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QARAKHANIDS AND SELJUKIDS IN THE HISTORY OF CENTRAL ASIA

Karahanlılar ve Selçukluların Orta Asya Tarihindeki Yeri

Elvira MOLOTOVA*

Svetlana MAXİMOVA**

Abstract

Qarakhanids and Seljukids have played an important role in the Central Asian history. The history of Mawarannahr ties the representatives of these two dynasties, which conducted mutual aggressive campaigns in order to expand their domains. Qarakhanids' relationships with Seljukids went back to the end of X. century. In the west of Talas valley, Qarakhanids feuded with Oghuz union divided into two political groupings. The rulers of Seljuk State considered themselves to be the shadow of Allah on earth and ruled the powerful country on his behalf. The Historical Sources have Prophet hadith about rules of Qarakhaind and Seldjuk States: "Sultan is the shadow of Allah on earth, and every offended seeks asylum under his auspices" and "The first among reliable Turks is Satuq".

This paper, being based on information from Oriental written monuments and numismatic materials, attempts to explore the history of conquests of the two states (Qarakhanids and Seljukids), as well as to trace relationships between the Great Seljukids and the rulers of both the Western Qarakhanid Khanate and the Eastern one.

Keywords: History, Qarakhanids, Seljukids, Historical Sources, Central Asia.

Özet

Karahanlılar ve Selçuklular Orta Asya tarihinde önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Maveraünnehir'in tarihi, bu iki devletin temsilcilerinin kendi etki alanlarını genişletmek amacıyla karşılıklı olarak yürüttükleri sert kampanyalara bağlanır. Selçuklu ile Karahanlılar arasındaki ilişkiler X. yüzyılın sonuna dayanmaktadır. Karahanlılar Talas vadisinin batısında, iki siyasi gruplar halinde bölünmüş olan Oğuz birliği ile çekişme halindeydi. Selçuklu Devleti hükümdarları kendilerini Allah'ın yeryüzündeki gölgesi olarak kabul etmekteydiler. Tarihî kaynaklarda onların yönetim şekilleriyle ilgili peygamber hadisleri mevcuttur. Buna göre; sultan Allah'ın yeryüzündeki gölgesidir ve zulme uğramış herkes onun himayesine sığınır. Bu konuda Türkler arasında en güvenilir kişi Satuq'tur.

Bu yazıda, Doğu yazılı anıtlar ve nümismatik malzemelerden elde edilen bilgilere dayanarak Büyük Selçuklular ve Batı Karahanlı Hanlığı'nın fetihler tarihini ve yöneticileri arasındaki ilişkilerin izlerini sürmeyi amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tarih, Karahanlılar, Selçuklular, Tarihi Kaynaklar, Orta Asya.

* Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow of Section of Literature Studies and Linguistics Center of Uyghur Studies Institute of Oriental Studies Named after R. B. Suleymenov, Almaty, KAZAKHSTAN, E-mail: m.elvira_76@mail.ru

**Teacher of Giography of the School-gymnasy № 153, E-mail: svetamax52@mail.ru

Qarakhanids and Seljukids have played an important role in the Central Asian history. The history of Mawarannahr ties the representatives of these two dynasties, which conducted mutual aggressive campaigns in order to expand their domains. Qarakhanids' relationships with Seljukids went back to the end of X. century. In the west of Talas valley, Qarakhanids feuded with Oghuz union divided into two political groupings (Agadzhanov, 1968: 113). The birthplace of one of them was in the middle reaches of Syr Darya River (Agadzhanov, 1969: 172); in the east they nomadized up to the valley of Talas. This is proved by the fact of latter's assistance to Samanids in their fight against Qarakhanids. According to Oriental authors, the relocation of Seljuks to these areas occurred between 355/961-962 and the beginning of XI. century. As S.G. Aghazhanov argues, the resettlement of Seljuk tribes had been caused by the conflict of Selcuk himself with Oghuz ruler as well as the lack of pastures and grazing for livestock. Most of the population of the Selcuk group has moved to the lower reaches of Syr Darya, while the rest settled in the steppes near Samarkand and Bukhara. Migration of Seljuks was also quickened by the Qarakhanids' pressure from the east during the second half of X. century (Agadzhanov, 1969: 174-186, 182-183).

