

## THE BANTU LANGUAGES OF NIGERIA

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The main purpose of this paper is to set forth the evidence for the existence of a number of Bantu enclaves in Nigeria; but it may be well to indicate, in the first instance, as exactly as possible the frontier of the Bantu continuum to the NE of Calabar. The western branch leaves the Akwayale River a few miles S. of the confluence of the Ebe and Akpakorum and, so far as can be seen runs NW, then nearly due N to the Cross River; but in the Oban area is an inadequately located Uyanga enclave; added to this there is a very scanty population, less than 1.5 per sq. mile outside the six chief villages, so that the line of the frontier is largely conjectural. The name of the language in this area is Ekoi or Ejam.

On reaching the Cross River near Nishi-Atam the frontier follows the river westwards to the Ewayon River, then turning N to form the boundary between Atam (Nde) and Esopon; I may note in passing that in the map in my "Specimens of Languages" Ukele is an error for Atam. After leaving the Ewayon the boundary follows the Aiya, but leaves it to the S to include Ogoja and Ishibori; N of Atam the language is known as Akaju; round Ogoja as Nkum; this is of course not the same tongue as the Cross River Nkum (Yala), which is identical with Okpoto (I) and nearly allied to Arago, north of the Benue. In about 6°:40' N the boundary turns S, then SE to about 6°:25' N; all the villages enumerated as Nkum lie on the Ogoja road, so that the Bantu territory is here extremely narrow; it is not clear whether Okworoñ, classed as Akaju, forms an enclave or is within the boundary. From about 6°:25' N, 8°:37' E the frontier runs almost in a straight line to the Cross River above Obokum.

In addition to Uyanga, already mentioned, with another enclave further west, which is comparatively isolated in its linguistic characters, though probably related to the other Cross River languages, this northerly Bantu headland includes two enclaves, Yala (Nkum) already mentioned, and Olulumo; the latter is possibly of Bantu origin; but its affinities are so obscured by borrowing that an accurate knowledge of its phonetic laws is necessary before any conclusion can be reached; the materials available are insufficient to deal with a problem of this kind.

If Olulumo is Bantu it may well represent an unsubmerged fragment of an earlier movement; this type of enclave may be termed "insular", to suggest that it was formerly part of a continuum the other members of which have been overwhelmed or driven out. Orri-Ikerri may also be of this class.

To the west and north of the Bantu borderline are found several enclaves of this stock, viz. (1) Effium, Mtezi, termed Okpoto (II) in my "Specimens",

and Orri, forming a nearly related sub-stock only twenty or thirty miles apart, and (2) Ikerrri-Ito, more to the north. For these languages a Bantu origin is by no means improbable, as the following specimens show:

	Orri	Bantu		Orri	Bantu
dog	<i>ebwa</i>	<i>-wa</i>	goat	<i>ebolli</i>	<i>-yuli</i>
dream	<i>loroala</i>	<i>-lota</i>	leopard	<i>egol</i>	<i>-ywi</i>
eat	<i>koto</i>	(Duala <i>toi</i> )	sun	<i>luwe</i>	<i>li-yuva</i>
earth	( <i>l</i> ) <i>ice</i>	<i>-ki</i>	tree	<i>kece</i>	<i>-ti</i>
eye	<i>je</i>	<i>-yiko</i>	well	<i>usi</i>	<i>-tima.</i>
fowl	<i>li-koko</i>	<i>-kuku</i>			

Some of these enclaves lie within the Ibo frontier, others on or adjacent to the border of intrusive Tivi or Munshi. It is perhaps worthy of note, as bearing on the history of Orri and Ikerrri, that there are numerous other enclaves in the neighbourhood, at least five or six of the Yala-Okpoto stock, and two of Akpa-Yachi.

Of a very different character are the enclaves of the Jarawa stock, which lie in Adamana, on the Middle Benue and far to the west on the Bauchi plateau. Their approximate positions are given in the table (p. 70), which reveals that they extend over no less than five hundred miles from south-east to north-west and are distributed among the three Sudanic groups known as Adamana, Benue-Chad and Nigerian (formerly Benue Semi-Bantu).

