronto, *Aur.* 15.30 (=74.6)]

⁴ Yardley, et al. (2013) *ad loc.* Celsus is not alone, of course. This interpretation is rather old, e.g. O. Dykes, *Justin's History of the World from the Assyrian Monarchy Down to the Time of Augustus Caesar* (London 1712) at 157 translates the phrase "falling sickness," which is yet another name for epilepsy. The idea took hold in the 19th century, when it was debated among commentators, perhaps owing to a renewed scientific interest in epilepsy, for which see O. Temkin, *The Falling Sickness* (Baltimore 1971) at 255–299. I record here, because such things slip out of the conversation over time, an interesting suggestion from J. Jeep, *Trogi Pompei Historiarum Philippicarum Epitoma* (Leipzig 1859) at 77. He points out that it is palaeographically easy to mistake the abbreviated form of "animorum" (āiorum) for "maiores" when the previous word ends in m, as in the case of *valetudinem*. If the manuscript's "valetudinem maiores" is an error and the original read "valetudinem animorum," it would be possible to see that phrase a reflection of the ψυχικά πάθη mentioned by Diodorus 18.2.2, which is not a term for epilepsy. Jeep does not explain the change from -orum to -orem.

⁵ D.R. Langslow, *Medical Latin in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 2000) at 16–25 discusses methods for identifying synonymous technical terms in Latin medical texts.

⁶ M.T. Sblendorio Cugusi, *I sostantivi latini in -tudo* (Bologna 1991) at 263–271 surveys its uses and does not report its use in a context of epilepsy. A search for "valetudo magna/maior/maxima" on the Brepols Cross Database Search Tool returns 19 results, and its most common use by far is as a wish for good health in medieval and Renaissance Latin epistolography.

⁷ J. Yardley, *Justin and Pompeius Trogus: A Study of the Language of Justin's Epitome of Trogus* (Toronto, 2003) at 146.

The context of this passage does not suggest a technical use of the term *valetudo* either. The letter is from Marcus Aurelius, whose illnesses are not known to include epilepsy, and he is writing in general terms about his own health without offering a specific diagnosis. Thus, the passage in question does not support an interpretation of Justin's *valetudinem maiorem* as epilepsy, and it is best to view the *Heidelberg Epitome* in isolation.

Beyond the practicalities of this diagnosis, there are some issues pertaining to the practice of diagnosing diseases in people from the distant past that need to be considered. There are problems of evidence – we cannot examine these people, and even if we could, most historians are not qualified to make medical diagnoses. More importantly, however, forcing a modern medical framework onto social situations from the distant past carries a significant risk of misunderstanding the ancient context. As Helen King has argued, to insist on a single explanatory framework may devalue alternatives to the point that they become impossible to see, thus limiting our ability to understand the nuances of the cultural systems we are approaching.⁸ In a chapter on ancient Greek conceptions of intellectual disability, Goodey and Rose have argued that the practice of retrospective diagnosis all but assures that an inappropriate set of assumptions will be brought to bear in any given scenario, medicalizing what was not considered medical, and obscuring the reality of individuals who lived with characteristics that may or may not have affected their social standing.⁹ These scholars urge a relentless process of contextualization in the assessment of literary evidence, and the *Heidelberg Epitome*, with its tempting use of a medical term that is more or less legible to modern audiences, provides an ideal experimental space for deploying such an approach. To do so, it will be helpful to return that text to the environment in which it was found, long before it appeared in an online database that cannot replicate its physical properties.

The bibliographical essay in the *BNJ* edition of the *Heidelberg*

⁸ H. King, *Hippocrates' Women: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London and New York 1998) at 3–11.

⁹ C.F. Goodey and M.L. Rose in C.F. Goody and M.L. Rose (eds.), *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity: Disparate Bodies A Capite ad Calcem* (Leiden 2013) 17–44.

Epitome states that, “nothing is known of the excerptor,” but this is incorrect. The manuscript was created by the 14th-century polymath Nicephorus Gregoras, as has been demonstrated on palaeographical grounds.¹⁰ The manuscript is tidy and there is a great deal of room in the margins for future notes, but the hand is not as elegant as Gregoras is capable of (fig. 1), and the contents are not organized in any obvious order.¹¹ For these reasons, it is generally thought to have been a collection of Gregoras’s personal reading notes, intended for his own future use but not dissemination to others through copying. Indeed, several of his published works draw on these notes, sometimes updating and correcting what is found in this manuscript, meaning that Gregoras himself treated the texts he copied as potentially malleable.¹² This will be important to bear in mind while assessing notes that do not appear elsewhere. In some places, Gregoras is clearly using earlier excerpts, and in others he himself has done the condensing work.¹³ Without the original, we cannot know for sure which category this early Hellenistic his-

¹⁰ I. Ševčenko, “Some Autographs of Nicephorus Gregoras,” in F. Barišić, *Mélanges Georges Ostrogorsky II. Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta VIII* (1964) 435–450 at 443–450; A. Biedl, “Der Heidelberger cod. Pal. gr. 129, die Notizensammlung eines byzantinischen Gelehrten,” *WJA* 3 (1948) 100–106.

