Alexander the Great: A Very Short Introduction
Hugh Bowden

Alexander the Great: A Very Short Introduction demonstrates the profound influence the legends of Alexander's life have had on our historical understanding of him by focusing on the evidence from his own time. Aged just 20, Alexander the Great became king of Macedon in 336 bc; he died aged 32. During his reign, he conquered the Achaemenid Persian Empire, the largest empire that had ever existed, leading his army from Greece to Pakistan, and from the Libyan desert to the steppes of Central Asia. He had a profound effect on the world he moved through and his achievements became legendary both in his lifetime and in the centuries that followed.

Ancient Greece: A Very Short Introduction
Paul Cartledge

Ancient Greece: A Very Short Introduction takes the polis as its starting point and uses the history of eleven major Greek cities to illuminate the most important and informative themes in Ancient Greek history, from the first documented use of the Greek language in around 1400 bce, through the glories of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, to the foundation of the Byzantine empire in around ce 330. Ancient Greek civilization was defined by the city, the polis, from which we derive 'politics'. It is above all this feature of Greek civilization that has formed its most enduring legacy, spawning such key terms as aristocracy, oligarchy, tyranny, and — last but by no means least — democracy.

The Etruscans: A Very Short Introduction
Christopher Smith
This book explores Etruscan history, culture, language, and customs and examines the controversial debates about their origins, placing them within the geographical, economic, and political context of the time. From around 900 to 400 bc, the Etruscans were the most innovative, powerful, wealthy, and creative people in Italy. Their settlements were powerful, and their influence extended into northern and southern Italy, including Rome. Their archaeological record is both substantial and fascinating, including tomb paintings, sculpture, jewellery, and art. However no literature of their own has survived, so we have to understand them entirely through the eyes of contemporary and later ancient writers. This account seeks to understand the way the Etruscans were perceived and described, and also to insist on the possibility of a diachronic historical understanding of their civilization. The volume ends with an account of the influence of the Etruscans from the middle ages on, showing how the distinct discipline of Etruscology has grown up, and what may be its future.

The Hellenistic Age: A Very Short Introduction
Peter Thonemann

Drawing on inscriptions, papyri, coinage, poetry, art, and archaeology, The Hellenistic Age: A Very Short Introduction opens up the history and culture of the vast Hellenistic world, from the death of Alexander the Great (323 bc) to the Roman conquest of the Ptolemaic kingdom (30 bc). It navigates the power struggles and wars in the three centuries that followed the conquests of Alexander. In this age of cultural globalization, a single language carried you from the Rhône to the Indus. Narrative close-ups of individual cities, including the Greek city-states with the earliest federal governments, and kings from Sicily to Tajikistan who struggled to meet the challenges of ruling multi-ethnic states, are provided.

The Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction
Christopher Kelly

The Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction covers the history of the empire from Augustus (the first Emperor) to Marcus Aurelius, describing how the empire was formed, how it was run, its religions and its social structure. It examines how local cultures were ‘romanized’ and how people in faraway lands came to believe in the emperor as a god. This VSI also examines how the Roman Empire has been considered and depicted in more recent times, from the writings of Edward Gibbon, to the differing attitudes of the Victorians and recent Hollywood blockbuster films.
‘The Roman Republic’ describes the rise of the Roman Republic from its humble beginnings and explores its legacy in the modern world. How do the social and cultural aspects of the Republic resonate in modern-day literature and film? How do the literary and historical sources help us to better understand the Republic's dramatic rise and fall? Examining the political structure of the Republic and reflecting on the values and beliefs held by Romans of the time, it traces the legacy of the Republic through the Empire and the early Christian church to the Renaissance and the eighteenth-century revolutions in the USA and France.

The Trojan War: A Very Short Introduction

Eric H. Cline

The Trojan War: A Very Short Introduction investigates two major questions: did the Trojan War take place and, if so, where? This VSI suggests that, although a Trojan War (or wars) probably did take place, it was fought for economic and political reasons. This formed the nucleus for the story that was eventually recorded by Homer. In addition to Homer, this VSI examines other treatments of the story from classical times. It also surveys the archaeological attempts to document the Trojan War through excavations at Hissarlik, Turkey, especially the work of Heinrich Schliemann and his successors.