

Acquisitions (1998–2014) at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford



I. Head of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Found at Steane, near Brackley (Northants), and probably made in Britain after the emperor's death in 180 AD. Copper alloy with inlaid cobalt glass eyes, 16.2 cm. high. Purchased with the aid of the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund, the Art Fund, the Friends of the Ashmolean, and individual donors (AN2011.46).

Designed to be carried in procession, this head offers a striking example of the combination of Celtic taste for pattern and colour with a clearly recognisable image of Marcus Aurelius. This is one of five small bronze heads of second-century Roman emperors from south-east Britain, all apparently religious in purpose.

THIS SUPPLEMENT REPRODUCES a selection of the thousands of works of art acquired, by bequest, gift or purchase, by the Ashmolean Museum in the sixteen years of the Directorship of Christopher Brown, who retired in September 2014. During this period the Ashmolean has been transformed by the new building designed by the late Rick Mather and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Linbury Trust and numerous other trusts and supporters, which opened in November 2009. Despite having focused energy and resources on the new development, the Museum has continued a programme of enriching the collections. The Ashmolean's purchase endowments are very small, but with the help of the Art Fund, the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund, sometimes the Heritage Lottery Fund or National Heritage Memorial Fund, our Friends and Patrons, and countless supporters in the United Kingdom and abroad, some major purchases

have been possible over the whole range of the Museum collections. Important gifts are still received and the Museum seeks continually, in collaboration with well-wishers, to make optimum use of the incentives offered by both the British and American tax systems, especially the excellent system in the United Kingdom, now administered by Arts Council England, by which important works of art can be accepted in lieu of inheritance tax.

The selection here is a personal one made by Christopher Brown. Some of the items reproduced have previously been illustrated, alongside others, in Supplements in this Magazine in May 2000, May 2004 and October 2009.

The Ashmolean Museum and *The Burlington Magazine* are indebted to the late Robert Holden, through whose agency the Manet (no. XXIV) was acquired, for generously sponsoring this Supplement.



II. Base of an oval glass dish decorated with gold leaf portraits of a man and his wife surrounded by biblical scenes of salvation. Rome, 350–400 AD. Diameter 10.8 cm.

The Wilshire Collection of gold glass, sarcophagi, and inscriptions was purchased from Pusey House, Oxford, with the aid of the Art Fund, the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Young Friends, Friends, and Patrons of the Ashmolean Museum, and individual donors (AN2007.13). The gold-leaf decoration was stuck to the base, then sealed in place by heating the base with the body of the vessel. The scenes of salvation illustrate the words of the earliest recorded Christian prayer for the commendation of the soul. Such dishes were specially commissioned for use at funerary feasts.



III. (Far left). Fire-blower, *Jack of Hilton*, from Hilton Hall, Staffordshire. c.1300–1400. Copper alloy, 30.4 cm. high. Bequeathed by Peter Vernon, 2013 (AN2013.1).

Filled with water and placed near a fire, steam pressure projected air through the mouth 'blowing' the flames. 'Jack' was used in an annual custom to formalise tenorial agreements in the Vernon family home at Hilton Hall. It was first brought to public notice by Robert Plot in 1686.

IV. (Left). Old fisherman, from the Hadrianic Baths at Aphrodisias (Turkey). c.200 AD. Plaster cast of marble statue divided between Berlin (torso) and Aphrodisias (head and legs). 160 cm. high. Acquired 2000 (Cast Gallery H35).

The wiry old fisherman wearing a crude loin cloth is a striking re-interpretation of a famous Hellenistic statue known in some twenty versions. The torso was found in 1904 and sold to the Berlin State Museums. The head and legs, excavated in 1989, remain in the site museum at Aphrodisias. This cast unites the separated parts.



V. Roman Imperial coin. Silver, diameter 2 cm. Purchased as part of the Chalgrove Hoard with the aid of the Art Fund, the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund, the Headley Trust, the Carl and Eileen Subak Family Foundation, and the Friends of the Ashmolean, 2005 (HCR6264).

