

Dr. Vasfi Samim (1905-1981): A successful veterinarian, artist and sportsman in Albania

Çağrı Çağlar SİNMEZ^{1,a,✉}, Batuhan ŞAHİN^{2,b}

¹Erciyes University, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Department of History of Veterinary Medicine and Deontology, Kayseri, Türkiye; ²Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Vocational School of Health Services, Department of Laboratory and Veterinary Health, Osmaniye, Türkiye

^aORCID: 0000-0002-9248-6022; ^bORCID: 0000-0002-7234-1379

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✉Corresponding author

cagrisinmez@erciyes.edu.tr

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ABSTRACT

This biographical research aims to reveal the professional life and scientific works of Dr. Vasfi Samim. Dr. Vasfi Samim (1905–1981) was an internationally renowned Albanian veterinarian registered in the Ottoman State Register, who has been considered as an accomplished veterinarian, zootechnist, artist as well as sportsman in Albania. After graduating from the Higher Veterinary School (*Baytar Mekteb-i Alisi*) in Istanbul in 1927, Dr. Vasfi Samim completed his doctorate in the field of veterinary zootechny at the Berlin Higher Veterinary School in 1931. Upon returning to his country, he provided the structuring and development of animal health, breeding and zootechnical disciplines at international standards through serving important administrative duties. Dr. Vasfi Samim has 27 scientific articles on veterinary infectious diseases, animal breeding, selection, and crossbreeding as well as 11 books with social, cultural and political themes, 16 stories, 43 essays, and 23 theater works. He also played in Fenerbahçe, one of Türkiye's well-established sports clubs, and in Albanian football teams, and became an exemplary role model by being a manager in the national and international promotion and development of Albanian sports. Dr. Vasfi Samim should be remembered as an influential veterinarian, and an intellectual personality for the region he was grown in and for the world.

Introduction

Veterinary medicine education in Türkiye started with the first veterinary school opened in Istanbul in 1842 (21). Since the graduates of the Military Veterinary School were insufficient in preventing the diseases of the animals in the hands of the public and could not meet the needs of the country, the necessity of establishing a Civil Veterinary School emerged and the first Civil Veterinary School was established in 1889 based on the regulations and programs from the Alfort Veterinary School, France. Military and Civil Veterinary Schools were combined under one roof in 1920 and teaching activities were carried out under the name of the Higher Veterinary School in 1921 (20). At that time, hundreds of veterinarians graduated from these schools. Among the graduates including Vasfi Samim, some scientists provide successful services in the field of medicine and veterinary medicine

(6, 7, 10, 12, 19, 23, 24) as well as veterinarians who provide outstanding services in the fields of politics, bureaucracy, culture, art, and sports (2, 3, 13, 29, 30, 33). In this research it was aimed to reveal Vasfi Samim's biography as a prominent contributor to the history of science in general and to the history of veterinary medicine in particular of with his identity as a scientist, journalist, writer, bureaucrat, and athlete who was born in Albania as a citizen of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century, then came to Istanbul, the capital of his state, for education, and pioneered the development of veterinary medicine and zootechny in his country with his knowledge of veterinary medicine.

Materials and Methods

The material of the study consists of personal interviews with Dr. Vasfi Samim's living son, Genci Samim,

documents and photographs obtained from the family archive, books and newspapers written about Dr. Vasfi Samim's life, scientific journals, articles, books, stories, essays, and theater works published by Dr. Vasfi Samim. The information obtained from the document analysis was written down in accordance with the chronology with a retrospective approach.

Results

Vasfi Samim was born on December 15, 1905, in the village of Visoka, Fier, Albania. When he was four years old, he came to his uncle who immigrated to Istanbul after his father's death and started school under his auspices. Vasfi Samim completed his primary, secondary and high school education free of charge at a private boarding school in Istanbul (8, 15). After his high school education, he enrolled in Higher Veterinary School (*Baytar Mekteb-i Alisi*) in Istanbul on September 23, 1923, with a scholarship (26) (Figure 1). He graduated from this school in 1927 as a civil veterinarian (5).

