

## Libraries in the Change Age

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### *The National Library of Romania. Goals and Perspectives in Valorising the Cultural Patrimony*

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#### **Abstract**

The National Library of Romania (NLR) ensures the creation, processing, preservation, management and valorisation of the national documentary patrimony. With its highly valuable collection, the NLR is part of the European cultural heritage, a real cultural wealth for future generations, and therefore it will endorse the role of coordinator of the digitization process at the level of the national system of libraries.

The National Library of Romania is involved in international projects aiming at the creation of digital content relevant for the European Culture: **The European Library – TEL and ENRICH – European Networking Resources and Information concerning Cultural Heritage**, projects coordinated by the National Library of the Czech Republic. The National Library of Romania has contributed to the projects Manuscriptorium / ENRICH by ancient Romanian books from the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Keywords:** The National Library of Romania, Digital Library, projects, TEL, Manuscriptorium, ENRICH

The National Library of Romania, together with the other Information and Documentation Structures, has to face the challenges and requirements of the contemporary society along the phrases “Information Society” and “Knowledge Society” by diversifying its functions and competences, the products and services provided for users.

In the context of globalized information, the mission of the National Library of Romania should be defined in a unitary way with that of other national libraries, as formulated by consensus within the specialized section “National Libraries” of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) (1). The role of national libraries in the society is to capitalise and preserve the national intellectual heritage by organizing, processing, providing access and making available the national documentary patrimony for all media. The promoted principles are: the principle of freedom of information and of universal access to information; preservation of the national intellectual heritage; respect of intellectual copy-rights; sharing of information and documentation resources; promoting the role of libraries and librarians in society; promoting specific legislation; promoting professional cooperation at national and international levels etc.

In accordance with Law no 334 of May 31, 2002 republished in 2005 (2) on libraries, the National Library of Romania has a number of *specific functions* within the National System of Libraries, as well as functions common to all other libraries of the system. By the structure and dimension of its collections, by the specific products and services it provides, the National Library of Romania has become an encyclopaedic library, at the same time managing special and specialized collections and providing for a wide array of information requirements, from the common recreation reading to the basic and applied scientific research.

As concerns the specific competences, we should mention the characteristic competences of national libraries which are pursued in a non-competitive environment. The competences on Legal Depository, the National Bibliography, the National Centre of Exchange, the National Centre of Pathology and Restoration of documents, the management of the National Reserve of Publications, methodological responsibilities – all the above grant a special role and place within the National System of Libraries.

From the perspective of common competences with the other libraries of the system, specialized in accordance with the community they provide for (as stipulated in the Law on Libraries), there is a complementary relationship between the National Library and other types of libraries in the Romanian system of libraries. The public libraries, irrespective to their size are, just as

the National Library, an integral part of the same network: the network of public libraries, providing for users of a similar information profile.

At international level, the National Library of Romania is part of the specialized section „National Libraries” of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), on the Board of Directors of the National Libraries (CENL), alongside the other national libraries, and defines its institutional policy by correlating the national objectives with the goals defined by IFLA for that section and participates in the specific projects and programmes, including the project for the creation of the European Library (a project that started in August 2004).

The National Library of Romania has a number of specific *users*.

The first beneficiary is the Romanian society in its whole: by constituting, preserving, managing and valorising the national documentary patrimony, the National Library is in the service of the national interest.

We can identify an extremely heterogeneous category of users, individuals with various interests, occupations and information needs. We have users with the same information profile as the users of public libraries; users interested in documents that can be found only in the special collections of the National Library; users interested in documents that cannot be found in the country and who directly or through other libraries benefit of the international exchange services or of the international inter-library lending services etc.

Another category of users, a very specific one, is the National System of Libraries (They may be considered specialized domestic users, as well as partners of the national Library). By its competences as a national methodological centre, a national centre for pathology and restoration of publications, as the national data base on bibliography, the elaboration of specialized publications etc., the National Library is a products and services provider for libraries and librarians.

