MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AS VOTIVE GIFTS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

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ANGELA BELLIA AND SHERAMY D. BUNDRICK

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SHERAMY BUNDRICK CLAUDE CALAME MARIA LUISA CATONI CORNELIA ISLER-KERÉNYI BARBARA KOWALZIG CLEMENTE MARCONI

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AFTERWORD: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AS VOTIVE GIFTS: TOWARDS AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

Angela Bellia

T HE importance of music in worship concerns both the function of sound in a ritual context and the role played by musical and choral performances as a means of communication.¹ As Catherine Bell has argued, performance communicates on multiple sensory levels, usually involving highly visual imagery, dramatic sounds, and other tactile, olfactory, and gustatory stimuli:² thanks to its privileged function in communicating messages to worshippers about the social order and the values of the community, performance might have inspired a sense of belonging in the social context.³ As two inseparable components in the sacred sphere, music and dance strengthen the power of ritual performances.⁴ Given that musical and choral performances provided opportunities for appropriate individuals to act during events, performance could be considered a favourite language of communication with the gods.⁵

While music in the cultual sphere should be considered part of the actions that contribute to the effectiveness of the rite, it is also necessary to consider it as more than a mere accompaniment or means of filling various phases of the ceremony with sound: it was instead a necessary aspect of ritual practice and an indispensable element to the set of acts aimed at expressing sacredness and creating – or co-creating – the context suitable for ritual actions.⁶

For this reason, it is not possible to understand the development of ancient music (and dance) without taking into account the fact that it was heavily influenced by religion, and that all forms of musical performances were closely related to social life and festive and religious manifestations.⁷ No celebration took place without music and dance: libations, fumigations, sacrifices, and processions were performed with the accompaniment of instruments and ritualised movements.⁸ It is worth remembering that there are actually no known examples of dance performances were always accompanied by song, sounds, and musical accompaniment.⁹ They contributed to the enactment of rituals, which would have included various acts of worship in the sacred space, such as processional routes, performances of hymns, ritual dramas, and sacrifices to induce a sense of the numinous in the participants.¹⁰

¹ Furlay 2010, 117-119.	² Bell 1997, 159-164.
³ Tambiah 1985, 123-131.	
⁴ NAEREBOUT 2015, 107-109. See also SOAR and AAMODT 2014.	
⁵ Taplin 1999, 33. See also Mylonopoulos 2006, 69-71.	⁶ Lind 2009, 203-204.
⁷ PASALODOS, TILL, and HOWELL 2013, 17-23.	
⁸ Naerebout 2006.	⁹ Naerebout 2010, 108.
¹⁰ Cfr. Marconi 2007, 28.	

Music and sound may have had various roles: firstly, to please the gods themselves so that they were favourably disposed towards the worshippers' requests, therefore increasing the efficacy of the epiclesis.¹ Furthermore, music and sound in cult could be considered an offering to the deities and a prayer or votive act unto itself. Worshippers or musicians tried to produce a more lasting effect to the musical performance by dedicating not only the text of a song itself,² but also musical instruments or their miniaturised models in honour of a god or a goddess.³

As the papers in this volume have shown, the practice of dedicating musical instruments and sound tools to the deities of the ancient world – along with figurines of instruments – is well attested by a variety of sources, including a number of epigrams in the *Greek Anthology*, temple-accounts, and the discovery of the instruments themselves during excavations, some of which bear votive inscriptions.

As Sheramy Bundrick highlights,⁴ all together, these sources point to many different motives and often more than one explanation for the dedication of musical instruments to the gods: a prayer for protection, the retirement from religious life and from professional musical life, health, or to celebrate a victory (including participation in a music contest) and thanksgiving for a fulfilled vow. The dedicatory act of these special offerings conveys the implied exchange that is embedded in the act of giving gifts to divinities: it emphasises not only the aesthetic character of the musical instruments as votive objects – in many cases luxury items – but also their meaning as a form of a *sema* of the giver,⁵ which in turn functions as a material musical testimony of the dedicators' devotion. Thus, the dedication was employed as an instrument of ritual communication. Its full significance is articulated in the specific context of an attempt to communicate with the divine through ritual.⁶

