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STONE ON PAPER
ARCHITECTS MANIFESTING ON THEIR CITIES

KAMIEŃ NA PAPIERZE
MIEJSKIE MANIFESTY ARCHITEKTÓW

Abstract
The role of architect in city-making has been the theme of unsolved debates in urbanism. Committed as performers and recipients of a holistic knowledge, architects-urbanists keep acting, still today, in-between idealism and pragmatism. The city, being frequently defined as a text, becomes the molten object where projects brought to materiality are able to build an intangible narrative. The paper presents the ongoing research 6by6, a compared analysis of cities where the apparent contradiction between idealism and practice is solved. Acknowledged American and European cities are analysed as a mean to illustrate the connections between the most extreme city-narrative – architectural manifestos – with the most tangible material commitment – actual and implemented urban projects. This article announces them and reports on the manifestoes they are the cores of.

Keywords: Architectural Manifestoes, European city, American city

Streszczenie
Rola architekta w tworzeniu miasta stanowi temat nierozstrzygniętych debat w dziedzinie urbanistyki. Architekci-urbaniści jako oddani wytwórcy i odbiorcy wiedzy holistycznej nadal działają w zawieszeniu pomiędzy idealizmem a pragmatyzmem. Miasto, które nierzadko określa się jako tekst, staje się rozległym obiektom, w którym materializowane projekty mogą budować nienamacalne opisy. Artykuł niniejszy przedstawia prowadzone badania 6x6, porównawczą analizę miast, w których znieswiadowana są najskrajniejszą formą narracji miejskiej – manifestami architektonicznymi – a najpełniejszym zaangażowaniem materialnym: zrealizowanymi projektami urbanistycznymi. Artykuł niniejszy przedstawia zarówno projekty, jak i manifesty stanowiące ich podstawę.

Słowa kluczowe: manifesty architektoniczne, miasto europejskie, miasto amerykańskie

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1. Narratives. The architect’s hand draws, and writes too

Very often architects are asked about our role in city making. The answer is usually compromised between our disciplinary tradition as thinkers and artists and our mission as necessary actors in Real Estate development. That is to say, between reflection and action, theory and practice. From the assertion “best theory is a good practice” by R. Unwin to the more recent “the actual makes the history of architecture and all previous lessons on urbanism irrelevant”[1], the urbanism of architects has been balancing between theory and practice. Solving the false dichotomy between both extremes becomes especially crucial in architecture education: an uncritical practice-orientated training can be as damaging as a pure speculative approach disconnected with the reality urbanism is demanded to deal with.

Rather than the traditional “mens et manus”[2], which recalls the hand-making – as an autonomous entity from the mind-thinking – the approach of good architects to city relies on the motto “mens est manus”, fairly translated as “the mind is the hand”; ultimately “thinking is making”. Urbanism, we state, unites reflection and action, being designing and writing considered as their ultimate expression. Considered as complementary expressions of the same holistic activity, designs and writings are given together in good city-making. Far from other disciplines with a shared interest in urbanism, architecture in the city is a unique meeting point between materiality and abstraction, since the will of an idea comes to reality in the shape of actual performed stone. Neither social sciences nor scientific disciplines are expected to envision and implement designs into material reality. Technics, on the other hand, are just means for bringing a vision into reality.

1.1. City as a text: the three timelines of urbanism

Architecture reunites both, since it moves between idealism and pragmatism. As Manuel de Solà-Morales points, the urban project is more than a mere design. It is a text, a discourse that, by confronting itself with the existing “con-text”, is able to add a new meaning to the city: “The truth is that a project for a city is a text that is added to so many existing statements. Cities have thus been described as a writing slate, and a good urban project as a form of narrative”[10]. Assuming city as text and not only as context it should be considered that the most important factor of the narrative genre is its linear nature, the timescale of the ideas brought to materiality. To understand a project as a statement is to admit its timescale. As phrased by de Solà-Morales timescale can be conceived as context (in which the city will be understood and linked to the existing substrates), implementation (in which the city is built) or perception (in which the city will be devised)[3]. Based on this basic

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2 “Mens et Manus” (Mind and Hand) is the Latin voice motto of many higher education institutions, such as MIT.
3 The roots of time conception in de Solà-Morales can be tracked back to positivism. The notion of time and space was formulated by R. Carnap in his dissertation Der Raum, early published in 1922. Based on the triple dimension of space – Physical, Logical and Perceived – Carnap’s methodological approach was regarded by the neoestructuralist approach of Ludovico Quaroni, mentor of de Solà-
triple understanding of timescale in urbanism, an ongoing research is seeking to describe the approach of architects to city-narrative.