¹¹ For a contrasting sample of Gregoras’s handwriting, see British Library Edgerton MS 2624 f. 307r. At the end of a manuscript of Thucydides, Gregoras has written a pinax of Xenophon’s *Hellenica*, leaving the first letter of each line blank for a specialist to finish; this is clearly a more formal context and the writing is accordingly less hurried, the letters are formed more clearly, and there are fewer ligatures and abbreviations.

¹² See for example C. Giacomelli, “Un altro codice di Niceforo Gregora: il Laur. Plut. 83, 3, fonti degli estratti nel Pal. gr. 129,” *QS* 80 (2014) 217–241 at 228–30; I. Pérez-Martín, “El Escorialensis X. I. 13: una fonte de los extractos elaborados por Nicéforo Gregorás en el Palat. Heidelberg. Gr. 129,” *ByzZ* 86–87 (1993) 20–30 at 20 n. 3 collects further examples.

¹³ For instance, in the left margin on f94v, Gregoras has labeled his notes on Pausanias as “Pausanias from Planudes,” referring to the excerption created by Maximus Planudes; cf. F. Williams “Neapolitanus II.C.32: A New Source for the text of Pausanias,” *Scriptorium* 36.2 (1982) 190–218 at 202, and Biedl, *WJA* 3 (1948) at 104. Zingg “Uno Sguardo Lidiano allo Stemma della *Synagoge* di Massimo Planude,” *Néa Páwn: Rivista di ricerche bizantinistiche* 17 (2020) at 202–221 observes that even in this case, Gregoras altered the arrangement of his exemplar.

tory belongs to, but the identification of Gregoras provides a significant context within which to understand the various peculiarities of this text, since his habits, interests, and impulses are well documented elsewhere and offer a window into the meaning this small set of notes may have had at the moment of its creation.¹⁴ A consideration of the manuscript as an object therefore offers a promising new framework for approaching individual parts of it.

Gregoras was born at the very end of the 13th century and lived until c. 1360, meaning that, as an adult, he experienced a time of civil war and religious controversy.¹⁵ He was directly involved in the latter, and he was personally acquainted with numerous prominent intellectual and political figures of his time. He read and wrote widely, and he was generally interested in science, mathematics, theology, and history. Although he sometimes commented on medical affairs, the extent of his formal training in medicine is questionable. All of these interests are reflected in the relevant manuscript.¹⁶ His *Roman History*, covering the years 1204 to 1358, has been shown to draw from his notes in this manuscript, and includes discussions of the mental health of two recent Byzantine Emperors (John Vatatzes

¹⁴ E. Treharne, *Perceptions of Medieval Manuscripts: The Phenomenal Book* (Oxford 2021) argues persuasively that much is lost by ignoring the physicality of a book and the relationship between an object and its creators and users.

¹⁵ E. Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance* (Leiden 2000) at 357–373 gives a detailed overview of Gregoras's life and career with accompanying bibliography upon which this paragraph is primarily based. See also L. Neville, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge 2018) at 243–245, H.V. Beyer, "Eine Chronologie der Lebensgeschichte des Nikephoros Gregoras," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 27 (1978) 127–55, J.L. van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras: Rhomäische Geschichte* (Stuttgart 1973) at 1–35, and R. Guiland, *Essai sur Nicéphore Grégoras* (Paris 1926) at 3–54. For the disputed dates of Gregoras's birth and death, see the comprehensive bibliography discussed in D. Manolova, "Who Writes the History of the Romans? Agency and Causality in Nikephoros Gregoras' *Historia Rhomaïke*," *New Europe College Black Sea Link Yearbook* (2014–15) 97–123 at 112 n. 17.

