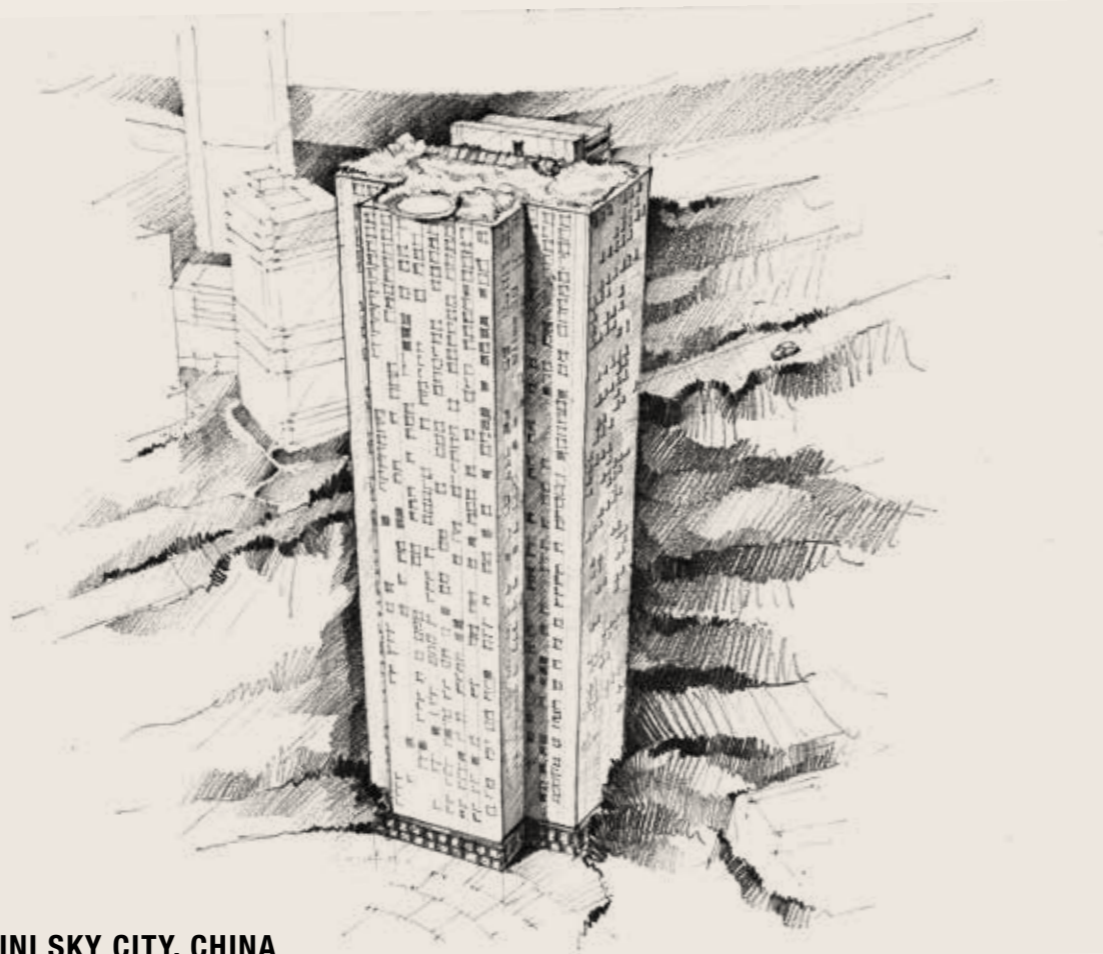


# WONDERS OF THE WORLD

Since the dawn of time, mankind has been engaged in building immense structures, from monuments and tombs to amphitheatres and cathedrals. Some took weeks. Others, years. And a few... centuries. From a two-week skyscraper to a two-millennia wall, here's a timeline of epic construction projects throughout history.