The research seminar 6by6 explores the role of architects as text-builders. By analyzing the work of acknowledged architects who have considered particular cities as narratives, the seminar describes the dense fabric of relations that weaves the best urbanism practice with the deepest reflection on city form. Based on a compared analysis methodology, 6by6 describes context, implementation and perception narratives by establishing a cross reading between the American and the European context. Studied cities share a common characteristic: they are the main argument of extreme city-narratives. Berlin, Manhattan, Barcelona, Los Angeles, Rome and Boston are the motto of Architectural Manifestoes that, rooted in the counterculture tradition, were written by architects in the second half of the XXth century, most of them during the 70’s. 6by6 drains from that period the most remarkable examples and expose them to analysis.


As previously mentioned, 6by6 assumes the triple understanding of timeline in city-narrative. They structure the content of the seminar and define the thematic lines in which cities are grouped.

2.1. Context. Berlin, Die Stadt in der Stadt

The city of Berlin, as phrased by Oswald Mathias Ungers in “Die Stadt in der Stadt”, is very much coincident with the definition that we previously used in “City as a text: the three times of urbanism”. Seen as palimpsests of strata along time, the intervention of architects during his stay in Rome. Under the leadership of de Solà-Morales, the Laboratory of Urbanism of Barcelona developed during the 70’ and 80’a methodology of urban morphology analysis, based on the description of three different processes combined along time: Urbanization, Tracing and Building. See ‘Ludovico Quaroni’, UR/Urbanismo Revista, No. 7, Barcelona, 1988, and de Solà-Morales M., Las formas del crecimiento urbano, UPC, Barcelona 1997.

4 “6by6: Cities through the writings and designs of their architects” is a research seminar offered by the author at the Illinois School of Architecture. Conceived as a compared case studies seminar on European and American cities, the course explores both urban design relevant case studies and manifestos on cities coupled according to the topics phrased in this article (Context, Construction and Perception). See more on: http://www.arch.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/faculty-courses/6.pdf.

5 As pointed by Sébastien Marot: “We are referring here to the site-specific manifesto, the “learning from” syndrome that led several architects from this era to devote their energies to describing a particular city, becoming apostle for specific places, which were viewed as holding the keys to an alternative way of approaching urban design”. Examples include Learning from Las Vegas, Chicago à la Carte_The City as an Energy System, Los Angeles_The architecture of four ecologies, Collage City, Delirious New York and Die Stadt in der Stadt. See Hertweck, F. & Marot S., The City in the City. A manifesto (1977) by Oswald Mathias Ungers and Rem Koolhaas, Lars Müller Publishers, 2013.

6 Although the palimpsest concept is widely spread today in literature about urbanism, we are specially interested in André Corboz’s development of the concept. See, Corborz A., Le territoire comme palimpseste et autres essais, Editions de l’ Imprimeur, 2001.
in a city-text is an adherence to the actual dynamics of the urban facts rather than a rational vision ‘ex ante’ of the operations to undertake. “The commitment of an architect in the city is much more about adding than about solving” [10]. In “Die Stadt in der Stadt”, Ungers shows Berlin as the superimposition of ideas, concepts, decisions, coincidences, and realities that across the arc of seven centuries has given the city its present form. For him the topography of Berlin is similar to a book of events in which history has drawn its traces. In the light of Unger’s thesis, Berlin is not a unified entity but a living collage, a collection of fragments. “Die Stadt in der Stadt”, an academically presented Manifesto in 11 Thesis7, constitutes a remarkable effort of drawing a new topography for Berlin. Ungers solidly establishes the theoretical foundations of Berlin as a text and phrases its identity by a double approach: diachronism and diatopism.

