

The “Cura pastoralis” Fragment from the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia: A Completely Different Story

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The fragment “Cura pastoralis” is the oldest manuscript fragment in Slovenia and is kept in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia under the file number AS 1073, II-1r. It consists of one bifolium. One side of it is very badly damaged, as the fragment was once used for the binding of a book that served as the marriage register of the town of Trbovlje between 1669 and 1704. The register is still kept in the Diocesan Archives of Maribor. The bifolium is cataloged as a fragment of a ninth-century manuscript containing the “Cura pastoralis” of Gregory the Great. After a thorough examination, however, it turned out to be part of a work by Paterius of Brescia, Gregory the Great’s first secretary, which may have seen the light of day in the Freising scriptorium. There are some physical and content-related similarities between the fragment and the oldest complete manuscript in Slovenia, the Ecloga of Lathcen, which was written in the same period, namely at the end of the first half of the ninth century.

Keywords: Christian literature / Medieval manuscripts / ninth century / fragments / Gregory the Great / Paterius of Brescia / Lathcen: *Ecloga* / Trbovlje / Freising

Content and physical appearance

The so-called “Cura Pastoralis” fragment, known under signature AS 1073, II-1r in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, has a dimension of 26,9 by 35,7 centimeters and the text is divided over 30 lines.¹ The fragment goes back to the second quarter of the ninth century and was most likely copied in a Southwest-German writing school (Golob,

¹ Research Foundation—Flanders and Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency have financed the underlying research. Project number: FWO.OPR.2021.0087.01.

Srednjeveški rokopisi 182). The complete text seems to be written by the same hand. There is little reason to doubt the dating of the *bifolium*. Therefore, its Carolingian origin is also very straightforward.



Figure 1: Inner side of the bifolium AS 1073, II-1r.



Figure 2: Outer side of the bifolium AS 1073, II-1r.

About 20 years ago, Nataša Golob defined the fragment as a part of a manuscript containing the *Cura* or *Regula Pastoralis* by Gregory the Great (Golob, “Karolinški fragment” 277–281). At the bottom of the

right page of the bifolium on the inner side we can indeed read the following title in bold letters: IN CODICE REGULE PASTORALIS III. After taking a look at the exact content of the inner side of the bifolium, it became clear that it contains parts of another famous work by Gregory the Great, namely the *Moralia in Iob*. The left page on the inner side contains a part of chapter 51 of book 15. The right page holds part of chapter 16 of book 9 (Gregorius I and Adriaen, *Moralia in Iob: libri I–X 473–476; libri XI–XXII 784–786*). This explanation was also added in a more recent description of the manuscript fragment by the same author (Golob, *Srednjeveški rokopisi* 183). The outer side of the bifolium is severely damaged and almost impossible to read. However, on the right side of the outer part of the bifolium, it is possible to distinguish a title written in bold letters followed by a *capitalis* D on the next line. By putting in a little effort and using a light source, we are able to distinguish the ink from the parchment, especially because the scribe was rather generous with the use of ink while writing headings. The heading reads: IN EXPOSITIONE BEATI IOB LIBRO XXXV. The presence of this title reassures us again that it is indeed a part of the *Moralia in Iob* we are dealing with. Contrary to what was always assumed and again pointed out in the most recent work on the fragment, Golob assumes that the left page of the damaged side of the bifolium must contain a part of the third book of the *Regula Pastoralis*, because this was mentioned in the title below the excerpt of book 9 chapter 16 of the *Moralia in Iob* (Golob, *Srednjeveški rokopisi* 183).

However, it is not as straightforward as it seems. The damaged side of the bifolium was never actually examined with full attention. One could say it is simply impossible to read, but with a little effort, it is still possible to distinguish some words² on the left page of the damaged side. At first sight, we can distinguish a part of chapter 25 from book 3 of the *Regula Pastoralis* (Migne, *Patrologiae Volume 77* 97–98). This would make sense considering the title IN CODICE REGULE PASTORALIS III written on the previous page. However, it would be very strange to add parts of the *Regula Pastoralis* when there are still parts of the *Moralia in Iob* to come, among which is chapter 51 of book 15. According to our bifolium, the last sentence of book 9 chapter 16 is: “Irae igitur Dei et resisti valet, quando ipse qui irascitur, opitulatur, et resisti omnino non valet, quando se ad ulciscendum excitat, et ipse

