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# Deo gracias Anglia!

*Medieval English Carols*  
The Trinity Carol Roll

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## Medieval English Carols

### The Trinity Carol Roll

#### The Trinity Carol Roll (nos. 1–7)

1. Hail Marye ful of grace (4'51)
2. Nowel, nowel, nowel (3'18)
3. Alma redemptoris mater (4'48)
4. Now may we syngyn (3'56)
5. Be mery, be mery (2'10)
6. Nowel syng we (2'37)
7. Deo gracias Anglia (4'30)
  
8. Nowel, nowel (1'38)
9. Lullay, lullay (6'37)
10. Princeps pacis (2'50)
11. Nova, nova (2'42)
12. Tibi laus, tibi gloria (3'23)

#### The Trinity Carol Roll (nos. 8–13)

13. Now make we merthe (3'22)
14. Abyde I hope it be the beste (3'27)
15. Qwat tydynges bryngyst thu messenger (3'50)
16. Eya martir Stephane (2'08)
17. Prey for us the prynce of pees (3'08)
18. Ther is no rose of swych vertu (5'09)

Total time (65'09)

Producer: Nigel Short

Engineer: Jim Gross

Executive Producer: Martin Souter

Recorded in: The Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge, by kind permission of the Master and Fellows, 1-3 September 2011.

Performing editions: David Skinner

Cover image: The Adoration of the Magi (detail)/Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.11.7, f. 45r., by kind permission of the Master and Fellows

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NICHOLAS TODD, *tenor*

SIMON WALL, *tenor*

ANDREW LAWRENCE-KING,

*gothic harp & psaltery*

MICHAËL GRÉBIL, *plectrum lute*

PAMELA THORBY, *recorder & gemshorn*

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Highly significant to the history of medieval English music, the Trinity Carol Roll is nevertheless an enigmatic document. Its striking physical format, a roll of parchment 18 centimetres wide and some two metres in length when fully unrolled, is highly unusual. Rolls were both portable and economic to produce, so were often used in the Middle Ages for texts that needed to be written down and passed on rapidly, but their lack of binding made them especially vulnerable to loss and damage, and it is likely that many medieval rolls have been destroyed. Inventories listing the (now lost) music-manuscripts held by medieval churches sometimes mention rolls, and they regularly feature in artistic depictions of singers, unfurled over a lectern to be sung from. But the Trinity Carol Roll is a rare survivor of this type of manuscript, and astonishingly well preserved. Its place of origin is unknown, as is the history of its ownership before it was donated to the College in the 19th century by H.O. Roe. The only evidence of the Roll's place of origin comes from the dialect of the carols themselves: this shows signs that the poet(s) or scribe hailed from

south Norfolk, though the Roll itself may have been produced and used elsewhere. A few different indicators suggest that the manuscript was produced in the second or third decade of the 15th century: its script and musical notation are both of a style that dates to the first third of the century, and one of its carols refers to events of 1415, so it cannot have been written before that year. These indicators make the Trinity Carol Roll the earliest of the manuscripts to contain musical settings of medieval carols.

In the 15th century, the carol's distinctive structure (a number of stanzas preceded by and alternating with a recurring burden) was one of the most popular choices for lyrics in the English language, though in the vast majority of cases, only the texts of these carols survive. Perhaps many of these were intended to be sung nonetheless, and in a few cases carol texts are annotated with the names of well-known tunes to which they were to be sung. If this is the case, though, the carols for which music was committed to parchment belong to a different musical sphere: these polyphonic carols, of which

those in the Trinity Roll are the earliest examples, are complex and intricate, and could only have been composed, sung and notated by highly trained musicians. Their part-writing, for two or three independent voices, is of a musical sophistication that goes well beyond the plainsong that formed the musical bread-and-butter of most medieval choirs. Moreover, the carols are not based musically on any pre-existing plainsong melodies (as is much medieval polyphony) but involve two or three newly-composed voice-parts, equal in importance. A few of the carols in the Trinity Carol Roll vary the musical texture by setting the stanzas in two voice-parts and the burden in three; *Abyde I hope it be the beste* (track 14) is the most ambitious in this respect, with a total of four sections, using one, two and three voice-parts. Both this carol and *Deo gracias Anglia* (track 7) open with a burden in unison, a striking musical gesture that may perhaps be a nod to the monophonic tunes to which other carols were once sung.

