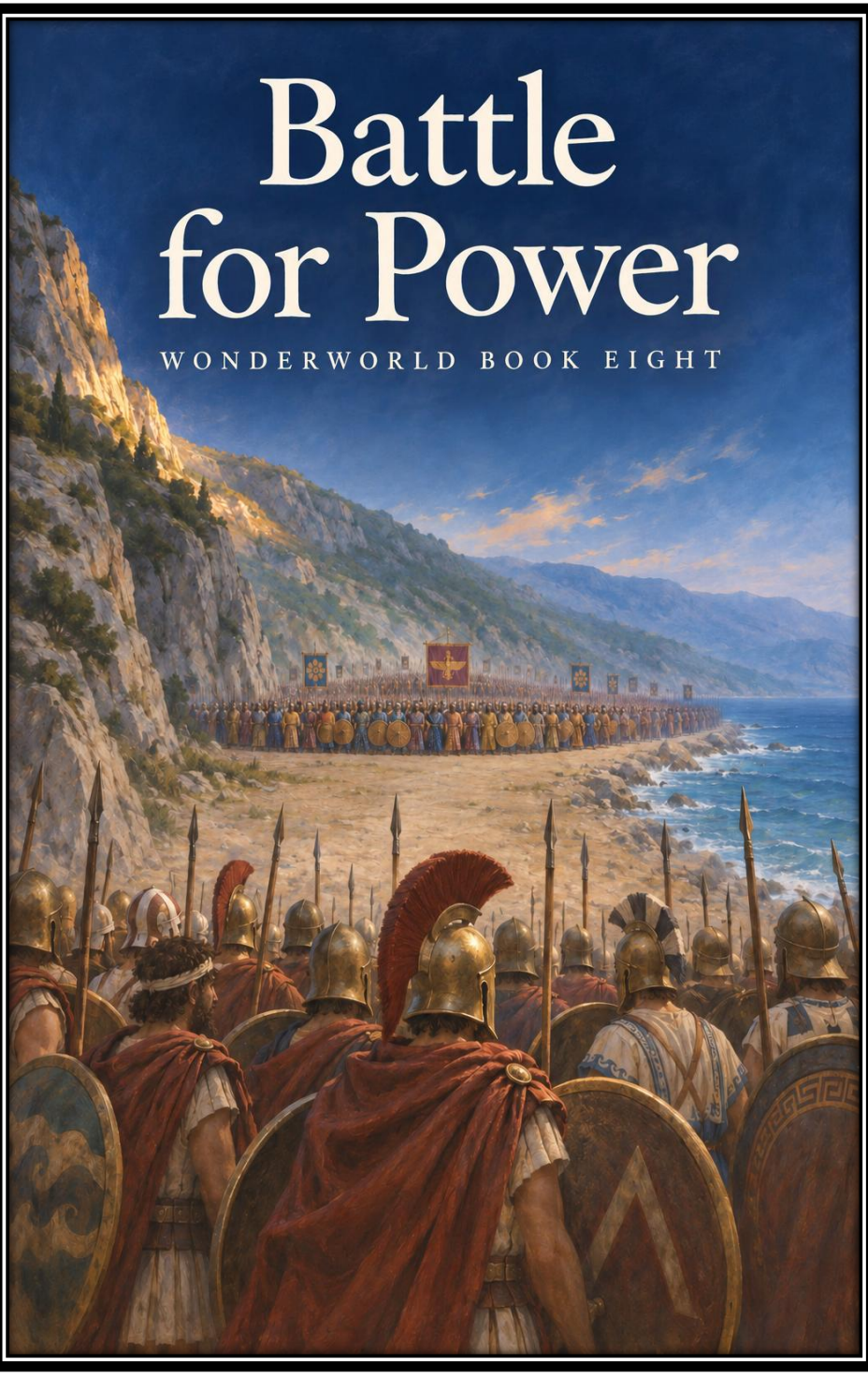
# Battle for Power

WONDERWORLD BOOK EIGHT



# Battle for Power

Wonderworld Book Eight

Lumen with Chip Cook

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# A Note for the Reader

At Thermopylae a man has time to finish a drink before he is called away. The Professor has come to look at two armies. Lumen looks at the people who have to stand in them. Their journey runs through the Persian Wars, the Peloponnesian War, and the rise of Macedon, ending in the world Alexander's successors left behind.

The book follows individual scenes, with a look backward from Thermopylae to Marathon. It draws on ancient histories, an Athenian play and records from the Near East. Ordinary people and their conversations are imagined. The dates near the front and the historical notes at the back are there to help you find your place.

# Dates Along the Way

490 BCE • Marathon

480 BCE • Thermopylae and Salamis

479 BCE • Plataea

After 479 BCE • The Athenian-led alliance based at Delos

431–404 BCE • The Peloponnesian War

427 BCE • The vote over Mytilene

420 BCE • Sparta is barred from the Games at Olympia

416–415 BCE • The siege and fall of Melos

415–413 BCE • The Sicilian expedition

338 BCE • Chaeronea

331 BCE • Gaugamela and Alexander's entry into Babylon

323 BCE and after • Alexander's death and the wars of his successors

Around 200 BCE • The harbor at Alexandria

**Chapter 1**

# The Space Between the Armies



*At Thermopylae, there is time to put down a cup.*

The man drinking at the pass had a cracked lip. He turned the cup until he found the place where he could drink without putting the rim against it. The Professor could see the army across the strip of ground whenever the man lowered his hand.

He had imagined that the first thing worth looking at when he came to Thermopylae would be the people he had heard about since he was a boy. There was a man right in front of him who belonged to the force from Sparta, and another who had come from Thespiae. He could not have told them apart if Lumen had not asked where the second man had left his family.

The mountainside came down near the water then. The space between the men and the other army was wide enough to make a person walk a little way before he could speak to someone on the other side. It was narrow enough that the Professor could see why a much larger force might have trouble moving through it. He put one hand on a rock. The other side of it was still cool.

He and Lumen had come from the kitchen at Monhegan, where Hakan had asked him who won. He had answered from the end of the story he knew, with ships destroyed and a king going home. Lumen asked him to try answering from where they were now. The man with the cup did not know how long he had to finish it. He swallowed and set it where another man could find it.