As concerns judicial entities as users, one should mention publishing houses for the services of granting them ISBN and ISSN and CIP; the Romanian cultural institutions in other countries that are supported by the National Library in completing their collections; research institutions that may benefit on request of support for the preparation of bibliographical works and of documentary sources from own funds or by domestic or international borrowing; meanwhile, media entities, economic entities, foundations, various organisations that may request specific information and documentation products and services from the National Library.

Public perception and the social and cultural prestige are bestowed upon the National Library of Romania by its institutional status, its competences of national interest it has to fulfill. The expectances of beneficiaries related to the cultural offer of the National Library of Romania are linked to the quick and easy access to collection documents, the diversity of specific products and services and the use of electronic media for information and documentation etc.

*The dimension and profile of collections* are due on one hand to the national mission of the Library and on other hand to the various ways they have been constituted: by taking over private and institutional collections in the communist era, by assimilating the collections of institutions that were liquidated or reorganized, by current and retrospective acquisition, donations, transfer, international exchange, legal depository. We can mention the existence of about 12 million biblioteconomic units (b.u.), most of which needing bibliographical processing and registering in catalogues. By document typology, in the collections of the library we can find books (current issues, old books, rare and bibliophile books), manuscripts (original documents, handwritten or printed, bound in volumes or organized in files), microformats (microfilms, microcards), cartographic documents (maps, atlases, plans, globes), printed musical scores, graphic documents (engravings, art reproductions, prints, studies of paintings, technical drawings), dissertations and doctors' theses, standards, guidebooks, methodologies and other technical documents, numismatic and philatelic documents, posters and leaflets, engravings, photographs, audiovisual documents and electronic documents.

The processing of documents of the collections of the National Library of Romania are carried out in accordance with the norms, methodologies and procedures specific to each type of document, observing in the same time the international standards, towards the achievement of the National Bibliography of Romania (as National Bibliographic Agency) with its known series (books, albums, maps; serial publications; musical scores, records, cassettes; doctors' theses; papers in periodicals; Romanica) and creating the groundwork for information exchanges through specific information systems).

The National Library of Romania possesses two funds of patrimony collections located in Bucharest and Alba Iulia (the Batthyaneum branch).

### **The special collections of the National Library of Romania (3)**

The core of *special collections in Bucharest* contains a number of funds that have been previously constituted, such as: the collections of the

Cultural Foundation Ion I. C. Bratianu, the collection of documents of the Al. Saint-Georges Museum, the collection of documents of the M. Kogalniceanu Foundation, the Scarlat Rosetti funds, the Exarcu and Adamescu funds that have belonged to the Library of the Romanian Atheneum. Later, the collections have been expanded and diversified through various acquisitions, donations, transfers etc. so that at present they contain almost all types of bibliophile and patrimony documents.

The service has working and study offices for each category of bibliophile documents, and the activity is carried out by librarians specialized in biblioteconomy and humanistic university studies. The service is structured according to the specific content of each collection in seven individual compartments: Bibliophilia, Manuscripts, Historic archive, Old Romanian periodicals, Prints, Photographs, Cartography. In addition, there is a section of audio-video documents with a collection of musical scores, collections of records on various supports, from gramophone records to CDs to DVDs.

The **Cabinet of Bibliophily**: about 53,000 bibliographical units – incunabula, old books, rare books, loose leafs. The collection of Romanian books of the National Library of Romania contains 7,043 titles and 12,638 b.u., including old books printed between 1508 and 1830 on the entire Romanian national and political territory and in printing centres abroad, such as Uniev, Roma, Lvov, Alep, Sankt Petersburg, Venice, Viena, Buda, Lipsca, Tiflis, Paris or Ausbach, centres that printed Romanian books for the Romanian Principalities.

The National Library of Romania possesses in its collections old and rare printings, of which we would mention: a copy of the “Slavonic Liturgy-book” printed by the prior of Serbian origin Macarie, the only original copy on the territory of Romania of the “Slavonic Apostle” and one of the “Slavonic Prayer-book”, both printed between 1545 and 1547 by Dimitrie Liubavici.