The carol's association with Christmas dates from late in its history: in the 15th century, the Nativity was only one of a

range of religious topics that inspired carol-writers. Many early carols relate to other festivals of the church's year, and it is possible that they were intended to be sung at feasts or evening entertainments on such occasions; an account of a royal banquet in 1487 records that members '*... of the King's Chapell... incontinently after the Kings first course sange a Carall*'. Six of the Trinity Roll's carols take up the theme of the Nativity, and one each is devoted to St Stephen and St John the Evangelist, whose feast-days fall within the broader Christmas season (on 26th and 27th December respectively). A further three praise the Virgin Mary, and one is a more general moral text. The most unusual carol in terms of its subject-matter is the renowned 'Agincourt Carol', *Deo gracias Anglia* (track 7), which is one of only a few carols in the entire 15th-century repertoire to relate to contemporary events.

Celebrating the victory of King Henry V at the Battle of Agincourt, this carol seems likely to have been composed soon after the events of 1415 to which it refers, and we can speculate that it may have formed some part of the spectacular pageant that was

staged in London in November of that year to welcome home the king and his troops.

Though 15th-century carols rank among the highlights of late-medieval poetry in the English language, it is a distinctive feature of the genre to incorporate short phrases in Latin, often in the burdens.

Many of these Latin phrases were drawn from the church's liturgy and would have been well-known to medieval audiences, churchmen or laypeople. *Deo gracias Anglia* (track 7) ends every stanza with the phrase 'Deo gracias' ('Thanks be to God'), a phrase spoken or sung at the close of many church services. *There is no rose* (track 18), on the other hand, derives its Latin lines from a less familiar source, a much older poem for the Christmas season, the sequence *Letabundus exultet fidelis chorus*. For the poets of the carols, the incorporation of Latin phrases offered the opportunity to link their texts into the framework of the liturgy whilst simultaneously displaying their skill as wordsmiths in weaving phrases in two languages seamlessly together.

Though unlikely to have been sung during official church services, the carols are evidence that, in 15th-century life, the

worlds of ecclesiastical worship and secular entertainment were never very far apart.

*Helen Deeming*

**Further reading:** Helen Deeming, 'The Sources and Origin of the Agincourt Carol', *Early Music*, Vol.35, No.1 (2007), 23-38.

### **Note on the Performing Editions, Forces, and Pronunciation**

It is unlikely that the Trinity Carol Roll itself was used in performance, but served simply as a notated record of the tunes and text. Owing to the poetic metre and stress, individual verses of each carol must rhythmically be reset for each line of text. A new performing edition of the entire roll has been prepared especially for this recording.

For many of the carols we have, at liberty, employed medieval instrumentation, offering a variety of timbres for each, including the gothic harp, psaltery, plectrum lute, recorder, and, for *Lullay, lullay* (track 8) the haunting and watery sounds of the gemshorn. Some, though, remain *a cappella*.

This recording uses a predominately early-fifteenth century and southern

pronunciation of Middle English as yet little marked by the extensive changes in English phonology known as the Great Vowel Shift which occurred later in the century. Simply speaking, this entails using the so-called 'Continental' vowels (somewhat as in Italian) so that, for example, Middle English 'grace' becomes a virtual homonym of Modern English 'grass' and the long /i/ sound heard in Modern English with its distinctive glide (as in 'shine') is absent. Many consonants now silent are here duly voiced (e.g. the 'gh' in 'light').

We are very grateful to Professor Christopher Page, who offered pronunciation guides and related assistance for this recording.

## THE TEXTS

The spelling as in the Trinity Carol Roll has here been retained, as a modern transcription by the late John Stevens is accessible in *Medieval Carols*, Musical Britannica, vol. 4 (1952). Punctuation has been kept to a minimum and the thorn symbol 'þ', when it occurs, has been replaced with the modern 'th'. Names and place names have been capitalised, while

inserted texts in Latin or French have been italicised. A modern version of the texts is also available on [www.alamire.co.uk/discography/deo-gracias-anglia](http://www.alamire.co.uk/discography/deo-gracias-anglia)

For *Lullay*, *lullay* and *Nova, nova*, see *The New Oxford Book of Carols*, ed. Andrew Parrott and Hugh Keyte (Oxford, 1992).

