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## “PADUANS” AMONG THE RANKS OF THE PROFESSORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KRAKÓW IN THE EARLY YEARS OF ELECTIVE MONARCHY IN POLAND

### ABSTRACT

The author analyses the career and academic work of those distinguished professors at the University of Kraków who studied in Padua in the age of first elective monarchs (from the 1570s to ca. mid-17<sup>th</sup> century). One of the key questions in the article is to what extent the Paduan stage of education influenced the university career and intellectual culture of the Polish academics. More broadly, the author tries to indicate future research prospects of the studies on the implications of the University of Kraków professors’ Paduan background.

KEYWORDS: University of Kraków, University of Padua, Polish “Paduans”

The history of the University of Kraków in the period analysed in this study, i.e., from the 1570s to ca. mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, is rarely discussed by researchers. Suffice it to say that the biographies of merely a handful of professors of the period have been extensively researched and that only Marcin Wadowita has hitherto been covered in a comprehensive monograph (Graff 2018). At that time, the university must have faced a host of problems. With first generations of humanists already departed, the ranks of professors were dominated by advocates of Neo-Scholasticism and university’s confessionalisation. Papal legates tended to view Kraków’s *alma mater* as a bulwark of Catholicism, which effectively resisted the currents of the Reformation. The Tridentine Creed was compulsory for anyone pursuing a degree at the University of Kraków, with newly enrolled students renouncing all heresy by swearing on the Bible.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the University needed a profound reform of its curriculum. Some professors were perfectly aware of the challenges facing the institution and anxious of the rise of competitive Jesuit schools, which – unlike the University – were tuition-free, and their curricula were considered current and relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> For more see: Rykaczewski 1864: 140; Sondel 2012: 456, 1047–1048; Barycz 1935: 308; Urban 1964: 275–277; Machaj 2015: 95–135; Graff 2018: 241.

Kraków's Jesuits intended to establish a college of higher education, sparking a conflict between Cracovian professors and the Jesuit order, which tried to leverage its influence not only with local parliaments (*sejmiki*), the Sejm and the king, but even with the Holy See.<sup>2</sup>

A partial reform of the curriculum was implemented as late as in 1603 under the rectorate of Kraków Canon Mikołaj Dobrocieski, who (*nota bene*) had made an entry in the University of Padua's Roll 4 years before as a member of Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł's retinue headed for Rome for Jubilee celebrations (Archivio Antico dell'Università di Padova: 51; Barycz 1971: 32, no. 251; Barycz 1939–1946: 242–243; Pietrzyk 2000: 159). In line with the reform, the instruction was no longer based on “The Four Books of Sentences” by Peter Lombardo but on *Summa Theologica* by St. Thomas Aquinas (Biblioteka Jagiellońska: MS 1171 III, sheet 1r–9v; Szujski 1882: 364–408). A number of organizational improvements were made, too, ensuring the smooth running of the university. Most recent studies, e.g., by Maciej Zdanek, showed that, despite the claims to the contrary in older publications on the subject, the University had in fact experienced a minor academic revival which lasted at least until the Swedish Deluge of 1655–1660 (Zdanek 2017: 30). Among the scholars who contributed to the process was a group which can be referred to as “Paduans”, i.e., former students or sometimes even doctors of the University of Padua.

The University of Kraków had enjoyed close relations with the University of Padua since the early years of Kraków's *alma mater*. Many eminent Krakow students and professors studied in Padua, frequently attaining academic degrees.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Padua featured prominently in biographies of certain university chancellors, i.e., Kraków bishops. Let us just mention that those officials included, among others, Piotr Wysz – the first chancellor of the renewed University of Kraków, author of *Speculum Aureum*, a work criticising papal fiscalism, which became popular all across Europe (Seńko 1996) – and Paweł Włodkowic (Paulus Vladimiri) – rector of the University and creator of *ius gentium*, who became famous during the Council of Constance (Ehrlich 2017), or Marcin Szyszkowski – a bishop of Kraków during the early modern period (Biedrzycka, Kawecki 2014/2015: 392–406). Among Kraków students who continued their education in Italy, also in Padua, one must also mention Nicholas Copernicus – one of the most outstanding minds of the early-modern Europe on par with Leonardo da Vinci – or prospective cardinal Stanisław Hozjusz, and Bishop of Warmia and historian Marcin Kromer. Jan Kochanowski, a poet, formerly a student at the University of Kraków, also studied in Padua. The Poles who studied in Padua in the early modern period also included eminent politicians, such as Jan Zamoyski, chancellor and hetman, founder of the city of Zamość and the Zamoyski Academy (Barycz 1938; Lenart 2013; Łempicki 1980: 353–380). Also, it should be noted that Polish kings Stephen Bathory and John III Sobieski did not study in Padua, contrary to earlier opinions (Gömöry 2014: 169–173; Wójcik 1983: 35–42)<sup>4</sup>. However, one must remember that not all of those who came to Padua received a well-rounded education, since many arrived “as part

