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March 1955

The So-Called Barletta and Trani Issues

by V. Hermanowski

(Translated by Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz)

From time to time here and elsewhere we continue to hear news, that the poster stamps of so-called Barletta and Trani Issues, are postage stamps, and moreover that they are attached to the 2nd Polish Corps in Italy.

Although the status of these has previously been known and widely publicized, still it is worth while to give general Philatelists this information.

To avoid any kind of misunderstandings or insinuations—I am writing only as a Philatelist, an old Philatelist, dating back to the early stage of Philately.

The definition of a postage stamp is already known by the general Philatelist.

Philatelists everywhere know, that the headquarters of the 2nd Corps in Italy issued four stamps and a block. They appeared on the 1st of January, 1946 in the denomination of Zloty. On each stamp is inscribed, "Poczta Polska 2 Korpusu." The pictures on the stamps are as follows: (1) Ruins of the Monastery at Monte Cassino, (2) Ancona, (3) Bologna and (4) General William Anders. Beyond these above mentioned stamps the 2nd Corps had no other issues.

From where did the stamps with the picture of Holy Mother Mary become attached to the 2nd Corps? This matter has been widely and seriously publicized in the years of 1946-1947. These are not postage stamps, and furthermore were not issued by the same corps, but just plain pictures privately printed in the form of a postage stamp, but having no attachment whatsoever with the postoffice.



Two values of the so-called Barletta-Trani Issues. Top value — the Holy Mother of Częstochowa. At the left — the highest military award, order of Virtuti Militari

With these stamps the term Barletta and Trani became attached. This is the history: After the termination of the war in 1945, in the territory occupied by the 2nd Corps, arrived refugees from Germany and Austria. These refugees were previously in German concentration camps, taken there forcibly by the Germans. The majority were women. A small group of intellectuals of the 2nd Corps took over and helped them. These people were placed in two neighboring villages of the Adriatic Sea — Barletta and Trani (the name of the picture stamps). These villages were near the Italian Port of Bari. In all there were 3,500 of these dis-



A registered cover showing the four stamps issued by the Polish 2nd Corps in Italy, referred to on previous page by author V. Hermanowski.

placed persons. They had their own officers and order. For their own correspondence which was limited they were permitted to use Polish field post No. 120 of the 2nd Corps which was in a village adjoining.

In April of 1946, less than a year after the war an article appeared in the press about new Polish stamps for Barletta and Trani, but no mention was made of these being stamps of the 2nd Corps.

Various Polish Philatelists came to these villages to acquire these pictures, but none of the populus of Barletta and Trani ever saw or heard of these stamps. They were also not seen in the nearby Polish field post No. 120.

The writer has visited these Polish villages a few times in search of the new Polish stamps, but the result was negative. It is hereby added that the life in Italy at this time was normal and also even in our village the Italian Postal system was normal.

In the newspaper "Gazeta Żołnierza" of the 7th Quartermaster Division questions by Philatelists were asked as to where stamps of Barletta and Trani were and no one knew in the villages.

Inquiries by collectors to the Barletta and Trani pictures became so numerous that in June, 1946 the leader of these

Polish villages officially issued in the "Gazeta Żołnierza" that of any Polish postage stamp or Polish post office in the villages of Barletta and Trani he has no information.

Philatelists, as is known, are a group of people on the alert; they look and question. After some time it came to be known that the "stamp" of Barletta and Trani was the "work" of one or more stamp dealers. New revelations appeared: it was found that the "main store" is located on a side street of Rome where these stamps are being sold wholesale in whole sheets with the profit in the pockets of these private dealers. Where is Bari and where is Rome? This is proof that the so-called "stamps" of Barletta and Trani never saw an official post office, and no one has ever seen them on bona-fide letters. They are only private pictures issued for profit purposes only. Philatelic history knows of similar accounts.

It seems that the business at the beginning prospered because the dealers were not satisfied and printed a new issue. In a short time a second issue appeared, different from the first. The theme of these is always kept in a pathetic-patriotic tone. So we have a picture of Mother Mary of Często-

ehowa and General Dąbrowski of the Polish Legions with a soldier of the 2nd Corps, the order of Virtuti-Militari and others. We also find a "stamp" for air mail. Oh yes, even a stamp with the autograph of the former president of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. We also find blocks of Barletta and Trani. On each stamp we find the words "Poczta Osiedli Polskich w Italii", and here is not a mention of the 2nd Corps.