A single instrument or single sound tool cannot tell us much about rituals linked to their dedication unless we view it against a broad social and archaeological context. Each instrument is not an isolated unit, but a component of ritual activity considered as an offering to the divinity within the framework of the ceremony. The dedication of musical instruments and sound objects acquires further specificity when it was set up at a particular location. Therefore, an ideal interpretation would consider the relationship between musical offerings and their setting. Obviously, the difficulty in treating the question of location arises from the fact that in many cases it is complicated to establish the precise location of instruments as votive gifts in a given space and this specific location's particular meaning. However, when musical instruments or sound tools survive in an archaeological context along with images, inscriptions, and possibly written sources, it is possible to outline the aspects of the occasion for which they were offered in the context of a ritual performance; they serve as valuable pieces of evidence not only for reconstruction of their function in religious practices, but also for enriching our understanding of visual images of performances in ancient world.⁷

An example of this approach to the study of musical instruments as votive gifts is offered by the *aulos*, a common find among votives. This instrument was almost al-

- ³ Cfr. Bellia 2012a, 121-123.
- ⁵ Rappaport 1999, 141-144.
- ⁷ See Gaifman 2008.
- ² Parker 2004, 309.
- ⁴ See her introduction in this volume.

⁶ Cfr. Forsén 2004, 309-310.

¹ Papadopoulou 2004, 347.

ways present in ceremonies: despite the *aulos* being criticised in the Greek world,² it was considered an irreplaceable element of the rite. Its sound evoked the festivity itself and was seen as crucial in bringing vitality to the ceremony.³ Since its first appearance, which dates back to the end of 8th c. BCE, the aulos was the protagonist not only of the processions that were directed towards the shrines and at different moments of sacrificial rites, but also in dances performed in the sacred context. Whether used in solo pieces or to accompany songs, the aulos was the most played instrument either because it was easily portable, or because it required a relatively low level of technical skill and could be played by non-professional musicians.⁴

Several auloi have been discovered in the sanctuaries of the Greek world since 1900.⁵ These finds not only show how this instrument had a function in sacred places, but also how its presence in particular contexts recurs. At least until the 5th c. BCE, findings point the instruments in relation to shrines devoted mostly to female deities: this circumstance raises the issue of the function of the *auloi* in ritual activities related to the respective cults, and on the deposition of these instruments as votive offerings in these contexts. With regard to the present state of the studies,⁶ bone auloi, or their fragments, have been found in sacred areas that reference Hera (Samo,⁷ Chios,⁸ Perachora,⁹ Poseidonia-Paestum,¹⁰ Elea-Velia (in bronze) (FIG. 1)¹¹), Artemis (Sparta,¹² Ephesus, ¹³ Brauron, ¹⁴ Aegina ¹⁵), Athena (Lindos, ¹⁶ Iallyssos ¹⁷) and Persephone (Locri Epizefirii¹⁸). Now, we can add to the list of instruments found in sacred contexts two other examples found in Selinunte, one of which is a fragment of an aulos found in the sanctuary of Malophoros,¹⁹ and the other concerning the two sections of aulos discovered under Temple R,²⁰ probably dedicated to Demeter *Tesmophoros*. The inscribed aulos from Locri and the two examples from Selinunte can help us in reconstructing the ritual occasion and the meaning of the dedication related to these instruments.

As the papers of this volume highlight, few inscribed auloi have been found in the excavation of sanctuaries. These instruments give us some information about the dedicator and the deity the instrument was dedicated to. In the case of the aulos from Locri (FIG. 2),²¹ the inscription in, could be read as an invocation of the divinities

