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FUNERARY MONUMENTS AND QUARRY MANAGEMENT IN MIDDLE DALMATIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is not to shed a measure of light on Greek, but rather on Roman stonemasonry, and the latter only within the context of the production of funerary monuments in Dalmatia. The first funerary monuments in Dalmatia were stelai. A particular kind of simple, architectural stele developed in Greek towns. Something seen most commonly in Naronā, as well as in Salona and elsewhere on occasion, is that the Greek type of stele was accepted before there was any strong influence from Italy. These stelai obviously belonged to wealthy families, which commissioned burial monuments that would cost an entire fortune on their own. Accompanying the soldiers that served in Dalmatia, who were stationed in legion camps (Burnum and Tilverium) at the start of the 1st century, came monumental and richly decorated monuments, which often featured military symbolism and tools. The sarcophagus began its life in Dalmatia around the middle of the 2nd century, except for isolated examples from the 1st century. The largest source of locally made sarcophagi matches a period within the 3rd century, when the standard became the three-piece front face (a central inscription field with two empty fields on its sides or a *tabula* for reliefs, usually in the form of erotes with a reversed torch).

Military inscriptions regarding the quarries at Trogir and on Brač are clear evidence that the trade was not in the hands of private enterprise. Soldiers were not available to other private and civil institutions, as they were paid directly by the emperor, and were thus tasked with jobs that they were trained to do in the army. This is why none of these city-like settlements had an actual civil government with municipal functionaries.

Keywords

stone, stone quarries, sepulchral monuments, Dalmatia



Fig. 1. Map of Central Dalmatia showing the locations of stone quarries

Funerary monuments and quarry management in middle Dalmatia

Putting stone to use is a very ancient trade which traces its Dalmatian roots back to prehistoric times. Practically the only stone available locally, particularly in the coastal areas, was limestone, which varies greatly in quality from one quarry to the other, and would accordingly be used for various purposes. Limestone deposits were plentiful, and thus utilized in numerous locations. Greek colonists in Dalmatia began harvesting stone in the quarries on Vis (Issa), Hvar (Faros), at Trogir (Tragourion), and Stobreč (Epetion). It was likely that the Greeks also exploited excellent limestone from the small island of Vrnik (off Korčula), across the way from an Issaen settlement in Lumbarda (Greek name unknown). These antique quarries are, for the most part, still in use today. During the 1st century, the repertoires of the workshops that produced these funerary monuments were broadened with the addition of other funeral monuments, with the most numerous among them originating from cult sacrificial altars.



Fig 2. Simple types of Hellenistic stelai from the island of Issa

However, the purpose of this paper is not to shed a measure of light on Greek, but rather on Roman stonemasonry, and the latter only within the context of the production of funerary monuments, which was one of the most developed trades alongside construction, particularly in the middle Dalmatia and Salona, the center of the Roman province of Dalmatia (Fig. 1). The Romans made use of the stone to a much larger degree than the Greeks, which is to be expected, considering the small number and size of the Greek settlements. Thus the Roman settlements were much larger, and the local, pre-Roman population was already romanized, which is to say, had adapted to the Roman way of life. Towns developed because the local people tended to gravitate towards them, along with people from other corners of the antique world, as numerous inscriptions clearly indicate. Thus there was a large increase in the number of citizens living in cities, which meant that there was suddenly a great need for stone as a construction material in some of the most populous cities, specifically for the manufacture of decorations, all kinds of sculptures, and funeral monuments in particular, which led to the expansion of old quarries and the opening of new ones.

The first funerary monuments in Dalmatia were stelai. A particular kind of simple, architectural stele developed in Greek towns (Fig. 2); it occasionally adopted a more complex structure and decorations, but was often of a simple shape derived from Greek architectural trends,



Fig. 3. A specimen of more complex type of Hellenistic stele. The island of Issa

specifically architectural stelai (Fig. 3).¹ Their typology is architecturally modeled, but we cannot use this sort of development process to draw any chronological conclusions as to the simplification or even removal of superfluous elements. By all accounts, it is simply a case of production becoming cheaper and thus affordable to a larger number of

1 On Greek stelai see NIKOLACI 1961-62, 57-90; NIKOLACI 1980, 205-227; CAMBI 2005, 11-13, fig. 5-6; KIRIGIN 2008, 9, No. 1, 14-16, No. 4-6; KUNTIĆ-MAKVIĆ, MAROHNIC 2010, 73-89; CAMBI 2002 (b), 37-38.