“They remember three hundred,” the Professor said.

“The man from Thespiae will want them to remember something else.”

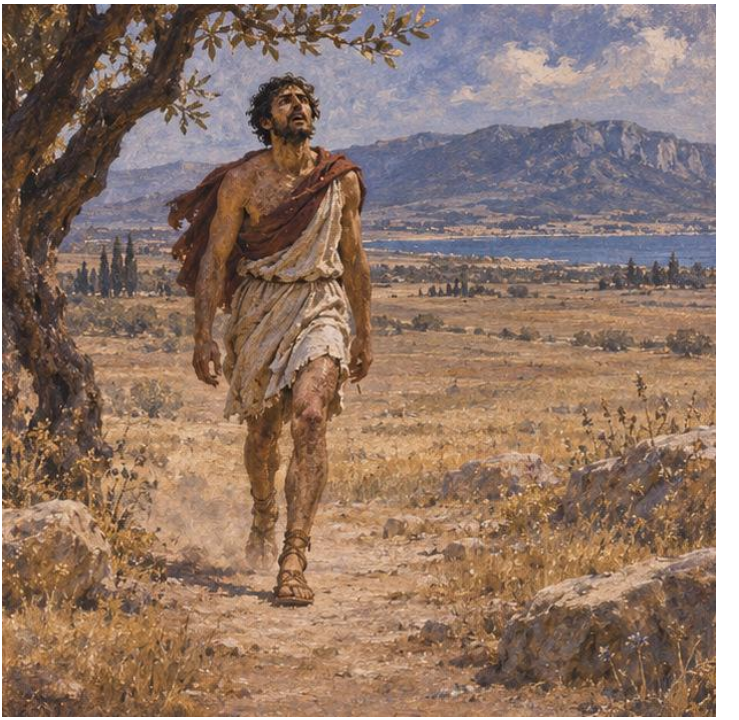
The Professor knew that Greek forces from several communities came to defend the pass. The three hundred Spartans were the number he could say without thinking. Herodotus says the Thespians stayed for the last stand. He says the Thebans also remained, attributing a different reason to them. The Professor had seen how easy it was to draw a line around the whole company and label it. The man who shared the cup knew the first names of people who would fit on different sides of that line.

Farther back, someone was making room on the ground for a person to sit down. A boy had brought water in a vessel too heavy for him to lift far. An older man put a hand under it until the boy found a place where the bottom would stand level. The Professor had seen much the same movement at a house on Thera when someone had come in with a jar. He had not thought to look for it here.

Across the pass there was a bright point where the sun found metal. The man closest to the rock looked up. He had heard somebody he knew calling to him. The Professor waited to see if he would go. The man reached down and set the empty cup farther into the shade. Then he went where he had been called.

**Chapter 2**

# The Man on the Road



*A runner on the road from Marathon.*

There was another plain the Professor had been told about before he was old enough to see it on a map. When he first heard the name Marathon, it meant to him a distance anybody could run if the road and the person had been properly prepared. He thought it would feel the same way if he stood at the end of the distance and waited for someone.

He and Lumen came to the plain ten years before Thermopylae. There would be an Athenian victory there, with Plataean help. As they followed the road back, there were people going in both directions. Some knew where they were going from the shape of a turn. Other people had to wait for somebody they could ask. The Professor saw one man stop with his knees slightly bent. He was breathing too hard to come straight up. He began to move again before the Professor had decided what question he might put to him.

He knew the famous version in which a man ran to Athens with news of the victory and died after giving it. The story did not come to him in that form from Herodotus. There, the runner

was sent to Sparta before the battle. On the way he was said to have encountered Pan. The Professor could think of two good reasons for remembering a runner and only one name he was used to giving both of them.

“Are you waiting for him to fall?” Lumen asked.

He had been trying not to. There was a place for a person to put his hand on an old wall. The man he had watched stopped there and kept his hand down until he could bear to go on. He was alive when he went out of sight. The Professor had never thought of how much satisfaction that could give a person who had been expecting a story to end differently.

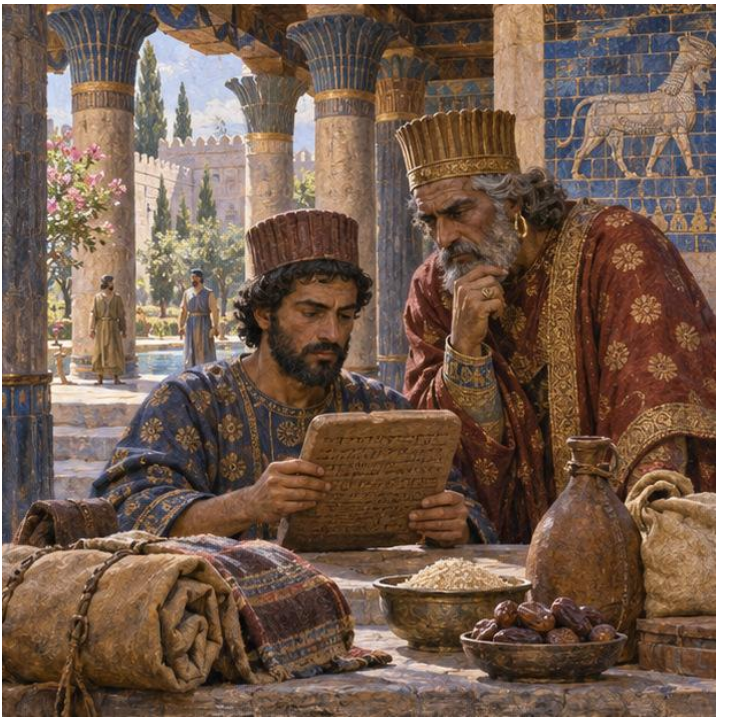
Later, when they went to the place where the news had come, someone wanted to know whether the people who had gone out would be back before dark. A man could have answered him with a distance if he thought they were coming all the way on foot. The person he asked wanted first to know whose name he needed. The Professor took a place at the end of

the group and waited to hear a name he could remember.

