



CATALOGUE ENTRY

**Portrait of a Man**

about 1450

**Follower of Rogier van der Weyden**

Flemish

oil on wood panel transferred to canvas

14-3/8 × 10-1/2 in.

(36.5 × 26.6 cm)

*The Clowes Collection*

2018.27

## Marks, Inscriptions, and Distinguishing Features

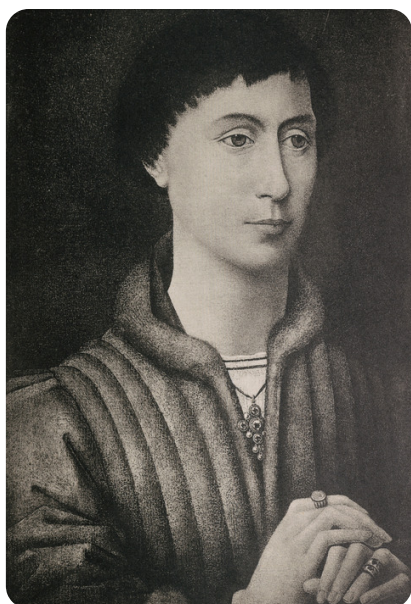
None

### Entry

1 Among Dr. Clowes's distinguished collection of portraits, many of which are masterworks depicting prominent people, this portrait of an anonymous young man stands out by manifesting distinct qualities of Rogier van der Weyden's (about 1399–1464) portraiture. In addition to the three-quarter view, dark background, and the overlapping hands drawn close to the body, all of which belong to Rogier's vocabulary of composing half-length portraits, the rich colors and fine brushwork convey a sense of calmness and self-possession characteristic of Rogier's portraits of Burgundian dignitaries. The sitter wears a white chemise; a red, fur-trimmed doublet; and several pieces of jewelry, including an elaborate cross-shaped pendant and a signet ring. His hairstyle recalls the fashion of the mid-fifteenth century, and his elongated face, accentuated by the sharp nose and echoed by the deep pleats of his doublet, recalls the distinct lithe poise that graces all Rogier's depicted sitters.

2 The Clowes painting is one of three versions of this subject (the second is likely in private hands, and the third is probably lost). The replication of portraits was common in the Low Countries in the early modern period. Copies after authorized images of the ruling members of the Burgundian court, for instance, were produced and circulated so that a formulaic likeness could be established and recognized by individuals of a wide community.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the three paintings of our concern do more than attest to a traditional practice, evidencing, in the meanwhile, its popularity beyond the context of the court. They also provide insight into the practice of replication, with the extensive underdrawing of the Clowes portrait exemplifying such a process.

3 Of the other two versions of the portrait, one was last seen at a Christie's sale in London in December 2002. In 1902, that painting, then in the collection of Charles-Léon Cardon of Brussels, had appeared in the exhibition *Les Primitifs flamands* in Bruges. It subsequently passed among private hands and underwent at least two major restorations, one for Agnew's Gallery, London, in 1939, and the other by Albert Philippot of the Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique, Brussels, in 1968 for Galerie Robert Finck.<sup>2</sup> Two photos of the Cardon portrait, one from Jules Destrée's monograph *Rogier de la Pasture—Van der Weyden* (1930), and the other provided to the Clowes Foundation by Finck in 1968, show apparent changes to the sitter's right hand (figs. 1 and 2). The rationale for flattening the fingers, which most likely occurred during the 1968 restoration, is yet unknown.<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 1:** 1930 photo detail of "Cardon" portrait. Jules Destrée, *Rogier de La Pasture van der Weyden* (Paris and Brussels: G. van Oest, 1930), Plate 134. Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.



**Figure 2:** Circle of Rogier van der Weyden (Flemish, about 1399–1464), *Portrait of a Young Man, Bust-Length, in a Fur-Trimmed Red Doublet*, about 1450–1460, oil on panel, 14-1/2 x 10-1/2 in. Private Collection. Photo © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images.

