



E A R L Y V I S U A L M E D I A L A B

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PANORAMA AS MEMORY OF THE WORLD: AN IMMERSIVE MEDIA ART FORM AS DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

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Abstract

Coined in the 1790s, the term ‘panorama’ originally described a purpose-built rotunda containing a circular painting that immersed viewers in a depicted place or event. Though currently understood as fixed in place, panoramas were typically designed to be circulated. This was accomplished either by transporting the canvas between rotundas or by moving the entire structure, in either case, subjecting it to wear and tear. Surviving heritage examples endured in part because they became stationary exhibits; but whether mobile or fixed, the geographic location of display was—and, importantly, remains—intrinsic to their meaning. Panoramas are geographic documents that combine painting, architecture, lighting, and visitor movement to create an illusion of scale, aligning—or productively misaligning—subject and site in space and time. Recognition in UNESCO’s Memory of the World Program would bring attention to an archive that is geographically distributed rather than institutionally centralized. The International Panorama Council is uniquely qualified to define and interpret a dispersed archive that invites critical engagement with place-based histories of visitation, visualization, political formation, and the built environment.

Keywords: *Panorama, geographic documents, archives, media art form, media archaeology, visualization, UNESCO Memory of the World*

The word ‘panorama’ is common in modern languages. This term was coined at the turn of the eighteenth century to describe an influential new medium (OED Online, 2025)—a new form of visual experience that transformed the way people engaged with images of the world.¹ Becoming a global phenomenon by the second half of the nineteenth century, the panorama precipitated a consequential transformation in visual culture, captivating paying audiences by immersing them in vast depictions of history, travel, and spectacle. Today, the medium stands as a sensorially accessible index of how people consumed visual information, participated in virtual travel, navigated national identity, and made sense of colonial projects during this period. With the rise of the cinema (1890s–1920s), the moving image gradually supplanted the panorama as a mass medium. Yet the panorama’s immersive logic phenomenon did not vanish with its decline as popular entertainment; instead, it continued to shape modern media and spatial imagination. Tracing this more extended history offers insight into how visual culture incorporates forms of documentary immersion.

In its basic form, a panorama—or cyclorama, as this type of artifact has been called in some places and times—is a purpose-built architectural structure containing a monumental circular painting that affords a multi-sensory virtual experience of standing amid an actual place or event. Natural lighting from a ring-shaped skylight introduces atmospheric

effects that enliven the virtual experience. A variety of architectural, theatrical, and choreographic features combine to produce immersion. Exemplars ranged in size from relatively minor to monumental. For example, the *Panorama of Salzburg* (extant, painted 1825–1829) occupies approximately 250 m², while the *Panorama of Jerusalem* (extant, painted 1886–1889) measures approximately 1,600 m². Whether intimate or monumental, such works were conceived as environments rather than mere images: these spaces enveloped spectators and coordinated painting, architecture, and light to simulate embodied presence. Designed to attract and transport, panoramas were often constructed to travel and be presented in new venues. This mobility proved central both to their reach and their fragility.

The modest number of heritage panoramas that survive to the present day (see appendix) represents a fraction of a far larger body that survives only in documentation. Generally, panoramas were intended to be circulated to facilitate viewing in a sequence of geographic locations. Circulation was accomplished either by transporting the entire rotunda, together with its canvas, from city to city or by circulating canvases from rotunda to rotunda (Fig. 1).² Transporting these monumental objects was costly and subjected the artifacts to significant wear and tear. As a result, although most heritage examples were initially designed for circulation, their survival was only possible once they were exhibited or stored in permanent facilities. This tension between

1. s.v. ‘panorama’, sense 1a, first use 1791.

2. Surviving examples of travelling panoramas are exceedingly rare, owing to their heavy use, frequent transport, and the repeated rigors of installation and dismantling. An exceptional surviving example is the Sattler Panorama (painted 1826–1829), which has been carefully preserved at the Salzburg Panorama Museum.



Fig. 1 Installation of a panorama canvas in the panorama building at the Rossplatz, Leipzig, 1885. F/7913/2005, Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig.

mobility and preservation is fundamental to the panorama's history: the same conditions that made panoramas a global medium also made them vulnerable to loss. Understanding

this dynamic helps situate surviving works within the broader panorama phenomenon that inspired a wide range of nineteenth-century immersive media.

The panorama's popularity inspired the creation of an array of immersive and interactive media that fostered felt engagement with distant places, times, and events. Well-known examples include the diorama, cosmorama, georama, mareorama, and many more. Among these successors, several remained so closely related to the panorama that they should be considered as part of the same lineage (Kenderdine, 2007). Two variations are so closely associated with the panorama as to share its name, and we include them in our definition of the medium: the partial-circle or *hemicycle* panorama and the moving or *peristrepthic* panorama. Hemicycle panoramas employed the same perspectival system as the circular panorama and were sufficiently large to immerse visitors, even though they did not fully surround them. Indeed, some early examples of panoramas were produced as partial circles, and several notable hemicycle panoramas were created in the late nineteenth century. The moving panorama, by contrast, was smaller in height—often 2.5 to 3 meters—but prodigious in length, typically ranging from 175 to 400 meters. Scrolled from one spindle to another, its imagery created in viewers the sensation of traveling along a depicted route—a bodily sense of co-presence with narrated events and pictured landscapes (Oettermann, 1993; Huhtamo, 2013; Huhtamo, 2019; Lowe, 2024). While monumental in proportions, the canvases of both hemicycle and moving panoramas were often staged in temporary or adaptable venues. Their proliferation across theaters, public rooms, fairsgrounds, and world exhibitions helped extend the

panorama's immersive appeal throughout the nineteenth century. Together, these variations carried forward the panorama's immersive logic, adapting its fusion of painting, architecture, and movement to new audiences and exhibition contexts.