As for the first approach, much of the manifesto addresses the historical context of Berlin in a timeline scope. Ungers finds the reasons for the actual morphology of Berlin in history. From the foundation of Berlin and Köln to the explosion of the automobile in the XXth century, the manifesto describes a “collaged along time” city8 and, more important, capitalizing on its actual fragmented identity launches an hypothesis for its future development. Announced under the concept “archipelago-city” Ungers list a series of goals that, under one single final thesis, constitute his proposal for future Berlin9. Topography, namely “the drawing of space”, is more than a mere description and becomes the foundations from where future interventions are envisioned.

But we are even more interested in the second approach, what we have come to name as diatopism. Once the fragmented morphogenesis of Berlin is justified in terms of historical processes, where does the real identity of its fragments rely? How is the simultaneous juxtaposition of contrasting elements building the dialectical identity of Berlin, as stated by Ungers? The answer resides in the concept of critical antithesis and divergent multiplicity that is, according to Ungers, the very essence and unique character of the city. But how is this

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7 The model of the city in the city was conceived during the Summer School organized in Berlin in 1977 by Cornell University, the senator in charge of building and housing systems, the IDZ, and the Kunstlerhaus Bethanien. The results of this seminar were published in a separate volume. The revision was undertaken at Cornell in view of its presentation to the SPD Congress in Berlin on September 23, 1977.

8 This reasoning is developed by Ungers in the Thesis 9 of Die Stadt in der Stadt. This passage can be considered as the core of his manifesto for Berlin

9 “The concept of the archipelago-city answers a series of fundamental urban design demands, such as: finding a solution to the problem of reduction that goes hand in hand with improvement in quality, as opposed to the loss in quality that is concomitant to constant growth and unlimited expansion/improving urban quality by offering varied and versatile spaces for living and activities/creating a pluralistic system of unresolved contradictions, instead of a unitary and centralized system/restoring identity in urban spaces/establishing a close link between city and country, which means renewing the relationship between culture and nature/the intensification of places, along with the preservation of collective memory and historical consciousness, understood as a continuity of space and time/the individualization of architecture and, simultaneously, an improved adaptability to the wishes and expectations of inhabitants/the need for smaller units so as to create more manageable living and working areas at the scale of the city, and that of individual buildings”.
antithesis expressed in a proactive way? How divergent multiplicity will become an inspiring asset rather than an overwhelming load of confusing data? We find the answer to the question in the sixth thesis of *Die Stadt in der Stadt*: “To establish the characteristics of the city, one could take into consideration a number of typical cases that were designed at other times for other situations and may have comparable typological features. For example, the ideal project of Karlsruhe, with its radial axis, might serve as an example for a configuration of the Südliche Friedrichstadt, or the project for Manhattan’s Central Park be transferred just as it is into the Garlitz station zone. The urban planning structure of the Schlossstrasse is identical to the Baroque structure of Mannheim. Leonidov’s linear design for Magnitogorsk is similar from a typological point of view to the built structure along the avenue Unter den Eichen” [Ungers, 1977]. It is through analogy and comparisons with models that Ungers designs insights that can be transposed in a typological sense. These are particular metaphors are graphically illustrated by Unger’s assistant Peter Riemann in occasion of the 1977 Summer School at Cornell University (Ill. 1). It’s the metaphorical and diatopic thinking that allows Ungers to fulfill his narrative on Berlin’s topography, that of the city as an archipelago of islands10.

Counter-manifesto, “Manhattan and the City of the captive globe”

By the time that Ungers was polishing *Die Stadt in der Stadt* for its presentation in front of the SPD congress in Berlin (1977) a young architect is immersed in assembling his other manifesto, *Delirious New York*. His name is Rem Koolhaas and he has been working closely with Ungers for some years. Koolhaas, who actually authored the first manuscript version of the *Die Stadt in der Stadt*, is preparing a kind of prepublication preview of *Delirious New York* that will be published that same year in the journal Architectural Design. Symptomatically, the notion of the archipelago crops up in this preview to describe the “conceptual-metaphorical” project of his intuitive approximation of the architecture of Manhattan (Ill. 2). In this script, which in his view synthesizes the grid’s genius, Manhattan is described as “a dry archipelago” where each block represents an individual «island» while the fast-moving traffic that ensures their relative isolation corresponds to the water. The islands described by Koolhaas, however, are very much distant from the urban islands that Ungers envisioned in his manifesto. Whereas Ungers refers identity to history, Koolhaas explicitly despise it. While Ungers finds Berlin’s topography in time, Koolhaas assumes the absence of real history in Manhattan11.

