

Scripture Study



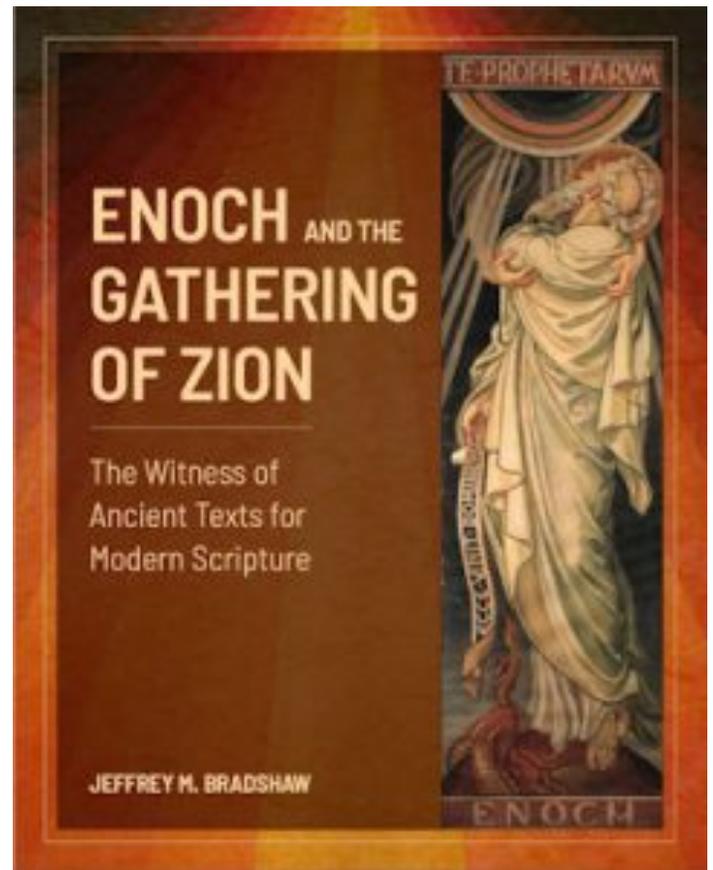
New Discoveries about Enoch's Battle's and the Gathering of His People

By [Jeffrey M. Bradshaw](#) · January 24, 2022

*This series of articles introduces a new book entitled **Enoch and the Gathering of Zion: The Witness of Ancient Texts for Modern Scripture** (see review at: <https://latterdaysaintmag.com/a-new-biography-of-enoch-and-an-excellent-tool-for-the-book-of-moses/> . Digital and softcover copies of the book are available now in black and white or beautiful premium color. See <https://interpreterfoundation.org/books/>). Though many Latter-day Saints will remember Hugh Nibley's remarkable discoveries in ancient documents relating to the Book of Moses story of Enoch that were published nearly fifty years ago, they may not be aware of exciting new findings. For example,*

newly analyzed passages from the Book of Giants confirm the Latter-day Saint account of Enoch's gathering of Zion and the eventual ascent of his people to heaven. In addition, based on the recent discovery of the Manichaeen Cosmology Painting—a thirteenth–fourteenth century Chinese wall hanging that includes illustrations of Enoch's story—we now have some idea of the symbolic geography of Enoch's travels, likely portraits of individuals to whom he preached (including Mahijah), and what seems to be a depiction of the cities of Zion that ascended to heaven.

With the help of these ancient sources, we are now in a better position than ever to assemble the most complete and detailed biography of Enoch to appear in modern times. In our day, when stories of scripture figures are often dismissed as fables or ignored altogether, Enoch's story and message are more vital and relevant than ever. After all, Latter-day Saints have been called, like Enoch's people, to more fully engage our hearts and accelerate our labors in a spirit of consecration until the Enoch's vision of a true and permanent Zion becomes a reality.



The Decisive Battle (7:13–15)

The Book of Moses briefly summarizes how the “enemies” of the “people of God” “came to battle against them,” crediting the victory of Enoch not to their superior numbers or weaponry but to the power of the “word of the Lord” that he spoke (Moses 7:13–15).

