AGON AND THE NEED FOR PHYSICAL MOTION - EXERCISE IN PERSONALITIES WHO MARKED THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

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SUMMARY

Physical movement - an exercise, which springs from our being and returns to it as a gracious food, with its agon, that desire to compete with others but also with itself, helps a human being to become and remain a personality. This statement is confirmed by people who marked the 19th and 20th century. By their example and work, they not only testified the benefits of physical exercise, but also encouraged the formation of theanthropocentrism, one of the theories of physical culture, at the end of the 20th century.

Metropolitan Hadzi Sava Kosanovic, Bishop Rade, Bishop Nikolaj of Zica, Vasa Pelagic, Cedomir Milic, are just some of those who testified and encouraged others by their example not to forget about physical exercise and their body. Because in the union of body and soul sanctified by the Holy Spirit, that trinity survives only if all and each of them is taken care of, in specific.

With examples of their attitude towards physical exercise and competition, which they only pointed out or others wrote about, we will lighten up a significant part of the history of physical culture.

Key words: theanthropocentrism, physical exercise, physical culture.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 19th and 20th century, there were many smart people of various professions (pedagogues, philosophers, doctors, theologians, writers, historians, etc.) who, in addition to a positive opinion about physical exercise, pointed out the importance of physical exercise and sports for the development of the whole human organism, his spiritual and physical abilities, encouraging others to exercise physically, they did it themselves and in addition were practicing certain sports that existed at that time. In Europe at that time there were several systems of physical exercise whose common goal were to develop a person's spiritual and physical abilities. These systems (ways) of physical exercise: biocentrism, ethnocentrism, egocentrism, anthropocentrism and theanthropocentrism (or christocentrism) were at the same time certain directions of the theory of physical culture. Among those who pointed out the importance of physical exercise and who created the above systems of physical exercise were: Friedrich Ludwig Jan, Per Henrich Ling, Miroslav Tyrs, Thomas Arnold, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Henrich Pestalozzi, Francois Rabelais, Heronimus Mercurialis, Jan Amos Komenski, Johan Bernard Bazedov and others.

From the area of Serbian lands, those people were: Nikola Tesla, Mihajlo Pupin, Steva Todorović, Čedomir Milić, Vojislav Besarović, Djordje Natošević, Svetomir Djukić, Laza Kostić, Simo Matavulj, Jovan Dučić, Aleksa Šantić, the Ćorović brothers and others, and in addition many church dignitaries such as: Metropolitan Hadži Sava Kosanović, Bishop Rade (Petar Drugi Petrović Njegoš), Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović of Žička, Vaso Pelagić and others. By actively participating in physical activities, writing about it and by their personal example, they showed and proved their positive effect on all human values, spiritual and physical.

All of them, each in their own way, dealing with physical exercise and certain sports, but also writing and talking about their importance for the entire human body, its spiritual and physical abilities, made a significant contribution to the development of physical culture, and within it the development of sports, especially in the form of theoretical and philosophical settings of the physical culture of Europe at that time.

SUBJECT AND GOAL

The subject of this paper are church dignitaries of Serbian Orthodox Church and their views on physical exercise and sports. At the same time, they felt physical exercise and recommended it as a gracious food for human, necessary for unity of body, soul and (holy) spirit.

The goal of the authors is to explore and show the readers the views regarding the aforementioned of: Metropolitan Hadži Sava Kosanović, Bishop Rade, Bishop of Žiča Nikolaj Velimirović, Vaso Pelagić and others.

METHOD

During research the authors used theoretical-historical method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Petar II Petrovic Njegos

*„Who stands on a hill, even a little.
see more than the one under the hill -
I see a little bit more than you,
fortune gave it, or misfortune!“
(Njegos)*

Petar II Petrovic Njegos

His Eminence Bishop Rade is one of those hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church who knew and highly appreciated the value of physical exercise, games and sports activities and competitions for the proper development of, not only of the human body, but also its spiritual values.