Fig. 4. Stele of Hellenistic type from Narona



Fig. 5. Luxury Roman stela from Salona

consumers. The complexity and simplicity of their forms and decorations clearly gravitated toward the latter in the larger center of production in Issa. However, the manufacture of a smaller number of more complex types points to the workshops' ability to adopt more elaborated forms of monument. As far as the epigraphy is concerned, there is a clear trend toward simplicity, mostly without complex sentences, with predominantly larger sets of names appearing, as the tombs of Issa were often used to bury several generations of a given family. They would usually all appear listed on one funerary monument.² It was not possible to determine whether there were multiple funeral monuments under one grave chamber, known to house up to several dozen skeletons.³ This would have been a logical conclusion, as there was a general desire for posthumous individualization.

Something which was most commonly seen in Narona (Fig. 4)⁴, as well as in Salona⁵ and elsewhere on

occasion⁶, is that the Greek type of stelai was accepted before any strong influence from Italy. There can be no doubt that Greek forms were used as a model, as none of the ones that were introduced in the following decades were around at the time. These early forms of Roman stelai were only slightly different from their Greek counterparts.

Their shapes were usually of a simple Issaeian form, which, aside from its gable, had no other distinguished architectural traits, except that they featured inscriptions in Latin instead of Greek, also with greatly simplified content (mostly names along with the simple phrases related to burials, i.e. *situs est*). However, we can also find several fragments with no inscription, but we should assume that they had inscriptions painted on, which naturally faded over time⁷. It was not until later that the influence of Italian stelai, which obviously originated from the North Italy (likely Aquileia), would be felt in these parts.

These forms were generally extremely simple (sometimes merely a rounded plate at the top) with no outstanding features⁸, and would soon be manufactured here, in Salona in particular, alongside monumental stelai that featured series of family portraits (Fig. 5). These stelai obviously belonged to wealthy families, which commissioned burial monuments that would cost an entire fortune

2 As indicated by the names of the deceased that belonged to a family, which serves as an example of a lavish stela from Issa, see KUNTIĆ-MAKVIĆ, MAROHNIC 2010, 83-84. It lists eight names.

3 Unfortunately, there are few tombs that have not been previously opened. A small number of those that were not pillaged contain numerous skulls. Their inscriptions likely record only the main branch of the family tree.

4 See KIRIGIN 1980, 169-172, fig. 1-3.

5 The *stela* of Lolia Muza see CAMBI 2005, 11-12, fig. 5, 6.

6 GABRIČEVIĆ 2015, 195- 214, fig. 1, 2. Original paper in *Diadora* 9, 1980, 251-271, fig. on pp. 252 - 253.

7 KIRIGIN 1980, fig. 3.

8 CAMBI 2013 (a), 22, fig. 24, 25.



Fig. 6. Examples of Roman military stelae from Gardun



Fig. 7. Roman military tropaeum from Gardun

on their own⁹. Accompanying the soldiers that served in Dalmatia, who were stationed in legion camps (Burnum and Tilurium) at the start of the 1st century, came monumental and richly decorated monuments, which often featured military symbolism and tools (Fig. 6).

Both of the military camps here were home to active workshops that produced funeral monuments, mostly stelai for the soldiers, alongside other kinds of monuments. The most important of these is a fragment of a trophy from Tilurium (Fig. 7). Such official trophy had a great deal of influence on the decoration of funeral monuments (in Tilurium obviously), it is to assume that they were produced in the same workshop.¹⁰

⁹ See CAMBI 2013 (a), 22, fig. 26, 27.

¹⁰ CAMBI 2010, 125-150, fig. 4-11; CAMBI 2013 (a), 9-21, fig. 4-7.



Fig. 8. Ara of Pomponia Vera from Salona

During the 1st century, the repertoires of the workshops that produced these funerary monuments were broadened with the addition of other funeral monuments, with the most numerous among them originating from cult sacrificial altars. The leap from altar to funeral monument of a similar shape is not that great, as the grave were *locus religiosus*, upon which sacrifices were offered for the deceased, or more specifically, for the gods of the underworld, which led to the introduction of the inscription *D(is) M(anibus)* at the end of the 1st century (Fig. 8).