¹ Papadopoulou 2004, 347-348.	² West 2007, 129-167.	
³ Cfr. Haldane 1966, 106.		
⁴ Papadopoulou 2004, 347; Bundrick 2005, 34-42.		
⁵ Papadopoulou 2004, 353-354.	⁶ Perrot 2012; Bellia 2017.	
⁷ Moustaka 2001, fig. 1, pl. 13, 1.	⁸ Boardman 1967, 242, n. 598.	
⁹ Dunbabin 1962, 448-451, pl. 115; Psaroudakēs 2013, 109-112, pls. 5 3c-e; 5 4c-d.		
¹⁰ Greco 1998, 56-57; Greco 1999, 237.		
¹¹ NEUTSCH 1980, 354, pl. 19, 2; CICALA and VECCHIO 2008, 164, n. 20.		
¹² DAWKINS 1939, 236-237, 56-57.		
¹³ Hogarth 1908, 194, pl. 37, 12. Psaroudakēs 2002, 36	52, pl. 22.	
¹⁴ Landels 1963, 116-119; Landels 1999, 271-275.	¹⁵ Furtwängler 1906, 429, n. 7, fig. 337.	
¹⁶ Blinkenberg 1931, 153-155, nn. 448-454, pl. 16. Cfr. P	SAROUDAKĒS 2008, 210, fig. 12.	
¹⁷ PSAROUDAKĒS 2002, 356, pl. 18; PSAROUDAKĒS 2013, 110, pl. 5 3f.		

¹⁸ Superintendency for Archaeological Heritage of Calabria, no. RC, n. inv. 5818. LEPORE 2010, 430, pls. 30.9 and 30.10; Bellia 2012a, 93, fig. 91; Bellia 2012b, 46-47, fig. 12.

¹⁹ Palermo, Regional Archaeological Museum, no. N.I. 23218. For its organological features, see Bellia 2017b. See also GASPARRI 2014. ²⁰ Marconi 2014, 108, figg. 7-8.

²¹ Lepore (2010) reads this as I and N. She proposed that this is the inscription of two notes, on the basis of an uncertain date of the instrument (3th c. BCE), but there is no reason to explain this interpretation and neither a musical nor a technical function related especially to a wind instrument. In addition, thanks

worshipped in the sanctuary in order to reinforce the dedication of the votive gift, and could be related to the rituals that marked the passage from child to adult female performed in the *Persephoneion*.⁴ Taking into account that on the *pinakes*² found in the same sanctuary, scenes of procession are depicted which represent the presentation of the gifts to Persephone by the Locrian maidens before their marriage (FIG. 3),³ it is not surprising that a fragment of an *aulos* has been found in the *Persephoneion*, where the processional route could be accompanied by music: as a musical dedication, this *aulos* could have been related to this moment in which songs, music and dance were performed, and the goddess (or the other divinities worshipped in the sanctuary) could be invoked in order to protect the new lives of the girls as wives and mothers.⁴ In addition, it is worth remembering that amongst the sanctuary findings were some *pinakes* representing a scene in which a goddess or a priestess and a female *aulos* player are depicted celebrating a ritual, perhaps a bloodless sacrifice before marriage, inside a sanctuary around an altar (FIG. 4).⁵

The *aulos* from the Locrian *Persephoneion* can be considered not only as an offering related to the power of music and sound to imbue the ritual performances with a more lasting effect, but also as an effort to communicate with divinities through the inscribed invocation, consecrating the musical instrument to the related deities, most likely, the goddess Persephone.⁶

Similarly to the Locrian *aulos*, the fragment of the instrument from Selinunte displays the characteristics of the so-called "early type" *auloi*, characterised by the absence of mechanisms of action on the holes for sound production.⁷ On the basis of its features and upon comparison with the sections from Temple R, this *aulos* can also be dated to the 6th-5th c. BCE.

The discovery of an *aulos* in the sanctuary of *Malophoros* is of great interest, especially if it is considered in the context of this shrine. We do not know where exactly within the sacred area the section of the instrument was found. We do not even know what function its sound had during the celebrations at the sanctuary of *Malophoros*. However, some significant finds, dating from a period between the 7th and the 5th c. BCE, suggest that musical activities were performed in the sanctuary as early as the the Early Archaic period: in addition to Corinthian pottery with *Frauenfest* scenes⁸ and Attic vases featuring representations of dancers and instrument players (including players of the *aulos*,⁹ bronze¹⁰ and terracotta bells (FIG. 7)¹¹ used in the rituals as a signal and as the recall of the worshippers), an *aulos* player in *faïence*

