

# Berichte

## The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew

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### 1. The Project

This article is a report on the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, at present in preparation in the Department of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield. The project has been under consideration since 1983, and proposals concerning its principles and methods have been discussed with many scholars in various countries before the work was begun. The actual composition of the Dictionary began in September, 1988.

In the year to August, 1989, the first drafts of almost all the articles for the letter *aleph* have been completed, and it is hoped to issue that material as the first Part of the Dictionary in the course of 1990. Since words beginning with *aleph* constitute about 10% of the word-stock of the Hebrew language, it is expected that the Dictionary will be issued in about 8 parts, the whole to comprise ultimately a single volume of about 2000 pages. Along with the individual Parts of the Dictionary will be published individual Bibliographies, listing the relevant scholarly literature which has been considered in the course of preparation of the Dictionary. Following the completion of the Dictionary itself, it is hoped to issue an abbreviated version of about 300 pages in length for the use of students.

The *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* is a project being carried out under the auspices of the (British) Society for Old Testament Study, from whose members a Board of Reference of about 12 scholars has been appointed. They act on occasion as consultants to the project. In addition, there is a group of about 50 collaborators world-wide, who have undertaken to read the proofs of the Dictionary, as they are sent to them in batches from time to time, especially from the perspective of some expertise of their own.

### 2. Principles

The most characteristic features of the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* result from its general orientation to the principles of modern linguistics. Rather than an emphasis on the individual word there is a stress - inasmuch as it is possible within the framework of a *Wörterbuch* - on the relationship of words within phrases and sentences; and rather than an emphasis on the history of words (the diachronic aspect) there is a stress on the function of words within the language as an operating system (the synchronic aspect).

Among the distinctive features of the Dictionary which exemplify its principles may be mentioned the following:

1. **The Corpus of Texts.** Unlike all previous dictionaries of the ancient Hebrew language, this work does not restrict itself to, or privilege in any way, those ancient

Hebrew texts found in the Hebrew Bible. Rather, it views Hebrew simply as a language like any other ancient language, for which it is necessary to examine the evidence of all extant texts written in that language.

We have defined the scope of the Dictionary as the *classical* Hebrew language; like most lines of division across a historical development, there is a certain arbitrariness in our decision to cover only the period down to c. 200 B.C.E. But we felt that we would have the support of most Hebraists in drawing a firmer line between the language of the Dead Sea Scrolls and that of the Mishnah than, say, between Biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew of the Scrolls.

Within the corpus, then, which we call Classical Hebrew, we distinguish four smaller collections: the Hebrew Bible, the Hebrew text of Ben Sira, the Hebrew scrolls from the Dead Sea, and Hebrew inscriptions and similar material earlier than c. 200 B.C.E. For most purposes we regard these four collections as constituting a single phase in the history of the Hebrew language, and for the most part we do not attempt to trace historical developments within that phase. We of course believe that there were in fact many changes in the meanings of words throughout the millennium or more in which 'classical Hebrew' was spoken, and we also allow that in some cases it is possible to pinpoint those changes with a reasonable degree of certainty. But it is impossible to prepare a dictionary of the classical phase of the language on historical principles, since so few of the texts we have can be dated with any assurance; and so on principle we do not attempt to reconstruct the history of the semantics of words. We do, however, indicate the number of occurrences of each word in each of the four collections - which is a matter of fact that does not require the construction of any hypotheses or theories.

It goes without saying that this is a dictionary of *Hebrew*, and not at all of Aramaic; it is something of a curiosity among older dictionaries that their editors have felt impelled, because of the privileged position they have accorded to the Hebrew Bible as testimony to ancient Hebrew, to include in their work dictionaries of Aramaic as it is attested in the Bible. An approach stemming from linguistics rather than from the demands of theological education is bound to leave the treatment of Biblical Aramaic to the lexica of that language.

The editions of texts which we have adopted as our standards are: for the Bible, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, for Ben Sira, the edition published by the Academy of the Hebrew Language (*The Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language. Series I. 200 B.C.E. - 300 C.E.*) prepared as sources for their concordance of texts of the period, and for the inscriptions the collection prepared by Dr. G.I. Davies of Cambridge in connection with his *Concordance of Hebrew Inscriptions* currently in progress.

**2. Syntagmatic analysis.** In accordance with the principle that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language', the present Dictionary pays much attention to the syntagmatic relationships in which the word under consideration occurs. Most dictionaries of the past have indeed cited contexts in which a word occurs, sometimes quite richly; but none, we think, has made syntagmatic analysis into a systematic method of working.