The collection of modern bibliophile book contains rare and valuable issues, princeps and authors’ editions, de luxe issues illustrated by renowned Romanian artists or with particular bindings, editions printed on special paper or on precious materials. We would like to mention the first issue of poetry signed by Eminescu and printed in year 1883, and the princeps issues and final issues of classics of the Romanian literature such as the representatives of the Transilvanian School, Timotei Cipariu, Ion Eliade Radulescu, Vasile Alecsandri, Mihai Eminescu, George Cosbuc, Alexandru Vlahuta, Alexandru

Odobescu, Mihail Sadoveanu, Camil Petrescu, Tudor Arghezi etc. or the historians Nicolae orga and A. D. Xenopol.

The foreign book fund of the Special Collections has a highly humanistic character, including all classical authors from Antiquity to the 20th century, in princeps editions, first issues, original and definite editions, editions commented by world renowned personalities such as Donatus, Erasmus, Melanchton, Guillaume Bude, Paulus Manutius or Henri Estienne, editions illustrated by famous artists such as Pierre Le Rouge, Wolgemuth, Lucas Kranach, Gustave Dore etc.

The **Cabinet of Manuscripts**: – Latin, Arab, Persian, Slave, Greek manuscripts; – ca. 30,000 bibliographical units correspondence and journal pages (Titu Maiorescu, Martha Bibescu, George Enescu, Simona Lahovari, Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Vasile Voiculescu, Mihail Sebastian etc.); literary manuscripts (O. Goga, N. Iorga, I. Pillat, Duiliu Zamfirescu, L. Blaga, Camil Petrescu, M. Sadoveanu, Tudor Arghezi, G. Călinescu, etc.).

The **Historical Archive**: the “M. Kogălniceanu” resources (1,162 files), “I. C. Brătianu” (724 files), “Al. Saint-Georges” (5,804 files).

**Old Romanian periodicals** (from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to 1948): calendars, almanacs, year books, annals, newspapers, organs of the political parties, cultural, literary, juridical, economic magazines, etc.

The **print cabinet** contains Romanian graphics starting with the pioneers of the genre: Carol Pop de Szatmary and Theodor Aman, to the works of Nicolae Grigorescu, Sava Hentia, Theodor Pallady, Iosif Iser, Francisc Sirato, Jean Al. Steriadi, Nicolae Tonitza, to the contemporary artists Dimitrie GHiata and Corneliu Baba.

The foreign collection of graphics includes mainly works of the French, Italian, Dutch, English and German schools. In this collection there are litographs signed by Auguste Raffet, Alois von Saar, Eugene Ciceri, Wullner, Bodmer, who have visited our country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These litographs are of real historic interest, as they describe settlements, landscapes, habits and costumes of the epoch.

The collection of engravings and prints contains the following categories of graphics: Romanian drawings: 7,000 b.u.; foreign drawings: 240 b.u.; Romanian engravings: 3,400 b.u.; European foreign engravings: 5,300 b.u.; Japanese prints: 840 b.u.; albums with original engravings: 235 b.u.; ex-librises: 18,000 b.u.

The **Cabinet of Photography**: ca. 113,000 bibliographical units – original photos and illustrated post cards.

The **Cabinet of Cartography**: ca. 3,661 bibliographic units – historical maps, linguistic maps, ethnographic maps, demographic maps, military maps, tourist maps, topographical surveys, plans of cities and estates; ca. 1,000 geographical, geological, climatic, meteorological, hydrographical atlases, books of maps of the soil and the environment.

The **Audio-Visual Cabinet**: gramophone plates, records, CDs, DVDs, scores, monographies, etc.

#### The **Batthyaneum Branch of Alba Iulia (4)**

The library was created on July 31st, 1798, as the initiative and on the costs of the Roman-Catholic bishop of Transylvania Batthyany Ignac (1741-1798), within the framework of the cultural foundation initially named *Institutum Batthyani Albae Carolinae / The institute of Batthyany from Alba Iulia /*. The institute included initially, beside the library, an astronomic observatory, historical and natural sciences collections, binding and printing units aimed at serving them.

The personal collection of Batthyany Ignac was the nucleus of the Institute's library and remained till now the golden fund of the library. Donations from private individuals and Transilvanian institutions were other ways that enriched the library of the Transilvanian bishop. The library is functioning for two hundred years in the building of the former Trinitarian church of Alba Iulia. As of 1951 the library was renamed *The documentary library Batthyaneum*, and in year 1962 it became *the branch of the Central State Library (presently the National Library of Romania)*.