Njegos loved chivalry games and various sports activities, he participated in them but at the same time encouraged others to do the same. While staying in other European countries, Njegos got acquainted with the game of billiards, fell in love with the game and even bought a billiard table which was delivered to Cetinje and placed in the bishop's palace, which was named „Biljarda“. In addition to Bishop Rade, Nikola Tesla, the world's greatest scientist, also appreciated and loved to play billiards.

At the gatherings Montenegrins competed in numerous games and various physical activities. Njegos described some of those games and competitions in his „Gorski Vijenac“ (The Mountain Wreath).

„Besides, this is our *slava*
on which our best and noblest lads gather
to test their strength and their abilities,
the strength of arms, and fleetness of their feet,
to vie also in the target-shooting,
to cleave the roast ram's shoulder in wager,
to hear also the liturgy in church,
dance the *kolo* all around the churchyard,
and thrust their chest in knightly exercise.
To all brave men that is a holy incense,
making youthful hearts as strong as iron!“¹

From the verses above, all the values of games, physical activities and competitions are visible, both for the development of physical (“to test their strength and their abilities, the strength of arms, and fleetness of their feet;”) and spiritual (“to hear also the liturgy in church, dance the *kolo* all around the churchyard: and thrust their chest in knightly exercise. To all brave men that is a holy incense, making youthful hearts as strong as iron!”) values.

The following verses also tell us about these values:

“You are not left just to your resources.
Do you not see these five hundred brave lads?
What marvels of strength and fleet-footedness
have we not seen here among them today?
Did you see how they were target-shooting,
how skillfully they played the game of *grad*,
and how nimbly they did grab the small caps?”²

¹ Петар Други Петровић Његош: *Горски Вијенац*, Удружење независних издавача за СРЈ, Београд, 2002, стр. 14 – 15. Translated by Vasa D. Mihailovich:
https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain_wreath.html (Accessed: 9th October 2021)

His Eminence tells us in the following verses that, among other things, physical exercise, games and sports activities served to prepare Montenegrins to fight enemies.

“Never before in these lofty mountains
was bred a youth so splendid and decent.
Brave lad was he and he seemed to wear wings.
I have watched him leaping with his comrades:
his standing jump was all fourteen feet long,
he jumped over three horses in one leap.”³

As he believed, the better and braver someone was in the game and competition, the better and braver he was in the fight itself. The following verses show us that this was indeed the case:

“What is the use of hiding what really is?
Never has a Montenegrin woman
given birth to such gray falcon before!
It was always hard to be quite certain
whether he was more handsome than valiant,
whether he was more good-natured than wise.
Six times we were in trouble together
when our eyes were burning by the gun-powder
and the slain heads were being tossed around –
such steely eyes I have yet to witness
in a young man as I saw in that one.
And he was not twenty years of age yet!”⁴

The Sokol movement, as one of the largest Slavic physical exercise movements in Europe in the 19th century, originated in today’s Czech Republic, and the name itself, according to some authors, comes from Serbian heroic poetry with the wish

² Ibid, p. 15.

³ Ibid, p. 102.

⁴ Ibid, pp. 102 – 103.

that Sokol members have all the characteristics of this magnificent bird. Supporting this fact, the following verses show how Bishop Rade himself wrote about Sokol (falcon):

“As soon as the falcon grows his first plumes,
he cannot be peaceful any longer.
Instead, his nest he keeps rearranging,
Grabbing the straws one after another,
he flies shrieking toward the light blue sky.” ⁵

“A falcon hates the fields covered with dust.
A falcon wants not a frog from a marsh.
A falcon loves to dwell on a high cliff.
A falcon seeks to find a partridge bird.
A partridge is a slender, timid bird,
but her body is like live, darting fire.” ⁶

Based on the above, we can conclude that His Eminence Bishop Rade made an extremely large contribution to the development of: physical exercise, games, sports and competitions, primarily in Montenegro.

Hadzi Sava Kosanovic

His Eminence Metropolitan Hadži Sava Kosanović also greatly appreciated the values of physical activities, sports, games and competitions in which he himself participated (horseback riding, long jump from the place and from the run, running and other sports and games).

