

A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*

Leonid Kogan – Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow

The book under review is an English translation of the authors' *Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica* (DLU) and, as such, scarcely needs to be introduced — immediately after the appearance of its first fascicle in 1996, DLU became a widely used standard tool of today's Ugaritology. This promptly published English translation will no doubt enlarge the circle of Ugaritologists, Biblical scholars and Semitists able to make a profitable use of this dictionary¹.

The reasons that make the present reviewer consider DUL a truly outstanding work of Semitic lexicography are manifold, but the following ones deserve to be singled out.

Perhaps the most important achievement of DUL is the authors' commitment to use every possible means to justify their translations. The necessity of such justification in a lexicographic work dealing with a dead language with a relatively restricted corpus may look self-evident but in fact DUL seems to be the only Semitic dictionary where this approach is carried out with full consistency.

First and foremost, every word and every meaning in DUL is exhaustively exemplified by textual passages where it is supposed to occur, all of them translated into English. This practice, in full agreement with the most advanced lexicographic achievement of Semitic philology — the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary — but practically unknown otherwise, firmly secures the reader's unambiguous understanding of the lexicographic decision adopted for each particular case. Incidentally, it must have saved the authors from many questionable or doubtful solutions whose weakness tends to become much clearer when the lexicographer is supposed to render entire passages rather than separate words.

The authors are to be praised for their mastery application of etymological method. This application is both extensive and cautious, thus providing a solid and attractive alternative to the explicit rejection of etymology as a tool of philological analysis — a trend becoming increasingly popular in Semitic studies of recent decades². A certain amount of etymological evidence is provided for every lexeme in DUL, in most cases restricted to cognate terms from such "classical" Semitic languages as Hebrew, Akkadian, Arabic,

1. In the introduction to DUL, the authors do not mention explicitly any material differences between the English and the Spanish editions. They do refer, however, to P. Bordreuil and D. Pardee's permission to include into the corpus of DUL the lexical material from unpublished texts from the 1986-1992 campaigns. Indeed, full account has been made of some truly peculiar texts now published in RSOu XIV (note, e.g., the lemma ^c*qrb* 'scorpion' from RSOu XIV 52:5, missing from DLU but present in DUL, p. 177).

2. The authors' admirable justification of their approach to the etymological method as expounded on pp. XI-XII of the Introduction can be successfully applied to other fields of Semitic lexicography.

Aramaic and Geez. Especially valuable is the authors' attempt to bring into the field the lexical evidence from Syro-Palestinian idioms of the third and second millennia: Ebla, Mari, Emar, Amarna (and, last but not least, copious references to non-alphabetic cuneiform data from Ras Shamra, both Ugaritic and Akkadian³). Their first-hand knowledge of the Western peripheral cuneiform material and their meticulous way of collecting it are without precedent in Semitic lexicography and will allow the specialists to use DUL as a true encyclopedia of North-West Semitic lexis of the period. Due attention is paid to borrowed lexemes: non-Semitic (Sumerian, Hurrian, Hittite, Egyptian) etymological parallels are adduced in an exemplary way. Finally, all cognates are provided with references to the pertinent lexicographic tools, a very important practice which, surprisingly enough, is far from commonplace in dictionaries of ancient Semitic languages.

Whenever alternative interpretations for a given word are known, they are usually expounded in a clear and exhaustive way. Quite often the same procedure has been applied to entire passages. Thanks to the authors' unbiased approach to their colleagues' opinions (however divergent from their own), DUL becomes a valuable introductory tool to the Ugaritological scholarship as a whole. Abundant bibliographic references, usually concentrated in the headings but often scattered throughout the lemmata, greatly contribute to the same purpose.

All types of proper names (antroponyms, theonyms, geographic names etc.) are fully accounted for. Not only are such terms included into DUL's lexical corpus, but they are usually processed in the same exhaustive and careful way as all other lexemes: etymology, syllabic attestations, identification, bibliographic references. The authors' attention to proper names is in agreement with the lexicographic tradition of Biblical Hebrew but almost without precedent in other branches of Semitic lexicography. It is hard to overestimate the extremely positive income of this practice, above all for the beginners as well as scholars not directly involved in Ugaritic studies. The authors' expectations in this respect as expressed on p. IX of the Introduction are certainly justified.