There was no one there prepared to say how many people would tell the story afterward. There was a man who had come far enough to have seen dust on another man's clothes and been able to tell from it which way he had gone. The Professor went back to look at the wall before he left. He set his hand flat on it for as long as it took him to breathe the way he thought the man had wanted to breathe.

**Chapter 3**

# The King's Countries



*Provisions and records in an imagined Persian court.*

The Professor had drawn Persia with a broad sweep of the pencil. At the edge of the map there had been room left for another line or two. He had used it for a note whose first word was Xerxes. Lumen asked him to leave the map at home when they went to see the people from the other side of the pass.

They came to a court where a man kept track of provisions. The place was Persia, though the man who took him to see the records had grown up somewhere else. He spoke to one person in a way the Professor had heard before; for the next person he had to wait for someone to help. The people around him were trying to find out who was entitled to what and who had brought a message that could be trusted.

There were records on clay at Persepolis from before the invasion. They had to do with people who needed to travel and people who had to eat wherever they were. The Professor knew some originals had survived. Here he and Lumen imagined one such day among people preparing for journeys. There was no message about the pass in front of them. There was a traveler who

had been given a name that meant something in one office and who had another name people at home called him by.

The official had a disputed allowance to settle. A man had arrived with a companion who did not seem to be on the record. The Professor expected him to send the man away. Instead he asked who had sent both of them. He made somebody go to the doorway to call back a person who had already started down the corridor. When both names were said again there was enough room on the clay for more than the Professor thought there would be.

“Do you think he’s going to Greece?” he asked Lumen.

“He’s trying to get to the next place with someone who knows where they’re going.”

The Professor wanted to ask whether the people who served the king thought of themselves as having the same country. He had seen the map and knew how many places a person would have to think of to answer him. When he asked how the man in the court liked to be addressed, he got an answer he could try to repeat. The

man corrected him. Then he brought a younger clerk over to hear what the Professor had done wrong.

Later the Professor looked at a royal inscription. The king could tell a great many people who he was in words intended to be there after he was gone. The man with the allowance had gone out with his companion. One of them, Lumen thought, had something to bring home when they were done. The king could tell people where the empire was. Nobody had asked the two men what was far from home.

At the end of the day a man who had spoken very little sat down in the shade to eat. He was listening to someone tell about a great bridge made for the army to cross. It was not clear whether he had seen it himself. When the younger man asked how long it looked, the storyteller used both hands. He had to get up from where he sat in order to show how far one of them went.

**Chapter 4**

# What They Took to Salamis



*At Salamis, people take what they can fit into a boat.*

She had space for a bundle in the boat. She did not have space for the bundle she had made. A man took hold of one end and told her to turn it. The Professor thought at first he meant the boat.

Athens was being evacuated. People were taking what they could to places they hoped would be safer. There was an answer from Delphi about a wooden wall. People could disagree about what it meant. In the account the Professor knew, Themistocles had wanted the Athenians to trust their ships. The woman at the landing seemed to have enough to think about before anybody asked her to decide which man had understood the god.

Her bundle held a bit of cloth that belonged to somebody who had already left. When she took it out, the rest fit. She laid it flat along the top and put a hand over it until the man in the boat had it under his hand. The Professor saw her look across at the person who was going with him. She had decided she could wait for another boat. Lumen stood with her until she had a clearer view of the water.

“What did she think the wall was?” the Professor asked.

“She’s hoping to find somebody on the other shore.”

“Did she hear what the oracle said?”

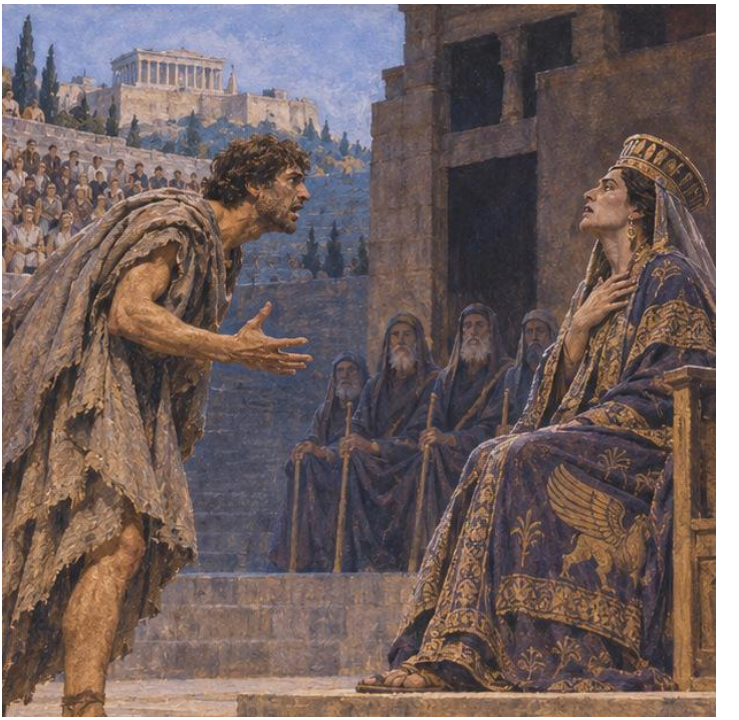
“Somebody told her. He was expecting an argument.”

The Professor looked toward the narrow water where the fighting would be. He had seen pictures of Salamis with boats in precisely the places an author wanted them at a particular moment. He could not have drawn the boats he saw that morning if somebody gave him time to look at them again. The ones carrying people drew most of his attention. A man who had shoved one of them out stood with one wet leg and one dry one, watching until he knew somebody had picked up the oar.

When they left the landing, the Professor could still see somebody standing where the woman had been. He had known they would hear about the fighting at Salamis and the fighting on land at Plataea the following year. He put the names down in the margin. He left the middle of the page for the woman and the boat she had let go.

**Chapter 5**

# The News in the Theater



*A messenger brings the news to the Persian queen in Aeschylus's play.*

The man on the stage had brought a message to a woman who was going to have to hear it. The Professor knew the message in advance. He had been to Salamis. He wanted to see when the woman knew enough to change what she had been expecting.

The war had been over long enough for someone in Athens to make a play about it. Aeschylus called the people in the play Persians. The audience had lived through a time when it mattered to them every morning where the Persian army was. Now they were being asked to sit in the same place and wait with a Persian queen for a fleet to come home.