His Professional Life and Scientific Studies: After graduation, he was appointed to Samsun city as a state veterinarian with the decision of the Ministry of Agriculture dated 14 August 1927 and numbered 2264 (26) (Figure 2). He took part in the fight against many infectious animal diseases, especially rinderpest, for one year. Vasfi Samim moved from Samsun to Istanbul on May 24, 1928, and completed his technical internship and military service for one year (18 June 1928-18 June 1929) at the Military Practice Veterinary School. At the end of the exams, he received the rank of lieutenant veteran (26) (Figure 3).

Vasfi Samim was appointed to the Artvin province as a state veterinarian on 18 June 1929, after completing his internship at the Military Practice Veterinary School, but he did not accept this duty. Meanwhile, he received an invitation letter from his colleague Dr. Bilal Golem who is in Albania. In this letter, Dr. Golem stated that there is a need for veterinarians, doctors, and intellectuals for the development of Albania, which is a small country at the time. Upon this invitation from Dr. Golem, Vasfi Samim returned to his country in 1929 as a well-educated young veterinarian (8, 28). On his return to Albania, he first worked as an assistant Dr. Golem's in veterinary department in Tirana. Dr. Golem is a veterinarian with the rank of captain who graduated from the Military Veterinary School in Türkiye in 1920 (5) and received his postgraduate education at the famous Pasteur Institute in Paris. During the following period, he was assigned to the Vlora region by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to fight the diseases (especially foot and mouth disease) spreading among large cattle herds. Vasfi Samim worked here from October 1, 1929, in the early spring of 1930 and was successful in controlling the epidemics (8). On June 13,



Figure 1. The record of student Vasfi Samim at the Higher Veterinary School - *Baytar Mekteb-i Alisi* (Courtesy of Genci Samim archive).



Figure 2. Vasfi Samim's document showing to be assigned as a veterinarian in Samsun (Courtesy of Genci Samim archive).



Figure 3. The record of trainee of Vasfi Samim at the Military Practice Veterinary School - *Askeri Baytar Tatbikat Mektebi* (Courtesy of Genci Samim archive).

1930, he was appointed Head of the Veterinary Department of Vlora province (11). With the suggestion of Golem, Vasfi Samim went to the Veterinary Higher School in Berlin (*Die Tierärztliche Hochschule Zu Berlin*) in September 1930 to receive his PhD. Between 1930 and 1932, he continued his education under the consultancy of Professor Valentin Stang and Carl Cronacher, and completed his thesis titled “Investigation of the effect of different types of defatted soybean meal on the blood count of cattle” (*Zur Kenntnis der Einwirkung verschiedenartig entfetteter Sojaschrote auf das Blutbild des Rindes*) in the field of zootechny on 19 December 1931 with the degree of very good (*sehr gut bestanden*), and received the title Dr. Vet. Med. (26) (Figure 4).

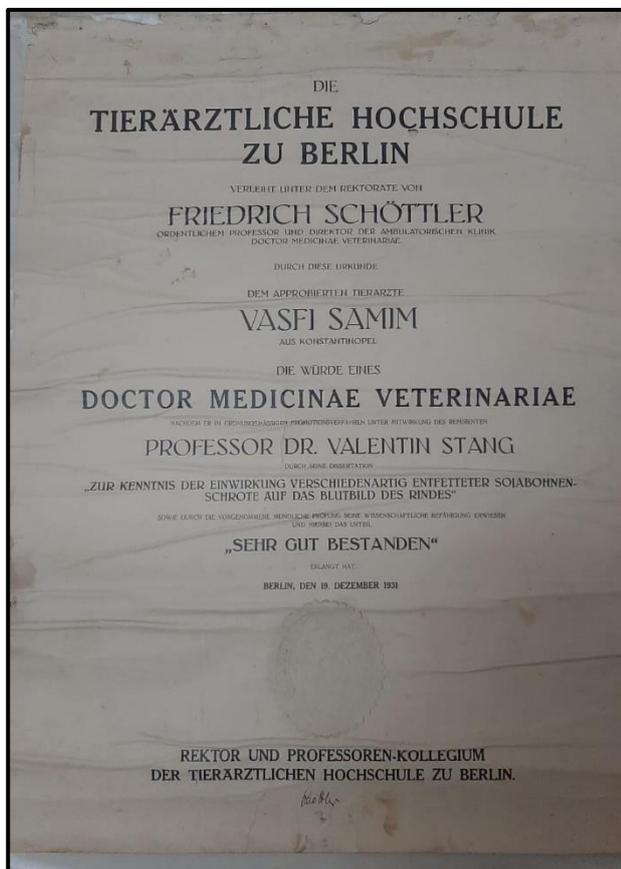


Figure 4. PhD diploma of Vasfi Samim (Courtesy of Genci Samim archive).

