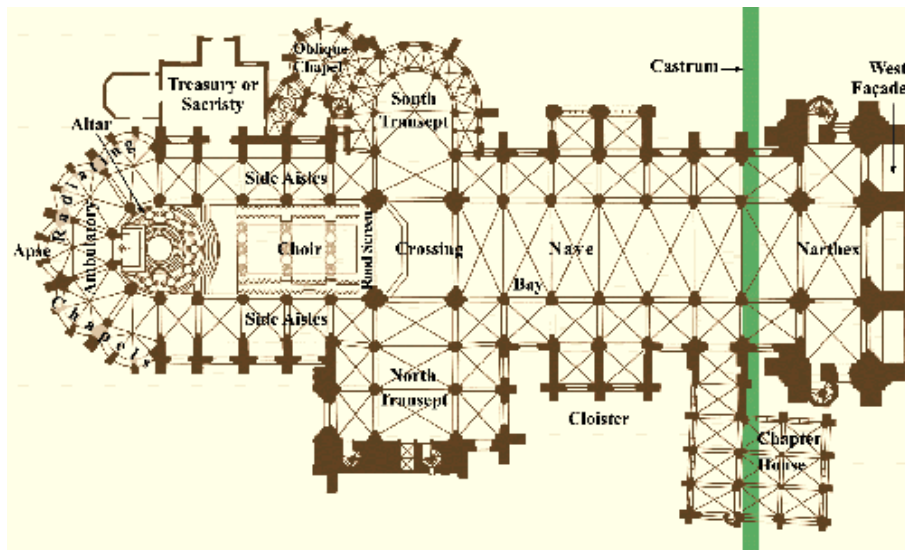


Altar: Elevated structure located in the choir at the east end of the church, where religious rites are performed (fig.1).

Ambulatory: Passageways surrounding the central part of the choir, which is often a continuation of the side aisles (fig.1,5). The most common design of the Gothic era was the double ambulatory surrounded by semi-circular radiating chapels such as at the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis.



Apse: Semi-circular vaulted structure at the east end of

the church at the termination of the choir (fig.1).

Arcade: An arch or a series of arches supported by piers or columns (fig.6)

Arch: Curved masonry construction that spans an opening such as a portal or window. Pointed arches were a feature of the Gothic era, that evolved from the round Romanesque arches. See [Gothic Architecture](#).

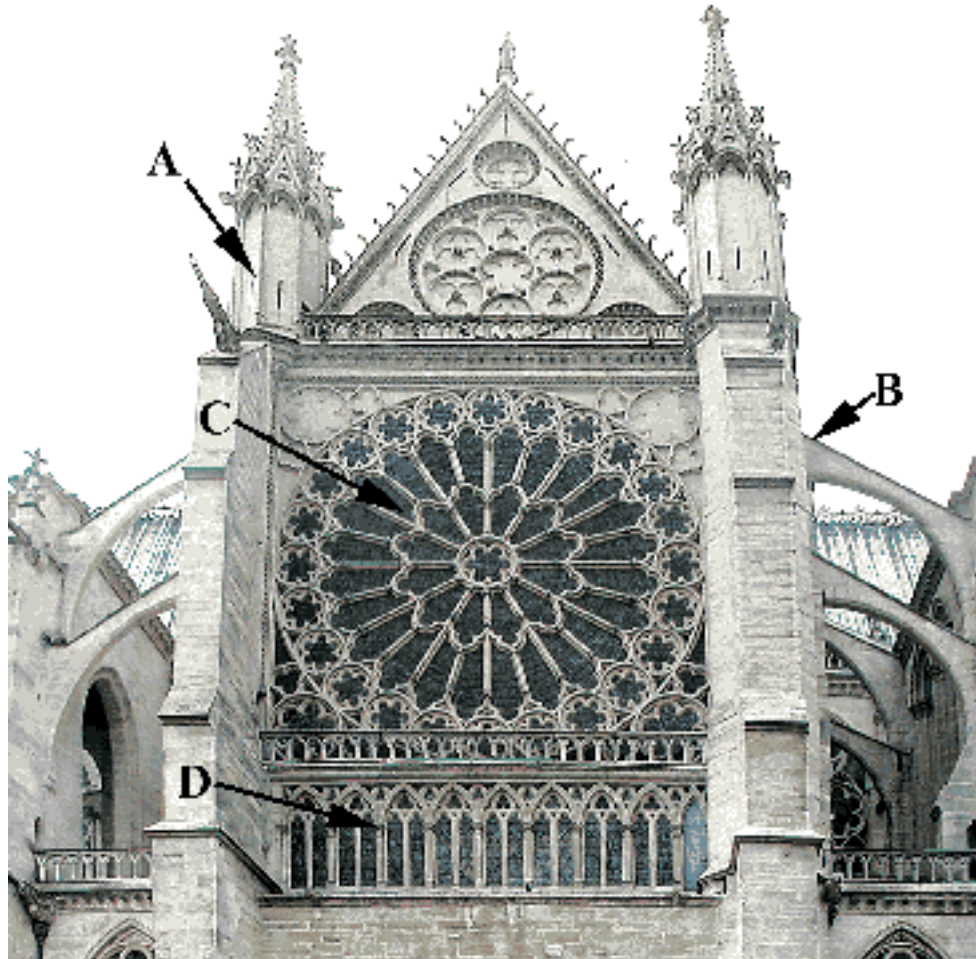
[**Fig.1:** Plan of the interior at the Cathedral of St-Gervais and St-Protais (after Gonet 1998)].