Finally, the present reviewer cannot but warmly welcome the authors' decision to present the Ugaritic lexemes in the Latin alphabet sequence. This practice, inspired by modern Assyriological compendia and with growing influence in a few other branches of Semitics (SD for Sabaic, CDG for Geez) is not popular in Ugaritology where the Hebrew order or, more rarely, that attested in abecedaries from Ugarit itself is normally used⁴. None of the two common practices has much to recommend itself: while the Hebrew order is simply arbitrary ("Ugaritic is not Hebrew and the sequence which takes the Hebrew alphabet as its model is as alien to Ugaritic and as conventional as any other", DUL X)⁵, the authentic Ugaritic order is little known outside a relatively narrow circle of Ugaritologists.

Not unexpectedly, a book of such a size and importance is not free from minor deficiencies, some of which will be briefly mentioned in the remaining part of this review.

3. Ugaritic lexemes which are attested only syllabically (like *ri-[i]g-lu* 'foot', Huehnergard 1987:176) are not included into the corpus. This is a pity: the number of such terms is not particularly high but some of them may be quite important for our understanding of the Ugaritic lexicon in its various registers.

4. Another welcome exception are the indexes to Tropper 2000.

5. The tradition is hardly a justification in this case — after all, the same tradition was gradually abandoned in many other branches of Semitic studies where it was previously common (Assyriology, Sabaeology and even MSA studies, notably, W. Leslau's LS).

Problematic translations

For a few passages the authors' English translations appear to be hardly possible for morphological and syntactical reasons:

p. 66. *l ys f alt tbt* 'I will certainly rip out the supports (?) of your seat' (1.6 VI 27) — correct 'I will' to 'he will'.

pp. 70, 892. On these pages a contradictory account of the combination *tar um* in 1.14 I 15 is offered: 'a mother's avenger' vs. 'maternal relatives'. At any rate, it must be emphasized that Arabic *ta'r-* from which both translations must eventually derive does not mean anything beyond 'talion, sang versé pour le sang' (BK 1 215; so also Sabaic *t'r*, SD 149). For an attempt to cope with the difficulties connected with this passage v., e.g., Tropper 2000:366 (*tnt' u'n' tkn lh* 'eine zweite wurde ihm zu(m Anlass) einer Totenklage').

p. 89. *aphm kšpm dbbm ygrš* 'immediately afterwards may the wizards cast out the *d*-demons' (1.169.8) — since masculine plural forms in *y-* are unlikely to be common (if at all attested) in Ugaritic (v. Tropper 2000:432ff.), *kšpm* can hardly function as the subject of *ygrš*. This subject is with all probability *h̄rn*, cf. Tropper 2000:876 ('Danach soll H̄ôrānu die vielredenden/anklagenden (?) Zauberer vertreiben'), Ford 2002:155 ('Furthermore, (regarding) the sorcerous accusations: may H̄ôrānu, the spellcaster, expel (them)').

p. 130. *att šdqh l ypq* 'I certainly acquired a lawful wife' (1.14 I 12) — correct to 'he certainly acquired his lawful wife' (or 'he did not ...', according to one's understanding of the whole episode).

pp. 139, 148. Contrast *šbd dgn* 'those who cultivate the grain' (1.1 III 13) on p. 138 with *šdb dgn* 'those who grow grain' for the same passage on p. 148 (under *šdb* 'to put, prepare, arrange'). The first interpretation (presupposing that a verb *šbd* 'to cultivate land', well known from Hebrew and other North-West Semitic languages, was present also in Ugaritic) corresponds to the reading of KTU whereas the second one must be based on an emendation which is not mentioned explicitly.

p. 185. *km aht šrš mdw* 'for the bed of sickness has taken you' (1.16 VI 50-51) — this translation is unlikely since *aht* can hardly be a 3 f. sg. form of the perfect, which should be *aht* (as indeed attested, cf. p. 36). An alternative translation is thus necessary: 'for you have taken to the bed of sickness' (p. 37, *aht* = 'ahatta < *'ahadta) or 'como (tu) hermana es la cama de la dolencia' (del Olmo Lete 1981:322, *aht* = 'ahātu). This passage does not unambiguously suggest that Ugr. *šrš* is feminine in agreement (*contra* Tropper 2000:287), which is nevertheless clear from *trbd šrš* and *tn šr šrš* in 132.2, 26. DLU's "n. m." is thus probably mistaken (as rightly pointed out by Tropper, a fem. gender for this lexeme agrees with the Akkadian and Hebrew evidence).