Dr. Vasfi Samim came to Tirana, Albania, again, in June 1932, after completing his doctorate education. He was appointed as the Head of Animal Science at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on 6 July 1932 and as the Director of Veterinary Affairs on 20 September 1933 (11). During these duties, Dr. Vasfi Samim prepared reports in which he evaluated the situation, problems, and solutions of Albanian livestock. It organized competitions,

meetings, and conferences to educate and raise awareness of farmers on the solution of the basic problems of veterinary medicine and zootechny. He published his impressions during his travels to Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Romania, Türkiye, and former Yugoslavia in a series of articles, reports, and notes in various newspapers (8).

Dr. Vasfi Samim was appointed as the Chief Inspector of Herd Management at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in 1941. He served as the Secretary General of the Ministry of Culture between 1943 and 1944 (1). He was awarded the St. Sava medal by the King of former Yugoslavia for his work in the field of veterinary medicine on December 28, 1936, and he was rewarded with the Order of Skanderbeg with the Royal Decree on April 19, 1942, in Albania (8).

After World War II, Dr. Vasfi Samim was arrested for a book he wrote (*Mother Kosovo-The Real Albania*) by the Albanian Communist Party's seizure of power (27). Because of this book, he was prosecuted as an *enemy of the people* and arrested on 9 December 1944. Due to the political crime, his doctoral title was taken away by the government and he was appointed as a zootechnician at the Agricultural Enterprise in Sukth. He worked as a zootechnician at the Agricultural Enterprise in Sukth (1946-1949) and the Animal Science Center in Shkodër (1949-1956) (11). In the next period, he worked as a lecturer at Kamza Agricultural Institute, which is the only agricultural institute in Albania, for 15 years from November 1, 1959 to December 1974 (26).

Thanks to Dr. Vasfi Samim, a number of achievements have been completed, including the restructuring of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the establishment and reorganization of the veterinary (Higher Veterinary Council), and zootechnical organizations. Dr. Vasfi Samim, who can also speak German, Russian and Turkish languages, has published many scientific papers (Table 1) and books (Table 2) in the field of veterinary sciences. Dr. Vasfi Samim's veterinary services include training veterinary technicians, controlling and eradicating communicable animal diseases (foot and mouth disease, etc.), sending thousands of experts in the field of herd management and zootechny abroad, crossing local breeds, opening and rebuilding slaughterhouses, establishing veterinary dispensaries, organization of veterinary services in Kosovo, measures to protect public health, and the creation of legislation for the export of dairy and poultry products are included in. Dr. Vasfi Samim continued all these professional and academic achievement until his retirement on 31 December 1974 (8).

Table 1. Major manuscripts by Vasfi Samim (8).

