The Rise of the Greeks, 1000–500 BCE

- Geography and Resources
- Greece is part of the Mediterranean ecological zone, an area in which all the various lands have a similar climate, similar seasons, and similar crops
- This characteristic of the Mediterranean zone is highly conducive to migration, transfer of crops and technology, and trade
The areas inhabited by the Greeks relied entirely on rainfall, having no water resources sufficient for irrigation.

Limited water and limited, thin arable soil meant that the area could not support large populations.

Greece had few metal resources and little timber, but it did have plentiful harbors.
The Emergence of the Polis

- The *polis* (city-state) was an urban center and its rural territory
- Characteristic features of the *polis* included an acropolis, an agora (marketplace), fortified walls, and public buildings
- There were frequent wars between the various city-states
Great Acropolis in Athens
The Greeks developed a style of warfare that used hoplites—a close formation of heavily armored infantrymen who would try to break the enemy’s line of defense.

The soldiers were mostly farmer-citizens who served for short periods of time when called.
When population growth outstripped available resources, the Greeks sent excess population to colonize other areas in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Colonization brought the Greeks into closer contact with other peoples.
Colonization introduced the Greeks to new ideas, but it also sharpened their sense of Greek identity.

One of the most significant new developments of this period was the invention of coins in Lydia (western Anatolia) in the early sixth century b.c.e.
Increasing prosperity and the growth of a middle class in Archaic Greek society led to the emergence in the mid-seventh and sixth centuries BCE of one-man rule by tyrants, who reduced the power of traditional elites.
The tyrants were eventually ejected and government developed in one of two directions: oligarchy (power rests with small elite part of society) or democracy (rule by the majority)
Greek religion

- involved the worship of anthropomorphistic sky gods, many of which represented forces of nature
- These gods were worshiped at state ceremonies
- Animal Sacrifice was a central part of religious practice and helped to create a sense of community
Athens and Sparta

- Sparta was a polis located in the Pelopponese in southern Greece.
- In order to assure its supply of food, Sparta took over the more fertile land of Messenia and enslaved the Messenians.
Fear of an uprising of their Messenian slaves inspired the Spartans to create a severely ascetic and highly militarized society in which all Spartan males trained for the army and devoted their lives to the needs of the state.
Athens had an unusually large hinterland (Attica) that supported a population of about 300,000 in the fifth century b.c.e.

Athens went through a period of rule by tyrants in the sixth century b.c.e.

In the late sixth and early to mid-fifth centuries b.c.e., Athens ejected the tyrant family and developed a democracy
The Height of Athenian Power, 480–323 b.c.e.

The Classical period of Greek history (480–323 b.c.e.) was marked by the dominant role of Athens, which subordinated the other states of the Delian League and became an imperial power.

Athenian power was based on the Athenian navy.
The keys to the strength of the Athenian navy were technological innovation and the use of lower-class men as rowers.

The major technological innovation was the development of the trireme—a fast, maneuverable 170-oar boat.

The use of lower-class rowers meant further democratization of Athenian society.

These men, realizing their importance, demanded the full rights of citizenship.
Athens used its power to carry out profitable trade and to extract annual tribute from subject states.

The wealth of the empire made it possible for Athens to construct:

1. impressive public works
2. put on grand festivals
3. support development of the arts and sciences.
Socrates and Plato

- The two most influential philosophers of the Classical period were Socrates and Plato.
Socrates

- turned the focus of philosophy to ethics
- probed the precise meaning of words
- created the Socratic method of question and answer
- He was tried on charges of corrupting the youth and not believing in the gods of the city and sentenced to death.
Plato

- wrote dialogs exploring concepts such as justice, excellence, and wisdom.
- Plato taught that the world as we see it is a pale reflection of a higher, ideal reality.
Inequality in Classical Greece

- Athenian democracy was very limited in its scope
- Only free adult males participated in Athenian democracy
- They accounted for about 10 or 15 percent of the total population.
- Women, children, slaves, and foreigners did not have the rights of citizens
Slaves

- were mostly foreign, accounted for one third of the population
- were regarded as property
- The average Athenian family owned one or more slaves who were treated like domestic servants
- Slaves provided male citizens with the leisure for political activity.
Women

- The position of women varied in different Greek communities
- In Sparta, women were relatively free and outspoken.
- In Athens women were more confined and oppressed
- Athenian marriages were unequal arranged unions of younger women to older men
The duties of a wife were to produce and raise children (especially sons), to weave cloth, and to cook and clean.

Since there were no meaningful relations between men and women, men sought intellectual and emotional companionship with other men.
This gave rise to a common pattern of bisexuality in which older men engaged in extended social, intellectual, and sexual relationships with younger men.