In this article, we argue that panoramas—including circular, hemispherical, and moving examples—represent a documentary heritage of world significance, as defined by UNESCO's Memory of the World (MoW) program. Under the auspices of the International Panorama Council, panorama owners and curators have been invited to participate in developing a joint application to list panoramas in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.³ This article presents the main arguments of the project's scientific committee, which was tasked with suggesting definitions, criteria, and a rationale for listing. It also presents an exhaustive list of preserved panoramas. Taken together, these efforts advance recognition of panoramas as a geographically distributed archive—one that redefines how documentary heritage can operate through spatial, immersive, and collaborative forms. In the following sections, we define the panorama as a documentary medium, outline its historical and material scope, and explain how its inclusion in the Memory of the World register will illuminate its significance as both cultural heritage and global media history.

3. Initially organized in 1992 as the 'European Panorama Conference', the International Panorama Council (IPC) has facilitated the preservation and conservation of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century panoramas, as well as the expansion and dissemination of knowledge and awareness of the broader panorama phenomenon, through its annual conferences, publications and other outreach initiatives for 33 years (Deicher, 2019).

1. The panorama as documentary heritage and distributed archive

Examining the relationship between image, architecture, and location clarifies how panoramas embody the Memory of the World definition of documentary heritage and why their geographic disposition is central to their meaning. UNESCO has three main heritage programs: World Heritage, Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Memory of the World. Launched in 1992, Memory of the World is an international initiative to safeguard and raise awareness of the world's documentary heritage, which consists of 'those single documents—or groups of documents—of significant and enduring value to a community, a culture, a country or to humanity generally, and whose deterioration or loss would be a harmful impoverishment' (Edmondson, 2020; UNESCO, 2015). According to UNESCO, documentary heritage consists of an object comprising analogue or digital information content and the carrier on which it resides. It is preservable and usually movable. The content may comprise signs or codes (such as text), images (still or moving), and sounds, which can be copied or migrated. The carrier may have important aesthetic, cultural, or technical qualities. The relations between content and carrier may range from incidental to integral (Edmondson, 2020, p.22; UNESCO, 2015).

This framework provides the conceptual foundation for our argument: panoramas, whose content and material form are inseparable, should be understood as document heritage within the meaning of the MoW program.

Panoramas merit recognition as documentary heritage, as defined by UNESCO's MoW Program. In the case of the

panorama, the carrier consists of the architectural structure and the circular painting. In contrast, the content consists of the narrative, spatial, and affective information conveyed by the painting's disposition within the architectural setting. This definition accommodates circular, hemispherical, and moving panoramas, whether circulating or stationary, and includes artifacts housed in permanent and temporary structures. Interpreting panoramas through the MoW framework makes visible how their documentary function depends on the fusion of content and carrier: the physical environment not only supports but constitutes the informational content. In this sense, panoramas exemplify the complexity of documents that integrate image, structure, and experience, offering an expanded model of what documentary heritage can be.

More than images, panoramas constitute a paradigmatic media art form that performs as a cultural phenomenon. They are geographic documents in three ways: they depict geographic subjects, operate at geographic scale, and are themselves geographically disposed and dispersed. This geographic disposition is not incidental but central to their documentary meaning: visitors stand not in front of an image but inside an illusion—ensconced in an environment that simulates presence through the artful engineering of perspective, scale, habits of looking, bodily movement, and visual narrative. Through these interactions, panoramas transform space itself into a medium of record, making geographic perception and embodied experience integral components of the document. In this way, their documentary status arises from the capacity to create spatial experience, both the content and

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the carrier of cultural information. This quality underlies the archive's distributed character, which we discuss below.

The same spatial logic defines the panorama archive. Unlike conventional archives gathered in a single location, the

panorama archive incorporates geographic space. A single panorama depicting a particular place may have been commissioned, produced, displayed, and later preserved in different sites. This dispersion makes the panorama archive an exceptional case for the MoW Program because it challenges

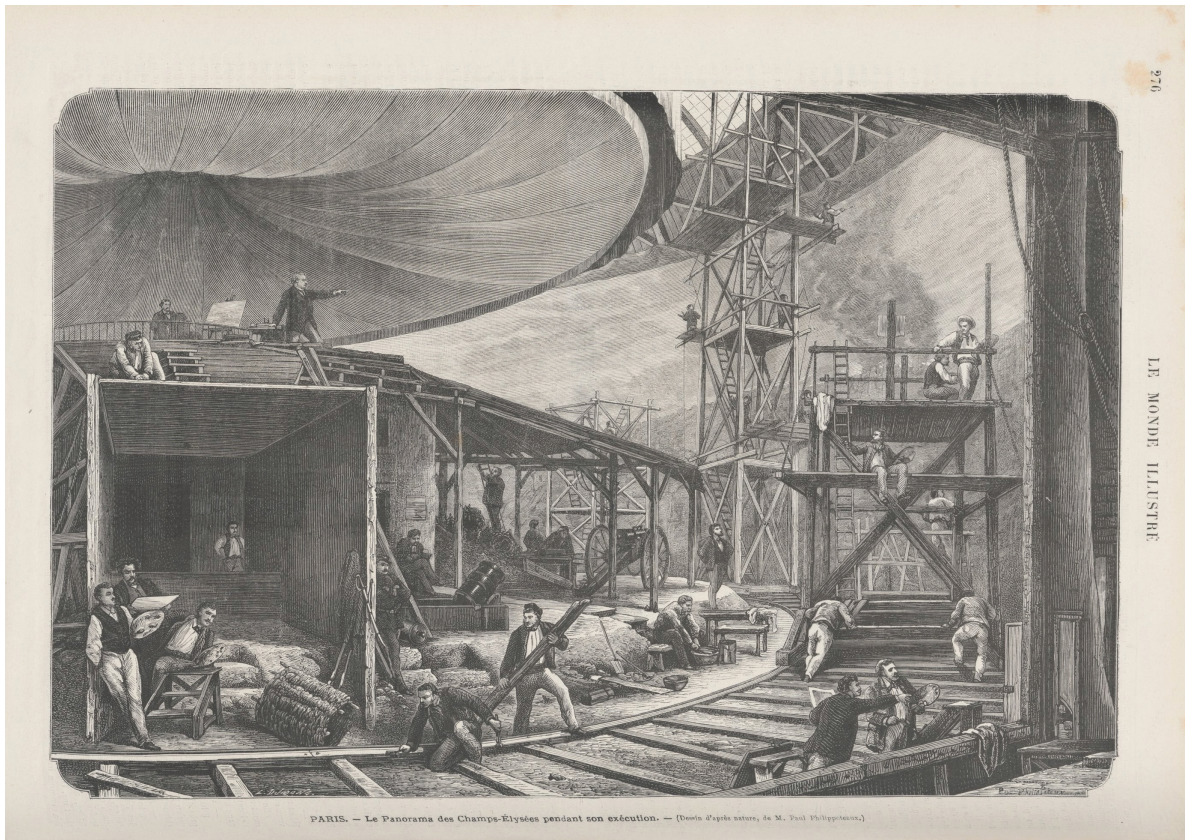


Fig. 2 Paul Philippoteaux. Illustration of Felix Philippoteaux's panorama 'Défense de Paris, Champs-Élysées', Paris, during its execution. (2 November 1872). *Le Monde Illustré*, 276.

