

# Training in Pesantren Manuscript Editing for Mahasantri in Lampung Province Through the Khastara Digital Portal of the National Library of Indonesia

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## KEYWORDS

*Manuscript Editing, Pesantren, Khastara, Mahasantri, Digital Philology*

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to analyze the implementation and impact of a training program on pesantren manuscript editing for mahasantri (university students from Islamic boarding schools) in Lampung Province through the Khastara digital portal of the National Library of Indonesia. This community service program employed a service-learning approach involving four stages: investigation, preparation, action, and reflection. Participants included 16 mahasantri from 10 pesantren in Lampung Province. Training was conducted through an intensive workshop at the Computer Laboratory of Universitas Ma'arif Lampung, utilizing the digital manuscript Kitab Safinatun Najah accessed via the Khastara portal. Results: reveal significant improvements in participants' philological and digital literacy competencies: 100% of participants successfully accessed and inventoried digital manuscripts through Khastara, 90% mastered standard Arabic-Latin transliteration, and the majority demonstrated proficiency in manuscript description, translation, and basic textual criticism. The program also established productive collaboration between universities, pesantren, and national institutions for preserving Indonesia's Islamic intellectual heritage. The service-learning-based manuscript editing training effectively enhances mahasantri's philological competencies while fostering academic responsibility and cultural preservation awareness. This integrated model offers a sustainable framework for digital philology education that can be adapted by other Islamic higher education institutions.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Proficiency and awareness in scientific and honest manuscript editing are essential skills for Islamic academics (Nurdin, 2015). Mahasantri---santri who pursue higher education at universities---represent a significant academic group with substantial potential for developing manuscript editing competencies. Considering that classical Islamic religious manuscripts in the Nusantara region generally employ Arabic script or Javanese-Arabic (pegon) script with Javanese or Malay as the language of the Kitab they study, mahasantri possess foundational linguistic skills that can be optimally developed for manuscript preservation efforts (Alfadla, Riva, & Darwis, 2023).

The preservation of pesantren manuscripts has become increasingly urgent in the context of Indonesia's intellectual heritage conservation. Pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, have historically played a significant role in the development of manuscripts in the Nusantara region since the 13th century (Baso, 2014). Manuscript production served as a medium for disseminating Islamic



ideology across various sultanates, with pesantren functioning as agents in spreading Islamic teachings through manuscript culture. However, despite this rich heritage, many pesantren manuscripts remain unsystematically preserved and inadequately edited, limiting their accessibility and scholarly utility (Latiar, 2018).

The National Library of Indonesia has addressed this challenge through the Khastara digital portal, which provides open access to thousands of digitized Nusantara manuscripts. As of 2024, the Khastara portal provides access to over 8,000 digital manuscripts from 168 owners across 57 regions in Southeast Asia, representing nearly three-quarters of the National Library's total manuscript collection of 13,000 items (Media Indonesia, 2024). This digital infrastructure creates unprecedented opportunities for manuscript study and preservation, yet its optimal utilization requires targeted capacity building among potential users, particularly mahasantri who are uniquely positioned to bridge traditional pesantren scholarship with digital philological methods.

Several considerations underscore the selection of mahasantri as program participants. First, mahasantri typically possess active or passive Arabic language skills complemented by comprehension of the Arabic-Pegon script, providing them with a strong foundation for manuscript editing training (Alfadla et al., 2023). Second, many pesantren in Lampung Province possess significant manuscript collections. Based on interviews with mahasantri, Pondok Pesantren Tribhakti At-Taqwa in East Lampung holds the manuscript Nazam Aljurumiyah Jawan. Third, while some manuscript editing has been conducted by pesantren, it often lacks proper editorial standards and methodologies, resulting in suboptimal readability for general audiences. Furthermore, digital preservation of these manuscripts has not been systematically undertaken.

Fourth, as highlighted by research conducted by Idahram (2012), numerous instances exist of dishonest manuscript editing practices among Muslim scholars, involving corruption, addition, and redaction changes driven by various motivations, including efforts to legitimize specific group perspectives by referencing mainstream Islamic scholarly writings. This phenomenon underscores the critical importance of training mahasantri in ethical and scientific manuscript editing methodologies.

