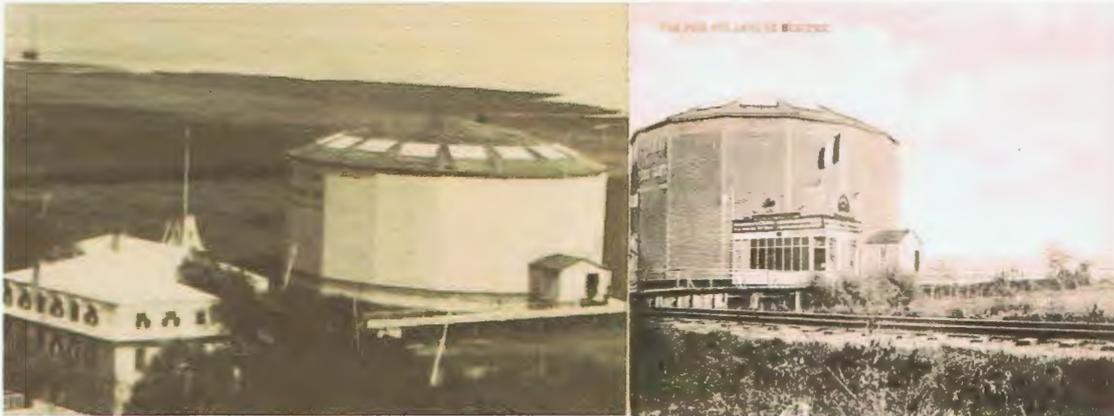


Heritage Study Heritage of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem in Sainte-Anne –de-Beaupré

Progress Report

Since December, study has been concentrated on the historical aspect and the documentation of the panoramic painting and its building, and their evolution through time. A meeting with Guy Blouin on December 18, 2013, allowed obtaining considerable data and opened up new avenues of research to precisely detail the history and evolution of this heritage ensemble.

Research in archives has already allowed unearthing a significant number of original old photographs which contain new information about the important dates in the historic evolution of this work, its building and environment.

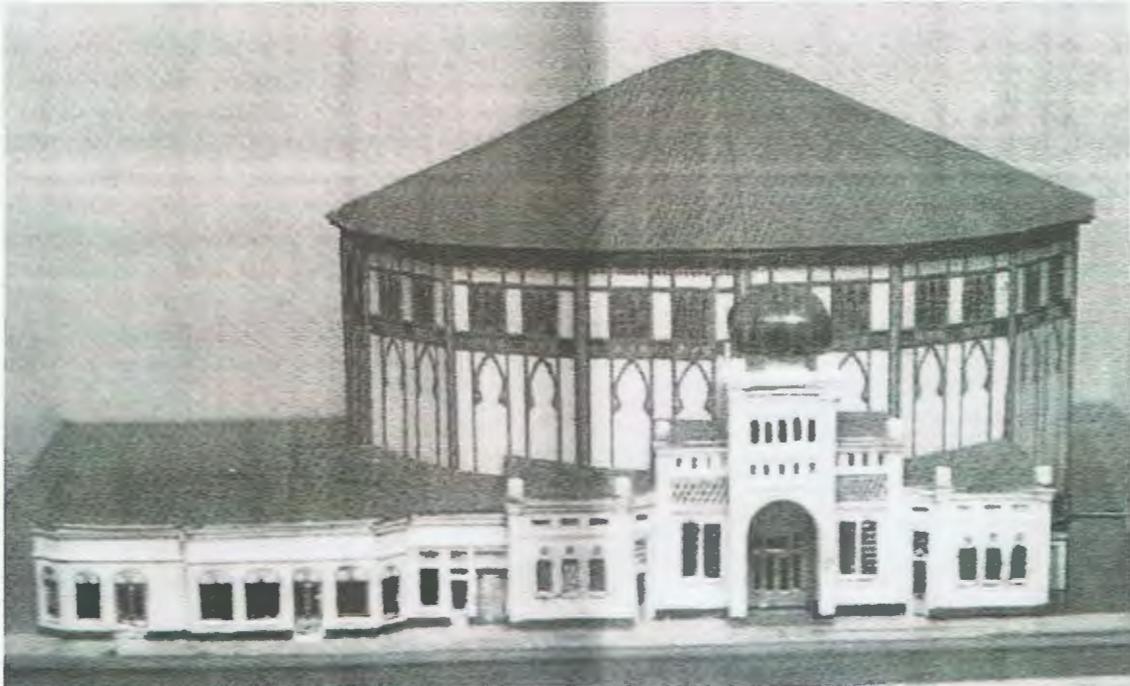


Two of the oldest photographs found of the rotunda of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem in its original condition (before 1900).



Cyclorama of Jerusalem as it looked like from 1926 to the beginning of the 1980's.

Archival research is now concentrated on Quebec City and Montreal architectural fonds in which the originals of the various phases of the architectural history of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem were located. These documents contain fundamental information about the building, its structural and technical details.



Model of the new Cyclorama store (1964) which is in the Laval University archives.

We have also begun the study of the contextualization of the Cyclorama of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré and of its unique characteristics, from among the panoramic paintings which are currently located all over the world. Numerous little-known facts about the world history of these panoramas were also discovered, shedding new light on this phenomenon which began at the end of the 18th century and continued over a period of three centuries.

Research conducted on the heritage value of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem and the architecture of its rotunda underscores the **following highlights**, which are still unknown:

PANORAMIC PAINTING

- In 2014, there were **64 panoramic paintings**, nearly half of which (28) have been completed since 1992, most of them in Asia.

