

B<sup>N</sup> JAMES DE ROTHSCHILD


# Les Rothschild en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle

{ BnF

Richelieu Paris 2<sup>e</sup>

20.11.2012 | 10.02.2013 | bnf.fr



 ROTHSCHILD



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## The Rothschilds in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The exhibition focuses on the Rothschild story and the enlightened financiers of the 19th century. As the head of the family in France, James de Rothschild is at the centre of the display. Close to two hundred items are presented: manuscripts, outstanding paintings, archive photographs and documents. They illustrate the family's way of life – their houses, works of art and vintage wines – as well as banking activities and family-owned industrial enterprises. The exhibition also shows how James de Rothschild, a philanthropist and cultural patron, also influenced economic and financial affairs in Europe.

James, one of the five Rothschild brothers from Frankfurt, arrived in Paris in 1812. His talent in financial affairs soon made him one of the main protagonists in the world of high finance. Inspired by him, bankers from all over the world made Paris a financial hub and a prominent centre of the industrial revolution.

By following the progress of the Rothschild family, visitors to the exhibition can discover the history of the early 19th century and how an aristocratic and rural society turned into a middle class and industrial society. This period covers the First French Empire, the Restoration, the reign of Louis Philippe, the Second French Empire and ends with the dawn of the Republic.

These bankers were businessmen who invested in industry, raw materials and transportation. As patrons, they encouraged the fine arts. As philanthropists, they supported medical research and promoted innovative town planning. Thanks to their family ties and contacts, they developed business in various countries. In the the case of the Rothschilds there were business houses in Frankfurt, London, Vienna, Naples as well as Paris.

The exhibition will examine James de Rothschild, the archetype of the 19th century businessman, and other famous bankers - friends or rivals - the Pereire brothers and the Camondos. It focuses on their banking and industrial activities. James invested heavily in railways, in particular the Paris – Boulogne railway, the construction of Gare du Nord station and of the stations between the two cities. These bankers also invested in mines, foundries, Paris urbanization, and philanthropic activities such as the foundation of the Rothschild hospital.

Away from business an enlightened and cultured world is presented to visitors, a sophisticated social world within which James de Rothschild mixed with acquaintances such as Rossini, Chopin, Delacroix, Ingres and Balzac.

Depicted in Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* as well as in Stendhal's and Zola's novels, these real life characters who greatly influenced their times, have been immortalized in classic literature.

Presented in the spectacular Mansart gallery, the exhibition offers a rich diversity of paintings among which some outstanding loans such as Greuze's *La Laitière*, the first work bought by James de Rothschild and now housed at the Musée du Louvre. Other items on display include objets d'art, books, illustrations, photographs, documents from archives and collections belonging to the Rothschild family, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, several major museums and French institutions.

# The Rothschilds in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

<b>Dates</b>	20 November 2012   10 February 2013
<b>Venue</b>	BnF   Richelieu 5 rue Vivienne - Paris II <sup>e</sup> Métro : Bourse, Palais Royal, Pyramides Bus : 20, 21, 27, 39 74, 85
<b>Open</b>	Tuesdays to Saturdays 10 a.m -7 p.m Sundays 12 a.m-7 p.m Closed on Mondays and banks holidays  Admission : 7 euros, Concession: 5 euros Bookings FNAC, tel : 0892 684 694 (0.34 euros TTC/mn), <a href="http://www.fnac.com">www.fnac.com</a>
<b>Curator</b>	<b>Claude Collard</b> , general curator, BnF general librarian, BnF director of the Department of Philosophy, History and Humanities <b>Melanie Aspey</b> , Director of The Rothschild Archive, London
<b>Coordination</b>	Joël Cramenil, exhibition manager, BnF
<b>Exhibition design</b>	Martin Michel Graphics : Mateo Baronnet
<b>Guided tours</b>	Information and bookings at 01 53 79 49 49
<b>Educational activities</b>	Free visits for teachers wednesday at 2: 30 p.m Visites guidées for classes Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 10 a.m and 11:30 a.m Bookings at au 01 53 79 49 49
<b>Publication</b>	<i>Les Rothschild en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle</i> Directed by Claude Collard and Melanie Aspey 196 pages BnF publication Price : 36 euros
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# Presentation

The Bibliothèque nationale de France pays tribute to James de Rothschild who arrived in Paris in 1812 at the age of twenty and founded the French branch of the Rothschild family.