<sup>2</sup> See e.g.: Natoński 2002; Graff 2018: 305–334; Bieniarzówna 1984: 316–319; Urban 1964: 278–284; Barycz 1958: 134–169; Szymborski 2013/2014: 46–49; Sondel 2012: 586–590.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Fijałek 1900; Relazioni 1964; Barycz 1965; Sroka 2016: 381–391; cf. Del Negro 2001–2003.

<sup>4</sup> See also: Tygielski 2021: 21–46; Lenart et al. 2019: 189–267; Quirini-Popławska 2013: 19–30; Lenart 2016: 69–103.

of a general trend or to experience some peculiar intellectual adventure” (Graff 2018:198), at times only occasionally, hence it is rather difficult to determine who was actually a student. Maciej Loret used to refer to such individuals poetically as “migrant birds” (Loret 1929: 161–163; Chachaj, 2017: 352–353, 357). Likewise, as early as in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, students who left the University of Kraków to study in Italy were called “sed studentes sicut et aves” by Stanisław of Skarbimierz in the rector’s sermon (Jung-Palczewska: 56). In this case, educational duties were treated less seriously, and more weight was attached to social interactions, as well as the numerous attractions of Padua and its surroundings, e.g., Venice. In the early modern period, Cracovian professors often treated Padua as a temporary “stopover” en route to Rome, where they intended to study theology (examples include famous scholars such as Marcin Wadowita and Adam of Opatów) or law (Andrzej Schoenus). Even if they did not stay long, Polish student rolls were supplemented with additional information next to entries made by the most notable ones. For example, next to Wadowita’s own handwritten entry in the roll of 1605, the following annotation was made some decades later: *Post in Universitate Cracoviensi Theologus*, adding the date of his death, *Mortuus AD. 1641 27 Ianuarii* (Archivio Antico dell’Università di Padova: 61; Barycz 1971: 38, no. 416). In Kraków, Italian educational background was something to be proud of when recounting past experience. For instance, Wawrzyniec Śmieszkwic, a Kraków professor and prospective Paduan doctor of medicine (Baster 2016), in his panegyric addressed Marcin Wadowita as follows: “You, the jewel of the Polish nation, adorned with the laurel of victory, made your way through immense crowds of Italians” [transl. Tomasz Wolski] (Śmieszkwic 1617; Graff 2018: 207).

Any list of the most distinguished Polish “Paduans” in the broadest possible sense of the word, i.e., those who studied or at least occasionally stayed in Padua in the period of interest, would be incomplete without Stanisław Sokołowski, a scholar who was considered the most notable theologian at the University of Krakow in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. A polemist well-known all over Europe, he was King Stephen Bathory’s preacher. It was thanks to this short and hunchback man, probably born out of wedlock, that the king allowed the university to obtain the wealthy provostry of St. Florian, the originally owned by the same Sokołowski. The scholar was ennobled in recognition of his service to the king in 1571. Sokołowski became famous in Europe due to his work “*Censura Orientalis Ecclesiae*”, in which he criticised the answer given by Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremiah II to German Lutherans. He studied in Kraków from 1572 to 1575 and went on to acquire his doctoral degree in Italy, encouraged by Bishop of Włocławek Stanisław Karnkowski. He became doctor of theology in Bologna (1575), although he had started studying theology at Sapienza in Rome. For some time, he also studied law in Padua, where he became friends with Transylvanian chancellor Farkas Kovacsóczy. The education he obtained in Padua, Bologna and Rome, coupled with his outstanding didactic and writing talents enabled him to become part of the intellectual elite, not only in Poland but also in Europe. Mindful of the poverty in which he had been raised, Sokołowski cared for destitute students until his death in 1593.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> On Stanisław Sokołowski see also: Sondel 2012: 1219–1220; Ryczek 2011; Pawlak 2009: 15–39; Panuś 2005: 42–60; Murawiec 2000: 240–247; Bieńkowski 2000: 3–9; Grzebień 2000/2001: 183–189; Wyczawski 1983: 132–136; Bracha 1947: 103–134; Usowicz 1946: 97–126; Cichowski 1929; Graff 2018: *iuxta indicem*.