4 Despite the restorative change, the Cardon portrait provides clues to the pentimenti in the Clowes painting, whose painted state diverges from the underdrawing at various places. In the underdrawing, the right sleeve of the Clowes sitter resembles that of the Cardon sitter (fig. 3). It is possible that the preparatory plan of the Clowes portrait adhered closely to the Cardon portrait, or a lost version that was similar. The pentimenti also include a semicircle adjacent to the sleeve, indicating an original plan to depict the fur trim visible in the Cardon portrait. (Its absence from the Clowes portrait likely derived from a conservation decision.) In addition to these changes, the meticulous hatching and crosshatching establish that the Clowes painting was made after a finished picture—instead of a living person—that dictated its final appearance. Indeed, the thorough mapping of the sitter's nose and jawline, and the shading under the lower lip, nostril, and left eye suggest that the artist had planned both contour and shadow before painting. Furthermore, given the final alterations—i.e., the smoothed sleeve and raised hairline—one might speculate that more than one painting had served as a prototype for painting the Clowes portrait.



**Figure 3:** Infrared reflectography showing the underdrawing of Follower of Rogier van der Weyden's *Portrait of a Man*, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, The Clowes Collection, 2018.27.

<sup>5</sup> The third portrait of the trio may well be an additional precursor. Formerly in the collection of Carl von Hollitscher (1845–1925) of Berlin, this painting is now only known from a photograph (fig. 4) from the Max J. Friedländer Archive (The Hague, Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie). The back of the photograph bears Friedländer's handwriting, which states that he knew not the painting's whereabouts, despite having acquired the photograph from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum.<sup>4</sup> Importantly, this portrait was not included in the 1912 catalogue of the Von Hollitscher collection, edited by Friedländer himself and Wilhelm von Bode.<sup>5</sup> Since this photograph is undated, one can only presume that the painting had left the collection by 1912. The smoothed sleeve, raised hairline, and general features of the Von Hollitscher sitter suggest that the painting may have been the source for the Clowes painting's deviation from its underdrawing.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, that the three versions are interrelated—in terms of both likeness and configuration—suggests that some sort of cross-referencing would have been in place for copying of a portrait, so that details, to say the least, could have been compared, scrutinized, and adjusted.



**Figure 4:** After Rogier van der Weyden, *Portrait of a Young Man*, about 1400–1599, oil on panel. Private collection of Carl von Hollitscher, Berlin. Image courtesy RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, BD/RKD – ONS/Photo-archief M.J. Friedländer, 232913.

<sup>6</sup> Absent from both the Clowes and the Cardon portraits, but present in the Von Hollitscher version, is a coat of arms, which identifies the sitter as a member of the Van Themeseke family of Bruges.<sup>7</sup> (See fig. 5, X-radiograph of the Clowes portrait, which shows losses of paint at the upper-left corner. This may be the area of an erased coat of arms.) An 1851 heraldic registry describes their coat of arms as “d’or, à trois têtes et cols de cheval de sable bridées d’argent. Cimier: une tête et col de cheval de l’écu entre un vol d’or” (In gold, three horse heads and necks. Their crest: one horse head and neck flanked by golden wings).<sup>8</sup> The Van Themeseke crest can also be found in a blazon page representing the troop of Jan van Bruges, Lord of Gruuthuse, in the fifteenth-century *Traictié de la forme et devis comme on fait les tournois* (fig. 6), a manuscript attributed to King René d’Anjou of Sicily and Naples (1409–1480).<sup>9</sup> Members of the Van Themeseke family—a Louis and a Daniel—were among those who accompanied Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy on his expedition of vengeance against King Charles VII of France following the murder of his father, Duke John the Fearless, in 1419.<sup>10</sup> Given the survival of three portraits, the Clowes sitter may well be among the most prominent members of the family.



**Figure 5:** X-ray image showing paint loss of Follower of Rogier van der Weyden's *Portrait of a Man*, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, The Clowes Collection, 2018.27.