¹ Bellia 2012b; Marroni and Torelli 2016.	
² For the <i>pinakes</i> as votive objects, see Forsén 2004, 293.	³ Bellia 2012b, 41, fig. 9.
⁴ Cfr. Burkert 2003, 176-177.	_
⁵ MARRONI and TORELLI 2016, 53; Bellia 2017a.	
⁶ Cfr. Lambrinoudakis 2004, 303-305.	
⁷ Cfr. Psaroudakēs 2002, 335-366. Cfr. West 2007, 129-158.	⁸ Marconi 2013a, 264.
⁹ Bellia 2009b, 49-65. See also Gasparri 2014.	¹⁰ BELLIA 2012a, 13 and 39.
¹¹ Castelvetrano (Trapani), Civic Museum. Unpublished. For clay	and bronze bells as votive gifts, VIL-
LING 2006.	

to the comparison to other similar instruments found in Magna Grecia and in Sicily (BELLIA 2012a, 91-109), and on the basis of archaeological evidence of musical interest in Locri Epizefirii, the instrument could be dated to the 6th-5th c. BCE.

was found,¹ as well as terracotta figurines of male and female players connected to the sacred sphere.²

Along with these pieces of evidence, the analysis of sacred spaces also adds to our knowledge base. We must not forget that, as Clemente Marconi suggests,³ the height difference between the sanctuary structures, from which one entrance was accessed on the east side of the sacred area and through a five-step staircase, was used as a form of scenery and backdrop for the dramatic re-enactments connected to the cult and practiced at the sanctuary of *Malophoros*. Thus, one cannot ignore some function of music and dance in the "sacred drama", the plot of which can be traced to the epigraphic text dated to the 4th c. BCE and housed in the J. Paul Getty Museum, which is considered to be of Selinuntian origin.⁴

In addition, we also have to take in account that the spaces around the circular structure located outside the propylaea could be considered as a place suitable for dances around the altar⁵ or around the well, if the hypothesis that it is a replica of Kallichoron or Kallichoros of Eleusis is accepted.⁶ It is interesting to note that placed next to the propylaea, namely at the entrance to the sanctuary of Malophoros, was the sacred enclosure of Hecate, whose cultual connection with Demeter in her role as a messenger is attested by several written and epigraphic sources⁷ uncovered during the research on the goddess Kore. It should be considered that in Selinunte, Hecate was honoured with Angelos epiclesis, which is documented by the dedication found in the sanctuary near the propylaea.⁸ The epiclesis recalls the *aggheliké* dance practiced in Syracuse for Artemis as a messenger and, according to Pollux, imitated the "posture of the messengers".9 As with Hecate at Selinunte, Artemis at Syracuse was also connected to Demeter and this name could be connected to the seasonal festival that announced the return of Kore after her rape carried out by Hades:¹⁰ it is very likely that this feast included processions and dance accompanied by music performed with the aulos.¹¹ Taking into consideration the aulos from the sanctuary of Malophoros as a votive gift, it cannot be refuted that its dedication could be related to its function as the musical instrument par excellence to delight deities, and to celebrate the rebirth of human and chthonic nature, marking the festival spirit.¹² Despite the fact that musical instruments were not generally used in the cult of chthonian deities,¹³ the use of the *aulos* in this sacred place may be an exception, as archaeological evidence and written sources have attested for other contexts.¹⁴

As a means to please the divinities, the dedication of musical instruments could also have been used as a way of commemorating the completion of a building or in the process of consecration. Prayer, sacrifice, and deposits seem to have been indis-

- ³ Marconi 2018.
- ⁴ FARAONE and OBBINK 2013; ANTONETTI 2018, forthcoming.
- ⁵ See JAMESON, JORDAN, and KOTANSKY 1993, 43; ZACCARINI 2015, 300-305.
- ⁶ TORELLI 1984, 99. A different interpretation is in ZOPPI 2015, 32.
- ⁷ Serafini 2015, 413-425. See also Antonetti 2006, 154-156.
- ⁹ POLLUX, 4, 103.

¹¹ They may have wound across from the inhabited area of Selinunte to the temple of Triolo Nord (perhaps dedicated to Hera) on the western hill, then to the sanctuary of *Malophoros* and its adjacent space, including the area where the so-called temple of Zeus *Meilichios* was built, and temple M (or most probably a fountain used as a shrine for the sacralisation of the procession), and then towards the necropolis.