While this is going on, during the year of 1946 the 2nd Corps is evacuating Italy and going to England. In Great Britain the same speculants of Italy revive new life into the pictures of Barletta and Trani. In 1947 in London appears a Philatelic magazine, its sole purpose was to prove that the pictures of Barletta and Trani are postage stamps. In a series of clouded articles the magazine tried to convince its readers that the pictures ought to be recognized as true stamps. This magazine in a short period "died", which proved that the Barletta and Trani pictures are only labels of private individuals and of no value philatelically.

IN MEMORIAM—W. E. HARRYMAN

A great number of collectors of Poland will hear with great regret of the death on Feb. 17, 1955 of W. E. Harryman, of Coulsdon, Surrey, England.

He was one of the best-known collectors of Poland in Great Britain and was always willing to give his advice to any new or young collector.

He was a friend of Colonel Larking, who started him off on his collection of Poland, which I understand, finally totalled some 40 volumes. Besides being a member of POLONUS for a number of years, he organized and was President of the Polish Collectors Circle in London.

His death will cause great sorrow to his many friends and correspondents throughout the World.

—John C. Crimlisk

APPLICANTS PENDING

M. M. Pawlak
2904 West 25th Place
Chicago 23, Illinois

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING JANUARY 31, 1955

RECEIPTS:	
Membership dues paid	565.15
Bulletin subscription	3.00
Gift from member J. Jaworski	2.50
Rental of frames:	
Chicago Play. Card Collectors	24.75
Roselle Stamp Club	3.00
Ravenswood Stamp Club	75.00
Commissions received:	
R. Burkiewicz (Polpex sales)	10.00
Ted Light (Polpex auction)	14.50
R. Burkiewicz (Sales circuit)	12.50
Polpex 1954 Advance (refund)	50.00
Polpex Receipts	359.06
Raffle Receipts	15.60
Picnic Advance (refund)	7.00
Polpex Sales	57.02

TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$1198.73
Balance on hand Feb. 12, '54	766.99

Total	\$1965.72
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DISBURSEMENTS:

Bulletins (Miller Print Shop)	\$125.40
Bulletins (Hollywood Press)	187.05
Bulletin plate expense	5.00
Membership cards	6.25
Picnic printing	9.00
Gift for F. Kovarik, A. Banasiak	5.00
Picnic Advance	15.00
Beeba expense for year	40.11
Postage, mailing bulletins, etc.	69.14
Subscription to STAMPS	5.00
S. P. A. Dues, 1954-5-6	3.00
Purchase of exhibit frames	184.59
Purchase of glass for frames	87.50
Advance on Polpex 1955	100.00

Total	\$ 842.04
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Total Receipts—	
2-12-54 thru 1-31-55	\$1965.72
Total Disbursements—	
2-12-54 thru 1-31-55	842.04

Net balance on hand 1-31-55	\$1123.68
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Jos. A. Banasiak, Treas.

Approved by Auditing Committee
Chester W. Makowski
Stanley Kucharz
John S. Bobo

HERE'S A TIP —

When sending parcels of stamps thru the mails, send them Air Mail Insured. The cost is about one-third as much.

OUR LADY OF WILNO

by Roman Witowski, C.S.C.

The current March-April issue of MARY, a bimonthly published by the Carmelite Fathers of Chicago at 6415 Woodlawn, contains a story by Brother Roman Witowski, C.S.C., of Holy Trinity High School, Chicago, entitled -- "Our Lady of Wilno."

This account is one of the first in the English language giving a historical sketch of a Polish Madonna little known in America, yet Poland's second most famous place of pilgrimage and prayer.