the intuition that documentary heritage resides in a single physical location. What ties these works together is not just where they are held, but how they operate in relation to their sites of display. Their archival unity lies in the mechanics of the panoramic illusion itself—combining painting, architecture, lighting, and geographic site in a singular immersive encounter. This geographic disposition complicates standard archival models but also extends them, demonstrating how a collection’s coherence emerges through shared spatial logic rather than institutional consolidation.

For example, Paul Philippoteaux’s drawing of a panorama in progress illustrates the relationship among the canvas, the observation platform, and the rotunda (Fig. 2). The image captures the intersection of illusion and construction, where perspective, architecture, and the viewer’s positionality coalesce to produce a continuous field. As such, it exemplifies the panorama’s status as both document and site: the material artifact records its own conditions of display even as the environment situates the audience within that record. This interplay of structure and experience is the basis of our argument that the panorama archive be conceived as geographically distributed: its coherence is rooted in spatial design rather than proximity.

The panorama archive is best understood as a geographically distributed documentary system that encompasses both the painted work—the ‘document’, in MoW’s terms—and its associated materials: the building or rotunda, if present;

the *faux terrain* and the displayed objects, if present; and the documentary corpus surrounding its creation, exhibition, and preservation. These may include printed visitor guides, orientation plans, preparatory drawings, production records, and conservation reports. Taken together, these components form an interrelated set of sources that record not only the finished image but also the processes and conditions of its display. Recognizing panoramas within the MoW framework, therefore, illuminates a category of documentary heritage whose coherence depends on spatial and experiential design rather than physical aggregation. In doing so, it extends the MoW conception of a ‘collection’ to encompass geographically distributed archives—those whose unity lies in shared media logic and embodied encounter rather than in institutional or geographic consolidation.⁴

Having established the panorama’s documentary and archival character, we will turn to the medium’s invention, defining features, and principal variants. Understanding how circular, hemicycle, and moving panoramas operated in practice will clarify the basis for their shared classification as documentary heritage within the MoW framework.

2. Defining the medium: Circular, hemicycle, and moving panoramas

Virtual reality is often regarded as a recent invention, but immersive and interactive media have deep historical roots. As we have seen, the year 1787 marks a decisive moment in this

4. There are some relevant MoW examples that validate this approach, in which archives are geographically distributed, such as ‘Documents on the History of the Hanse’ (nominated 2023) and ‘The Large Format 68mm films of the Mutoscope & Biograph Company’ (nominated 2025).

lineage: the invention of the panorama, a visual and architectural interface designed to simulate presence within a depicted environment. Scholars have called it both the first mass medium and the media signature of the nineteenth century, anticipating later immersive technologies from cinema to digital simulation (Oettermann, 1980; Plessen, 1993; Comment, 1999; Grau, 2001; Huhtamo, 2013; Chau & al., 2024). Understanding the panorama as an early iteration of virtual reality clarifies our argument about its material and perceptual design: the mechanisms that once produced embodied illusion now define its documentary and heritage significance.

Robert Barker's 1787 British patent (Engelen & Koller, 2024), titled *La Nature à Coup d'Œil* ('Nature at a Glance'), described an 'entire view of any country or situation, as it appears to an observer turning quite round.' The word *panorama*—a neologism combining the Greek *pan* (all) and *horama* (view)—appeared four years later in Barker's 1791 advertisements, naming not a static image but a device for creating immersion. Reading Barker's textual patent alongside, another patent diagram by Robert Fulton (1799) makes the design clear: a cylindrical building illuminated from above, a raised platform entered from below, and a railing and canopy hide the top and bottom edges of the painting (Fig. 3). Shifts in air flow, temperature, and daylight produced atmospheric variation, enhancing the realism of the scene. Viewers circulated upon the platform, sensing light, motion, and atmosphere as continuous with the depicted landscape. The panorama thus coordinated optical and bodily immersion—the fusion of content and carrier that underpins its documentary significance and exemplifies the way architecture and perception were engineered together to produce the illusion of presence.

This architectural and perceptual logic remained stable even as the form diversified. In the circular panorama, visitors walked within a 360-degree environment that surrounded them. In the hemicycle panorama, a semicircular canvas produced a similar illusion, often in a more economical, portable

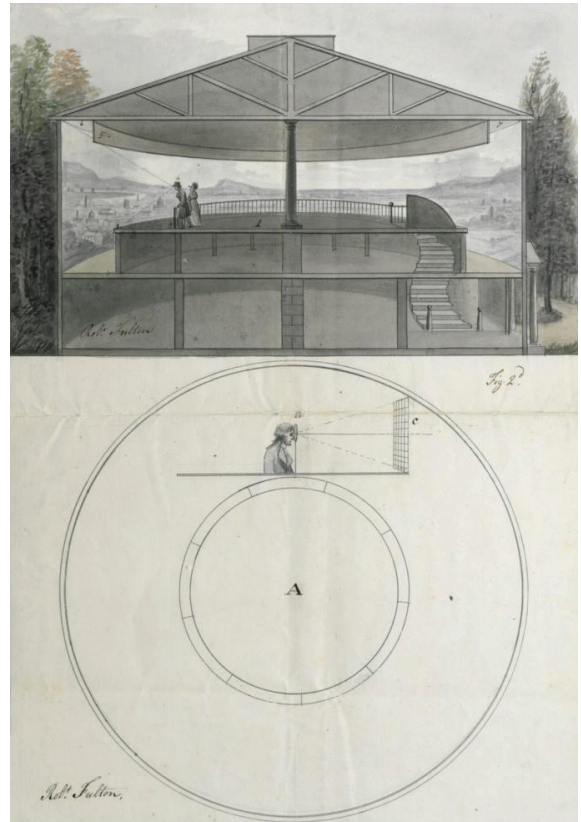


Fig. 3 Robert Fulton. Patent drawing for a *brevet d'importation: tableau circulaire, nommé panorama*, [import patent: circular painting, called a panorama] 1799. Ink-and-wash drawing. Institut National de la Propriété Industrielle, Courbevoie, France.