TEXT *Joseph Reaney*  
ILLUSTRATIONS *Adelina Popescu*



**456 HOURS**  
(19 DAYS)

## MINI SKY CITY, CHINA

*In April 2015, Broad Sustainable Building, a construction firm in China performed an extraordinary feat: it erected an entire 57-storey skyscraper in less than 19 working days. The glass and steel structure – known as Mini Sky City – was built at a rate of three storeys per day, literally changing the skyline of Changsha on an hourly basis. And all this despite encountering storms during construction.*

*Built using a modular method, rather than with individual bricks, Mini Sky City boasts office space for 4,000 people as well as 800 apartments. What's more, the whole building is 100 per cent earthquake proof.*

## EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, USA

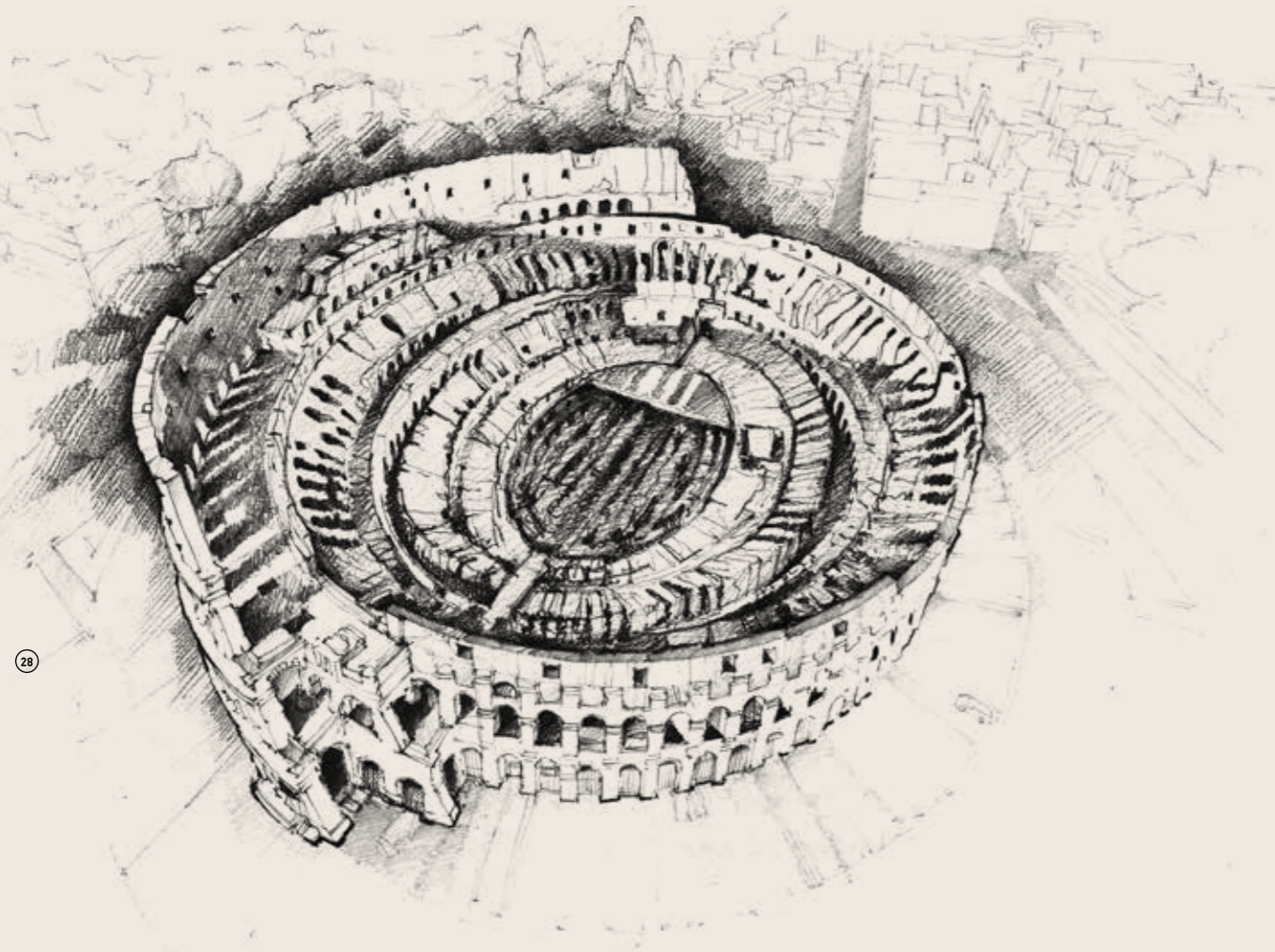
*The Empire State Building is one of the world's most iconic skyscrapers, and was officially the world's tallest building for almost 40 years. But did you know that it was built in just 410 days? When it was completed on April 11, 1931, the Empire State Building was 12 days ahead of schedule, breaking construction speed records.*