¹² ATHANASSAKIS 1976, 102-103. For music and dance performed on the occasion of the *Koreia* and *Kalligeneia*, see Bellia 2012b, 32; Bellia 2014, 25-26; Bellia 2015, 101-102. ¹³ Haldane 1966.

¹⁴ Papadopoulou 2004, 349, n. 10; Bellia 2009a; Marconi 2014, 109; Bellia 2015.

⁸ Serafini 2015, 423, fig. 39.
 ¹⁰ Burkert 2003, 444-450.

² Bellia 2009a, 134-137.

¹ Bellia 2017b, 20, fig. 4.

pensable in this procedure. According to Vassilis Lambrinoudakis,¹ consecration and foundation rites took place some time before the process of building, immediately before or during the process or after the building was completed, as thankgiving to divinities for the success of the enterprise. Implements for sacrifice or for the parallel consumption of food by participants were deposited in the foundations. As one of the most important parts of this process, the sacrifice was always accompanied by processions, ritual dances and music.²

Regarding the bone *aulos* fragments discovered under Temple R in Selinunte, Marconi has argued that these two sections were found against the south wall of Temple R.³ A significant number of objects including vases, weapons, terracotta figurines, elements of personal ornament, and a significant amount of animal bones (identified as belonging to small piglets, goats and sheep, and fish) were also found. According to Marconi, it cannot be excluded that the two fragments, probably belonging to the same wind instrument,⁴ were dedicated together after the construction of Temple R. It seems likely that this offering was related to a sacrifice and ritual performances which could have taken place in the open space between Temple R and the South Building: it was an impressive theatral area which, since to the end of the 6th c. BCE, would have served as a viewing point for any sort of ritual performances in the open space.⁵

Given the various occasions for which the *aulos* was used (mentioned by Marconi),⁶ the possibility that the instrument was a special offering consecrated under the temple, where there were also irreversibly deposited implements of cult or votive offerings, could be considered: in this case, the dedication of the instrument was not only a form of sacrifice to the divinity in order to guarantee protection for the sacred place and for the future of the building itself,⁷ but also a dedicatory act to remember important events and rituals performed in the temple, involving performances of music and dance associated with the cult's activity.⁸

As a ritual offering that brought pleasure to the gods, instruments as votive gifts could also be conceived as souvenirs of special moments in a given ritual that involved not only singers, dancers, and musicians, but also priests, priestesses, and/or cult personnel.⁹ The desire to retain a tangible memento of a musical performance in a sacred place ¹⁰ could have brought worshippers or musicians to offer these particular dedications, which survived long after their presentation to the gods as a physical perceptible and tangible object in the sanctuary.¹¹

As special votive gifts which contributed to the effort of ritual performance, musical instruments and sound objects deposited in shrines and sacred places could have contributed to evoking the presence of the gods in the worshippers, recalling sounds related to their epiphany and their soundscape in a sacred setting (as in the case of models

² For music and dance during sacrifice, cfr. Nordquist 1992; Vergara Cerqueira 2014; Kubatzki 2016.

⁷ BURKERT 2003, 202. It is worth remembering that the foundation myth of the mother city of Selinunte, Megara, is related to music. According to Pausanias (the main source for this myth), after its invasion and the destruction of its walls, Megara was reconstructed at the location where Apollo laid his musical instrument. See MARCONI 2007, 197-199.

⁸ For music and dance associated with cult activity in Selinunte, see Bellia 2018b. See also Bellia 2018c.
 ⁹ NORDOUIST 1994.
 ¹⁰ Cfr. MARCONI 2013b.

¹ Lambrinoudakis 2004, 337-338.

 ³ Marconi 2014, 107-108, fig. 5-6.
 ⁵ Marconi and Scahill 2015.

⁴ Bellia 2018a.
⁶ Marconi 2014. See also Bellia 2017.

 ⁹ Nordquist 1994.
 ¹¹ Parker 2004.

of percussion instruments found in sanctuaries dedicated to the chthonic divinities near the altar),¹ or of rattles in the form of fruits and pomegranates, most of which have been found in sanctuaries dedicated to female divinities of fertility and safety.²

Keeping this perspective in mind, these dedications could commemorate the devotion of worshippers and musicians: their dedicatory act was associated not only with a specific idea of ritual and musical performances, but also to an explicit preservation of their memory.³

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¹ De Miro 2008; Bellia 2014, 25, fig. 13. ² Bellia 2012a, fig. 13.

