



The Greeks came to Italy in large numbers during the age of Greek colonization (750 B.C. to 550 B.C.). Starting in southern Italy, they slowly migrated up the peninsula. They also occupied eastern **Sicily**, an island south of the Italian peninsula. The Greeks had much influence on the people of Rome. They cultivated olives and grapes, passed on their alphabet, and gave the Romans artistic and cultural models through their sculpture, architecture, and literature.

It was the **Etruscans**, however, who most influenced the early development of Rome. Located north of Rome in Etruria, they came to control Rome and most of Latium after 650 B.C. The Etruscans found Rome a village and turned it into a city. The Romans adopted Etruscan dress—the toga and short cloak. The Roman army also borrowed its organization from the Etruscans.

✓ Reading Check **Evaluating** What role did geography play in Rome's prosperity and defensibility?