The Jarawa stock is without doubt of Bantu<sup>1</sup>) origin, though from the time of Koelle onwards, and probably from a much earlier date, it has been borrowing from its Sudanic neighbours. It will be seen that the phonetic laws followed by the words set forth below are Bantu, not Sudanic; and many words take precisely the form that would be expected in a north-west Bantu tongue. Apparent exceptions, such as Jar. *vuk*, Jak. *vukhu* "hand", may be due to contamination with Sudanic; cf. Piti *uvok*.

The Jarawa stock did not reach its present seats as an integral portion of some great Bantu wave that swept far into what is now Sudanic territory. A stock so widely scattered but, at the same time, so homogeneous in certain parts of the vocabulary, must have occupied a restricted area and been set in movement by the shock of a hostile impact, if it did not form part of an invading mass which split off from the main body and followed its own course. But the heterogeneous character of another part of the vocabulary indicates that words have been adopted, either from fellow migrants, or tribes on their path which they either overwhelmed, assimilated or drove out. Thus for "nose" we have: *lul*, *lulo* Bam. Bar. Gu. Jak. Mbu.;

<sup>1</sup>) As a curiosity may be noted the statement that Jar. has "clicks" resembling Bantu (Temple, 165).

*jol* Mboa; *delam* Bi.; *dunul, nunul* Dun., Jar.; *lisu* Ban.; *luto(?)* Nag.; for "sun": *kara* Bi.; *kwori* Bar.; *faro, pware* Mbu.; *tangal* Jar. 4; *šiki* Nag.; and *musa, mus* Gu. Jak. Mboa. Ban.; *muca, maša* Bam.; *mes* Jar. 5; for "moon": *zongo(n)* Bar. Jak. Mbu.; *nzongan* Gu.; *nzuwa(?)* Mbu.; *šio* Nag.; *šeri* Bi.; *lean, lian, lwan* Tar. 4, 5, Ba. Although one of each of these series of words may be part of the original vocabulary of the Jarawa stock, it seems clear, bearing in mind the homogeneity in other cases, that borrowing has here been extensive.

It is clear from the distribution of the stock that it entered Nigeria by way of the Benue valley, but there is nothing to show what was the original home of the main mass. Elements of the vocabulary are traceable, as will be shown below, in Kamerun, Gabun and Central Congoland, not to speak of more remote regions, but no single language contains even all the words common to the Jarawa stock.

In the absence of tribal traditions we have at present no evidence to fix the date, even approximately, of the Jarawa dispersion. Measured by the rate of change in Yoruba, a tongue extraordinarily stable even in enclaves severed from the parent body for hundreds of years, the splitting up may be very remote; judged by the Kukuruku evidence, it must be extremely recent; for Kukuruku villages and towns only a few miles apart are unable to understand each other and make use of Yoruba, the language of their wives. But if the rate of change may vary so much that two languages of the same group are incommensurable, much less can we apply to one family of languages a measuring rod derived from another in which the sound changes and their origin are wholly different; before we can estimate the rate of change in Bantu we need at least a Bantu standard.

An examination of the Jarawa vocabulary shows that some words are common to the whole stock while others are confined each to a single enclave. Some have homonyms or allied forms which are widely used in Bantu; others are limited to one or two Bantu-speaking tribes, others again are clearly Sudanic, and a small remnant cannot be assigned with certainty to either family.

It is naturally more important to demonstrate at this point the Bantu character of Jarawa; I therefore cite here the Jarawa words and Bantu roots or parallels for thirteen words out of the total of some three dozen in my lists.

Jarawa	Bantu
Arrow: <i>mun, muni, mon, mone</i> Ban. Bar. Bi. Gu. Jar. 2, 4, 5 Nag.; <i>min</i> Bam. Jak.; <i>kum</i> Mboa.	<i>mun</i> Nso (K); <i>mana</i> Bube.
Blood: <i>nkila</i> Bar. Bi. Mbu.; <i>kila</i> Jak. Nag.; <i>kil</i> Jar. 4, 5; <i>kida</i> Gu. <i>ncira</i> Bam.; <i>nikili</i> Mboa.	<i>makila</i> Kele, Ngala etc.; allied forms common. Cf. <i>cir, ncir</i> Yergum.