**Figure 6:** Blazon page (detail). René I d'Anjou (French, 1409–1480), *Traité de la forme et devis comme on peut faire les tournois*, 1401–1500, manuscript, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, MS. Fr. 2692, fol. 4v–5r. [ark:/12148/btvlb9059162x](https://nla.gov/nla/bn/12148/btvlb9059162x).

7 The Friedländer Archive also contains a photograph taken during a restoration of the Clowes portrait (fig. 7). On the back of the photograph, in Friedländer's handwriting, is the notation: "v Nemes XII. 30" [Von Nemes December. (19)30].<sup>11</sup> The restoration, possibly commissioned by the Hungarian collector Marcell von Nemes, reveals substantial paint loss on the sitter's left cheek, chin, neck, and collar. Moreover, a second stripe on the chemise—a detail shared by the Cardon and the Von Hollitscher portraits—indicates that its omission from the Clowes portrait was the result of a restorative decision. This photograph also shows the fur trim of the sleeve, another detail that has since been eliminated. The removal of both elements probably took place during the restoration for Von Nemes, as another photograph in the Friedländer Archive closely matching the current state of the Clowes portrait shows the result of a later treatment. On the back of this photograph, Friedländer wrote: "Silberman X. 36 v. Eigenberger gereinigt" [Silberman October. (19)36 restored by Eigenberger].<sup>12</sup> The date likely indicates the time of the photograph's reception, not that of the actual restoration. Apart from the fact that Dr. and Mrs. Clowes acquired the portrait from the brothers Elkan and Abris Silberman, who had a gallery in Vienna, in 1934, Friedländer noted on the back of another photograph—of the Cardon portrait—that Robert Eigenberger, the director of Vienna's Akademie der bildenden Künste, attended to the Clowes painting in 1934. In the same note Friedländer wrongly asserted that the Cardon portrait was the same painting dealt by the Silberman brothers, although this mistake is consistent with the mix-up of the two paintings in his *Early Netherlandish Painting*.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 7:** Photograph of the Clowes *Portrait of a Man* taken during restoration, 1930. Image courtesy RKD — Netherlands Institute for Art History, BD/RKD — ONS/Photo-archief M.J. Friedländer, 232912.

8 Despite having better preserved "an old core" than the Cardon painting, the Clowes portrait received less scholarly attention at least in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup> Of the Cardon painting, the Belgian art historian George Hulin de Loo deemed, according to the critic Jules Destrée, that "the composition, the drawing of the neck and the hands recall Roger. But the work has suffered too much for us to decide." Nonetheless, De Loo dated the painting to 1450–55.<sup>15</sup> Friedländer regarded it as an authentic Rogier, writing in 1947—that is, before the drastic cleaning of 1968—that "as far [as] I can judge from the photo, this picture by Rogier v.d. Weyden makes recently cleaned with success [sic] a better impression than 1902 at the exhibition in Bruges."<sup>16</sup> Less convinced of the work's authenticity, Erwin Panofsky noted that "A Portrait of a Young Man which, if authentic, would be approximately contemporaneous with that of Guillaume Fillastre was recently sold at Christie's ...; but to judge from the reproduction it is not equally convincing."<sup>17</sup> Of the Clowes portrait, Austrian art historians Gustav Glück and Eigenberger, in their joint expertise, regarded the painting as "a very important, noble, stylish and characteristic work of Roger van der Weyden." Dating it to 1450–60, the scholars underlined "the forms of the (sitter's) hands," which they considered similar to those in Rogier's *Portrait of Francesco d'Este* (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art).<sup>18</sup> While these authentications have become no longer tenable, the two works—in particular the one in Indianapolis—

bear close formal and stylistic ties to Rogier's half-length portraits. The Clowes portrait belongs to the exceedingly small body of early Netherlandish portraits and, like those portraits, solicits admiration for its lustrous finish and exquisite likeness.