The messenger began to tell what happened. Somebody in the audience knew how he wanted to hear it. He leaned over to speak to the person with him at the first mention of a place. The other person raised one hand until he could hear what the man on the stage was going to say. The Professor had thought of a theater full of people who had found somebody with them to see the defeat of an old enemy. The

man beside him kept his hand up until the other man sat back.

There was work for the chorus. Some of it was to ask about people whom the messenger could no longer answer for. The Professor had heard such names said in other places. The way they were spoken here made it possible to have room for somebody with another name still to put down. From the place he was sitting, he could see a woman who had put something near her feet to keep it from falling. She did not reach for it when the messenger paused.

He looked for Lumen when there was time. She had been thinking of the woman at the landing, left to wait while a boat pushed away. The Professor had thought she would have been looking at the woman on the stage.

“I was until she started to listen,” Lumen said.

The Professor went on looking at the messenger. The next thing he would say could tell the whole audience that the war was going to end in a way they remembered. It would not give the woman on the stage any way to go out and find a boat that had not already sailed. The

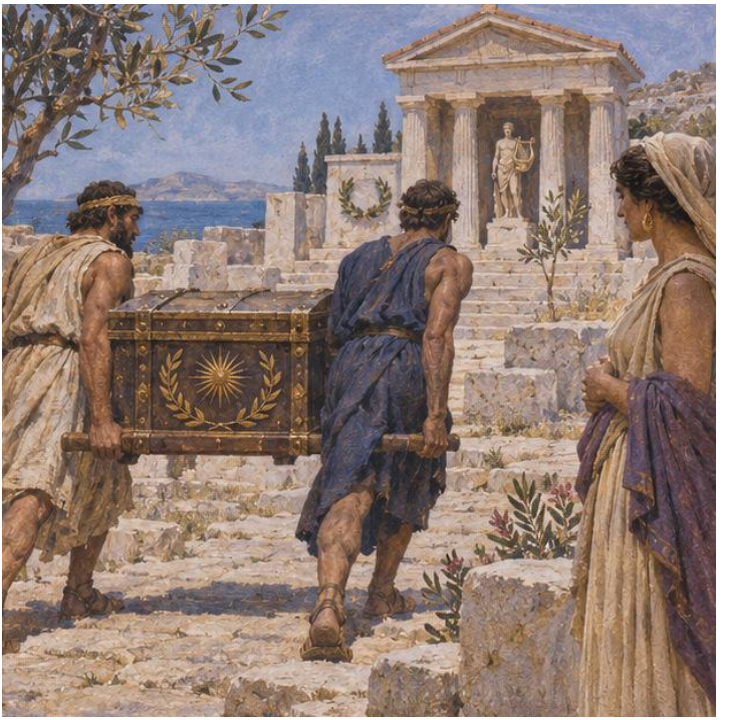
Professor could hear her speak to a person whose first concern was whether he could get the rest of the story out.

No one in the audience could send the news to her sooner. They could wait while she heard what she had come for. The Professor tried to remember when he had last been in a room where everybody knew what would happen and had nevertheless given the time it took for it to happen to somebody else.

When the scene was over, the man who had raised his hand moved it to let his neighbor go past. Neither got up at first. The Professor thought he might have something he wanted to say now. He waited awhile. What the man said, when he said it, was too low for him to hear.

**Chapter 6**

# What Came in the Chest



*Two men carry an alliance's contribution to Delos.*

The men carrying the chest thought they could make the turn if one of them went first. The woman who had been standing by the wall told them they would have to lift it higher. They did. It took both of them to get it to the place where it could be put down.

The Professor had come to Delos to look at an alliance. The cities that made it had a reason to go on acting together after Xerxes had gone home. There were places they meant to protect and people who wanted to keep the Persians from coming back. Some contributed ships, others money. For the people carrying the chest it mattered very much at what time the person who could take it would arrive.

“Which one belongs to the alliance?” he asked.

“The two who can’t put it down yet,” Lumen said.

A man came to say where they could leave it. The woman wanted to know who would be there to say it had arrived. The man said he would be. She stayed near enough to see whether he put down what he had said he would. The Professor could see what happened

if three people agreed about the reason for a thing and one of them had to come back the next year to make sure it was still the reason everyone remembered.

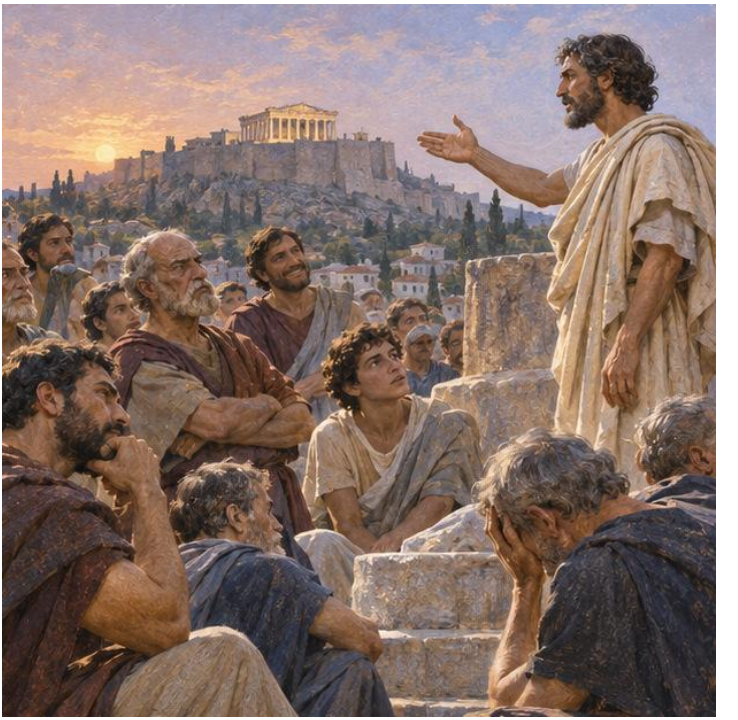
Athens was able to ask more of allies as time went on. The common treasury was later moved to Athens. The Professor knew how that looked from the chapters he had read. On the island the woman came back near the end of the day looking for one of the men who had brought the chest. He had promised to take something to a person on the shore. The people who had been standing over it earlier were gone.

