

Our stories - past, present and future

By Connie Gregory, Melbourne



Connie Gregory is a Melbourne writer and editor of Kastellorizian and Cretan descent.

The little island of Kastellorizo has many passionate and learned champions here in Australia who have given us outstanding literature and research that continues to be supplemented. In the lead up to this year's 100th anniversary of the Kastellorizian Association of WA, the association published a book, *Commemorative Reflections*, detailing the lives of many West Australians of Kastellorizian descent. The contents weren't written by experts, but potted histories written by family members, and there was a word limit. This publication was a highly commendable undertaking, and hopefully an inspiration to others to set down in writing their recollections of family members, and a jumping-off point for the contributors to write a fuller history of their families.

In addition to fleshing out stories, it is good to preserve family documents. Sometimes family documents get lost, but there are Australian records you can chase up. The National Archives holds many documents which can be requested, and some are readily available online. Reading my father's and grandfather's files from the archives brought to light lots of interesting facts, and the digitised Alien Certificates I was able to order, complete with photographs and fingerprints, elicited much emotion.

A great place to start chronicling your family is the Kastellorizo Genealogy pages website: www.castellorizo.org. Allan Cresswell has put together an amazing genealogy site with meticulous attention to dates which he cross-checks with official records wherever possible. There are 7,469 families on the site, 21,515 individuals and 3,295 photographs. I particularly like the facility to work out your relationship, if any, to names listed on the site. I am surprised at how many cousins have emerged. Another interesting thing to do is to work back to the first recorded person in your family tree and then with the press of a button get a list of all that person's descendants. Be warned: the site is addictive.

Allan Cresswell has also written an excellent family history to honour his mother – *In Search of my Cazzie Heritage*, which is listed on the site menu under histories. It could serve as a model for others wishing to record, as fully as possible, information and stories that give life to family history.

Another very useful tool is the Kastellorizo History website established by Nicholas Pappas (castellorizohistory.com) for the pooling of information on Kastellorizo. Questions can be posted seeking genealogical information, photos can be submitted for identification, and historical points can be checked: most definitely worth a visit. This site and the genealogy site are both free to users. There are no charges whatsoever, but you do need to register to have full access.

There are a number of websites that provide a rich source of information on Kastellorizo, its people, customs, ceremonies, music, dress, food, and more. From YouTube, through to the Australian Friends of Kastellorizo website: www.kastellorizo.com, which has many links to other sites; there is much pleasure to be gained in browsing them. These sites are also an inspiration to start your own documentation. Being a Victorian I must also mention the highly regarded Kastellorizian Association of Victoria's website: www.kastellorizo.com.au

If you would like to interview family members, there are a number of websites that are very informative on how to approach oral history. Here are just a few helpful sites: www.storyarts.org - the storytelling in the classroom section has a comprehensive article on collecting family stories, and it could also be very useful for getting young people to interview their elders; www.dohistory.org has a step-by-step guide to oral history - click the "on your own" menu at the bottom of the page to find the guide; and www.genealogy.about.com has put together the Top 10 Tips for Great Interview Stories – just enter that phrase in the search area on the site.

The Story Arts website neatly defines the term 'Family Stories': "Family stories are tales about people, places, and events related to the members of our immediate family or their ancestors. Family stories casually chatted about at the dinner table, or regaled again and again at family gatherings can parallel great epics or notable short stories. The memorable stories of our lives and of others in our family take on special importance because they are true, even if everyone tells different versions of the same event. These tales are family heirlooms held in the heart not the hand. They are a gift to each generation that preserves them by remembering them and passing them on."

Nobody was more surprised than myself when a story about my Grandfather, entitled *The Confectioner and the Cake*, won The Age (Melbourne daily newspaper) Short Story Award back in the 1980s. It just goes to show that family stories can be of great interest to others.



Our stories - past, present and future (cont.)

In the time of our grandparents it was expected that at family functions, and also around the family table, people would talk about their childhood, and their parents, and grandparents, and many stories were told and kept alive. That the stories were repetitive and often not appealing to the young didn't matter. Stories were repeated in the hope that children would know their stories. Not always so nowadays. There is too much competition from what is happening in the fast modern world.

In recording our family histories, we often forget about ourselves and our own stories.