The rulers of Seljuk state considered themselves to be the shadow of Allah on earth and ruled the powerful country on his behalf. V.V. Barthold in his work "The Caliph and the Sultan" notes that the Prophet himself was attributed to the following *hadith*: "Sultan is the shadow of Allah on earth, and every offended seeks asylum under his auspices" (Barthold, 1966: 31). "Tadhkira-yi Bughra Khan" also refers to the *hadith* by the Prophet Muhammad, according to which Qarakhanids' Sultan Satuq Bughra Khan was to be born 333 years later after his death. When he becomes 12 years old, the population of his state would accept Muslim religion. Islam would reach tops in its fierce struggle against the "infidels". According to *hadith*, at one meeting the Prophet had eloquently said: "The first among reliable Turks is Satuq", and this *kalima*, reportedly, was further edited by Hadrat 'Ali Karim-Allah. After few years, Hvardja Abu Nasr Samani carries out the intended in an everlasting peace to the transitory world (Manuscript 862, l. 44⁶; Manuscript 5531, l. 40⁶; Manuscript 1818, l. 41⁶; Molla Haji, 1988: 38-39). Sultan's successors, continuing the policy of their ancestor, further expanded their domains.

This paper, being based on information from Oriental written monuments and numismatic materials, attempts to explore the history of conquests of the two states (Qarakhanids and Seljukids), as well as to trace relationships between the Great Seljukids and the rulers of both the Western Qarakhanid State and the Eastern one.

The history of Mawarannahr interrelates conquests of these two abovementioned states. With the advent of Islam in Kashgharia and subsequent spread of this new religion among the Turkic peoples of Eastern Turkestan, the territory of Qarakhanid state significantly expanded due to regular campaigns of Muslims against "infidels" that led to the assertion of political power of Qarakhanids on the lands located to the east.

To legitimize their political power, Qarakhanid khans needed a new great "Muslim ancestor", which became Afrasiyab – the great conqueror of the world who spread the faith of the Prophet Muhammad to its very limits. By the name of this mythical king of Turan Qarakhanids began to call themselves "the House of Afrasiyab", despite the completely non-Turkish sounding of that name (Barthold, 1968: 79). Based on precisely such an ideal of the "ruler", the representatives of the Qarakhanid dynasty hoped for historical confirmation that could allow them to govern not only Eastern Turkestan, but also Mawarannahr. The fact of belonging to this genus could have given the rulers of this dynasty a legitimate right to sovereignty over the whole territory of Central Asia. "Ilkhan

kings” or “princes of Turkestan of Afrasiyab origin” bore the title *Malik al-Mashriq wa-s-Sin*, which meant “the rulers of Chin and Machin”. This is evidenced by the coins of 459/1066-1067 (Radloff, 1893: 120, 125).

Qarakhanid ruler Hasan Bughra Khan Ghazi, who bore the title of “Light of Power and Support for the Call to Faith” (*Shihab ad-Dawla wa zahir da’wa*), changing the plan of his uncle Musa Bughra Khan Ghazi, who intended to subdue Khotan, decided to make the military campaign to the Samanids, and only after this to continue march towards Western neighbors. The reason lied in the seizure by Hasan Bughra Khan Ghazi of Isfidzhab, a part of the Samanid state. Prior to the very arrival of Qarakhanid Khan, the rulers of this city had voluntarily opened the gates and greeted him with many expensive gifts. According to V.V. Barthold, the might of Samanid state was undermined by internal unrests during the reign of Nukh ibn Mansur (365-387/977-999). Hence, when in 380/990 Hasan Bughra Khan appeared with his army at the realms of Isfidzhab, the frontier city of Samanid Empire, he captured it without any resistance. There is a report that the aristocracy hostile to the Samanids itself called Turks upon to come. Hasan Bughra Khan had made a secret deal with the Samanids’ vice-regent in Khurasan and hereditary vassal ruler of Kuhistan – Abu ‘Ali ibn Sinjur, and agreed about division of the Samanid state. In accordance with these negotiations, Mawarannahr was to move under Hasan Bughra Khan domains, while the lands south of the Amu Darya – to Abu ‘Ali. After seizing Bukhara, Hasan Bughra Khan, regardless this treaty became to deal with Abu ‘Ali as his own vassal regent. Therefore, the latter had agreed with Nukh ibn Mansur the Samanid and received a return promise. However, this promise has not been fulfilled, as because of certain favorable circumstances Samanid ruler managed to return back to Bukhara on Wednesday 14 Jumada II / August 17, 992 without somebody else’s assistance (Barthold, 1963: 477; Barthold, 1963: 318-319).

