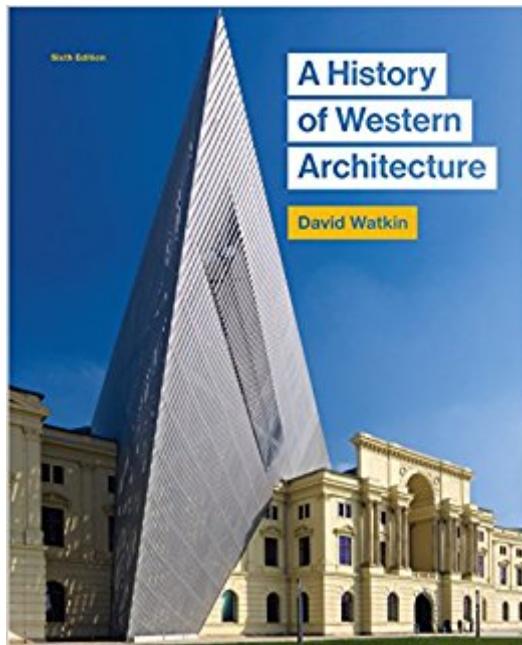


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# A History Of Western Architecture



## **Synopsis**

In this highly acclaimed reference work David Watkin traces the history of western architecture from the earliest times in Mesopotamia and Egypt to the eclectic styles of the twenty-first century. The author emphasizes the ongoing vitality of the Classical language of architecture, underlining the continuity between, say, the work of Ictinus in fifth-century BC Athens and that of McKim, Mead and White in twentieth-century New York. Authoritative, comprehensive and highly illustrated, this sixth edition has been expanded to bring the story of western architecture right up to date and includes a separate final chapter on twenty-first century developments, including the role of computers in architecture, sustainability, humanitarian architecture, and very tall buildings.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

David Watkin is Emeritus Professor of the History of Architecture at the University of Cambridge and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. His many books include Sir John Soane: Enlightenment Thought and the Royal Academy Lectures (1996), Morality and Architecture Revisited (2001) and The Roman Forum (2009).

This book is tough to read, especially if you don't know anything about architecture. But with a tough path ahead of me, I appreciate the thoroughness of the text. Well-presented photos along with these text makes for an interesting read. I have only read up to chapter 3, and I am already excited to learn more about the history of architecture. The vendor I got mine from was also very quick in the mailing process.

Great book!

This is the fourth edition of this monumental book. This edition has been expanded to include additional coverage of Egyptian and Mesopotamian architecture at the early end, and the coverage of the architecture of the twentieth century has been greatly expanded. There is also expanded coverage of the architecture from Asia, particular that of Japan. The book now has 50 color and 931 black and white photographs. Most of these are from Europe, but the rest of the world does have some coverage. The increased size and scope of the book now presents a continuous coverage of the evolution of architecture from the earliest building, about 5000 B.C. to buildings constructed in the twenty first century. It is the most complete single volume history of architecture available and it's new edition is greatly improved. The author, David Watkin is Professor of the History of Architecture at the University of Cambridge.

First time I read D. Watkin's book almost 10 years ago. Basically, it is a comprehensive and detailed throughout. However, I was struck by one 'little' improper detail - instead of the picture of Haja Sophia (St. Sophia Cathedral) in Kiev built in 11 cent. I found a picture of a Neo-Byzantine style church which dates to the beginning of the 20 cent. I'm just curious is it that difficult for a recognized art historian to tell the difference? Or it's just a matter of 'neglegence'? In 1996 I wrote a letter to the Publishing house and received a nice answer saying that in the case of the third print they would definitely check and replace the picture with the proper one. No changes so far.

Dr. Watkin and his publishers would have done better to have deleted virtually all of the text from this tome, leaving more room for the most successful part of the book, its photographs. While the bleeding of the images helps make the format seem more up-to-date, this book remains hopelessly out-of-date, the inclusion of Frank O. Ghery's Bilbao Museum and I. M. Pei's glowing pyramid on the cover notwithstanding. The gaps in this book are egregious as are the waxing and waning from over- to under-statement. While the color images are lovely, many of the black & white images of pre-20th century works seem as if they were taken from a photocopy. Dr. Watkins' propensity to treat "the New World" as a lost appendage of the British Empire colors the latter chapters in particular. The influence, for example, of "The Chicago School" barely registers within his stylometric system. As is often the case with survey books, in the end it seems quite a lot about all too little.

Surprisingly the book begins with Ancient Rome, leaving the Caves, Stonehenge, and Egypt out, but as a result has more time to explore Western Architecture in greater depth for a Survey Book. The photographs are excellent, with many in color.

Watkin knows his stuff. But I don't so I bought this book which didn't clear things up as much as I hoped. There are far too many details, not a sense of narrative through history. Then there are far too few photos of things he expose's so that I have to guess what he means. And no maps. My geographic knowledge is not that good. I think it could be improved by streamlining, photos near the text which refers to them, and a map at the start of each section. But his prose is beautiful sometimes.

great condition and great textbook

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