Year	Title of the article	Title of the journal
1933	A study on the Infectious Diseases of Albanian Animals	Unknown
1933	The breeding and distribution of Angora goats in Turkey	Unknown
1936	Cross-breeding of Hungarian Rambouillet and Albanian Sheep	Unknown
1937	Skutariner Schafrasse in Nordalbanian	Tierzuechbio
1937	Sheep milk production and sheep cheese - export from Albania	Unknown
1939	Overview of the current state of Albanian cattle breeding	Unknown
1940	Veterinary essay 1928-1938	Unknown
1940	A short Observation on the Zootechnology Activity in Albania during 1928-1938	Unknown
1940	Crossbreeding Greek Italian Sardo-Arab stallions and Albanian native mares	Unknown
1940	The improvement of Albanian horses	Unknown
1943	On Agricultural Education and Restoration of the Farmers	Shkolla Kombëtare
1950	Domestic Meat Production	Bulletin of Natural Sciences
1951	Industrial Value of Domestic Wool	Unknown
1952	Wool Quality and its Industrial Value	Unknown
1952	The Importance of Cow in the Betterment of the breeds	Unknown
1954	How can we Reduce the Death of Calves?	Unknown
1954	The Importance of Fodder in Tirana	Unknown
1955	My Work on Raising 125 Calves with One Loss	Unknown
1955	The Betterment of Domestic Cattle and The Results Obtained During 1948-1955	Bulletin Natural Sciences
1955	The Main Results on the Betterment of Domestic Cattle	Unknown
1955	The Proper Age of Breeding Domestic Lambs	Bulletin of Natural Sciences
1955	The Dynamics of Development among Domestic Calves	Unknown
1955	The Utility of Feeding Corn to Cows	Unknown
1955	Teeth Development in Domestic Cattle	Unknown
1957	Physical Development of Domestic Cattle	Bulletin of Natural Sciences
1957	How Can We Raise Calves with Reduced Milk Portions	Bulletin of Natural Sciences
1959	Milk Production from the Cows of Shkodra	Bulletin of Natural Sciences

Table 2. Major books of Vasfi Samim (8, 26).

Year	Title of the book	Name of the publisher
1936	The Important Issues of Herding and Recommendations for Improvement	Unknown
1937	Restoration of the Farmer	Unknown
1938	Raising Birds and Egg Production	Unknown
1940	Albanian Herding	Unknown
1940	Ankara Goats in Albania	Unknown
1943	Nena Kosove-Shqipëria E Vertete	Unknown
1955	Silo and Fodder	Unknown
1955	Milk Production and Milking Techniques	Unknown
1956	Feed-An Important Tool for Expanding the Food Base	Unknown
1958	Raising Cattle Dr. Bilal Golemi	Unknown
2000	Evliya Çelebi Beratı 300 vjet me pare	Botimet Dita

Theatre, Authorship, and Journalism Activities: Dr. Vasfi Samim also excelled at journalism, authorship, and theatre activities besides his veterinary courses in his early years of studentship in Istanbul. Although the modern theatre was not developed in Türkiye in these years, he got to know closely some theatre giants such as Muhsin Ertuğrul, Bedia Muvahhit and Behzat who were mentioned with sagas in the country. He has four important dramas, of which he also played in *Çizgiler ve Lekeler* (Dr. Vasfi Samim played as Selahattin Bey), *Dert Ortağı*, *Kırık Hayatlar* and *Yaşasın Krallık* (17). Dr. Vasfi Samim's dramas, scenarios, monologues, and memoirs (Table 3) are important due to his care about theatre from different aspects. He performed playwriting, acting, directing, and criticism. He attended a drama course directed by a well-known director Max Reinhardt while studying his masters in Germany and attended Berlin Theatre School (15). Dr. Vasfi Samim focused on some important social and cultural issues in his dramas. He focused on love, illness, poverty, desolation, death, women, and social life subjects and themes that come from glitches and some shortcomings in social life that caused depressions (17).

Table 3. Theatre works by Vasfi Samim (17).

Theatre works			
Dramas	Scenarios	Monologues	Memoirs
Çizgiler ve Lekeler	Yastığının Romani	Bizim Hayatımız	İlk Operam: Aida Operası
Dert Ortağı	Toprak Sesleri	Asılacak Adam	Emil Jannings
Yaşasın Krallık		İnşad ve Hitabet Muallimi	İstintak
Kırık Hayatlar		İsyân	Kraliçe Elizabet
		Hiç	Büyük Jannings Sahnede
		Piç	Bir Hatıra
			Usaç
			Danton
			Herr Held'in Ölümü
			Faust
			Aleksander Moissi İkinci Oyunda

Besides theatre, he wrote essays and stories. He published 16 stories and 43 essays in some magazines and newspapers in Türkiye, Germany, and Albania (15, 16) (Table 4). He started journalism in Istanbul while he is a high school student and he continued to write in newspapers until the end of his life when he returned to Albania. He worked as a reporter of Istanbul and Ankara

in *Türk Yolu* (1926), *Edirne Postası* (1927) and *Sakarya* (1927) newspapers (26).