The sarcophagus, both receptacle for the body and the funeral monument, began its life in Dalmatia around the middle of the 2nd century, although there were isolated examples from the 1st century. The largest source of locally made sarcophagi matches a period within the 3rd century, when the standard became the three-piece front face (a central inscription field with two empty fields on its sides or a *tabula* for reliefs, usually in the form of erotes with a reversed torch). These symbolic-decorative elements are a clear indication that the workshops that produced these funeral monuments were all connected, and shared a common path of development in regard to formal treatment and iconography (Fig. 9). All of these funeral monuments have the iconographic motif of a portrait of the deceased (Fig. 10). This is how these funeral monument workshops helped developed portrait art, as part of the education of their personnel, as portraits were in high demand from their customers. The portrait began to fall in disuse in the first half of the 4th century. Even other forms of funeral monuments, aside from sarcophagi and smaller, more modest, stelai (usually undecorated), slowly began to disappear. However, sarcophagi were also



Fig. 9.
An example of local
Salonitan sarcophagus.
Vranjic near Salona



Fig. 10.
A fragment of sarcophagus
lid from Salona. Early 3rd
century



Fig. 11.
Fragment of Christian
sarcophagus chest

convenient for Christian burials, as they were suited to laying whole bodies to rest, as well as housing numerous bodies (Fig. 11). We have uncovered over 2000 sarcophagi and fragments to date, but this number is provisional, as there are new discoveries appearing every day.

Sculptures, sarcophagi, and other forms of funeral monuments made from local stone were not exported from Dalmatia. However, the late Antique saw the beginning of the export of the stone itself for the other coasts of the Adriatic. It is notorious that the monolithic dome

of Theodore's Mausoleum in Ravenna was removed from its original location in a quarry in Istria (likely from the west coast), whose structure and quality were similar to those of Dalmatia. On the other hand, several sarcophagi from Dalmatia were exported to the opposite, Italian coast of the Adriatic, from the 3rd century onward. These were mostly simple chests and lids, with a gable roof and angular *acroteria*, made from bituminous limestone from Brač. The 6th century saw a notable increase in the export of sarcophagi, which had central, plastic crosses



Fig. 12.
Local sarcophagus with cross



Fig. 13.
A sarcophagus chest of
Proconnesian marble Salona

and simple cover with four *acroteria* or cylindrical lid (Fig. 12). They featured several types of crosses.¹¹

The idea of a central cross on the sarcophagi was adopted from the altar screens made of Proconnesian marble that were imported to Dalmatia as finished products from the island of Proconnesos (today Marmara) in Propontis. Such *plutei* were also made from local limestone, and the motif was later adapted on sarcophagi. There are numbers of such sarcophagi on Brač and in Salona and its vicinity. According to this author's records, there are seventeen such items on the eastern coast of Italy, and one in Albania.¹² That makes eighteen such examples, which are identical in both form and materials used to those from Dalmatia, discovered to date.¹³ Proconnesian marble was imported to Dalmatia until the end of the Antique and was extensively for church decorations, while the limestone trade on the eastern Adriatic only lasted until the end of Antique civilization.

How and why the first export of finished stone products came is questionable, but anyway, the demand

for sarcophagi continued to grow into the later centuries as their popularity grew considerably, and other destinations across the Adriatic did not have any such workshops due to their lack of quality stone and unfavorable typology. It is clear that the ratio of cost to quality was satisfactory, as the sarcophagi were greatly in demand. Local limestone, particularly the high quality stone, was collected in Seget near Trogir. It was more suited for making statues and reliefs than stone from Brač, which was predominantly used in making sarcophagi and for building material. Stonemasonry was an important branch of trade across the whole of the eastern Adriatic. Half-finished sarcophagi were sent from their quarries to Salona, where they had to be finished. Once completed, such sarcophagi were also shipped to other locations in Dalmatia. Their crosses were occasionally left unfinished, due to the extent of demand. These examples of sarcophagi in local limestone indicate that, in all likelihood, the economic situation necessitated importing cheaper stone from Istria and Dalmatia across the Adriatic. It is very likely that trade was booming.