² Some examples of words that are still visible, are: *de porta, necesse est, tanta aequalitate, culpas, occidat vir, amicum, profecto esse, universa plebs, papilionis* and *populus de egyptia*.

precem quae ei funditur non aspirat.” This is not the last sentence in the original version of the *Moralia in Iob* (Gregorius I and Adriaen, *Moralia in Iob: libri I–X* 473–476). When we further examine the left page of the damaged side, we see that there is more than just a part of *Regula Pastoralis*. There is an excerpt of the first homily of the second part of the *Homilae in Hiezechielem*, another work by Gregory the Great (Migne, *Patrologiae Volume 75* 935–948). This excerpt directly follows the one from the *Regula Pastoralis*. Consecutively, we have excerpts, not complete chapters or texts, from Book 9 chapter 16 of the *Moralia in Iob*, chapter 25 of Book 3 of the *Regula Pastoralis* and the first homily of the second Book of the Homilies on Ezekiel. This exact order of excerpts is to be found in a work called *De Expositione Veteris ac Novi Testamenti liber de diversis S. Gregorii Magni libris concinnatus* by Paterius of Brescia, more precisely in the part on Exodus (Migne, *Patrologiae Volume 79* 747–749). The titles we can distinguish in the fragment, are therefore subtitles that identify the works from which the excerpts are taken. In principle, we should be able to find four of them throughout the fragment. On the right page of the damaged bifolium, we can distinguish two of them. As was already mentioned, the first one is still more or less visible: IN EXPOSITIONE BEATI IOB LIBRO XXXV. We can find another one at the bottom of the same page that is very poorly visible and can be read as: IN EXPOSITIONE BEATI IOB LIBRO XV (Migne, *Patrologiae Volume 79* 751). Still very well readable is the subtitle referring to the excerpt from the *Regula Pastoralis*: IN CODICE REGULE PASTORALIS III. We should be able to find the subtitle introducing the excerpt from the first homily of the second part of the *Homilae in Hiezechielem*. Unfortunately, the left page of the damaged side of the bifolium is in a very bad condition in the place where this subtitle should be. On line 17 of the page in question, we can vaguely distinguish the use of capital letters. This is likely the place where the excerpt of the homily was introduced. Considering all this, we see that the text on the right page of the intact side is continued on the left page of the damaged side. The same can be said about the right page of the damaged side and the left page of the intact side. Content wise, there is only a small gap between the end of the text on the left page and the beginning of the part on the right page of the damaged side. This means there was not more than one bifolium present inside of this one when it was still inside the manuscript.

The work of Paterius where AS 1073, II–1r was originally part of, is sometimes also referred to as *Liber Testimoniorum*. It still survives in 123 works, both in complete versions and fragments (Martello 431,

435). Now we can add the 124th to the tradition. Paterius was the notary and later on *secundicerius*³ under Gregory the Great (Étaix 78). As a contemporary and close collaborator of the famous pope, Paterius likely had the original versions at his disposal. Without doubt, his work certainly is characterized by its high quality. According to the author himself, the anthology was divided into three parts: two on the Old Testament and one on the New Testament. He wrote this in the prologue of his work, but eventually the work has not survived the test of time in its entirety. We do possess the parts from Genesis till the Song of Songs. The last two parts, Proverbs and the Song of Songs, appear to be in a much rougher stage and less accurate (Martello 431–432). It was therefore argued by Étaix that these parts were not originally written by Paterius (Étaix 66–68). More recent research on the *Liber Testimoniorum* was carried out by Castaldi and Martello (Castaldi and Martello 23–107). They assume that the revision process was never completed for all the parts of the *Liber Testimoniorum* and that the revised parts therefore got lost because they were probably written down on inferior material. Only the last two parts of the 14 parts that have been copied through the centuries have survived in their unrevised form. Curiously, the work only started to gain fame in the eighth century. The oldest surviving fragments and “complete” versions go back to the same century (Martello 431–433). It is rather remarkable that Gregory the Great was often cited through the work of Paterius by a number of very well-known Medieval writers and theologians, like Bede and Rabanus Maurus (Étaix 67). Apart from that, the work of Paterius is still very valuable for the study of the works of Gregory the Great, as the *Liber Testimoniorum* refers to unpublished fragments of the pope. This can, of course, be explained by the function Paterius held in Rome as the notary and later *secundicerius* of Pope Gregory. He would have been able to use unedited versions of the works of his pope (Étaix 75–78). Without doubt, the work of Paterius was considered as valuable and often used as a reference work for the oeuvre of Gregory the Great.

