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A GLIMPSE OF IBN JINNI'S BIOGRAPHY AND ARABIC LINGUISTIC THOUGHT

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Abstract: The Arabic language in its development, gave birth to many experts and thinkers who made a major contribution to the science of linguistics. One of the leading linguistic figures is Ibn Jinni. Ibn Jinni made a major contribution to the development of Arabic linguistics. This study aims to examine in depth the biography and Arabic linguistic thought of Ibn Jinni. This research uses the literature study method. This study found that Ibn Jinni was not just a linguist, but a critical thinker who dared to open new paths in the study of Arabic linguistics. Some Arabic linguistic thoughts put forward by Ibn Jinni are the difference between *qaul* and *kalam*, the definition of language is the sounds used by a people to express their goals, language must be agreed upon by the language-speaking community so that communication can be communicative, viewing *lafazh* and meaning as two inseparable elements in the macro linguistic spectrum, no two languages are identical, although there are similarities in words or synonyms, usually one of the words has a higher frequency of use and is the original word of its users.

Keywords: biography, thought, Ibn Jinni

Abstrak: Bahasa Arab dalam perkembangannya, melahirkan banyak pakar dan pemikir yang memberikan sumbangan besar bagi ilmu linguistik. Salah satu tokoh linguistik terkemuka adalah Ibnu Jinni. Ibnu Jinni memberikan sumbangan besar bagi perkembangan linguistik Arab. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam biografi dan pemikiran linguistik Arab Ibnu Jinni. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi pustaka. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Ibnu Jinni bukan hanya seorang ahli bahasa, tetapi seorang pemikir kritis yang berani membuka jalan baru dalam kajian linguistik Arab. Beberapa pemikiran linguistik Arab yang dikemukakan oleh Ibnu Jinni adalah perbedaan antara *qaul* dan *kalam*, pengertian bahasa adalah bunyi-bunyi yang digunakan oleh suatu kaum untuk menyampaikan maksud dan tujuannya, bahasa harus disepakati oleh masyarakat penutur bahasa tersebut agar komunikasi dapat bersifat komunikatif, memandang *lafazh* dan makna sebagai dua unsur yang tidak dapat dipisahkan dalam spektrum linguistik makro, tidak ada dua bahasa yang identik, meskipun terdapat kesamaan kata atau sinonim, biasanya salah satu kata memiliki frekuensi penggunaan yang lebih tinggi dan merupakan kata asli dari penggunaannya

A. Introduction

Linguistics is the science of language, where language is the object of study. The language in question is human language. Knowledge of linguistics will help a person to understand and use a language.

Arabic is one of the oldest and widest languages in the world, with an extraordinary history and linguistic richness. In its development, Arabic gave birth to many experts and thinkers who made great contributions to the science of linguistics. These Arabic linguists have shown great interest in linguistics. They produced valuable works in various fields of linguistics, such as phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. One of the most prominent linguistic figures is Ibn Jinni, an Arabic linguist who is famous for his insightful views on language, especially Arabic. His monumental works, such as *Al-Mujaz fi 'Ilmi al-'Arabiyyah*, *Al-Khoshhoish*, and *Sharh al-Mufasssal*, are evidence of his great contribution in advancing Arabic linguistics.¹

Syahda A'immatul Mahdiyyah and Moh. Pribadi in an article entitled *Al-Isytiqāq in Arabic Linguistics from the Perspective of Ibn Jinni*, where this study aims to discuss more deeply one of the thoughts or ideas of one of the linguistic figures, namely Ibn Jinni, about *Isytiqāq* or derivation, which is then also discussed by modern linguists. The findings of this study are that according to Ibn Jinni, *al-Ishtiqaq* or derivation is divided into two, namely *al-Isytiqaq al-Asgar* known as *al-Isytiqaq al-'Am* and *al-Ishtiqaq al-Akbar* known as *al-Ishtiqaq al-qalb*.²

Mufti Rizky Ponny in his article entitled *Linguistics in the Perspective of Ibn Jinni and Ferdinand De Saussure* found that Ibn Jinni had formulated terminology about *kalam* and *qaul*, *al-lughah* "language" as the basis for selecting letters and also composing words, and *qiyas* as a method of creating new languages. Similarly, Ferdinand De Saussure who is dubbed as a linguist has laid the foundations of

¹ Mufti Rizky Ponny, "Linguistik Dalam Perspektif Ibnu Jinni Dan Ferdinand De Saussure," *Al-Mashadir* 02, no. 01 (June 30, 2022): 40–56, <https://doi.org/10.30984/almashadir.v2i01.251>.