- There is currently a real **renaissance of panoramic painting** throughout the world. **China** alone has some **26 contemporary panoramic paintings**, 10 round panoramas and 13 in a semi-circle.

- The Cyclorama of Jerusalem at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré is **most important** in the history of painted panoramas.
 - It is the **9th oldest** of the 16 panoramas in the world painted before 1914 and still being shown to the public
 - It is the **only panorama** in Canada;
 - It is the **4th oldest** panorama in North America and its **rotunda** is the **oldest in North America**;
 - The Cyclorama of Jerusalem is part of the **second generation of the history of panoramas** (1870 – 1914) and is the **5th oldest** of the 17 panoramas from that period which still exist;

- The **panoramic scene of the Crucifixion** of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré is **the oldest in the world** and is the only one which is contemporaneous to the original model designed by the German painter Bruno Pioglheim (1848 – 1894). The two other panoramic paintings of the Crucifixion date from 1902-1903 (Altötting in Germany) and 1962 (Einsiedeln in Switzerland).

- The **themes of the Crucifixion** are part of a **distinct category** – and also the **scarcest** – in all panoramic painting. **Only three panoramas out of 64** have a **religious theme** (the Crucifixion). Approximately 60% of panoramas have military themes and approximately 40% present natural landscapes or historical scenes.

- The **themes of Crucifixion**, such as in the Cyclorama of Jerusalem, are also the few panoramas to show a double theme: a historical environment (Jerusalem) and a religious scene (the Crucifixion).

- The Cyclorama at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré has the **only panoramic painting with the Crucifixion theme in North America**. There is a semi-circle panorama of the Crucifixion at the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale, California. This is a work by the Polish painter Jan Styka (1858 – 1925), which dates back to 1896.

- The **panoramic painting** of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem is **one of the largest in the world**. Measuring 14 x 110 metres, it is the **8th largest among the 14** painted before 1914 ¹.

- The **team of artists** who painted the Cyclorama of Jerusalem in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré was **one of the most skilled at that time**. Made up of five specialized artists from the United States and Europe, the team included two Americans (Charles Abel Corwin and Oliver Denett Grover), an Englishman (Edward J. Austen) and two Frenchmen (Salvatore Mège and Ernest Gros).

¹ According to the *Guinness Book of Records*, the largest panoramic painting in the world is a contemporary work in Zhengzhou, China (1911), the dimensions of which are 20 x 160 metres.

- Because of special circumstances, the painted canvas of the Jerusalem Cyclorama is in a state of exceptional authenticity and in much better condition than many other old panoramas:

- the work was never on tour (thereby avoiding frequent damage at that time);
- there were proper conditions to preserve the painting;
- the painting went through an exemplary restoration process in 1958-1959, by a renowned artist, Christo Stefanoff (1898 – 1966), a native of Bulgaria and one of the few artists at that time to master the specific techniques of panoramic painting.

- The esthetic qualities of the Jerusalem panoramic painting are exceptional. Not only has the work not lost any of its original qualities, but it acquired even more when it was restored in 1958-1959.

- Specialists agree that the Crucifixion scene of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem is in many ways of a higher esthetic quality than the work of Bruno Pieglhein, which inspired it.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF PANORAMA ROTUNDAS

- The rotunda of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem is the 3rd oldest in the world which still has its original function, after the rotunda of the Mesdag panorama in The Hague, Netherlands (1880) and that of Luzern in Switzerland (1889). Globally, the rotundas of almost all of the oldest panoramas were renewed during the 20th century.

- The architecture of the Cyclorama of Jerusalem is original from several points of view:

- Its architecture is more detailed than that most old rotundas, the exterior walls of which are very plain;



The Mesdag Panorama in The Hague, Netherlands, 1880



The Crucifixion panorama in Altötting, Germany, 1902-1903



The Crucifixion panorama in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, 1962

- The rotunda of the Cyclorama in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré is part of the first generation of those buildings, with a wooden structure and framework. This is the oldest rotunda with a wooden structure in the world to still have is

original purpose. The other wooden rotunda in Altötting, Germany, was erected in 1902.

- The Cyclorama of Jerusalem rotunda was the subject of a **high quality restoration** which ensured that the impressive structure would still be in good condition up to now.
 - During the 1950s, a **concrete foundation** was built for the rotunda, which had been originally erected on piles.
 - The **structure of the floors and framework** was reinforced during the 1950s and 1960s.
- The style of the Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré rotunda **harmonizes with the theme of the work of art** it houses. With the former panorama of Cairo in Brussels, it is one of the rare panorama rotundas to be influenced by an **oriental style**.



The former panorama rotunda of Cairo, erected in 1879 in the *Cinquantenaire* Park in Brussels. It is now the **Grand Mosque of Brussels**.

Like the Cyclorama of Jerusalem in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, the two other panoramas of the Crucifixion of Christ are located in **cities of pilgrimage**². But, quite different from the rotunda in Altötting, Germany and in Einsiltein, Switzerland, the rotunda of the Jerusalem Cyclorama dominates the countryside and may be considered as a **part of the pilgrimage site**.

Richard Dubé and Paul Trépanier

May 5th, 2014

² At the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries, the pilgrimage site in Lourdes, France had a panorama. There was also one in the Montmartre district in Paris, near the Sacred Heart Basilica.