Until the late Antique, Dalmatia was mostly focused on its own stone, but for more luxurious sculpture and building decorations material from quarries on Proconnesius (Fig. 13) and Attica (Mons Pentelicon and Mons Hymettus, Fig. 14) was imported. A vast number of lavishly decorated sarcophagi, mostly featuring

11 CAMBI 2002, 47-56, fig. 1-12; CAMBI 2007, 87-131, fig. 12 and 13.

12 CAMBI 2002 (a), 49-53.

13 CAMBI 2002 (a), 53.



Fig. 14.
An Attic sarcophagus. Split



Fig. 15.
Sarcophagus fragment of
Carrara marble (Salona)

mythological themes, were imported from the aforementioned stoneworking centers.¹⁴ Even though their numbers were far more limited, sarcophagi made from Carrara marble manufactured in the workshops of Rome were also represented in Dalmatia, and mostly in Salona (Fig. 15).¹⁵ Sarcophagi from Proconnesian marble were predominantly brought to Dalmatia as roughly hewn blocks, which were then finished on the spot.¹⁶

Apart from a short overview of the development of funeral monuments made from local limestone, the particular goal of this paper is to present the history of the management and ownership of rock quarries, which have not been the topic of much discussion in the past. The emperors discovered the benefits of exploiting Dalmatian limestone quite early. Thus they acquired the

quarries in Seget and Brač, although it is impossible to say exactly when this happened (Fig. 1). This is confirmed by the inscriptions of the soldiers who organized and oversaw the works at the quarries, and would measure the stone for various orders, as certain buildings also clearly indicate. These inscriptions were found in the vicinity of the quarries on Brač and Seget near Trogir. Of all of the Greek colonies on the Adriatic, only Issa undertook any further colonization. Tragurium, the Issacan settlement, was very well positioned for shipping and trade. The waterways leading north passed around the southern side of the Trogir island. On the other side of the island, the coast was home to deposits of outstanding limestone, which is still being exploited to this day. The people of Issa had to have been familiar with harvesting and utilizing the stone, as their mother town (Syracuse) was known for its quarries (Latomie), which are both a popular tourist attraction and a source of knowledge on the historical exploitation of stone in modern times. Syracusan colonists passed on their knowledge and experience on the eastern Adriatic, and it is no stretch to say that the exploitation of stone was one of the reasons

14 On antique sarcophagi see CAMBI 1988.

15 CAMBI 1977, 444-459.

16 On the import of sarcophagi see the study by G. Koch in this volume.



Fig. 16. Hercules' shrine in the Rasohe quarry on the island of Brač



Fig. 17. Altar dedicated to Hercules

they founded the settlement.¹⁷ Pliny the Elder, in his well-known characterization of the settlement: *Tragurium civium Romanorum marmore notum*, thus giving two definitions of the city. On one hand, it is a town of Roman citizens known for its marble (limestone).¹⁸ Tragurium, like its mother town of Issa, went on to become a town of citizens who had Roman citizenships in the later period of the Republic, even though it still had not acquired the status of a city.¹⁹ The municipal status was undoubtedly lost for Tragurium when Issa allied with the losing side in the war between Caesar and Pompey, which was largely fought on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. It is likely that the exploitation of the quarries passed into the ownership of the emperor as early as the age of Augustus. The history of the quarries is told through inscriptions dedicated

to Hercules, the guardian of both Seget and Brač.²⁰ The first such inscription is on an altar with a dedication and wreath from Seget. The second inscription was found some time later, and its contents are unknown, aside from the fact that it was dedicated to Hercules.²¹ The third inscription is also dedicated to Hercules, and was found discarded stone material at the *Kučičeva kava* quarry at Seget Donji.²² It is not reliably known whether all of these dedications to Hercules refer to a single place of worship

17 All of the towns that were founded, as a prerequisite for their development, had to have knowledge on selecting and exploiting stone.

18 ZANINOVIĆ 1998, 180.

19 WILKES 1969, 227.

20 JELIČIĆ 1981, 97-104, fig. 1. Inscription reads: Hercu(-li)/Sacrum/P(ublius) Plotius 7 (centurio) le/g(ionis)] VII C(laudia) P(ia) F(idelis)/V(otum) S(olvit) L(ibens) M(erito).