The Professor had seen people at Delphi put up things that showed what a city wanted somebody to remember. On Delos there was a record of what had come in. He could imagine someone a long way away being glad they had kept it and someone else a little closer hoping they could say it was time for the arrangement to end.

They went back to where the men had lifted the chest. One of them had said something they had not heard when he thought they were going to put it down. The woman told Lumen what it was. He had been asking who was going to carry it out again.

**Chapter 7**

# A Second Vote



*Athenians return to the assembly for a second decision.*

The Professor arrived in Athens early enough to see a man trying to exchange a morning's work for time to listen. The man found somebody who could take the first part of it and agreed to come back later. Another person would have to be found to take the rest if the meeting ran long.

The city had gone to war with Sparta and its allies. Mytilene had revolted against Athens and then surrendered. The day before, the Athenians had sent an order that would kill the men and enslave the women and children. Now they had come back to decide what should happen to the order they had issued. Someone had got on a boat with the first decision before most of the people at the meeting had had a night to sleep.

The Professor had read the speeches set down by Thucydides. He had always reached a place where he felt he knew what the other man was going to say. In the room the men who were speaking had to say it while people who had already made up their minds were close enough to make it difficult to hear. Lumen told him some of the voices raised at the back had come

from people speaking among themselves. A person nearby wanted to know whether they had missed something important.

One speaker made the case for leaving the order as it was. Another argued in terms of what would happen the next time a city considered giving up. The Professor had been waiting for someone to speak about what was right. An argument about what could be got from a city could spare people someone else had been unable to spare with a different argument. He had not known how much trouble he would have keeping track of what he wanted to happen and why he wanted it.

A second boat took the decision that reversed the first one. The Professor knew what Thucydides says about the two boats. He watched a man who had stayed long enough to hear the vote go back to finish the work he had left. He had not imagined a person ought to be able to go back to a task like that. The first person he met asked him what had happened. He said they had changed the order. The other

man waited for him to say whether it was already too late.

They had not reversed everything. Thucydides tells of executions after the second order came. Lumen found the Professor along a low wall above the sea. He had been looking for a place to put the two decisions on the same sheet.

“What will you put in between?” she asked.

He could put the passage of one boat. He could put the place where the men had come back to vote. He had never been on a boat trying to catch somebody who was carrying something it would be too late to take back. He left as much space as he could for that.

**Chapter 8**

# Whose Horses?



*At Olympia, Lichas approaches the driver of the winning chariot.*

The boy had brought a stool from Athens. He was to hold it until the chariots came round. Then his father would let him stand on it.

It was 420 BCE, seven years after the second ship went to Mytilene. Sparta and Athens had made a peace that few people trusted. Here at Olympia there was another agreement, a sacred truce meant to let people travel to the Games and get home again. His father had promised him this trip four years ago.

A man from Elis asked if he could set his water jar under the stool. The father made room. They had taken different roads to get here. By the time the boy asked for water, the man had told them which bend would give them the first sight of the horses.

“Which one will you cheer for?” Lumen asked the boy.

“The one that gets round that bend,” he said.

The Professor could still hear the Athenians at the second vote. A man could put down his work and go hear two men argue about what the city should do. If he was a citizen, he might get to raise his own hand. At the theater he could spend an afternoon listening to a Persian queen.

He tried to imagine what a boy with a Spartan citizen father would be taught to admire. He would learn to go without, stay in step and hold his place when the man beside him wanted to run. Somebody still had to bring in the barley. In Sparta much of that work fell to helots, people compelled to farm land for others. Their sons had a different reason to listen when they heard men coming down the road.

“How far is it between the two cities?” Lumen asked.

The Professor started to answer in days. He stopped when he saw what she was watching. Two men nearby had been arguing about whether the judges had the right to keep Sparta out. When the horses came round, both put out a hand to steady the same boy on his stool.

The people of Elis said Sparta had sent soldiers into their territory during the truce. Sparta said the truce had yet to be proclaimed there. The fine stood. Sparta refused to pay, and its people were barred from competing and sacrificing.

The charioteer came through the dust with the reins held close. The herald gave the victory to the Boeotians. Then Lichas, a Spartan, stepped onto the course and crowned the driver. The horses were his. He wanted people to know it. The officials struck him. People feared the Spartans would come back armed. The festival went on.

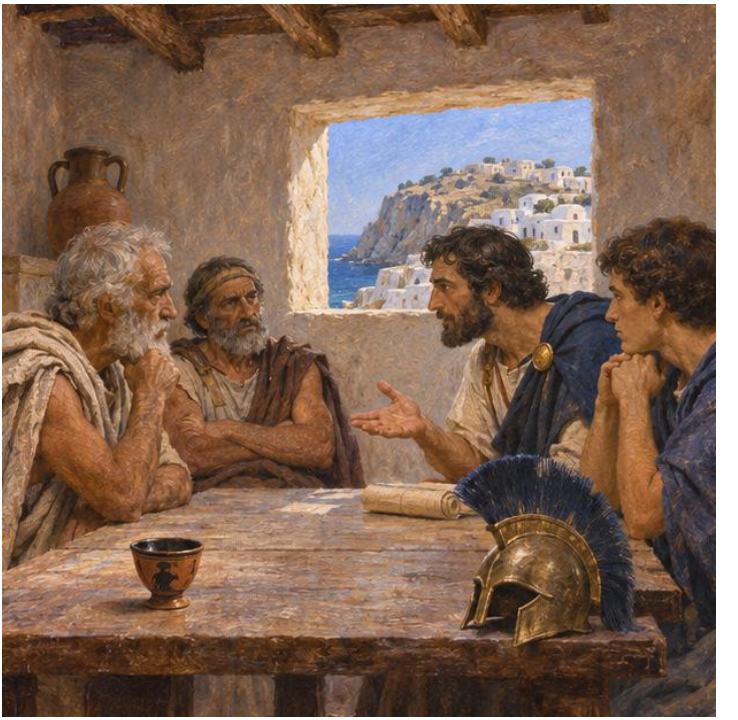
The Professor had been watching the man who stepped onto the course. Lumen watched the driver. He had climbed down now and was walking beside the team. He stopped to work a twist out of one of the traces. One horse put its head against the arm that had held the reins.