¹⁶ Regrettably, the section misidentified by Treu as "medical texts" turns out to be [Demades] *On the Twelve Years*. See H. Haupt, "Excerpta aus der vollständigen Rede des Demades περί δωδεκαετίας," *Hermes* 13 (1878). Treu's original analysis is available here: https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/de/bpd/virtuelle_bibliothek/codpalgraec/beschreibungen/cpgraec129.html

and Theodore Lascaris) who were thought to have a form of epilepsy, and, in accordance with one line of contemporary medical thinking, a resulting form of madness.¹⁷ It is worth noting that Gregoras devoted space in his history (1.50.1) to discussing the correct diagnosis of Vatatzes, and elsewhere displayed familiarity with the theory that the motions of the moon affected the symptoms of epilepsy (*Epistulae* 69.99), showing that he actively investigated such issues. With such demonstrated research interests in mind, we can now begin to appreciate how Gregoras chose what to read and also how he approached his reading tasks.

Other parts of the manuscript present shortened versions of extant classical texts, which lets us see how Gregoras worked. To get an idea of how Gregoras interacts with a text, we can look at a few examples from his notes on Arrian's *Anabasis* and *Indica* (*Cod. Pal. Gr.* ff. 126v–129r). These works, often treated as a unit, of course survive to the present day, making it easy to observe Gregoras's methods. Arrian's works, these two at least, were widely available during Gregoras's life (five 14th-century copies still exist) and Gregoras's summary does not match any other known epitome, so it is reasonable to conclude that the notes found in this manuscript are original work by Gregoras.¹⁸ There are several features of his work that are worth observing here.

Some changes are minor and easy to ignore. For instance, Gregoras sometimes uses an Atticizing form of Greek as he excerpts from the *Indica*, which Arrian wrote in careful imitation of the Classical

¹⁷ Ševčenko, in *Mélanges Georges Ostrogorsky* 447–450 discusses information found in Book 7 of the *Roman History* that draws on f. 37v of the present manuscript. For the epilepsy of Vatatzes and Lascaris see Gregoras, *Roman History* 1.50.1 and 1.60.2 respectively. There is some debate about Lascaris, for which see J. Lascaratos and P. Zis, “The Epilepsy of Theodore II Lascaris (1254–1258),” *The Journal of Epilepsy* 11 (1998) 296–300 and D. Angelov, *The Byzantine Hellene: The Life of Emperor Theodore Lascaris and Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge 2019) at 381–389. For connections between epilepsy and disordered thinking in medieval thought, see Temkin, *Falling Sick* 97–98.

¹⁸ For the extant manuscripts, see P. Stadter in F.E. Cranz, *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Mediaeval Latin Texts and Translations*, vol 3 (Washington D.C. 1976) 1–20 at 2–3.

Ionic dialect.¹⁹ Lists of names might appear in the wrong order. Gregoras might use a different verb of speaking than Arrian does to introduce a quotation. Such changes are well within the normal range of variation found in texts copied by hand, and they do not fundamentally alter the content or presentation of the original. Other changes are more substantial and reveal various reading and interpretative practices that are relevant to our understanding of the *Heidelberg Epitome*.

For example, there are apparent errors. While summarizing a passage in which Arrian names the two gods worshipped in Arabia (Ouranos and Dionysus), Gregoras substitutes Heracles for Ouranos.²⁰ Heracles and Dionysus are a natural pair in terms of Alexander's mythical models, and they appear together elsewhere in Arrian, but not here, nor does this error occur in the extant manuscripts of the *Anabasis*.²¹ In this case, Gregoras must have either misread something or let his attention lapse. Similarly, Gregoras confused at least one geographical detail in a way that alters the meaning of the original text. At *Anabasis* 7.20.3–6, Arrian names two islands off the coast of Asia near the mouth of the Euphrates: Icarus and Tylos. When Gregoras copied out this passage (*Cod. Pal. Gr.* 129 f.128r 25–26), he initially made it a single island called “Icarus’ Island.” He caught his mistake and attempted to fix it by writing the name of Tylos above the line (figure 2), but the impression this leaves on a reader coming to the corrected page for the first time is that it was Arrian who named Icarus’s island Tylos, so the two islands remain conflated. Again, this is clearly a mistake, and ultimately it is a trivial point, but it demonstrates the potential dangers of relying on this codex alone for any given text.

There are, moreover, instances of apparent manipulation that ought to give us pause when approaching this manuscript. A good example is the story of Alexander’s attempt to achieve immortality

¹⁹ As at *Cod. Pal. Gr.* 129 f. 128v l. 28, when Gregoras writes ἀπιστεῖν instead of Arrian’s ἀπιστεῖνσι (*Indica* 16.8).

²⁰ *Cod. Pal. Gr.* 129 f. 128r ll. 24–25; cf. Arrian *Anab.* 7.20.1.