Remarkably, the picture of the conflict painted by the Dead Sea Scrolls fragments of the *Book of Giants (BG)* agrees with the Book of Moses account of the shattering defeat of Enoch's opponents. Significantly, *BG* and the Book of Moses emphasize not only war but continually flowing "bloodshed," which a speaker in *BG* compares to horrible "great rivers on the earth."^[1] The profound disappointment expressed by one of the leaders of the *gibborim* after their loss in a decisive battle is magnified by his overweening ambition to dominate and humiliate Enoch and his people. Reeves writes:

The confident, even boasting character of the [statement of Enoch's opponent in battle] accords well with several testimonia contained in Jewish sources that stigmatize the "pride" or "arrogance" of the [*gibborim*]. 3 Maccabees 2:4 states: "Those who formerly practiced lawlessness, among whom were [*gibborim*] *confident of (their) might and boldness.*" ... Note also Wisdom of Solomon 14:6: "For also in the beginning, *while arrogant [gibborim] were dying.*" ... Josephus is also familiar with this motif: "... sons who were arrogant and contemptuous of all that was good, *placing confidence in their strength.*"

The Manichaean remnants of the *Book of Giants* also "preserve even more extensive testimony regarding this conflict,"^[2] including the participation of the angels shown with Enoch in the figure above. For example, here is an extract from a fragment that relates details of the final combat:^[3]

[The angels] took and imprisoned all the [rebellious Watchers] that were in the heavens. And the angels themselves descended from the heaven to the earth. And (when) the two hundred demons saw those angels, they were much afraid and worried. ... they went to fight. And those two hundred demons fought a hard battle with the [four angels], until [the angels used] fire, naphtha, and brimstone.

Detail of MCP.[4] Rex Honoris (“King of Honor”),[5] one of the sons of God who, in Manichaeism tradition, is responsible for “watching” over the inhabitants of heaven and earth, “flanked by four angelic warriors [in armor] on either side.”[6] In Manichean thought, Rex Honoris, a stand-in for God Himself,[7] would have been the one responsible for sending angels to help Enoch defend his people against their foes.

As angels from heaven and the very elements of earth joined to defend the people of Enoch, the battles entered a new phase, as pictured above. Richard Draper, Kent Brown, and Michael Rhodes explain how the idea of divine support for the conflict is described in the Book of Moses:[8]

Heretofore we have found reference to “enemies” who “came to battle” *against*

the people of God.” [\[9\]](#) The account in Moses 7:15 [that is, “the people that fought *against God*”] makes it clear that battling against God’s people [had become] the same as battling against God Himself.

Bas-relief showing Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, stabbing a wounded lion. North Palace, Nineveh, Mesopotamia, Iraq, ca. 645–635 BCE. [\[10\]](#)

Wild Beasts and the Wild Man (6:38; 7:13)

We should be relieved that the surviving fragments of *BG* preserve only a few words about what must have been a long series of terrifying and bloody battles. In the Dead Sea Scrolls fragment referenced earlier above, the leader of Enoch’s adversaries is said to have

lamented:[\[11\]](#)

3. [... I am] mighty, and by the mighty strength of my arm and my own great strength

4. [and I went up against a]ll flesh, and I made war against them; but I did not

5. [prevail, and I am not] able to stand firm against them, for my opponents

6. [are angels who] reside in [heav]en, and they dwell in the holy places [...]

And they were not

7. [defeated, for they] are stronger than I. [...]

8.] *of the wild beast* has come, and the *wild man* they call [me.]

With respect to the use of the term “wild man,” remember that Enoch himself had been called a “wild man” in earlier in the story (Moses 6:38).[\[12\]](#) Considering the frequent doubling of phenomena in the *BG* story noted by scholars,[\[13\]](#) this later, second use of the rare scriptural term “wild man” is not surprising.[\[14\]](#) “Wild man” had been applied for the first time to Enoch’s by his hearers in sarcasm. Now the term “wild man” was applied a second time by Gilgamesh, the mighty warrior, to himself after his humbling defeat. Enoch, who lacked any of the macho qualities his enemies held dear, became a fearsome foe to Gilgamesh as “he spake the word of the Lord.”[\[15\]](#) His former weakness of being “slow in speech” had become his strength[\[16\]](#) through “the power of the language which God had given him.”[\[17\]](#) And the physical strength of the *gibborim* leader Gilgamesh was, crushingly, nothing but weakness when facing Enoch, a divinely empowered adversary.[\[18\]](#) When Gilgamesh dismally mutters “the wild man they call [me]” after his defeat, the

expression of self-reassurance sounds hollow. He can no longer boast of his beastly strength; only the beastly nature of his character has survived.