The exhibition presents numerous items from the Rothschilds' archives housed in London and the Archives nationales du Monde du Travail in Roubaix. This set of outstanding documents illustrates the desire of the Rothschild family to preserve a family, financial, industrial and artistic heritage which dates back to the foundation of the Frankfurt bank by Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744-1812). Other documents from several BnF departments, national institutions and private collections are also presented.

Several major items are displayed.

Masterpieces donated by the Rothschild family to famous French institutions, including:

- *La Laitière* by Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805) housed at the Musée du Louvre, gold or silver-plated objects – snuffbox (gold plate, diamond and enamel) of Queen Victoria (musée du Louvre), cup made with a nautilus representing Neptune (shell, gold plate and vermeil - musée national de la Renaissance, Château d'Ecouen), religious objects such as a plate used to ornament the Torah (silver, coral, semi-precious stones and pearls – musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme).

Illuminated manuscripts such as the famous *Chansonnier de Jean de Montchenu* dating back to the 15th century, the *Bréviaire de Martin d'Aragon* (14th-15th century), autographs of Pierre Corneille and Madame de Maintenon (Manuscripts Department, BnF), outstanding works with precious bindings from the library of James-Edouard, the grandson of James, which were donated by his widow to the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 1922 (Rare Books Reserve).

Photographs such as a fascinating series of cartes de visite by Eugène Disderi (1819-1889) showing James de Rothschild, and the *Album de vues photographiques, Chemins de fer du Nord, Ligne de Paris à Boulogne*, commissioned by James, the president of the company, from the famous photographer Edouard Baldus (1813-1889), illustrating stations, routes and viaducts (Department of Prints and Photographs, BnF).

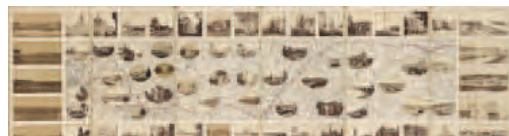
**Pieces on display invite us to discover the multi-faceted character of James de Rothschild, a banker, industrialist, philanthropist and patron of the arts. The exhibition also offers an insight into the Parisian political and artistic worlds and society in the 19th century.**



Jeton permettant à Lionel de Rothschild de voyager gratuitement sur les chemins de fer du Nord, dont il était l'administrateur.  
The Rothschild Archive, London



Édouard Baldus, *Chemin de fer du Nord, Ligne de Paris à Compiègne par Chantilly, Petites Vues photographiques*, vers 1865  
– Page de garde - Carte illustrée de Paris à Boulogne,  
BnF, Estampes et photographie



# Exhibition



Baron James de Rothschild,  
vers 1820, huile sur toile  
The Rothschild Archive London

The exhibition opens with a large family tree of the Rothschilds. Mayer Amschel, a successful merchant and trader in Frankfurt, established the first Rothschild partnership with his sons in 1810 ; after his death the partnership continued as the sons settled in five European capitals : Amschel remained in Frankfurt, Nathan continued his business in London, Salomon and Carl went to Vienna and Naples respectively and James in Paris.

Ennobled by Emperor Francis the 1st of Austria in 1822, the five brothers adorned their coat of arms with a red shield ('rote Schild' in German). The shield is accompanied by five arrows as a symbol of the unity of the family, held by a firm hand, perhaps a reference to their late father.