Crocodile: <i>gan</i> Jar. 5; <i>gaun</i> Dun; <i>gandu</i> Mbu.	<i>gan</i> Nso, Bafut; * <i>ngan</i> Yaunde; <i>gandu</i> in Ogo-we, Kamerun, etc. B <i>-vwa</i> ( <i>mbwa</i> ).
Dog: <i>mva</i> , <i>mvwa</i> , <i>mvo</i> , <i>nvo</i> Bar. Jar. 1, 4, Bam. Bo.; <i>mfwa</i> , <i>mfo</i> Mbu.; <i>hwa</i> Gu.; <i>ba</i> Nag.; <i>buga</i> Mboa; <i>minlara</i> Bi.	B <i>li-yiko</i> .
Eye: <i>musu</i> Ban. Bam. Mbu.; <i>meso</i> Bar.; <i>miso</i> Nag.; <i>misi</i> , <i>missi</i> Gu. Mboa; <i>nyel misi</i> Jak.; <i>mus</i> Jar. 1, Dun.; <i>mes</i> , <i>mos</i> Jar. 5; <i>jyam</i> Bi.; <i>didok</i> Jar. 4.	B <i>-vulî</i> ( <i>mbulî</i> ).
Goat: <i>mbul</i> Bar. Bi. Mbu.; <i>bul</i> Mboa; <i>mbil</i> , <i>mpil</i> Ban. Gu. Jar. 1, 4, 5; <i>mbiri</i> Bam.; <i>baa</i> Nag.	<i>nyun</i> Bayon, etc.
Hair: <i>nyon</i> , <i>nyan</i> Bar. Jar. 4, 5; <i>leyan</i> Jar. 1; <i>njeo</i> Nag.; <i>niye</i> Gu.; <i>namauru</i> Bi.; <i>busu</i> Mboa.	<i>moru</i> , <i>motu</i> , <i>tu</i> Bantu, pas.
Head: <i>muro</i> Nag.; <i>moru</i> Mbu.; <i>mudu</i> Jak.; <i>mut</i> , <i>mot</i> Dun. Jar. 1, 4, 5; <i>mu</i> Ban.; <i>mo</i> Mboa; <i>bamur</i> Bar. Mbu.; <i>ntu</i> Bam.; <i>tu</i> Gu.	<i>nda</i> Kamerun, Yaunde, Fang; <i>ndab</i> and allied forms pas. Nkum has <i>itap</i> .
House: <i>nda</i> Ban. Bar. Gu. Jar. 2 (Johnston, CS., gives pl. <i>ndaba</i> ); <i>da</i> Mboa; <i>nla</i> Jar. 4; <i>ndo</i> Bam.; <i>lo</i> Jak.; <i>gali</i> Nag.; <i>kwanna</i> Bi.; <i>palmo</i> Mbu.; <i>ufog</i> Jar. 5.	Allied forms, pas. Cf. <i>lol</i> Ganawuri, <i>alur</i> Yergum, etc.
Nose: <i>lulo</i> Bam. Bar.; <i>lul</i> Gu. Jak. Mbu.; <i>luto</i> (?) Nag.; <i>jol</i> Mboa; <i>duñul</i> , <i>nunul</i> Dun. Jar. 1, 5; <i>delam</i> Bi.; <i>lisu</i> Ban.	B <i>li-kumi</i> .
Ten: <i>tum</i> all but Mboa; Mboa has <i>bo</i> .	B <i>li-yîno</i> .
Tooth: <i>maeno</i> Nag.; <i>mino</i> , <i>minu</i> Bar. Mbu.; <i>mini</i> Bam.; <i>mila</i> Bi.; <i>min</i> Dun. Gu. Jak. Jar. 1, 4, 5, Mboa.	<i>kuni</i> Tete, Akela etc.; <i>koni</i> N. C. Congoland cf. <i>ikun</i> Yergum; <i>ngun</i> Wute.
Tree: <i>gun</i> , <i>ngun</i> Bar. Bi. Jar. 2, 4, 5, Mbula, Mboa; <i>guni</i> Nag.; <i>nga</i> Gu.; <i>mbinni</i> Bam.	

Where Jarawa words in the foregoing list are common to three or more enclaves there can be little doubt that they formed part of the common stock before the diaspora. But there are words known to the Jarawa stock, for which, up to the present, no precise Bantu parallels have been found, though there are Sudanic words of the same, or nearly the same form; yet it is not easy to see how scattered enclaves, some of which are remote from the Sudanic tribes in question, can have become possessed of loanwords in identical form.