²¹ For Heracles and Dionysus as Alexander’s mythical models, see R. Stoneman, *The Greek Experience of India: From Alexander to the Indo-Greeks* (Princeton, 2019) at 80–98.

by deception. There is a tale, which Arrian reports on the authority of an unnamed source, in which Alexander perceives that his death is near and attempts to engineer the appearance of an apotheosis by flinging himself into the Euphrates under cover of night. It was only the swift actions of his wife Roxane that prevented him from completing this plan. Gregoras excerpted this story using the exact words that Arrian did, but he omits the source citation, and that surrounding context constitutes an important difference. For Arrian, this story was the crowning example in a list of stories about Alexander that he finds so obviously false that they do not even require refutation. Gregoras, however, implies that Arrian is the source for the story. If we did not have the original text of the *Anabasis*, we might conclude that Arrian was different kind of historian than he really was. Whatever motivated Gregoras to make such changes, whether it was a creative impulse or simple carelessness, the fact that he does so at least some of the time rules out the assumption that his reproductions of lost exemplars are as precise as modern scholars might hope.

A related issue is that Gregoras also adds to the text to clarify points that seem unclear to him. The story of Alexander's march through Gedrosia is illustrative. During the march, Alexander performed one of his most famous acts of exemplary leadership. After many days of marching without water, some of Alexander's men found a small supply, collected it in a helmet, and brought it to Alexander, who then poured it out in front of everyone without drinking any of it. The implied message is that Alexander was suffering along with his men and would not ask them to endure any hardship he was not willing to face himself. Arrian calls this an excellent example of Alexander's leadership qualities, but he focuses on the effect the action had on the troops while leaving Alexander's thought process implicit:

τὸν δὲ λαβεῖν μὲν καὶ ἐπαινέσαι τοὺς κομίσαντας, λαβόντα δὲ ἐν ὄψει πάντων ἐκχεῖν· καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε τῷ ἔργῳ ἐς τοσόνδε ἐπιρρωσθῆναι τὴν στρατιὰν ζύμπασαν ὥστε εἰκάσαι ἂν τινα πότον γενέσθαι πᾶσιν ἐκεῖνο τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ πρὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐκχυθέν. τοῦτο ἐγώ, εἴτερ τι ἄλλο, τὸ ἔργον εἰς καρτερίαν τε καὶ ἅμα στρατηγίαν ἐπαινῶ Ἀλεξάνδρου.

And he took [the helmet full of water] and praised the ones who brought it. And taking it in view of everyone, he poured it out. And at this deed, the whole army was strengthened to the point

that one would think that the water poured out by Alexander was a drink for everyone. I praise this deed more than any other, as far as Alexander's strength and generalship are concerned. (Anab. 6.26.3)

Gregoras evidently found Arrian's summarizing statement lacking, and when he excerpted this passage he added a more explicit explanation for Alexander's actions:

ὁ δὲ λαβὼν ἐνώπιον πάντων ἐξέχεεν ἰσχυρὸν κρίνας τῶν ἄλλων τὴ δῖψαι κακοπαθοῦντων αὐτὸς εὐπαθῆς. Καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε ἦσθη πᾶσα ἡ στρατία.

And taking it, he poured it out in front of everyone, judging it absurd that while the others suffered terribly from thirst, he himself should feel fine. And at this deed, the whole army was pleased. (Cod. Pal. Gr. 129 f.128r 6–7)

This addition is significant, since in other passages, Gregoras has omitted motivations discussed at length by Arrian. Here, he supplies an explicit motive that Arrian had withheld, but with no indication that it is *not* coming from Arrian. Again, whatever Gregoras's authorial purpose may have been, it is clear that he adds to the texts he copies when he feels it is necessary, even if it means departing from the phrasing and purpose of the original.

Gregoras's summary of Arrian's *Anabasis* and *Indica* is largely accurate, but he has made many changes, both consciously and unconsciously to the text. He is also selective, and nearly all of the material he preserved dealt with political or military developments, or geography, a theme reflected throughout the entire manuscript.²² Fittingly for a historian of Byzantine civil wars, he is especially interested in troubled transfers of power, and it seems that he adds short texts as they come to mind. After his notes on Arrian, he appends a series of shorter notes, all drawn from scholia to the works of Lucian. These examples are telling, because they connect thematically to what comes before, while being drawn from many sources, and they display the same tendency towards textual manipulation.