21 JELIČIĆ 1981, 103. The author only mentions the second altar in an addendum to her work.

22 MARŠIĆ 2007, 111-128, fig. 1,2. Inscription reads: [H] ecvii[i]/Avg(usto) S(acrum) Donatvs Gn(ei) Corneli/Certi (servus) V(otum) S(olvit) L(bens). Even though the inscription makes no mention of the occupation of dedicant *Donatus*, we can still reliably say that he was a slave of *Claudius Certus*, who was likely a military man.

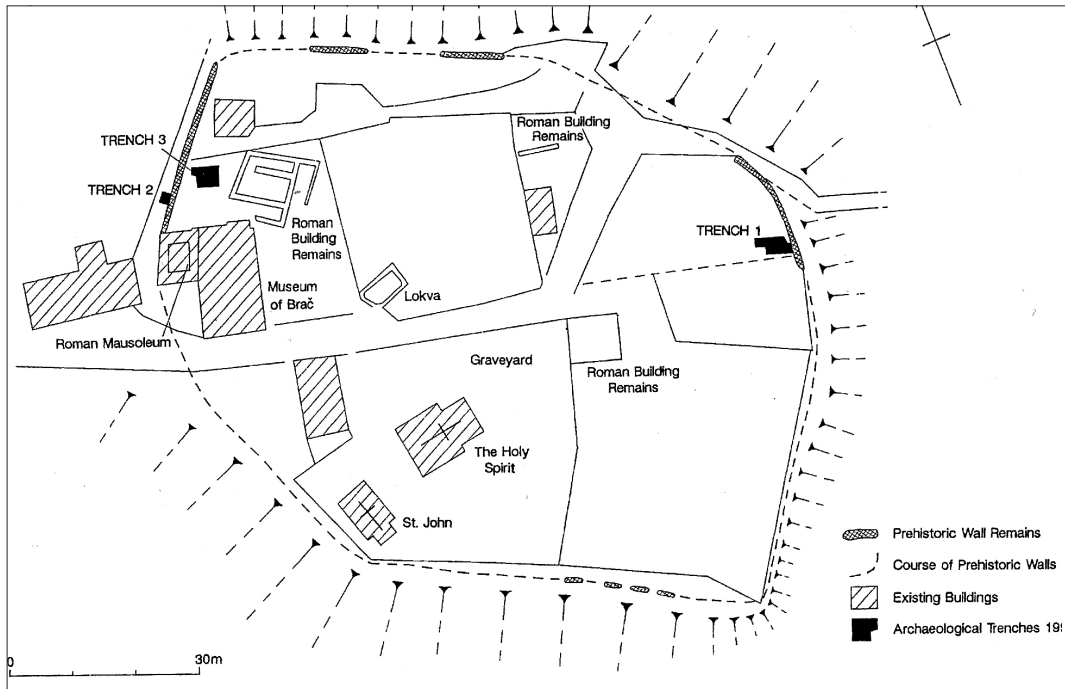


Fig. 19.
Ground plan of
Škrip on the island
of Brač

were not representatives of the commissioning party, but worked as part of the management for the meeting of incoming commissions. This is indicated by the function of a centurion called Pompeus with the rank of *ensor*. There were various posts in the army in charge of taking measurements, but it is likely that the soldier in question was in charge of measuring the gradient of the terrain.³⁰ The only person in charge of any military unit was the emperor himself, through his chief military commanders. As the soldiers originated from various troops, they were undoubtedly individually dispatched to work in the quarry as specialists. They would not have been the ones actually quarrying the stone, as that was reserved mostly for slave labor. The soldiers ran the processing of stone quarrying, and would determine the necessary volumes needed, in accordance with the various orders and projects that were being worked on at the time. Meanwhile, a separate service was in charge of the administration and finances of the imperial treasury (*fiscus*). One of the most important sources of income for the treasury was, in fact, the exploitation of the quarries.