When we take a closer look at the fragment itself, we can notice something striking. On the right page of the readable side of the bifolium, we notice some underlining on line 24. It concerns the following part of the sentence: “pro semetipso infirmatur.” One could wonder why these words in particular were emphasized. The whole sentence

³ A *secundicerius* is the second in rank at the pontifical chancery (Boudinhon 122–123).

goes as follows: “Et pro semetipso infirmatus est pro semetipso infirmatur in formidine qui furorem Dei placat aliis per interventionem.”⁴ As can be seen, the same message, “pro semetipso infirmatus est pro semetipso infirmatur,” is given twice by two different grammatical constructions. The underlining is indeed very peculiar, as it does not seem to have a clear purpose. However, there is a manuscript from the same period with very similar content that holds the same type of underlining. The manuscript in question contains the *Ecloga de moralibus Job*, written by a certain Irish monk Lathcen or Laidcend who died in 661 in the monastery of Clonfertmulloe (Lathcen and Adriaen v). It is kept in the National and University Library in Ljubljana (NUK) under the registration mark MS 6. The *Ecloga* is actually a very condensed version or summary of the *Moralia in Job* (Lathcen and Adriaen v). In this manuscript, the underlining was often used to point out mistakes in the text. Here, the correct words were mostly written above the erroneous part of the sentence. We do find many manuscripts where the corrections were added in the margins, but the practice of expunctuation existed as well. This meant that the incorrect part of the sentence was underlined with dots in order to warn the reader to ignore it (Rudy 59–60). The underlined words in our fragment are exactly the ones that the reader should ignore, so the underling is definitely a case of expunctuation.

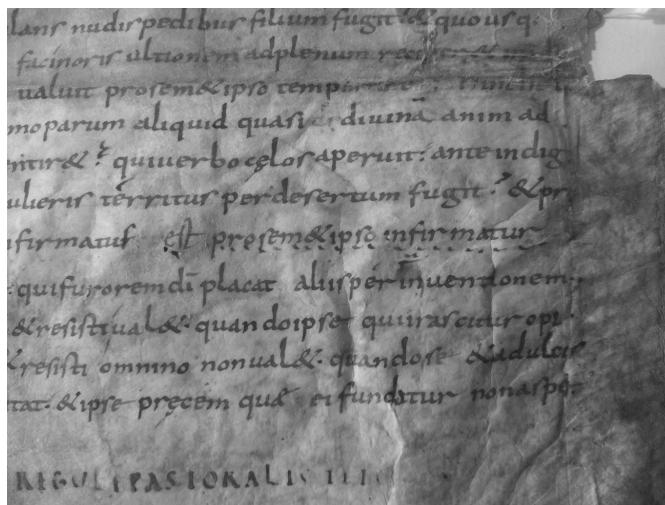


Figure 3: Expunctuation is clearly visible on AS 1073, II–1r.

⁴ “And he who shows weak for himself in fear, who appeases the Wrath of God for others through intervention.” All translations in this article are done by the author.