It is almost considered bad form to talk about yourself (childhood, schooling, your work activities, the way things were) to your children these days, which is rather odd as grandparents still do it. When grandparents say, "I remember when..." or "I will tell you a story about..." grandchildren tend to listen. When parents do this, offspring often get impatient, and perhaps we too were impatient when younger and didn't listen properly. If you have grandchildren, do tell them your stories, as they seem to listen a lot better than your own children.

A prominent legal figure is on record as saying: When I walk into the court people stand, and they listen to what I have to say. When I go home I sit down and shut up. So, what can you do about this? Start chronicling your life and tell your stories on paper. I know people who have started doing this and have found it immensely interesting, particularly if they write down how they felt at the time of various events.

If you don't know where to start, a good jumping-off point is to write down all the places where you have lived and worked – you will be surprised at how memory can be jogged this way. Another good way to start is to browse through your photos and write up the events portrayed, and don't forget to note the names of the people in the photograph and their relationship to you. If you don't think it is important to do this, think again how much work many Kastellorizians have put in to tracing our roots, and how much easier it will be for your descendants to find out about you if you make an effort. If this all sounds daunting, at least try and put together a scrapbook/file and make some notes. It goes without saying that all your original family documents are carefully stored together and that you have a file of photocopies.

Remember, we all have stories to tell. Everyday memories of everyday people, not just the rich and famous, have historical importance, and the telling of them enriches you and your family, and future generations.

Recently the Kent Street School in Perth celebrated its 70th anniversary, and various years held reunions. My husband, Paul, was asked for the record to submit some memories of his time at the school. It was a wonderful trip down memory lane to write down those recollections. Now, I just have to work on him writing some more about his own life, and recollections of the stories he was told. Coming from the large Palassis family I want to know more about their lives to pass on. The interviews I conducted with his mother have yielded wonderful stories, and I know Paul has many more that should be written down.

Objects also have a place in our stories. Knowingly and sometimes unknowingly we discard items of significance. A friend of mine has a beautiful example of Kastellorizian gold-work embroidery on velvet.

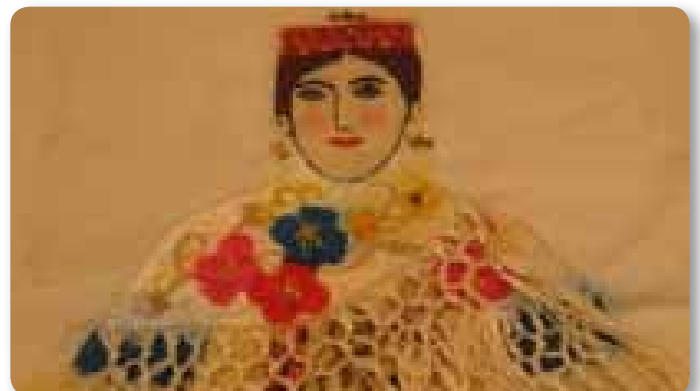
It was not a family hand-down but a find in an Op Shop. How could anybody discard it? Well, sometimes these things happen when sorting out estates, if the significance of a piece is not known, and with the broadening of families into second and third generations this is bound to happen more often. This should send alarm bells to people to document their significant and sentimental family pieces, and encourage their siblings to also contribute to documentation. This can be in the form of a simple list and description, who it belonged to originally, who it belongs to at the date of recording, and where it came from and, if handwork, who made it; and can extend to fuller provenance and photographic records.

To illustrate my claim of people discarding family objects, I have over the years built up a collection, from auction rooms and antique dealers, of the copper lustre jugs that every home in Kastellorizo prized. I like to think that I rescued them.

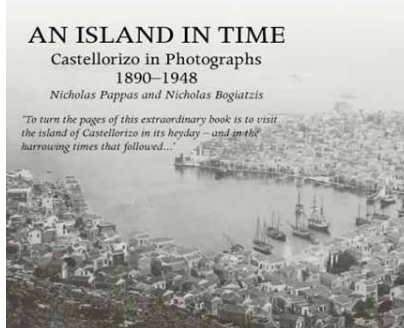


These Staffordshire jugs were first produced by George Ray in the 1850's. Most copper lustre of this period is unmarked. I was told that these jugs were bought in Jersey, by Kastellorizian traders, where they were Duty Free, but I can't find any evidence to substantiate that claim.