One word of importance may be noted in this connection "bird": *nyel* Dun. Jak. Jar. Johnston asserts (C. S. II, 180) that the word is found in

Wadia, Imoma and Lesa (N. C. Congoland); but I have been unable to find the exact form. On the other hand, Yergum<sup>2</sup>) has *nyil*, Sigidawa *yali*, Angas *yer*, and Paiem *yere*.

A word which demands attention on account of its form is (Jar. 5) *girgi* "canoe"; in the form *jirigi* this word is widely used in Nigeria and can hardly be other than a loanword from Hausa; Galambe, however, a Benue-Chad language, has also the initial *g* and a corresponding form, *gera*, is recorded for Bolewa; there is no evidence that *girgi* is a loanword from Hausa, which has marked affinities with more than one Benue-Chad tongue.

It is not possible to analyse completely even the brief list of words in my hands, much less the more extended vocabulary of Jarawa which we owe to Koelle, important because it belongs to an age when Sudanic borrowings were relatively few. But a few words may be said as to the main affinities of the word-stock. An examination of Kaka, a Bantu-language spoken in various enclaves in about 8° N in Kamerun, reveals that about one-third of its words are also present in the Jarawa group. But, as it is probable that the Kaka are also migrant peoples<sup>3</sup>), it is necessary to discover where lie the affinities of the Kaka-Jarawa words; they are fairly common in western Kota (*C. S.* 183) and other Ogowe languages; it is worthy of note that some of these words are found only in a single Jarawa enclave, e. g. *mbe* "pot" Bam., Kaka; *bam* "man" Kaka; *bom* Mbu.; *ba* Bam.

If we take the words not found in Kaka-Okota etc., some, as shown above, are today in use in Kamerun; but there are other words for which a Fang origin seems probable, e. g. *lla* "town", Jar. 5, *nlam* Fang; *jam* "water", Jar. 5, *-jim* Fang. The isolated Okota word *mosa* "sun", corresponding to *mes* Jar., *mus* Ban., may have come to both Okota and the Jarawa stock from Fang, where it is found in the meaning "day", which is a word very commonly the same as that for "sun", Koelle gives *mi-mes* as the Jarawa word for "day". *Mbit* "leopard" Jar. 2, 5, *vit* Bo., suggests a name transferred from the hyena (B *-pîti*, *mpîti*); if this is the case we must look, at any rate, as far as the Upper Ituri for some elements of Jarawa, if present day distributions are a safe guide.

Perhaps *nzog* "ground-nut", points the same way. But speculation in this direction is comparatively useless until more complete vocabularies are to hand from North Central Congoland.

I will conclude this brief survey of the Jarawa stock by giving a list of the numerals from one to ten. Apart from some borrowings, apparently from the Benue-Chad group (*rop*, *rap*, *pe* "two") they are normal and