² Syahda A'immatul Mahdiyyah and Mohammad Pribadi, "Al-Isytiqāq Dalam Linguistik Arab Perspektif Ibnu Jinni," *Aphorisme: Journal of Arabic Language, Literature, and Education* 5, no. 1 (2024): 30–41, <https://doi.org/10.37680/aphorisme.v5i1.4463>.

linguistic thought such as langue-parole, significant-signifie, arbitrary-motivated, and syntagmatic-pradaigmatic.³

This research is different from the research mentioned above, Syahda A'immatul Mahdiyyah and Moh. Pribadi's research focuses on one of Ibn Jinni's linguistic thoughts, namely derivation, Mufti Rizky Ponny's research focuses on linguistics according to Ibn Jinni and Ferdinand De Saussure, while this research focuses on an in-depth study of Ibn Jinni's biography and Arabic linguistic thought.

Based on the background that has been presented, it is important to know and understand the biography and Arabic linguistic thought of Ibn Jinni. Therefore, this study aims to examine in depth the biography and Arabic linguistic thought of Ibn Jinni, with the hope of contributing to the treasures of science and enriching understanding of the Arabic language.

B. Research Methode

This research explores the meanings and interpretations from various perspectives recorded in the literature, using the literature study method. Literature study utilizes library sources to obtain research data.⁴ Data and information were collected through literature study, utilizing reliable written sources such as books, scientific articles, journals, and other written works. This was done to broaden the reader's understanding by presenting the data thoroughly.

This research uses documentation techniques to collect information from books and articles. The information is then processed to understand and explain the biography and Arabic linguistic thought of Ibn Jinni. The data analysis technique used is the data analysis technique adapted from Miles and Huberman. The stages of qualitative data analysis after the data collection stage are: First, categorize the data according to the research objectives. Some also use the word reducing data to refer to this stage. Second, presenting data that has been grouped

³ Ponny, "Linguistik Dalam Perspektif Ibnu Jinni Dan Ferdinand De Saussure."

⁴ Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008), 1-2.

to help draw conclusions. Third, formulating conclusions based on the results of the analysis, which is the process of concluding the research results while verifying that these conclusions are supported by the data that has been collected and analyzed.⁵

C. Result Of Research and Discussion

Biography of Ibn Jinni

Abu al-Fath 'Uthman bin Jinni, known as Ibn Jinni, was a prominent Arabic linguist and nahwu scholar. Born in Mosul (Iraq), the exact date of his birth remains a mystery. Some opinions suggest that he was born in 321 H, or 322 H. The name "Jinni" itself has an interesting meaning. Derived from the word "gennaius" in Latin, this name symbolizes the genius, intelligence, nobility, and sincerity of Ibn Jinni.⁶

Based on the opinion of Ibn Qadi who stated that Ibn Jinni died at the age of 70 years, the estimated year of birth can be done by subtracting the year of death from the age of Ibn Jinni, which he died in 392 H with the age of 70 years, then the result of the year of birth of Ibn Jinni 321 or 322, This estimate can still be different by one year, depending on the month of birth of Ibn Jinni.⁷

In terms of genealogy, Ibn Jinni's lineage is only known up to his father. Ibn Jinni's father was of Roman origin.⁸ The position of Ibn Jinni who does not have a family tree from the Arab nation is something that can be understood why in writing about biography and also Ibn Jinni's lineage ends with his father. The scholars who come from the Arab nation have a complete genealogy, because for them, genealogy is an important identity that continues to be maintained from one generation to the next. For scholars who are not Arabs, this genealogy cannot be

⁵ Samiaji Sarosa, *Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2021), 3–4.