Archivolt: A series of decorated, recessed arches spanning an opening such as a portal (fig.3, B).

Baldachin: ornamental canopy covering statues (fig.3, F).

Balustrade: A railing with symmetrical supports.

Bay: A major vertical division of a large, interior wall. There are usually more than one, such as a nave that is divided into seven bays (fig.1).



Buttress/Abutment System: A projecting or free-standing support built into or against the exterior wall of a cathedral, which steadies the structure by opposing the lateral thrusts from the vaults. The appearance of double span flying buttresses first occurred at Saint-Denis (fig.2, B).

Canopy: A decorated rooflike projection or a richly decorated baldachin over a statue (fig.3, F).

Capital: Architectural element that surmounts a column or any other vertical support (fig.5, B).

Chancel: Space around the altar of a church that is usually intended for the clergy (fig.1). From the Latin *cancellus* for "railing."

Chevet: Apse built as radiating chapels outside of the choir aisle, and the resulting, more complicated structure became known as the chevet at the beginning of the 13th century.

[**Fig.2:** North transept of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis showing A) tower; B) Double Span Flying Buttresses; C) Gothic rose window with tracery; D) Lancet windows (*photo: Athena Review*)].

Choir: Part of the church east of the crossing, usually occupied by the priests and singers of the choir (fig.1). From the Latin *chorus* for a "singing group."

Clerestory: Windowed area of the church above the side aisles and above the wall of the central part of the nave (fig.6).

Colonnades: A series of columns supporting either arches or an entablature, and usually one side of a roof. These were common architectural features of Early Roman churches.

Colonettes: Small, thin columns, often used for decoration or to support an arcade.

Column: Slender vertical support having either a cylindrical or polygonal shaft, and which always has a base and a capital.

Crossing: Space where the transept intersects with the nave along the main axis of the church (fig.1).

Crypt: Low room underneath the choir of the church used as a sepulchral vault. From the Greek *kryptós* meaning "hidden." Examples include the crypt at [Notre-Dame in Paris](#).

Embrasure: An opening in a thick wall for a portal or window, especially one with angled sides, so that the opening is larger on the inside than the outside. From the Old French *embraser* for "to cut at a slant."