## Hail marye ful of grace

*Hail Marye ful of grace*  
*Modyr in virgynyte.*

The holy gost is to the sent  
Fro the fadyr omnyotent  
Now is god wythin the went  
While the aungel seyde 'Ave'.

*Hail Marye...*

So seyth the gospel of seynt Ion  
God and man is mad but on  
In flesch and bloyd, body and bon  
O god in personys thre.

*Hail Marye...*

And the prophete Ieremye  
Told in hys prophecye  
That the sone of Marye  
Schuld deye for us on rode tre.

*Hail Marye...*

Meche joye to us was graunth  
And in erthe pece i-plaunth  
Qwan the born was this faunth  
In the lond of Galyle.

*Hail Marye...*

Mary graunth us the blys  
Ther thi sonys wonyng is  
Of that we han don amys  
Prey for us pur charyte.

*Hail Marye...*

### **Nowel, nowel, nowel**

*Nowel, nowel, nowel*

*To us is born our god Emanuel.*

In bedlem this berde of lyf  
Is born of marye maydyn and wyf  
He is bothe god and man i-schryf *Hail  
Marye...*

*Nowel, nowel...*

Thys prince of pees shal secyn al stryf  
And wone wyth us perpetuel.

*Nowel, nowel...*

This chyld shal bey us wyth hys bloyd  
And be naylyd upon the royd  
Hys raunsom pasyth al erdly goyd

*Nowel, nowel...*

Allas qwat wyth dar be so woyd  
To sle so ientyl a iowel.

*Nowel, nowel...*

Be hys powste he hys emprys  
Schal take fro helle at hys uprys  
And save mankende upon this wys

*Nowel, nowel...*

Thus telly us the prophecys  
That he is kyng of heven and helle.

*Nowel, nowel...*

This maydenys sone to hys empere  
Schal stey to hevene be his powere  
Hys holy gost us alle shal lere

*Nowel, nowel...*

[They and] the fadyr in feere  
Schal rengne o God this leve I weel.

*Nowel, nowel...*

Prey we this chyld wyth good entent  
In our deyng he is present  
Onto hys fadyr omnyotent

*Nowel, nowel...*

The ferst tydyng of this testament  
Browth to us seynt Gabryel.

*Nowel, nowel...*

## **Alma redemptoris mater**

*Alma redemptoris mater.*

As I say by on a nyth  
My thowth was on a berde so brith  
That men clepyn Marye ful of myth  
Redemptoris mater.

*Alma...*

To here cam Gabryel wyth lyth  
And seyde: 'heyl be thu blysfyl wyth  
To ben clepyd now art thu dyth'  
Redemptoris mater.

*Alma...*

At that wurd that lady bryth  
Anon consevyd god ful of myth  
Than men wyst weel that sche hyth  
Redemptoris mater.

*Alma...*

[Q]wan Ihesu on the rode was pyth  
Mary was doolful of that syth  
Til sche sey hym ryse up rith  
Redemptoris mater.

*Alma...*

Ihesu that syttyst in hevene lyth  
Graunt us to comyn beforn thi sith  
Wyth that berde that is so brith.  
Redemptoris mater.

*Alma...*

## **Now may we syngyn**

*Now may we syngyn as it is  
Quod puer natus est nobis.*

This bebe to us that now is bore  
Wyndyrful werkys he hath iwrowt  
He wil not lese that was ilore  
But baldly ayen it bowth

And thus it is, forsothe iwys  
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

*Now may we syngyn...*

[T]his chaffare lovyd he rith weel  
The prys was hey and bowth ful dere  
Qwo would suffre and for us feele  
As dede that prince was owtyn pere.

And thus it is, forsothe iwys  
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

*Now may we syngyn...*

Hys raunsum for us hath ipayd  
Of resoun than we owyn to ben hys  
Be mercy askyd and he be prayd  
We may be rith kalange blys.

And thus it is, forsothe iwys  
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

*Now may we syngyn...*

To sum purpos god made man  
I leve weel to salvacyoun

Qwat was his blood that fro hym ran  
But defens agens dampnacoun.