Military inscriptions regarding the quarries at Trogir and on Brač are clear evidence that the trade was not in the hands of private enterprise. Soldiers were not available to other private and civil institutions, as they were paid directly by the emperor, and were thus tasked with jobs that they were trained to do in the army. There were undoubtedly many other kinds of workers in a

quarry, who would keep tallies and reports for the imperial treasury. There can be no doubt that the center of the Brač stoneworking industry was in Škrip, and that Seget's was in Trogir. This is why none of these city-like settlements had an actual civil government with municipal functionaries. There are certainly no inscriptions in Trogir or Škrip that would indicate this. *Tragurium civium romanorum* does not mean that there was some form of civil government, rather, it only indicates the presence of Roman citizens, and even if there was some form of civil government, this quickly changed after Caesar.³¹ The entire settlement would have subserved the vast stoneworking apparatus (from quarrying raw materials, to shaping the final product). An inscription by Publius Cloelius, a soldier of a Campanian cohort, seems to indicate some sort of relationship between Salona and Tragurion. His function, *custos Traguri*, was certainly not municipal in nature.³²

31 WILKES 1969, 227.

32 CIL III 8693 Inscription reads: *P(ublius) Cloelius miles C(o)h(ortis) Campanae custos Traguri/V(otum) s(olvit) L(ibens) M(erito)*. The inscription slab was also put to use as the door for the burial chamber in the basilica in Manastirine, where it is located today. It is a pity that the portion of the inscription dedicated to a deity, which every votive monument had to have, was not preserved. The position of *custos* was known among military nomenclature; see CLAUSS 1999, 37. A soldier with such a title would have likely overseen the workings of the entire quarry production in Trogir.

30 CLAUSS 1999, 73 (s.v. protector), 78 (s.v. singularis) 1999, 57 (s.v. mensor librator).

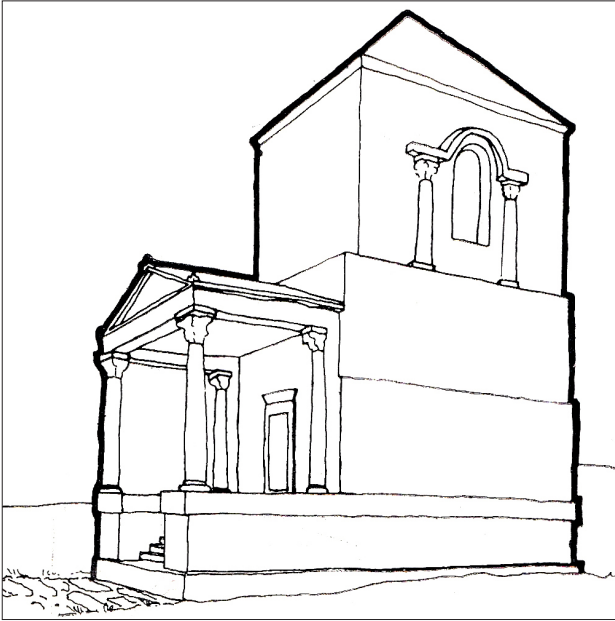


Fig. 20. The Škrip tower. The island of Brač (reconstruction by S. Faber)



Fig. 21. The Škrip watch tower

Not even Škrip, or anywhere else on Brač, saw the development of a civilian city. Škrip is the only place to display any of the characteristics of a city at the time; walls, streets, a forum, and temples, but no inscriptions to indicate a civil constitution (Fig. 19). Unlike Trogir, which became an archdiocese and city in the Middle Ages, Škrip never developed to that point. Thus, Brač was the only large island on the eastern Adriatic without its own city center. Any attempts to (falsely) corroborate the existence of a city here in the Middle Ages are entirely baseless.³³ The Roman imperial administration actively blocked any civil development. It was only under modern administrative structures that Supetar became

a city center. Unlike Tragurion, which was known for its marble, Brač was praised by Pliny the Elder not for its stone but for its goats (*Brattia capris laudata*), which could have indicated that Brač's quarries were still not very developed or widely known during the 1st century. It would seem that they came fully into their own during the time of the preparation and construction of Diocletian's palace in Split. It is clear that it was significantly easier to bring in the materials needed for this grand undertaking with ships and rafts than it was to transport them by land (on carts) from Seget. An added Hellenistic heroon, which had an arched lintel as seen on the southern corners of Diocletian's palace, only much simpler, was used for the purposes of overseeing and managing the quarries (Fig. 20, 21).³⁴

33 CAMBI 2013 (b), 55-69, fig. 1.

34 CAMBI 2013 (c), fig. 14 and 25.

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