The total number of publications of the library (the old books and the contemporary funds together) is of 70,958 bibliographic units, of which 24,000 bibliographic units are old books.

From a scientific and bibliophilic point of view, the most important collection is the **collection of manuscripts**. It contains 1,775 bibliographic units illustrating the European and Transilvanian cultures of the 19-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are in the languages: Latin, German, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, French, Hebrew, Armenian, Arabic and Turkish. Over one hundred codex-manuscripts are copied on parchment and 66 are illustrated.

The international fame of the library is also due to the existence at Alba Iulia of the oldest Western Medieval illuminated codex in Romania. It is *the Codex Aureus* or *Das Lorscher Evangeliar. I Theil / The Gospel of Lorsch. Part I. /*, as the manuscript is known in the Western specialized literature. An old Latin manuscript, the Codex Aureus has been

commissioned by the franc Emperor Charles the Great (742-814) and is remarkable through its calligraphy and painted images. It is written on fine sheets of parchment with gold letters, hence the name of the Golden Codex, and the text of the manuscript represents a fragment of a Tetraevangely comprising only the first two Gospels, Matthew's and Mark's. The other part of the manuscript, corresponding to Luke's and John's Gospels, is part of the wealth of the Vatican Library in Rome. The actual binding of the fragment kept at the Alba Iulia branch is not the original one, and the two covers made in ivory are in London and Rome. It is a unique case of a document created in three countries.

Of the other miniated manuscripts of high bibliophilic value we would like to mention: *Biblia Sacra* (13<sup>th</sup> century), *Psalterium Davidicum cum calendario* (13<sup>th</sup> century), *Missale Strigoniense* (1377), *Horae canonicae latine et gallice* alias *Codex Burgundus* (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries), *Promissio Andreae Vendramini ducis Venetiarum* (1476) etc.

The collection of incunabula preserves 571 bibliographic units, most of which were in the initial fund of the library. The oldest incunabulum is the *Opera* of Lucius Madarensis, printed in Rome by the pioneers of Italian printing Konrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1469. There are over thirty princes editions and a large number of very rare issues. From the first category we would mention: Macrobius: *In somnium Scipionis expositio. Saturnalia* (Venezia, Nicolas Jenson, 1472), Tertullianus: *Apologeticus contra gentiles* (Venezia, Bernardino Benalio, 1494), Lucanus: *Pharsalia* (Venezia, Juvenis Guerinus, 1477), Quintilianus: *Institutiones oratoriae* (Roma, Giovanni Filippo Lignamine, 1470), etc.

**The old book collection** printed between 1500-1800 at various European printing houses has a total of 24,000 bibliographic units, of which 7,950 are from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

From the rare Romanian prints preserved at Batthyaneum we would mention: *Palia* (Orăștie, 1582), *Noul Testament* (Bălgrad, 1648), *Sicriul de Aur* (Sebeș, 1683), *Evanghelie* (Blaj, 1765), *Îndreptarea legii* (Târgoviște, 1652), *Evanghelia învățătoare* (Mănăstirea Dealu, 1644), *Psaltirea* (Râmnic, 1743) etc.

The library has also preserved other **collections of archive and museum values**. The **archive documents fund** is mainly constituted of the archive of the Roman-Catholic Capital of Alba Iulia and of the Cluj-Mănăștur Convent (about 17,163 documents), in addition to which we find the handwritten correspondence of Roman-Catholic bishops of Transilvania (43,081 documents).

The **museum collections** contain: coins (3,735 Greek, Roman and Dacian coins), seals (59 pieces), medals (28 pieces), decorations (6), decorative medallions (42 pieces), banknotes (238 pieces), minerals (3,000 stones, rocks, crystals), molluscs (208 species in 685 copies), astronomical instruments (53 pieces), clocks (2), religious art objects (335 pieces), fabrics (215 pieces of Catholic cassocks), paintings (96 pieces), pre-historic pieces from the bronze and iron epochs and antiques (300 objects), labels of ex-libris (about 1,635 pieces).