p. 219. *bkm tmdln šr bkm tšmd p̄hl bkm tšū abh* 'straight away he harnessed the ass, straight away he yoked the donkey, straight away he helped his father up' (1.19 II 8-9) — correct 'he', 'his' to 'she', 'her' (*p̄gt's*).

p. 250. *btlt p šn[t] w p n šmt aht b[šl]* (1.10 III 9-10) — while the quotation does not correspond to the edition (*btlt p btlt šn[t] w p n šmt aht b[šl]*), the translation ('deflowered was the vulva of DN, of the most graceful of DN's sisters') does not seem to fit the text quoted (nor that of the edition).

p. 257. *bnšm d i⁶ alpm lhm⁷* 'people who have no oxen' (4.422.1) — correct to 'people who have oxen'.

6. Correct DLU's *it*.

7. Correct DLU's *lh*.

p. 273. *ydm ʕ lʰ kdd* PN ‘they shed tears for the son of PN’ (1.19 IV 12) — the form *ybk* and *ydm ʕ* in this passage can hardly be analyzed as 3 m.sg. “Folglich ist Dani’ilu selbst Subjekt” (Tropper 2000:435).

ibid. *w l ytk dm ʕt km rb ʕt tq̄lm* ‘tear(s) fell like quarter shekels’ (1.19 II 33) — to be corrected to ‘and truly they poured out tears...’ (so on p. 651).

p. 302. *thrt km gn ap lb* ‘he ploughed (his) chest like an orchard’ (1.6 I 4) — correct to ‘she ploughed’ (*ʕnt* is the subject).

p. 444. *tdn km mrm tqrʕn* ‘our chests bite us like cubs’ (1.12 I 11) — correct to ‘they bite our chest like cubs’.

p. 451. *tiḥd knr b ydh* ‘he took the lyre in his hand’ (1.101.16) — correct to ‘she took’.

p. 463. *tmthʕ ksp* ‘he fought me for the silver’ (1.3 III 46) — correct to *imthʕ ksp* ‘I fought for the silver’.

p. 510. *zbl ʕrʕm yʕu* ‘load the sick man (with) the stretcher’ (1.14 II 5) is hardly possible (cf. rather ‘let the sick person carry his own stretcher’ on p. 999).

p. 588, 625. *amn w ... il mʕrm dt tgrn npʕ ʕpʕ* ‘may Ammon and the gods of Egypt protect the soul of the Sun’ (2.23.22) is impossible in view of the relative pronoun *dt* and the indicative mood of the verbal form. To be rather translated as ‘length of days of my lord in front of (*urk ym b ʕly l pn*) Amon and in front of the gods of Egypt who protect the life of the Sun’.

p. 617. *tlṭ aṭt adrt w tlṭ gʕrm w ḥmʕ n ʕrt* ‘three noble ladies and three lads and three girls and five maidservants’ (4.102.17) — no ‘three girls’ in the text.

p. 657. *b ph rgm l yʕa* ‘from his mouth it had not (yet) issued’ (1.19 II 26) — *rgm* as the subject is missing in the translation (cf. ‘no había aún salido de su boca la palabra’ in del Olmo Lete 1981:391).

p. 695. It is not meaningful to adduce the passage 1.16 VI 54-57 as *yṭbr (...) ʕttrt (...) qdqdḱ* ‘may (...) DN (...) break your skull’. The verb in this passage is in the masculine and its actual subject is of course *ḥrn* rather than *ʕttrt*.

p. 802. *ʕmrpu ʕb ʕ* ‘PN, three (quotas)’ (4.775.19) — correct ‘three’ to ‘seven’.

p. 824. *iʕtm ʕ w tqg udn* ‘take note and prick up your ear(s)’ (1.16 VI 42) — since the verb *yḱg* must be intransitive, the alternative translation ‘listen and let (your) ear be alert’ on p. 976 is preferable.

p. 845. *pdr̄m tdu ʕrr* ‘from the town he scared off the enemy’ (1.16 VI 7) — correct ‘he’ to ‘she’ (*ʕ ʕḱt*) as seen from the feminine gender of the verb.

p. 967. *aḥdt (...) plḱ t ʕlt b ymnh* ‘he took (...) the spindle of the charm (?) in his right’ (1.4 II 3-4) — correct to ‘she’ and ‘her’ in view of the feminine gender of the verbal form.

p. 1004. It is not clear why *zl* in *b zl dpr̄n* (4.244.13) is listed under *zl* ‘shade’ and translated as ‘Shade(s) of Juniper’.