This two-denarii coin was found in Chalgrove (Oxfordshire) in a hoard of 5,000 coins. The obverse portrays a previously unrecorded Roman Emperor, Domitianus II. The reverse depicts the 'loyalty of the armies'. Domitianus II was acclaimed by troops near the Rhine in 271 AD, but his rule was probably not more than a few days.



VI. King Canute (1016–35), pointed helmet type penny, Ilchester, moneyer Aegelwig. From the Stevens-Cox collection of medieval coins from the Ilchester mint (HCR9448).

The acquisition in 2014 of this private collection has added another dimension to the Ashmolean Museum's collection of late Anglo-Saxon to Angevin coins (10th to 13th centuries). It is a concentrated specialist assemblage of types and issues of one of the many royal mints of the period, Ilchester in Somerset. It provides insight into the precise processes by which coins were produced in these years.



VII. The Asthall Hoard, a complete gold coin hoard of the Tudor period from Oxfordshire was discovered in 2007, declared Treasure, and acquired by the Ashmolean Museum with the aid of numerous donors, 2010 (HCR8102).

Tudor gold hoards are surprisingly rare and often very small. At 210 angels and their halves, the Asthall Hoard compares in terms of magnitude and historical importance only to a hoard discovered at St Albans in the nineteenth century, now dispersed. The Asthall coins, dating from 1470 to c.1526, allow one to verify gold production rates over this half century and to estimate the size of the English currency in the early sixteenth century.



VIII. (Above). *Landscape with blue mountain*, by Qi Baishi. 1949. Ink and colours on paper, 94.3 by 61.7 cm. Bequest of Michael and Khoan Sullivan, 2014. Michael Sullivan (1916–2013) was a pioneering scholar in the field of modern Chinese art and owner of the foremost Western private collection of twentieth-century Chinese paintings, which he formed over seven decades. He bequeathed the entire collection, together with his library and research papers and a generous endowment, to the Ashmolean Museum.

IX. (Left). Figure of the bodhisattva Guanyin. China, Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 AD). Wood with carved decoration, gesso ground, gilding and traces of pigment, 93 cm. high. Purchased with the aid of the Art Fund, S. Wheatland Fisher, the Friends of the Ashmolean, an anonymous donor, and the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation (EA1999.96).



X. Cushion cover with carnations. Bursa (Turkey), 1600s. Velvet, brocaded with gilded and silver metal threads, 166 by 123 cm. Purchased with the aid of the Art Fund and the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund (EA2001.149).

Ottoman silk velvets were predominantly produced in Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire and an established centre for the trade and production of raw silk and luxury weavings. The velvet used for this cushion cover (*yastik*) was brocaded with silk yarns wrapped in thin strips of silver and gold, whose sheen is still visible in the carnation-shaped voided areas.



XI. *Sitarah* (curtain), Cairo (Egypt), 1206 AH (1791–92). Silk, dyed black, with coloured silk appliqué, partly padded with stitching in cotton, and embroidered with looped silver and silver-gilt wire secured with waxed cotton thread; cotton lining, dyed black, 268 by 164 cm. Presented by Nasser D. Khalili and Family (EA2012.3).

Embroidered textiles were among the most impressive gifts presented during the processions associated with the annual Islamic pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca. Traditionally produced every year by the Muslim rulers who controlled the holy sites of Mecca and Medina, these costly objects were at once expressions of wealth and piety. This *sitarah*, commissioned by the Ottoman sultan Selim III (ruled 1789–1807), was destined for the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina.

XII. Lacquered Imari porcelain garniture. Japan, early 1700s. Porcelain with design in underglaze blue and overglaze red and gold, partly covered in black lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlay and *urushi-e* lacquer painting in gold. Jar, 88 by 45 cm.; trumpet vase, 62 by 30 cm. Purchased (Story Fund) with the aid of the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund, the Art Fund, and the Elias Ashmole Trust (EA2012.1).