After capturing Jand, the news of the victories of Seljukids spread throughout the whole Turkestan and Mawarannahr. The version of “Malik-namah” cited by Ibn al-Athir says that when Harun ibn Ilek Khan conquered the “margins” of domains of one of the Samanid amirs, the latter appealed for help to Seljuk. “He (Seljuk), – Ibn al-Athir writes, – sent his son Arslan with a detachment of his people to help him. Thanks to them, Samanid became stronger and, gaining the upper hand over Harun, returned back everything the latter previously had taken from him”. Historian al-Utbi writes that during the retreat of Harun ibn Ilek Khan from Mawarannahr, his army was attacked by Turks-Guzes. Apparently, these were the Seljuk voluntary forces arrived from the area of Jand to help Nukh ibn Mansur the Samanid (Agadzhanov, 1969: 179-180).

According to “Ta’rikh al-Yamini” (“The History of Yemen”) by al-Utbi, Hasan Bughra Khan Ghazi was exhausted in the climate of Bukhara. He suffered a misfortune due to mutiny, rebellion and disaster caused by him to the Samanid dynasty. He became terribly ill in bed. He thought he could recover only with an air of Turkestan. However, on the way to Kashgar he died (Materiali, 1988: 26-27). According to V.V. Barthold, in Rabi’ I 382/ May 7 – June 5 992, Qarakhanid ruler managed to march into Bukhara, but shortly thereafter due to excessive consumption of fruits fell desperately ill and was forced to leave the conquered country. He died on the way to Kashgar in the area of Kochkar-Bashi. This area was not far from the source of Chu River, the so-called Kochkar (Barthold, 1964: 506-507). According to Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni, this event occurred in 384-385/994-995. At the turn of X-XI. centuries, the power of Qarakhanids had been definitively established in Mawarannahr (Klyashtorniy, 1992: 273, 279).

The information cited above about the death of Hasan Bughra Khan Ghazi finds contradiction within “Tadhkira-yi Bughra Khan”. According to this source, Qarakhanid ruler died in just another fierce battle with “infidels” in the area of Kulkuyar (Manuscript

5531, l. 116^a).

According to Abu Rayhan al-Biruni and Ibn al-Athir, Hasan Bughra Khan had a *laqab* of “Shihab ad-Daula” (Barthold, 1964: 154). As noted by B.D. Kotchnev, Fergana dirham of 381/991-992 opens his further titulature: *Malik al-Mashriq Shihab ad-Daula wa Zahir al-da'wa Abu Musa Turk-Haqan* (Kochnev, 2006: 134).

As noted above, Seljuk tribes of Jand provided military assistance to Samanid Nukh ibn Mansur. Thanks to this help, Samanids managed to make restitution of their ancestors' domains. According to Ibn al-Athir, the mentioned Samanid ruler turned for help to Selcuk, who sent him a squad led by his son Arslan (Isra'il), whereby “Samanid became stronger and, gaining the upper hand over Harun, returned back everything the latter previously had taken from him” (Materiali, 1976: 365). According to B.D. Kotchnev, after Bughra Khan's going away, Nukh with the assistance of Isra'il bin Selcuk restored Samanids' power not only in the valley of Zarafshan, but also in the Syr Darya basin – Fergana, Khujand, Shash with Ilaq and even Ispijab.

The struggle between the Samanids and the Qarakhanids had always been of stubborn character. In 999, Qarakhanids again invaded the territory of the Samanid state and seized their possessions. Seljuk leaders, being enticed by the perspectives of capture of big loot, have realized the hopelessness and even danger of further support to Samanids. Despite the success in the battle of Samarkand in 1004, the war against Qarakhanids who relied upon local feudal nobility was actually lost. The refusal by Seljuk leaders of alliance with the last Samanid ruler led to the ultimate consolidation of Qarakhanids' authority over Mawarannahr.