*As if that wasn't enough, it was built during the Great Depression, the greatest economic crisis in US history, and a time when the rest of the construction industry in New York was in freefall.*



**9,840 HOURS**  
(1 YEAR, 45 DAYS)





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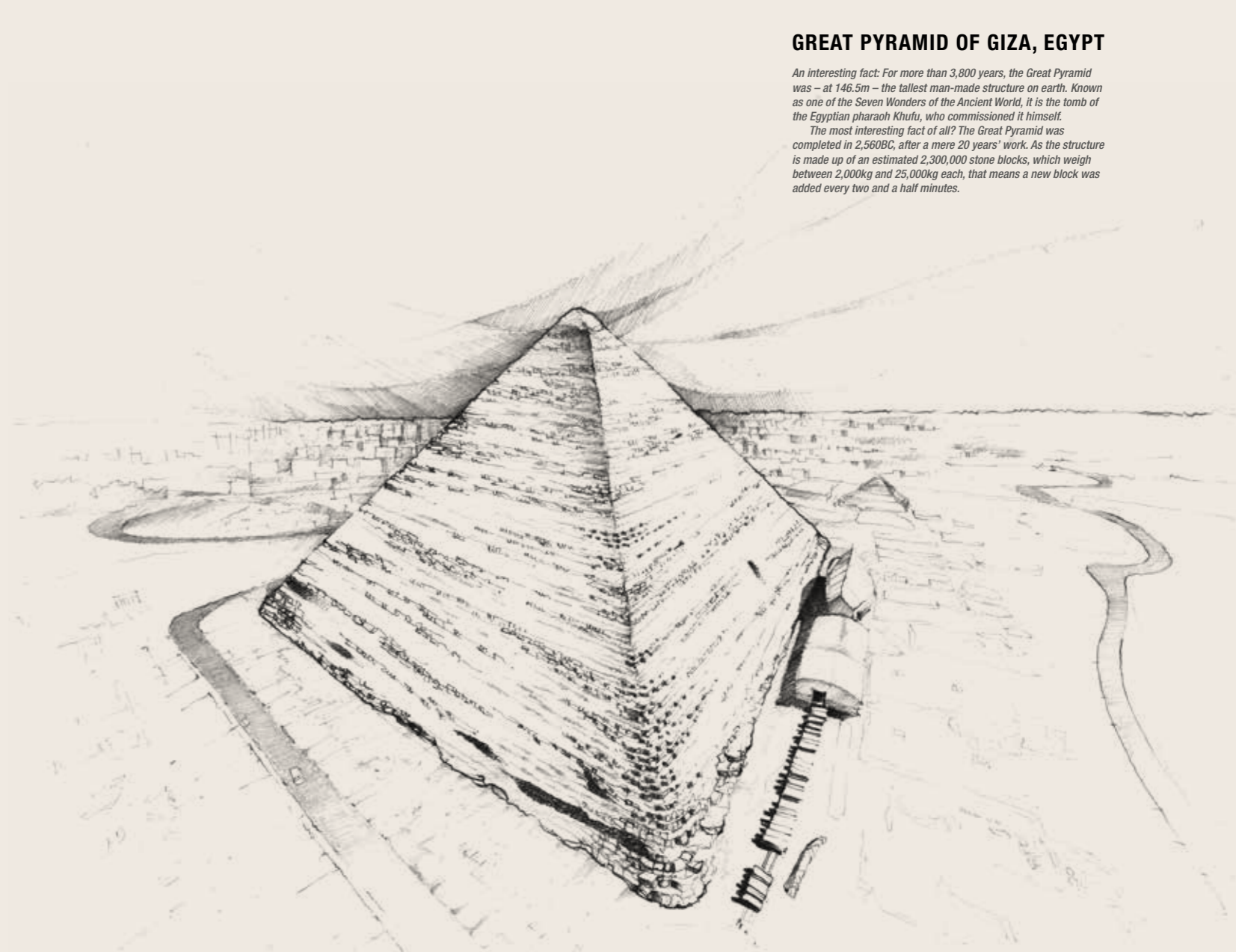
**87,600 HOURS**  
(10 YEARS)