And thus it is, forsothe iwys  
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

*Now may we syngyn...*

Almythy god in trynyte  
The mercy we pray with hool herte  
Thy mercy may al woo make fle  
And daungerous dreed fro us to sterthe.  
And thus it is, forsothe iwys  
He askyth nowt but that is hys.

*Now may we syngyn...*

### **Be mery, be mery**

*Be mery, be mery I prey you ev'rychon.*

A princypal poynt of charyte  
It is mery to be in hym  
That is but oon.

*Be mery...*

For he that is but one in blys  
To be hath sent his sone i wys  
To save us fro our foon.

*Be mery...*

For of a maydyn a child was born  
To save mankende that was forlorn.  
Man think theron.

*Be mery...*

Now Mary for thi sonys sake  
Save hem alle that merthe make  
And lengest holdy on.

*Be mery...*

### **Nowel syng we now al and sum**

*Nowel syng we now al and sum*

*For rex pacificus is cum.*

In Bedleem in that fayr cite  
A child was born of a maydyn fre  
That shal a lord and prynce be.  
A solis ortus cardine.

*Nowel syng we...*

Childryn were slayn ful greth plente  
Ihesu for the love of the  
Qwerfore here sowlys sayvd be.  
Hostis Herodis impie.

*Nowel syng we...*

As sunne schynyth thorw the glas  
So Ihesu in hys modyr was  
The to serve now graunth us gras.  
O lux beata trinitas.

*Nowel syng we...*

Now God is comyn to wurchepyn us  
Now of Marye is born Ihesus  
Make we mery amongys us.  
Exultet celum laudibus.

*Nowel syng we...*

## Deo gracias Anglia

*Deo gracias Anglia  
Redde pro victoria.*

Owr kyng went forth to Normandy  
Wyth grace and myth of chyvalry  
Ther god for hym wrowth mervelowsly  
Werfore Englonde may cal and cry

*Deo gracias...*

He set a sege for sothe to say  
To Harflu toune wyth ryal aray  
That toune he wan and mad a fray  
That Fraunse shal rewe tyl domysday.

*Deo gracias...*

Than went hym forth owr kyng comely  
In Achyncourt feld he faught manly  
Thorw grace of God most mervelowsly  
He had both feld and vycory.

*Deo gracias...*

There lordys eerlys and barone  
Wer slayn and takyn and that ful soun  
And sume were browth into Londone  
Wyth ioye and blysse and greth renoun.

*Deo gracias...*

Almythy God he kepe our kyng  
Thys pepyl and al hys weel-welyng  
And give hem grace withoutyn endyng  
Then may we calle and savely syng

*Deo gracias...*

## Lullay, lullay

*Lullay, lullay, lay lay, lullay  
Mi deere moder sing lullay.*

Als I lay on yoolis night  
Alone in my longing  
Me thought I saw a well fair sight  
A may hir child rokking.

*Lullay, lullay...*

The maiden wold withouten song  
Hir child o sleep to bring  
The child him thought sche ded him wrong  
And bad his moder sing.

*Lullay, lullay...*

Sing nou moder said the child  
What schal to me befall  
Heerafter wan I cum til eld  
For so doon modres all.

*Lullay, lullay...*

Sweete sune said sche  
Weroffe schuld I sing  
Ne wist I nere yet more of thee  
But Gabriels greeting.

*Lullay, lullay...*

He grett me goodli on his knee  
And saide hail Marie  
Hail full of grace God is with thee  
Thou beren schalt Messie.

*Lullay, lullay...*

Ther als he saide I thee bare  
On midewenter night  
In maidenhede withouten kare  
Be grace of God almight.

*Lullay, lullay...*

Serteynly this sight I say  
This song I herde sing  
Als I me lay this yoolis day  
Alone in my longing.

*Lullay, lullay...*

## **Nova, nova**

*Nova, nova, ave fit ex Eva.*

Gabriell off hye degre  
He cam down from Trinite  
To Nazareth in Galile.

*Nova, nova...*

He met a maydn in a place  
He knelyd down afore hir face  
He seyde heile Mary ful of grace.