The different parts of the exhibition follow a chronological order and explore the history of the family from economic, political, domestic and cultural point of view. As a counterpoint to the history of the Rothschilds, the exhibition explores the Pereire family, famous businessmen and rivals of the Rothschilds, and the Camondos, other major figures of banking establishments in the 19th century.

## At the age of twenty, James de Rothschild arrived in Paris

James de Rothschild was both the youngest of the five brothers and the youngest of the ten children of Mayer Amschel Rothschild who founded the Rothschild family business. James grew up with his brothers in the Judengasse – the Jewish ghetto – in Frankfurt. He went to the Jewish school and learnt Hebrew, the script he would later combine with his native German language when writing to his family.

In 1809 he visited his his brother, Nathan, in Manchester. Nathan was the first to leave Frankfurt and diversify his activity, subsequently moving out of the textile trade to take an interest in the world of finance as a merchant banker in London.

In 1812 James settled in Paris. On his arrival the police issued a report on his activities. From 1814 the Rothschild brothers were entrusted by the British Government with the provision of funds to the allied army under the command of the Duke of Wellington during the campaign against Napoleon. James's situation in France was delicate and he used all of his diplomatic skills, as soon as the war was over, to secure government contracts against well-established rivals such as the British bank of Baring Brothers and the Parisian Jacques Laffitte.

In 1816 James registered the Paris business in the trade register. In 1817, he set up the company Messieurs de Rothschild Frères in the business district, at the rue Laffitte, in a property formerly belonging to Fouché.

In the same year the Emperor of Austria Advanced the family to the first rung of the aristocracy, granting them permission to be 'von' or 'de' Rothschild advancing them to the status of Baron in 1822. During a visit to Nathan in 1817, James was assured by his brother Salomon that everybody in Paris is talking about 'de Rothschild Frères': « there has never been in Paris such a great business as yours. »



Photographie d'Olympe Aguado,  
octobre 1856 :  
La cour à Compiègne,  
avec James de Rothschild (à gauche)  
BnF, Estampes et photographie



Armoiries octroyées en 1822  
exemplaire officiel illustré, reliure, 1843,  
The Rothschild Archive London

## James and Betty

In 1824 James married Betty, the daughter of Salomon von Rothschild and his wife Caroline Stern. James and Betty had five children: Charlotte, Alphonse, Gustave, Salomon and Edmond. The women of the Rothschild family were encouraged to play an active role in society and to be accomplished hostesses. They were active participants in the family's philanthropic engagements, oversaw their children's education and looked after the interests of the banks' clients. Betty was no exception : she was recognised as one of the most accomplished hostesses of her generation, presiding over a salon which welcomed clients, family and artists.

## Banque, industry and business

After the Napoleonic wars the Rothschild brothers handled subsidy payments to the victorious states for several years and James rapidly made a name for himself within the circle of Paris high finance. In 1820 he organised a loan of one million francs to the government of Louis XVIII who tackled the riots that occurred in June after the murder of the Duke of Berry. For half a century, through various financial arrangements, James supported successive governments, from the Restoration to the July Monarchy to the Second Empire. An influential banker, he managed the wealth of sovereigns such as Louis-Philippe and members of the Royal family of Belgium, of politicians including Metternich and Thiers, of artists such as Balzac and Vigny.

With his brothers James developed commercial activities, dealing in cotton from the United States, Cuban cigars, wood, precious metals, gold, brass and mercury. He was also essentially a leader in modernising French society and contributing to its economic growth. He played a major role in developing the French railway network : he created the Chemins de Fer du Nord, and also took part in the development of the lines Paris-Orléans, Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée (PLM) and of the Chemins de Fer de l'Est.

James was also involved in the exploitation of minerals and metals having interests in Belgian coal Spanish quicksilver. He also made a name for himself in a completely different field of activity: wine. In 1868 he bought the estate of Château Lafite, a great Médoc wine. Several years before, in 1853, his nephew Nathaniel, the husband of his daughter Charlotte, had purchased the Château-Mouton vineyard.