structure. The moving panorama translated immersion into motion: a long painted scroll, usually hundreds of meters in length, was unrolled before a seated audience while a narrator and musicians guided the journey (Fig. 4). Spectators experienced a composite of narrative and locomotion—an embodied sense of travel along rivers, rails, and roads. Monumental installations like the *Mareorama* at the 1900 Paris Exposition (Deckers, 2021) combined two vast scrolling canvases with ship-like architecture, fans, scent machines, and mechanical motion to simulate an ocean voyage (fig. 5). Many such spectacles, by design ephemeral, have not survived, underscoring the urgency of preservation. Across these forms, the panorama's immersive system—integrating architecture, image, sound, and movement—remained constant, a point that

underscores the logic of content and carrier that defines its documentary significance within the MoW framework.

Not every nineteenth-century immersive display belongs within this genealogy. The diorama, developed by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre in the 1820s, presented illuminated paintings viewed frontally through an aperture, creating striking optical effects but not enveloping the spectator's field of vision. For the Memory of the World application, dioramas, cosmoramas, and related peep-show forms are excluded

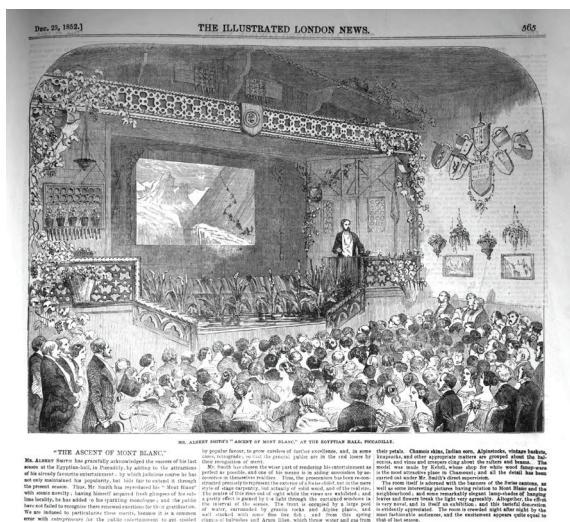


Fig. 4 Albert Smith lecturing about his moving panorama 'Ascent of Mont Blanc' at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, London. *Illustrated London News*, Vol. 21, 25 December 1852, 565.

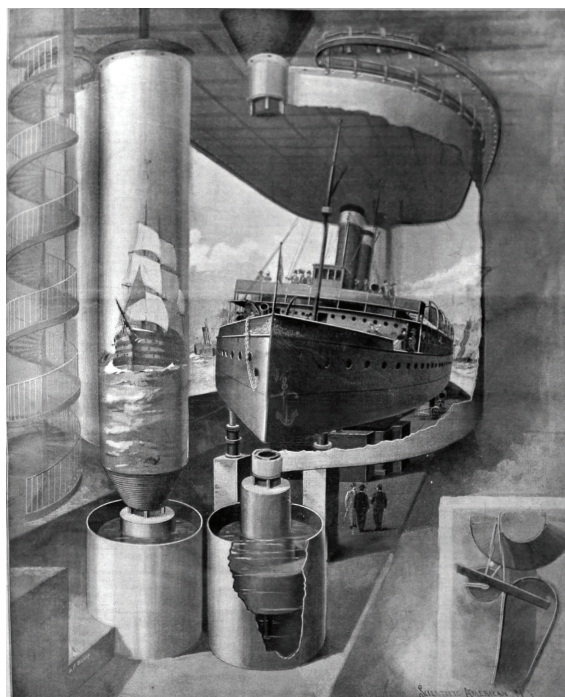


Fig. 5 The Mareorama at the Paris Exposition (19 September 1900). *The Scientific American* 83, no. 13, 193.

because their mechanics of illusion differ fundamentally: they do not integrate image, architecture, and bodily movement in a unified spatial experience. Taken together, circular, hemicycle, and moving panoramas constitute a coherent media art form—one that couples painting, architecture, lighting, and choreography to produce immersive encounters. These works are inseparable from their environments: the building, observation platform, and *faux terrain* are as integral to meaning as the painted image. The panorama's invention thus constituted not only a new art form but also a new kind of documentary medium, one that records visual, spatial, and somatic modes of perception. In the context of the MoW program, this integration of content and carrier explains why panoramas qualify as documentary heritage of world significance and why their geographically distributed survival demands coordinated recognition and stewardship.

2.1 Scope and Method: Sources, Cataloging, and IPC Coordination

The corpus on which this study is based was developed through the ongoing work of the International Panorama Council's (IPC) scientific committee (2023–present), convened to prepare a joint nomination for inclusion in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. The committee's mandate includes identifying and documenting extant panoramas, coordinating input from panorama owners and custodians, and articulating the conceptual rationale for recognition. Research draws on the IPC's continually updated database of circular, hemicycle, and moving panoramas; archival documentation such as construction plans, exhibition records, and conservation reports; and curatorial consultation with institutions and scholars across four continents. Together,

these sources establish the evidentiary basis for defining the panorama phenomenon as a geographically distributed form of documentary heritage.

In the remainder of this article, we synthesize the committee's findings to outline the contours of this corpus and to demonstrate how panoramas meet UNESCO's criteria for documentary heritage. The following section examines those requirements in detail, showing how the panorama phenomenon fulfills the program's core standards of authenticity, world significance, rarity, and safeguarding.