“What was his name?” Lumen asked.

The Professor knew whose horses they were. He had to ask her which man she meant.

**Chapter 9**

# The Cup No One Touched



*A cup waits through the conversation at Melos.*

There was a cup on the table at Melos, close enough to the edge that the Professor kept expecting one of the people to move it. The men who were speaking had learned to keep their hands in places where the next person would not have to ask what they meant. The cup stayed where it was.

Melos had hoped to keep apart from the war. Athens wanted submission. Thucydides presents their exchange as a dialogue. The Professor knew the general course it took. The Athenians wanted the islanders to think of the power that was in front of them. The islanders had their own ideas about what they could hope for. The words in the book had survived as something a person could read at a comfortable distance from the man who had to answer.

Lumen and the Professor had come into an imagined room. In it there were men whose ages could be guessed from the time it took them to get up, if they happened to let somebody see. There was a person at the door who had brought the cup. He had not heard all of what came before his arrival. The Professor

could see how much he wanted to stay where he could hear the rest.

“If you have no reason to think somebody will come,” the Professor said afterward, “it’s hard to count on them.”

“Who would you count on if you couldn’t leave?”

He had been thinking of the islanders as people able to choose whether to keep arguing. Outside he could see a place where an older woman stopped on her way down to the harbor. She was waiting for someone to bring a small child from farther up the road. They would decide where to go once the child was there. He could imagine something changing in a room that would have to be explained to her by a person who had not been in it.

On another day the Professor heard people talk about the expedition Athens would send to Sicily. A visitor drew a shape with his finger to show how large the island was supposed to be. Somebody who had been there waited for him to finish. He had no trouble believing there would be a fleet. What he wanted to know was

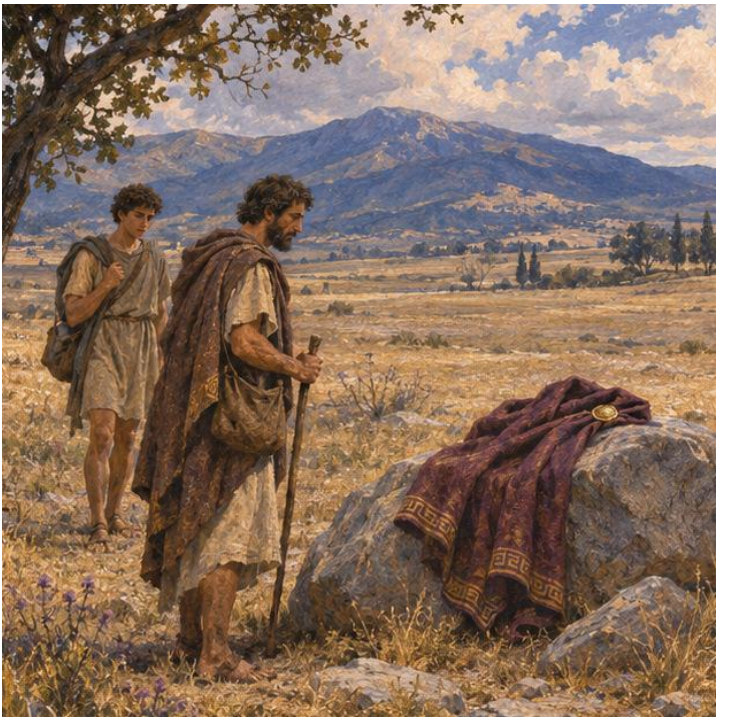
how many of the people who wanted to go knew what they wanted when they got there.

Thucydides tells what happened on Melos after Athens won. The men of military age it captured were put to death and the women and children enslaved. The Professor had been able to get through that in a few lines the first time he read it. The woman at the harbor and the child who had not yet come down made the few lines take longer.

The disaster in Sicily did not put an end to the war at once. Athens would go on fighting until it surrendered to Sparta. The Professor had been trying to follow what the larger country could demand at every point. Lumen remembered the cup. She asked him whether the man who brought it ever came back for it. They had gone out before there was anybody left in the room to ask.

**Chapter 10**

# The Ground at Chaeronea



*Someone has left a cloak on the field at Chaeronea.*

There was a cloak on a stone at Chaeronea. The Professor had seen it from higher ground and taken it for something that had grown there. The color was close to the color of the place where it lay. He understood what he was looking at when he saw one corner lift.

Philip of Macedon had defeated the Athenians and Thebans and their allies. The Professor had come knowing that the young Alexander had taken part. He had also come knowing what Alexander would do afterward. There was someone there who had lost a relative and knew what he was looking for by the way the cloth had been mended. The Professor understood that none of what he brought with him about the next few years could help the man look.

At the edge of the field two people talked about what a city could do now. One said it would still be there the next year and the year after, whatever it agreed to. The other asked how much it could give up and still speak in its own name. The Professor had heard something like that question put a different way on the pass where two people could agree to let one another

use a piece of ground. He did not know how either of them would have answered it here.

There would be a league after the battle, with Philip at its head. Later, Alexander could take a force east. From a place where someone had waited to see which people returned, what happened next depended on who was able to get home and what they could say when they got there.

“Do you remember the child at the fire?” Lumen asked him.

“The one who wanted to know about Zeus?”

“She wanted to know what he had to worry about after he won.”

