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NOTES & QUERIES

Miles Barton, 'Sir Richard Child of Wanstead: a Portrait Revealed', *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XIX, 2011, pp. 184–85

Eileen Harris, 'The Right Wright versus The Wrong Wrights', *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XIX, 2011, pp. 186–189

Selby Whittingham, 'The Early History of the Hardwick Dynasty of Architects', *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XIX, 2011, pp. 190–91

SIR RICHARD CHILD OF WANSTEAD: A PORTRAIT REVEALED

MILES BARTON

Born as he was into a family of significant wealth, it is surprising that the only representations commonly known of Richard Child, first Earl of Tylney (1680–1750) are those within the conversation pieces of Hogarth and Nollekens.¹ It is fair to assume that the man behind the building of such a startlingly modern edifice at Wanstead, born to ‘a merchant most sordidly avaricious’² who was painted by John Riley,³ would have succumbed to the simple vanity of sitting for a portrait a number of times during his life. However the portrait considered here, by the great eighteenth-century artist Jonathan Richardson Sr., emerged only recently and represents not only the earliest likeness of Child, being painted before his elevation to the peerage in 1718, but is seemingly the only individual portrait currently known.⁴

The well documented plight of the Tylney wealth meant that in 1822 when the contents of Wanstead Park came on the market every item was available to the highest bidder without restriction.⁵ Within the pages of the simply arranged catalogue, there lurk a large number of plainly described family portraits. Unnamed, perhaps deliberately for family reasons born out of shame or embarrassment, or perhaps purely because of the speed of cataloguing by the auctioneers, these have gone on to represent tantalising conundrums for historians many years later.

Richard Child was the youngest son of Sir Josiah Child (1630–1699) and his third wife Emma Barnard. In 1703 Richard married Dorothy Glynne, daughter of John Glynne and Dorothy Tylney, daughter of Francis Tylney of Tylney Hall, Hampshire. Soon afterwards on the death of his half-brother Josiah,

Richard succeeded to the baronetcy and the family estate of Wanstead Manor. Given the apparent age of the sitter, together with the style of wig and clothes, we can propose that the present portrait was completed c.1705, not long after his significant inheritance.

Jonathan Richardson Sr., (1665–1745) has been described as ‘the ablest of the painters who came to prominence during the last decade of Kneller’s life and who flourished after his death’.⁶ Trained under the portrait painter John Riley, he rose from a humble family of weavers to become one of the most popular and influential portrait painters in England during the first half of the eighteenth century. His bold approach was published in three treatises on painting that called for imagination and characterisation in portraiture rather than a mere mechanical reproduction of physiognomy.

Richardson in many ways seems an obvious choice of artist for young Sir Richard with his newly acquired status. The association with Riley, via his father’s portrait, would encourage the patronage of his obvious successor, and Richardson’s quickly gained recognition and status, together with the obvious financial merits this brought, maybe in some way reflected the young baronet’s own background. And perhaps, as was to become apparent with the building of the vast neo-Palladian mansion at Wanstead, Sir Richard favoured a native born artist whose approach represented something new and distinctly different, standing out from his foreign born rivals. Either way, this remarkably fresh and lively portrait represents a confident and assured approach both in handling of paint and



Fig. 1. Jonathan Richardson Sr: 'Sir Richard Child of Wanstead' c.1705, oil on canvas, 30 by 25 inches. *Private collection.*

expression of character that is Richardson working at his best.

This is almost certainly the portrait listed in the Wanstead auction catalogue for Day 10, lot 328, as *Richardson – A portrait of a Gentleman in blue*. To date its whereabouts after the sale are unknown until it appeared on the London art market in late 2001 as a follower of Michael Dahl and having belonged to Richard Child, but further enquiries on this point have proved unsuccessful.⁷ An inscription on the canvas stretcher reads 'Rt. Hon. Earl of Tilney by Kneller' and a Hamptons repository label indicates that it was in storage prior to the Second World War.⁸ The painting, having been restored early in the 20th century and then cleaned in 2001, has passed through two private collections in the last ten years, only recently correctly being attributed to Richardson. It is hoped that more information regarding the background of this significant portrait may yet come to light.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Peter Brown at Fairfax House, York for sharing his views and advice.