Dr. Vasfi Samim gathered eight articles involving notes from his trip to Kosovo in 1938-1943 years in a book called *Mother Kosovo-The Real Albania*. That book mentioned earlier themed literature, philosophy, culture, history, and social issues (25).

Table 4. Some literary works by Vasfi Samim (15, 16).

Essays	Short Stories
Sanatkârın Evi	Harcırah
Artistin Ölümü	Mukaddes Yalan
Kalp Yıldızları	Hatıra Defterimdeki Sır
Buselerin Seyahati	Gurbette İlk Arkadaş
Sahipsiz Şehir	İskelet
Küçük Kürek	İzmit Hakkında Tahassürler
Dağlar Kurdu	Oyuncak
Amur	Minatori Tüneli
Dilek	Teneke Palas
Kadavra	Kadıköy'ün Meşhur Kadını...
Rozafa'nın Kayalıkları	Kadıköy'ün Meşhur Hacı Annesi
Hapishane Mazgalları	Şair Fuat Efendi
Mezarın Üzerinde Bayrak	Annesini Parçalayan Vahşi
Yastık	Öğrenci Evinde
Fotoğrafın Gözü	Hayattan Hikâyeler
Toprak	Sofyalı Derviş Saliha Abla
İstanbul'dan Ayrılırken	
Hatıra Defterimden Bir Tahassüs Sayfası	
Köyde İlk Aşk Hissi	
Baytarlar Nedir ve Kimdir?	
Gurbet	
Mesut Ümit	
Sükût	
Veda	
Bizim Hayatımız	
Sahnenin Şairi – 1	
Sahnenin Şairi – 2	
Kütüphanelere En Çok	
Kimler Devam Eder ve En Ziyade Hangi Eserler Okunur	
Türk Gençliğinin Tipi	
Hangisidir	
Miguen'den; Hayatı ve Eserleri	
Öldüren Güzellik	
Küçük Zeynel	
Luli	
Kömür İstiyor Musunuz?	
Mısır Efsanesi	
Memnu Elma	
Kirazlar	
Krizin Hikâyesi	
Cadılar ve Cinler	
Kilisede Gölgele	
Allah Versin	
Başsız Tanrılar	
Bir Mecmuanın Programı	

Footballer, Coach, Organizer, and Sports Journalist: Dr. Vasfi Samim started his sports activities when he was a high school student in Türkiye. Between 1927 and 1928, he worked as a goalkeeper in Fenerbahçe, one of Türkiye's deep-rooted sports clubs (4), with registration number 1307 (26) (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Document showing that Vasfi Samim is a football player in Fenerbahçe Sports Club (Courtesy of Genci Samim archive).

Dr. Vasfi Samim continued to play football as a goalkeeper in the Vlora Football Club in Albania. In 1933, he played as a goalkeeper in the Albanian Capital team Sport Club Tirana and was the goalkeeper coach of this team for a while (28, 32).

Dr. Vasfi Samim was appointed by the Ministry of Education as the chairman (1933-1936) of the Albanian Technical Committee, which was responsible for the activities of Albanian football clubs. He contributed to the establishment and chaired the Albanian Sports Federation called *Vllaznia Shqiptare* (Albanian Brotherhood). As a result of Dr. Vasfi Samim's work, national sports events (football, cycling, athletics and swimming championships) were organized for the first time in Albania. Albanian teams participated in the Olympic Games in 1936 held in Berlin and Zagreb, and Albania became a member of two International Federations (Fédération Internationale de Football Association-FIFA, and International Association of Athletics Federations-IAAF) (8).

Discussion and Conclusion

It was envisaged to establish a Veterinary Surgery Hospital (*Baytar Ameliyat Hastanesi*) in 1873 for veterinarians who graduated from the Military Veterinary School in Türkiye to receive practical training for one year (9). In this process, this practice training continued and this school was united under the name of Military Practice Veterinary School and Hospital (*Askeri Tatbikat-ı Baytariye Mektebi ve Seririyatı*) (14, 18). The staff of the

Military Practice Veterinary School, which was restructured with the proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye, was expanded and civilian veterinarians started to do their military service in this school (18). In this context, the fact that the course instructor and Ministry of Education approval information are included in the diploma (Figure 3), which shows that Dr. Vasfi Samim graduated as an intern from Military Practice Veterinary School in 1929, can be considered a historical document that sets an example for the information given by Melikoğlu and Osmanoğlu (18).