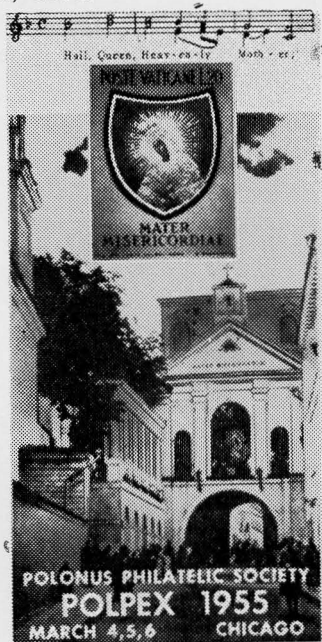
Several illustrations, especially, a reproduction of the special stamp issued recently by the Vatican City postoffice at the close of the Marian Year singularly honoring Poland's Ever Glorious Lady of "Ostro Brama" under her official title "Mater Misericordiae" (Mother of Mercy), features the article.

This is the second time that a Madonna is the principal figure on the stamps of the Vatican City. It was arranged by the Polish artist Casimera Dąbrowska. She previously, in 1943, was responsible for the Holy See's Saint Maria Goretti commemoratives, thereby gaining the unprecedented distinction of being the first woman ever to plan and design a Vatican City postage stamp.

At the 16th annual exhibition and bourse of the Polonus Philatelic Society which was concluded March 6, in Chicago, the Polpex 1955 souvenir sheet honored the Madonna at the Holy Gate of Wilno. The sheet contained an illustration of "Poste Vaticane" 20 lira value stamp with a portrait of Wilno's Blessed Virgin Mary. A very old Polish hymn to the Blessed Virgin framed the top of the souvenir sheet and the "Osra Brama" shown below.

Last November the Vatican City Post Office announced that a special Marian stamp would be issued by the Holy See to commemorate the closing of the Marian Year. The stamp carried the likeness of Our Lady of "Ostra Brama" in Wilno, Poland. The selection of Our Lady of Wilno by Pope Pius XII for this unparalleled honor has prompted this article.

In Poland's classification of Marian



churches and places of pilgrimage, with approximately 460 miraculous pictures and statues of the Blessed Mother, the shrine of Our Lady of Jasna Góra at Częstochowa holds first rank. Second place, in the opinion of many Polish scholars, is held by the Romanesque gateway and its miraculous picture of the ever Virgin Mary of Ostro Brama at Wilno, in northeastern Poland.

The Lady of Wilno is venerated by other peoples besides the Poles. She is Patroness of countless millions in neighboring Lithuania, Latvia, White Russia, and elsewhere, including the United States.

Since 1939 this centuries-old center of cultural, political and economic development of Eastern Europe, is a part of Soviet occupied territory.

"Brama" means porch or gate. "Ostra" literally means sharp or acute; and here eastern, because it faces the east. Thus the correct title should be: "Our Lady of the Eastern Gate."

This simple gateway, normally open to pedestrian and vehicle traffic, originally was a part of the ancient Wilno city wall. It crowns the summit of a

narrow, ascending street that leads to the towns of Krewa and Midnick. This roadway is bounded on one side by the arcade and walls of the church of St. Teresa of Avila, a Carmelite monastery, and on the other by stuccoed houses of dignified appearance.

Centered in the arch of the gateway is a chapel. On its exterior wall, facing the city, in large letters, are written in Latin the words: "Mater Misericordiae" (Mother of Mercy). Below is a large window flanked by two smaller ones, above which are marked the words, "Sub Tuum Praesidium Confugimus" (we fly under Thy protection). In this chapel, as an integral part of the altar, hangs the miraculous image, the Lady of Wilno.

Because the archway chapel is very small, accomodating approximately 50 people, the icon of the Madonna of Ostra Brama is so placed in the tiny shrine, that even though protected from the elements by the above-mentioned windows, it is clearly visible to all in the street. Thus, day and night, winter and summer, the thoroughfare in front of the Marian holy place, truly is a basilica in the open air. For this reason it is considered by many as the most unique shrine of its kind in the world.

In contrast to the massive church of Our Lady of Częstochowa, the Mother of Mercy place of prayer in Wilno is a simple one. It is not too richly endowed with gold jewels, pearls or elaborate lamps. Even the votive offerings, for special favors received, are plain and inexpensive. They consist of crudely designed tiny silver memorials in the form of crosses, legs, hands, eyes, hearts, etc., bearing the names or initials of their donors. These cover every inch of the walls of the altar and chapel of Ostra Brama. The only ornate and more costly decoration is a silver half-moon covering the entire base of the miraculous image.