⁶ Muhammad Alghiffary et al., *Pemikiran Tokoh-Tokoh Bahasa Arab*, ed. Muhammad Alghiffary (Yogyakarta: Trussmedia Grafika, 2018).

⁷ Arifuddin, "Pemikiran-Pemikiran Fonetik Ibnu Jinni (W. 392 H. / 1002 M.)," *Jurnal CMES* 6, no. 2 (2013): 146–63, <https://doi.org/10.20961/cmcs.6.2.11708>.

⁸ Yousef Mokhtar Elramli and Tareq Bashir Maiteq, "Ibn Jinni ' s Phonetics and Phonology," *Journal of Academic Research* 15 (2020): 47–56, <https://lam-journal.ly/index.php/jar/article/view/239>.

traced further. This fact can be found when examining the genealogies of non-Arab scholars, many of whose genealogies are not as well preserved as those of Arabs.

Ibn Jinni's youth was characterized by a quest for knowledge in his native Mosul. It was there that he went to Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Mausili al-Shafi'i, known as al-Akhfasy, to study nahwu. The science of nahwu had originally been introduced by Maslamah bin Abdullah al-Fahriy and flourished in Mosul. This made the city a cradle for the birth of nahwu scholars.⁹ In other words, Mosul became the starting place for Ibnu Jinni to study nahwu and develop into an expert in his field. The advancement of nahwu science in Mosul also paved the way for the birth of many famous scholars in the field.

Ibnu Jinni moved to Baghdad and studied linguistics. Ibnu Jinni studied it for about forty years with his teacher whom he respected, Abu 'Ali al-Farisi.¹⁰ Ibnu Jinni did not only learn from one teacher, but also deepened his knowledge of Arabic by learning from other prominent linguistic figures. These figures, who have special expertise in language sourcing (*ruwat al-lughah wa al-adab*), became a valuable source of knowledge for Ibnu Jinni. Some of Ibnu Jinni's teachers who are experts in retrieving language sources are: Abu Bakr Muhammad bin al-Hasan, better known as Ibnu Miqsam, an expert on the Qur'anic qira'ah and Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin al-'Assaf al-'Uqaili al-Tamimi.¹¹ By learning from these scholars, Ibnu Jinni expanded his knowledge of the Arabic language and improved his ability to understand and analyze the language.

The important thing to know is that Ibnu Jinni lived in the century of the development of Islamic Sciences. Scientists of that century did not only master one field of science, departing from this, it is known that Ibn Jinni can combine and combine several disciplines, namely Linguistics, Ushul Fiqh theory and also Kalam theory.¹²

⁹ Zahratul 'Aini et al., "Kontribusi Pemikiran Ibnu Jinni Dalam Epistemologi Ilmu Nahwu : Studi Kitab Al- Khasa ' Is," *Al-Fikra: Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 22, no. 2 (2023): 157-67, <https://doi.org/10.24014/af.v22i2.23357>.

¹⁰ Dian Risky Amalia et al., "Linguistik Perspektif Ferdinand De Saussure Dan Ibn Jinni," *Al-Fathin* Vol. 2, no. 2 (2019): 163-82.

¹¹ Ponny, "Linguistik Dalam Perspektif Ibnu Jinni Dan Ferdinand De Saussure."

¹² 'Aini et al., "Kontribusi Pemikiran Ibnu Jinni Dalam Epistemologi Ilmu Nahwu : Studi Kitab Al- Khasa ' Is"; Zamzam Afandi, "Ibnu Jinni Menembus Sekat Mazhab Linguistik (Memadukan Aspek 5 | Juwairiyah Siregar, Nandang Sarip Hidayat, Tatta Herawati Daulae: **A Glimpse Of Ibnu Jinni's Biography And Arabic Linguistic Thought**