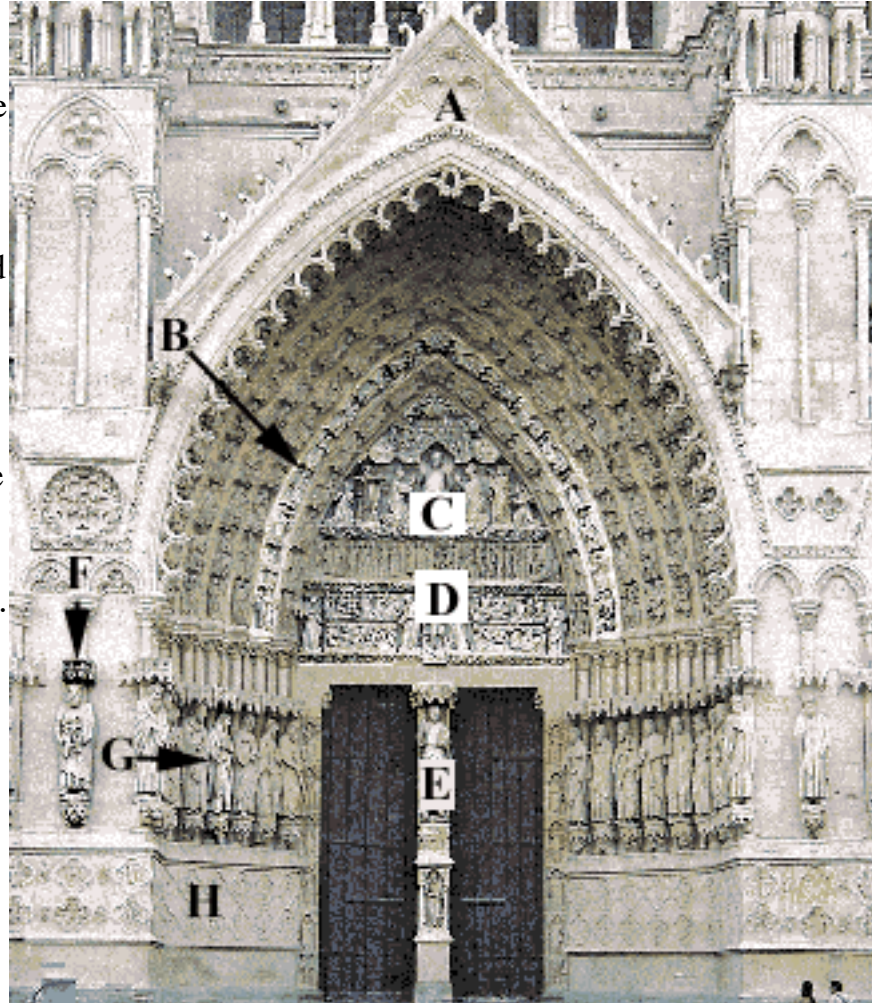
Effigy: A sculptured representation of a figure such as in the recumbent effigies of dead kings at the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis.

Façade: The front of the cathedral (fig.1). During the Gothic era, the west façade at the entranceway was noted for its three sculptured portals, and crowning rose window flanked by two towers. Starting with Saint-Denis, this became a feature of Gothic cathedrals.

Finial: Small ornament located on top of a pinnacle or gable.

Foil: Circular segments combined concentrically with other foils to form the tracery used in rose windows (fig.2, fig.4, B) The foil is usually used in groups such as trefoil or quatrefoil.

Foliated frieze: A panel decorated with carved foliage or leaves, found below the upper molding or cornice of a wall, and sometimes spanning the whole interior of the church.



Gable: Triangular portion of a wall fronting the enclosing lines of a sloping roof, which often contains sculptures (fig.3, A).

Gallery: Covered corridor in an upper story overlooking the nave. A traverse gallery crosses both sides of the church and a tribune gallery is the elevated part of a gallery which contains seats.

[**Fig.3:** Central portal of the West façade of Amiens showing A) gable; B) pointed archivolt; C) tympanum; D) lintel; E) trumeau; F) canopy above a carved cornerpiece; G)jambs; H) socles (*photo:Athena Review*)].

Gallery of Kings: Statues of kings in sequence, located either under baldachins (ornamental canopies) or encircling the base of the towers of the west façade of Gothic cathedrals. Examples include the 63 giant statues of kings at Reims, and the Kings of Judah at Notre-Dame in Paris.

Gargoyles: A water sprout terminating in a grotesquely carved figure of a human or animal, and projecting from the gutter of a cathedral such as Notre-Dame in Paris.

Iconographic scheme/program: The specific arrangement of sculptures, which symbolically represent a religious event or saint's life on the sculptured portals of Gothic cathedrals. Examples include the narrative portrayal of the Annunciation, Visitation, and Presentation at Reims Cathedral.