The successor of Hasan Bughra Khan became the Great Khagan Tonga/Togan Khan Ahmad bin Ali. However, further advances of Qarakhanids are associated with the name of his brother Nasr, who was at that time neither Khan nor even Ilig but only Tegin (Tonga-Tegin) i.e., one of princes. According to numismatic data of his earliest coins (*fals*), in 384/994-95, he won back Fergana and Khujand from the Samanids. Khujand *fals* named Nasr only, while Fergana *fals* of 384-385/994-95 mention Ahmad bin Ali as his suzerain, and as his vassal – certain Khumar-Tegin, Qarakhanid prince not known earlier, who obviously took direct part in the re-conquest of Fergana. Nasr bin Ali has also captured the neighboring Ilaq, where since 385/995 (which is the most probable date for this conquest) there begins regular coinage by Qarakhanids (Kochnev, 2006: 153-154).

In 415-419 AH (1024/1025-1028), Yabgu Musa ibn Selcuk, one of the future founders of the Seljuk Empire, had been a ruler of Karmina, a part of principality of 'Ali bin Hasan the Qarakhanid. After the death of 'Ali, Seljukids moved to Khorezm, but after their defeat by the ruler of Jand were forced to flee to Khorasan. In 431/1040, in the battle of ad-Dandanakan located between Sarahs and Merv, the Seljukids shatteringly defeated Maso'ud the Ghaznavid. In a few decades, they have created a vast empire that included even Syria and Asia Minor. The head of the Seljuk state became Togrul Beg (1038-1063), who conquered Iraq Ajem (Persian Iraq), Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and Kuhistan (Kochnev, 2006: 213; Istoriya, 1955; 254-255). Seljukids had rendered assistance to Qarakhanid Khan, Tafgach Khan Ibrahim bin Nasr (1046/47-1068), in his struggle for Mawarannahr, but later began raiding his domains. Such clashes continued during the reign of Qarakhanid Shams al-Mulk.

In 1063, the founder of the Seljuk state Togrul Beg died. He was succeeded by his nephew Alp Arslan Khan (1063-1072), the son of Chagry Bek Dawood, who made Merv the state capital. Military-political interests of this Seljuk ruler were largely oriented towards the East. His name is associated with the marches to Huttalyan and Chaganian, Jand and Sauran, which started from the Khorezm and could not but bothered Tafgach Khan

Ibrahim. In 1068, for reasons unknown to us, he abdicated throne in favor of his son Shams al-Mulk Nasr (1068-1079/80). This step resulted in a struggle for the throne between Shams al-Mulk Nasr and another son of Ibrahim Khan – Shuays (Sayfas). The main struggle broke out in Bukhara, where the second son of Ibrahim Khan seized the Ark-citadel. After a long and stubborn battle, Shams al-Mulk seized the fortress of Bokhara and Samarkand (Istoriya, 1950: 293).

The clashes with the Seljuk state that had begun yet during the life of Tafgach Khan Ibrahim intensified in the time of Shams al-Mulk Nasr. The objectives of the Seljuk campaigns were Termez and Balkh. In 1072, Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan set up with almost a 200 thousand strong army. To ferry such a large army across the Amu Darya, it was needed to build a special bridge of ships. At the very beginning of the campaign, Sultan Alp Arslan was killed in his marquee by Yusuf al-Khwarizmi, the commandant of one of the local strongholds. Seljuks had to cancel the campaign and return army to Iran (Istoriya, 1950: 294).

Taking advantage of this, Shams al-Mulk Nasr captured Termez and Balkh, though not for long. Seljuk Sultan Malik Shah (1072-1092) re-conquered both the cities and in 1074 moved to Samarkand; this ended with the concluding of peace. According to numismatic data, in 482-483 AH (1089/1090-1090/1091) in Samarkand there were coined dinars mentioning Malik Shah and his Qarakhanid vassal Arslan Khan Muhammad bin Ibrahim. Manuscript sources inform about the son of Tafgach Khan Ibrahim bin Nasr named Muhammad, but only coins revealed the indubitable fact that Muhammad was just next, the fourth, ruler of Western Qarakhanid Khanate (Kochnev, 2006: 214).