While in Vienna in the autumn of 1888, Simo Matavulj “... met Laza Kostić whom he knew well because they worked together in Cetinje in *Voice of Montenegrins* (Kostić was the editor and Matavulj was an associate) and Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, whom he did not know personally. They met every night in an Inn on Vering and, among other things, talked about Metropolitan Hadži Sava Kosanovic. At the urging of Zmaj, Matavulj decided to go to the ‘Hotel de France’ on the Ring one morning, visit His Eminence and get to know him. Along with the

⁵ Ibid, p. 15.

⁶ Ibid, p. 96.

coffee that Metropolitan made and tobacco, because they were both passionate smokers, they talked about everything, among other things, about sports competitions from their younger days and in which sports they were the best at.”⁷

His Eminence Metropolitan Kosanović told him about his journey to the tomb of Christ and the Holy Land, in which, among other things, he vividly told him about “... his racing on horseback with another horseman when they went to Jordan (that episode Hadži-Sava also lauded in Bosanska Vila).”⁸

His Eminence “In the ecstasy of fond memories, he clicked, snapped his fingers, waved his arms. And finished: I was very agile, my Simeon, light and quick as a roe deer, a jumper like a deer and a horse rider like an Arab! ...

Are you a horse rider.

- I am not, but I am everything else!

- How do you mean everything else?!

- Well, I’m a good wrestler, I throw rocks well, I do gymnastics well, and I skip my height and almost a meter more!

- I can’t believe that, I’m sorry!

- Which: `that`?

- I believe everything because you are healthy and strong as a bull, but it seems impossible to me that you, so big, can jump so much!”⁹

Those words of the metropolitan made Matavulj stand up and say:

“- Reverend, do you allow?

- What?

- To prove to you right now that I’m not lying! To jump once, but without shoes and coat! Give your blessing!”¹⁰

To these words of Matavulj the metropolitan replied: “My son, I told you, I was also a jumper, from run, with jump and from the spot, and by God, even today ... hmmm ...”¹¹

To Matavulj’s great surprise, “... Metropolitan throw off his coat and began to take off his shoes, saying:

⁷ Петар Д. Павловић и Кристина М. Пантелић Бабић: *О спорту и телесним активностима у делима писаца српске историје*, Торовићеви сусрети 2016. године, Научни скуп историчара с међународним учешћем, Зборник радова, Писци српске историје, уредник: Драга Матиловић, СПКД „Просвјета“ Гацко, Гацко, 2017, р. 457.

⁸ Симо Матавуљ: Скакање, *Босанска Вила*, год. 23, бр. 8, Сарајево, 20. март 1908, р. 113.

⁹ Ibid, р. 115.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

- Why not!? ... So be it, let me see! Come on! Come on!"¹²

After those words of the metropolitan, Matavulj jumped: "I jumped. You can imagine how the floor rumbles under the weight of a hundred kilos! How pleasant that earthquake must have been to those below us and around us!"¹³

After the jump, "Hadzi-Sava handed me a pen to mark the bounce with a line, then measured it with his feet, then shook his head and said:

- By God, you are! ... And now to see the old man!

He jumped and almost landed, and then comes back and lands.

Then I pulled as best I could, and flew over the line.

Then he pulled the cloth around his waist and almost confirmed me, but then he came back for another jump.

And all like that! dum! dum! And in some we began to shout:

- Ha, Dalmatian! Ha, Herzegovina!"¹⁴

That competition would probably take a long time,

"... if only the maid didn't come in, who was so startled that she couldn't speak. She came in at the moment when the consecrated, so tall and dry, without a coat and shoes, was nodding his arms to get the momentum for a bigger jump, and I, stocky in the same outfit, was standing on the side. I see the maid clear as now. She was blond, round, pale face, which clearly said: `Mein Gott, ist das möglich! Seine Bichöfliche Gnaden springt!` (My God, is that possible! His Episcopal grace jumps!). Knowing why she had come uninvited and not knocking, I assured her that this would be the last rumble and asked her to take cover. Of course, as soon as she came out, there was a roar of laughter in the hallway."¹⁵

In the palace of His Eminence Metropolitan Sava Kosanović in Ulcinj, a year later, in 1889, they competed in jumping again. Simo Matavulj was a fugitive from Serbia at the time, and the metropolitan was a pensioner. Their competition and story Matavulj did not record.