NOTES

- 1 The Tylney family were depicted in two major 'conversation pieces', one by Joseph Francis Nollekens in 1740 which is now at Fairfax House, York, and another by William Hogarth c.1730 now at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Some doubt must be cast on two further paintings by Nollekens, purporting to depict Earl Tylney at an informal musical gathering at Wanstead, where the architectural surroundings appear not to correspond with the mansion; one is at Longleat House and another recorded on the art market in 1982: Heinz archive, National Portrait Gallery.
- 2 G. de la Bedoyere (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn*, (Woodbridge, 1995, p. 258).
- 3 National Portrait Gallery attribute it to Riley, NPG 5932.
- 4 The Heinz archive have a photograph from 1925 of a gentleman stated to be by Kneller of Child when Viscount Castlemaine. The present whereabouts of this portrait is unknown but various factors make this not possible, notably the age and attire of the sitter.
- 5 British Library, SC 1522 (auction particulars for Wanstead House, June, 1822).
- 6 R. Strong, (ed.), *The British Portrait* (Woodbridge, 1991), p. 124.
- 7 Conversation with Wilkins & Wilkins art dealers. The business has now ceased trading and after moving premises some original stock records have gone missing. It is possible it was purchased at a provincial auctioneer, though to date this has not been ascertained.
- 8 On 16th November 1940 an incendiary bomb hit Hamptons Pall Mall premises destroying the building and presumably all the contents.

THE RIGHT WRIGHT VS THE WRONG WRIGHTS

EILEEN HARRIS

The bicentenary of the birth of Thomas Wright of Durham (1711–1786), amateur astronomer, architect and landscape gardener, is a suitable occasion to distinguish the ‘right’ Wright from the several ‘wrong’ Wrights; to dispel the falsehoods that the confounding of names has fathered upon him, and to have a good look into his face.

Thomas Wright was a fairly common name in the eighteenth century; contemporary namesakes include a book collector whose library was sold in 1732, a publisher active c.1732–34, a bookseller at the Bible in Exeter-Exchange c.1741 (possibly one and the same person), a surveyor who laid out Lincoln’s Inn Fields in 1735,¹ the author of *Antiquities of Halifax*, 1738, a Dissenting Minister of Bristol in 1759, and a member of the Horn Lodge of Freemasons at Westminster in 1725 who has been mistakenly identified with Wright of Durham despite the fact that the latter was only fourteen at the time.² Wright’s membership in the burgeoning fraternity, though not unlikely, remains unproven. Nevertheless, mumbo-jumbo mongers remain resolutely determined to make him a freemason – if only by association. Their efforts have added nothing of any significance to our knowledge or understanding of his work.³

The most notable, and certainly the most germane of Wright’s namesakes was Thomas Wright (c.1695–1767) mathematical instrument maker to George II as Prince of Wales from 1718 and then as king from 1727 to 1747 when he retired from his business at the ‘Orrery & Globe next the Globe & Marlborough Head Tavern in Fleet Street’.⁴ Orreries, as his trade card of ‘1718’ (Fig. 1) indicates, were

Wright’s speciality: a speciality which he developed whilst apprentice and probably successor to John Rowley (c.1665–1728) who made an important orrery in 1712–13 for his patron, Charles Boyle, fourth Earl of Orrery after whom the instrument is named. Rowley’s orrery was based on an astronomical model by the horologist, George Graham (1647–1751), who lived above Wright’s shop in Fleet Street.⁵

The nineteen-year-old Wright of Durham entered this close-knit London circle in the summer of 1730 as a journeyman ‘Making Mathematical Instruments first with Mr Heath and then for Mr Sysson’.⁶ Having recently been apprenticed, albeit unhappily, to a clockmaker in Bishop Auckland, one Brian

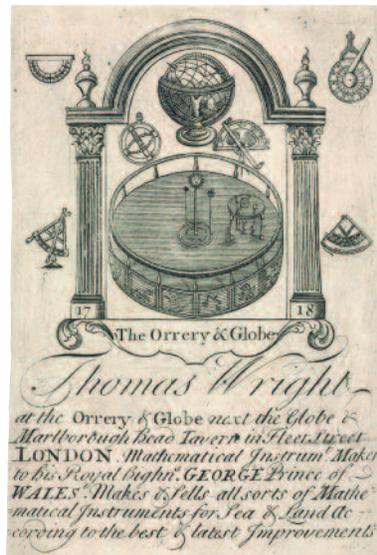


Fig. 1. Trade card of Thomas Wright, Mathematical Instrument Maker, 1718.