## Author

[Haohao Lu](#)

## Provenance

Galerie Sedelmeyer, Paris, France.<sup>12</sup>

Eduard Friedrich Weber (1830–1907), Hamburg, Germany, in 1897.<sup>20</sup>

Marczell von Nemes (1866–1930), Munich, Germany, by 1930.<sup>21</sup>

Probably Countess Vetter von der Lilie, Vienna, Austria.<sup>22</sup>

E. and A. Silberman Galleries, New York, New York.<sup>23</sup>

Dr. George Henry Alexander Clowes (1877–1958), Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1934.

Clowes Fund Collection, Indianapolis, Indiana, since 1958, and on long-term loan to the Indianapolis Museum of Art since 1971.

Given to the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields in 2018.

## Exhibitions

John Herron Art Museum, Indianapolis, 1959, *Paintings from the Collection of George Henry Alexander Clowes, a Memorial Exhibition*, no. 56;

Art Gallery, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN, 1962, *A Lenten Exhibition*, no. 50;

Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, IN, 1963, *Northern European Painting: The Clowes Fund Collection*, no. 17;

Indianapolis Museum of Art at the Newfields, Indianapolis, IN, 2019, *Life and Legacy: Portraits from the Clowes Collection*.

## References

Patricia Bennett, "The Portraiture of Rogier van der Weyden and the Problem of Copies, with a Case Study of Portrait of a Young Man, Clowes Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art." MA thesis (Indiana University – Bloomington, 1983), *passim* (reproduced);

Lorne Campbell, *Rogier de le Pasture: Peintre officiel de la ville de Bruxelles; Portraitiste de la cour de Bourgogne, 6 Octobre–18 Novembre 1979, Musée Communal de Bruxelles, Maison du Roi* (Brussels: Crédit Communal de Belgique, 1979), 155;

Marin Davies, *Rogier van der Weyden: An Essay, with a Critical Catalogue of Paintings Assigned to Him and to Robert Campin* (London: Phaidon, 1972), 217.

A. Ian Fraser, *A Catalogue of the Clowes Collection* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1973), 102–3 (reproduced);

Max J. Friedländer, *Die altniederländische Malerei: Rogier van der Weyden und der Meister van Flémalle* (Berlin: P. Cassirer, 1924); *Early Netherlandish Painting: Rogier van der Weyden and the Master of Flémalle* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1967), no. 33 (reproduced);

Georges Hulin de Loo, *Exposition de tableaux flamands des XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles: Catalogue critique* (Ghent: A. Siffer, 1902), 7;

Haohao Lu and [Annette Schlagenhauff](#), "Provenance: Follower of Rogier van der Weyden's *Portrait of a Man*." *Indianapolis Museum of Art Magazine* (Spring 2014): 8–10 (reproduced);

*Northern European Painting: The Clowes Fund Collection*, exh. cat. (Bloomington: Indiana University Museum of Art, 1963), no. 17;

*Paintings from the Collection of George Henry Alexander Clowes: A Memorial Exhibition*, exh. cat. (Indianapolis: John Herron Art Museum, 1959), no. 56;

Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 478;

Dirk De Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden: The Complete Works*, trans. T. Alkins (New York: Abrams, 1999), 410.