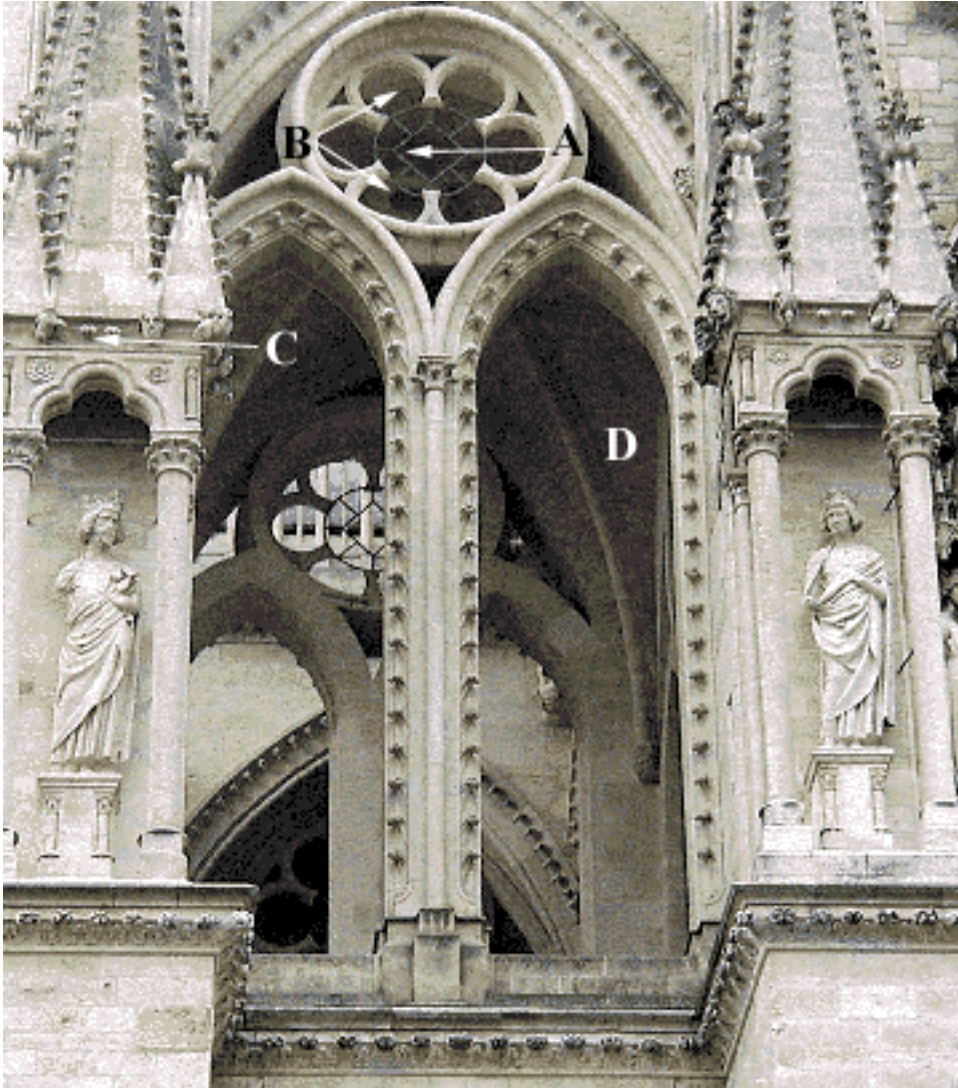
Impost: Slab above a column capital at the point of the spring of an arch.

Jamb: One of a pair of vertical posts or pieces, that together form the sides of a portal, which often contains sculptures (fig.3, G). The individual columns can also be referred to as jambshafts, which often support an arch or vault. From the Old French *jambe* for "pier" or "sidepost of a door."

Keystone: Stone in the form of wedge forming the central element of a lintel, vault, or arch. Pendant keystones are found at the intersection of ribbed vaults. Originally from the Latin *clavis* for "key."

Labyrinth: Intricate combination of paths and passageways, often located in the nave of a cathedral, marked by floor tiles sometimes engraved with the names of the cathedral architects. Pilgrims would follow the torturous path on their knees; see [Chartres](#).

Lancet window: A narrow window with sharp pointed arches. Starting with Amiens, lancets were often subdivided into two and topped by a smaller rose window. Prior to this, lancets were typically surmounted by an oculus or round opening (fig.2, D; fig.4, D).



Lintel: Horizontal architectural member in wood or stone that supports the weight above an opening (fig.3, D).