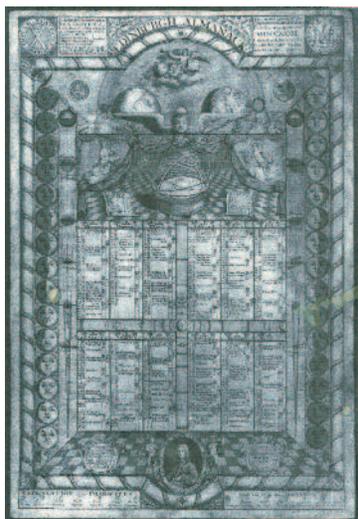


Fig. 2. Thomas Wright of Durham, 'Edinburgh Almanack 1733', unpublished copper plate, Badminton Archives.



Fig. 3. Thomas Frye, 'Mr Thomas Wright', mezzotint, signed and dated 1737.

Stobart, he would have been interested in meeting the celebrated George Graham, then master of the Clock workers Company, who was 'on very close terms' with his employer, Jonathan Sisson, and was a neighbour of Thomas Wright the instrument maker. He would certainly have been aware of – if not directly involved in – the latest improvements to the orrery.

Brief though it was, his London experience was both stimulating and inspiring. On his return to Sunderland in the winter of 1730 he promptly printed 'a new advertisement for selling all sorts of Mathematical Instruments ec' – and had 'a curious sign of ye Creation Painted over his Door.'⁷ His namesake's 'grand orrery' representing the movements of all the heavenly bodies in the solar system around the sun and embellished with an armillary hemisphere made a particularly strong impression on him both as a visual aid to an understanding of the solar system and as a display of the magnificence of the Creation.

The connection between astronomy and the Creation, between the material and the moral view of the universe was the constant, almost obsessive, concern of Wright's cosmological work; a concern

he shared with other eighteenth-century writers on astronomy like William Derham and William Whiston.⁸ It is not surprising, therefore, that a 'grand orrery' placed on a chequer-board floor symbolizing the diversity of the Creation – not, as supposed, a freemasonic pavement⁹ – should occupy centre stage of the unpublished almanac designed by him in 1731/32 and engraved in 1733.¹⁰ (Fig. 2) An orrery also featured in the half-length portrait of him which hung in the dining room of his house at Byers Green.¹¹ This was probably a self portrait like the one on the almanac and of similar date, i.e. early 1730s. Along with the other paintings in the room, mostly of astronomical subjects, it was in the possession of his biographer, George Allan of Darlington, in 1793 and has not been traced since.

The mezzotint of 'Mr Thomas Wright' by Thomas Frye dated 1737 depicts a mature man in his fifties; yet it is generally thought to be Thomas Wright of Durham, who was twenty-six at the time. (Fig. 3) This certainly is not the 'right' Wright. But could it be the mathematical instrument maker? Unfortunately, the portrait has no attributes that identify the sitter. Apart



Fig. 4. George Allen, 'Thomas Wright', engraving, signed G. Allen Pinxit, P. Fourdrinier Scul., undated, c.1740.

from the self-portrait aged 21 on the unpublished almanac, the only definitive portrait of 'Thomas Wright. Phil: Nat: Et. Mat: Prof:?' was engraved by Paul Fourdrinier (1698–1758) who was responsible for the plates in most of Wright's astronomical publications, including his *Original Theory* of 1750, from a painting by the little known 'Face Painter', George Allen.¹² (Fig. 4) George Allan of Darlington (1736–1800), who is generally credited with the portrait, would have been only six years old in 1742 when it was published as a frontispiece to Wright's *Clavis Coelestis*.

