As will be seen this review was written by a reviewer who on many points was in disagreement with the author, but this fact does not detract from his appreciation of an attractive book, and a will to give an understanding, comprehensive review of Celtic mythology and folklore, akin in many ways to what her predecessors have written upon this fascinating subject. She has at all events managed to convey to her readers "the scent of appleblossom"; in how far it is Celtic or not, remains an open question.

REIDAR TH. CHRISTIANSEN

Some Items from an Aberdeenshire Parish

On a recent visit to the parish of Auchterless in Aberdeenshire, a number of items were collected, five of which are noted below. Further information on any of these items would be welcomed.

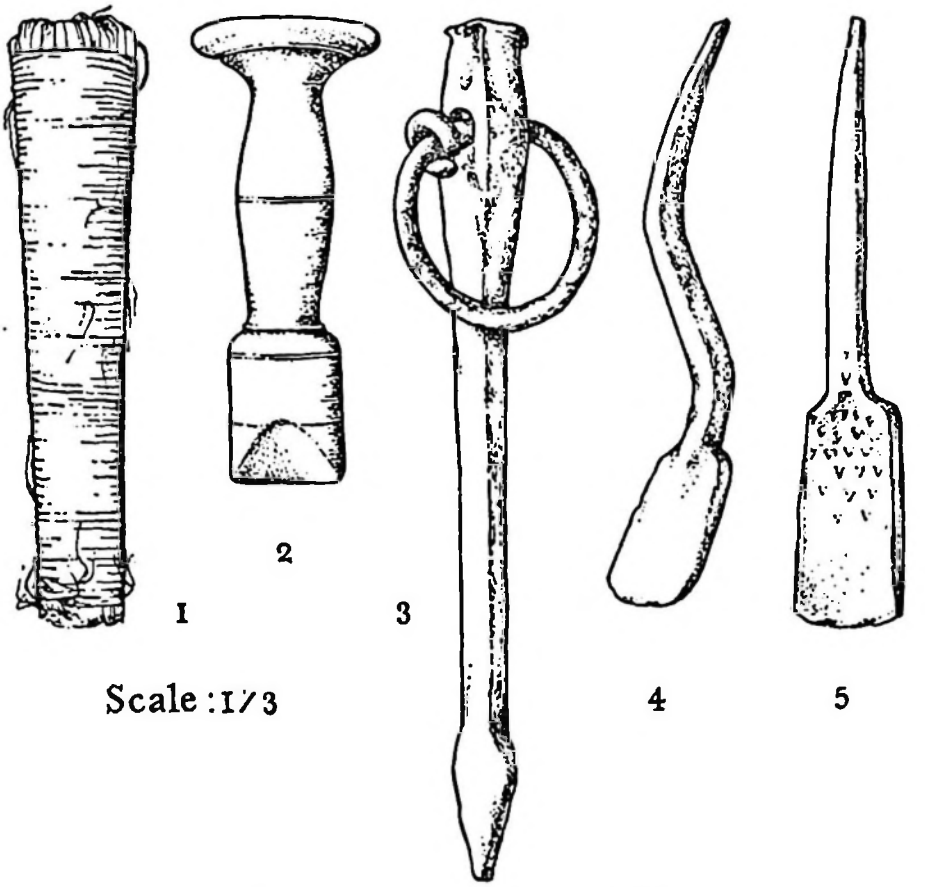
1. A straw *knitting sheath* from the farm of Brownhill. It was made by George Merson (died 1938), father-in-law of Mr. Hunter, the present farmer, in the following way. A band of straw was pulled out straight, a piece of binder twine tied round it about half-way along its length, and the straws bent back upon themselves over the ring of twine so as to leave a tube-shaped opening in the centre. The loose end of the twine was brought through the bent-back straws, and wound very tightly round the outside of the straw until a cone had been formed, measuring 9¼ inches long, and tapering from 1½ inches in diameter at the top, to 1 inch in diameter at the foot. The loose straws were then trimmed straight across with a sharp knife. This sheath shows little sign of wear.

