

# The Great Builders

Edited by Kenneth Powell

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The great builders of history were innovators and visionaries. Building has been a fundamental activity since the dawn of civilization, and some have become universally recognised landmarks such as the Sydney Opera House, the Eiffel Tower and the Taj Mahal.

This book is a unique survey of forty architect-engineers who have been pioneers in both aesthetic design and technological innovation from the early 15th century up to the present day.

In a series of concise but penetrating biographies, an international team of distinguished historians, writers and practising architects examine the work of some of the world's most successful designers. Covering 700 years of architectural history, they have included a wide range of buildings from churches and fortresses to bridges and high-tech skyscrapers.

The earliest builders were neither architects nor engineers, but artists like Brunelleschi who designed the 'unbuildable' dome of Florence Cathedral, a scientist like Christopher Wren whose St Paul's Cathedral still dominates the City of London, or Shah Jehan, a powerful monarch and the greatest builder of his age in India.

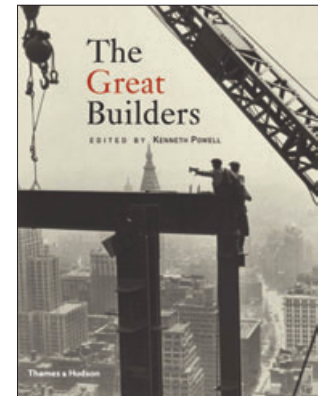
The Industrial Revolution inspired innovation, and with the need for railways, canals and factories, Thomas Telford, Joseph Paxton and I.K. Brunel used new materials such as glass and steel. Reinforced concrete alongside steel made the building of the modern world possible, and this was used by Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe and Pier Luigi Nervi to great effect.

Le Corbusier became the most influential architect worldwide of the 20th century, and he presaged the era of globalism and universalism. Yet some of the greatest builders of the age, such as Kenzo Tange in Japan and Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil have created buildings that reflect their distinct national cultures.

*The Great Builders* brings many remarkable characters and their work to life, revealing the technological ingenuity and aesthetic flare that define some of the world's most admired and iconic structures.

## Author

Kenneth Powell, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, is the author of *Richard Rogers: Complete Works*, *New London Architecture*, *City Reborn* and *Culture of Rebuilding*.



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