Wright may have had the idea of including a portrait of himself in *Clavis Coelestis*, his first book on theoretical astronomy, as early as 1737 when he published '...Proposals for Printing ... by Subscription.'¹³ As he was then spending a great deal of time with the first Duke and Duchess of Kent at Wrest, teaching 'ye Young Ladies Geometry etc.'¹⁴, it can safely be assumed that it was the Duke (1702–1740) who recommended George Allen as a portraitist, having employed him himself from 1712 to paint various members of his family at Wrest. Thereafter

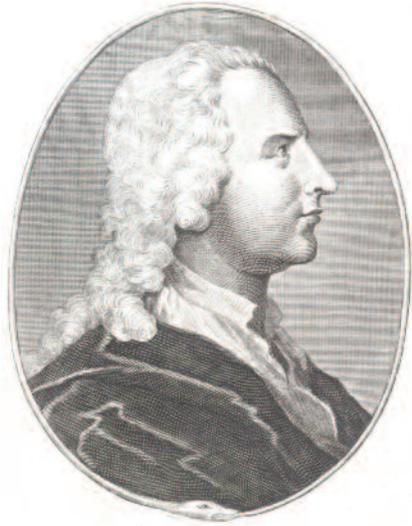


Fig. 5. Portrait of Thomas Wright, copy after the engraving by P. Fourdrinier made for *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1793.

Allen and Wright remained close friends; twenty years later, in 1758, Allen recommended the 'ingenious' Wright as a landscape painter to the diplomat and writer, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams (1708–1759), who employed him to improve his house and garden at Coldbrook in Monmouthshire.¹⁵ George Allen was among the subscribers to Wright's *Clavis Coelestis*, as were the Duke and Duchess of Kent and their extended family: the Duke of Portland, Lord Limerick, the Hon. Philip Yorke, Jemima, Marchioness Grey, Lord Glenorchy and others.

Wright can be credited with the composition of Allen's portrait of him: a circular medallion from behind which there emerges an unusual elongated or oval ouroboros (tail-eating serpent) emblematic of the Milky Way. The more familiar circular ouroboros – representing eternity, unity, infinity, self-sufficiency – was used by Wright to frame his plates of the solar system in *The Use of the Globes*, (pl. I), 1740, his 'Synopsis of the Universe' explained in *Clavis Coelestis*, 1742 and in his *Original Theory*, pl. II, 1750. Vain as he was, he would never have used it to frame his portrait, for that would have been tantamount to

presenting himself as a microcosm. The profile portrait that accompanies George Allan of Darlington's 'Sketch of the Character of Mr Thomas Wright . . .', published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1793 (Fig. 5), seven years after Wright's death, is a misrepresented copy of Fourdrinier's engraving of George Allen's painting with the regular circular medallion (which Wright might well have equated with the sun) reduced to a meaningless oval that would fit the smaller page, the inscription – incorrectly transcribed – removed from the medallion itself and used instead as a heading, and the lively ouroubus brought under control to serve as a frame.¹⁶

Without the distraction of the wrong Wrights, the true history of Thomas Wright of Durham may now proceed.