Origin and value of the fragment

Where the manuscript that contained our fragment is originally from, is difficult to tell with certainty. We know it was used as binding material for the marriage register of the parish of St. Martin spanning the period 1669–1704. In one of Nataša Golob’s works on manuscript fragments in Slovenia, she remarks that the discarded manuscripts that came to be recycled in the bindings of books often came from monasteries or other institutions near the place where the book was assembled (Golob, “Srednjeveški pergamentni fragmenti” 103). In our case, the book is a blank notebook, but we should be able to apply the same theory. In order to do so, we must first try to find out where the notebook was assembled. Fortunately, the marriage register holds some watermarks with a dimension of 3,5 by 4 centimeters⁵. We can clearly distinguish a watermark in the form of a rather plain shield with a cross beam holding a simple curlicue. However, the origin of the watermark has proven to be completely untraceable. This is certainly a setback, but there is still another clue that can give us some more insight into the origin of the fragment. Apparently, there were no standard forms for the registration of marriages before 1784, so the parishes were not instructed from above on where they should buy their notebooks and what quality they should have. Standardization was only introduced due to the reforms introduced by the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II (Štih, Simoniti and Vodopivec 241). It would be rather odd if a small parish like St. Martin bought its notebooks at a place far removed from its own location. I therefore suggest the marriage register must have been assembled by a bookbinder that was relatively close by. What is also clearly visible, is the grid that was added to the paper in the same way as is done with the watermark. In order to add lines to the paper, metal strings were put inside the paper scoops. This technique came about in 1745 in Nürnberg. This type of gridded paper was normally of a higher standard and meant for chanceries and more generally for writing (Weiss and Weiss 170–174).

⁵ Many thanks to Igor Filipič, archival advisor at the Diocesan archives in Maribor, for sending the photographs of the watermarks and giving the information on the marriage register and former structure of the diocese.

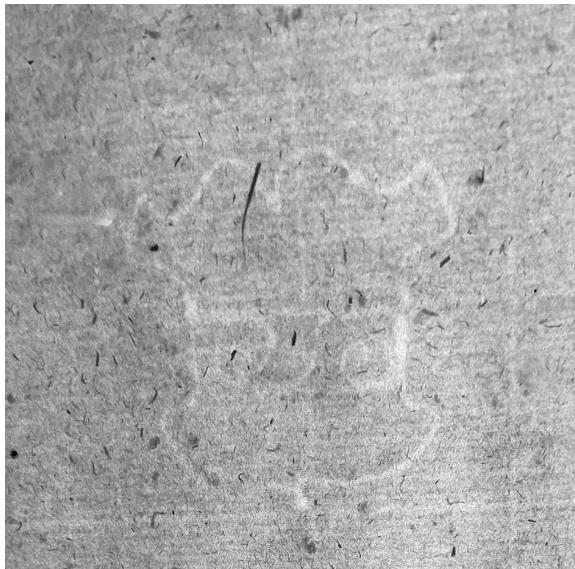


Figure 4: Watermark and grid on the paper of the marriage register (1669–1704) of St. Martin from the Diocesan Archives of Maribor, Parish of Trbovlje—Sv. Martin, sig. 0271, marriage book 01 1669–1704.

In short, we can be fairly sure that the parish of St. Martin acquired a notebook made with rather qualitative paper that was likely assembled nearby. Considering that the notebook was made not too far away from the Trbovlje region, the manuscript fragment must have been taken from a codex that was discarded from a location that was relatively close by. Considering that the handwriting was determined as South-East German and was possibly even of Freising origin (Golob, *Srednjeveški rokopisi* 181–182), it is possible that the work of Paterius travelled to the broader area around Trbovlje due to the presence of the bishopric of Freising in what was then Carantania. However, it is very unlikely that Freising was already active south of the river Drava (Drau) in the ninth century. Their first possession in this area was the Loka dominion in 973 (Sickel 56–57) and this is still relatively far away from the area of Trbovlje. Another possession that was in the hands of Freising and at a more or less equal distance from Trbovlje as is Škofja Loka, was the area around Klevevž. The first mentioned property of Freising in this area was Vinji Vrh. This was in 1074, just over one hundred years after the acquisition of the Loka dominion (Blaznik 5). This does not mean Freising could not have been active in this area a little sooner, but it seems unlikely they would have been active around Klevevž in

the ninth or even tenth century. If this manuscript somehow ended up in St. Martin through interference from the bishopric of Freising, it was most likely due to its presence in the area of Škofja Loka. The manuscript could have only been brought from Freising if this was done more than 150 years after it was copied. This is indeed possible, considering the theory of Golob that peripheral areas of bishoprics, or in this case a remote possession, were often supplied with manuscripts that were discarded because newer copies were already in use at the center of the see (Golob, “Karolinški fragment” 280). Shortly put, the location of discovery of the fragment of Paterius’ work and the watermarks on the paper of the marriage register cannot give us a definitive answer about the origin of the manuscript where the fragment once belonged to. We cannot rule out the Freising scriptorium as a possible candidate, but neither can we confirm it was copied there based solely on what has been discussed earlier.