Album photographique anonyme,  
Locomotives, vers 1874  
Archives de la Compagnie  
des Chemins de fer du Nord  
ANMT, Roubaix



Anonyme,  
La Banque du 19 rue Laffitte  
vers 1880  
Coll. Part. Rothschild, Paris



Château Lafite,  
étiquette d'une bouteille de vin, 1894  
Collection Château Lafite



## Properties

In Paris James and Betty lived at 19, rue Laffitte. Formerly Fouché's property, their principal residence housed both the bank's offices and their private apartments. « As we know, the Baron de Rothschild's private mansion is one of the most beautiful places in Paris... At the back of the vast courtyard which separates it from the gate facing the rue Laffitte, at the bottom of the steps, two statues holding two torches draw passer-by's attention and light the way for visitors. In both torches, the gas has been cleverly transformed and burns in a picturesque manner. This way, a gallery runs along the major part of the façade. » (Edouard Ferdinand Beaumont-Vassy, *Les Salons de Paris et la société parisienne sous Louis-Philippe Ier*, 1866).

In 1817, at the age of 25, James purchased a château surrounded by a large park in Boulogne-sur-Seine, just outside Paris. In 1855, it was entirely reconstructed in the neo-17th century style on the model of the Clagny château imagined by Mansart in 1680 and located near Versailles. The painter Eugène Lami was commissioned to decorate Boulogne. Great balls and receptions were organised by the Rothschilds to which figures from Parisian high society, political and cultural spheres were invited.

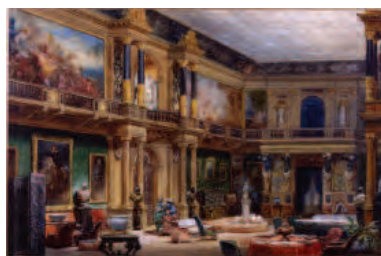
In 1838 James purchased the hôtel de Saint-Florentin, formerly the residence of Talleyrand located at place de la Concorde, at the corner of the rue de Rivoli, a prestigious property facing the Ministry of the Navy.

Between 1853 and 1860 he constructed a château at Ferrières, an estate bought from Fouché's heirs in 1829. The construction of the château was entrusted to the English architect, Joseph Paxton, who had been responsible for the design of Crystal Palace for the 1851 Great Exhibition. The fitting-out and decoration were once again overseen by Eugène Lami. The château was both comfortable and luxurious. The decoration, which perfectly illustrated the 'Rothschild style', combined the Renaissance with the period of Louis XIV.

Ferrières was the scene of magnificent receptions and shooting parties. Napoléon III, who honoured the place with his presence on 16 December, 1862, described it as a «château des Mille et Une Nuits».



Catherine et Alexandre Serebriakoff :  
Vue de l'hôtel de la rue Laffitte à Paris  
Copie. Aquarelle, vers 1867,  
©ADAGP, 2012  
Coll. Part. Rothschild Paris



Eugène Lami,  
Hall du château de Ferrières,  
vers 1860, aquarelle.  
Collection particulière, France.



Paul Castelnau, hôtel particulier,  
2 rue Saint Florentin, place de la Concorde  
Tirage d'après autochrome  
© Ministère de la culture,  
Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine,  
RMN

## Art collections

In May 1821 29-year-old James de Rothschild bought his first painting, *La Laitière* by Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1783, Musée du Louvre, Paris), becoming the first collector of the Rothschild family. Even though his father had successfully dealt in antique coins and medals no member of the Rothschild family had purchased the works by old masters before James's arrival in Paris, the centre of the art market. At his death in 1868, his collection consisted of about sixty paintings.

The most important collection – about forty paintings including *the Portrait de Willem van Heythuysen* by Franz Hals and *Le Porteur d'étendard* by Rembrandt – was in the tradition of Dutch and Flemish schools. James's taste placed him as a worthy heir to the great collectors of the second half of the 17th century. Paintings belonging to the French school – *Portrait de Mlle Duclos dans le rôle d'Ariane* by Nicolas de Largillière – the Italian school – *La Sainte Famille* by Andrea del Sarto – and the Spanish school – *Portrait de don Luis de Haro, marquis de Carpio* by Vélasquez – complement the group.