10 The manifesto expression of Ungers metaphorical approach is expressed for the first time with the opening of the group show “Man Transforms” at the Cooper Hewitt Museum, for which Ungers develops an exhibition design that systematically pairs a series of city plans with images and concepts that have translated and interpreted them. See Marot S., *The Genesis of a Hopeful Monster* [in:] Hertweck F. & Marot S., *The City in the City*, op. cit.

11 “In the metropolitan archipelago each Skyscraper – in the absence of real history – develops its own instantaneous folklore.” Through the double disconnection of lobotomy and schism – by separating exterior and interior architecture and developing the latter in small autonomous installments – such structures can devote their exteriors only to formalism and their interiors only to functionalism”. Koolhaas R., *The city of the Captive Globe*, [in:] Koolhaas R., *Delirious New York*, op. cit.
2.2. Construction. Barcelona, Against the Universal Metropolis

The notion of city-construction announced by de Solà-Morales in 1994 is further developed by him in an article published in 2000 under the name of Against the Universal Metropolis. The thesis of the text is that, unlike many trending theories claiming for the Global, cities do not resemble one another. In spite of the fact that many cities have been built through a tremendous building boom in the last few years and that each has a fragmented and decomposed spatial system, this is not enough for us to regard them all as the same. Cities, on the contrary, are, according to de Solà-Morales, regarded to their culture, the context that embraced their process of growth. Through the description of Barcelona, the article-manifesto states that there is a specific identity in Southern Mediterranean cities. But this singular character, this uniqueness is not the result of a cultural imprint, neither the consequence of the deterministic scheme of structural functionalism imposed by contemporary requirements on the city. Urban identity is closer, instead, to a model of taking advantage of fragmentary opportunities and conditions that will ultimately determine the process along which the city is built. It is the time of construction that determines the identity of what Manuel de Solà-Morales announces in four theses as “city growth opportunism”.

The first one refers to the role that infrastructure plays in city-extension. Unlike West-American or Asian cities, Barcelona has grown following the oil-slick scheme. This particular growing pattern is a geographical condition of juxtaposition of metropolitan components based on continuity in the way that empty and full elements are arranged. The idea of contiguity is predominant in Barcelona and, despite the prize of functional instability inherent to it, is where the quality of Mediterranean urbanity resides.

Secondly, de Solà-Morales recalls the orography not only as a contextual or a conditioning factor, but also as substantial element of cities. Barcelona established a game of interaction with the orography right from the beginning of its construction. And, resulting from this interaction, a rich promiscuity is produced in several parts of the city, thus making Barcelona different from anything that one can find in other cities.

The third component relevant to city-growth is urban dimension, what we name as urban grain. The module the city imprints not only the final geometry of the city, but also the extend and scale of every single urban transformation. The small grain in Barcelona is also the aspect that made possible to remain sensitive both to the immediate conditions of the existing fabric as well as to the production of objects, buildings and public spaces, sufficiently in tune with generic urban functions.

Finally, the relation of the Barcelona and its hinterland has defined an undeniable character to Barcelona’s growth along history. Only lately denied by the annular scheme of motorways

*The City of the Captive Globe*, written by Koolhaas in 1972, is the foundation text of *Delirious New York*. In the introduction of the latest, Koolhaas insists on the lack of historical background in Manhattan: “The plotting of its streets and blocks announces that the subjugation, if not obliteration, of nature is its true ambition. All blocks are the same; their equivalence invalidates, at once, all the systems of articulation and differentiation that have guided the design of traditional cities. The Grid makes the history of architecture and all previous lessons of urbanism irrelevant. It forces Manhattan’s builders to develop a new system of formal values, to invent strategies for the distinction of one block from another.”
built in 1992, Barcelona is a radial city, structured along infrastructural axis-roads – that linked it to the broader territory. And this particular relation with the large scale, with its territorial context, is also a determinant condition in the city’s identity.