Marmosets: Grotesque human and animal figures sculpted in stone, often underlying jamb figures. From the Old French word *marmouset* (1280). At the end of the 15th century, the same word was used to describe small squirrel-like monkeys of the New World.

Martyrium: An edifice built over the site of a tomb of a martyr frequently became the site of cathedrals.

Moldings: Long narrow, often decorated bands found on other architectural features such as cornices or bases.

Mosan goldsmiths: A 12th century workshop located in the Meuse valley of Belgium and northern France that produced high quality gold, silver, and enameled objects, with naturalistic human figures. These are thought to have

influenced the figurative stone sculptures adorning the façades of Gothic cathedrals (Williamson 1995). Examples include the reliquary of Cologne by Nicolas of Verdun and the gold cross made for **Abbot Suger**.

[**Fig. 4:** Lancet Window (D) of Reims Cathedral surmounted by an oculus (A) with six lobed foils (B). Tabernacle pinnacles (C) flank both sides of the lancet window and contain sculptures of saints and angels (*photo: Athena Review*)].

Mullion: The vertical dividing bar of a rose or lancet window (fig.6).

Narthex: Beginning with Early Christian architecture, this was the gallery, vestibule, or porch located in the main (west) entrance of the church (fig.1).

Naturalism: Style of art treating drapery, bodily movements, and facial expressions as they might appear in nature or real life. Sculptures carved in the Gothic era showed considerably more naturalism than in the Romanesque or Byzantine eras ([see Gothic sculpture](#)).

Nave: The middle aisle or multiple main aisled part of a church extending from the narthex or main entrance to the choir (fig.1). The congregation usually sits here.

Oculus: A small circular opening, and which was a precursor of the Gothic rose window (fig.4, A).

Openwork gable: Gable-shaped motif above portals and windows, often containing tracery decorations as well as pinnacles and finials.

Pier: A masonry support between openings such as arcades. Typically slender, the pier has a rectangular, polygonal, or round cross-section, but does not taper and often has no capital (fig.6).



The pier may also have a base as well as an impost. A compound pier is a pier with two or more members or support elements.

Pillar: A support which does not taper, has an impost, and does not need to be cylindrical as is the case with a column. The shaft consists of either rectangular, octagonal, circular, or cruciform blocks and may have a capital (fig.5, A).

Pinnacle: Small narrow pointed tower capping buttresses and openwork gablets or portals and galleries.

Portal: The door or entrance of a cathedral (fig.3).

Fig.5: Pillars (A) with capitals (B) and quadri-partite vaulting (D) containing keystones (C) of the ambulatory of the Cathedral of St-Gervais and St-Protais at Soissons (*photo: Athena Review*)].

Portico: A gallery which opens onto the exterior of the church and is supported by columns. From the Latin *porticus* for "arcade" or "gallery."

Radiating (Apsidal) chapels: Series of chapels arranged around an ambulatory in the apse of a cathedral (fig.1).

Reliquary: A container, often richly ornamented, holding the remains of a saint which can be displayed to the faithful.

Rood screen/Jube: A stone or wooden screen, which separated the choir of the church where the clergy sits from the nave where the congregation sits (fig.1).

Rose window: A large round window on the west façade or transept, containing tracery that became more elaborate as the Gothic era progressed (fig.2, C). Beautiful examples occur at Notre-Dame in Paris and Chartres.