The three passages that follow (fig. 3) share an interest in trans-

²² In addition to Treu's 1888 analysis cited above (n. 16), a less complete but more up-to-date summary of the manuscript's contents is available here: <https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/cote/32460/>.

fers of power, and also display some of the re-writing tendencies we saw with the Arrian material. In the first, Gregoras repeats a scholion to Lucian that summarizes part of the first book of Xenophon's *Anabasis* explaining the origins of the Persian civil war, and he has departed from the text found elsewhere by adding in the details of Xerxes' name, and then also glossing Xerxes above the line.²³ The next two passages are valuable chiefly because they cover the same period while presenting different authors' versions. The first is from Dexippus's lost *Events after Alexander*,²⁴ and the second is from Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*.²⁵ This feature is noteworthy, because in the *Heidelberg Epitome*, key events repeat in multiple extracts, suggesting that they may potentially be drawn from different sources, which would further complicate the interpretation of this text. For instance, Arrhidaeus and his wife Eurydice die twice (*BNJ* 155 F1.5 and F2.2).

A more detailed look at the Dexippus note shows that Gregoras has once again expanded on the material he found elsewhere. I print here the text side by side with the standard phrasing:

ad Lucian 22.25.14 Rabe (= <i>BNJ</i> 100 F31)	<i>Cod. Pal. Gr.</i> 129 f.129r 23–24
Οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς διάδοχοι ἦσαν Ἀλεξάνδρου, καὶ ὁ μὲν Περδίκκας συνδιώκει Ἀριδαίῳ τῷ βασιλεύοντι μετ' Ἀλέξανδρον, ἀσθενεῖ ὄντι, τὴν βασιλείαν, ὁ δὲ Πτολεμαῖος ἤρχεν Αἰγύπτου, καὶ Σέλευκος τῶν περὶ Βαβυλῶνα τόπων, ὡς ἰστορεῖ Δέξιππος.	ὅτι ὁ Περδίκκας συνδιοικῶν ἢ τὰ πράγματα Φιλίπῳ τῷ Ἀριδαίῳ τῷ μετ' Ἀλέξανδρον \Μακεδονίας/ βασιλεύσαντι, ἀσθενεῖ ὄντι εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἢ διοικεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν. ὁ δὲ Πτολεμαῖος ἤρχεν Αἰγύπτου. ὁ δὲ Σέλευκος τῶν ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνα τόπων. ὡς ἰστορεῖ Δέξιππος.
These three were successors of Alexander, and Perdiccas administered the empire together with Arrhidaeus, the one ruling after Alexander, since he was weak, and Ptolemy ruled Egypt, and Seleucus the places around Babylon, as Dexippus records.	[He says] that Perdiccas was the one administering affairs together with Philip Arrhidaeus, the one ruling Macedonia after Alexander, since he was weak in terms of being able to administer the empire. And Ptolemy ruled Egypt, and Seleucus the places around Babylon, as Dexippus records.

²³ *Cod. Pal. Gr.* 129 f.129r 23–24; cf. scholium ad Lucian 22.25.4 Rabe.

²⁴ *Cod. Pal. Gr.* 129 f.129r 23–24; cf. scholium ad Lucian 22.25.14 Rabe (= *BNJ* 100 F31).

²⁵ *Cod. Pal. Gr.* 129 f.129r 28–29; cf. Josephus, *JA* 12.1–2.

Gregoras has phrased the note slightly differently, adding Arrhidaeus' regnal name Philip, glossing the name of the empire he ruled above the line, and (unique to Gregoras) adding the phrase εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι διοικεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν (in terms of being able to administer the empire), to explain the adjective ἀσθενής (weak). These explanatory additions follow the pattern seen elsewhere in the manuscript, and the impulse Gregoras felt to explain the circumstances of Arrhidaeus' reign hint at a curiosity we should bear in mind when approaching the *Heidelberg Epitome*. As is widely known, Arrhidaeus lived with an intellectual disability of some kind, which at least some of his contemporaries viewed as disqualifying for a king.²⁶ No surviving ancient source goes into detail about this, and most modern scholars have largely accepted that Arrhidaeus was completely incapable of ruling (as opposed to simply being unlikely to rule well).²⁷ The fact that Gregoras was thinking actively about Arrhidaeus' abilities suggests that he too was trying to discern something that was absent in his sources.

With the above considerations in mind, we can turn at last to the *Heidelberg Epitome* (fig. 4). The excerpts are physically set off from the surrounding texts, which gives the impression that they should be read together, although, as we saw with the Lucian scholia, that does not mean they all come from the same original. The preceding text is from Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and the following text is from Cassius Dio. Before the *Heidelberg Epitome* begins, there is a note reckoning time – some 80 years from the death of Alexander to the birth of Hannibal – so Gregoras is linking up chronologies for the various events he has taken notes on, indicating that

²⁶ Squillace in *Affective Relations and Personal Bonds* has an up-to-date discussion with complete bibliography; cf. Meeus' commentary on BNJ 155 F1.2.