NOTES

- 1 BL, Add MS 35077, ff. 7–8.
- 2 *Minutes of the Grand Lodge of Freemasons of England 1723–1739* (London, 1913), p. 23; Andrew Baker, 'Thomas Wright: The Druids and Sophisticated Ladies' (n.d., c.2004–5), www.imaginingstaffordshire.org.uk/shug/.
- 3 Judith Kay Preston, 'Elysian Fields, Pindaric Shades and A Myriad Inchanting Mansions': The Landscapes of Thomas Wright (1711–1786), unpublished master's dissertation, University of Bristol, 2008, p. 59; Judy Preston 'A Polymath in Arcadia: Thomas Wright (1711–1786)', *Garden History*, 38(2) (2010), p. 166. Paul Elliott and Stephen Daniels, 'The 'School of true, useful and universal science.'Freemasonry, natural philosophy and scientific culture in eighteenth-century England', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 39(2), June 2006, p. 223.
- 4 Gloria Clifton, *Directory of Britihh Scientific Instrument Makers 1550–1851* (London, 1995), p. 306.
- 5 Henry C. King and John R. Millburn, *Geared to the stars. The evolution of planetariums, orreries, and astronomical clocks* (Toronto, 1978), pp. 152–162; John R. Millburn, 'Benjamin Martin and the development of the Orrery', *The British Journal for the history of science* 6(24) (1974), pp. 382–84.
- 6 E. Hughes, 'The Early Journal of Thomas Wright of Durham', *Annals of Science*, 7(1) (1951), p. 6. Thomas Heath, mathematical instrument maker (fl. 1720–1750, at the Hercules & Globe next the Fountain Tavern in the Strand; Jonathan Sisson (1690?–1747), mathematical instrument maker to Frederick, Prince of Wales from 1729, at the Sphere, corner of Beaufort Buildings in the Strand. Thomas Heath and Thomas Wright, mathematical instrument maker, were subscribers to Wright of Durham's *Clavis Pannautici* (1734), 'a Mathematical Instrument . . . describing the Lunar Theory and the motion of the Tides.'
- 7 Hughes, *loc. cit.*, p. 6.
- 8 On this subject see Michael Hoskin and David M. Knight's introduction to the facsimile reprint of Wright's *Original Theory* (London, 1971), p. 38.
- 9 Preston, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- 10 The copper plate, engraved by Richard Cooper in Edinburgh, is now in the archive at Badminton House. Wright gave a full account of his fruitless efforts to get it published in his 'Early Journal', Hughes, *loc. cit.*, pp. 7–10, 13. This is the subject of a forthcoming article by the author.
- 11 'Mr Wright's Description of his Villa at Byer's Green', *Gentleman's Magazine* (March 1793), p. 215.
- 12 William Roberts, 'George Allen', letter to the editor, *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 June 1937. This is the most complete account of Allen in print. Roberts (1862–1940) was a prolific writer particularly about eighteenth-century painters.
- 13 Hughes, *loc. cit.*, p. 13. Wright's first title for *Clavis Coelestis* was 'Physical and Mathematical Elements of Astronomy, or the Doctrine of the Sphere being a synopsis of the Universe, or the visible World epitomiz'd . . .' It was advertised in his *Use of the Globes*, 1740 as 'Now in the Gravers Hands and will speedily be published.'
- 14 Hughes, *ibid.*
- 15 Yale University. Lewis Walpole Library, Hanbury Williams Correspondence, CHW 31-11375 and CHW 77-11385.
- 16 F.A. Paneth, *Chemistry and beyond* (New York, 1964), pp. 96–97; Preston, *loc. cit.* Preston was concerned only with the conventional circular ourouborus mistakenly believing it to have been Wright's choice; neither she nor Paneth realized that the *Gentleman's Magazine* portrait of 1793 was a later, debased copy of the earlier portrait by Allen.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE HARDWICK DYNASTY OF ARCHITECTS

SELBY WHITTINGHAM

The careers of the Hardwick architects are summarised by Sir Howard Colvin in his *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects*. However their builder antecedents have remained uncertain until recent findings. These have been partly recorded in 2010 by Celia Cotton¹ and Carolyn Hammond².

I was led to an interest in the family by the fact that Philip Hardwick (1792–1870) was one of J.M.W. Turner's executors, he complaining of the confusions in Turner's will relating to the Royal Academy, of which Hardwick was Treasurer. In Walter Thornbury's biography of Turner little reference is made to Philip, who was among those who evidently failed to co-operate with the author. This was a pity, as it was to the Hardwicks more than to anyone else that Turner owed his great interest in architecture, preferably classical. Turner would have first met them when he stayed with his uncle at New Brentford c.1785.

The family tradition has been that it came from Herefordshire gentry. Research shows that Thomas I (1681–1746) was born at Weston-under-Penyard, a member of a family of yeomen long established there.³ In 1711(?) his settlement certificate at Isleworth described him as 'from Weston'.⁴ He was a 'stonecutter' or 'stonemason'.⁵ In 1725 he acquired property at New Brentford High Street near Brentford Bridge.⁶ The Hardwick yard there had passed to a mason called Loveless by 1804, when a print after a painting by Henry Sexton was published.⁷ The two adjacent houses built by the Hardwicks survived until the 1950s.