The urgency of philological training for mahasantri is further reinforced by the growing recognition of pesantren manuscript preservation as a national priority. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has emphasized that "pesantren was essentially born from a tradition of manuscript literacy. The tahqiq (philological) method is not foreign. What we need is the right system and academic ecosystem" (Kemenag, 2025). Digitalization of manuscripts has become a crucial step in preserving this intellectual wealth, with experts noting that manuscripts preserved in pesantren possess significant scholarly value and can serve as sources of study for students and academics (FIB Unair, 2025).

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the integration of traditional philological approaches with modern digital technology. The Ngariksa Program (Ngaji Manuskrip Kuno Nusantara), for instance, exemplifies how digital philology can revitalize the study of Nusantara manuscripts by combining traditional philological methods with contemporary digital tools (DOAJ, 2025). Similarly, the development of e-libraries based in pesantren has been identified as a strategic priority, enabling the works of ulama to be accessed through e-books and digital journals (MUI, 2026).

Despite growing initiatives in manuscript digitalization, a significant gap remains in systematic training programs specifically targeting mahasantri in philological methods and digital manuscript editing. While previous community service programs have focused on manuscript digitalization for museum staff (Setiawan, Artha, & Prasetyo, 2020) or article writing for manuscript enthusiast communities (Aminullah & Habibah, 2022), limited attention has been directed toward empowering mahasantri as agents of manuscript preservation within pesantren communities.

The novelty of this research lies in its integration of service-learning pedagogy with digital philology training for mahasantri from diverse pesantren backgrounds. This approach not only develops participants' technical competencies in manuscript editing but also fosters academic responsibility and cultural preservation awareness. Furthermore, the program establishes collaborative networks between

universities, pesantren, and national institutions, creating a sustainable ecosystem for manuscript preservation and study.

Therefore, this community service program aims to: (1) analyze the urgency of manuscript editing training for mahasantri in Lampung Province, (2) describe the implementation of manuscript editing training through the Khastara digital portal, and (3) evaluate the impact of this training on the preservation of pesantren manuscripts in Lampung Province.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This community service program employed a service-learning approach, integrating academic learning with community engagement through structured reflection (Felten & Clayton, 2011; Wekke, 2022). Service-learning was selected as the pedagogical framework because it enables participants to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems while developing civic responsibility and academic competencies (Astin et al., 2000). The program followed four sequential stages: investigation, preparation, action, and reflection.

### 2.2 Subject and Research Location

The program was conducted at Universitas Ma'arif Lampung from July to October 2025. Participants included 16 mahasantri from 10 pesantren across Lampung Province: Pondok Pesantren Raudlotut Tholibin, Tri Bhakti At-Taqwa (East Lampung), Baitul Makmur Mulyosari, Darul A'mal Lampung, Ma'arif Metro, Raudlotus Sholihin, Bumi Sholawat (Central Lampung), Sunan Ampel Punggur, Raudlatul Qur'an Metro, and Darul Ma'arif. Participants were selected through a rigorous screening process based on academic background, Arabic language proficiency, motivation, and commitment

**Table 1. Participant Selection Criteria and Competency Mapping**

Selection Criteria	Assessment Method	Minimum Requirement	PAI Contribution	PBA Contribution	IAT Contribution
Classical Arabic reading	Reading test & interview	Fluent reading of Arabic texts without harakat	Analyze Islamic substantive content	Focus on linguistic structure	Contribute to Qur'anic contextual interpretation
Arabic-Pegon script comprehension	Transcription exercise	Ability to read Javanese-Arabic script	Validate fiqh content accuracy	Apply standard transliteration (SKB)	Analyze tafsir-related contexts
Translation competence	Translation test (Arab-Indonesia)	Translate classical Arabic to Indonesian	Ensure legal terminological precision	Maintain linguistic accuracy	Ensure contextual meaning fidelity
Academic motivation	Interview	Strong commitment to program	-	-	-