The position of Shams al-Mulk was complicated by the fact that Eastern Qarakhanid ruler Yusuf Qadir Khan ibn Hasan and his sons started fighting against him, in the result of which the lands north of the Syr Darya, including Fergana, went out from Nasr's possession. Weakened by internal turmoil in his own country as well as constant fear of aggressive actions by the Seljuks, Shams al-Mulk was forced to give up the offensive policy towards the south-west.

In 471/1078-1079, Shams al-Mulk died and was succeeded by his brother Hyzr (Hidr). Initial period of Hyzr's reign was marked by a new, very unfortunate Seljuk invasion; further relationship of Hyzr with southern neighbors were quite peaceful (Barthold, 1963: 364; Bunyatov, 1981: 6-7). The sources provide almost no information about his reign and the date of death. Nizami al-Aruzi as-Samarkandi writes that the power of Qarakhanids during Sultan Hyzr ibn Ibrahim, a patron of poets, has reached such a great flowering, strong force and might that had never happened before. During his reign, it was relatively quiet situation in Mawarannahr (Nizami, 1968: 77). A few coins of Hyzr Khan preserved until nowadays. M.N. Fedorov (Fedorov, 1978: 173-176) revealed his Uzgend dirham of 473 AH, thus proving that Fergana belonged to Hyzr. Written sources do not indicate any final date of his reign, though O. Pritsak (Pritsak, 1953: 47) considered it close to 473 AH, while M.N. Fedorov (Fedorov, 1980: 53-54) stated it as 473 AH (1080-1081) confidently. From the story by Samarkandi on Hyzr it is obvious that the latter was not just an ephemeral ruler reigned for only about a year. In the chronicle by Gars an-Ni'mah mentioning events up to 479 AH, there are mentioned Shams al-Mulk and his brother Hasan (the second name of Hyzr), but no mention of the latter's son and successor Ahmad. If this is not a coincidence, than Hyzr, as Kotchnev believes, was still alive in 479 AH (1086-1087) (Kochnev, 2006: 211). Later, M.N. Fedorov (Fedorov, 1985: 151) published his dirham with the date reconstructed as 476, 477 or 479 AH (1083-1084, 1084-1085 or 1086-1087). The same author mentioned Samarkand dirham of 479 AH (1086-1087) with titlature of *ap-Qaqan al-Mu'azzam Sultan*, attributing it without any argument to Ahmad bin Hyzr. Nizami al-Aruzi as-Samarkandi definitely refers to him as Sultan; on the

Samarkand dirham of 479 AH the coin issuer is named as *al-Kha-qan al-Mu'azzam Sultan*. From the chronicles by az-Zahabi (XIV century) it is clear that Hyzr reigned until 479 AH. By Kotchnev's assumption, the period of his reign is 473-479/1080-87 (Fedorov, 2006: 211).

The successor of Hyzr Khan has become his son Ahmad whose years of reign are unknown to us. Heir's reign angered subjects, especially these representing the rich elite. Abu Takhir Abd ar-Rahman bin Ahmad bin Allak, the former chief judge of Samarkand, on behalf of disgruntled complained to Malik Shah about Khan's harassments. Sultan took a favorable opportunity, and in 482/1089-1090 seized Bukhara and besieged Samarkand, which has also been occupied after fierce resistance. Captured Khan was sent to Isfahan, and in Samarkand Malik Shah left a vice-governor. Then through Uzgend he reached the borders of Kashgar. As Kotchnev notes, here the Khan of Kashghar sent him an ambassador, acknowledged himself as Malik Shah's vassal, and began to read the khutbah and mint coins with Sultan's name. Al-Husaini reports about yet another campaign of Sultan against Sohrab, the ruler of Taraz. After the victorious military expedition, Malik Shah left Mawarannahr (Barthold, 1963: 379; Kochnev, 2006: 213).

As noted by Kotchnev, after Sultan's departure, 'Ain ad-Daula, a head of Qarakhanid army in Samarkand, forced Seljukids' vice-governor to leave Mawarannahr and invited from Atbash the brother of Kashgar Khan, Ya'qub-tegin; according to Sibta ibn al-Jawzi – Buga-tegin. When Ya'qub executed 'Ain ad-Dawla, causing the army discontent, Malik Shah came back to Samarkand, forcing Ya'qub to flee, and left his amir, then he again proceeded up to Uzgend. In Kotchnev's opinion, Samarkand dinars of 483 AH (1090-1091) mentioning only Malik Shah convince us that both the consolidation in Mawarannahr of Buga-tegin Ya'qub and his exile fall on 483/1090-91 (Kochnev, 2006: 214).