A puzzling phrase about the “wild beast” immediately precedes the reference to the “wild man.” The first part of line 8 was left untranslated by Edward Cook and has proven difficult for other translators to reconstruct as well. Thus, for example, Loren T. Stuckenbruck renders it simply as two untranslated letters: “*rh*” (that is, “*rh* of the beasts of the field is coming”[\[19\]](#)). However, two translators, Florentino García Martínez and Józef Milik, were confident enough to make a conjecture. They respectively understand the phrase as “*the roar of the wild beasts has come*”[\[20\]](#) and “*the roaring of the wild beasts came.*”[\[21\]](#) Lending credence to their reading, the Enoch account in the Book of Moses has a remarkably similar phrase: “*The roar of the lions was heard.*” This phrase, placed immediately after a description of the battles in both texts, is one of the most striking and unexpected resemblances between Joseph Smith’s Enoch story and *BG*.

Brian R. Doak’s sociolinguistic analysis provides a persuasive rationale for the appearance of “wild beast” and “wild man” together in *BG*. Among other evidence, he cites an Old Testament example in which Benaiah’s victory against elite adversaries (in this case, “lionlike men” and a giant) and a prestige animal (lion—consistent with Moses 7:13) were

also deliberately mentioned together.[\[22\]](#) Likewise Julian Reade notes “the close relationship” in other ancient cultures of “killing animals which were dangerous like lions or merely wild, and killing people who were dangerous enemies or merely foreign.”[\[23\]](#) Reade’s summary highlights the perversity of people who take pleasure in pitting the “handsome, imperturbable” hunter against “animals in distress” and likewise laughingly vaunting the vanquishing of their “human enemies, who are liable to be shown losing their hats and dying comically.”[\[24\]](#) Yet, while modern evidence attests to the idea that there was indeed a close connection in ancient times between a military victory and a “roar of wild beasts,” that association would likely have been just as unfamiliar to Joseph Smith as it is to general readers today.

Like the ironic reversal of the roles of Enoch and his wicked opponent as “wild men,” this example provides a turning of the tables in the subjugation of the wild beasts/lions to the God of the righteous Enoch, rather than to his wicked adversaries. The same God who “shut the lions’ mouths” to save Daniel from harm opened the mouth of Enoch to destroy his enemies through the “power of [his] language.” The deep and interconnected nature of these stories is further explored elsewhere.[\[25\]](#)

Detail of MCP.[\[26\]](#) Movement of the wicked and the righteous with respect to the high, treelike cliff at the center of the world, corresponding to the sacred Mount Sumēru. The cities that were established by the repentant gibborim were said to have been situated in earthly mountains that were westward of their point of origin. Note the mountains shown at the foot of Sumēru.

Gathering to the West and Dispersal to the East (7:16–17)

In one of the most significant resemblances of *BG* to the Book of Moses, we are told in both

texts that the righteous were gathered to a place of safety. This theme appears nowhere else in the ancient Enoch literature.

Latter-day Saint readers will recall the Book of Moses description of this place of safety. We read that “the Lord came and dwelt with his people. ... And Enoch ... built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion” (Moses 7:16, 19). One interesting feature of the Manichaean *BG* fragments is that they tell us the direction that Enoch’s people traveled. Specifically, according to *BG*, four angels ultimately led the wicked to their eventual destruction in the *east*—away from the “sacred center”—while the righteous went *westward* to inhabit cities near the foot of the holy mountain, as shown by the annotations on the figure above.