As heritage items are split between offspring and then split again into the next generation, the effort of recording makes a lot of sense. And before you throw out old embroidery and textiles that are in disrepair, or not wanted by anyone in the family, at least photograph them for posterity. I have seen some lovely examples of sections of old embroidery and lace that have been preserved and properly framed, thus lasting longer than if packed away in unsuitable storage. They can look quite stunning in any décor.



Section of embroidery by Eftihia Gregory (Palassis)



Our stories - past, present and future (cont.)

It is also worth mentioning that various Immigration Museums in Australia are interested in acquiring items that immigrants brought with them to Australia. Various museums have conserved the Kastellorizian costume and Museum Victoria has beautifully documented the Kastellorizian costume they have in their Immigration Museum collection. We should all be thankful to Geoffrey Conaghan (see last issue of *Filia*) who has carefully conserved and documented an extensive collection of Kastellorizian garments for our enjoyment and for posterity.

There is a large Greek book I treasure - *O Laikos Politismos tou Kastellorizou* (Athens 1982), by J. M. Hatzifotis. It belonged to my mother-in-law. Not only does it have the history of Kastellorizo, customs, recipes, songs, but also it has many illustrations and descriptions of objects such as jewellery, coins, embroidery, and kitchenware. To my dismay, I found a photo and description of some bowls that were sent off to the Auction rooms, when we were sorting out the Estate and none of us knew they were of any significance.



Kastellorizian bracelet inscribed with 13 February 1899



Small brass pot, probably from Izmir.

Late last year I read a charming piece by Paul Chai, in *The Age Sunday Life* magazine, that prompted me to write this article for *Filia*. After his grandmother's death a hessian bag labeled "Things I treasure" came to light. She had saved letters, drawings, cards and objects he had made as a child and through his adolescence. The contents brought back memories of things he had forgotten about and affected him in ways that he didn't expect. He is now busy putting together time capsules for his own children, archiving important emails, photos and texts so that one day they may get a surprise trip down memory lane. I am sure as he goes down that path he will include some stories about his own parents and grandparents. I do hope that he also includes something of substance about himself. Maybe you would like to borrow this idea of putting together some time capsules.

Returning to my opening paragraph when I spoke about the growing literature on all things Kastellorizian, Geoffrey Conaghan presented an excellent article in the last issue of *Filia* on "The Indian Connection with Traditional Kastellorizian Clothes". Brilliant! This surely must be a treasured item to go into the family scrapbook. If you secured a copy of the book *An Island in Time*, by Nicholas Pappas and Nicholas Bogiatzis, you will continue to be amazed at the history of Kastellorizo. There is so much to read and learn, and to pass on. I wonder also how many people did, as I did, when they read the article in a previous issue of *Filia* by Nicholas Bogiatzis, on the "Golden Coins of Legend". I brought out my inherited coins, went straight to Wikipedia to get the list of the Doges of Venice and worked out the dates they were minted.

Children's literature also plays an important role in keeping our stories alive. In 2008 AFK reprinted, with permission, *Orlif: The Gentle Giant*, by Ethel Kanganas, illustrated by Margaret Sauer. This gentle fable, set in Kastellorizo, was also translated into Greek by AFK. Then in 2010 AFK published the highly acclaimed *Kastellorizo: My Odyssey*, a bi-lingual book by Marilyn Tsolakis and J Andrew Johnstone, illustrated by Dr Platon Alexiou. It sold out quickly, although some copies are still available on Kastellorizo. It is a great book to help children understand and enjoy their history. It is a concise history that adults also enjoy.

We should be very grateful to everyone who sheds more light on our history, traditions, lineage and our inherited possessions. All part of our story. It is up to each individual to continue the story into the present and the future, utilising all the work that has been done by others, and putting to work that wonderful personal resource of memory. And don't forget to write down your mother's recipes!

Note: Care has been taken to spell Kastellorizo as Castellorizo when referring to an organisation or site which uses that spelling.



Icon of St. Spyridon commissioned in Odessa by the Palassis family.



2 Mazi, Syntagma



The FishCafe, Makrigyianni



Jamon, Gazi

Where to get great food in Athens

By Elspeth Geronimos, Athens

Many of you stop over in Athens en route to and from Kastellorizo and may appreciate the following recommendations from Elspeth Geronimos about where to dine out in Athens. Nick and Elspeth Geronimos accommodated the AFK Student Exchange team in Athens last year.