**COLOSSEUM, ITALY**

*Built by the Romans as the heart of their city, the celebrated Colosseum is the largest amphitheatre ever constructed. It is believed to have held 50,000 to 80,000 spectators, who would gather to watch everything from gladiatorial contests to classical dramas and battle re-enactments to public executions.*

*In a timescale befitting its lofty status in Ancient Rome, the Colosseum took a whole decade to build, after it was started by Emperor Vespasian in AD70. In the two millennia since, the structure has been damaged by fire, earthquakes and stone-robbers, leaving behind the famous profile we know today.*

*Earlier this year, it was restored to its former glory by luxury Italian label Tod's after a massive conservation project costing nearly US\$33 million.*



**GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZA, EGYPT**

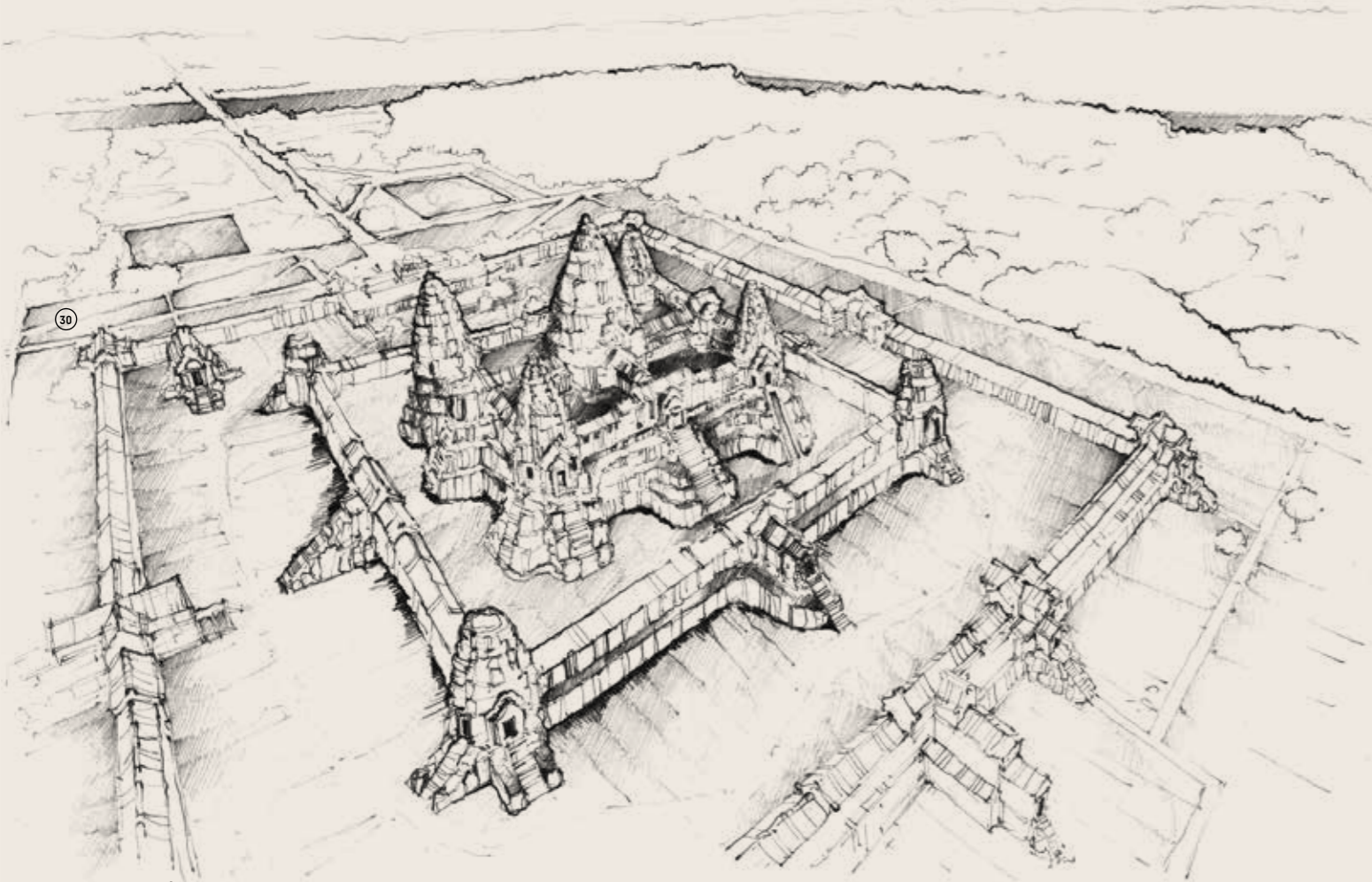
*An interesting fact: For more than 3,800 years, the Great Pyramid was – at 146.5m – the tallest man-made structure on earth. Known as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, it is the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Khufu, who commissioned it himself.*