Although the Manichaean version of these events highlights only the prominent role of the angels in leading the battles and gathering the righteous, we can safely presume that the role of Enoch was closely intertwined with that of the angels. For example, note that the protection of Enoch by these angels is mentioned elsewhere in *BG*[\[27\]](#) and the angels and Enoch seem to be shown together visually within *MCP* as previously mentioned:[\[28\]](#)

And the angels themselves descended from the heaven to the earth. ... And they led one half of them eastwards, and the other half westwards, on the skirts of four huge mountains, towards the foot of the Sumēru mountain, into thirty-two[\[29\]](#) towns which the Living Spirit had prepared for them in the beginning.

While some Manichaean traditions suggest that both the eastward and westward bound groups were wicked,[\[30\]](#) Matthew Goff sees it as more reasonable to view the westward bound group in *BG* as repentant *gibborim*, reminding readers that the area near Mount Sumēru is the sacred *omphalos mundi* (“navel of the world”)[\[31\]](#) of Indian tradition”:[\[32\]](#)

No reason is given as to why the [*gibborim*] are placed in cities. The division of the [*gibborim*] along an east-west axis suggests two opposed fates for them—one half was killed and the other survived. This could be explained by positing that some of the [*gibborim*] repented and changed their ways while others did not.

In the symbolic account of the geographical history of the two opposing groups, *BG* describes the righteous dwelling “westwards, on the skirts of four huge mountains.”^[33] Significantly, this imagery recalls Moses 7:17, which relates that the righteous “were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish.” Where in all the ancient Enoch tradition do we find the remarkably similar story of the gathering of Enoch’s converts to a community of refuge in the mountains? Only in the *Book of Giants* and the *Book of Moses*.

Laying the Foundation of Zion (7:18–19)

The word “Zion,” which probably predates the arrival of the Israelites, may be related to the root *ṣwn* (so Arabic *ṣâna*), which means “protect,” “preserve,” “defend.”^[34] This is consistent with its description as a fortified hill in 2 Samuel 5:7.^[35] It is also similar to its description in Doctrine and Covenants 45:66 as “a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God.”^[36]

In contrast to the typical way “Zion” is used in the Bible to refer to a place near Jerusalem, in Doctrine and Covenants 97:21 the Lord applies the name to a group of *people*: “for this is Zion—the pure in heart.” Draper, Brown, and Rhodes observe that in Moses 7:18 it is the Lord “who conferred the name on His people, itself a sacred act.”^[37]

Is there a precedent for the Book of Moses definition of Zion as a people rather than a place? Yes, Isaiah 51:16 echoes this idea within a passage that suggests the creation of a

new heaven and earth,[\[38\]](#) God reaffirms his unwavering love by formally making a covenant: “I ... say unto Zion, Thou art my people.”[\[39\]](#)

How are we to know that the people of Zion qualify for God's blessing? According to the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Manachem Mendel Schneerson, Zion qualifies for being God's people by keeping His covenants. In support of this idea, he cited Isaiah 1:27: “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts [that is, the Jewish people] through righteousness.”[\[40\]](#)

Interpreting the term “Zion” creatively through the lens of the Hebrew word “*tziun*” (= distinguishing sign, mark, or indication), he taught that the people referred to in Isaiah 51:16 were called “Zion” because “they are distinguished ... in their observance” of God's law. Continuing his teaching, he observed that when “a physical object has a ‘sign,’ the sign enables it to be returned to its owners [should it be lost].” Likewise, when Zion's righteousness is the sign by which it is known that its people belong to God.

The requirement that Zion be a covenant-keeping people is consistent with Latter-day Saint teachings. Specifically, the Lord “called His people Zion” because they kept the crowning covenant of *the law of consecration*, identified in scripture as “the law of a celestial kingdom,” with the explanation that “he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:22). [\[41\]](#) In the faithfulness of Enoch's people to this and all others of the Lord's covenants:

they were of one heart and one mind
and dwelt in righteousness;
and there was no poor among them (Moses 7:18).

Restating this requirement for the people of the last days, President George Q. Cannon

taught:[42]

As a people we are expecting the day to come when Jesus will descend in the clouds of Heaven; but before this day comes we must be prepared to receive him. The organization of society that exists in the heavens must exist on the earth; the same condition of society, so far as it is applicable to mortal beings, must exist here.[43]

Enoch's people lived the final, crowning law of consecration—along with all the other laws of the celestial kingdom—to such a degree that they were eventually received into the presence of God. The stirring Book of Moses account of these events, the parallel description of them in *BG*, and the return of Zion to the earth in the last days will be described in the next and last article in this series.