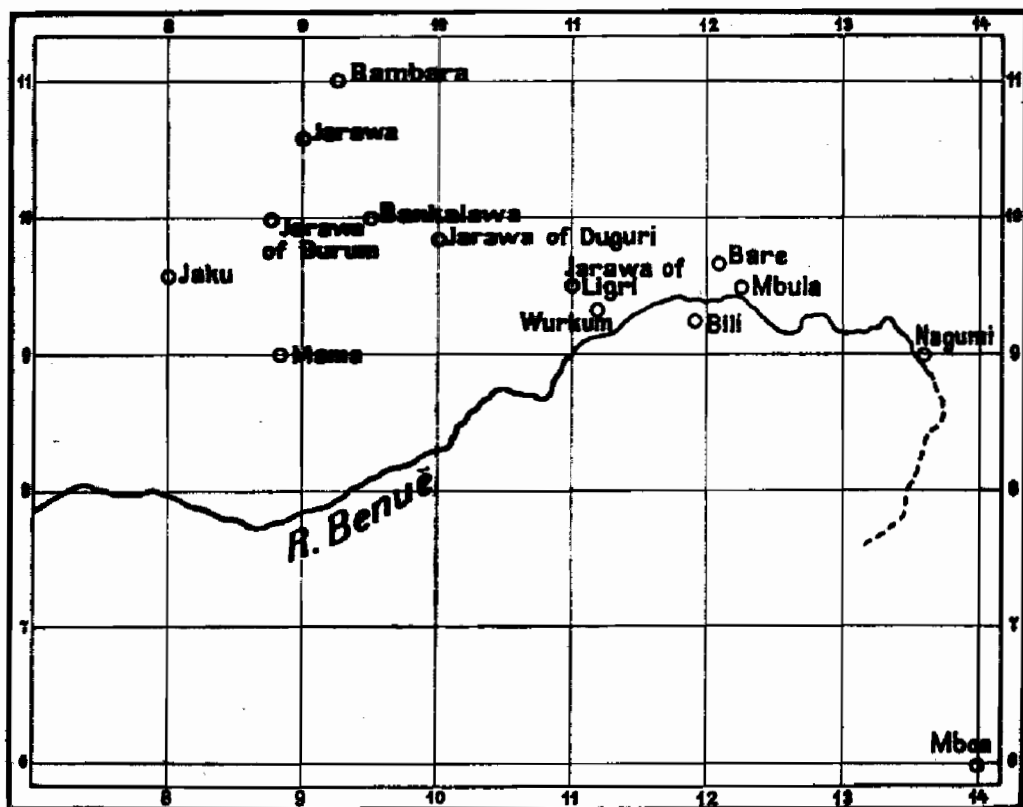
<sup>2</sup>) The Yergum parallels, four out of fourteen words, are noteworthy; cf. also *acurus* "ear".

<sup>3</sup>) Kaka seems to be a collective name for a number of groups rather than a tribal name.

present few variations up to five; but from six to nine there is far less agreement. Unhappily but few of the forms promise to throw light upon origins; but I may cite *tebba*, *tabber* "six", and perhaps *ntua*. These are obviously a form of *mutoba*, today used in N. C. Congoland, on the Ogowe (by the Okota), and in Kamerun, a comparatively limited field. In the word for "nine" we should have perhaps a better key to origins, if it could be itself explained; Guba and Jaku use *f(w)un*, and Bambara has *rubu*, perhaps allied to *fun*, if we may analyze it as *ru-bu*.

### Numerals.

- One: *mo* Ban. Bar. Gu. Jar. 5 Mbu.; *mu* Bi.; *mun* Ma.; *mongo* Bam.; *moko* Wu.; *mok* Bo.; *mogho* Jak.; *mwop* Jar. 3; *motu* Mboa; *mušet* Bar.; *mwašat* Mbu.; *dik* Jar. 2; *dyok* Jar. 4; *baku* Bi.; *daru* Nag.
- Two: *bari* Bam. Ban. Bi. Bo. Jar. 1, 2, Mbu. Wu.; *gbari* Jar. 5; *bali* Nag.; *bar* Jak. Jar. 4; *bai* Mboa; *pe* Mbu.; *rap* Bar.; *rop* Jar. 3; *hrawu* Gu.
- Three: *tatu* Bam.; *tatuf* Gu.; *tat* Ban. Bo. Jak. Jar. 2, 3, 4, 5; *taro*, *taru* Bar. Bi. Jar. 1, Mbu. Nag.; *taram* Wu.; *sai* Mboa.
- Four: *ini* Bar. Bi. Jar. 1, Mbu.; *in* Jar. 2; *ni* Mboa; (*i*)*yin* Ban. Jak. Jar. 3; (*i*)*yəu* Gu. Ma.; (*i*)*yen* Bo. Jar. 5; *yinu* Bam.; *yiin* (?) Jar. 4; *fəde* Nag.