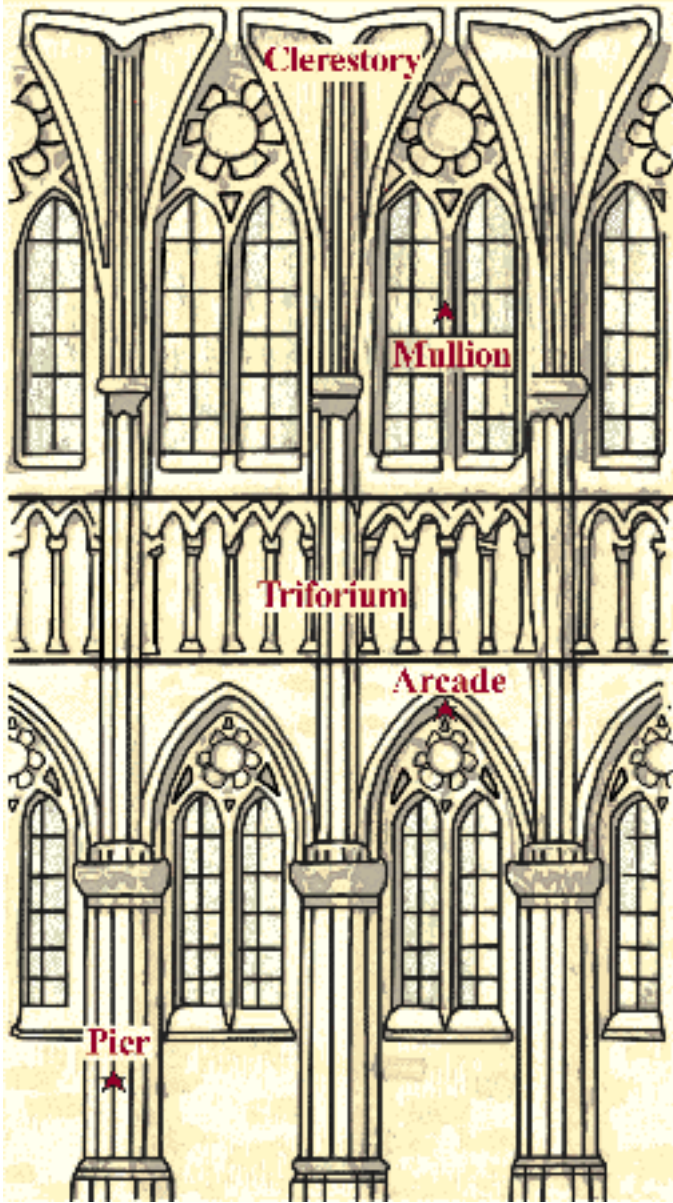
Socles: Architectural term referring to the lower panels of a portal, often located under the jamb figures. The reliefs were often quatrefoil, and typically portrayed such pagan themes as the Signs of the Zodiac and the Virtues and Vices (fig.3, H).

Spire: A sharply pointed pyramidal structure surmounting a tower.

Spandrel: An area between two adjoining arches, often decorated.

Stained glass: Colored windows of Gothic cathedrals made from a combination of many pieces of colored and semi-transparent white glass joined

together with lead strips. Colors were generated by adding specific metal oxides, which illuminated the glass with bright red, blue, green, and yellow tones. The function of stained glass was to fill the cathedral with light in windows which also fulfilled a narrative and illustrative purpose, in representing Biblical events and the lives of saints. Patrons and workers guilds who helped fund the construction of the cathedral were also portrayed (see [Chartres](#)).



Tabernacle: a canopied niche holding a sculpted figure, such as the rendering of saints and angels on the façade and transept of Reims cathedral (fig.4, C).

Tracery: Geometrically constructed building ornament such as a foil found in the upper part of Gothic rose windows (fig.2, C). This type of stonework decoration became more complex during the High Gothic and Flamboyant phase.

Transept: Any major transverse part of the church, usually crossing the nave and at right angles with the entrance of the choir (fig.1). The transept may be divided into areas of different height.

Triforium: Space or passage above the nave arcade, below the clerestory, and extending over the ceiling or vaults of the side aisle (fig.6). A blind triforium does not contain a passageway and blind arches are placed in front of the wall such as at Amiens. A false triforium has arcades which open to the roof. A pierced triforium contains windows in the outer walls of the passageway.

Trumeau: Stone pillar or column supporting the tympanum of a portal at its center (fig.3, E).

[**Fig.6:** Drawing of the nave at Reims cathedral showing the clerestory, triforium, and the nave arcades (*after M.Alexander, 2003*)].

Tympanum: A triangular space between an arch and the horizontal bar of a portal or window (lintel), often decorated with sculpture (fig.3,C).

Vaulting: A curved, self supporting wall or ceiling that covers a space between two walls and rests on pillars. Romanesque antecedents of the Gothic ribbed vault are the barrel vault and the groined vault. The ribbed vault is composed of diagonally arched ribs and can be classified as tri-partite, quatri-partite (fig.5, D), or sexpartite. Sexpartite vaults have an additional transversal rib in the center of the bay ([see Gothic architecture](#)).

Voussoirs: Any of the pieces, in the shape of a truncated wedge, that make up an arch or vault.

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