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Endnotes

[1] D. W. Parry *et al.*, DSSR (2013), 4Q531, fragment 7, lines 5–6, p. 955.

[2] J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, p. 122.

[3] W. B. Henning, *Book of the Giants*, Text G (Sogdian), p. 69.

[4] G. Kósa, *Book of Giants Tradition*, p. 180.

[5] On the identification of Rex Honoris with the Zoroastrian Yima in two Sogdian fragments of the Manichaean *BG*, see P. O. Skjærvø, *Iranian Epic*.

[6] From the caption to this image of a detail from MCP, figure 1a, published in G. Kósa, *Book of Giants Tradition*, p. 180.

[7] See P. O. Skjærvø, *Iranian Epic*, pp. 203–7.

[8] R. D. Draper *et al.*, *Commentary*, p. 120.

[9] Moses 7:13, emphasis added.

[10] <https://livingdesign.info/2012/08/02/photolog-british-museum/> (accessed December 7, 2021).

[11] D. W. Parry *et al.*, *DSSR* (2013), 4Q531 (4QEnGiants(c) ar), fr. 22, l. 3–8.

[12] For more on the meaning of the term “wild man” in *gibborim* culture and its application to Enoch and Gilgamesh, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Enoch and the Gathering of Zion*, pp. 58–64.

[13] E.g., L. T. Stuckenbruck, *Book of Giants*, p. 20; L. T. Stuckenbruck, *Book of Giants among the DSS*, p. 133.

[14] The term “wild man” is used only once in the Bible, as a description of Ishmael

(Genesis 16:12). Thus its only known appearance in the Enoch literature—within compatible context in the Book of Moses and in *BG*—is remarkable.

[15] Moses 7:13.

[16] See Ether 12:27.

[17] Moses 7:13.

[18] See G. Mobley, *Empty Men*, pp. 59–68 for a description of how inspiration, fear, and courage functioned as heroic conventions.

[19] L. T. Stuckenbruck, *Book of Giants*, 4Q531, 17:8, p. 164.

[20] F. G. Martínez, *Book of Giants* (4Q531), 22:8, p. 262, emphasis added.

[21] J. T. Milik *et al.*, *Enoch*, p. 308, emphasis added.

[22] After describing how the category of “wildness” applied equally well to the “wild man” and “wild animal” in the mind of the ancient military man or hunter, B. R. Doak, *Giant in a Thousand Years*, p. 24 writes: “I conflate these potentially distinct categories of the ‘elite adversary’ and the ‘elite animal’ in order to highlight the correspondence between elite military victory against a prestige animal (lion) and the defeat of an Egyptian giant in 1 Chronicles 11:22–23.” On p. 25, he goes on to argue from another example by comparing 2 Samuel 23:20–23, 1 Chronicles 11:22–23, and 2 Chronicles 20:6.

[23] J. E. Reade, *Assyrian Royal Hunt*, p. 56. Julian Reade provides several examples of these activities being closely associated in art and inscriptions. One inscription from Tiglath-pileser I (1115–1076 BCE) (*ibid.*, p. 56):

after giving extensive details of forty-two lands and rulers that the king has conquered, immediately proceeds to describe four extraordinarily strong, wild, virile bulls he has shot in the desert ... in just the same way as he has brought enemy booty home; there were also ten elephants killed and four captured, and 120 lions killed on foot and 800 lions killed from his chariot.

[24] Ibid., p. 77.

[25] J. M. Bradshaw, *Enoch's Preaching Mission: The Defeat of the Gibborim and the Roar of the Wild Beasts* (#12).

[26] Z. Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, p. 470.

[27] W. B. Henning, *Book of the Giants*, text A, frg. i, p. 61 [and 62n4].

[28] Ibid., text G (Sogdian), p. 69.