*Nova, nova...*

When the maid herd tell off this  
Sche was full sore abascyd iwys  
And wened that sche had don amyse.

*Nova, nova...*

Then seid the angell dred not thue  
Ye shall conceyve in all vertue  
A chyld whose name shall be Ihesu.

*Nova, nova...*

It is not yt syx moneth agoon  
Sen Elizabeth conceyved ion  
As it was prophysed before.

*Nova, nova...*

Then seid the mayden verely  
I am youre servaunt right truely  
Ecce ancilla domini.

*Nova, nova...*

## **Now make we merthe**

*Now make we mertbe al and sum  
For Cristemesse now is icum*

*That hath no pere*

*Syng we alle in fere*

*Now ioye and blysse*

*Thei shal not mysse*

*That makyth good chere.*

Now god almythy down hath sent  
The holy gost to be present  
To lyth in Mary maydyn verament  
That bar goddys sone wyth good entent.

*That bath no pere...*

Now goddys sone omnipotent  
In Mary mylde he hath hent  
Flesh and blood for he hath ment  
Man to restore agen to his rent.

*That bath no pere...*

To mylde Marye our hert be bent  
That blysfyl lady so be bent  
To prey for us we may not schent  
To lhesu crist here sone so ient.

*that bath no pere. Syng. Now make we mertbe*

### **Abyde I hope it be the beste**

Abyde I hope it be the beste  
Abyde I hope it be the beste  
Syn hasty man wantyth never woo.

*Abyde I hope...*

Lat every man that wal han reste  
Ever ben avysyd quat he schal do.

*Abyde I hope...*

Preye er thu take thinke er thu feste  
In wal be war er thu be wo.

*Abyde I hope...*

### **Qwat tydyngs bryngyst thu messenger**

*Qwat tydyngs bryngyst thu messenger*

*Of cristys berthe this yobys day.*

A bebe is born of hey nature  
The prince of peas that ever shal be  
Of hevene and erthe he hath the cure  
His lordschepe is eternyte

Swich wynder tydyng ye may here  
That man is mad now godys pere  
Wom synne had mad but fendys pray.

*Qwat tydyngs...*

A wundyr thing is now be falle  
That kyng that formyd sterre and sunne  
Hevене and erthe and aunglys alle  
Now in mankende is newe begunne

Swich wynder tydyng ye may here  
Afaunt is now of o[n] yere  
That hath ben ever and shal ben ay.

*Qwat tydyngs...*

That semlyest selkouth to se  
This berde that hath this babe I born  
And lord ateynyd of he degre  
A maydyn is as was beforн

Swich wynder tydyng ye may here  
That maydyn and mad is on her in fere  
And sche a lady of greth aray.

*Qwat tydyngs...*

That lovelyst gan grete her child  
'Heyl sone heyl brothyr heyl fadder dere  
Heyl dowter' he seyth 'heyl moder myld'  
This heylng was an qweyet manne  
Swich wynder tydyng ye may here  
That heylng was of so good chere

*Qwat tydyngs...*

### **Eya martir Stephane**

*Eya martir Stephane*

*For us we prey to the.*

Of this martir make we mende  
*Qui triumphavit bodie*  
And to hevене blysse gan wende  
*Dono celestis gracia.*

*Eya martir Stephane...*

Stonyd he was wyth stonys grete  
*Feruore gentis impie*  
Than he say Cryst sitte in sete  
*Immixum patris dextere.*

*Eya martir Stephane...*

*Tbou preydyst Cryst for tbin enmyse*  
*O martir invictissime*  
*Tbou prey for us that hye iustyse*  
*Un nos purget a crimine.*

*Eya martir Stephane...*

### **Prey for us the prynce of pees**

*Prey for us the prynce of pees*

*Amici Cristi Iobannes.*

To the now Cristes dere derlyng  
That were a maydyn bothe eld and yying  
Myn herte is set to the to syng

*Amici Cristi Iobannes.*

*Prey for us...*

For thu were so clene a may  
The prevytes of hevене forsothe thu say  
Quan an Crystys brest you lay

*Amici Cristi Iobannes.*

*Prey for us...*

Quan Cryst beforon Pylat was browth  
Thou clene maydyn forsok hym nowth  
To deye wyth hym was al thy thowth.