Andrzej Schoneus, another eminent scholar and Paduan student, who later became the rector of the University and the dean of the Faculty of Theology, was his friend and household member. Schoneus himself hailed from Głogów in Silesia. He enrolled at the University of Kraków in 1583 and obtained the degree of the Master of Liberal Arts in 1586. A university lecturer in Kraków and educator of young men in the Tęczyński family, he went to study in Italy. His first destination was Padua, yet he obtained doctorate *utriusque iuris* in Pisa, and a doctorate in theology at Sapienza in Rome in 1598. He had officially enrolled in the University of Padua in the academic year 1595/6 as a tutor (*preceptor*) of the boys from the Tęczyński family and stayed there for at least a year, until mid-1597, when he left for Rome with his pupils. Apparently, his academic path was not only his own choice; rather, it was in accordance with his agreements with Tęczyński family, who paid him for the tuition of the three young men. Upon his return to Poland, despite the staffing crisis at the Faculty of Theology – which at that time had only one theologian with a doctoral degree, as most doctors of theology had died either due to old age or in the epidemic – Schoneus waited several years for the validation of his doctorate. He complained about it profusely in his letter to Bishop Bernard Maciejowski. Schoneus's degree was finally recognised as late as 1602, although the authorities had applied an exceptional, fast-track procedure (Biblioteka Jagiellońska: MS 2579, sheet 17; Schoneus 1602; Chachaj 1992/1993: 7; Rechowicz 1975: 21; Graff 2019: 43). It should be noted that the University did not readily accept diplomas awarded abroad (Graff 2018: 213–214), as proved by the following quote from Szymon Starowolski: “Someone from here who has acquired a degree abroad will not be placed among the ranks of professors unless he proves the merit of his talent in a public dispute and obtains a consent from His Magnificence Rector or the Most Honourable Chancellor in the person of the Bishop of Kraków” [transl. Tomasz Wolski] (Starowolski 1991: 356). Henryk Barycz argued that scholars with doctoral titles “acquired abroad, mainly in Italy, were (...) considered intruders and prevented from accessing the faculty by all methods possible” [transl. Tomasz Wolski] (Barycz 1935: 168). At times, it was directly said that some Italian universities enabled a “fast track” to obtaining the degree in exchange of suitable payments, whereas in Kraków the path from *magisterium artium* to doctorate sometimes took 10 or even more years.<sup>6</sup> Those foreign doctors were referred to in Kraków as *doctores alibi promoti* and they encountered considerable obstacles to diploma validation, being required to complete the standard university career path (Morawski 1900: 395–397). After the recognition of his degree, Schoneus himself was one of the university's fathers as the dean of the Faculty of Theology and eight times university rector in a trying period, in which the dispute between the University of Kraków and the Jesuits over the monopoly for education in the capital and the Crown escalated. Having studied in Kraków, Padua, Pisa and Rome, he was proficient in both Latin and Greek. In 1612, he founded a separate chair of the Greek language at the University of Kraków. Schoneus was regarded as an excellent lawyer, theologian, and humanist poet who wrote, among other works, eclogues deeply rooted in the culture of ancient culture. He supported students and was a benefactor of the University. Interestingly, he assisted his two brothers by bringing them to Kraków