Elspeth Geronimos has lived in Athens with her husband Nick since emigrating from Perth in 2003. They originally started Athens Backpackers in 2004, then later opened Athens Studios, Athens Apartments and Athens Sports Bar, all in the Makrigyianni area by the new Acropolis Museum. Why move to Greece? "for a change, an adventure maybe – but we were drawn in by the opportunities. Greece is still well behind the rest of Europe in the quality of accommodation and hospitality on offer. We wanted to provide a higher standard for a better price. And we've had fun in the meantime. When we first arrived there were only old fashioned tavernas or over priced French style places to eat – a big let down after Australia! But in the last five years

more young chefs are returning to Greece, and with the excellent local produce and competitive pricing they have really made Athens one of the best cities in Europe to eat."

The following places are amongst our favourites - I have picked them for their value for money, quality of food and atmosphere as well as service. I have not included any of the usual places listed in the magazine guides – most have either closed down, are too expensive, their standards may have fallen or they are too far away from the city centre. Restaurants do change, but most listed here have been around for 2 years or more and are professionally run by committed owner/chefs. I have also listed them by area, so if you are in the Acropolis area, for example, all these listed are in short walking distance from each other. If you know of any other places I should visit to write up in my blog, please let me know: eatinathens.wordpress.com or email me on elspeth@metamorfosis.gr

MAKRIGYIANNI – NEXT TO THE ACROPOLIS MUSEUM

Manh Manh – Peloponnesian, evenings only, but also Sunday lunch

10 Falirou St, Makrigyianni, a 5 minute walk from the Acropolis metro station

www.manhmanh.gr tel 210 921 8180

Owner Yiannis Boutsikaris and chef Alexander, with his beautiful wife Yolande, have been running this place for over 7 years, a secret known widely to the locals who really do have to book early to get a seat. We live on the street beside them and eat there far too often; they are so reliably good, even their cheapest house wine is wonderful. Every dish is worth trying and there are some here you may never have tasted if you haven't been to the Mani region. Expect to pay €50 for 2 with excellent wine and dessert.

Trapezaria (the Banqueting Table) – excellent modern Greek- open from 12 midday to midnight every day except Sunday

1 Theodorou Negri, Makrigyianni, a stones throw from ManhManh near Acropolis metro station

www.trapezaria.gr tel: 210 921 3500

Chef Dimitrios Panetopoulos worked at Milos in the Hilton, one of Athen's best, and opened Trapezaria late in 2011. The economic crisis has not touched him; he is full all day, every day, so call ahead! For €40 for 2, you will have an amazing meal, full of creative surprises. The cockerel on celery puree is my favourite, Nick loves the stuffed squid. The service is brilliant and the atmosphere intimate, warm and welcoming - I just love this place!

The FishCafe - fish and chips in the evening, breakfast lunch and supper all day, including a Full English Breakfast – open every day, all day

3 Veikou St, Makrigyianni, under the Athens Studios

www.fishcafe.gr, tel: 210 923 5811

Recently opened to look after the many Australians in the Studios and Apartments, chefs Vangelis and Katerina have specialised in making everything fresh in-house, from the tartare and mayonnaises to breads, muffins, tartines and pizzettes at lunch. They are using Cyprus hand cut potatoes and importing ocean caught Icelandic cod, locally caught squid and whitebait (served from 5.00pm daily). Prices are amazing, €5 for a very full cone of fish and chips.

Ambrosia – the original local psistaria, open lunch and dinner – very casual street taverna

3-5 Drakou in Koukaki - walk down Veikou St for 3 blocks until you reach the pedestrian walkway on your left that goes down to the Syngrou Fix metro station.

tel 210 922 0281

A real 'Greek' place, very popular with locals so the turnover in the kitchens is high. Their gyros (pork or chicken shaved off highly spiced rotating gyros and wrapped with salads, chips and tsadikis into a pita bread for €1.80) is one of the best around. They do great souvlakis and various other meats roasted on the charcoal – all very tasty. Their vegetables are open to view, and inevitably include fresh cooked peas, horta, aubergine stews and many other traditional Greek dishes.