²⁷ Carney, *AHB* 15.1 (2001) is an important exception. See also S. Morris, "The Conscience of the King: Alexander the Great and the Ancient Disabled" in K. Moore, *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great* (Leiden 2018) 823–843 at 823–825. The ancient sources are as follows: App. *Syr.* 52.261: οὐκ ἔμφρονα (not of sound mind); DS 18.2.2: ψυκτικοῖς δὲ πάθεσι συνεχόμενον ἀνιάτοις (constrained by incurable mental illnesses); Just. 13.2.11: valetudinem maiorem (serious illness); Plut. *Al.* 10.2 οὐ φρενῆρης (not of sound mind), 77.5: ἀτελὴ δὲ τὸ φρονεῖν (imperfect in his thinking), *de Alex. fort.* 337D: οὐδὲν νηπίου διαφέροντα (no different from a child).

he viewed those notes as in some way connected. In the left margin beside lines 28–29, there is evidence of a problem with the copying. Some corrections have been added to complete the sense of each line. In both cases, the correction begins with the same rare word (ἐδολοφόνησε; to murder by treachery), which most likely means that a repetition in the original caused Gregoras to lose his place before catching his mistake and fixing it. There are also some marks of erasure visible in the gaps in lines 28 and 30, suggesting that the correction may have been more extensive than what is now obvious. The contents of this short summary all relate to the break-up of Alexander's empire, the distribution of satrapies, the murder of Arrhidaeus and his wife Eurydice, in other words, the expected contents of a history of the wars of the Successors.²⁸ Again, there is nothing here that we cannot find in Plutarch, Diodorus, etc., except the one detail of Arrhidaeus living with epilepsy, which I print here for ease of reference:

ἐπεὶ δὲ ἦν νωθρὸς ὁ Ἀρριδαῖος, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐπιληπτικός, ἡρέθη ἐπίτροπος καὶ ἐπιμελητὴς τῶν βασιλικῶν πραγμάτων ὁ Περδίκκας, ᾧ δέδωκεν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος τελευτῶν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ δακτύλιον ὡς πιστοτέρῳ τῶν ἄλλων στρατηγῶν. ὃς συνδιασκεψάμενος δέδωκεν ἐκάστῳ στρατηγῷ σατραπείαν διεξάγειν, μερίσας ἀπάσας οὐσας πλείους τῶν κδ.

But since Arrhidaeus was slow, and moreover epileptic, Perdikkas was chosen as overseer and caretaker of royal affairs, to whom Alexander gave his ring while dying since he was more trustworthy than the other generals. And he, after thoroughly examining things, gave to each general a satrapy to run, distributing all of them, totaling more than 24. (*BNJ* 155 F1.2 = *Cod. Pal. Gr.* 129 f.137v 17–20)

Gregoras shares with other extant sources the belief that Arrhidaeus' mental abilities were insufficient for the job of running an empire, and he adds epilepsy as a second factor. I stress that without the original we cannot say for sure whether this addition belongs to

²⁸ P. Wheatley, "The 'Heidelberg Epitome' A Neglected Diadoch Source" in V. Troncoso and E. Anson, *After Alexander: The Time of the Diadochi* (Oxford 2013) 17–29 at 22–5 takes an even-handed approach to identifying the traditions within which the original author may have been working and concludes that the excerpts derive ultimately from Hieronymous of Cardia.

Gregoras or he found it somewhere, but the phrasing (ἔτι δὲ καὶ...) is a fairly common way to introduce an added consideration, especially in a two-item list.

The dominant approach to this text has been to ask the factual question, “Did Arrhidaeus live with epilepsy?” and to assume that omission is possible for the excerptor, but not addition.²⁹ However, as we have seen, Gregoras *does* add things, he *does* try to fill gaps in his sources, and he *was* curious about the mental states of subpar rulers. He even showed a specific interest in the extent of Arrhidaeus’s limitations elsewhere in this very manuscript. Other ancient sources, especially Plutarch (*Al.* 77.8), invite speculation by telling salacious stories about Alexander’s family and pointedly *not* offering a named diagnosis. It may be that this is another attempt on Gregoras’s part to answer a question on his own.³⁰ This explanation is no less likely than that a well-known disease like epilepsy would evade all other extant sources.