The acquisition of two Flemish primitives, *La Vierge à l'Enfant avec saints et donateur* by Jan Van Eyck (c. 1441-1443) and *La Fuite en Egypte* by Hans Memling (before 1494) housed at the Musée du Louvre, are good examples of James's aesthetic choices, very different from the ones made by his numerous relatives who would become collectors after him. He developed a very personal taste; he was faithful to his intuition and was able to afford the very best. Primarily he bought paintings to adorn his residences.

His daughter Charlotte, Baroness Nathaniel de Rothschild, donated *La Laitière* to the Musée du Louvre in 1899 and bequeathed her own collections to numerous French institutions. Her brothers and cousins were no less generous : for over a century, this tradition of patronage has been emblematic of the Rothschild family.

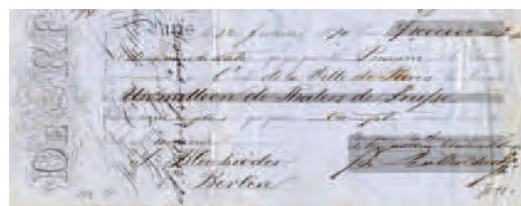
## Social and cultural life

James and Betty de Rothschild were at the centre of Parisian society life, like their aristocratic contemporaries, making Paris a city famous for its enchanting evenings and brilliant society life. In their private mansion of the rue Laffitte in Paris, they organised concerts and held dinner parties on many nights of the week. They also held balls every Saturday night. James and Betty's salon was the most famous one in Paris. Their chef, Antonin-Marie Carême (1784-1833), was one of the most talented cooks in the history of gastronomy. Among other dishes, he invented for them soufflé Rothschild and beef filet 'à la Rothschild'.

As a banker James financed French investments, issued loans and government bonds and from his arrival in 1812 to his death in 1868, he built up relationships with the political leaders of the successive systems of government: Louis XVIII and the Restoration, Charles X, Louis-Philippe, the brief Second Republic and the Second Empire. James and Betty were especially close to Louis-Philippe and his family. Thanks to James's brothers and to the network of family banks they had friendly relationships with royal and imperial European families.



Eugène Lami, *Sortie de l'Opéra*,  
huile sur toile, 1835  
BnF, Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra



Chèque du 12 février 1871  
qui a permis le rachat rapide et complet de  
la dette de la France à la Prusse  
après la défaite de Napoléon III, manuscrit,  
Peter Schwabach and The Rothschild Archive London

The Rothschilds were in contact with numerous artists of the time. They hosted painters – the Baron Gros, Eugène Delacroix, Ary Scheffer, Ingres – and writers. Balzac, a client of the bank, dedicated his novels *Esquisse d’homme d’affaires d’après nature* to James and *L’enfant maudit* to Betty. Heinrich Heine, the son of a German banker, was very close to the Rothschilds.

James de Rothschild also had a great admiration for musicians : he commissioned Hector Berlioz to compose a cantata for the opening of the railway line Paris-Lille in 1846. Chopin taught piano to James’s daughter Charlotte. For her, he composed the famous *Valse en C mineur* Opus 64. Rossini was so close to the family that he accompanied James to the marriage of his nephew, Lionel, in Frankfurt in 1836.

## Philanthropy

In the years before the concept of a ‘welfare state’, the sick and elderly, orphans and the poor had to rely on charity to meet their needs. Charitable organisations did exist and there were attempts to organise solidarity among religious groups but the system was far from comprehensive. For instance there was no hospital for the Jewish community in Paris.

