

C. A. JENSEN
1792–1870

52. *Portrait of Joseph Hambro, 1828*

(*Portræt af Joseph Hambro*)

Oil on canvas, 9 x 7½ in. (23 x 19 cm)

Signed and dated on lower left: C A Jensen 1828

PROVENANCE: Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 663, 1999, lot 334, ill. p. 132.

EXHIBITED: Bruce Museum of Art and Science, Greenwich, Connecticut, and The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, New York, *Danish Paintings of the Nineteenth Century from the Collection of Ambassador John L. Loeb Jr.*, 2005, no. 3, ill.

LITERATURE: Sigurd Schultz, *C.A. Jensen*, I–II, Copenhagen, 1932, no. 230; Bo Bramsen and Kathleen Wain, *The Hambros 1779–1979*, London, 1979; Else Martensen Larsen and Hasse Neerbek, *Slægter omkring Øregaard*, Øregaard Museum, 1990 (on Joseph Hambro and his family).

A commanding presence was captured by the artist C. A. Jensen in this portrait of Copenhagen industrialist and “virtual” banker Joseph Hambro, arguably the forerunner of the world-renowned Hambro banking family. This depiction of Joseph Hambro at the age of forty-eight was painted at the height of his brilliant business career by the foremost portrait painter of the time.

Another quite similar portrait of Joseph Hambro, commissioned by friends to commemorate his fiftieth birthday, can be viewed at the Copenhagen Stock Exchange (Det Danske Handelskammer) where his visage joins those of the greatest leaders in the history of Danish Commerce, (Fig. A). A third portrait, very similar to that in the Loeb collection, but smaller, is also dated 1831; here Hambro’s face appears more narrow and his hair has become gray (Fig. B).

Joseph Hambro’s ingenious innovation of extending foreign loans to his trading clients ultimately yielded large economic boosts for the Danish State and Court, and for which he received many honors, including that of the prized title of Privy Counselor by King Frederik VI for successfully negotiating loan agreements between England and Denmark. (The English government lent a large amount of money to the bankrupt Danish government.)

Born in Copenhagen, Joseph Hambro had the right temperament and talent for furthering his German father’s ambitions. Entrepreneur Calmer Joachim Hambro had emigrated from Hamburg in 1778 to Copenhagen, setting up a trading company called simply “C. J. Hambro.” Calmer’s young son Joseph, at the age of seventeen, traveled back to Hamburg for an apprenticeship with the trading firm of Furst, Haller & Co., but soon returned to Copenhagen to work in his father’s business, eventually taking it over in 1806. Securing a coveted wholesaler’s license, he rapidly built up a reputation as Copenhagen’s leading general clothier, only one aspect of his multi-faceted and far-reaching interests, including speculation in currency, spices and sugar from the Danish Virgin Islands and wool from England.

Joseph married Marjam von Halle in 1807. It remained for their sole offspring, Carl Joachim, to really establish the Hambro family as world class bankers. Because of Marjam’s prolonged mental instability, (she died in a mental institution in 1838) Joseph arranged for young Carl to be reared in the Christian home of zoologist Johannes Reinhardt. Under the care of the Reinhardts as surrogate parents, the child was baptized

a Christian. Nevertheless, it was his Jewish father's footsteps in which Carl Joachim followed, ultimately establishing an even greater name in the world of commerce and government than had his father Joseph and grandfather Calmer Hambro. Though Joseph had certainly laid the groundwork for the Hambro banking fame, it was son Carl Joachim who established himself as a more traditional banker at London's Old Broad Street Number 70, the true beginning of the Hambro banking business in England.

Joseph would probably note with approval that the Øregaard estate, which he bought for Carl Joachim, his wife, Caroline (née Gostenhofer), and their four sons, is now the Øregaard Museum in Copenhagen's suburb, Hellerup, for Joseph had a great interest in art. In his latter years he traveled extensively, making visits to artists he admired such as Bertel Thorvaldsen in Rome, and contributing significantly toward the building of Thorvaldsen's Museum in Copenhagen. Joseph Hambro died in Copenhagen at the age of sixty-eight.

Coincidentally, the Hambro family is distantly related to the John L. Loeb Jr. family through the Levy family of Hamburg, Germany. The family name of John Loeb's great-grandfather, Adolph Lewisohn, was originally Levy in Hamburg. One branch of the Levys changed the Levy name to Lewisohn and another branch changed the name from Levy to Hambro (after Hamburg). Much of the famous Lewisohn art collection is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

B.H.



FIG. A C. A. Jensen
Portrait of Joseph Hambro (1780–1848), 1831
 Oil on canvas, 25 x 19 $\frac{2}{3}$ in. (63 x 50 cm). The Copenhagen
 Stock Exchange.



FIG. B C. A. Jensen
Portrait of Joseph Hambro, 1831
 Oil on canvas, 9 $\frac{1}{5}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{3}$ in. (23.3 x 18.7 cm), Schultz no. 230,
 present owner unknown.