3. Applying UNESCO's Memory of the World criteria to panoramas

The Memory of the World Program distinguishes between procedural requirements and evaluative criteria for inclusion in its international register. To be eligible, a corpus must demonstrate (1) identification and documentation of its components, (2) policies for protection and conservation, and (3) mechanisms for public access and dissemination. Within this framework, evaluation is guided by four principal criteria: authenticity, world significance, rarity, and safeguarding. The following discussion addresses these four criteria in relation to the panorama phenomenon.

Authenticity. Panoramas survive as original artefacts of nineteenth-century visual culture, combining painting, architecture, and choreographed movement into unified immersive environments. Extant examples retain their historical fabric—painted canvas, *faux terrain*, and architectural design—often supported by extensive archival documentation,

including sketches, guidebooks, and exhibition records. Even when an original rotunda no longer exists, its architectural design can usually be reconstructed from archival plans and photographs. Figure 6, for instance, shows Jacques-Ignace Hittorff's 1839 rotunda for the Champs-Élysées in Paris, recorded through elevation, cross-section, and bird's-eye views. These interrelated elements verify provenance and demonstrate that the experiential form itself constitutes the authentic document.

World Significance. Panoramas embody the global circulation of images, ideas, and technologies. Created and exhibited across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, they visualized wars, cities, landscapes, and colonial encounters for mass audiences. As precursors to modern screen culture, they reveal how industrial societies learned to translate place into spectacle, producing a shared visual vocabulary of the contemporary world.

Rarity and Irreplaceability. Hundreds of panoramas were produced during the nineteenth century; only a few dozen survive intact today. Their scale, fragility, and complex material composition make them exceptionally vulnerable. Each extant panorama is therefore a unique record of its subject, site, and medium—impossible to replace once lost.

Safeguarding and Access. Because panoramas are geographically dispersed, their preservation depends on collaboration among institutions and nations. Ongoing restoration, conservation, and digitization projects—often coordinated through the International Panorama Council—illustrate how local efforts contribute to global stewardship. Archival

documentation such as Hittorff's 1839 plans (Fig. 6) not only authenticates the original design but also provides the technical basis for its preservation and study, linking the

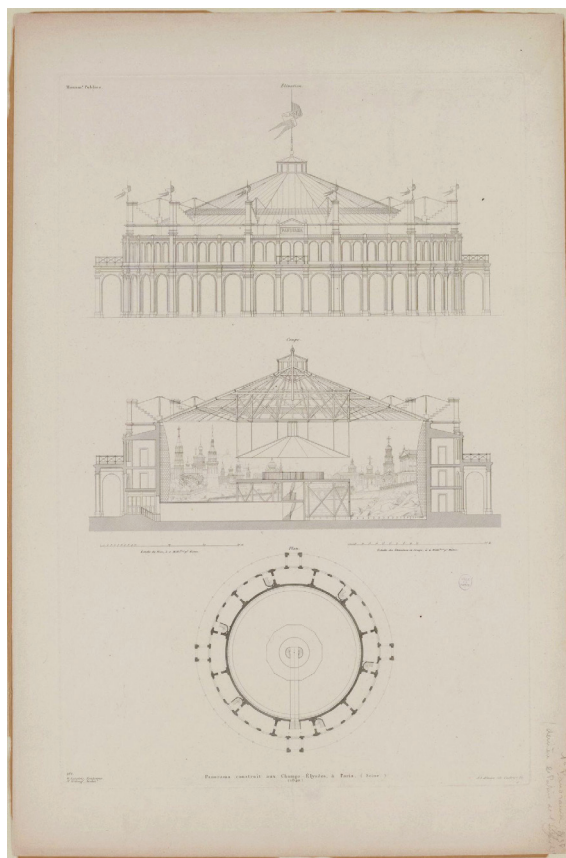


Fig. 6. Jean Joseph Olivier (1840). Panorama construit aux Champs-Élysées, à Paris [Panorama built in the Champs-Élysées, Paris]. Etching (48 × 32cm). Paris, Musée Carnavalet.

authenticity of the past to the safeguarding of the present. The MoW framework offers a means to formalize this cooperation and to ensure continued public access to a heritage that is at once local, national, and international in scope.

Taken together, these criteria affirm the panorama's eligibility for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register. As authentic, significant, rare, and collaboratively safeguarded documents, panoramas constitute a geographically distributed corpus that broadens the MoW conception of documentary heritage to encompass immersive, spatial, and experiential media. Having established the panorama's qualification under the program's evaluative criteria, we turn now to questions of representation and selection—how this corpus may be defined, delimited, and presented for inscription.

4. Selection Framework for a Representative Register

Establishing a representative register requires balancing historical, geographic, and typological diversity with the practicalities of documentation and stewardship. The panorama phenomenon spans more than two centuries and multiple continents, yet the number of extant examples is finite. A carefully delineated selection ensures that the MoW nomination conveys both the medium's global reach and the specificity of its surviving sites. The following subsections outline the principles guiding this process: periodization and geographic breadth; representative 'ambassadors' of the form; and collaborative commitments among owners, custodians, and institutions.

4.1 Periodization and Geographic Breadth

The panorama phenomenon spans more than two centuries, encompassing thousands of works produced between the late eighteenth century and the early twenty-first century. For the Memory of the World nomination, the corpus is delimited to panoramas created between 1787 and 2025, the period spanning the invention of the form and its continued reinvention in contemporary heritage and media practice. This timeframe includes the invention of the circular panorama by Robert Barker, its nineteenth-century dissemination throughout Europe, the Americas, and Asia, the later development of moving panoramas and related forms, and the subsequent phases of preservation, reconstruction, and reinterpretation that continue to this day.

Geographically, panoramas constitute an intercontinental phenomenon. Historic rotundas and canvases survive in Europe, North America, South America, Asia, and Australia, each representing distinctive trajectories of production and exhibition. Many subjects depict global geographies—urban centers, battlefields, and landscapes—produced and viewed far from the sites they represent. This disjunction between place of depiction and place of display underscores the panorama's dual role as both world picture and world document.

The selection framework aims to represent this diversity through a finite yet inclusive set of exemplars: works that collectively express the panorama's geographic reach, temporal continuity, and media evolution. Rather than exhaustive enumeration, the goal is representative integrity. This corpus communicates the panorama's significance as a global

medium while remaining administratively and interpretively coherent for the Memory of the World Register.