However, there are other clues that still hint towards a Freising origin. The works by Gregory the Great alongside the oeuvre of other patristic fathers were copied eagerly by the Freising scriptorium. One could definitely speak of a tradition starting off during the episcopacy of Arbeo (764–783) and dwindling a bit by the time of Anno (854–875). It knew its height during the episcopacy of Hitto (810/12–835), which overlaps with the period our fragment could be dated to approximately. One could assume the codex containing the compilation work of Paterius saw the light during the heydays of patristic literature in Freising. The patristic writers that were held in especially high regard were Ambrose, Augustine and Gregory. The middle of the ninth century was known for all its copying activities regarding the works of the Church fathers. This was all due to the Carolingian renaissance. It was important to possess these esteemed patristic works, especially for Cathedral schools (Mass 190–191). It is beyond any doubt that the work of Gregory the Great had an educational purpose. It is therefore most likely that the manuscript where our fragment was part of, belonged to a certain center of knowledge, as an anthology of the work of Gregory the Great must have come in very handy. Interestingly, we can also detect the popularity of the works of Gregory the Great at the monastery of St. Gall. We know that the oldest *abbreviatio* of the *Moralia in Job* by Lathcen was recommended to Salomon, the future bishop of Konstanz, by his mentor Notker from St. Gall in his *De interpretibus divinarum scripturarum*. Notker suggested this work because it is much more condensed than the original work of Gregory the Great (Castaldi 374–375, Aris 362; Migne, *Patrologiae Volume 131*

996–997). In a way, this type of adaptation made it easier to process the material of very extensive works.

What seems to be often overlooked, is that Notker also recommends the *Liber Testimoniorum* of Paterius in the first chapter of the same book. Chapter one recommends works that mainly discuss the Pentateuch (Migne, *Patrologiae Volume 131* 993–1004). About Paterius' work, he literally states: “Quod si excerptum Paterii, quod de libris beati Gregorii per ordinem singulorum librorum deflorando confecit, unquam reperire potueris, illud tibi ad omnimodam sufficiet sapientiam.” (Migne, *Patrologiae Volume 131* 995)⁶ Paterius' anthology was definitely highly valued by Notker and apparently not so easy to get hold of. The work provides the reader with the possibility to look up what Gregory wrote about a specific passage in the Old Testament without having to plough his way through multiple works of considerable size, as it is composed of quotations from various writings of Gregory the Great.

We could argue that the *Liber Testimoniorum* and the *Ecloga* could have fulfilled a similar function. Both works can be seen as compact versions of much larger works. This definitely comes in handy for the training of new clergy and for looking up the answers to specific questions on the themes they discuss. At the same time that Salomon was trained, his brother by blood Waldo and future bishop of Freising, received his education in St. Gall as well (Mass 24). Both brothers could have been influenced by the recommendations of Notker. However, our fragment of the *Liber Testimoniorum* and the copy of the *Ecloga* from the NUK (MS 6) were presumably both created a bit earlier than 850, so before the episcopates of the two brothers. Waldo only became bishop of Freising in 884 and Salomon took over the see of Konstanz in 890 (Mass 72–73, 84). Both works were written in the same geographical area and have a very similar appearance. As was already mentioned, the paleographical examination of the fragment shows us that it was most likely part of a codex that was written in Southwest Germany, more specifically Freising, or the Eastern part of what is now Switzerland (Golob, *Srednjeveški rokopisi* 181–182). MS 6 from the NUK containing the *Ecloga* has also been attributed to a Southern or Southwestern German writing school. In the ninth century the work of Lathcen was mainly copied in Murbach, Reichenau, Salzburg, Konstanz and other

⁶ “But if you could ever find the excerpt of Paterius, which he produced by selecting the books of the blessed Gregory through the order of the individual books, it will be sufficient for you in all matters of wisdom.”

