

A conference by Eric Hurtado

Raymond Ismidon-Marie de Bérenger, marquis of Sassenage
The landscape garden

"He crossed the fence and saw that all nature is garden"

Horace Walpole
Essay on the art of modern gardens

Raymond Ismidon-Marie de Bérenger (1811-1875), marquis of Sassenage, comes from one of the oldest families of the Dauphiné. After a brief career as deputy of the Isère, Bérenger lived between Paris and his castle of Sassenage, alongside his wife, devoting himself to his two passions, gardens and photography.

Around 1852, he was introduced to photography in the Parisian studio of Gustave Le Gray, who played an important role in the training of many photographers. Like many of them, he is a member of the *Société Française de Photographie* and participates in numerous exhibitions in France and abroad to publicize his work.

His photographic production extends over fifteen years, from 1853 to 1860. Most of his views are preserved in Sassenage, in several copies, multiple tests obtained according to the desired result.

Together with a number of prominent professionals such as Baldus and Le Gray, amateurs such as the Marquis de Bérenger contributed to the recognition of the artistic dimension of photography.

Raymond de Bérenger begins his photographic activity at the time when great works begin to redesign the park of his castle ... The photography, all new, and the creation of garden were for him two parallel activities, and one may wonder to what extent he did not learn photography to satisfy his passion for gardens, to record the lines of a landscape.

A journey takes us from landscaped gardens of the eighteenth century to the invention of photography, landscape painting and panoramas: new systems of representation order space and time according to principles that openly break with the homogeneous point of view of the theatrical space of the Renaissance. Such devices assume a general redeployment of the visible field.

... The garden of the gaze ... the gaze keeps transforming into fiction the real, the garden, the fiction of landscape as a metaphor for our relation to reality?

Indeed, by discovering the photographic work of Raymond de Bérenger today, we are witnessing the production of new images which, by their nature of structure and by their finality, also laid the foundations of modernity in their time.