The early history of the Ostra Brama shrine and picture is not known. This four by two-and-one-half-foot half-figure of Mary is painted on oak boards. Its technique, in the opinion of certain critics, is similar to artistic creations of an early period of Christianity, associated with the ancient Sienese school of painting. However, others trace it to the Renaissance era. Polish chroni-

cles first make mention of the Wilno Madonna in the seventeenth century. At that time it hung, partly protected from the rain and snow by a small roof, on the open wall above the gate, facing the city.

In the year 1626 the Discalced Carmelite friars were invited to Wilno. Here, near the Sharp Gate, certain Polish nobles soon endowed them with a church and monastery, named in honor of St. Teresa of Avila.

Noting the fervent devotion of the people to the Madonna attached to the Ostro Brama, the Carmelites, with permission of the city's magistrates, removed this image to their church of St. Teresa. Subsequently, due to the preaching and zeal of these Carmelite monks, even greater loyalty to the Blessed Virgin Lady of Wilno was enkindled in the hearts of the faithful. For here many graces and favors were granted by God to hundred of souls through the intercession of the Mother of God.

In 1671, a special wooden chapel was erected near the Sharp Gate and the portrait of the Madonna of Mercy placed therein. In the 1715 fire the picture of Our Lady of Wilno was miraculously saved even though the chapel was completely destroyed. Soon thereafter, with the aid of many generous offerings, the Carmelites erected a more elaborate archway. Made of brick, it contained a chapel and altar to house the precious image. That Romanesque gate and shrine stands even to the present time.

Looking at the picture of the Lady of the Eastern Gate one notes that her hands are folded on her breast. Her head is tilted somewhat to the right shoulder. With half closed eyes cast downward, the Virgin's face of fair complexion expresses great tenderness, compassion and infinite abnegation.

Since 1671 the original painting has been covered with a silvered and gilded over-dress, fashioned to represent clothing, crowns and halo. It is richly stamped with floral and symbolic motifs. Mary's halo sheds forty-two golden rays, spaced by twelve stars of gold. Her head is covered by two separate crowns of gold and jewels. The top crown, supported by two angels, represents Mary's Queenship in Heaven.

The lower one signifies her supreme reign over the earth.

Although the image of Wilno carried double crowns for centuries, the solemn ecclesiastical coronation of the Ostra Brama Madonna was not performed until July 2, 1927. The actual crowning ceremonies took place on the front steps of the cathedral of Wilno because its plaza could accommodate many more thousands of pilgrims than the thoroughfare leading to the Sharp Gate. The crowns were blessed and placed on the head of the icon by Cardinal Kakowski, the late Primate of Poland.

In "Free Poland" for services and devotions the Lady of Wilno Chapel was opened daily at 6 a.m., when one Mass after another was celebrated until noon either by the Carmelites or by visiting clergy. Each Wednesday and Saturday at Vespers, special devotions were held. At this time the Rosary was recited, the Litany of Loreto and Marian hymns sung, a sermon preached, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament given.

Pilgrimages from distant parts of Poland and neighboring countries were the most numerous from May until October, and especially on the Blessed Lady's special solemnities. The most important anniversary, proper to the Madonna of Ostra Brama under her title of "Mater Misericordiae," was celebrated on November 16.

Each pilgrim in the processions going toward Wilno had a bundle on his or her back held there by a strap around the neck. The bundles contained provisions for the pilgrimage. Sometimes a priest led his congregation; again a person started alone and joined other groups on the way. Many walked the last miles to Wilno barefooted. Still different individuals approached the last block to the shrine on their knees, pausing every few feet and bowing profoundly in recognition of the welcome of the Lady of Ostra Brama.

Reaching their place of pilgrimage some wayfarers prostrate themselves on the street in front of Mary's miraculous image; others knelt on the cobblestones with outstretched arms. By gazing at the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God, these and like units, revealed their tender and genuine love

for the Mediatrix of All Graces.