James and Betty de Rothschild became involved in numerous philanthropic activities. Sometimes these were particularly aimed at the Jewish community : for example they created a hospital on the rue de Picpus in 1852. The women of the Rothschild family also organised raffles in aid of the Comité de Bienfaisance Israélite. But sometimes these initiatives supplemented the charitable system as a whole. The Rothschilds helped create anti-TB clinics and the first social housing projects and provided financial support to health services.

Several generations of the Rothschild family were involved in philanthropic activities, to such an extent that individual charity initiatives became professional philanthropic and co-ordinated social actions.



Billet de la Loterie  
israélite, fondée en 1843 pour  
récolter des fonds servant  
à financer d’autres œuvres philanthropiques,<sup>1</sup>  
1846, Paris, Archives du CASIP-COJASOR



Invitation à la vente de charité  
au profit de l’hospice des vieux  
marins et vieilles matelotes  
envoyée par la baronne  
Laura-Thérèse de Rothschild, 1902  
The Rothschild Archive, London



Hôpital Nathaniel de Rothschild  
fondé en 1871 à Berck-sur-Mer, Pas de Calais  
The Rothschild Archive London

## James de Rothschild in Literature

James de Rothschild who arrived in Paris at the age of twenty to set up a branch of the Rothschild family business remained in France until his death. However he never acquired French nationality. Through different political systems, he gained the confidence of rulers and high-finance peers. He also gained acceptance thanks to his social life. The receptions at rue Laffitte and at the châteaux of Boulogne and Ferrières allowed him to honour personalities from both political and artistic circles.

Well-established in business and high society life, rich and powerful, he had all the qualities required to become a character from a novel. Thus he was a source of inspiration for three masters of 19th-century literature. Balzac in *La Maison Nucingen* (1837), Stendhal in *Lucien Leuwen* (1836) and Zola in *L'Argent* (1881) did not portray him exactly but used elements of his life.

In her memoirs the countess Stéphanie de Tascher de La Pagerie, cousin by marriage of Joséphine de Beauharnais, wrote after James's death on 13 November 1868: « He was definitely a great banker. He will go down in history as the richest man in Paris. He was the kings' banker and the king of bankers. He was as honourable and honest as he was rich; he was also highly charitable. »



Eugène Disdéri,  
James de Rothschild, photographie Planche contact  
avec sept portraits,  
BnF, Estampes et photographie



Émile Zola, *L'Argent*, 1891  
Séance à la Bourse  
BnF, département Littérature et art



Honoré de Balzac,  
*La maison Nucingen*, 1853  
BnF, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal



## 19th century great bankers : the Pereires and the Camondos

As a counterpoint to the major part dedicated to James de Rothschild, the exhibition presents two great families of bankers that are representative of the 19th century Parisian high-finance: the Camondos and the Pereires. Like James de Rothschild they were great bankers who supported an industrial society. They took an active part in society and artistic life, owned magnificent estates and collections of works of art that were donated after their death to major French institutions.

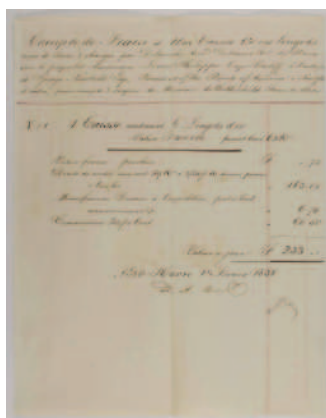
Born in Bordeaux, the Pereire brothers, Emile (1800-1875) and Isaac (1806-1880) settled in Paris in the 1820s and developed interests in industry and finance. They became involved in the construction and implementation of railway lines between Paris and Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1835-1837), and Paris and Versailles Rive-droite (1839). They collaborated with James de Rothschild on the project of the Paris-Lyon line (1840) and on the creation of the Lyon-Méditerranée line; but as bankers and railway manufacturers, they became rivals, a rivalry that never ceased to grow.