<sup>6</sup> Note that there were other ways of obtaining an academic degree besides universities, e.g. in the Roman Curia. Cf. Rehberg 2009: 183–215,

to study at the University; one of them, John, took his pupils Aleksander Ługowski and Jan Daniłowicz on an educational tour of Europe (Ingolstadt, Dillingen, Siena, Bologna, and Padua, the main focus of this article).<sup>7</sup>

Obviously, among the most distinguished professors at the Kraków university in the late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century we should name Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno, a medical doctor educated in Padua in the years 1589–1590. Owing to problems with the validation of his doctorate, a disheartened Petrycy moved to Lviv, and came back to Kraków after the death of his wife. He took part e.g. in the Dymitriad.<sup>8</sup> Having come back from Moscow, he briefly resumed his work at the University, yet, due to his conflict with another “Paduan”, Walenty Fontana, over treatment methods, he resigned from his post at the university and returned to practising medicine. He set up a foundation for a university historiographer, and the first person appointed to that position was his son Jan Innocenty Petrycy.<sup>9</sup>

An equally outstanding “Paduan” was Szymon Syreniusz (Simon Syrenius), poor people’s doctor on behalf of the University of Kraków, author of a monumental herbal, in which he described 765 plants. Syreniusz acquired his doctorate in medicine from the University of Padua in 1577, supervised by Hieronymus Mercurialis, and his diploma was validated in Krakow as late as 1590. He had learned botanical knowledge by studying plants already in Padua, in locations such as the local botanical garden, under the guidance of eminent masters (Barcik 2009/2010: 279–281; Lenart 2016: 95).<sup>10</sup> Let me mention that his herbal was published by another illustrious member of the Faculty of Medicine, his intimate friend and Paduan doctor of 1597 Gabriel Joannicy of Przeworsk, who was a student of Paduan researcher of the Egyptian flora Prospero Alpini. Gabriel Joannicy is also the author of a non-extant work on the plants in Kraków and its surroundings. He was not incorporated into the Faculty of Medicine until 13 years after the award of his Paduan degree, based on the skill he demonstrated in a dispute on mental illness. Joannicy was appointed to the chair of botany, founded in 1602 by Jan Zemelka (Zemelius), an alumnus of the University of Kraków and Paduan doctor himself. Inspired by the botanical garden and anatomical theatre in Padua, Zemelka founded Poland’s first chair of anatomy in 1602 (Sondel 2012: 44, 170–171, 931, 600–601, 1445–1446; Lenart 2016: 95).

Remarkably, other distinguished “Paduans” among the professors at the University of Kraków who had acquired their doctoral degrees in medicine from the University of Padua, often held rectoral positions at the University of Kraków. Stanisław Pik Zawadzki, who obtained his doctorate in medicine from the University of Padua in 1557, was a rector of the University of Kraków twice in the 1580s. Zawadzki had also studied in other European universities, such as Heidelberg, Basel, and Frankfurt (an der Oder). He earned the reputation of an outstanding physician and was ennobled by King Sigismund II Augustus. He was the first lay vice-chancellor of the University of Kraków.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Hajdukiewicz 1994: 597–600; Pietrzyk 2000: 163; Ozorowski 1983: 27–29; Sondel 2012: 71, 293, 350, 520, 532, 587, 815, 961, 1066–1067, 1171–1172; Graff 2018: *iuxta indicem*; Rössel 1957: 156–173.

<sup>8</sup> In 1606, Petrycy went to Moscow for the coronation of Marina Mniszech as a member of her retinue. Following the outbreak of an uprising against Poles, he was imprisoned to be released after a year and a half.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Sondel 2012: 978–979; Barycz 1980: 703–707; Barycz 1968: 295–326; Barycz 1957; Szpilczyński 1961; Grzybowski 1956; Wąsik 1923–1935; Wąsik 1968; Budzyńska-Daca 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Sondel 2012: 931, 1286–1287.