*Amici Cristi Iobannes.*

*Prey for us...*

Crystys moder was the betake  
A maydyn to ben a maydynnes make  
Thow be our helpe we be not forsake.

*Amici Cristi Iobannes.*

*Prey for us...*

## Ther is no rose of swych vertu

*Ther is no rose of swych vertu*

*As is the rose that bar Ihesu.*

Ther is no rose of swych vertu

As is the rose that bar Ihesu.

*Alleluya.*

*Ther is no rose...*

For in this rose conteynyd was  
Hevene and erthe in lytyl space.

*Res miranda.*

*Ther is no rose...*

Be that rose we may weel see

That he is God in persons thre.

*Pari forma.*

*Ther is no rose...*

The aungelys sungyn thh sheperdes to  
'Gloria in excelsis deo'

*Gaudeamus.*

*Ther is no rose...*

Leve we al this worldly merthe  
And folwe we this joyful berthe.

*Transeamus.*

*Ther is no rose...*

## BIOGRAPHIES

### ALAMIRE, directed by David Skinner

One of the leading vocal consorts in the UK, Alamire has an enviable line-up of some of the finest consort singers under the charismatic directorship of **David Skinner**. Inspired by the great choral works of the medieval and early modern periods, the ensemble expands or contracts according to its chosen repertoire and often combines with instrumentalists, creating colourful programmes to illustrate musical or historical themes. Recent collaborations with Andrew Lawrence-King and QuintEssential Sackbut & Cornett Ensemble have been uniformly well received.

Alamire presents concerts regularly in the UK, USA, and Europe and has enjoyed varied and highly acclaimed projects including soundtracks for TV and film, sound installations for art galleries, festival appearances and radio broadcasts.

David Skinner and Alamire record exclusively for Obsidian Records, with whom they have released six CDs and won a number of awards. In March 2010 they received critical acclaim (Gramophone Record of the Month) for their groundbreaking CD of the complete motets of

the *Cantiones Sacrae* (1575) of Thomas Tallis and William Byrd.

For more information about Alamire, and the soloists on this recording, please visit [www.alamire.co.uk](http://www.alamire.co.uk).

### **ANDREW LAWRENCE-KING**

**Andrew Lawrence-King** is recognized as one of Europe's leading early music artists, and is currently leader of The Harp Consort. He has recorded with nearly all the leading specialist ensembles, and has made over 100 recordings of music ranging from Troubadour lyrics (with Paul Hillier for ECM) to 15th and 16th century repertoire (Gothic Voices) to new music for early harp (John Paul Jones' 'Amores Pasados' with The Harp Consort for DHM). Also on record are two accounts – with The Sixteen and the Taverner Players – of the Handel Harp Concerto. For further information, visit [www.theharpconsort.com](http://www.theharpconsort.com).

### **MICHAËL GRÉBIL**

**Michael Grébil** is a multi-instrumentalist & singer who has dedicated a part of his musical life to medieval music. He particularly excels in the research of the medieval lute practice, improvisation and ornamentation in the medieval monodic

area. He plays with a number of renowned medieval ensembles : Alla Francesca (Brigitte Lesne, Pierre Hamon) and Hesperion XXI (Jordi Savall, Montserrat Figueras†). Recently he developed a solo recital echoing his own researches and his intuitions about the medieval instrumental practice and how this music comes alive in modern times. For further information, visit [www.myspace.com/michaelgrebil](http://www.myspace.com/michaelgrebil).

### **PAMELA THORBY**

**Pamela Thorby** has established herself as one of the world's leading recorder players. Her stylish virtuosity can be heard on numerous recordings of music ranging from the medieval period to the present day. Pamela records as a solo artist for LINN Records. Pamela's ability to assimilate many styles of music and her skills as an improviser have led to her work with groups such as the modern jazz quartet Perfect Houseplants. Her appearances on these million-selling albums make her arguably the most listened to recorder player in the world. For further information, visit [www.pamelathorby.com](http://www.pamelathorby.com).

**Image overleaf:** The Agincourt Carol from The Trinity Carol Roll/Trinity College, Cambridge MS 0.3.58 (detail) by kind permission of the Master and Fellows.



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