Their major project, supported by Napoleon III, was the creation of a long-term lending bank for industry, the *Crédit mobilier*, that financed Haussmann's alterations, the creation of the *Compagnie générale transatlantique* and Arcachon sea resort. In 1867, the *Crédit mobilier* became bankrupt and the Pereire brothers who contributed to the development of French economy ceased to have an active role in business development.

Settled in Constantinople at the end of the 18th century, the Camondos were no doubt the most powerful Sephardic family of the Ottoman Empire. Considered as the 'Rothschilds of the East', they asserted themselves as rich, dynamic and philanthropic bankers. Ennobled by King of Italy Victor Emmanuel II in 1867, the two brothers Abraham Behor and Nissim de Camondo settled soon afterwards in Paris.

The following generation had a passion for art. Isaac, the son of Abraham Behor, was a composer and supported the construction of the *Théâtre des Champs-Élysées*. At his death in 1911, all of his collections were donated to the *Musée du Louvre*: furniture, oriental works of art, impressionist paintings. His cousin Moïse who had a passion for 18th-century French decorative arts built up an outstanding collection housed in his private mansion on the *rue Monceau*. His only son Nissim died in an air battle in 1917. In his memory, Moïse de Camondo bequeathed his hotel and collections to the *Union centrale des Arts décoratifs*. The *Musée Nissim de Camondo* opened in 1936.

The last descendants of this family were sent to Auschwitz and were murdered during the Second World War.

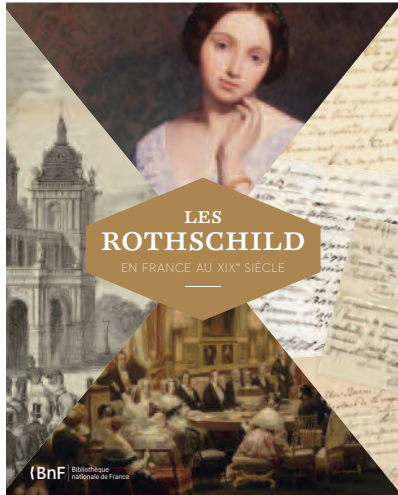


Bon de transport  
pour une caisse de lingots d'or  
Fonds Rothschild,  
ANMT, Roubaix



Léon Bonnat,  
Le comte Abraham-Béhor de Camondo,  
1882, huile sur toile  
Les Arts décoratifs, musée Nissim de Camondo

# Publication



## Les Rothschild en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle

directed by Claude Collard and Melanie Aspey  
with texts from Claude Collard, Melanie Aspey, Sophie  
Le Tarnec, Claire-Amandine Soulié, Youssef Cassis,  
Michael Hall and Harry Paul.

196 pages, 130 illustrations  
BnF publication  
36 euros

“It is to the family that we owe everything, and the greatest fortune which we enjoy, with the help of God, is our devotion to each other and to our unity.” James de Rothschild

In 1812 James de Rothschild (1792-1868), one of the five brothers of the renowned family from Frankfurt, arrived in Paris. The young man of 20 years of age rapidly became one of the most prominent members of the world of finance alongside key figures of the enlightened group of the “Haute Banque” of the 19th century such as the Pereires and the Camondos.

Bearing witness to their fashionable life, Rothschild residences on the rue Laffitte and Ferrières formed the backdrop for the sophisticated receptions at which the greatest figures of arts and letters met: Delacroix, Balzac, Heinrich Heine, Berlioz, Rossini and Chopin.

The Rothschilds contributed to the formation of European economic and cultural life in the 19th century. They involved themselves in philanthropic activities, creating hospitals that bore their name. Passionate collectors of works of art, they were patrons of many French institutions (musée du Louvre, Bibliothèque nationale, musée national de la Renaissance, château d’Écouen, musée des Arts décoratifs, etc.).

The volume brings together a number of specialists to tell the history of the Paris branch, which inspired great figures of fiction in Balzac (*La Maison Nucingen*), Zola (*L’Argent*) and Stendhal (*Lucien Leuwen*).