Previously owned by the Spencer family at Althorp, this spectacular lacquered garniture was stopped from export after being sold at auction to an overseas buyer. A rare combination of prized Japanese porcelain and lacquerware, the garniture would have symbolised the wealth and taste of its owners.





XIII. *Portrait of Giacomo Doria*, by Titian. c.1530–35. Oil on canvas, 116 by 98 cm. Purchased in memory of Francis Haskell with the aid of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Art Fund, the Friends and Young Friends of the Ashmolean, the bequest of Mrs Audrey Hanson, and private donors (WA2000.85). This penetrating portrait of a Genoese patrician of the early 1530s, the first painting by Titian to enter the Ashmolean Museum, is striking for its restrained palette and sense of austere grandeur.



XIV. *Charles I and the Knights of the Garter in procession*, by Anthony van Dyck. c.1638. Oil over silverpoint on panel, 29.8 by 130.8 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax on the estate of the 10th Duke of Rutland and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum (WA 2002.55). This is a study for a never-executed tapestry intended for the Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace.



XV. *George, 2nd Earl Harcourt, his wife Elizabeth, and brother William*, by Joshua Reynolds. 1780–81. Oil on canvas, 148 by 172 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum (WA2010.10). This imposing portrait shows the Earl and Countess in state robes and with coronets. The figure of William seems to have been added at a late stage in the composition. The picture hung at the Harcourt family house at Nuneham Courtenay, near Oxford.



XVI. *The coronation of Henri IV*, by Peter Paul Rubens. c.1627. Oil on panel, 23.3 by 21 cm. Purchased with the aid of the Art Fund (WA2002.43). This is one of the sketches for a series of paintings celebrating the reign of Henri IV. The series was commissioned by his widow, Maria de' Medici, in 1627, but never completed.



XVII. *The triumph of Love*, by Titian. c.1545. Oil on canvas mounted on panel, diameter 88.3 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum; hybrid purchase (Virtue-Tebbs, Madan, and Russell funds) with the aid of the Art Fund (including a contribution from The Wolfson Foundation), Daniel Katz Ltd., the Friends of the Ashmolean, the Tradescant Group, the Elias Ashmole Group, Mr Michael Barclay, Dr Roger Highfield, the late Mrs Yvonne Carey, the late Mrs Felicity Rhodes, and other private donations (WA2008.89). A rare survivor, Titian's playful, allusive allegory acted as a cover (*timpano*) for a lost portrait of a Venetian noblewoman when in the celebrated collection of Gabriele Vendramin (1484–1552). Its high quality and fascinating history emerged during conservation and research in 2008–09 (see C. Whistler: 'Titian's "Triumph of Love"', with a technical appendix by Jill Dunkerton, *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 151 (2009), pp.536–42).



XVIII. *The vision of St Jerome*, by Domenichino (Domenico Zampieri). c.1606–08. Oil on copper, 49.4 by 37.2 cm. Presented by the Trustees of Sir Denis Mahon's Charitable Trust through the Art Fund (WA2013.12). One of twelve paintings selected by Sir Denis Mahon (1910–2011) for the Ashmolean Museum, this powerful early work attests to Domenichino's talents and ambition. Painted when the artist was in the household of Monsignor Giovanni Battista Agucchi in Rome, the *St Jerome* was sent to France at an early date, as Bellori recorded, and retains an exquisite French frame of c.1670–80.



XIX. *The Fondamenta Nuove with the Lagoon and the Island of San Michele, Venice*, by Francesco Guardi. c.1758. Oil on canvas, 72 by 120 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax, and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum; hybrid arrangement through Christie's, with a grant from the Art Fund made possible by the legacy of Sir Denis Mahon, and contributions from and in memory of the late Jo Wilson, volunteer and Friend, the Sir Denis Mahon Charitable Trust, the Elias Ashmole Trust, Eileen Pirie and other private donors (WA2013.144). Made for a British Grand Tourist, this atmospheric, sunlit vista comes at the start of Guardi's career as a view painter. The handsome eighteenth-century English frame seems to be original to the painting.



