citizenship was occasionally conferred on non-citizens. But this sort of naturalization was not usual (see 2.2). So there was a natural limit on how much territory any Greek city could control. Conquering meant enslaving the conquered or, at best, giving them metic status. So adding conquered territories did not mean adding citizens and the loyal inhabitants and military manpower needed to retain such territories. Therefore, the more territory a city tried to control, the thinner its armed forces were stretched and the harder it was to hold onto that territory. After the Peloponnesian War, this difficulty led the Spartans, who had fought in the Persian Wars in the name of the "freedom of Hellas," to ally themselves with the Persians in order to try to maintain their dominance in Greece. But even this measure failed to save the Spartans at Leuctra.

The fact that Greeks were willing to fight for their cities against other Greeks in conflicts like the Peloponnesian War showed the limits of the pull of Hellas compared with that of the polis. Yet the Peloponnesian War also both revealed the loosening of people's ties to their cities and encouraged it. Fields of grain were torched every year for years. People lost their livelihoods. By the end of the war, refugees wandered the Greek world. Most ominously for the polis, men began to serve as mercenaries, fighting for any city that would pay them.

The rise of such mercenaries suggests that many citizens were becoming detached from their poleis by the end of the fifth century BC. The career of an Athenian politician named

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Map 2.2: Greek colonization