*The most interesting fact of all? The Great Pyramid was completed in 2,560BC, after a mere 20 years' work. As the structure is made up of an estimated 2,300,000 stone blocks, which weigh between 2,000kg and 25,000kg each, that means a new block was added every two and a half minutes.*

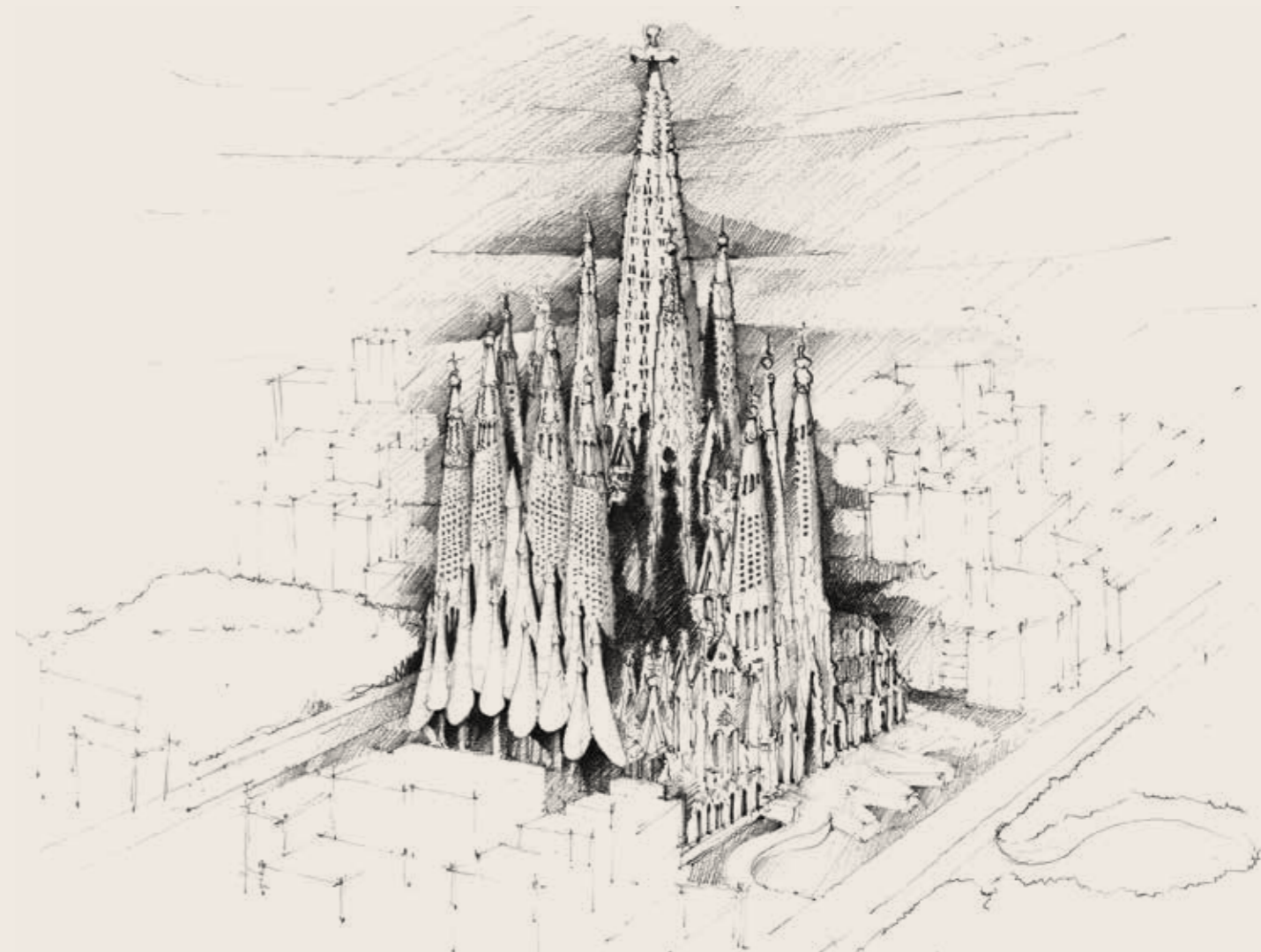
**175,200 HOURS**  
(20 YEARS)