The valorisation of the highly valuable patrimony of the library takes various forms, from signals in catalogues and data bases, to the printing of specialized works, to organizing thematic cultural events, documentary support for other institutions for printed or audio-video cultural materials etc. and involvement in national and international projects on the preservation and valorisation of the national cultural heritage. We would mention below only the projects in which the library is being involved.

The National Library of Romania is involved in some very interesting and large **international projects**, especially in projects that create relevant digital content to the enhancement of European cultural memory. From a strictly biblioteconomic point of view, we would like to mention the projects:

– “**Manuscriptorium**”(5), financed and coordinated by the National Library of the Czech Republic, aiming to build a virtual research environment for the sphere of historical resources. Manuscriptorium started to collecting and make accessible on the internet information on historical book resources, linked to a virtual library of digitised documents.

The origins of the Manuscriptorium project stem from the UNESCO initiative of 1992 “Memory of the World”. The Czech Republic participated in this program with the project “*Memoriae Mundi Series Bohemica*”, a project which enabled the identification and representation of old books in an electronic context. By the accumulated experience, the Manuscriptorium project could be further developed with the aim to create a virtual library providing access to old books, manuscripts, rare and bibliophile books via Internet, creating meanwhile an electronic context for information, documentation and research. The main contributors to the project are libraries, museums, archives and other cultural institutions, depositories of cultural patrimony of this type. As any library, the virtual library Manuscriptorium has an online catalogue and enables access to full-text documents.

Currently, Manuscriptorium is the largest digital library of manuscripts and old books in Europe providing over 1 million pages of digitized manuscripts, old books, maps or other historical documents. The catalogue has over 180,000 bibliographic entries of which 3,082 are fully digitized volumes.

A superior phase of Manuscriptorium is the project **ENRICH** – **E**uropean **N**etworking **R**esources and **I**nformation concerning **C**ultural **H**eritage (6), the targeted project funded under the eContentPlus programme. Also coordinated by the National Library of the Czech Republic, ENRICH aims to virtual aggregation of information concerning old documentary heritage, especially manuscripts and incunabula, and other historical documents. The main goal is to provide easy access to old documentary heritage from various European cultural institutions in order to create a shared virtual research. Enrich is built on the Manuscriptorium Digital Library that has already managed to aggregate data from 46 collections from the Czech Republic and other countries. ENRICH is being developed over the period December 1, 2007 – November 30, 2009. The main objective of the project is to represent and provide online access to over 5 million pages from the direct partners and hundreds of thousand from the associated partners. The partners of ENRICH are European institutions depositories of cultural patrimony adequate to the aim of the project: national libraries, university libraries, archives, museums or cultural institutions. The ENRICH consortium consists of 18 partners and the project is also supported by a number of other institutions among which there are many important content owners. The interest to cooperate has been expressed, among others, also by the national libraries of Hungary, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, and Turkey as well as by the university libraries in Bratislava, Bucharest, or Heidelberg.

The National Library of Romania has made a contribution to the Manuscriptorium/ENRICH projects in the form of old Romanian books dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. These are items of outstanding cultural, historical and artistic value. Most of these treasures are religious works, but amongst them there are also law and history books.

One of the most valuable items is the first book printed on Romanian territory – the Slavonic Book of Liturgies /Liturghierul slavonesc – printed in the year 1508 at the Dealul Monastery (Hill Monastery) during the reign of Radu the Great, by the monk Macarie of Montenegro.

– **The European Library – TEL** (7), a project initiated with European funds having as objective to provide free access to information and documentation resources existing in 47 national libraries in Europe in 20 languages. The digital resources may be full text or bibliographical (bibliographical registration of non-electronic documents). Why the National Libraries? The National Library of a country is the one assuming the role of capitalizing, organizing, processing, preserving and valorising the national cultural patrimony by its specific mission (legal depository, national bibliographic control, national centre for conservation and preservation, methodological centre).

The 47 European national Libraries participating in “The European Library – TEL” are members of the CENL – **Conference of European National Librarians** (8).