4.2 Representative Ambassadors

The Memory of the World Register favors nominations that balance historical depth with global representativeness. For panoramas, this balance can be achieved by identifying representative ‘ambassadors’—exemplary works that embody the form’s defining characteristics while reflecting its geographic, chronological, and thematic range. These ambassadors do not exhaust the panorama corpus; instead, they serve as touchstones for understanding the medium’s development and diffusion.

Selection favors panoramas that are well-preserved, well-documented, and publicly accessible, and that collectively express the form’s technical and cultural diversity. This may include:

Foundational examples that mark key stages of invention and innovation, such as early circular panoramas or pioneering moving panoramas

Regional exemplars that demonstrate the form’s adaptation to distinct national and cultural contexts

Thematic exemplars that illustrate major subject categories—urban views, historical events, religious narratives, and natural landscapes

Continuing or reconstructed sites that reveal how panoramas have been preserved, reinterpreted, or re-created in contemporary practice

By selecting a limited group of such ambassadors, the nomination can convey the panorama’s global scope without diluting focus. Together, these works demonstrate the form’s continuity across time and place, its integration of art, architecture, and technology, and its enduring capacity to shape collective perception of the world.

4.3 Collaboration and Commitments

The panorama phenomenon has always relied on cooperation among artists, architects, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Likewise, contemporary preservation depends on collaboration among institutions and nations. The International Panorama Council (IPC) provides the framework for this coordination through its scientific committee and international membership network, which includes panorama owners, custodians, conservators, scholars, and heritage specialists. Participants in this nomination commit to shared principles of documentation, preservation, and public access consistent with the goals of the Memory of the World program.

Individual panoramas remain under the custodianship of their respective owners or host institutions. The MoW nomination does not alter ownership but establishes a collaborative register that links these works through common documentation standards, conservation goals, and accessibility policies. Each participating institution agrees to maintain up-to-date records, to support digitization where feasible, and to facilitate scholarly and public engagement. The IPC acts as a coordinating body—keeping the collective database, organizing communication among participants, and assisting with reporting and visibility.

This shared stewardship model ensures that the panorama archive remains both distributed and coherent. It reflects the MoW Program's emphasis on collective responsibility for global documentary heritage, demonstrating how independent institutions can align under a unified framework of preservation, access, and interpretation.

5. Conclusion: Panoramas redefine the documentary form

Panoramas transform the act of viewing into a form of documentation. By joining painting, architecture, lighting, and bodily movement into a continuous perceptual field, they make spatial experience itself the medium through which information is recorded and shared. This fusion of image and environment—of content and carrier—extends the meaning of documentary heritage beyond the textual and the pictorial to encompass the lived and the immersive.

Recognizing panoramas within the Memory of the World Program highlights their dual status as both artistic and informational artefacts. Each panorama records not only its subject matter but also the ways societies have sought to visualize, inhabit, and interpret the world. The panorama's history reveals how modern visual culture emerged from collaborative, technological, and transnational processes that continue to shape media today. Its survival—through preservation, reconstruction, and digitization—demonstrates the evolving relationship between documentation, performance, and public memory.

In extending the MoW Program to include panoramas, UNESCO would acknowledge a mode of documentary heritage

that is experiential, spatial, and participatory. The panorama archive exemplifies how global cooperation can safeguard complex, distributed heritage while fostering renewed engagement with historical media. Through the coordination of the International Panorama Council, the panorama phenomenon continues to operate as both a legacy of the nineteenth century and a living platform for twenty-first-century heritage practice—a reminder that the world's documents are not only things we read, but spaces we enter.

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Appendix

This appendix provides a provisional catalogue of panoramas that have survived to date, either in their entirety or as fragments. The catalogue encompasses circular, hemicycle, neorama, and moving panoramas. The list is organised in chronological order of production and by place of preservation (not necessarily place of production). Links in the name of the panorama points to the collection item details, or to its digitized version when available. Links in the name of the institution points to the institution's website. All urls were last accessed September 30, 2025.

Name of the Panorama Medium, Dimension	Date	Painter(s)	Owner / Custodian Institution, Country
Panorama of Thun Oil on canvas, 7.5 × 38.3 m	1809–14	Marquard Fidelis Wocher, Johann Jacob Biedermann	Kunstmuseum Thun, Thun, Switzerland (on display)
Panorama of London Gouache and watercolor on paper, 0.85 × 6.05 m (preparatory study for a lost panorama)	1815	Pierre Prévost	London Museum, London, United Kingdom (re-opens in 2026)
Panorama of the Palace and the Gardens of Versailles Oil on canvas, 3.6 × 49.5 m	1818–19	John Vanderlyn	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA (on display)
Panorama of Constantinople Oil on canvas, 0.69 × 8.65 m (preparatory study for a lost panorama)	1822–23	Pierre Prévost	Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (stored)
Panorama of Rome Oil on canvas, 1.67 × 13.35 m	1824	Ludovico Caracciolo	Victoria & Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom (stored)
Panorama of Salzburg Oil on canvas, 4.82 × 50.8 m	1825–29	Johann Michael Sattler, Friedrich Loos, Johann Jacob Schindler	Salzburg Museum, Salzburg, Austria (re-opens in 2026)
Neorama of the Interior of the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome Oil on canvas, 16.64 × 54,12 m	1827	Jean-Pierre Alaux, Jean Alaux	Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (stored)
Neorama of the Interior of Westminster Abbey in London Oil on canvas, 19.5 × 66.1 m	1830	Jean-Pierre Alaux, Jean Alaux	Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (stored)