Problematic Etymologies

As mentioned in the introductory section of this review, the etymological material adduced in DUL is usually of very high quality. Nevertheless, there are two obstacles which considerably hamper its proper use: Semitic parallels are almost never translated and no distinction between self-evident and problematic etymologies is systematically carried out. Thus, for example, on p. 267 Ugaritic *dgn* ‘grain, wheat’ is compared, on the one hand, to obvious cognates like Hebrew *dāgān* and, on the other hand, to such verbal roots as Arabic *dağana* ‘to be cloudy (wheather)’ and Geez *degana* ‘pursue, persecute’ —all of them

8. Not in DLU.

adduced without translation and introduced with the ubiquitous “cf.”⁹. Independently of one’s judgment on the origin of Hebrew *dāgān* and Ugaritic *dgn* (which, to my mind, remains fully uncertain), this kind of presentation seriously obscures both the etymological picture and its usefulness for the contextual analysis. At least in problematic cases short glosses indicating the basic meaning of the hypothetic cognates are, I believe, virtually indispensable.

A deficiency which DUL shares with most studies in North-West Semitic philology is an insufficient attention paid to the etymological evidence coming from the South Semitic linguistic area (Epigraphic and Modern South Arabian, Modern Ethiopian). As I tried to demonstrate in a recent article (Kogan 2004), at least on some occasions these languages can provide precious etymological information whose importance for the textual analysis is not inferior to the evidence from Arabic or Akkadian.

A few critical remarks on particular etymological comparisons:

p. 9. Akkadian *aban birqi* is in fact *aban birki* ‘stone coming from the penis’ (CAD A1 60, AHw. 6-7) and has no bearing on the interpretation of the Ugaritic expression *abn brq*.

p. 88. As pointed out in SED I No. 223, Akkadian *appi libbi* does not seem to be attested in modern dictionaries and probably does not exist (cf. Loretz 2001:349). Nevertheless, the Ugaritic expression does have a stunning parallel elsewhere in Semitic, namely in Tigrinya *ʔaf ləbbi* ‘breast, chest, bosom, bust’ (K 1547), the more surprising since *ʔaf* is ‘mouth’, not ‘nose’ in Tigrinya.

p. 346. Hebrew *hārōn* (HALOT 256) means ‘pregnancy’ and cannot be adduced as an etymological parallel to Ugaritic *hrr* ‘to become inflamed’.

p. 414. Arabic *ḥaṭṭ-* means ‘line, mark’ (Lane 759) and is hardly compatible semantically with Ugaritic *ḥṭ* ‘sceptre, rod’.

p. 485. No affirmative meaning for Geez *la* is quoted in CDG 303.

p. 646. Differently from Hebrew *nēš* and Arabic *naššasat-*, Akkadian *nāšu* is not a bird name, but rather means ‘plumage, feathers’ (CAD N2 53). Therefore, it is probably not to be immediately compared with Ugaritic *nš* ‘bird, wild bird’. A more attractive Akkadian etymology is *našnašu* ‘a bird’ (CAD N2 49, AHw. 757), see further SED 2 No. 169.

p. 648. Correct Sabaic *nsʹ* (so presumably for *ns₁ʹ* ‘to defer, postpone’, SD 98) and Arabic *nasaʹa* (‘retarder, différer qch’, BK 2 1244) to *ns₂ʹ* ‘to arise’ (SD 98) and *našaʹa* ‘grandir, être haut’ (BK 2 1255) respectively.

p. 1007. It does not seem warranted to treat the lexeme *zu* (*ṭu*) ‘exalation, secretion > excrement’ as an “allophone of < /y-ṣ-ʔ/”, cf. SED 1 No. 286 (with an addition in SED 2 p. 344) and, in much detail, Bulakh 2005:423-4.