In 485/1092-1093, Ahmad bin Hyzr was returned to the throne of Samarkand as a Seljuk vassal, and in 488/1095 perished at the hands of conspirators, who enthroned his cousin Mas'ud, the son of Muhammad bin Ibrahim. In 490/1096-1097, new Seljuk Sultan Barkiyaruk bin Malik Shah marched to Mawarannahr and appointed as Khan another grandson of the founder of the Western Khanate – Sulaiman bin Dawood bin Ibrahim, who died in the same year. O. Pritsak (Pritsak, 1953: 48) attributed to him the coins mentioning Sulaiman Qadir Tafgach Khakan.

At the same time, in the Eastern Khanate there got strength the ruler of Taraz and Balasagun – Qadyr Khan Jabra'il, the son of Togryl Tegin 'Umar. In 492/1098-99, he invaded Mawarannahr, killed Mahmud and conquered the Western Khanate. Taking advantage of unrest among the Seljukids, he tried to grab the Khorasan belonged to Sanjar, brother and vice-governor of Sultan Barkiyaruk bin Malik Shah. In 495/1101-1102, Jabra'il seized Tirmiz and crossed the Amu Darya, but died near Balkh (Barthold, 1963: 381; Pritsak, 1953: 49).

Children of vassal rulers, major *iqtadars* and commanders used to stay as privileged hostages at the court of Seljukid rulers. "Atabat al-Qataba" ("The Collection of Sultan Deeds") by al-Juwayni contains interesting document evidencing that under Sultan Sanjar there was as a hostage the son of Muin ad-Din, a vizier of Qarakhanid ruler, who once had been in the service of Seljukids.

Manuscript sources preserve contradictory information about the end of Arslan Khan Muhammad's reign. Suffering from paralysis, he appointed as co-ruler his son Nasr, who was then either killed by conspirators or was executed by father for participation in own conspiracy. Arslan Khan called Sanjar for help and appointed as co-ruler another son, who managed to overcome the rebels on his own. Nevertheless, Sanjar came to Mawarannahr and, accusing Muhammad of treachery, besieged and after several months conquered

Samarkand in the spring of 524/1129-1130. Sick Khan was sent to Balkh, where he soon died (Barthold, 1963: 383-384; Kochnev, 2006: 219).

According to B.D. Kotchnev, all the three Western Qarakhanid Khans, who ruled in Mawarannahr after the death of Jabra'il bin 'Umar, were placemen of Sanjar, and Muhammad and Mahmud were even in close relations with him: Muhammad related to Sanjar simultaneously as nephew, son in law and father in law, while Mahmud bin Muhammad also was a nephew of Sultan (Pritsak, 1953: 50; Kochnev, 2006: 221-222). At that, the relationships of these three Qarakhanids with Sanjar were reflected in the coinage in different ways. Thus, on coins issued in the domains of Muhammad, Sultan figures sporadically and, judging from the available materials, only (or mostly) on coins of Bukhara. On Hasan's *dirhams*, Sanjar seems to be mentioned slightly more often, and what is most important – he figures even on the coins of Fergana, which was not the case during Muhammad. Finally, in the Mahmud coinage Sultan is mentioned regularly. It could be therefore assumed that the degree of dependence of Western Khagans did not remain invariable – it had been gradually increasing, reaching its maximum at the time of Mahmud.

According to reliable information, Seljukids, repeatedly invading Mawarannahr, never marched to Eastern Turkestan and therefore could not control it. Even in case the suzerainty of Seljukids extended to the Eastern Khanate, it did not last for long and was of quite formal character.

It should be noted that despite the strife between the heirs of Western and Eastern Qarakhanid states, each ruler left his mark in the history of Central Asia. Feudal dissensions and Seljukids' marches of conquest into Mawarannahr gradually weakened the once mighty Qarakhanid Empire. The desire of some cities and regions to break away from the complete subordination to Qarakhanid Khans resulted in the final decline of Qarakhanid state.

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