SYNTAGMA – CENTRAL ATHENS

2 Mazi – contemporary, sophisticated Mediterranean – open 1.00pm to midnight daily

48 Nikis Street, Syntagma Athens 105-58, open 1.00pm till late
www.2Mazi.com tel 210 322 2839

This place has been my favourite since it opened in 2007, chef Yiannis Baxivanis has a great reputation in Athens. It is the priciest place listed here, but still considerably less than a moderately priced restaurant in Australia. The menu changes daily, try anything traditional. Their take on keftedes or moussaka will always be a revelation. They import all their vegetables from private growers in Crete, so you will find rare tomatoes or wild saffron unlike anything you have tasted. Brilliant! Expect a €60-70 bill for two including wine and dessert.

O Tzitzikas ki o Mermigkas (the Ant and the Grasshopper) Greek food- open 1.00pm –midnight daily

12 Mitropoleos St, Syntagma (parallel to Ermou and near Syntagma Sq at the top end of Mitropoleos)

tel: 210 324 7607

Wines by Strofilia (Roditis and Moschato) all excellent Greek varieties €7-25 per bottle. Starters and salads from €5-10, all excellent, fresh and Greek in style although far removed from the 'taverna' style. Main courses cover all the meat and fish options, consistently good value for money. This is a chain of restaurants and the owners are slick in their delivery of a good product every time.

EXARCHIA – BESIDE KOLONAKI, STUDENT AREA

Giantes, a modern Greek restaurant, lunch and dinner

44 Valtetsiou St in Exarchia

tel 210 330 1369

Giantes has a light, airy courtyard and modern clean décor that gives you confidence in the management. Although the menu is large and looks like the usual taverna menu, everything I have tried here is original in presentation and style. The owner includes a lot of organic vegetables and meats and sources her cheeses from good farms in the Peloponnese. The yoghurt mousse with vanilla seeds and basil syrup is amazing. I also had a plate of fresh peas with olive oil in season which was spectacular. Prices are low to medium and good value.

Zaxari & Elati, all day bistro, music venue and café/bar

47 Valtitsou, Exarchia, on the main Valtetsiou pedestrian walkway

www.zaxalot.gr tel 210 380 1253

This hidden treasure is difficult to find, but once inside, you want to explore the extended rooms, courtyard, upper bar and coffee areas around this 100 year old traditional mansion. The original tiles are here, floor boards and windows, a delightful hotch potch of spaces and furniture in the grunge chic style. Yet everything is spotless, and the table settings, glasses and tableware impeccable.

GAZI – TAKE THE METRO TO KERAMIKOS, GAZI IS ATHEN'S BEST AREA FOR NIGHT LIFE.

Sardelles and The Meat Shop – side by side, same owners one specialises in fish, the other in meat

15 and 16 Persefonis St, Gazi, 11854

Phone 210 347 8050

Both these places are well managed, the food is fresh and excellent, and you will always enjoy eating in both of them. Sardelles serves brilliant sardines, sweet fried prawns and fresh local fish at very reasonable prices – it is particularly popular with young Athenians so go early if you want a seat. The Meat Shop has a cool wooded courtyard behind, an interesting menu which includes venison, wild boar from Kastoria and smoked pork sausages from Crete. Both are highly recommended and good value.

Jamon, open from 4.00pm daily, including holidays

15 Elasadon Dekekeion Gazi 118-54

www.jamon.gr tel 210 346 4120

At railway end of Gazi is the Spanish tapas/restaurant Jamon. On a corner the open-air glass frontage affords the prospect of dangling hocks of Serrano ham hooked on mini-gibbets. Bright mirrored display fridges glitter with tapas plates.

Sit on high stools on the pavement – good for urban eating – try the Rioja with your paella or tapas, cheeses, chorizos and hams. Everything was good enough, the street life is sparkling in Gazi, so although I wouldn't say this is the best gastronomic experience, there are restaurants you go to for a convivial evening out – and others you go to purely for the food. This was the former. Prices mid range and fair value for money.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO MEMBERS

As many of you know AFK has received limited donations from generous members which help to fund many projects such as Student Exchange, the quarterly newsletter, *Filia*, and monthly electronic news. AFK relies on membership payments to continue these projects & services. All we ask is that you pay \$25 and payment can be made on-line or by cheque. Please ensure July 2011/July 2012 membership fees are paid. See details on the back of this newsletter for postal details.