Technical mistakes

A considerable number of typographic errors is one of the few negative aspects of the book under review. They will obviously not undermine its value for a relatively experienced user, capable of restoring the correct reading without much difficulty. However, for the benefit of beginners and outsiders a more careful proofreading would have been welcome.

Typographic errors involving incorrect diacritics: *tḥtin* > *tḥṭin* (p. 2), *ʹid*, *ʹd* > *ʹid*, *ʹd* (p. 16), *yihd* > *yihḏ* (p. 50), *qarrad la šanan* > *qarrād lā šanān* (p. 77), *riṣh* > *rišh* (p. 78), *ḥm* > *ḥm* (ibid.), *šmdm* > *šmdm* (p. 90), *tšmḥ* > *tšmḥ* (p. 112), *ʹeskotō* > *ʹešk(ə)tō* (p. 117), *tt* > *tt* (p. 130), *ʹaḥb* > *ʹaḏb* (p. 145), *lhḥm* >

9. The difference between ‘strong semantic relationship’ and ‘weak semantic relationship’ as announced on p. XI of the Introduction has, it seems, not always been carried out with due rigor.

lhm (p. 147), *ttb* > *ttb* (p. 162), *ahy* > *ahy* (ibid.), *zl* > *zl* (p. 167), *tmtḥṣn* > *tmtḥṣn* (p. 168), *ṣana* > *ṣanā* (p. 172), *smd* > *ṣmd* (p. 178), *bā ṣis*, *bist* > *bā'is*, *bišt* (p. 204), *ar[h]* > *ar[ṣ]* (p. 224), *thrm* > *ṭhrm* (p. 248), *lht* > *lht* (p. 257), *yḥsl* > *yḥsl* (p. 281), *tšthwy* > *tšthwy* (p. 331), *tš ṣn* > *tš ṣn* (p. 340), *hmhmt* > *ḥmhmt* (p. 346, bis), *'ahnaf* > *ḥnaf* (p. 399), *ḥwp* > *ḥwp* (p. 400), *ḥuraṣu* > *ḥurāṣu* (p. 406), *ṭql* > *ṭql* (ibid.), *it ṣnk* > *it ṣnk* (p. 420), *ḥwt* > *ḥwt* (p. 421), *sk* > *šk* (p. 425), *dbh* > *dbš* (p. 437), *ṣgr* > *ṣgr* (p. 444), *b ṣ* > *b ṣ* (p. 450), *ṭn* > *ṭn* (p. 460), *anhr* > *anḥr* (p. 490), *aṭ* > *aṭ* (p. 495), *tlhk* > *tlḥk* (p. 506), *ṣrm* > *ṣrm* (p. 516), *ḥms* > *ḥmš* (p. 518), *dāba* > *dāba* (p. 525), *raḥibu l-kanafi* > *raḥibu l-kanafi* (p. 543), *ṭgr* > *ṭgr* (p. 555), *mšt ṣltm* > *mšt ṣltm* (p. 595), *risyt* > *rišyt* (p. 599), *ḥdt* > *ḥdt* (p. 612), *aḥt* > *aḥt* (p. 615), *aṭty* > *aṭty* (p. 616), *ṭh* > *ṭh* (ibid.), *y ṣr* > *y ṣr* (p. 620), *nāha* > *nāḥa* (p. 627), *tši* > *tši* (p. 637), *tnḥ* > *tnḥ* (ibid.), *t ṣ* > *t ṣ* (ibid.), *t ṣy* > *t ṣy* (p. 647), *ansq* > *anšq* (p. 650), *nasiqa* > *našiqā* (ibid.), *paṭāru* > *paṭāru* (p. 664), *yḥrt* > *yḥrt* (p. 668), *prys ṣ* > *prys'* (p. 683), *qds* > *qdš* (p. 697), *qst* > *qšt* (p. 700), *ḥrṣ* > *ḥrṣ* (ibid.), *qš ṣt* > *qš ṣt* (p. 716), *aḥr* > *aḥr* (p. 729), *rūhō* > *rūhō* (p. 736), *reḥmum* > *reḥmum* (p. 737), *rāqihum* > *rāqihum* (p. 746), *ḥṭbn* > *ḥṭbn* (p. 753), *ṭn* > *ṭn* (p. 755), *yṭtn* > *yṭtn* (p. 773), *msb ṣthn* > *mšb ṣthn* (p. 817), *lṭpn* > *lṭpn* (p. 835), *spš* > *špš* (p. 837), *šāk* > *šāk* (p. 839), *ṣašqī* > *'ašqī* (p. 840), *šaqa* > *saqa* (ibid.), *t ṣdr* > *t ṣdr* (p. 856), *ṭlḥnt* > *ṭlḥnt* (p. 866), *trṣ ṣ* > *trṣ ṣ* (p. 872), *t ṣy* > *t ṣy* (p. 894), *tḥtṣb* > *tḥtṣb* (p. 905), *ṣr[h]* > *ṣr[h]* (p. 909), *tlt* > *tlṭ* (ibid.), *tlṭt* > *tlṭ* (ibid.), *ṣr* > *ṣr* (ibid.), *ṣrm* > *ṣrm* (ibid.), *tltm* > *tlṭm* (p. 912), *ṣrm* > *ṣrm* (p. 916), *tn* > *ṭn* (p. 919), *ṣrh* > *ṣrh* (p. 920), *tnt* > *tnt* (p. 924), *itrḥ* > *itrḥ* (p. 945), *ṣzm* > *ṣzm* (p. 953), *kḥt* > *kḥt* (p. 977), *šph* > *šph* (p. 983), *ḥrṣ* > *ḥrṣ* (p. 992 bis), *yṭb* > *yṭb* (p. 995 bis), *du'du'* > *du'du'* (p. 1003).