Although knitting sheaths were formerly widely distributed throughout the British Isles, they have now become of museum interest. Older ladies may still occasionally be seen using them in the North-East of Scotland, and young and old use them in Orkney and particularly Shetland, where knitting is a flourishing industry, though the use of machines has made knitting by hand on any large scale obsolete. Mary Thomas (1938:22) mentions straw sheaths as being in use in Cornwall and Devon at the time she was writing. They are made of practically any convenient material. A bunch of hay or straw, bound round with string or tape, is a common form (Risom 1893:378; Muirhead 1895:141; Mackinnon 1897:120). An

informant from Huntly in Aberdeenshire spoke of a binding of criss-crossing red and blue tapes. Another from Orkney says that a bunch of feathers (called a "buss o' pens") was often used, and that in the early years of this century the usual device there was a goose wing bone cut at both ends and sewn in a double square of cloth about 2 inches by 3 inches in size, and pinned on to the bodice. She herself likes to use simply a safety pin stuck firmly into the bodice at the right side, a little above the apron band. I have myself seen a sheath of goose-quills in Foula, Shetland. Wooden knitting sheaths, called knitting sticks, seem to have been common in England, but no record of their use has come to hand in Scotland, although one made from a piece of *bourtree* (elderberry wood) is mentioned in the late eighteenth century, the soft pithy core making a good bed for the needle. I have not been able to trace the source of this reference. Sheaths in Northumberland are described in Heslop 1892:628: "The *sheth* . . . is sometimes made by tying a small bundle of straws together, or by a quill sewn into a fabric; but the old 'knittin *sheth*' was a small piece of fine grained wood, perforated for a distance of a few inches with a hole large enough to admit a knitting needle. These *sheths* were often of curious shape and elaborately carved." A number of knitting sticks, mainly of English origin, may be seen in the National Museum of Wales (listed in Peate 1929:115-6, and illustrated in Mary Thomas 1938:19), dated in some instances to the first half of the eighteenth century, and made not only of wood, but also of ivory, silver, bone, and bead-covered cardboard. Mary Thomas notes that tin knitting sticks were made as an experiment in America during the 1914-18 war. The type of sheath now used in Scotland is an oval leather pad, perforated with a number of holes of a suitable size for receiving the end of the needle (needles used with sheaths are, of course, pointed at both ends), stuffed with horse-hair, and fixed to a leather belt for tying round the waist.

When in use, the sheath was tucked into the apron band at the right side (Risom 1893:378; Wilson 1928:27; Milne 1955:1). It was never fixed at the left side as Peate (1929:53) suggests. It could be used with two needles or four, and the main advantages of using it were that it was possible to knit when walking along, the right hand could be freed at any time, and a considerable knitting speed could be attained, as described in Mary Thomas (1938:20). "The right needle

was place into the bore, and the right hand, thus freed of supporting the needle, was placed close up over the needle point, the forefinger acting as a shuttle, making the least possible movement and attaining a speed of 200-odd stitches a minute." I have seen a knitter in Foula using a sheath and going so fast that the spencer she was making seemed to flow from her needles.



Some items from an Aberdeenshire Parish.

The name *sheath* in this sense is peculiar to Scots and the English dialects of Northumberland, North Yorkshire, Oxford, and Cornwall, as far as the available records show. A curious name for it, now localised in Morayshire, Banffshire and Aberdeenshire is *wisker* ['wëskar]. Outside the North-East of Scotland the only reference to this name is for Northumberland in Heslop 1892:783, where the form *whisker* appears, and this also is the form in the earliest recorded reference, in Jamieson 1825, who describes it as a "sheath, at a woman's side, used

for holding the end of a wire, while she is knitting stockings". The word is of the same origin as English *whisk*, a bunch of feathers for dusting, etc., from Old Norse *visk*, a wisp, as of straw. Its development in the North-East of Scotland in this specific sense may be a result of the considerable trade in knitted stockings which developed there in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (as described in, for example, Keith 1811:577-80, Alexander 1877:xviii, Grant 1921:277-89).

2. A *beetle* [bitl], given by William Merson, farmer, North Pitglassie. This is a wooden implement, 6½ inches long, shaped in the middle so as to be held comfortably in the hand, as shown. It was widely used by the previous generation of farm servants for polishing horse-harness. Polish (Jamieson's Blaik was a brand mentioned) was spread on the harness, rubbed in with the wedge-shaped end of the beetle till all the cracks in the leather were filled up, and the final polish was given with the rounded end, heat sometimes being applied to get a better shine.

