The 6th century BC

The first philosophers, and the first democracy.

In Ionia, Thales and his successors asked what the world is made of without appeal to myth. Solon reformed Athens' laws, and in 508 BC Cleisthenes founded democracy. Rome expelled its kings.

What rose

c. 585 BC. Thales, the first philosopher, is said to predict an eclipse. Source: Thales of Miletus

594 BC. Solon's reforms in Athens. Source: Solon

c. 530 BC. Pythagoras founds his school. Source: Pythagoras

509–508 BC. Rome becomes a republic; Cleisthenes founds Athenian democracy. Source: Cleisthenes

What fell or stalled

Persia conquered the Greek cities of Ionia. Source: Achaemenid Empire

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