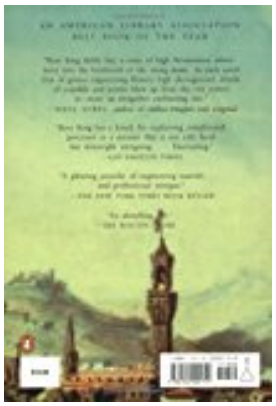
[PDF] Brunelleschi's Dome: How A Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture

Ross King - pdf download free book



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Description:

Filippo Brunelleschi's design for the dome of the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence remains one of the most towering achievements of Renaissance architecture. Completed in 1436, the dome remains a remarkable feat of design and engineering. Its span of more than 140 feet exceeds St Paul's in London and St Peter's in Rome, and even outdoes the Capitol in Washington, D.C., making it the largest dome ever constructed using bricks and mortar. The story of its creation and

its brilliant but "hot-tempered" creator is told in delightful *Brunelleschi's Dome*.

Both dome and architect offer King plenty of rich material. The story of the dome goes back to 1296, when work began on the cathedral, but it was only in 1420, when Brunelleschi won a competition over his bitter rival Lorenzo Ghiberti to design the daunting cupola, that work began in earnest. King weaves an engrossing tale from the political intrigue, personal jealousies, dramatic setbacks, and sheer inventive brilliance that led to the paranoid Filippo, "who was so proud of his inventions and so fearful of plagiarism," finally seeing his dome completed only months before his death. King argues that it was Brunelleschi's improvised brilliance in solving the problem of suspending the enormous cupola in bricks and mortar (painstakingly detailed with precise illustrations) that led him to "succeed in performing an engineering feat whose structural daring was without parallel." He tells a compelling, informed story, ranging from discussions of the construction of the bricks, mortar, and marble that made up the dome, to its subsequent use as a scientific instrument by the Florentine astronomer Paolo Toscanelli. *--Jerry Brotton, Amazon.co.uk* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly Walker was the hardcover publisher of Dava Sobel's sleeper smash, Longitude, and Mark Kurlansky's steady-seller Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World. This brief, secondary source-based account is clearly aimed at the same lay science-cum-adventure readership. British novelist King (previously unpublished in the U.S.) compiles an elementary introduction to the story of how and why Renaissance Italian architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) designed and oversaw the construction of the enormous dome of Florence's Santa Maria del Fiore cathedralAdesigning its curves so that they needed no supporting framework during construction: a major Renaissance architectural innovation. Illustrated with 26 b&w period prints, the book contains 19 chapters, some very brief. Although the result is fast moving and accessible, King overdoes the simplicity to the point that the book appears unwittingly as if it was intended for young adults. (Donatello, Leonardo and Michelangelo, for example, "took a dim view of marriage and women.") This book feels miles away from its actual characters, lacking the kind of dramatic flourish that would bring it fully to life. Despite direct quotes from letters and period accounts, the "would have," "may have" and "must have" sentences pile up. Still, the focus on the dome, its attendant social and architectural problems, and the solutions improvised by Brunelleschi provide enough inherent tension to carry readers along. (Oct. 23)
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