XX. *View of the Nile at Luxor*, by Jean-Léon Gérôme. 1857. Oil on canvas laid on board, 16.5 by 28.7 cm. Purchased (B.D.H. Miller bequest) (WA2001.45). Painted during the artist's first visit to Egypt, this study was later used as a background for his painting *The prisoner* (1861), now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes.



XXI. *Jerusalem*, by Edward Lear. 1865. Oil on canvas, 81 by 161.6 cm. Monogrammed and dated 'EL 1865'. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax on the estates of Captain and Mrs L.E.D. Walthall, and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum (WA2006.26). In 1858 Lear achieved his life-long ambition to visit Palestine, and he spent a fortnight making careful studies of Jerusalem from the surrounding hills. These formed the basis for five paintings, of which this is the largest. It was made for Samuel Price Edwards, a close friend of the artist.



XXII. (Above). *Portrait of Ruskin at Glenfinlas*, by John Everett Millais. 1854. Oil on canvas, 71.3 by 60.8 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum (WA2013.67). Millais's celebrated portrait of John Ruskin was begun while both were on holiday at Brig o'Turk, in the Trossachs, in July 1853. Ruskin is shown beside the cascading water of the Glenfinlas burn. Millais completed the picture reluctantly, having fallen in love with Ruskin's wife, Effie, while he was painting it. Ruskin's marriage was dissolved in April 1854 and Millais married Effie in July 1855.



XXIII. (Above right). *The rehearsal*, by Walter Richard Sickert. 1915. Oil on canvas, 47 by 52.1 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum (WA2011.186). This theatre painting was probably based on studies made in Brighton in the summer of 1915, and completed in London; it was acquired by the collector Morton Sands. Thanks in part to acquisitions from this collection generously made possible by the late Col. Christopher Sands, the Ashmolean Museum now holds one of the best collections of Sickert's work anywhere.

XXIV. (Right). *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus*, by Edouard Manet. 1868. Oil on canvas, 111 by 70 cm. Purchased by private treaty sale through Robert Holden Ltd., following an export stop and a public appeal, with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Art Fund, the Friends and Patrons of the Ashmolean, Manny and Brigitta Davidson and family, Mr and Mrs Geoffrey de Jager, Sir Harry and Lady Djanogly, Mr Philip Mould, the Rothschild Foundation, the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, Mr and Mrs Timothy Sanderson, the Staples Trust, Sir Adrian Swire, Mr and Mrs Bernard Taylor, Barrie and Deedee Wigmore, Mr and Mrs Brian Wilson, the J.L. Wine Charitable Trust, the Woodward Charitable Trust, and hundreds of private donors (WA2012.53). Fanny Claus was a violinist and friend of Manet's wife. This unfinished but vivid portrait was made in preparation for the large painting *Le Balcon* (1868–69), now in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Manet's work is thinly represented in British public collections and this acquisition lifts the Ashmolean's representation of French nineteenth-century art to a new level.





XXV. *Portrait of Charles Robert Cockerell*, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. 1817. Graphite, 19.1 by 14.6 cm. Purchased in memory of Hugh Macandrew, with the aid of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund, the Art Fund, the Friends of the Ashmolean, and Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox (WA1998.179). This drawing of Cockerell, later the architect of the University Galleries in Oxford (now the front part of the Ashmolean Museum), was made in Rome.



XXVI. *Landscape with a bridge*, by Jean-Honoré Fragonard. c.1760. Red chalk, 23.4 by 37.2 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of inheritance tax on the estate of Mr and Mrs Eliot Hodgkin and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum (WA2010.62).