³ For the memory of ritual performance and shared experience, see CHANIOTIS 2016; CONNELLY 2011.

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FIG. 1. Velia, "holy well" area: Bronze instrument (from Neusch 1980, pl. 19, 2).

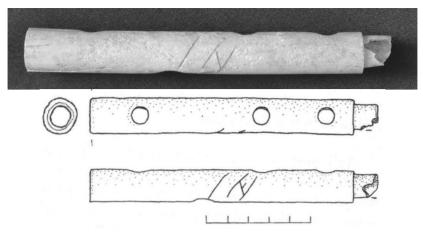


FIG. 2. Locri Epizefiri, *Persephoneion*: Inscribed *aulos* fragment [Drawing from Lepore 2010, pl. 30.9]. (© Superintendency for Archaeological Heritage of Calabria, no. RC, n. inv. 5818).

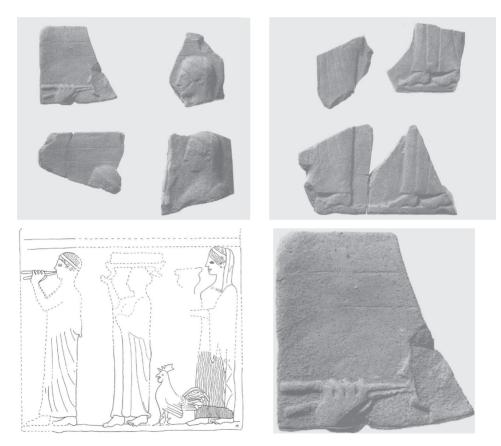


FIG. 3. Locri Epizefiri, *Persephoneion: pinakes* representing a procession with a male *aulos* player (from *I* pinakes *di Locri* 2000-2003, s. IV, II, 5, pls. 84-84, fig. 35).

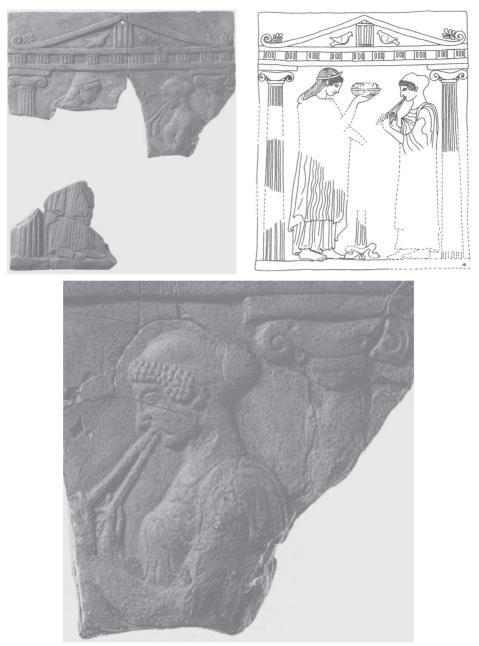


FIG. 4. Locri Epizefiri, *Persephoneion: pinakes* representing a female *aulos* player inside a temple (from *I* pinakes *di Locri* 2000-2003, s. IV, II, 5, pl. 16 a,b, fig. 5).

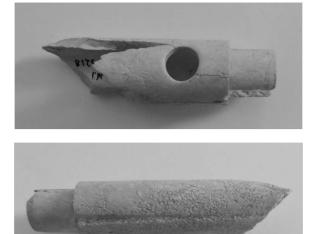


FIG. 5. Selinunte, Sanctuary of *Malophoros*: Bone *aulos* fragment (© Palermo, Regional Archaeological Museum, no. N.I. 23218)





FIG. 6. Selinunte, Temple R: Bone *auloi* fragments. Drawing by Filippo Pisciotta (from Marconi 2014, 116, figs. 7-8. © Institute of Fine Arts - NYU).



FIG. 7. Selinunte, Sanctuary of *Malophoros*: Clay bell (© Castelvetrano (Trapani), Civic Museum).

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