So, from case to category, from Barcelona to the broader understanding of cities, de Solà-Morales asserts that not all cities are built the same. That construction time and its components – infrastructure, orography, grain and territory – provides them with individual identity (Ill. 3). The author indulges himself: “A very important architect who knows about cities has written that today all cities are like Atlanta, like Singapore and like Los Angeles. Well, there are enormous differences between Atlanta, Singapore and Los Angeles” We agree, indeed there are. Reyner Banham knew well some thirty years before.

Retro-manifesto, “Los Angeles and the city of four ecologies”

The introduction of “Los Angeles. The Architecture of four ecologies” constitutes a fervent defense of Los Angeles qualities. Unlike many historians, Banham defies the inextricable identity of the Californian metropolis. And it does it by phrasing the context that has been skipped by others: Los Angeles is barely understandable through a historical gaze. For Banham going from the oldest monument to the newer could prove a short, boring and uninstructive journey, because the point is that Los Angeles has grown almost simultaneously all over. All parts are equal and equally accessible from all other parts at once. Los Angeles shouldn’t be reported only historically or topographically, but is to be grasped through its ecologies, by understanding the way that its builders settled on it and built it at the same time. Sufurbia, Foothills, Plains and Autopia are the four ecologies Banham announces in his manifesto (Ill. 4). A careful reading of Banham’s book shows that they respectively meet the four theses of de Solà-Morales, that is to say Territory (for Sufurbia), Orography (for Foothills), Grain (for Plains) and Infrastructure (for Autopia). What a fortunate finding!

2.3. Perception, Rome, Ways of seeing the city

The time of perception, that when urban reality is finally devised, requires previous context recognition as well as city implementation. Seen as the final goal of urbanism, perception is intimately related the comprehension of reality and, therefore, with the capacity we have to locate and name things. Location in the space is only possible thanks to city construction. Things can be situated, and named, in space when they are related to human action on the territory, since space can be measured in relation to a fixed value with what was, before, the unknown. \[12\]

The perception of space through urban intervention is the main topic of Bacon’s essay on Rome in “Design of Cities”. Presented as a compendium of criteria and strategies for city design through the description of selected case studies, “Design of Cities” is a delightful manifesto not about a singular city, but about the City in general. Bacon asserts in his essay that the **continentia**, the wild and unknown lands outside the **pomerium**, were assumed as fully urban for the very first time after the intervention of Pope Sixtus V. The finding is not only attributable to Bacon, since many other architects and urban historians had

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previously disserted on the Pope’s urban vision for baroque Rome\textsuperscript{13}. However, Bacon’s contribution is singular in stressing the imprint that Sixtus’ intervention had at a visual level. His graphic analysis of the visual connections among landmarks clarifies the intriguing relations between the original nodal urban layout extension and its present legacy in built Rome (III. 5). Through an intentional description of the visual “Design Structure of baroque Rome” – literally quoted – Bacon builds a passionate manifesto on city design that transgresses the pure visual order. Relations among elements are the driving force for urban design: “Both the aesthetic design entity and the concept of a system of functional interrelationships are manifestations of the same underlying order, and the integration of the two is required if we are to solve contemporary problems on an urban scale. The fashion in contemporary architectural and planning thought of separating them by a “noman’s-land” to assure their continued individual identity – even to attach a whole professional vested interest separately to each one – has meant serious damage to efforts to solve the problems of the modern city” \cite{2}. Therefore Bacon, like Unger and de Solà-Morales, understands the city as a material for a narrative construction. By making an intentional use of history, he states a critical position that, beyond historical description, defines an attitude towards the contemporary city. After illustrating the reader with a considerable amount of historical descriptions and case studies, Design of Cities claims for the renewed tools that, capitalizing on historical references, will be able to address future challenges. As he compares the designing principles of classical Rome with the plan of Sixtus V for Rome thirteen hundred years later, the reader is challenged to reflect about the underlying idea for design in contemporary cities. After four hundred more years since Sixtus V, cities have dramatically changed. They are urban continuums, metropolis with greater complexity and speed of movement. Bacon anticipates that, while the twentieth-century approach should include some elements of both the classical and Baroque approaches, the contemporary city-design must consider some completely new ingredients. As he specifically refers to speed and movement, we find an underlying relation between Design of Cities and the coetaneous manifesto “The view from the road”.