- Five: *toñnu, tuñnu, tuñno, tañno* Bar. Bi. Gu. Jar. 1, 2, Ma. Mbu.; *toñ* Ban. Bo. Mbu.; *toñnam* Wu.; *toñan* Jar. 4, 5; *toñwon* Jar. 3; *tinu* Nag.; *ssian* Mboa.
- Six: *toñnu puru mu* Bi.; *toñnu wur mušet* Bar.; *toñ sel mu* Jar. 1, 2; *tañ san mo, tuñno nañ mwašat* Mbu.; *toñ sal mo (ma)* Ban. Bo. Jar. 3, 4; *toñsarmo* Jar. 5; *tasamoko* Wu.; *tanza* Ma.; *tebba* Gu.; *tabber* Jak.; *intua* Bam.; *saesama* Nag.; *koeno* Mboa.
- Seven: *toñnu pul bari* Bi.; *toñnu wur rap* Bar.; *tuñno nañ bari* Mbu.; *toñ sel (sar) bari* Jar. 1, 5; *tañ sal bari* Ban.; *tanza bari* Ma.; *tan san bari* Mbu.; *tisbari* Mboa; *sabber* Gu. Jak.; *jindomogo* Nag.; *nsor* Bam; *tasa bari* Wu.; *kestat* Ban. Bo. Jar. 2, 3, 4.
- Eight: *toñnu pul (wur) taro* Bi. Bar.; *toñ sel taru* Jar. 1; *tuñno nañ taru* Mbu.; *tan san ini (!)* Mbu.; *tistaru* Nag.; *kešin* Jar. 2, 3, 5; *gešil* Jar. 4; *kesyin* Bo.; *kesini* Ban.; *kanana* Bam.; *ininin* Wu.; *nan* Gu. Jak.; *jindordoa* Mboa; *yanga* Ma.
- Nine: *toñnu pe (wur) ini* Bi. Bar.; *tuñno nañ ini* Mbu.; *toñ sel ini* Jar. 1; *tasawari (!)* Wu.; *tisfade* Nag.; *keston (un)* Ban. Bo. Jar. 2, 3, 4, 5; *jindorsu* Mboa; *f(w)un* Gu. Jak.; *rubu* Bam.; *parumo* Mbu.
- Ten: *lum* all but Mboa; *bo* Mboa.
- Eleven: *po* Ma.
- Twelve: *so* Ma.

The Jarawa Stock.

	Abbr.	Long. E.	Lat. N.
Bambara, Bomberawa . . . . .	Bam.	9°:15'	11°
Bankalawa . . . . .	Ban.	9°:30'	10°
Bare . . . . .	Bar.	12°:5'	9°:40'
Bili . . . . .	Bi.	11°:55'	? 9°:15'
Bobar . . . . .	Bo.	? Bauchi Plateau	
Dungera (wa) . . . . .	Dun.	"	"
Guba (wa) . . . . .	Gu.	"	"
Jaku . . . . .	Jak.	? 8°	9°:35'
Jarawa of Ligri . . . . .	Jar. 1	11°	9°:30'
"    "    Duguri . . . . .	" 2	? 10°	9°:50'
"    "    Burum . . . . .	" 3	? 8°:45'	10°
"    "    . . . . .	" 4	? 9°	10°:35'
"    "    Garaka (Koelle) . . . . .	" 5		
Mama . . . . .	Ma.	8°:50'	9°
Mboa . . . . .	Mb.	14°	6°
Mbula, Tambo . . . . .	Mbu.	12°:15'	9°:30'
Nagumi . . . . .	Nag.	13°:35'	9°
Wurkum, Wurkuawa . . . . .	Wu.	11°:10'	9°:20'

It is clear that the numerals from seven to nine have undergone changes; and it is not clear which was the original system. In addition to the obvious quinary method, used by many enclaves, Bankalawa and Bobar with, to a varying extent, the Jarawa areas, make use of numbers based on finger counting, e. g. (four) plus three, plus four, or plus five; other languages too designate eight as "four-four"; one name for nine is subtractive, possibly two others: finally Mama, with a rather exceptional series, has a duodecimal scale grafted on the normal quinary; this can hardly be anything but a loan from the Nigerian group, which has twelve or fifteen duodecimal tribes, mainly in South Zaria and the contiguous area of Bauchi. It seems probable that the method based on finger counting is the more primitive; but this is a subject on which singularly few data are available and in their absence discussion is apt to be unfruitful. I therefore leave the matter for future enquiry.

It only remains to indicate, as exactly as inadequate materials permit, the localities of the enclaves of the Jarawa stock; the following list is probably neither complete nor accurate in all its details.

According to the Nigerian Survey Dept. Mbula and Bare form a connected group as do also Jarawa and Bankalawa; Bomberawa and Wurkum are isolated in the midst of Benue-Chad tribes, while, Mama, shown in the map as Middle Zone is on the border of the same group. Jarawa and Bankalawa appear to have Benue-Chad tongues to the north of them and languages of the Middle Zone (Nigerian Group) on the other three sides.

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