**Table 2. Participant Profile by Study Program and Pesantren Origin**

Program Studi	Number of Participants	Percentage	Pesantren Origin
Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI)	6	37.5%	Tribhakti At-Taqwa, Darul A'mal, Bumi Sholawat, Sunan Ampel, Raudlatul Qur'an
Pendidikan Bahasa Arab (PBA)	5	31.25%	Raudlotut Tholibin, Walisongo, Ma'arif Metro
Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir (IAT)	5	31.25%	Baitul Makmur, Raudlotus Sholihin, Darul Ma'arif
<b>Total</b>	16	100%	10 pesantren

## 2.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through multiple methods: participant observation during training sessions, pre- and post-training competency assessments, analysis of participants' manuscript editing outputs, documentation of program activities (photographs and attendance records), and reflective journals completed by participants and facilitators.

## 2.4 Research Instruments

The research instruments included observation checklists, competency assessment rubrics, and structured reflection guidelines. The observation checklist was designed to monitor participant engagement and skill development across the four training sessions. Competency assessments were administered before and after the training to measure improvements in: digital manuscript access and inventory, manuscript description, transliteration, translation, and textual criticism. Reflective journals captured participants' learning experiences and perceptions of the program's impact.

## 2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods. Competency development was assessed through comparison of pre- and post-training performance across five philological competencies: digital manuscript access and inventory, manuscript description, transliteration, translation, and textual criticism. Data from observations, assessments, and reflective journals were triangulated to ensure the validity and reliability of findings.

## 3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 3.1 Focus Group Discussion and Program Planning

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted on October 23, 2025, at the Universitas Ma'arif Lampung Computer Laboratory served as a critical planning stage. The FGD involved 3 supervising lecturers, 3 teaching assistants, and 13 mahasantri representatives from 10 pesantren. The FGD achieved several key outcomes: shared understanding of program objectives and methodologies; identification of participant needs and institutional support; selection of *Kitab Safinatun Najah* as the training manuscript; and establishment of the workshop schedule and format.

**Table 3. Pesantren Partners Participating in FGD and Training**

No.	Pondok Pesantren	Location	Participants Sent	Manuscript Collection Status
1	Raudlotut Tholibin	Metro City	2	Has classical Islamic texts
2	Tri Bhakti At-Taqwa	East Lampung	2	Holds <i>Nazam Aljurumiyah Jawan</i> manuscript
3	Baitul Makmur Mulyosari	East Lampung	1	Has fiqh and tafsir manuscripts
4	Darul A'mal	Metro City	1	Has turath texts in tafsir and instrumental sciences
5	Ma'arif	Metro City	2	Has classical Islamic texts
6	Raudlotus Sholihin	Central Lampung	1	Has religious manuscripts
7	Bumi Sholawat	Central Lampung	1	Has Islamic manuscripts
8	Sunan Ampel Punggur	Central Lampung	1	Has pesantren manuscripts
9	Raudlatul Qur'an	Metro City	1	Has Qur'anic manuscripts
10	Darul Ma'arif	Metro City	1	Has classical Islamic texts
Total	10 pesantren		13 participants	

Internal investigation revealed that while participants possessed strong religious literacy, their technical philological competencies---particularly in Arabic-Pegon transliteration and digital editing---were varied. External investigation confirmed high enthusiasm from pesantren partners and identified three primary pesantren with significant manuscript collections: Pondok Pesantren Tri Bhakti At-Taqwa (East Lampung), Pondok Pesantren Walisongo (Central Lampung), and Pondok Pesantren Darul A'mal (Metro City).

### 3.2 Training Implementation and Competency Development

The initial training session focused on introducing participants to the Khastara digital portal. Initially, approximately 75% of participants experienced difficulties navigating the Khastara website and downloading digital manuscript files. However, through hands-on practice in the computer laboratory, all participants (100%) successfully mastered searching, verifying titles, and downloading various manuscript copies. Participants developed critical understanding of the concept of manuscript variations (*codex*) and learned to select manuscripts with the highest scholarly potential for editing.