The name *beetle* in this sense is peculiar to the North-East of Scotland. In other parts the word refers to a pounder or mallet, shaped like a pestle, and considerably larger, used nowadays for mashing potatoes, etc., but also in earlier times for bruising grain, pounding cloth in the process of washing, and so on.

3. A *baikie* ['beki] from Brownhill. It consists of a peg of iron, 1 foot long, flattened to a heart-shaped point at one end, and bearing a ring, 3 inches in diameter, at the other. A wooden peg or stake is what is most frequently used as a baikie. The peg was driven into the ground, and used in recent times for tethering calves which had been newly put out to the field and still had to learn about coming for milk when the handle of the bucket was rattled, and for ewes about lambing time. A chain with a swivel-hook at one end was fixed in the ring of the baikie, and the chain or rope round the animal's neck was attached by a spring-clip to the swivel-hook. A reference from the Parish of Turriff, dated 1916, mentions a *knocklesnorum*, described as "a swivel fixed to a baikie of such a kind that two or three sheep might be tethered without risk of the tethers getting twisted".

Full-grown cattle are never tethered in this way in this area, but are allowed to roam freely through the fields. As is to be expected, the tethering of cattle is only found in areas which are poor in grass—for example, I have seen cattle

tethered outside in Foula, Shetland (where the rope went round the horns, and not round the neck), and in the Faroe Islands. A record of the tethering of cattle in Aberdeenshire does, however, exist for the late eighteenth century in Anderson (1794 : 113-14), who, speaking of the grass lands around Peterhead, says: "As no person there has more than one, two or three cows, they have adopted a very economical mode of applying the produce of these fields to the feeding of milk cows without the aid of inclosures, merely by tethering the cows on these fields in a regular and systematic method, moving each tether forward in a straight line not above one foot at a time, so as to prevent the cows from ever treading upon the grass that is to be eaten: and as it is always fresh, and gives a deep bite to the cows, they feed upon it greedily, and eat it clean up without the smallest waste; care being always taken to move the tethers forward at stated intervals. . . . And by the time they have thus got to one end of the ridge, the grass on the other end of it is ready for being again eat. . . . One gentleman . . . has a few sheep upon longer tethers that follow the cows to sweep up any refuse that may have been left; and occasionally he makes the horses pasture on the same fields, so that the tufts of grass produced by the dunging of one species of animals is eat up by those of another kind and nothing is lost." This was by way of a local experiment in feeding, and with the widespread development of enclosed fields, it must soon have been replaced by the modern method of letting animals graze loose in one field for a time, and then changing them over to another to let the grass in the first recover. Cattle appreciate a change of grass like this, and thrive better from being changed round from time to time.

The name *baikie* though well enough known to older people, now survives mainly in the proverbial expression; "ye've gotten yer baikie oot" (see Fenton 1959 : 66; a similar saying, *to poo the baikie*, to indulge a little, is recorded for Caithness in Nicolson 1907 : 64). Curiously, the earliest reference to the word is also in a proverb: "better hand louse nor bund to ane ill baikie", dating from *a.* 1598 in Fergusson's MS. collection of *Scottish Proverbs*.

In origin, it is probably from the Gaelic *bacan*, a tethering-stake, derived from *bac*, to hinder or restrain, this etymology receiving support from the fact that the form *baikine* is found for baikie in the first published collection of Fergusson's *Scottish Proverbs* in 1641.

In the sense of "a stake for tethering animals out-of-doors", it is found in Morayshire, Banffshire, and Aberdeenshire in the form *baikie*, and in Caithness in the form *backie*. The more general Scots meaning is that of a stake for tethering cattle indoors, in a byre.

4 and 5. The blades of two thistle-cutters, number 4 from Brownhill, and number 5 from Smiddy Croft, Pitglassie. Both are made by local smiths, one from an old *risp* (coarse file). They were fixed on the end of shafts four or five feet long. The thistle-cutter now in use at Brownhill is much lighter, factory-made, and having a shaft 5 feet long, the blade being 2 inches long by 1¼ inches wide at the cutting end, tapering slightly in to where it joins the shaft.