centers in the area (Kos 300–301). It is possible Notker’s recommendations might have had something to do with this. There is a discrepancy in time between the recommendations and the writing of the *Ecloga* and the *Liber Testimoniorum*, so these works were not copied under Notker’s influence. This does not mean, however, that the introduction of these works is solely related to Notker. It is very likely that he simply propagated the usage of the works by Lathcen and Paterius because they were commonly seen as valuable and useful by the monks at St. Gall. The tradition of using these works could certainly date from before the *De interpretibus divinarum scripturarum* was written, which was definitely before Salomon became the bishop of Konstanz in 890 (Migne, *Patrologiae Volume 131* 993–994). These recommendations from St. Gall could have easily found their way into Freising, as there is earlier proof of close ties between the monastery and the Freising scriptorium. In fact, all the different writing schools in the Southwestern part of the Carolingian Empire were well connected (Golob, *Srednjeveški rokopisi* 182). It is therefore plausible to assume that Freising started copying the works of Paterius and Lathcen under the influence of the monastery of St. Gall. Therefore, it seems possible that the South-West German writing school we are looking for, is indeed the one of Freising. Due to a lot of similarities between the writing style of MS 6 and our fragment and the fact that the work of Lathcen was also propagated from St. Gall, we could carefully think about a Freising origin of the *Ecloga* (MS 6) as well. If we assume both manuscripts found their way into what is now Slovenia, it most likely happened after 973, so more than one hundred years after the manuscripts were created. The only possible explanation for this, could be the fact that older versions of important works were sent to the newer churches and religious centers in the peripheral areas of a bishopric (Golob, “Karolinški fragment” 280). This is what could have happened to both the manuscript of the *De interpretibus divinarum scripturarum* where fragment AS 1073, II–1r was part of, as the *Ecloga* (MS 6).

Of course, a definitive answer to the origin of the fragment shall probably never be given, but a Freising provenance seems to be the most plausible option so far. It is possible both works could have been used for the training of new local Slavic clergy or perhaps German clergy that proceeded their further education on the spot. This last possibility springs to mind because of a canon from the Council of Reims in 813. It says that the clergy should study to be able to better understand its duties. The works that are fit for study, are explicitly mentioned: the Bible, the canons, the Rule of Benedict, the *Regula Pastoralis* of

Gregory the Great and other writings of the Church Fathers. In this study through readings there should also be a particular focus on Mass, baptism, penance and the eight cardinal sins (von Hefele 758–759). However, where exactly the manuscripts were used is difficult to say, as it is very much possible that certain sites of religious training got lost through the ages.

Conclusion

Now that we know the true content of the fragment and have an idea of its provenance, it can be seen as much more than just the oldest manuscript fragment on Slovenian soil. It is a new addition to the manuscript tradition of *De interpretibus divinarum scripturarum* of Paterius of Brescia and hints towards a Freising provenance. Because of this more thorough examination of the fragment, it was possible to link its content wise and especially on a visual and paleographical level to MS 6 from the NUK that contains the *Ecloga* by Lathcen.

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Fragment »Cura pastoralis« iz Arhiva Republike Slovenije: povsem drugačna zgodba

Ključne besede: krščanska književnost / srednjeveški rokopisi / 9. stol. / fragmenti / Gregor Veliki / Paterij iz Brecie / Lathcen: *Ecloga* / Trbovlje / Freising

Fragment »Cura pastoralis« je najstarejši rokopisni odlomek na Slovenskem in se hrani v Arhivu Republike Slovenije pod številko AS 1073, II–1r. Sestavljen je iz enega bifolija. Ena stran je zelo poškodovana, saj je bil fragment nekoč uporabljen za vezavo knjige, ki je med letoma 1669 in 1704 služila kot poročna knjiga mesta Trbovlje. Matično knjigo še vedno hrani v Nadškofijskem arhivu v Mariboru. Bifolium je katalogiziran kot fragment rokopisa iz 9. stoletja, ki vsebuje »Cura pastoralis« Gregorja Velikega. Vendar pa se je po temeljiti raziskavi izkazalo, da gre v resnici za del dela Paterija iz Brecie,

prvega tajnika Gregorja Velikega, ki je morda luč sveta ugledalo v freisinškem skriptoriju. Med odlomkom in najstarejšim celotnim rokopisom na Slovenskem, Latchenovo *Eclogo*, ki je nastala v istem obdobju, in sicer ob koncu prve polovice 9. stoletja, je nekaj fizičnih in vsebinskih podobnosti.

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek / Original scientific article

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