Ibnu Jinni has left behind many academic works in various fields, especially linguistics.¹³ Among Ibn Jinni's works are: *Al-Khaṣāiṣ*, *al-Tamām*, *Sirr al-Ṣinā'at*, *al-Munṣif*, *Sharḥu al-Maqṣūd wa al-Mamdūd li Ibni al-Sikkīt*, *Ta'āqub al-'Arabiyyah*, *al-Faṣr* (*Tafsīr Diwān al-Mutanabbī al-Kabīr*), *Tafsīr Ma'ānī Diwānī al-Mutanabbī al-Ṣagīr*, *al-Luma' fī al-'Arabiyyah*, *al-Taṣrīf al-Mulūkī*, *Kitāb al-Hamzah al-Mamdūdah*, *Kitāb al-Muqtaḍab*, *Tafsīr al-Muḏakkar wa al-Muannaṣ li Abī Ya'qūb*, *Kitābu Ta'yīdi Taẓkirah Abī Ali*, *al-Maḥāsin fī al-'Arabiyyah*, *al-Khāṭiriyyāt*, *Tafsīr Urjūzati Abī Nuwwās*, *Kitāb al-Muḏakkar wa al-Muannaṣ*, *al-Talqīn fī al-Naḥwi*, *Kitāb al-Ma'ānī al-Muḥarrarah*.¹⁴

Ibnu Jinni, a prominent scholar, was recognized by linguists of his time and later generations for his mastery and breadth of knowledge of Arabic linguistics. He died in Baghdad on a Friday night in Safar and was buried next to his teacher in Shuniziyah. Ibn Jinni left behind three children: 'Ali, 'Ala, and 'Ala. According to Yaqut al-Hamawi, quoted by Wati Susiawati, his three sons followed in their father's footsteps and became renowned linguists and writers.¹⁵

Ibnu Jinni's Arabic Linguistic Thought

Ibnu Jinni in building his linguistic theory uses the scientific method. He made language an objective and systematic object of study, by combining two main methods of analysis, namely the descriptive method and the philosophical method. Descriptive method means studying the language as it is, by observing and describing the underlying structures, patterns, and rules. The philosophical (rational) method is to analyze language in depth by using logic and reasoning to understand the meaning, function, and relationship between language elements. By combining these two methods, Ibn Jinni was able to produce a comprehensive and structured linguistic theory, laying the foundation for the development of Arabic linguistics.

Logis Dan Sosiologis),” *Adabiyāt: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra* 8, no. 1 (2009): 49–76, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajbs.2009.08103>.

¹³ Amalia et al., “Linguistik Perspektif Ferdinand De Saussure Dan Ibn Jinni.”

¹⁴ Alghiffary et al., *Pemikiran Tokoh-Tokoh Bahasa Arab*.

¹⁵ Wati Susiawati, “Lafazh Dan Makna Dalam Perspektif Pemikiran Linguistik Ibn Jinni,” *Arabiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaan* 2, no. 2 (2015): 167–77, <https://doi.org/10.15408/a.v2i2.2133>.

Ibnu Jinni's Arabic Linguistic Thought will be presented as follows: **First**, in his book entitled *Al-Khashaish*, Ibnu Jinni distinguishes between *qaul* and *kalam*. According to Ibnu Jinni, *qaul* is all words that are easily spoken by the human tongue, whether it is a perfect word and gives meaning, or words that are incomplete and do not give meaning. As for *kalam*, it is any word that stands on its own and gives meaning. So every speech is a *qaul*, but not every *qaul* is a *kalam*.¹⁶

Second, Ibnu Jinni further defines that language is the sounds that a people use to express their purpose. (Jinni, 1952) According to Hilmi Khalik, quoted by Dian Risky Amalia and friends, stated that in the definition of language according to Ibnu Jinni, it consists of three main elements of language: first, sound elements as language symbols, second, the social function of language, and third, the social function of language, which can be analyzed in two complementary ways, first, analyzing its structure including phonetic, syntactic, morphological, and semantic (lexical) aspects, second, analyzing the relationship between the above constituent elements and the function of social dynamics.¹⁷

Ibnu Jinni chose the opinion of a number of linguists who say language is the result of human consensus. In this case, what is interesting in Ibnu Jinni's discussion is that he proposes a phonetic theory related to the birth of human language. A number of scholars hold the view that the earliest forms of human language were natural sounds that are often heard such as the swish of the wind, the gurgle of water, the sound of donkeys, crows, and the like. Then human languages were born after that.