Thistles are cut about July, on any day when it is too wet for hoeing or haymaking, or at any slack period before the beginning of harvest, as exemplified in a diary kept by Mr. Hunter's father, who writes, under 7th July 1924: "A some showery kind of a day did not get much hoeing. . . . I cut some thistles on steep brae of grass."

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ALEXANDER FENTON

The Reports on the Parishes of Scotland, 1627

The publication of Dr. Emery's most valuable account of the predecessors of the first *Statistical Account of Scotland* (Emery 1959) calls to mind the Reports made to the Commissioners for the Plantation of Kirks in 1627, which might perhaps be included as an addendum. Like many of the articles later published in *Macfarlane's Geographical Collections* these reports were also part of a church scheme for the compilation of a detailed topographical account of the whole of Scotland, the principal purpose of which in this instance would have been to pinpoint the areas in need of pastoral attention. An order was sent to the different presbyteries of the Kirk calling upon the clergy to report on existing parochial establishments, and on the state, amount and use of ecclesiastical property in each parish, but the actual order does not seem to exist, although it must have been issued in 1627. Accounts survive from forty-nine ancient parishes, but what proportion this represents of the total material submitted is not known.

The accounts of the parishes of Scotland in 1627 were eventually edited by Alexander Macdonald and published by the Maitland Club in 1835, but perhaps on account of the rarity of the book they do not seem to have received the attention they merit. They contain many interesting items, apart from much valuable matter for the ecclesiastical historian.

Thus the minister of *Chingilkirk* (Channelkirk) in Berwickshire complains: "I have no sowmes grasse mosse nor muire to cast elding and diffott into my great hurt and skaith . . ." (Macdonald 1835:5), showing that peat must have been the principal fuel in use there at that time. Of *Lochquharret Maynes* (Loquhariot) in the parish of Borthwick, Midlothian, it is reported: "It hes sum lyme staine quhairof they mak sum use in thair guidding" (*ibid.*:37), and at *Middiltoun* (Middleton) in the same parish this commodity was first utilised some two years previously. The farm of *Schank* (Shank) was limed with material brought over from Esperston (*ibid.*:39, 43), and there are references to the recent introduction of lime from other parishes in Midlothian, as well as to the different crops in cultivation, often with the individual farm itemised. The following parishes (apart from one or two cases, normalised in their modern spelling) are covered by reports:

Berwickshire:	Bunkle and Preston
	Channelkirk
	Coldstream
	Hume (included with Stichill under Roxburghshire)
	Langton
	Legerwood
	Longformacus
	Mordington
	St. Bothanes and Strafontanes (now Abbey St. Bathans)
	Swinton
Clackmannanshire:	Tillicoultry
Dumfriesshire:	Dalgarnock and Closeburn (now Closeburn)
East Lothian:	Bara (now Garvald and Bara)
	Bothanes (now Yester)
	Dirleton
	Humbie and Keith (now Humbie)
	Oldhamstocks
	Ormiston
	Pencaitland
	Salton
	Tranent

Kirkcudbrightshire:	Lochrutton
	Terregles
	Urr
Midlothian:	Borthwick and Loquhariot (now Borthwick)
	Cockpen
	Cranston
	Crichton
	Currie
	Fala and Soutra
	Heriot
	Inveresk
	Kirknewton
	Newbattle
	Newton
	Temple
Perthshire:	Dull
	Forgandenny
	Kenmore
	Killin and Strathfillan (now Killin)
	Lecropt (now Dunblane and Lecropt)
	Weem
Renfrewshire:	Greenock
	Houston
Roxburghshire:	Ednam
	Stichill (together with Hume, now in Berwickshire)
Shetland:	Nesting
Stirlingshire:	Logie
Wigtownshire:	Kirkcowan
	Kirkinner and Longcastle (now Kirkinner)

The distribution of these surviving reports is particularly rewarding to anybody concentrating upon south-eastern Scotland: thus twelve out of the twenty-two parishes of Midlothian (apart from Edinburgh) are represented, and of the seventy-eight rural parishes of Berwickshire and East and Midlothian, thirty-one are included in the *Reports on the state of certain parishes in Scotland.* Altogether they present a body of information which deserves closer study.