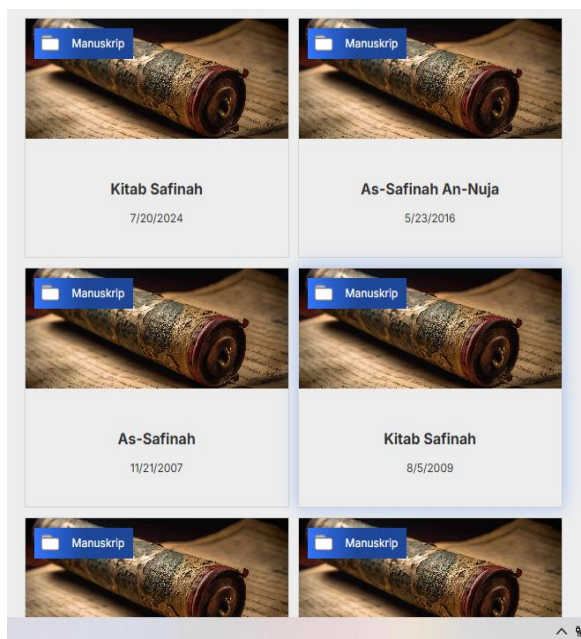


Figure 1. Khastara Digital Portal Interface

#### 3.2.2 Manuscript Description Practice

Following manuscript selection, participants engaged in codicological description practice. Initially, participants tended to record only surface-level information (titles, page counts) and struggled to identify colophons or scholia in digital images. Through structured guidance, 85% of participants demonstrated significantly improved observational skills, systematically documenting manuscript details including script type, estimated dimensions, and physical condition.



Figure 2. Manuscript Description Exercise

### 3.2.3 Arabic-Latin Transliteration

Transliteration practice represented a significant technical challenge. Initial difficulties arose from inaccurate application of the Standard Transliteration Guidelines (SKB Three Ministers), particularly regarding long vowels (ā, ī, ū) and characteristic Arabic consonants (gh, kh, sy, dz). However, through repeated practice, 90% of participants successfully internalized the transliteration standards. The most notable development was participants' ability to address Pegon orthography challenges---the ambiguous vowel writing in Nusantara Arabic script---and accurately translate handwritten script into consistent Latin text.



Figure 3. Arabic-Latin Transliteration Practice

### 3.2.4 Text Translation

Translation practice focused on the chapter on *Al-Wudu'* (Ablution), enabling integration of philological and fiqh knowledge. Participants demonstrated significant advantage due to their strong foundational knowledge of Safinatun Najah's content, effectively maintaining terminological precision in legal (*syar'i*) terminology during translation. The most notable development was the transition from literal translation to contextual translation that remained faithful to the Shafi'i legal nuances while achieving readability in standard Indonesian.

### 3.2.5 Textual Criticism

In alignment with participants' academic backgrounds, textual criticism practice focused on *emendatio* (text correction) based on internal fiqh validity. Participants critically compared their edited text with authoritative *matn* (core text) and successfully identified and documented potential *lapsus calami* (scribal errors) that could alter legal meaning, such as errors in the sequence of ablution pillars or wording of nullification factors. The highest-level achievement was observed in 80% of participants who successfully compiled a simple *apparatus criticus*, demonstrating their ability to provide scholarly justification (philological and fiqh-based) for their text choices.

Table 4. Sample Manuscript Editing Output (Bab Al-Wudu')

Original Manuscript Text	Transliteration	Translation	Apparatus Criticus
رُكْنُ الْوُضُوءِ سِتَّةٌ الْأَوَّلُ النِّيَّةُ	Rukn al-wudū' sittah: al-awwalu al-niyyah	The pillars of ablution are six: First, intention (niyyah)	Manuscript has no variant reading; confirmed with standard matn
الثَّانِي غَسْلُ الْوَجْهِ	al-thānī ghusl al-wajh	Second, washing the face	Variant: Some manuscripts include "al-kāmil" (complete) after wajh; omitted in standard edition as redundant
الثَّلَاثُ غَسْلُ الْيَدَيْنِ إِلَى الْمِرْفَاقَيْنِ	al-thālithu ghusl al- yadayn ilā al-mirfaqayn	Third, washing both hands up to the elbows	Note: Some copies use "ma'a" instead of "ilā" (with rather than to); accepted reading: "ilā"
الرَّابِعُ مَسْحُ بَعْضِ الرَّأْسِ	al-rābi' mash ba'd al- ra's	Fourth, wiping part of the head	No variant; standard reading maintained
الخَامِسُ غَسْلُ الرِّجْلَيْنِ إِلَى الكَعْبَيْنِ	al-khāmisu ghusl al- rijlayn ilā al-ka'bayn	Fifth, washing both feet up to the ankles	Variant identified: "ila" (to) vs. "ma'a" (with) in some copies; confirmed based on fiqh principles: "ila" is correct