How to get to Kastellorizo via Turkey

by Nick Mitaros, Perth

Kickoff 11.30 am Sunday 26 June, 2011 at Rosalie Park, Subiaco in the State of Western Australia. Optus Cup Match between Subiaco Football Club v Armadale Junior Soccer Club.

First hurdle, my youngest son Tas is expected to play in this important game and I am rostered to run line for the first half before boarding Malaysia Air flight MH124 departing Perth International Airport at 4.25pm for Istanbul then onto Athens and Rhodes.

So run the line I did and immediately upon the half time whistle being blown at 12.15pm, with limping Tas in tow (strained hip flexor), it was quick showers at home and then the entire family scurried to the airport.

Next hurdle, on the way to the airport we learn a 48 hour general strike has been called throughout Greece to protest the austerity measures planned to tackle Greece's ongoing sovereign debt issues. Okay, now what.....how to prevent being stranded in Athens Airport in 16 hours time? Agreed, let's put the luggage through to Istanbul only. Pull out the Blackberry and email family friend in Kas, Fethi Kemal Ozturk of Latebreak Travel :

From: Nick Mitaros

Sent: Sunday, 26 June 2011 1:05 PM

To: Fethi KEMAL OZTURK (fkozturk@yahoo.com)

Cc: Fethi Kemal Ozturk (fethi@ltbtravel.com)

Subject: Istanbul - Antalya - Kas - Meis

Fethi,

Can you book us 5 one way tickets Istanbul(Ataturk)Airport to Antalya Airport for Monday 27 June, 2011 - as we arrive at 6.15am on Malaysia Air MH30 & need to collect our luggage please make it the earliest available flight that is possible.

Once you secure the tickets you will know what time we arrive at Antalya Airport so you can organise our Mini Van transfer to Kas.

Giorgos Karayiannis (Barbara) will take us to Meis from Kas on Monday so we avoid the strike on Tuesday & Wednesday.

Regards.

Nick Mitaros.

We arrive in Kuala Lumpur on time at 10.05pm Sunday 26 June. Switch on the Blackberry and sure enough Fethi has followed through:

From: fethi@ltbtravel.com [mailto:fethi@ltbtravel.com]

Sent: Sunday, June 26, 2011 02:40 AM

To: Nick Mitaros

Subject: Re: Istanbul - Antalya - Kas - Meis

Hello nick

Atlas jet company details below
dep:9 20 am FROM Istanbul
ARRIVE 10.25 to Antalya
total 5 pax 1100 TL approximately

THY airlines

DEP: 9 .30 am from ISTANBUL

ARR: 10.45 to ANTALYA

TOTAL : 5 PAX 1200 TL

Whichever you prefer if you let me know please I can booking for you. I will send you a minibus to pick you up from Antalya airport and drive to Kas.

Hope to hear from you soon. Fethi

Arrive Istanbul 6.30am Monday 27 June, purchase visas, pass Immigration, collect luggage and pre-paid tickets from Turkish Airlines counter, check in and kill a couple of hours over a Turkiko-Elliniko kafedaki whilst praising Fethi for organising our 11th hour detour.

Great one hour flight to Antalya and then a comfortable and scenic 2.5 hour mini-bus ride to Kas (via Myra - birth place of St Nicholas) to be greeted in Kas by the familiar faces of both Fethi and Kapitanyo Giorgos of the caique ΣΜ ΒΑΡΒΑΡΑ. Half hour is all it took in Kas to process our passports and then the smoothest 20 minute caique ride to arrive at 3.30pm Monday 27 June, 2011 at the front door of our accommodation on Kastellorizo.

Unbelievable.....26 hours after departing Perth we were in Kastellorizo, the island my grandparents left over 100 years ago.

What was surreal about all of this? That night we ate barbounia, horyiatiki salata, rivokeftethes washed down with miso kilo of house red wine at a limani front table of Alexandra's Restaurant and only the day before I was running up and down a white line at Rosalie Park, Subiaco, Perth, Western Australia. I've travelled to Kastellorizo a number of times, but after 13,101.25 kilometres this arrival had a strange dreamlike quality.

PS. Full Time score **Subiaco FC 1 v Armadale JSC 1**. Extra time then penalty shootout **Armadale JSC 4 v Subiaco FC 3!**

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