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IAN WHITAKER

Agricultural Implements Drawn by Women

À propos of the harrow customarily drawn by women in Lewis, mentioned recently by Dr. Whitaker (Whitaker 1958: 159) it seems to be worth recording that I saw a woman drawing the plough for her husband at Gunnista, in the north of Bressay, in April 1907; the strip which they were ploughing was said to be held in rotation, which was probably correct, since rotational runrig, according to tradition, survived in Shetland longest on Bressay[1a] and is still remembered to have been " in use in Brough in Bressay some thirty years ago".[1b]

I append a note of the few similar instances found in my files:—

On the Huntingdon road, within a mile of Cambridge, a *didakai* woman was seen by Mr. R. C. Lambeth drawing the plough "for at least two seasons" (*ca.* 1936-7).[2]

For Portugal, an *aradinho* is figured, used in making irrigation channels on maize fields, and intended for traction by girls (Dias 1948:137, fig. 51).

One instance of the practice, common in this century among the poorest classes in the Rif (Spanish Stock Report, 1920, Vol. 2, 523; Dantín Cereceda, 1914:218) of yoking a woman to the plough with ass, mare, or cow, was noted (woman and ass) in S.W. Andalusia for the sierra behind S. Lúcar de Guadiana (*ca.* 1870);[3] in this instance, however, the woman seems to have been mainly used to maintain the interval between the furrows.

A Tennessee farmer was said in a court of law in 1937 to have used his wife and step-son to draw the plough after losing his mule (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, 15th June 1937).

The North African practice of yoking woman and ass to the plough is as old as Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* XVII, 3). P. George (cit. Haudricourt and Delamarre 1955:260 f.) noted in 1946

for Tunisia that women and children were being used to draw the plough under stress of famine conditions.

Among the Sherpas of Khumbu (Eastern Nepal) "ploughs are often dragged by teams of five or six men and women" (v. Fürer-Haimendorf 1956:274).

Traction by men has probably been commoner and more lasting. Recent instances are:

A light hoe-, or drill-plough, with single wheel (cf. the Portuguese *aradinho*) was in common use until 1939 at least on the potato-fields of Jersey: "one man guides, another pulls it".[4]

In the Haut-Bourbonnais at the same period, there was a light plough drawn by two men or by a single ass.[5]

In 1947 a man was seen drawing a plough in the Nile Delta neighbourhood.[6]

NOTES

[1a,b.] I am indebted here to Prof. A. C. O'Dell and to Mr John Jamieson, Agricultural Adviser for Shetland, for letters of March 1959.

[2] Verbal communication by Mr. Lambeth, Curator of the Cambridge and County Folk Museum (1939), kindly confirmed by letter (1959).

[3] Private communication by letter from my late friend, D. Joaquín Caballero, Gibraleón.

[4] Extract from an unpublished account of the Jersey ploughs (1939) by the late Mr. J. Paull Ross, w.s., St. Helier.

[5] From a descriptive letter of 1939 sent by Dr. Léon Chabrol, Vichy.

[6] Verbal report by Mr. D. Wardle, Hornsey.

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ROBERT AITKEN

International Congress of Celtic Studies, 1959

The International Congress of Celtic Studies, held in Dublin from 6th to 11th July 1959, was organised in two main sections—plenary sessions devoted to the theme of the Scandinavian impact on the Celtic cultures, and specialised parallel sessions where more purely Celtological matters could be discussed. The Congress covered a wide field of scholarship: amongst them archæology, history, languages, literature, onomastics, folklore, art and law.

The plenary sessions were addressed by Professor K. H. Jackson, Professor J. H. Delargy (deputising for Professor Einar Ól. Sveinsson), Mrs. Nora Chadwick, Professor Magne Oftedal, Dr. Melville Richards, Miss Françoise Henry, Professor Alf Sommerfelt, Mr Prionsias Mac Cana, and Professor D. A. Binchy, who between them surveyed the whole field of Scandinavian-Celtic cultural inter-action.