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Name of the Panorama Medium, Dimension	Date	Painter(s)	Owner / Custodian Institution, Country
Moving Panorama of a Whaling Voyage Round the World Oil on canvas, 2.5 × 389 m	1848	Benjamin Russell, Caleb Pierce Purrington	New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts, USA (on display)
Moving Panorama of the Monumental Grandeur of the Mississippi Valley Oil on canvas, 2.28 × 10.60 m	c. 1850	John. J. Egan	Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, USA (on display)
Moving Panorama of Pilgrim's Progress Oil on canvas, 2.45 × 243.85 m	1850–51	Joseph Kyle, Jacob Dallas	Dyer Library and Saco Museum, Saco, Maine, USA (stored)
Moving Panorama with Scenes from the Life of Christ Oil on canvas, 2.14 × 160 m	1853–54	Marcus Mote (attributed)	Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA (stored)
Moving Panorama of the Campaigns of Garibaldi Gouache on paper, 1.37 × 83.27 m (painted on both sides)	1860–62	John James Story	Brown University Library, Providence, Rhode Island, USA (stored)
Moving Panorama of London to Hong Kong in Two Hours Oil on canvas, 0.37 × 53 m	c. 1860	John Lamb and son	Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, Los Angeles, California, USA (opens in 2026)
Park Wilhelmshöhe in Cassel Gouache on paper, 0.75 × 3 m	n.d.	Carl Georg Enslin	Museums Behnhaus Drägerhaus, Lübeck, Germany (opens in 2025)
Karl Johansgate and Surroundings in Oslo Gouache on paper, 1.03 × 3.23 m	1857	Carl Georg Enslin	Oslo Museum, Oslo, Norway (stored)
Augustusplatz in Leipzig Gouache on paper, 0.74 × 3.02 m	1851	Carl Georg Enslin	Stadtgeschichtliches Museum, Leipzig, Germany (stored)
Panorama Mesdag (View of Scheveningen) Oil on canvas, 14.7 × 114.7 m	1881	Hendrik Willem Mesdag, collaborators	Museum Panorama Mesdag, The Hague, Netherlands (on display)
Bourbaki Panorama (Internment of the French General Bourbaki's Armée de l'Est in Switzerland, February 1871) Oil on canvas, 10 × 112 m	1881	Edouard Castres, collaborators	Bourbaki Panorama Foundation, Lucerne, Switzerland (on display)

Name of the Panorama Medium, Dimension	Date	Painter(s)	Owner / Custodian Institution, Country
Panorama du Caire Oil on canvas 14 x 114 m	1881	Emile Wauters	Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (fragment stored)
Panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg (1863) Oil on canvas, 12.9 x 114.8 m	1883–84	Paul Dominique Philippoteaux, collaborators	Gettysburg Foundation, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA (on display)
Panorama of the Battle of Atlanta (1864) Oil on canvas, 15 x 113 m	1885–86	Friedrich Wilhelm Heine, August Lohr, collaborators	Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia, USA (on display)
Panorama of Jerusalem and the Crucifixion of Christ Oil on canvas, 14 x 110 m = 1,695 m	1886–88	Oliver Dennet Grover, Charles Abel Corwin, collaborators	Cyclorama de Jérusalem inc, Sainte- Anne-de Beaupré, Québec, Canada (on display)
Panorama of Venice Tempera on paper, 1.75 x 22 m	1887	Giovanni Biasin	Accademia dei Concordi, Rovigo, Italy (stored)
Le Panorama de l'Histoire du siècle Oil on canvas, 20 x 120 m	1889	Henri Gervex, Alfred Stevens	Musées Royaux de Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium (fragments stored)
Feszty Panorama (The Hungarian Conquest) Oil on canvas, 14.1 x 113.5 m	1892-94	Árpád Feszty, collaborators	National Historical Memorial Park, Ópusztaszer, Hungary (on display)
Panorama of the Battle of Raclawice (1794) Oil on canvas, 14.2 x 114.5 m	1893–94	Jan Styka, Wojciech Kossak, collaborators	National Museum, Wrocław, Poland (on display)
Panorama of the Battle of Murten (1476) Oil on canvas, 9.9 x 97.4 m	1893–94	Louis Braun, collaborators	Foundation for the Panorama of the Battle of Murten, Murten, Switzerland (stored)
Panorama of the Crucifixion Oil on canvas, 13,72 x 59.44 m	1894–96	Jan Styka, collaborators	Forest Lawn Memorial Park, California, USA (on display)
The Tyrol Panorama (Battle of Bergisel, 1809) Oil on canvas, 10.6 x 93.94 m	1894–96	Michael Zeno Diemer, collaborators	Tiroler Landesmuseen, Innsbruck, Austria (on display)
Maroldovo Panorama (Battle of Lipany, 1434) Oil on canvas, 11 x 95 m	1897–98	Luděk Marold, collaborators	Marold's panorama, Prague, Czech Republic (on display)

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Name of the Panorama Medium, Dimension	Date	Painter(s)	Owner / Custodian Institution, Country
Panorama of Jerusalem and the Crucifixion of Christ Oil on canvas, 12 × 95 m	1902–03	Gebhard Fugel, Josef Krieger	Jerusalem Panorama Foundation, Altötting, Germany (on display)
Panorama of the Battle of Borodino (1812) Oil on canvas, 15 × 115 m	1910–12	Franz Roubaud, collaborators	Museum-Panorama Battle of Borodino, Moscow, Russia (on display)
Panorama of the Battle of Waterloo (1815) Oil on canvas, 12 × 110 m	1912	Louis Dumoulin, collaborators	The Waterloo Memorial 1815, Braine - l'Alleud, Belgium (on display)
Panorama of the Congo Oil on canvas, 14 × 115 m	1911–13	Alfred Bastien, collaborators	War Heritage Institute, Brussels, Belgium (stored)
Laysan Island Cyclorama Oil on wall, 42 m (length)	1914	Charles Abel Corwin, collaborators	University of Iowa Museum of Natural History, Iowa City, Iowa, USA (on display)
Panthéon de la Guerre Oil on canvas, 13.72 × 122.53 m (partially preserved)	1914–18	Pierre Carrier-Belleuse, Auguste-François Gorguet, collaborators	The National World War I Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, USA (on display)
Panorama of the Battle of the Yser (1914) Oil on canvas, 14 × 120 m	1920–21	Alfred Bastien and collaborators	War Heritage Institute, Brussels, Belgium (stored)
Panorama of the Clear World of the Blissful Oil on canvas, 3.45 × 25.3 m	1923–27	Elisär von Kupffer	Centro Elisarion, Minusio, Switzerland / Pro Elisarion Association, Monte Verità Foundation (on display)
Panorama of the Battle of Trafalgar (1805) Oil on canvas, 3.7 × 13 m	1928–29	William Lionel Wyllie	National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, United Kingdom (stored)
Panorama of the Battle of the Meuse (1914) Oil on canvas, 8.5 × 72 m	1937	Alfred Bastien and collaborateurs	War Heritage Institute, Brussels, Belgium (stored)
Panorama of the Defense of Sevastopol (1855) Oil on canvas, 14 × 115 m (painted after the original of 1905 by Franz Roubaud that was largely destroyed in World War II)	1951–54	Grekov Studio of Military Painters, Moscow	Panorama Museum of the Siege of Sebastopol, Sevastopol, Ukraine (since 2014 occupied by Russia) (on display)