XXVII. *The martyrdom of St John and St Paul*, by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (Guercino). c.1631. Pen and brown ink with brown and grey wash, 18.7 by 22.7 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax on the estate of Sir Denis Mahon and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum (WA2012.76). Guercino treated this violent subject with vigorous pen strokes and dark washes, yet gave the scene radiance and decorum. Placed on long-term loan to the Museum in 1984, Denis Mahon's pre-eminent collection of Guercino drawings beautifully complements the Ashmolean's holdings, which were largely built up by his friend Sir Karl Parker.



XXVIII. *The Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and St John*, by Claude Michel (Clodion). 1785. Terracotta, 68 cm. high; incised signature: 'Clodion'. Purchased 2011 (Virtue-Tebbs, Madan, Bouch, Russell, and Jones funds), with the aid of the Art Fund, the Henry Moore Foundation, the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of the Ashmolean, the Elias Ashmole Group, Mrs Charles Wrightsman through Americans for Oxford, Alain Moatti in honour of Timothy Wilson, Mr and Mrs J.A. Pye's Charitable Settlement, Martin Foley, Michael Barclay, donations in memory of the Rev. John Reynolds and of Virginia Pasley, and numerous other private donations (WA2011.66). In 1785 the Chapter of Rouen Cathedral, who were installing a large Neo-classical rood screen in the cathedral, commissioned from Clodion a large gilt-lead Crucifixion group to surmount it. This terracotta is the model submitted by the sculptor to the Chapter in August 1785. The screen was removed in 1884 but the Crucifixion remains in the chancel.

XXIX. (Right). Perfume burner, Padua, c.1540–50. Bronze, traces of gilding, 51.2 cm. high. Purchased (Madan, Bouch, Russell, France, and Miller funds) with the aid of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund, the Friends of the Ashmolean, the Elias Ashmole Group, Mr Philip Wagner, and other private donors (WA2004.1).

The casting of this grandiose perfume burner, formerly in the Wernher Collection at Luton Hoo, has been attributed by Jeremy Warren to Desiderio da Firenze (see J.P. Warren: *Medieval and Renaissance Sculpture in the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford 2014, I, no.50).



XXX. (Far right). *An osprey*, modelled by Johann Joachim Kaendler, Meissen Porcelain factory. 1731. Hard-paste porcelain, 54.5 cm. high. Presented by Lady Davson (WA2008.61).

This austere marine bird of prey was part of an extraordinary 'menagerie' of hundreds of more-or-less life-size porcelain creatures, both domestic and exotic, commissioned by Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, for the 'Japanese Palace' in Dresden. Most remain in Dresden.



XXXI. *Portrait of Edward Salter*, by John Michael Rysbrack. 1748. Terracotta, slip-painted, 41.9 cm. high. Incised inscriptions on base: 'MI RYSBRACK Fecit' and 'EDWARD SALTER A[eta]tis 6 1748'. Purchased (Blakiston, France, and Madan funds), with the aid of the Art Fund, the Henry Moore Foundation, the Michael Marks Charitable Trust, the late Mrs Eileen Stammers-Smith, the Friends of the Ashmolean, and other donors (WA1999.22).