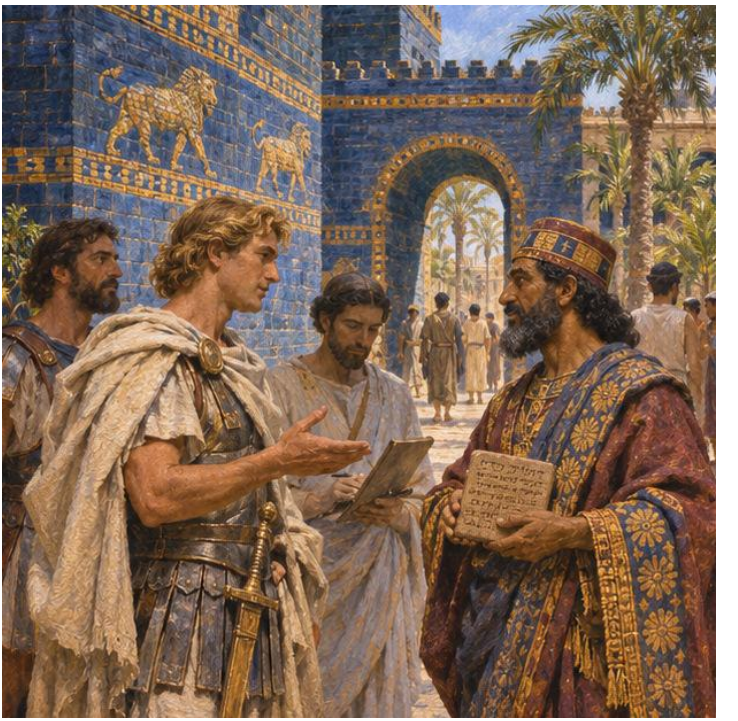
He remembered what she meant. Kronos had grown up thinking of the person he had replaced. Zeus had grown up out of his reach. If a man wanted to use their story to explain a ruler after Chaeronea, he could begin in as many places as he had reasons to tell it.

The man who had been searching bent at the stone and put his hand on the cloak. He drew it far enough over to look at the other side. Then

he folded it where it lay. The Professor had meant to ask whether it belonged to his relative. He walked back with Lumen as far as the place where the cloth had first looked to him like something that grew on the ground. From there he could still see the man, though he could no longer tell what he was holding.

**Chapter 11**

# A King in More Than One Language



*In Babylon, the news of a new king passes from hand to hand.*

At Babylon a man was trying to say the name of the new king to somebody who had heard it before he had. He had learned it from a person who said it a different way. When he asked how to say it he was interrupted by a man who wanted him to make room for someone carrying a tablet.

Alexander's army had won at Gaugamela in 331 BCE. He entered Babylon. The Professor knew what the historians who followed his story would say about the entry. He wanted to hear what the woman at the door said after the people around her found they were expected to recognize a different king. She was arranging something a messenger had brought. There was a younger worker beside her who could hear the name in two ways and knew when to use both of them.

The Professor went out to see the city. He had a habit of thinking Greeks arrived somewhere carrying things nobody there had seen. He could not look at what stood around him without asking how many people had had to know what they were doing long before

anybody said Alexander's name within hearing of the palace. The city had been through changes of ruler. It had people who could keep track of a night sky that did not need a new name when the king changed.

Later, in another place, men argued about honors. Someone spoke about how much could be expected of a ruler who had traveled farther in a few years than most people could name. Another man had known him before anybody could leave without his permission. The Professor heard reports and recollections enough to see how quickly a story could change when the men who told it first lost the chance to say it again.

The man who carried the tablet on the day of the entry had come to a threshold that the Professor could still find. He had waited while a woman got somebody out of the way so he would not have to turn sideways with the thing in his hands. The Professor tried to work out how to draw enough of the doorway to show what she had seen. The tablet was small enough

that he could put both his hands around an object that size without thinking of a king.

“Do you want to know what it said?” Lumen asked.

“I’d like to know whether she could read it.”

“Ask her that.”

The Professor had nearly gone on without doing so. When they went back she was speaking to a younger man whose hands were full. He had to wait for her to finish. She took something from him before she answered. When she told him she could read the writing he meant, she wanted to know whether he had brought anything she could look at.

**Chapter 12**

# The Orders After the King



*The couriers bring more than one set of orders.*

The man with the seal arrived late enough to find there were two men there before him. They had come from different places and each had been told the person inside would know what to do when he saw the seal. There was a seat near the door for one of them. The others stayed on their feet.

Alexander was dead. He had left an empire that men could try to speak for. There were members of his family whose names could be used with a claim. The Professor knew how the years after his death were commonly divided. The division did not tell him which of the messages the man inside would open first.

He was watching a meeting they had imagined, in a place where a courier could have been kept waiting while a man who had promised to see him was needed elsewhere. Each had been given enough food to get as far as this place. The man on his feet nearest the door wanted to know if he could get more before finding out whether he would have to go back that day.

“Did anybody think it might stay together?” the Professor asked.

“They’ve come all this way expecting one person to know what the others mean.”

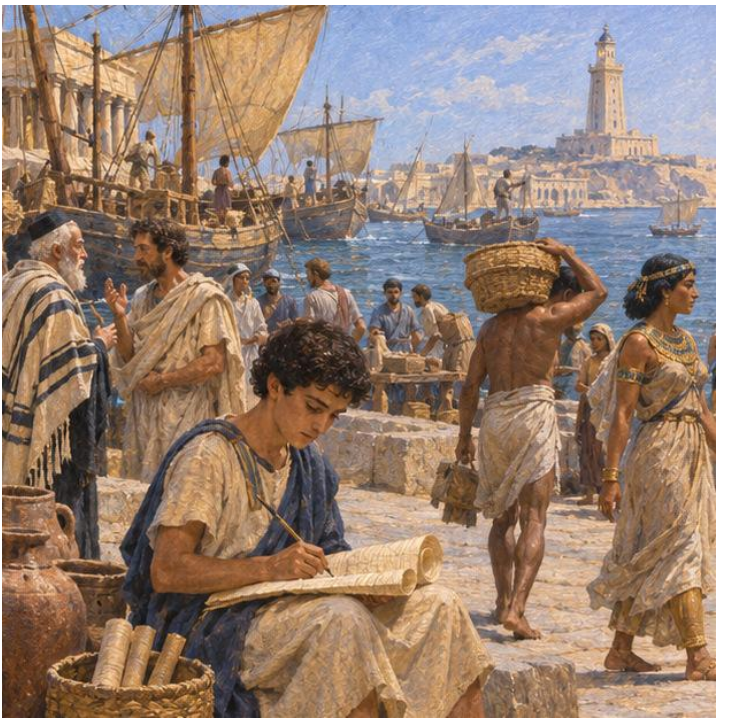
One of the men asked the person at the door whether he would accept the message and see that it got inside. The other man moved so he could see how he held it. He did not mean to give his up until he knew they were both meant for the same person. They had been riding under different orders. Each had expected there would be a place where that would stop mattering to him.