New projects that would further develop TEL benefited of co-funding:

The **TEL- ME- MOR** (2005-2007) supported 10 national libraries in Europe from the new Member States to become full-members of TEL.

**TEL+** (2007-2008) is financed by the European Commission and has two main objectives:

- to digitize 20 million pages of content in several languages;
- to support Romania and Bulgaria to become full-members of the **European Library**

**The National Library of Romania is member of TEL+ since October 2007.**

– **European Digital Library – EDL** (9) (2006- 2008) is financed by the European Commission within the framework of the eContent+ Program. EDL is an extension of the European Library, founded by CENL and its goal is to provide access to the electronic collections of libraries through a single access point. The TEL and EDL projects will mutually support each other and will develop the multilingual aspects of interfaces, due to the involvement of CENL in i2010 Digital Libraries. The European Library – TEL is crucial for the organizational foundation of the European Digital Library. EDL is supportive of the collaboration between the European Library and other non-library cultural initiatives with a view to protecting and valorising the national and European cultural patrimony.

As of year 2008, the **European Digital Library – EDL** entered a new stage of its evolution. It became **EUROPEANA** (10) and aims to become involved in the development of digital content in all member

countries of CENL. The European Commission wishes that the initiative developed at library level be extended to museums, archives and to any other structures having a role in the conservation and valorisation of the European cultural patrimony. For this purpose two recommendations were issued: *Council Conclusions on Digitisation and Online Accessibility of Cultural Material, and Digital Preservation (2006/C 297/01)*; *Commission recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (2006/585/EC)*.

At national level, the Ministry of Culture and Cults initiated a Public Policy for the implementation of the Digital Library of Romania in compliance with the two recommendations of the European Commission. The National Library of Romania is involved in the definition and substantiation of this public policy. The underlying principle is that the Digital Library of Romania is a unitary structure representing the national cultural patrimony in digital format, observing the accessibility to digital resources from a single access point and at the same time following a thematic and institutional organization. Accordingly, the following thematic benchmarks were defined:

- Written documentary patrimony (libraries)
- Mobile patrimony (museums, collections)
- Audio-visual patrimony (audio-visual archives)
- Immobile patrimony (monuments, archaeology)
- Archive patrimony

For the “libraries” module the National Library of Romania prepared a feasibility study (11) for the entire system of public libraries of Romania, in order to identify the minimum conditions for promoting and implementing such a public policy in the domain of libraries. The study was based on a questionnaire distributed to county libraries (that assume also a methodological mission in their area), to the Library of the Romanian Academy, the Central University Library of Bucharest (later the questionnaire was also sent to other university libraries in order to extend the results of the research).

The consultation process focused on:

Identification of problems and solutions for digitization of cultural resources on each thematic pillar (documentary written heritage, movable heritage, audio-visual heritage, unmovable heritage, archives heritage);

Identification of optimal solutions for digitization on each specific thematic pillar and proposals for stages of implementation;  
Identification of specific cultural material already digitized;  
Identification of social and economic impact digitization will have on each thematic pillar;  
Identification of a representative corpus of cultural material to be digitized (criteria, stages, concrete examples)

The public policy proposal became effective starting with January 2008 and represents the basis of a **multi annual programme for 7 years regarding the process of the digitisation of cultural resources** and the creation of the Digital Library of Romania (12).

### Conclusions

With his valuable collections, NLR is part of the European cultural heritage for the next generations, thus will take the leading role in the development towards a digitization of the Romanian library environment, as a challenge to put forward a variety of competitive services.

The current activity, the projects and programmes carried out at the level of the institution are interrelated and sub-ordinated to the objective to fulfil the specific mission of the National Library of Romania: to capitalize and preserve the national intellectual heritage by organizing, processing, valorising and making available and preserving the national documentary patrimony within all media.

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ENRICH - European Networking Resources and Information concerning Cultural Heritage.  
<http://enrich.manuscriptorium.com/>

The European Library – TEL. <http://search.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/en/index.html>

Conference of European National Librarians. <http://www.cenl.org/>

European Digital Library Project – EDL <http://www.edlproject.eu/>

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