Other mistakes involving incorrect rendering of words and forms: *pnm* > *p ṣm* (p. 106), *ydb* > *ybd* (p. 213), *šlty* > *šlyt* (p. 254), *dntm* > *dnhm* (p. 281), *tṭr* > *tṭar* (p. 335), *mdtn* > *madtn* (p. 378), *al kd* > *alp kd* (p. 396), *itrṭ* > *irtṭ* (p. 406), *bbt* > *bht* (ibid.), *qlm* > *ṭqlm* (p. 407), *yḥss* > *tḥss* (p. 410), *ri[i]* > *riš* (p. 421), *zbyn* > *šbyn* (p. 423), *kZpros* > *kýpros* (p. 452), *ṣn* > *nṣ* (p. 518), *yṭbš* > *y ṣbš* (p. 598), *lnp ktr* > *lnpš ktr* (p. 637), *rpš* > *ršp* (ibid.), *yši* > *tši* (p. 736), *ṭkl* > *ṭql* (p. 749), *śrm* > *šgrm* (p. 755), *ṭar* > *t ṣr* (p. 777), *ḥṣq* > *ṣḥq* (p. 782), *m'arynm* > *mrynm* (p. 785), *tmtšḥh* > *tmtḥṣh* (p. 801), *šēbū* > *šebū* (ibid.), *aylm* / *aylm* > *aylm* / *y ṣlm* (p. 804), *tmtḥḥ* > *tmtḥṣ* (ibid.), *t ṣdt* > *t ṣdr* (p. 856 bis), *ṣn* > *ṣin* (p. 881), *ḥthh* > *ḥtkh* (p. 898), *yahru* > *yḥru* (p. 918), *yšln* > *ylšn* (p. 924), *mzpt* > *mṭpṣ* (p. 963), *arz* > *arṣ* (p. 978), *nlk* > *nkl* (p. 979).

Examples of inexact textual references include 1.6 IV 14 > 1.6 V 14 (p. 844), 1.20 I 11 > 1.20 II 11 (p. 875), 1.14 III 33 > 1.14 III 53 (p. 952).

Varia: Aram. *ṭaḥana* > Arab. *ṭaḥana* (p. 888), Arb. *linapšihī* > *linaṣsihi* (p. 366), 'you should know that she I have entered into the presence of the "Sun"' (p. 422, delete 'she').

In their immense majority, the errors mentioned above are not crucial and can be easily eliminated from the future editions of the dictionary. Consequently, they by no means undermine the extremely positive impression produced by the two volumes under review. In my opinion, the whole scholarly community is greatly indebted to Professors del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín for their outstanding contribution, a fruit of many years of intensive and painstaking work in the difficult but fascinating field of Ugaritic philology.

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