The Professor remembered the first time he had looked at a map of Alexander's empire after Alexander died. The colors had been given new edges by the next page. He thought now of two people stopping where a seal could have been recognized one summer and might be questioned the next. They had to learn the places where it would still be worth coming to the door.

When the man came out he asked which of them had come farther. The Professor was surprised they all thought they could answer. The man with the seat stood up. He slid it over to the one who had arrived last. Nobody else had moved. He set his message down beside the seat and asked the man at the door whether there was any water.

**Chapter 13**

# A Harbor With More Than One Name



*A letter has come to the harbor at Alexandria.*

At Alexandria, years after Alexander was dead, a child waited near the harbor for a man with a letter. The Professor had heard the child say a place name to somebody who knew it by another name. The second person understood him after he pointed. They stood the same way while they waited, one a little farther from the water because he had been told to get back.

The kingdoms that came after Alexander covered country he had known for a short time and some he had never seen. Men who had once served with him and the families who came after them had fought over what could be inherited. By about 200 BCE the Professor could look across the Mediterranean and see a world changed by those claims. Alexandria was one place to see what people did with languages and skills that had been brought together. A man at the harbor had a question about where a letter was going to end up. There were people around him who could read it and still needed help finding the house the traveler wanted.

He had imagined there would be an end to his question about who got to rule. Here there was

a man with a boy who meant to find a house before it was dark. They could both say who ruled the city. That was something they could hear any day. The boy had spent the morning practicing the two ways of naming the place near the water. He wanted to be sure of both when it was his turn to find the way.

The Professor turned around to look out past the harbor. He had followed people across water from Thermopylae to Salamis and from Athens toward Sicily. Now he could see a ship arriving with somebody who had known it needed to turn long before he could see which place it was going. There would have been people waiting a great many years after Alexander went by who could tell from a long way off where such a boat was going to land.

Back at Monhegan Hakan asked how he would start the account. The Professor turned to the page where he had put the first end of the pass. There was room across from it he had meant to fill with something about the two forces. He could see the people across from him, massed together so that he could not get one face out of

the picture. Then he found the man nearest him in his mind.

“What did you bring back?” Hakan asked.

“The man had a cup,” the Professor said. “He put it down where the next man could find it.”

Hakan moved his own cup a little farther from the edge of the table. The Professor drew the rock and the hand and the bit of shade. He left the place where the armies stood until he knew how much of the page he had left.

# Historical Notes

## The forces at Thermopylae

Herodotus 7.202–203 lists a Greek coalition defending the pass in 480 BCE. In 7.219–222 he recounts who stayed for the last stand, including Spartans and Thespians. His account of the Thebans' motives is his report and merits separate scrutiny. The soldier with the cup is fictional. The cover is an artistic interpretation of the coastal pass and the opposing forces.

Herodotus. Histories 7.201–233. Translated by G. C. Macaulay, selections at Livius.

## The runners of Marathon

Herodotus 6.105–106 has the runner travel to Sparta before the battle in 490 BCE. He also gives the story of the runner's meeting with Pan. Herodotus describes Marathon in 6.108–117, including Plataean participation. The famous victory run to Athens and the runner's death appear in later forms of the tradition. The man at the wall in this book is invented.

Herodotus. Histories, Book 6. Translated by G. C. Macaulay. Project Gutenberg.

## The Persian empire and Salamis

The Persepolis Fortification Archive preserves evidence of imperial administration, including the distribution of provisions and travel rations. The scene with the two travelers is a composite inspired by those records. Herodotus gives the Delphic wooden-wall oracle and its

interpretation in 7.140–144 and the battle of Salamis in Book 8. Aeschylus's Persians, performed in 472 BCE, stages the news of defeat at the Persian court. It is an Athenian play. The boat landing, bundle and spectators in our story are invented.

Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, University of Chicago. Persepolis Fortification Tablets.

Herodotus. Histories, Books 7–8. Translated by G. C. Macaulay. Project Gutenberg.

Aeschylus. Persians. The Greek Drama Reader, overview and text.

## When allies became subjects

Thucydides 1.96–99 describes the Athenian-led alliance and contributions of money and ships after the Persian invasion. Delos housed the original shared treasury, later moved to Athens. The carriers, their chest and the record keeper are fictional. The debate over Mytilene is in Thucydides 3.36–50, including the second ship and the remaining executions. The Melian Dialogue is at 5.84–116. The account of the Sicilian expedition occupies Books 6 and 7. These speeches and dialogues come to us through Thucydides's composition. He explains his approach to reconstructing speeches at 1.22. Athens surrendered to Sparta in 404 BCE, after the point at which his narrative stops.

Thucydides 5.49–50 describes the dispute over the Olympic truce, the exclusion of Sparta, and Lichas's attempt to claim the victory. The sacred truce protected travel to and from the Games. The boy, his father, and the

account of the driver after the race are imagined. The illustration is an AI-assisted interpretation.

Thucydides. History of the Peloponnesian War. Translated by Richard Crawley. The Internet Classics Archive.

## Macedon and Babylon

Philip II defeated the Athenian and Theban alliance at Chaeronea in 338 BCE. Alexander fought there and later led the expedition against Persia. A contemporary Babylonian astronomical diary records events in 331 BCE around Gaugamela and Alexander's arrival at Babylon, alongside the later Greek and Roman narratives. The people at the threshold in the book are invented. Babylon already had deep traditions of astronomy, writing and administration.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World. Chronology, 2016.

Astronomical Diary mentioning the Battle of Gaugamela. Translation and commentary at Livius.

## After Alexander

Alexander died in 323 BCE. Generals and dynasties fought over the empire. By around 200 BCE, Ptolemaic Egypt, the Seleucid kingdom and Macedon were among the principal powers of the Hellenistic world. The scene with the orders stands for an imagined dispute in the years of the successors. The Alexandria chapter takes place much later, around 200 BCE. The people at the harbor are invented.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World. Essays and chronology, 2016.