In recent years several efforts have been made by the enemy to destroy the Lady of Wilno. Early in 1942 a Soviet Communist soldier came to the shrine and in seeming sincerity offered two large candles. He pleaded that they be burned as votive lights in the name of his deceased and supposedly Catholic parents beside the sacred icon. After his offering was accepted, it was discovered that, embedded in the wax, with fuse attached to the wicks of the candles, were sticks of dynamite.

Last November the Polish press in America revealed that the image of the Blessed Virgin of the Sharp Gate, by order of the Soviet authorities, had been removed to the nearby church of St. Teresa. The Communists ordered the shrine in the Ostra Brama closed, and the street always kept open for pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Prayer in this ancient thoroughfare is now strictly forbidden. Yet, many of Mary's children continue to ignore the commands of the Bolshevik atheists. Even at the risk of arrest and imprisonment they continue to pray and pay tribute to their Mother—the ever-glorious Lady of Wilno.

MARIAN YEAR VATICAN STAMPS

To the "Our Lady of Wilno" article I would like to add that the three variety three-color Marian Year Issue is regarded by the Vatican Philatelic Agency as the most beautiful stamps ever issued. Six trial printings were made before the final, very subtle colors were accepted for the 20, 35 and 60 lira set.

—Walter Szymlek

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY

With deep regret we learn of the death of Frank Horowitz, a friend of Polonus. On many occasions he served as a judge at our shows.

TIME TO PAY YOUR 1955 DUES!

Your membership in the Polonus Philatelic Society expired Jan. 31, 1955. Please help the society from doing much additional work and from extra expense by sending in your 1955 dues promptly. Remittances of \$2.50 for dues go to Joseph A. Banasiak, Treasurer, 3016 W. 41st Street, Chicago 32, Ill.

ANOTHER POLPEX GONE BY!

Approximately 800 people attended the 16th annual Exhibition and Bourse of the POLONUS Philatelic Society on March 4, 5 and 6, 1955 at the Falcons Hall in Chicago.

The Grand Award was taken for the second consecutive year by John C. Crimlisk of Yorkshire, England. His exhibit of Austria-Poland pre-stamp covers, Galician cancellations, Austrian occupation of Russian Poland and Etappenpoststamp postmarks was neatly classified, explained and displayed. Mr. Crimlisk is now tied with Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz who also is a two-time winner of the Larking Trophy. This trophy must be won by a member taking three Polpex Grand Awards before it can be kept permanently. Should one of the above mentioned gentlemen win next year, the Larking Trophy will become their permanent property.

The Polish Research Trophy went to Myron E. Steczynski for his comprehensive study of Poland 3 mk. on 40 f Provisional (believe me, it sure was comprehensive). For the first time, a collection of covers and cancellations of the Warsaw Insurrection of 1944 was shown by Dr. Matthew E. Uznanski. Never before was such little known material of the Warsaw uprising shown in such a large quantity and elaborately studied and described. This exhibit received the Best Poland Trophy.

This year a new award — Best Prisoner-of-War Trophy was introduced. From the many exhibits in this class, the Murnau collection by Leo. J. Topolinski rated the trophy.

Besides the numerous Polish exhibits, many foreign collections were shown. Favorable comments were made at the exhibition on the democratic showing of stamps, which included a fine Israel collection. Emerging as winner in this class was John S. Bobo with an outstanding display of U. S. Revenues. He received the Best Other Than Poland Trophy.

The Novice Award Trophy went to a first time exhibitor Zdislaw Obara for his Port Gdansk Issues. First Award Gold Medals went to Chester Mikucki for Polish War Covers; to Dr. Russel R. Vorhees for his "Characteristics of Jewish Art"; to Jack Domar for his

Warsaw Locals. Second Award Silver Medals went to Sigmund Bor for his Burma; to Stanley Kucharz for his Ten Liberated Cities; to M. A. Bojanowicz of England for his Polish Fieldpost in Russia (this exhibit also received the S.P.A. Research Award.)

Third Award Bronze Medals went to Roman J. Wojcicki for Polish Airpost; to John Gapinski for Semi-Official Stamps; and to Myron Steczynski for Constitution Commemoratives of 1921. The Prisoner-of-War Gold Medal went to Stanley L. Jakubowski for his Neu Brandenburg and Grossborn collection.