His tenure as the rector saw the creation of Private Schools, subsidiaries to the University, in 1588. They were later called “Nowodworski Schools” (Pietrzyk 2000: 154).<sup>11</sup>

Walenty Fontana, son of a peasant, was probably the first person in the world to lecture on Copernicus’ heliocentric theory (for a year and a half, from 1578 to 1580, at the University of Kraków). Around 1590, he travelled to Padua to study medicine, and acquired his doctorate in 1593. During his stay in Italy, he also visited Naples and Rome; he returned to Poland in 1595. He was one of the most respected academics at the University of Kraków and was elected rector a total of 6 times. Upon his return, he was incorporated into the Artium Faculty; in the meantime, he also ran his medical practice. Interestingly, together with another “Paduan”, Marcin Wadowita, he saved Arian theologian Fausto Sozzini from being drowned by students in the Vistula River in 1598. He also managed to pry Calvinist Wincenty Łyszkowic, a physician, from the hands of the unruly crowd in 1617. Fontana acquired urban citizenship and became married. A renowned astrologer, he was notorious for reprimanding young people for their lack of diligence in learning. Of particular note is the fact that he was not admitted to the Faculty of Medicine until 17 years after his doctorate from the University of Padua (Pietrzyk 2000: 162; Birkenmajer 1948: 62–63; Graff 2018: 246–257; Graff 2009: 281–295).

The group of professors with a doctorate in medicine acquired in Padua also included many time rector Krzysztof Najmanowicz, brother of another rector, Jakub, also listed among Polish students who had enrolled in Padua. Having studied in Pisa and Bologna, Krzysztof acquired a doctoral degree in medicine from the University of Padua circa 1609; his request for the recognition of this qualification was rejected when he had returned to Kraków in 1609. Surprisingly, his application was granted rather quickly (the following year): a rare occurrence, which led to his admission to the Faculty of Medicine. He served as a doctor for Bishop of Kraków Piotr Tylicki, and as a town councillor; he was a wealthy and married man, who went to become rector a total of four times. Together with his brother and other professors, he effectively defended the University of Kraków as the conflict with the Jesuits exacerbated. He died a destitute man in Rome in 1653, having escaped from Kraków, as he had clashed with the University officials and had been accused of *lèse-majesté*; he was even chased by the Inquisition (Pietrzyk 2000: 181; Hajdukiewicz 1977: 645–649).<sup>12</sup>

Maciej Wojeński was another doctor of medicine educated in Padua who later became rector of the University of Kraków. In December 1613, he had made his entry in the roll of Polish students and acquired his doctoral degree 3 months later, in February 1614. His doctorate too was hastily validated in Kraków in 1615, and he was able to take up the Chair of Anatomy founded by Jan Zemełka, another Paduan alumnus. Interestingly, it was thanks to his medical prowess that the effects of the plague which ravaged Kraków in 1622 were greatly alleviated. A wealthy man, he married, served as a city councillor and mayor; he held the office of the rector three times and became ennobled (Pietrzyk 2000: 174; Sondel 2012: 1419).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> On Nowodworski Schools see: Barycz 1988; Graff 2013: 159–176.

<sup>12</sup> The contention between Najmanowicz and the University arose for financial reasons.

<sup>13</sup> On Wojeński see also: Kasprzyk 2010: 580, no. 472; Noga 2008: no. 199; Suchodolski 1974: 763–764.



Among the rectors of the University of Kraków with a doctorate in medicine one should certainly mention Jan Brożek (Ioannes Broscius), the most eminent Polish scholar of the age, brilliant mathematician, and Copernicus’s first biographer. A protégé of Walenty Fontana, he studied in Padua for 4 years, when Piotr Mucharski was the councillor of the Polish nation in Padua.<sup>14</sup> Brożek acquired his doctorate in Padua in the year 1623. He was one of the very few medical doctors who decided to pursue an ecclesiastical career. He authored an anti-Jesuit work entitled *Gratis*.<sup>15</sup> He died in the plague, during his tenure as the rector in 1652. Brożek’s epitaph read that he was “the European prince of mathematics” (Starowolski 1655: 185). He is also remembered as a benefactor of the university, to which he donated e.g., an impressive book collection and the Jagiellonian globe (*Globus Jagellonicus*) dating back to ca. 1510, already showing the newly-discovered America (Pietrzyk 2000: 184–185; Sondel 2012: 179–182).<sup>16</sup> As demonstrated in the recent survey on the book collections of Kraków professors, the enormous books collection belonging to Brożek featured many works by Paduan masters. Some of them have survived at the Jagiellonian Library to this day; some were certainly brought to Poland directly from Padua (Quirini-Popławska, Frankowicz 2018: 14–15, 30).