Original Manuscript Text	Transliteration	Translation	Apparatus Criticus
السَّادِسُ التَّارْتِيبُ	al-sādisu al-tartīb	Sixth, order (sequence)	Note: Sequence is essential for validity (shart); maintained as per Shafi'i fiqh

### 3.3 Program Impact and Reflections

The manuscript editing workshop provided significant transformative benefits for the 16 mahasantri participants. The primary achievement was enhanced digital philological literacy: participants became proficient in accessing, downloading, and inventorying ancient manuscripts through the Khastara portal---competencies previously limited. Furthermore, the training successfully integrated traditional and modern knowledge; participants' deep understanding of Safinatun Najah's fiqh content proved crucial for accurate transliteration, contextual translation, and particularly textual criticism to correct scribal errors based on Islamic legal principles.

For the facilitator team, this program became a concrete implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education with dual impact. Lecturers benefited from validation and enrichment of their scholarly knowledge, as the workshop functioned as a field laboratory for testing the effectiveness of philological, codicological, and textual criticism theories in the context of religious manuscripts. Service-learning students successfully enhanced their soft skills and managerial competencies, actively serving as facilitators and mentors for mahasantri while applying their academic knowledge.

The program established strategic partnerships with pesantren in Lampung, opening pathways for prospective research networks and collaboration. Data and experience from the workshop will serve as feed-forward for curriculum improvement and the development of more adaptive digital philology training modules.

## 4. DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that the service-learning-based manuscript editing training effectively enhanced mahasantri's philological competencies while fostering academic responsibility and cultural preservation awareness. This discussion examines these findings in relation to existing theoretical frameworks and empirical research, highlighting the significance of this model for pesantren manuscript preservation in Indonesia.

The selection of Kitab Safinatun Najah as the training manuscript proved strategically advantageous for several reasons. First, its content relevance (basic fiqh) for novice mahasantri editors: as one of the most fundamental Shafi'i fiqh texts studied across nearly all Indonesian pesantren, participants possessed strong foundational text comprehension, enabling them to focus on philological aspects rather than struggling with content understanding. Second, the manuscript's script and language characteristics (paleography) were accessible: the majority of Safinatun Najah manuscripts use clear Arabic script with relatively standard orthography, providing ideal material for beginners. Third, the availability of manuscript variations enabled textual criticism practice: the existence of multiple manuscript copies allowed participants to compare and identify variant readings---a crucial stage in manuscript editing.

This finding aligns with Baso's (2014) argument that pesantren texts represent a distinct category of Islamic scholarly production requiring specialized philological approaches. The integration of participants' traditional pesantren knowledge (fiqh understanding) with modern philological methodology exemplifies what El-Mawa (2014) terms "pesantren philology"---a critical approach that transforms static texts into living, contextually relevant scholarship.

The significant improvement in digital literacy competencies (100% mastery of Khastara access) demonstrates the effectiveness of hands-on training in computer laboratory settings. This finding supports Setiawan, Artha, and Prasetyo's (2020) emphasis on practical training for manuscript digitalization. The Khastara portal's role as a preservation and dissemination platform aligns with the National Library's

mission to provide free access to digital manuscript collections through various online platforms (Kompas TV, 2025). The portal's significance is further underscored by research identifying nine distinct dissemination channels employed by Perpustakaan RI, with Khastara serving as a primary digital access point (Garuda, 2026).