[29] Some texts report thirty-six towns — see, for example, comments in *ibid.*, pp. 55–56 comparing text S to text G. Compare I. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, chap. 45 (codex 117, lines 5-8), p. 123 which also speaks of thirty-six towns. See also J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, p. 160n386; J. Wilkens, *Remarks*, pp. 220–21.

[30] Gardner summarizes the view of *Kephalaia* that all those described in this passage were wicked (I. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, p. 122. See also Z. Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, 273):

The point of this chapter is the foreknowledge of the powers of light that has enabled them to prepare places to hold and contain various evil forces that arise during cosmic history, ... [including] a prison for the Watchers; cities for the giants of old.

[31] Compare J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, p. 160n385:

According to Indian tradition, Mount Mēru or Sumēru (“Good Mēru) was the great mountain which stood at the center of the earth. See *Mahābhārata* 1(5) 15.5ff.: ... “The great mountain rises aloft to cover with its heights the vault of heaven.”

[32] M. Goff, *Sons of the Watchers*, p. 125

[33] W. B. Henning, *Book of the Giants*, text G (Sogdian), p. 69.

[34] Compare 2 Samuel 5:7, the first mention of the term, where “David took the strong hold of Zion.”

[35] See also A. P. Schade *et al.*, *Book of Moses*, p. 297n50.

[36] Compare Doctrine and Covenants 115:6; 124:10, 36, 109. Additional suggestions include “a rock, ... a dry place, or running water” (D. N. Freedman *et al.*, Eerdmans, s. v. Zion, p. 1421).

[37] R. D. Draper *et al.*, *Commentary*, p. 120.

[38] See M. Barker, *Isaiah*, p. 533.

[39] Though this verse is unique in the Bible in specifically applying the name “Zion” to God’s people as a whole, analogous passages can be found in Isaiah 49:2; Hosea 1:8–11, 2:23. Sometimes the people of Jerusalem are referred to as “daughter” (for example, Isaiah 1:8) or “sons” of Zion (for example, Lamentations 4:2). Psalm 78:68 also identifies “Mount Zion” with the “tribe of Judah” in poetic parallelism.

[40] M. M. Schneerson, *Kuntres Shabos Chazon*, 5748. He reads the Hebrew here as “through righteousness” rather than “with righteousness.”

[41] The conditions for such a society have been achieved only rarely, and with long, sustained effort. Terry and Fiona Givens observe (T. L. Givens *et al.*, *God Who Weeps*, p. 114): “All who have attempted to reenact Enoch’s enterprise have found the transition from worldly ways to celestial society a more taxing challenge than anticipated. The hard lesson has been, that ‘Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom’ (Doctrine and Covenants 105:5). Rome is not the only city that cannot be built in a day.”

[42] G. Q. Cannon, 6 April 1869, p. 99.

[43] When we look at modern Latter-day Saint definitions of Zion we can hardly go wrong with the extensive quotes from Brigham Young used by Hugh Nibley, of which the following is but a small sample (H. W. Nibley, *What is Zion?*, pp. 29–30):

“When we conclude to make a Zion,” said Brigham Young, “we will make it, and this work commences in the heart of each person.” Zion can come only to a place that is completely ready for it, which is to say Zion must already be there. When Zion descends to earth, it must be met by a Zion that is already here: “And they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks; ... and there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion” (Moses 7:63–64). Hence, President Young must correct a misunderstanding among many of the Saints who “gather here with the spirit of Zion resting upon them, and expecting to find Zion in its glory, whereas their own doctrine should teach them that they are coming here to make Zion,” that is, to make it possible. “The elements are here to produce as good a Zion as was ever made in all the eternities of the Gods.” Note

that Zion is an eternal and a universal type and that the local Zion, while made of the substances of this earth, “shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made” (Moses 7:64). “I have Zion in my view constantly,” said Brother Brigham, making it clear that Zion for this earth is still an unrealized ideal of perfection. “We are not going to wait for angels, or for Enoch and his company to come and build up Zion, but we are going to build it,” so that we will be ready. If we did not have a responsibility for bringing Zion, and if we did not work constantly with that aim in view, its coming could not profit us much—for all its awesome perfection and beauty, Zion is still our business and should be our constant concern.

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