## Notes

1. On the copying practice, see Dagmar Eichberger and Lisa Beaven, "Family Members and Political Allies: The Portrait Collection of Margaret of Austria," *The Art Bulletin* 77, no. 2 (1995): 226–28; and Joanna Woodall, "An Exemplary Consort: Antonius Mor's Portrait of Mary Tudor," *Art History* 14, no. 2 (1991): 204.
2. Max J. Friedländer opined that the Cardon portrait, like the *Portrait of a Man* at the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, made "serious and successful" claims to being an original by Rogier. "Von den Männerporträts machen zwei ernstlich und erfolgreich Anspruch darauf, für Originale des Meisters gehalten zu werden: das Bildnes eines Mannes in mittleren Jahren, ausgestellt als 'Pierre Bladelin'—wohl mit Unrecht, die Ähnlichkeit mit dem Donatorenbildnis in Berlin ist nicht groß—aus der Sammlung R. v. Kaufmann, und das ganz und gar verputzte Porträt eines jüngeren Herrn aus dem Besitz des Herrn Ch. L. Cardon in Brüssel." See "Die Brügger Leihausstellung von 1902," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 26 (1903): 71. On the restorations, see letter of Lorne Campbell (25 March 1982) to Patricia Bennett, reproduced in the latter's 1983 MA thesis, "The Portraiture of Rogier van der Weyden and the Problem of Copies, with a Case Study of Portrait of a Young Man, Clowes Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art." Copy of thesis available at the Herman B. Wells Library of Indiana University – Bloomington. Nonetheless, according to Friedländer's notation, "Agnew / pr[äsentiert] VIII. 45," on the back of a photograph of the Cardon painting, he received the photograph from Agnew's Gallery in August 1945.  
<https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/I04196>.
3. See letter of Lorne Campbell (25 March 1982) to Patricia Bennett, reproduced in the latter's 1983 MA thesis, "The Portraiture of Rogier van der Weyden and the Problem of Copies, with a Case Study of Portrait of a Young Man, Clowes Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art." Copy of thesis available at the Herman B. Wells Library of Indiana University – Bloomington.
4. "Ehemals v. Hollitscher (?) / Photo stammt aus K[aiser] F[riedrich] M[useum] / Wo jetzt? / = Cardon - Kleinberger (?)" See the webpage of the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (BD/RKD - ONS/Photo-archive M.J. Friedländer, img.nr. 0000112028) <https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/232913>.