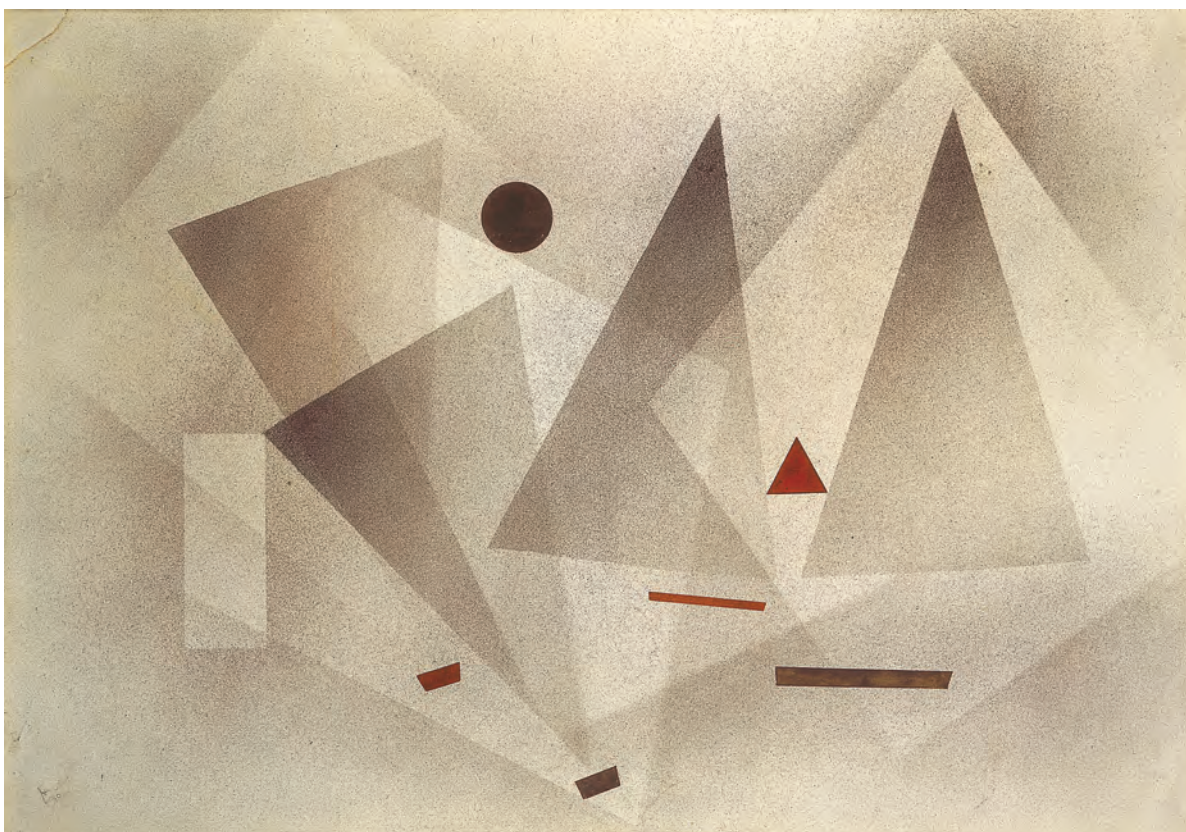


XXXII. *The kingdom of Neptune*, by or after Willem Daniëls van Tetrode (d.1587/88). Embossed and chased silver, diameter 30 cm. Bequeathed by Michael Wellby (WA2013.1.111).

An engraving by Jacques de Gheyn II corresponding to, and in the same direction as, this design is inscribed 'Guilelmus. Tetro. Invet.'. This silver relief seems likely to be Tetrode's original, but more detailed study is required to exclude the possibility that it was made after, rather than being the source for, the engraving. The Wellby bequest of some five hundred examples of mainly Continental goldsmiths' work and *Kunstammer* objects is the most important accession of this kind of material to any museum in the United Kingdom since the nineteenth century.



XXXIII. *Christ Church College, Oxford*, by J.M.W. Turner. 1831–32. Watercolour and bodycolour, 29.9 by 41.9 cm. Purchased (B.D.H. Miller bequest fund) in memory of Evelyn Joll, with the aid of the Art Fund (including a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation), the V. & A. Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of the Ashmolean, and other donors (WA2002.28). This watercolour was made for Turner's *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*. In the foreground, workmen are demolishing Cardinal Wolsey's almshouses.



XXXIV. *Moving veils*, by Wassily Kandinsky. 1930. Watercolour and black ink, 39.7 by 56.8 cm. Accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax on the estate of Sir James Colyer-Fergusson and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum (WA2005.198). Non-British graphic art of the twentieth century has always been poorly represented in the Ashmolean. A fine group of works from the Colyer-Fergusson collection goes some way towards remedying this situation.