His son, Thomas II (1725–98), was also a stonemason.⁸ He was based at New Brentford, though houses at Isleworth were still owned by Philip in 1850,⁹ and was quite prosperous. He was the builder in 1764 of St Lawrence, New Brentford, designed by Boulton Manwaring, now shamefully neglected. In 1761–7 he was engaged on works at Syon House for the Adam brothers. In 1748 he married a Methodist follower of Charles Wesley (who officiated at the wedding), Sarah Witham, and they produced Thomas III (1752–1829), the architect. Thomas III in 1783 married at Credenhill, Herefordshire, Elizabeth Hardwick, and they produced Philip, the father of Philip Charles (1822–92).

Elizabeth was presumably a cousin, maybe a granddaughter of Joseph, brother of Thomas I. At any rate connections with Herefordshire were maintained, as commissions for Thomas III and Philip attest. In his will of 1792 Thomas II mentioned Thomas Hardwick of Kensington, surgeon.¹⁰ This Thomas (1742–1825) was his first cousin, Master of the Society of Apothecaries in 1815, his portrait hanging in its hall. He lived at 16 (formerly 13) Young Street, Kensington Square, from 1783. In 1804–5 he refronted it.¹¹ No architect has been discovered, and we may wonder if the services of Thomas III were called upon. The apothecary made his will in 1820, which shows his continuing family connections with Herefordshire and Monmouthshire.¹²

Thomas III was in Rome with Turner's future friend, John Soane, whom he later visited at Pitzhanger Manor, where John Haverfield from the Turner circle of Brentford and Kew, comprising also

the Cobb gardeners, advised on the garden. Descendants preserve the passports and other documents of Philip, and portraits of Thomas III and probably also of Thomas II.¹³

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NOTES

- 1 Brentford High Street Project, www.bhsproject.co.uk/families_hardwick.shtml. This is based on Selby Whittingham, *Brentford to Oxford: J.M.W. Turner's early career under the guardianship of his uncle J.M.W. Marshall* (J.M.W. Turner, R.A., Publications, London, 2010). Burke's *Landed Gentry* (1921), 'Hardwick of Brentford', is incorrect.
- 2 'J M W Turner – connections with Brentford,' *Brentford & Chiswick Local History Society Journal*, 19 (2010), pp. 8–12.
- 3 Baptised at Weston under Penyard, 5 April 1681, son of John and Mary Hardwick.
- 4 London Metropolitan Archives, Isleworth parish records, settlement certificate, probably 1711.

- 5 His will, 31 May 1742, was proved 19 May 1746 in the Commissary Court of London. This left to his wife Jane the copyhold messuage with yard and wharf at Church Row, Isleworth, his dwelling house (and shop) at New Brentford and £10 p.a., and then to his son Thomas with remainder to the children of his brother Joseph Hardwick (1682–1757, buried at Credenhill?). At Isleworth he was overseer of the poor 1723, churchwarden 1728–9, on committee of the charity school 1728–31, for which he did work 1715.
- 6 London Metropolitan Records, Acc/1360/196/61902, with plan. (91 year lease from Christopher Clitherow of Boston Manor, 16 June 1725). See also Survey of Property in New Brentford, 1792; Tithe map of New Brentford (1838), plots 285–7.
- 7 Reproduced in Whittingham, *op.cit.*, p. 21.
- 8 Baptised at Isleworth, 11 February 1725; buried, 10 September 1798, at St Lawrence, New Brentford, where the monument by J.J.P. Kendrick to Thomas III and other Hardwicks is once again placed.
- 9 Map of Isleworth, surveyed by W.T. Warren 1813/14, updated 1850, 335–6 (4 houses and yards between the London Apprentice and Orange Tree public houses). Turner made a watercolour of the church for Thomas III, untraced.
- 10 Will, 30 June 1796, proved PCC 24 September 1798 (National Archives, PROB 11/1312/600).
- 11 *Survey of London*, XLII, *Southern Kensington: Kensington Square to Earls Court* (1986), p. 48.
- 12 Will, 12 December 1820, pr. PCC 15 April 1825. His portrait was presented to the Society of Apothecaries, to which he was admitted on 6 November 1770 after serving an apprenticeship to an apothecary at Tewkesbury, 31 October 1849, by his daughter-in-law.
- 13 Whittingham, *op.cit.*, p. 82.