Name of the Panorama Medium, Dimension	Date	Painter(s)	Owner / Custodian Institution, Country
Panorama of Jerusalem and the Crucifixion of Christ Oil on canvas, 10 × 100 m (painted after the original of 1893 by K.H. Frosch, J. Krieger, W.R. Leigh, destroyed by fire in 1960)	1962	Hans Wulz, Josef Fastl	Panorama Company, Einsiedeln, Switzerland (on display)
Panorama of the Peasants' War (1525) Oil on canvas, 14 × 123 m	1976–87	Werner Tübke	Panorama Museum, Bad Frankenhausen, Germany (on display)
Panorama Plevn Epopée 1877 (Russian-Turkish War, 1877–78) Oil on canvas, 15 × 115 m	1977	Nikolai Vasiljevich Ovechkin and artists of the Moskow Grekov Studio of Military Painters	Regional Military History Museum, Pleven, Bulgaria (on display)
Panorama of the Battle of Stalingrad (1942–43) Oil on canvas, 16 × 120 m	1980–82	Grekov Studio of Military Painters, Moscow	State History-Memorial Museum- Reserve "The Stalingrad battle," Volgograd, Russia (on display)
Panoramas in China (9 circular panoramas, ca. 25 semi-circular panoramas, including Shengjing Panorama (see below))	1986 ff	Various artists, mainly from Luxun Art Academy	Luxun Academy of Fine Arts, Shenyang, China (stored/on display)
6th of October Panorama Oil on canvas, 15 x 136 m	1989	Ri Chun Sik, Kim Chong Hale, Kim Dong Nam, Ri Gun Taek, Han Yong Su, Pak Yong Chol, Sin In Mo, Ri Chun Song, Hwang Dok Gwan, Ri Jae Su, Pak HwaRyong, Kim Gi Su, Yu Byong Gwon, Hong Jong Nam, Choi Song Sik, Paek Tae Sok, Ri Gwang Jun, Kiln Jong Tae	The 6th of October Panorama Museum Cairo, Egypt (on display)
16 panoramas, on exhibition since 2003 ff	1993 ff	Yadegar Asisi	F&E GmbH, Berlin, Germany (stored/ on display)
October War Panorama Oil on canvas, 15 x 125 m	1998	North Korea's Mansudae Art Studio	Tishreen museum, Damasco, Syria (on display)

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Name of the Panorama Medium, Dimension	Date	Painter(s)	Owner / Custodian Institution, Country
Staufer Panorama Oil on canvas, 4.5 × 30 m	1998– 2003	Hans Kloss	Lorch Abbey, Lorch, Germany (on display)
Staufer Saga Panorama Oil on canvas, 2.8 × 17 m	2012–16	Hans Kloss	Panorama-Museum, Schwäbisch-Gmünd, Germany (on display)
Panorama of the Valley of the Smokes, Panorama Effulgence of the North, Grand Moving Mirror of California	2000 ff	Sara Velas and various artists	The Velaslavasay Panorama, Los Angeles, California, USA (stored)
Fletcher’s Mutiny Cyclorama Oil on mural, 3.6 × 50 m	2002	Tracey Yager, Sue Draper	Norfolk Cyclorama, Norfolk Island, Australia (on display)
Cyclorama 2000 E-Cyclorama I E-Cyclorama II	2000 2008 2019	Sanford Wurmfeld	Sanford Wurmfeld, exhibited in various museums and universities in Europe and the United States (stored)
Wilpena Panorama, Oil on canvas, 3.5 × 33 m Arkaroola Panorama Oil on canvas, 5.5 × 46 m	2002–03 2013–17	Jeff Morgan	Jeff Morgan Art Gallery, Hawker, Australia (on display)
Panorama Le Marché-aux-Herbes vers 1650 Oil on canvas, 3.40 × 17 m	2005	Antoine Fontaine	Lëtzebuerg City Museum, Lëtzebuerg, Luxemburg (on display)
Panorama 1453 (The Conquest of Constantinople) Oil on canvas, 2,350 m2 surface, 38 m diameter	2005–08	H. Vatandas, R. Erkut, Y. Zeynalov, O. Legka, A. Kaya, H. Dincer, A.Tunca, M. Efe	Historical Museum Panorama 1453 (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality), Istanbul, Turkey (on display)
Aitken’s Australia in the Round Oil on canvas, 6 × 63 m	2010	Felix Kautzner	Jim Aitken, Glenbrook, New South Wales, Australia (on display)
Panorama 1326 Bursa Conquest Oil on canvas, 42 m diameter, 2,450 m2 surface	2018	Yaşar Zeynalov and collaborators	Bursa Fetih Müzesi Panorama 1326, Bursa, Turkey (on display)
Shengjing Panorama Oil on canvas, 2,8 × 26 m	2019	Li Wu, Yan Yang, Zhou Fuxian	The Velaslavasay Panorama, Los Angeles, California, United States. Los Angeles, California, USA (on display)

Name of the Panorama Medium, Dimension	Date	Painter(s)	Owner / Custodian Institution, Country
Panorama 25 December Antep Defense (1918–21) Oil on canvas, 13 × 120 m	2020	Alexander Samsonov and collaborators	Panorama 25 December Museum, Gaziantep, Turkey (on display)

This list contains 115 panoramas (circular, semi-circular, neoramas and moving panoramas) across five continents (North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania), produced between 1809 and 2020. All those are preserved (or partially preserved) to date. This list does not include panoramas which are documented, but no longer preserved. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the authors, who welcome any input or revision.