From the aforementioned, we can state that His Eminence highly appreciated the values of physical exercise, games, sports and especially competitions, and that he was engaged in these activities throughout his life, even in his older days.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 113.

Vaso Pelagić

Vaso Pelagić

A great man from a small place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although not a teacher of physical exercise by vocation, he gave a significant contribution to this area of human creativity with his theoretical settings and a certain practical application. Born in 1838, an Orthodox priest by profession, but also by humanity and knowledge: writer, educator, humanist and visionary, Vaso Pelagić was one of the first advocates of compulsory physical exercise (gymnastics), primarily in his Seminary in Banja Luka (1866) where gymnastics was an obligatory and equal subject, but also in all other places where he lived and worked. In addition to its practical application, he was one of the pioneers of modern theoretical settings and interpretations of physical exercise and physical culture in general, which gave a significant contribution to the further

development and establishment of theory in this area in the territory where he lived and worked.

He divided gymnastics into *Economy folk* (*Privredna narodna*), which meant working in the fields, orchards, gardens, forests, etc. and *Artificial* (*Veštačka*), which included various forms of physical exercise, folk and other games and various sports activities. According to Pelagić, gymnastics “[...] develops the whole composition of the human body and makes a person more shapely, prominent, heroic, very strong and healthy and that everyone who practiced and taught gymnastics as an underage, rarely gets sick.”¹⁶

He paid special attention to the importance of children’s play, which according to him was “[...] a real blessing for their physical and mental development, for strengthening both muscles and mindset, and for developing physical and spiritual energy.”¹⁷ and those who forbid children to play and jump to their heart’s content, even if it were their parents, he considered their greatest enemies.

¹⁶ Васо Пелагић: *Изабрани списи* (Књ. 2), Свјетлост, Сарајево, 1953, p. 29.

¹⁷ Васа Пелагић: *Пелагићев народни учитељ*, Слобода, Београд, 1974, p. 216.

He also dedicated a lot of his reflections to certain sports activities, among which he favored running and swimming, which, according to him, engaged and developed the whole organism. In addition to these activities, he recommended skating, as well as designated skating areas next to schools, where possible, so that teachers could take children to these activities during winter. He assigned special health significance to gymnastics, and he also recommended certain exercises for women during pregnancy.¹⁸

His interpretation of physical exercise and its significance for the human body and life in general are identified with certain attitudes of the representatives of the ethnocentric and biocentric direction of the development of physical exercise, however:

“[...] with his attitude towards physical exercise was actually a forerunner of theanthropocentric views on our profession. He did not precisely define this, but he knew that physical exercise is not only body movement made with a specific purpose, but also of blessed food, primarily for physical part of our being. Therefore he insisted on gymnastics and emphasized the importance of physical exercise.”¹⁹

Vaso Pelagić's free mind, in times not so favorable, in addition to a sublime and brilliant spirit, brought him a constant struggle with the authorities. However, that did not stop him from continuing to fight for his people through the promotion of health, the need for education, the implementation of physical exercise and many other things. In a time full of challenges and a life often spent in the internment of the body, the spirit of Vaso Pelagić surpassed the time and space in which he physically existed and created. On January 25, 1899, unfortunately in Požarevac prison, Vaso Pelagić moved to a space not easily accessible to everyone - he moved to eternity.

¹⁸ See more in: Petar D. Pavlović, Nenad Živanović and Kristina Pantelić Babić: *Vaso Pelagić, the first theoretician of physical culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 4th International Scientific Conference “Anthropological aspects of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, Banja Luka, November 2012, Proceedings Book, Editors: Slobodan Simović and Veroljub Stanković, Banja Luka, 2013, pp. 65 – 71. doi: 10.5550/SP.4.2012.07

¹⁹ Nenad Zivanovic, Petar D. Pavlovic and Kristina M. Pantelic Babic, *Vasa Pelagic – Anatoly on the west, Physical Education and Sport through the centuries*, 3 (2), 2016, pp. 5 – 16. DOI: 10.1515/spes-2016-0010

Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic

Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic

Cedomir Milic, a sokol from Herzegovina, "[...] was in constant contact with famous spiritual dignitaries: their Eminences Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović and Bishop Petar Zimonjić, His Royal Highness King Aleksandar Karadjordjevic and others, primarily sokols." ²⁰

Every year in the fall, Milić "[...] went to Žiča to His Eminence Bishop Nikolaj, where he stayed for a few days. Bishop Nikolaj was a fan of sokolism, and he believed that it was extremely important for the entire people of the afore state. He sent a letter to his brother Cedomir Milić, in which he wrote about what Herzegovinian sokols should be like. The letter was extremely important, not only for Milić, but also for the entire sokolism at the time." ²¹

Due to its importance, we list the letter in its entirety, with certain comments from the authors. His Eminence Bishop Nikolaj began the

letter with words:

"Nothing without faith in the living God.

Nothing without praying to the living God.

Nothing without the help of the living God." ²²

That is exactly what Herzegovinian sokols did. They believed in the living God, prayed to the living God and did nothing without the help of the living God.

Regarding that, Bishop Nikolaj wrote the following:

"Without that there has never been a great and glorious one in Herzegovina, nor it is, nor it will be. You understood that and recommended it to your sokols. And your sokols understood that and illuminated and inspired their lives with faith. That is why they are so strong and honest and harmonious and chaste and

²⁰ Кристина М. Пантелић Бабић и Петар Д. Павловић: *Херцеговачки соко Чедомир Милић*, СПКД „Просвјета“ Гацко и ФИЕП Европа – Секција за историју физичког васпитања и спорта, Ниш, Гацко-Ниш, 2016, p. 154.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Николај Велимировић: *Мисионарска писма*, Евро и Невен, Београд, 2000, p. 369.

*obedient and brotherly - those Herzegovinian sokols of yours. May the living God grant that for each of them can be said the apostle words – to be a perfect man of God, ready for every good deed.”*²³

Further in the letter the Bishop writes about the goal of the Herzegovinian sokols, that is, about the goal of physical exercise and engaging in certain sports disciplines. He says:

*“Because that is the goal of your sokols:
to be prepared for every good deed,
prepared in higher thoughts, which reach to the highest heavens;
prepared with nobler feelings of justice and love, which embraces all the humans, and all the nations of God, like Christ with outstretched arms on the cross;
prepared with a strong will, made, hardened, and ready at any moment for every act of goodness, mercy, philanthropy and piety.”*²⁴

Cedomir Milic

From the previously quoted part of the letter, we can conclude that the Bishop believed that sokols, i.e. athletes, must be ready to perform good deeds at all times, to strive for higher thoughts, to be just, to have love not only for sokols, athletes, but also for to their people; to have a strong and firm will, to believe in God and to love him, to love all the people and to do only good at every opportunity.

In the continuation of the letter, His Eminence writes about what kind of sokols, that is, athletes, the Serbian people need: *“We need such people, such sokols, such Herzegovinians. Like that and no different – ready for every good deed; that is, that they are ready with haste and joy to do every good deed for which they are given the opportunity, every day and every moment.”*²⁵

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 369 – 370.

At the end of the letter, the Bishop asks the question: Which sokol is that, and which man is capable of doing a good deed at any time necessary. He also gives an answer to that question and says that it is a *perfect man of God*, and if sokols are always ready to do a good deed, then they are perfect people of God.

"And who is ready for every good deed? Which man, and which sokol? I could not give a better answer than what the apostle Pavle gave; and the answer is: the perfect man of God. So, for every good deed, prepared is one and only - the perfect man of God. In other words; he who is not a perfect man of God is not ready for every good deed. And if the sokol is the one human being ready for every good deed, then it is clear, I think, that the sokol must be a perfect man of God." ²⁶

His Eminence cherished the opinion that during exercising of sokols and other athletes, as well as when achieving success in their competitions, the spirit comes first. It depends on the spirit how much you will practice and who will be the best among equals. In the end, he says: *"The Earth is not moved by the Earth but by the Heavens. You understood this; therefore you are more successful than those who push the Earth with the Earth, so they fail and remain tired. / Be long-lived and blessed by God."* ²⁷

In the previous text the authors presented the vision of physical exercise, sokolism and certain sports activities through the eyes and spirit of some of the most enlightened and sublime dignitaries of the Serbian people of the 19th and 20th century. They viewed all those physical activities as a gracious food not only for the human body, but also for his spirit.