With the establishment of the civilian veterinary school by the Ottoman Empire, a teaching staff consisting of veterinarians trained in the light of developing modern science in Europe in the 19th century was needed. It is reported that most of the veterinarians, who were sent abroad, especially to France and Germany, which started in the Ottoman Empire and continued in the Republic of Türkiye, to meet this need, provided important services in the education, training and organization of veterinary medicine when they returned to Türkiye. On the other hand, it is seen that the attitude of the Ottoman Empire regarding the non-discrimination of language, religion and race in sending students abroad has not changed in the field of veterinary medicine (22). In addition, foreign citizens of the Ottoman Empire such as Nikolaki (Mavroğlu), Takfor, Samoel (Aysoy), Santor, Armenak, and Yorgi were sent to Europe for specialist training and were appointed to the staff of civilian and military veterinary schools after returning to Türkiye. Thus, they played a major role in the teaching and development of Turkish veterinary medicine (22). One of the veterinarians sent abroad in this process is Albanian national Dr. Bilal Golem, who invited Dr. Vasfi Samim to Albania and encouraged him to receive doctorate education in Germany. Dr. Golem, with the world-renowned French microbiologist Prof. Gaston Ramon at the Pasteur Institute, has discovered a serum for the complete detoxification of dysentery toxin applied in the veterinary medicine world (8, 31). In this context, considering the scientific studies of Dr. Golem and Dr. Vasfi Samim and their success in the development and organization of Albanian veterinary medicine, it can be said that the Turkish Government's policy of sending students abroad, regardless of their ethnicity and belief, is a correct decision and practice.

Dr. Vasfi Samim is a versatile writer who has been closely interested in more than one variety of literature, in addition to his features such as writing, acting and directing in the field of theater (Table 3), which started when he was a student in Istanbul. The profession of veterinary medicine, which required Dr. Vasfi Samim to be in constant contact with the public, helped him get to

know the outside world. The obstacles he faced when he first started his profession was also reflected in his stories. The places that Dr. Vasfi Samim visited due to his veterinary services, the people he encountered, and the distressing and dramatic state of the people made him get to know the people better. In the works written by Dr. Vasfi Samim, traces of the philosophy of some famous writers, from Turkish national literature to world literature can be seen. These are valuable in that they show Dr. Vasfi Samim's inclination and success in the world of literature at a younger age (15, 16). Furthermore, Hayber (17) reported that Dr. Vasfi Samim focuses on some important social and cultural issues in his dramas. As it will be understood from the years that the dramas had been written, and a chaotic environment is encountered from experiencing some social changes. It can be argued that the main dynamic that led to the emergence of these works in the personality of Dr. Vasfi Samim was the realist emotion, thought and scientific point of view, which was inspired by his veterinary medicine profession.

It is possible to get to know the scientific thought and development lines of important people who have served in veterinary medicine with their biography studies, the social and cultural structure of the period they lived in, and the effects of these elements on individuals (29). Dr. Vasfi Samim's reports, works, and articles on veterinary and zootechny science, literature, arts, and sports might be an invaluable legacy for the Albanian history of science, art, and sports. In this article, it was concluded that Dr. Vasfi Samim attracted great attention with his duties and responsibilities in administrative, social, and cultural positions, as well as his contributions to veterinary medicine in a general and the development of the zootechny discipline in particular. He was educated in Türkiye and after returning to Albania he was a scientist who contributed to veterinary sciences and the development process of science in general. He should be remembered as a successful veterinarian, and intellectual man for the region he was grown and for the world. Thereof, it is worth integrating Dr. Vasfi Samim's fame into the veterinary literature.

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Conflicting Interests

The authors declared that there is no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

ÇÇS designed the study. ÇÇS and BŞ contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethical Statement

This study does not present any ethical concerns.

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