\textit{After-manifesto, “The view from the road”}

“Movement systems and Design Structures”, a chapter of Design of Cities, is illustrated by a series of historical engravings. Sequenced chronologically, they build a map of Baroque Rome before and after Sixtus’ proposal. Obelisks are praised as nodal points in movement systems. Only two years before Kevin Lynch was proposing an alternative understanding of visual order at metropolitan scale. “The View from the road”, his visual analysis for the highway system in Boston, tells us that the contemporary city is not composed merely of significant reference points whose importance arises from a self-evident distinctiveness, but rather it is a field of myriad possible routes, where individual urban elements only assume significance in the context of those other points that should logically come before them or after them in the process of moving through the city (III. 6). According to Lynch, the visual order of the city is formed by a contingent of episodes, the significance of which varies depending on the sequence of perceptions that the observer experiences through the fabric of the city. The first mode of urban perception is timeless and abstract; it corresponds to what

French theorist Michel de Certeau characterizes as the map. The second mode structures the city serially, over time, in a manner de Certeau identifies with routes or itineraries\textsuperscript{14} (and more generally, with narration itself, such as in any story with a plot) [1].

3. Postscript. The time of cities

City-narratives make use of time. All narratives do. They use time as a mean to develop an argument or reasoning, no matter whether linearly – Bacon for Rome – or randomly – Banham for Los Angeles.

But city narratives are time, too. The context, construction and perception of cities are not only described in relation to time, but are time themselves. The six architectural manifestos that we have introduced to the reader are basically built on such an assumption. Berlin’s context, as shown by Ungers, is time performed into present space, whereas the Manhattan of Koolhaas is, essentially, the tension of future at the present time. We find the antidote to the Universal Metropolis in construction throughout time; Barcelona is built through a combination over time of a series of operations conditioned by territory, orography, grain and infrastructure. And Los Angeles, quite usually brought to discussions as its counterpart, is too. Finally, no need to insist on the fact that city-perception is spatiality displayed on time, either as a map – Rome or as a route – Boston.

The three times of urbanism are not merely an approach to cities. They are the urban substance itself. “Urbanism is about measuring time against space. Just as in dance, in which circles and distances are described in space as forms by means of which we represent the rhythm of musical time, in urbanism too we must venture to measure time against space”\textsuperscript{15}. And architects can read and uncover the circles and distances that constitute the very essence of cities. By using our technical knowledge together with our wider ability for analogical reflection, architects can perform the music of cities. And, indeed, we shall dance!

\textsuperscript{14} “The map conceives of a landscape omnisciently, as it were, taking in the whole thing at once and establishing natural, fixed relationships between all identified elements. Particular landmarks, in this way of understanding urban space, always remain significant. These urban elements persist indefinitely with a clear hierarchy of importance (and this pattern remains fixed as long as elements are neither added nor subtracted physically from the cityscape). The route, on the other hand, establishes the relative importance of elements in the city by reference not to an abstract absolute relationship but in terms of the particular starting and ending points of the individual trip. Different journeys through the urban fabric, even over much the same ground, would potentially find entirely different points of significance along the way, selecting certain objects as landmarks (for this particular route) that could very well be ignored as insignificant if passed on a different trip. The operative hierarchy of signification here is constantly shifting, situational, all without a single atom of the built environment changing”. Axelrod J. quoting M. de Certeau in AXELROD J., Inventing Autopia. Dreams and visions of the modern metropolis in jazz age Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2009.

\textsuperscript{15} The references to music and dance as related with urbanism are brought into the writing from the article of de Solà-Morales, Time, Space and City. Shall we dance?, published in 1986 in Lotus International, n° 51.

Ill. 3. The extension of l’Eixample in Barcelona, as explained by Manuel de Solà-Morales in *Territory, idea, regulations and layout*. Cerdà’s plan for Barcelona. Source, de Solà-Morales, *Cerdà-Ensanche*, UPC, 2010

Ill. 4. Los Angeles’ four ecologies, as described by Banham, in one single map: Henry V. Wall’s pre-freeway map, 1946. Source: Rennie Commercial Atlas of Los Angeles, 1946

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