The theory chosen by Ibnu Jinni above can be understood that in the beginning humans spoke by imitating the sounds of nature. Then came a period, which is not known for certain how long, where humans tried to develop their ability to speak to express their daily needs and began to leave the form of natural sounds. The ability to speak is increasingly developing according to the needs of

¹⁶ Ibnu Jinni, *Al-Khoshoish* (Qohiroh: Dar-al Kutub, 1952).

¹⁷ Amalia et al., "Linguistik Perspektif Ferdinand De Saussure Dan Ibn Jinni."

life and the development of the human mind, and human language grows gradually.¹⁸

Third, another language concept proposed by Ibnu Jinni is that language must be agreed upon by the language-speaking community so that communication can be communicative. Ibnu Jinni explained that a word has no influence on other words. A word is not able to influence and change the word next to it. People outside the native speakers of the language can only follow the language conventions that the native speakers have agreed upon.¹⁹ In other words, Ibnu Jinni states that language is an agreement of a group of people who speak the language.

Fourth, Ibnu Jinni views *lafazh* and meaning as two inseparable elements in the macro linguistic spectrum. His linguistic studies are not only fixated on micro levels such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, but also consider aspects of meaning and broader context. According to him, lafaz and meaning in Arabic are interrelated and inseparable. Both are used and developed as a means of communication, both in oral and written form. Therefore, understanding lafaz and meaning must be done thoroughly, taking into account the linguistic and socio-cultural context in which the language is used.²⁰

In other words, it can be stated that Ibnu Jinni emphasizes the importance of the following three things: First, understanding the close relationship between *lafazh* and meaning; *lafazh* is just the physical form of the word, while meaning is the idea or concept contained in it. The two complement each other and cannot be separated. Second, considering the context in understanding the meaning where the meaning of the word can be different depending on the context in which the word is used. Third, seeing language in a socio-cultural framework, where language is not only a means of communication, but also a reflection of the culture of the people who use it.

¹⁸ Arifuddin, "Pemikiran-Pemikiran Fonetik Ibnu Jinni (W. 392 H. / 1002 M.)."

¹⁹ Alghiffary et al., *Pemikiran Tokoh-Tokoh Bahasa Arab*.

²⁰ Abdul Muid and Maburrosi, "Reflections on Ibn Jinni's Thought: Analysis of Words and Meanings in Arabic Semantics," *Al-Irfan : Journal of Arabic Literature and Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (March 12, 2022): 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.36835/alirfan.v5i1.5491>.

Furthermore, his linguistic thoughts on lafaz and meaning are briefly divided into four:

- a. *Ad-dalalah al-ijtima'iyah* (Situation Context) where meaning refers to the context of the situation and conditions at the time of the linguistic event.
- b. *Ad-dalalah as-shawtiyyah* (Phonology) which is one of the branches of linguistics is a science that examines the function of sounds in a particular language that can distinguish the meaning of one word from another. Ibnu Jinni termed *ad-dalalah as-shawtiyyah* with *ad-dalalah al-lafzhiyah* which is a dalalah that is more dominant than the other two dalalahs, namely *ad-dalalah as-shina'iyah* and *ad-dalalah al-ma'nawiyah*.²¹
- c. *Ad-dalalah ash-sharfiyah* (Morphology) studies the process of word formation, and the changes in meaning that result from changes in word form.²² Ibnu Jinni calls it *ad-dalalah as-shina'iyah*, which is produced from morphological units in words.
- d. *Ad-dalalah al-Nahwiyyah* (Syntax), Syntax is the science that discusses grammar, in Arabic linguistics syntactic studies are *nahwu* studies.²³

The study of *lafazh* and meaning in linguistics has a wide and diverse scope, giving birth to various linguistic disciplines. An in-depth understanding of the theory of lafaz and meaning is not only essential as a theoretical basis in understanding Arabic texts, but also plays an important role in the development of learning dalalah science for Arabic language students. Ibnu Jinni, a prominent scholar, is recognized as the pioneer who first coined the theory of *lafazh* and meaning, long before similar ideas were put forward by British linguist J.R. Firth.²⁴

²¹ Indah Khoiril Bariyyah and Milki Aan, "Linguistik Di Dunia Arab (Studi Pemikiran Ibnu Jinni)," *MUNASABA* 3, no. 1 (2020): 538-51, <https://www.munasbauai.com/index.php/mnba/article/view/119>.