At this point it is perhaps worth explaining, in statistical terms, how the information presented above compares in reference to the most prominent group: the rectors of the University of Kraków. In the years 1573–1655, of 38 rectors, some of which held the office more than once, as many as 15 were what I referred to as “Paduans” earlier in this article, which corresponds to nearly 40% of all rectors in the group (Pietrzyk 2000: *passim*). Only 6 in this group had acquired their doctoral degree from the University of Padua, namely Stanisław Pik Zawadzki, Walenty Fontana, Krzysztof Najmanowicz, Wawrzyniec Śmieszkwic, Jan Brożek, and Maciej Wojeński, which amounts to 16% of all rectors in those years and 40% of all “Paduan” rectors. In each case, the doctorate was in medicine, which may imply that medical studies in Padua enjoyed the highest prestige, at least among Kraków professors. In fact, this is confirmed by data on the educational background of other, less known professors. The group of 9 “Paduan” rectors without doctorate from Paduan university included: Jakub Górski, Andrzej Schoneus, Mikołaj Dobrocieski, Piotr of Górczyn, Jakub Najmanowicz, Adam of Opatów, Gabriel Ochocki, Jakub Witeliusz, and Paweł Herka. Some of them studied in Padua for a longer period, for example Ochocki. If we include in the ranks of rectors who were former Paduan students other University of Kraków professors with long- or short-term connections to Padua, such as the aforementioned distinguished academics like Stanisław Sokołowski, Szymon Syreniusz, Sebastian Petrycy of Pilzno or Marcin Wadowita, as well as other individuals who have not been named in this article, we may notice that studying in Padua was quite attractive, at least among the Krakow academic elite, though detailed statistics for the entire group of professor of the period require a separate analysis. Obviously, those professors

<sup>14</sup> The same Mucharski became Paduan doctor of medicine (1619) and, subsequently, dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Kraków, i.a. in years 1659/60, 1665.

<sup>15</sup> A separate research problem is the question to what extent the studies in Padua (then part of the Venetian Republic) contributed to the anti-Jesuit attitude of Brożek and other Polish „Paduans”? The expulsion of Jesuits from La Serenissima in 1605 was referred to, e.g., in the writings from the period of the Sandomierz rebellion.

<sup>16</sup> For more on Jan Brożek see: Franke 1884; Barycz 1956: 5–119; Dianni 1956: 5–34; Dianni 1949; Pelczar 2000: 239–269; Ozorowski 1981: 215–220; Birkenmajer 1937: 1–3.

who were poorly paid or did not have wealthy benefactors could only dream of education abroad. On the other hand, the prospect of studying in another country probably seemed discouraging due to problems with the validation of a foreign diploma. Some of “Paduans” did not return to their lecture halls in Poland, especially that the medical profession opened up a host of other career possibilities, as confirmed by the case of physician and Kraków city councillor Jakub Rejnekier, doctor of medicine and law student at University of Padua (Bieniarzówna 1988/1989: 59), or Władysław Mitkowski, Paduan doctor of medicine, who after returning to Poland started working as a physician in Kraków and Poznań, to finally become a Camaldolese in Bielany (Czaplińska 1976: 384).

Nevertheless, in the light of the above discussion, the University of Padua appears as a popular, culturally, and academically inspiring stage, and sometimes a destination, for those Kraków professors who had sufficient funds to embark on an expensive educational journey. Paduan influences on the intellectual background of certain Kraków professors are proved by the aforementioned Krakow academics’ book collections containing works by Paduan masters. Thanks to those works, as well as to Kraków professors who could be referred to as “Paduans” themselves, the thought of Paduan masters also found its way into the Polish university. However, these issues require additional in-depth studies, equally like the question of the common identification of our “Paduans” as belonging to the ranks of Kraków professors and, more broadly, as members of the cultural elite of the then Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

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