5. *Die Gemälde-Sammlung des Herrn Carl von Hollitscher in Berlin: Herausgegeben von Wilhelm Bode und Max J. Friedländer* (Berlin: Meisenbach, Riffarth, 1912).
6. The Clowes portrait was transferred from wood panel to canvas, possibly in the late nineteenth century. Such a treatment was likely unique among the trio, as we know that at least the Cardon portrait remains on wood panel.
7. Lorne Campbell, *Rogier de la Pasture: Peintre officiel de la ville de Bruxelles; Portraiture de la cour de Bourgogne, 6 Octobre–18 Novembre 1979, Musée Communal de Bruxelles, Maison du Roi* (Brussels: Crédit Communal de Belgique, 1979), 155.
8. François van Dycke, *Recueil héraldique, avec des notices généalogiques et historiques sur un grand nombre de familles nobles et patriciennes de la ville et du franconat de Bruges* (Bruges: C. de Moor, 1851), 446.
9. *Traité de la forme et devis comme on fait les tournois*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fr. 2692, fols. 4v–5r. See also Maximiliaan P. J. Martens, *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse: Mecenas en Europees Diplomaat ca. 1427–1492* (Bruges: Stichting Kunstboek, 1992), 99.
10. On the Van Themseke family, see J. Gailliard, *Bruges et le Franc ou leur magistrature et leur noblesse: Avec des données historiques et généalogiques sur chaque famille*, unique volume supplément (Bruges: E.D.W. Gailliard, 1864), 21–30. On the deeds of Louis and Daniel van Themseke, see J. Gailliard, *Bruges et le Franc ou leur magistrature et leur noblesse: Avec des données historiques et généalogiques sur chaque famille*, vol. I (Bruges: J. Gailliard, 1857), 203.
11. See letter of Lorne Campbell (25 March 1982) to Patricia Bennett, reproduced in the latter's 1983 MA thesis, "The Portraiture of Rogier van der Weyden and the Problem of Copies, with a Case Study of Portrait of a Young Man, Clowes Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art." Copy of thesis available at the Herman B. Wells Library of Indiana University – Bloomington. According to the RKD, the notation reads: "vNemes / XII.30 Photo / pr.[äsentiert]" [Photo received from Von Nemes December. (19)30]. <https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/232912>.
12. See letter of Lorne Campbell (25 March 1982) to Patricia Bennett, reproduced in the latter's 1983 MA thesis, "The Portraiture of Rogier van der Weyden and the Problem of Copies, with a Case Study of Portrait of a Young Man, Clowes Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art." Copy of thesis available at the Herman B. Wells Library of Indiana University – Bloomington. See also <https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/232912>.
13. "III. 34 ansch.[einend] dass.[elbe] G.[emälde] / Hand[lung] Silberman, / Wien, / mir orig[inal] von / Wendland gezeigt. / Auf leinwand. / v. Eigenberger restau- / riert. / Identität schwer / nachweisbar, aber / doch sicher" [March 34 likely the same painting / Dealer Silberman (sic) / Vienna / painting shown to me by / Wendland / on canvas / restored by Eigenberger / identity difficult to prove / yet certain.] <https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/232912>. Max J. Friedländer, *Die altniederländische Malerei: Rogier van der Weyden und der Meister van Flémalle* (Berlin: P. Cassirer, 1924); *Early Netherlandish Painting: Rogier van der Weyden and the Master of Flémalle* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1967), no. 33. The Clowes portrait, reproduced in both editions, is given the wrong provenance of having been among the collection of Charles-Léon Cardon.
14. The phrase is used by Dirk De Vos. See Dirk De Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden: The Complete Works*, trans. T. Alkins (New York: Abrams, 1999), 410.
15. "La composition, la dessin du cou et des mains rappellent Roger. Mais l'oeuvre a trop souffert pour que nous osions nous prononcer." See Jules Destrée, *Rogier de la Pasture van der Weyden* (Paris and Brussels: G. van Oest, 1930), 179. On the dating, see George Hulin de Loo, "Rogier van der Weyden," *Biographie nationale, académie royale des sciences, des lettres, et des beaux-arts de Belgique* (Brussels: E. Bruylant, 1938), 239.
16. Handwritten note dated 20 October 1947, Amsterdam, File C10085 (2018.27), Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields. His assessment would have likely been based on the photograph provided to him by Angew's Gallery in 1945. See note 2.
17. Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, vol. I (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 478.
18. "Eine sehr bedeutende, edel, stilvolle und charakteristische Arbeit von Roger van der Weyden;" "die formen der Hände." Expertise by Glück and Eigenberger, 6 March 1934, File C10085 (2018.27), Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.
19. A red oval wax seal on the stretcher bar can be deciphered to read "Galerie Sedelmeyer Paris."
20. A paper label, once on the verso of the painting, bears a round ink stamp which can be deciphered to read "Galerie Weber, Hamburg." It also bears the hand-written date "1897" as well as the inventory number "969." Eduard Weber did not own a gallery but amassed a large and important private collection which he called the Galerie Weber. This painting is not included in any of the catalogues published posthumously in Berlin in 1912. However, correspondence in June 2013 with Carla Schmincke, author of the 2004 Hamburg University dissertation "Sammler in Hamburg: Der Kaufmann und Kunstfreund Konsul Eduard Friedrich Weber (1830–1907)," revealed that in an unpublished inventory of Weber's collection, which she viewed in 2000 in the possession of a Weber heir, since deceased, nos. 967 to 971 were all purchased at Charles Sedelmeyer's Gallery in Paris.
21. Friedländer was very familiar with the Von Nemes collection; he wrote the introduction to the 1931 posthumous auction collection catalogue as well as an obituary in *Pantheon* 7 (1931): 32.
22. Art historians who documented the Clowes Collection in 1968 (Mark Roskill, unpublished manuscript in IMA Archives) and in 1973 (A. Ian Fraser, *A Catalogue of the Clowes Collection*, Indianapolis Museum of Art) both note that the painting came through Silberman Galleries from Countess Vetter von der Lilie, Vienna, but this has not been corroborated. A customs stamp on the stretcher bar reads "Bundesdenkmalamt Wien," indicating that painting did pass through Vienna where the Silberman brothers had a gallery.
23. Bill of sale from A. Silberman, 6 October 1934, File C10085 (2018.27), Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.