²² Abdul Kosim, "Penerapan Linguistik Arab Dalam Memahami Bahasa Al-Qur'an," *Kalamuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 1, no. 1 (2020): 18-35, <https://doi.org/10.52593/klm.01.1.02>.

²³ Edi Kurniawan Farid, "Sintaksis Bahasa Indonesia Dan Bahasa Arab (Studi Analisis Kontrasif Frasa, Klausa, Dan Kalimat)," *Bahtsuna Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.55210/bahtsuna.v2i1.70>.

²⁴ Hakmi Wahyudi, Hakmi Hidayat, and Sri Wahyuni Hakim, "Pemikiran Gramatikal Bahasa Arab Oleh Linguistik Arab (Studi Tokoh Lintas Madzhab Nahwu)," *Al-Fikra : Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 19, no. 1 (2020): 113-28, <https://doi.org/10.24014/af.v19i1.10235>.

Fifth, Ibnu Jinni emphasized that no two languages are identical, even if there are similar words or synonyms. Usually, one of the words has a higher frequency of use and is the original word of its user. Other words that have similar meanings are most likely absorbed from other languages or dialects. The diversity of synonyms arises due to the process of assimilation and vocabulary exchange between speakers of languages with different dialects.²⁵ So it can be concluded that two or more synonymous words are words that are likely to follow different dialects and languages.

Ibnu Jinni was not just a linguist, but a critical thinker who dared to open new paths in the study of Arabic linguistics. His dedication and persistence in understanding the intricacies of the Arabic language made him an example for scholars around the world. Although centuries have passed, Ibnu Jinni's thoughts are still relevant in the modern era. His scientific and objective approach to Arabic can be an inspiration for today's linguists to continue to explore the richness and complexity of this language.

The findings of this study have theoretical implications for developing an understanding of the history of Arabic linguistics, highlighting the complexity of Arabic linguistic thought, as well as improving understanding of the structure of Arabic. This research provides new insights into the structure of the Arabic language. Ibnu Jinni's thoughts on Arabic morphology, syntax, and semantics can help to understand Arabic better.

Furthermore, the practical implications of these findings are to improve Arabic language teaching and develop Arabic language processing technology, by understanding Ibnu Jinni's thoughts on Arabic, teachers can develop more effective and learner-centered teaching methods, it can also be used to develop Arabic language processing technology, Ibnu Jinni's thoughts on the structure of Arabic can help to build a more accurate and efficient system for processing Arabic.

However, this research still needs to be developed further. More in-depth research needs to be done on Ibnu Jinni's thought and its influence on the

²⁵ Bariyyah and Aan, "Linguistik Di Dunia Arab (Studi Pemikiran Ibnu Jinni)."

development of Arabic linguistics. This research also opens up new research opportunities related to Arabic linguistics and other Islamic scientific fields.

D.Conclution

Abu al-Fath 'Uthman bin Jinni, known as Ibnu Jinni, was a prominent Arabic linguist and nahwu scholar. He was born in Mosul (Iraq) in 321 H/322 H. Some of the Arabic linguistic thoughts put forward by Ibnu Jinni are the difference between *qaul* and *kalam*, the definition of language is the sounds that a people use to express their goals, language must be agreed upon by the language-speaking community so that communication can be communicative, viewing *lafazh* and meaning as two inseparable elements in the macro linguistic spectrum, no two languages are identical, although there are similarities in words or synonyms, usually, one of the words has a higher frequency of use and is the original word of its users.

Ibnu Jinni was not just a linguist, but a critical thinker who dared to open new paths in the study of Arabic linguistics. His dedication and persistence in understanding the intricacies of the Arabic language made him an example for scholars around the world. Although centuries have passed, Ibnu Jinni's thoughts are still relevant in the modern era.

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