Although some authors write that theanthropocentrism, as one of the directions of physical exercise "[...] in which a person is approached with 'pigeon legs' and to whom physical exercise is offered as a gracious food for his body." ²⁸ began to spread from the area of Eastern Christian universities only in the last decades of the 20th century, from the aforementioned and presented we can conclude that the idea of a "more humane" approach to physical exercise and sports activities in the minds of these Orthodox Christian dignitaries existed much earlier. And by that, we also open a new space for research in the field of history and theory of physical culture of Serbian people.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 370.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ненад Живановић, Небојша Ранђеловић, Верољуб Станковић и Петар Павловић: *Теорија физичке културе*, Факултет спорта и физичког васпитања, Ниш, ПАНОПТИКУМ, 2010, стр. 25.

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АГОН И ПОТРЕБА ЗА ТЕЛЕСНОМ КРЕТЊОМ – ВЕЖБОМ КОД ЉУДИ КОЈИ СУ ОБЕЛЕЖИЛИ 19. И 20. ВЕК

САЖЕТАК

Телесна кретња – вежба, која извире из нашег бића и враћа му се као благодатна храна, својим агонем, том жељом за надметањем са другима али и са самим собом, помаже човеку да постане и остане личност. Ову констатацију потврђују личности које су обележиле 19. и 20. век. Својим примером и радом не само да су сведочили о благодатности физичке вежбе, већ и подстакли уобличавање теoантропоцентризма крајем 20. века, једне од теорија физичке културе.

Митрополит Хаџи Сава Косановић, владика Раде, владика жички Николај, Васо Пелагић, Чедомир Милић, само су неки од њих који су сведочили и примером својим подстицали друге да не забораве на физичку вежбу и своје тело. Јер у споју тела и душе освећених светим духом, то тројство опстаје само ако се о свима и сваком од њих посебно, води рачуна.

Примерима њиховог односа према физичком вежбању и надметању, које су само истицали или су о томе други писали, осветлићемо један значајан део из историје физичке културе.

Кључне речи: теоантропоцентризам, физичка вежба, физичка култура.

АГОН И НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ ДЕЛАТЬ ФИЗИЧЕСКИЕ ДВИГАТЕЛЬНЫЕ УПРАЖНЕНИЯ ДЛЯ ЛИЧНОСТЕЙ, КОТОРЫЕ СТАЛИ ЗНАМЕНАТЕЛЬНЫМИ ДЛЯ 19-ГО И 20-ГО ВЕКОВ

АННОТАЦИЯ

Физическое движение – упражнение, которое исходит из нашего существа и возвращается к нему как благодатная пища, с его агонем, желанием соревноваться не только с другими, но и с самим собой, помогает человеку стать и оставаться личностью. Это утверждение подтверждено людьми, которые стали знаменательными личностями для 19 и 20 веков. Своим примером и работой они не только свидетельствовали о пользе физических упражнений, но и способствовали формированию теоантропоцентризма, одной из теорий физической культуры конца 20 века.

Митрополит Хаджи Сава Косанович, епископ Раде, епископ Николай из Жичи, Васа Пелагич, Чедомир Милич – это лишь некоторые из тех, кто своим примером подтверждали необходимость физических упражнений и призывали других не забывать о занятиях физкультурой и своим теле. Потому что в союзе тела и души, освященном Святым Духом, эта троица выживает только тогда, когда о каждом из них конкретно заботятся.

Приводя примеры, иллюстрирующие их отношение к физическим упражнениям и соревнованиям, о которых упоминали они сами или о которых писали другие, мы осветим значительную часть истории физической культуры.

Ключевые слова: теоантропоцентризм, физические упражнения, физическая культура.

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