The 90% mastery of standard transliteration among participants represents a notable achievement, particularly given the challenges of Pegon orthography. Jahuri and Fauji (2022) have documented the complexity of Arabic-Pegon script in Javanese manuscripts, where local vowel writing creates significant ambiguity. The participants' success in navigating these challenges reflects both their foundational Arabic competence and the effectiveness of the structured training approach. This finding supports the importance of standardized transliteration guidelines, such as the SKB Three Ministers guidelines, in producing scholarly editions accessible to broader audiences.

The integration of textual criticism with fiqh-based reasoning represents a distinctive contribution of this program. Participants' ability to identify and correct scribal errors based on their understanding of Shafi'i legal principles demonstrates what El-Mawa (2016) describes as the "interdisciplinary approach" essential for pesantren philology. This approach addresses the concern raised by Idahram (2012) regarding dishonest manuscript editing practices by equipping mahasantri with both technical skills and ethical awareness in manuscript preservation.

The program's service-learning framework proved effective in achieving multiple objectives simultaneously: developing participants' competencies, serving community needs (pesantren manuscript preservation), and fostering civic engagement. This finding aligns with Felten and Clayton's (2011) articulation of service-learning as a pedagogy that "enhances student learning by connecting academic coursework with community engagement." The reflective practice embedded in the service-learning model enabled participants to connect their technical learning with broader social responsibilities, consistent with Wekke's (2022) emphasis on reflection as a core service-learning component.

The collaborative partnership established between Universitas Ma'arif Lampung, pesantren partners, and the National Library of Indonesia reflects the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in manuscript preservation. This finding supports the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' emphasis on building academic ecosystems for philological research (Kemenag, 2025). The program demonstrates how higher education institutions can serve as bridges between traditional pesantren knowledge systems and modern preservation technologies.

The challenges encountered---varying participant competency levels, limited time for comprehensive training, and the complexity of textual criticism---are consistent with challenges reported in similar community service programs (Aminullah & Habibah, 2022). The program's success in achieving significant competency improvements within a compressed timeframe suggests the effectiveness of intensive workshop formats for philological training.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in its articulation of an integrated model combining service-learning pedagogy, digital philology, and pesantren manuscript preservation. While previous research has examined these elements separately, this study demonstrates their systematic integration into a coherent program. The model's emphasis on leveraging mahasantri's traditional knowledge (fiqh, Arabic, Pegon script) as a foundation for digital philological competencies offers a distinctive contribution.

The practical implications extend to educational policy and practice. For higher education institutions, the findings suggest that philology training programs should leverage students' existing competencies while providing structured digital skills development. For pesantren, the program demonstrates the value of partnering with universities for manuscript preservation. For the National Library, the findings highlight the importance of providing capacity-building programs to maximize the impact of digital manuscript portals like Khastara.

Finally, this research contributes to broader discourse on preserving Indonesia's Islamic intellectual heritage. As digitalization becomes increasingly important for manuscript preservation, training programs

that develop local capacity for manuscript editing and digital preservation become essential. The mahasantri, with their unique position bridging traditional pesantren scholarship and higher education, represent a strategic human resource for this endeavor. The program's success in transforming participants from passive readers to active editors demonstrates the potential for sustainable, community-based manuscript preservation initiatives.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The manuscript editing training program through the Khastara digital portal successfully enhanced mahasantri's philological and digital literacy competencies. 100% of participants mastered digital manuscript access and inventory through Khastara, 90% successfully applied standard Arabic-Latin transliteration, and the majority demonstrated proficiency in manuscript description, translation, and basic textual criticism. The service-learning approach proved effective in integrating academic learning with community engagement. The program not only developed participants' technical competencies but also fostered academic responsibility and cultural preservation awareness, transforming mahasantri from passive readers into active editors in digital philology.

The collaborative partnership established between Universitas Ma'arif Lampung, pesantren partners, and the National Library of Indonesia created productive synergy for preserving Indonesia's Islamic intellectual heritage. This multi-stakeholder engagement model demonstrates how higher education institutions can serve as bridges between traditional pesantren knowledge systems and modern preservation technologies. The selection of Kitab Safinatun Najah as the training manuscript proved strategically advantageous due to its content relevance, accessible paleography, and availability of manuscript variations for textual criticism practice, enabling participants to focus on philological skills development.

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