Among other papers of particular interest to Scotland were those given by Professor W. Croft Dickinson, "Some Scandinavian influences on legal procedure?"; Dr. Anne Ross, "Archæology and the vernacular tradition: the value of iconographic evidence for a study of pagan Celtic religion"; Dr. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, "Norse place-names in S.W. Scotland,"; Mrs. Isabel Henderson, "The Pictish symbol-stones and the Hiberno-Saxon style"; Dr. Ian Whitaker, "The sheiling in the Scottish Gaedhealtachd"; Professor K. H. Jackson, "Some results of the Gaelic Linguistic Survey of Scotland"; and Mr. James Ross, "Aspects of Gaelic-English bilingualism in the parish of Duirinish, Isle of Skye".

The programme of the Congress also included excursions to Clonmacnoise, and to Tara and the Boyne Valley, the latter terminating with a dinner in the memorable setting of the King's Inns.

The Congress, which was held under the patronage of Dr. Eamon de Valera, President of Ireland, owes much of its great success to the very high standard of the papers and discussions which distinguished the formal sessions. Special recognition must be made also of the part played by Professor Myles Dillon, the President of the Congress; Dr. Brian Ó Cuív, the Secretary; and all those who had worked hard, and often unobtrusively, during the preceding months. But Congresses do not succeed on intellectual merit, nor on efficient organisation, alone; and the participants remember with gratitude

the very generous hospitality of University College, Trinity College, the Minister for External Affairs, and, in their private capacity, many warm-hearted Irish friends, who made it possible for their guests to talk together late into the hot summer nights.

This Congress, the first of its kind, was attended by scholars from most European countries and from the U.S.A. Its great success has encouraged its members to plan a second Congress, to be held in Wales in a few years' time.

EDITOR

International Congress for Folktale Research, 1959

The International Congress for Folktale Research was held in Kiel and Copenhagen from 19th to 29th August. The University of Edinburgh was represented by Mr. C. I. Maclean and Mr. Hamish Henderson. The conference was attended by folktale scholars from America and practically every European country except Russia. The opening paper was delivered by Dr. Kurt Ranke, Kiel. He dealt with the classification of the basic forms of folktale material in a masterly survey. All papers were of interest to folktale students and all had some bearing on problems that face us here in Scotland. Particular mention must be made of papers by Dr. Ágnes Kovács and Dr. Linda Dégh of Budapest. To us in Scotland it was of special interest to learn that there are still in Hungary narrators of the stamp of the late Angus MacMillan, Benbecula, who can tell tales lasting from nine to twelve hours.

Most scholars gave reports dealing with folktale types in their particular countries, and some type-lists revealed a surprising similarity to the tale-types occurring in Scotland; one example that could be cited is that of Israel. The American contingent made an impressive contribution with papers by Stith Thompson on "Revision of Aarne-Thompson 'The Types of the Folktale' "; Archer Taylor on "What bird would you choose to be?"—a mediæval tale; Richard M. Dorson on "Folk Narrators in a Coastal Village"; Wayland D. Hand on "Abergläubische Grundelemente in der amerikanischen Volkserzählung"; and Luc Lacourcière on "Les contes de la langue française en Amerique du Nord". Dr. Katherine M. Briggs read an interesting paper on "English Fairy Tales". C. I. Maclean contributed a report on "Folktale Studies in Scotland"

There were, of course, various excursions and also receptions

by the Lord Mayor of Kiel, the Premier of Schleswig-Holstein, the Premier of Denmark and by the Organising Committee of the Frilandsmuseum in Copenhagen. The chief value of the Congress was in the number of personal contacts established. At Kiel an informal meeting was held by the American, English, Irish and Scottish delegates to discuss the recognition of folklore as an academic discipline in British Universities. A small corresponding committee was formed with Mr. Hamish Henderson representing Scotland.

Four North American scholars, Professors Luc Lacourcière of Quebec, Stith Thompson of Indiana, Wayland D. Hand of California and Frances Gillmore of Arizona visited the School of Scottish Studies either on the way to or from Kiel and Copenhagen.

EDITOR

BOOKS RECEIVED

Apart from the books reviewed in this issue or to be reviewed later, the Editor has received the following publications which he would like to bring to the attention of the readers of this Journal:

Aitken, A. J. (editor); *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, Part XVIII, KNOT-LAW. London 1959.

Hildeman, Karl-Ivar; *Medeltid på vers.* Skrifter utgivna av Svenskt Visarkiv 1. Stockholm 1959.

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