To see how such processes play out in a finished work, it will be beneficial here to return to Gregoras’ account in his *Roman History* of the illnesses of two Byzantine emperors often thought to have lived with epilepsy: Theodore Lascaris and John Vatatzes. The case of Lascaris is challenging, because the only author to diagnose him with epilepsy was George Pachymeres, who actually knew the emperor, although he was only an adolescent when Lascaris died. Gregoras, who certainly had read the work of Pachymeres, shows restraint here and says only that Lascaris suffered from a severe illness (νόσος χαλεπή). Although he describes an unpleasant end for

²⁹ G. Squillace in *Affective Bonds and Personal Relations* made the most recent attempt to answer this question, and he does so in the affirmative. P. Brunt, “On Historical Fragments and Epitomes,” *CQ n.s.* 2 (1980) 477–494 at 483–484 gives a classic exposition of the view that we should expect omission rather than addition from epitomators.

³⁰ Pérez-Martin, “Aristides’ *Panathenaikos* as a Byzantine Schoolbook: Nikephoros Gregoras’ Notes on Ms. Escorial Φ.I.18” in A. Cuomo and E. Trap (eds.), *Toward a Historical Sociolinguistic Poetics of Medieval Greek* (Turnhout 2017), 85–107, at 85–86, documents a similar attempt on the part of Gregoras to solve a problem in the textual transmission of Aelius Aristides by offering a conjecture: in this case that an expected text is missing because the author died before writing it.

the emperor, like other authors he gives no name to the disease (1.61.18–25), and indeed it seems that Pachymeres was hasty in his diagnosis since the reported symptoms are not consistent with epilepsy.³¹ By contrast, Lascaris' father, John Vatatzes, receives a more thorough treatment. The three main sources for this illness are George Pachymeres (*History* 1.99–101), George Acropolites (*History* 1.52), and Nicephorus Gregoras (1.49–50), and while all agree that it was a terrible illness that stymied the attending physicians, they do not agree on the details. Acropolites calls the disease apoplexy, which is distinct from epilepsy.³² Pachymeres says it was epilepsy, but his description of the symptoms differs significantly in both phrasing and content from Gregoras, who says that he does not know whether to call the disease epilepsy or phrenitis. The facts that these three authors disagree with each other and that two of them offer extensive justifications for their choice of a named disease is instructive. Whereas in the case of Lascaris, Gregoras apparently did not feel he had enough information to hazard a guess, in the case of Vatatzes he did, so he intervened in the tradition to offer a possibility (phrenitis) not found in other extant sources. This is typical of the reading strategies discussed above, and it is parallel to the incomplete information Gregoras found in his sources for the health of Arrhidaeus. While it will never be possible to state precisely what plans he had for that material, it should by now be clear that Gregoras was not only interested in reading about the mental health of emperors, but in intervening in the historical tradition pertaining to such topics as well.

My contention in this paper has been that the urge to give a medicalized name to Arrhidaeus's mental health has obscured the contribution of Nicephorus Gregoras to the history of the question. Given that epilepsy alone does not explain why stakeholders were reluctant to accept Arrhidaeus as Alexander's successor, naming the disease would not add much to the existing conversation about early Hellenistic history. It is possible to pursue a more productive avenue with the available evidence by incorporating the concerns

³¹ See the excellent Appendix 3 of Angelov in *Byzantine Hellene*, *op. cit.* n. 17.

³² See discussion in R. Macridis, *George Akropolites: The History* (Oxford 2007) at 272–273.

and behaviors of the 14th-century reader who preserved it into the interpretation of this particularly challenging text.

For Gregoras, classical texts provided potential explanatory frameworks for interpreting parallel situations.³³ We can see this, for instance, in his discursive adaptation of an Aristotelian conception of chance (*tyche*) in defining his theory of historical causation.³⁴ Crucially, he seems to have approached such texts with less reverence than we might expect, adapting them to suit his developing ideas while also preserving them for future uses. This kind of adaptation is a creative form of reading characteristic of the period, and it underscores the malleability of information contained in reading notes, which may never have been intended as authoritative statements of fact.