### ANGKOR WAT, CAMBODIA

Originally built as a Hindu temple in the 12th century before being converted into a Buddhist temple, Angkor Wat is the world's largest religious structure. It was built to be a replica of the universe with its five towers representing the five cosmic elements. Five million tonnes of sandstone, 300,000 labourers and 6,000 elephants were used in the construction of this UNESCO World Heritage site monument which spreads over an area of 5km. Iconic Hollywood film Tomb Raider featuring Angelina Jolie was filmed at Ta Prohm, one of the most scenic temples in the complex.



306,600 HOURS  
(35 YEARS)



### SAGRADA FAMILIA, SPAIN

Anybody who's ever visited Barcelona will be familiar with the Sagrada Familia. A striking modernist cathedral designed by local artist Antoni Gaudi (who is also known for the city's Park Guell and Casa Mila), its construction began on March 19, 1882. Today, 134 years later, it remains a work in progress.

The marathon construction project is set to be finished in 2026, the centenary of Gaudi's death. If they manage it, the whole project will have taken 144 years. Regardless of its state of completion, Sagrada Familia is already a consecrated church, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a huge tourist attraction.

1,173,840 HOURS  
(134 YEARS AND COUNTING)



13,140,000 HOURS  
(1,500 YEARS)

### STONEHENGE, UK

*There are all kinds of fascinating theories as to how Stonehenge was built. There are even more varied myths and legends as to why it was built. But there is clear, irrefutable proof as to when it was built. Stonehenge, as we know it today, was gradually constructed over the course of at least 1,500 years.*

*The first monument, decorated with deer bones, was built in 3,100BC. The second, made of timber, was finished in 3,000BC. And the third, which evolved into the iconic semi-circular stone structure, was built from 2,600BC to 1,600BC. That means Stonehenge spans 1,500 years of prehistory.*



### THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

*No, it isn't the only man-made structure visible from space. However, it is the only man-made structure that took 2,000 years to complete. It all started in the 700BC, when walls of stone, brick, earth and wood began to be built. Over the next 2,000 years, these walls were joined together, built higher, and made stronger, providing an invaluable form of defence and border control.*

*The Great Wall of China reached its peak in the 1600s during the Ming Dynasty, when it ran a total length of more than 21,000km. Despite this, it failed to halt a Manchu invasion that ushered in the Qing Dynasty.*

17,520,000 HOURS  
(2,000 YEARS)