A total of six trophies and 16 medals were awarded. Grateful acknowledgment is due to the following donors: Myron Steczynski for the Col. Larking Grand Award Trophy; to Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz for the Polish Research Trophy, the Best Poland Trophy and the Best Prisoner-of-War Trophy; to Jack Domar for the Novice Trophy. The present Polonus officers donated the Best Other Than Poland Trophy.

Thanks to Sidney Shayman who donated a registry book; a good many of the visitors to Polpex 1955 signed in for our permanent record.

Roman Reinowski reported that the Bourse was very successful and that the dealers went away well satisfied.

H. E. Harris & Co. gave POLONUS gift certificates. Each member who received one promptly donated it to Stamps For The Wounded.

The Beeba was greater than it ever was. A total of 125 attended. Anthony and Joseph Banasiak and Sigmund Bor of the Beeba Committee earned a well-deserved "Thank You". Among the ladies that helped in the kitchen and with the serving were Mrs. Anthony Banasiak, Mrs. Jos. Banasiak, Mrs. John Bor, Mrs. S. Krawiec, and two ladies of the Moose Stamp Club Mrs. Mildred Lane and Mrs. June Bell.

A wonderful turnout of members occurred on Thursday night to put up the show. And then Sunday evening many willing workers helped to take it down. Their names are too numerous to mention here — all we can say is "we are grateful."

And last but not least, a vote of appreciation is extended to Henry S. Barth for his work as a successful Polpex Chairman.

NEW ISSUES

by J. J. Domar

New issues planned for the early quarter of 1955:

Warsaw Monument set of 8 values. Designed by Prof. E. John: 5 gr. Syrena; 10 gr. F. Dzierżyński; 20 gr. Brotherly Defense; 40 gr. M. Kopernik; 60 gr. A. Mickiewicz. Those designed by R. Kleczkowski: 15 gr. Zygmunt III Waza, 45 gr. M. Curie-Skłodowska and 1.55 zł. J. Kilinski. Steel engraved, size 25.5 x 31.25 mm. To have been released in Jan. or Feb.

In Feb. or March, a set of "Land of the West" was proposed, of 20, 40, 60 gr. and 1 zł. values.

—FILATELISTA, Warsaw

CASIMIRA DĄBROWSKA

(Following is a sketch about the designer of the Vatican Marian stamps discussed in the "Our Lady of Wilno" article.)

Casimira Dąbrowska was born at Warsaw. Already at the age of seven her talent was known throughout the city. At 14 she entered her first painting in a Warsaw art exposition, and it received wide acclaim. Encouraged, she continued in the field. She had a total of 28 expositions in Poland alone. Then in Paris she displayed her art in three more expositions and then went to Rome.

Here she made a portrait of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI. In 1939 she painted a portrait of Cardinal Pacelli who later became Pope Pius XII.

In 1950 Miss Dąbrowska was re-

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Polonus Philatelic Society is non-political. The views expressed by the authors of articles appearing herein do not necessarily express the views of the Polonus Philatelic Society.

quested to do a portrait of Maria Goretti. Casimira placed her ideas on paper in the form of a rough sketch and submitted it to the Pope. His Holiness was pleased with the expression of purity, innocence and grace and gave permission to finish the portrait to be used for holy pictures throughout the world. The same masterpiece was used in 1953 as the main design of the stamps commemorating the 50th anniversary of the martyrdom of the child saint Maria Goretti. (Condensed from an article by W. Wonneberger Jr. in LINN'S STAMP NEWS of 10/12/53.)

TID BITS

Dr. M. E. Uznanski has among his many collections, one that is unique—his Submarine collection. He has collected this mail for the last 20 years.

The German submarines Bremen and Deutschland were the only subs ever authorized to carry mail back in 1916. Special stamps were issued for letters and parcels carried to and from Germany in subs. This was the only recognized commercial mail by the Universal Postal Union.

POLONUS members were fortunate enough to see the collection and enjoy a lecture by Dr. Uznanski when he spoke at a program meeting recently.

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