Beyond its value for inquiring into the history of the classical past, we have in *Codex Palatinus Graecus* 129 an excellent piece of evidence for the history of questions about the classical past (and, in the immediate context, the history of questions about epilepsy). It was the intellectual context in which Gregoras worked – full of chaotic transfers of power and worried bureaucrats looking over the shoulders of inadequate kings – that made it make sense for him to include this text here while researching a planned history of the troubled period between the Latin conquest of Byzantium in 1204 and his own lifetime. What remains to be explored is how this series of four historical excerpts fits into the total picture of the manuscript, and that goes beyond the scope of a single article. However, by observing how Gregoras behaved as a reader and note-taker, we can see what he found worthy and unworthy of preservation, what required explanation and what did not. These questions need interrogation in a crucial period in the transmission of texts from the eastern Mediterranean to the western Mediterranean, and from there to the printed and digital editions that make the living history of the text more difficult to see. Reuniting fragments such as these with their original context complicates and ultimately enhances our

³³ Pérez-Martin, “Aristides’ *Panathenaikos* as a Byzantine Schoolbook,” *op. cit.* n. 30 at 87.

³⁴ See the nuanced discussion of Manolova, “Who Writes the History of the Romans,” *op. cit.* n 15 at 103-10.

own methods of approaching ancient history.

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Figure 1: Codex Palatinus Graecus 129 f. 126v. A typical page from this manuscript. The first note in the left margin announces the beginning of a series of excerpts from Arrian's *Anabasis*. Image courtesy of Heidelberg University Library. (Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg / 'Nikephorus Gregoras Synagoge' / '129r').

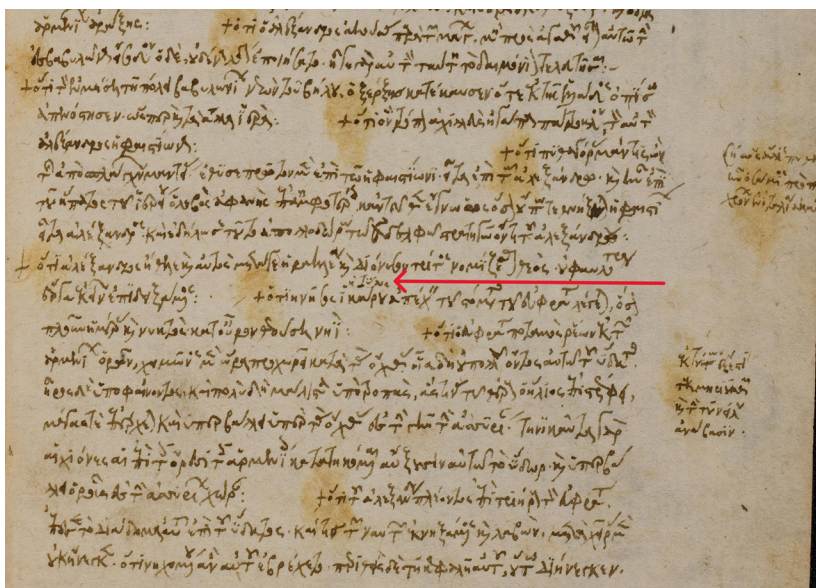


Figure 2: Detail of *Codex Palatinus Graecus* 129 f. 128r. A supralinear correction adds the name Τύλος. Image courtesy of Heidelberg University Library. (Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg / ‘Nikephorus Gregoras Synagoge’ / ‘129r’).

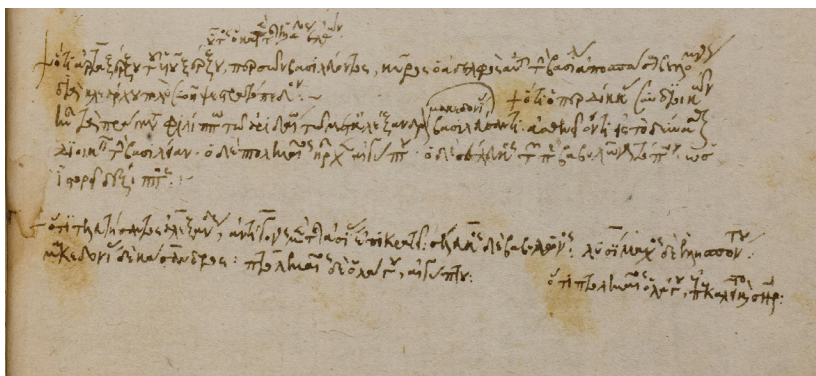


Figure 3: Detail of *Codex Palatinus Graecus* 129 f. 129r. Plus signs in the manuscript mark the beginning of the relevant texts. Image courtesy of the Heidelberg University Library (Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg / ‘Nikephorus Gregoras Synagoge’ / ‘129r’).



Figure 4: *Codex Palatinus Graecus* 129 ff. 137v–138r; images cropped and resized to allow side-by-side view. Image courtesy of the Heidelberg University Library (Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg / ‘Nikephorus Gregoras Synagoge’ / ‘129r’).