Our attachment to this principle has led us to state of each verb which subjects are used in connection with it, and which objects. These subjects are listed, not in

random or merely alphabetical order, but with some attempt at a rational and meaningful order. Thus personal subjects may be grouped together, or abstract nouns; and among abstract nouns, subjects of similar meaning or belonging to the same semantic field, such as verbs of movement, will be gathered together. Our own experience is that it is educational and indeed quite interesting, even for a professional Hebraist, to read such articles through, since what is to be found there is an organization of material familiar in its detail to the serious scholar but perhaps never before encountered in the form it has in the Dictionary.

In the case of a noun, we list in turn the verbs of which it is a subject and those of which it is an object. Thereafter we register all the other nouns with which it is connected in a construct relationship, the examples where it is *nomen regens* first, and those where it is *nomen rectum* second. Both with verbs and nouns, we indicate prepositional phrases in which the word occurs, and with most words there is also a section headed 'Collocations' in which other less formal and grammatical relationships of the word in question are entered.

The function of such systematic registering of syntagmatic relationships is to enable the user of the Dictionary to match the occurrence of the word in the place he or she has encountered it with the nearest parallel usages. In this way the user, whether a relative beginner or an advanced scholar, is given a greater control over the material than the use of other Hebrew dictionaries permits.

**3. Paradigmatic analysis.** The purpose of a paradigmatic analysis is to situate a word within the functioning system of the language (*langue*, in Saussure's terminology). Whereas syntagmatic analysis attempts to establish the meaning of a word by considering its connection with other words in the same sentence, paradigmatic analysis attempts to fix its meaning by considering other words available to the speaker or author of a given sentence, but rejected by him or her in favour of the word that now stands in our text.

A thoroughgoing paradigmatic analysis would require as a preliminary stage of research a complete description of the semantic fields in Hebrew and, in all probability, a much larger corpus of texts than we have at our disposal for classical Hebrew. Even under ideal conditions, it remains open to question how the results of a systematic paradigmatic analysis could be deployed within the usual format of a dictionary - which necessarily considers individual lemmata in isolation from other words belonging to the same semantic field. Even if the prerequisite research had already been completed, it is hard to envisage how access to it could be made usefully available to the typical reader of a dictionary.

Paradigmatic analysis is therefore not a conspicuous feature of our Dictionary; nevertheless we have included a feature which presents such data in summary form. That is the systematic registering of Synonyms and Antonyms - a rather obvious desideratum in a Hebrew dictionary, one would have thought, but one which is even so not provided by the standard dictionaries of the past.

For us, Synonyms and Antonyms mean essentially words attested in our texts in synonymous or antonymous relationship with the term under consideration. Within the body of the article we have registered as synonyms words of the same part of speech as the lemma which are used in parallel or in conjunction with the lemma; we do not refer only to terms used in strict poetic parallelism. Such synonyms are

indicated with the siglum of two parallel lines; for antonyms two colons are used. The list of Synonyms and Antonyms near the end of an article thus constitutes an index to actual usages that have already been cited in the article. In some cases, of course, there obviously existed in classical Hebrew synonyms and antonyms which are not actually attested as such within the extant texts, and it is no doubt a weakness in a dictionary if it does not enter rather systematically the possibilities open to speakers and writers of that language. On this point, however, we have felt it prudent to restrict ourselves to what can be attested from the texts themselves - if for no other reason that, once embarked upon the task of stating the synonyms and antonyms for a given word that *might* have been used but which never have been used as such in the texts that we have, it is hard to know where to stop.

4. **Comprehensiveness.** It is a principle of the Dictionary that, so far as is possible, citation of contexts will be exhaustive. The user can therefore be certain that, errors and omissions apart, all the relevant textual data will be provided in our Dictionary for a given word. There have been times, to be candid, when we ourselves have wondered to what end we have been providing such a mass of data; but we have always concluded that there is no way of predicting which pieces of information will prove interesting and important to which users, and we have consistently regarded our task as providing the data which others will use as they think best rather than imposing our own views as to what is significant. Of course principles of selection are in operation in every phase of a project like the present one, and the primary structure of each article - namely, according to our own analysis of the semantics of the word - is a massive imposition of our own judgement. Nevertheless, where the data themselves can stand and speak for themselves, we have thought it best to let them do so.

5. **User-friendliness.** A primary factor at every stage of the Dictionary's conception and execution has been the question of its intelligibility to the users we envisage for it. Such considerations determined our decision to arrange the Dictionary on a strictly alphabetical principle, and to use as lemmata the 'root' form of verbs, no matter how suspect such forms may be methodologically speaking. Above all, our concern for the user-friendliness of the Dictionary has led us to insist on glossing all the Hebrew in the Dictionary with an English translation. This practice is indeed a little imprudent, for it has necessitated our offering renderings of very many words which we have not yet studied; and we can of course easily envisage that by the time we have finished the work there will be many renderings embedded in it that we would no longer wish to stand by. But the alternatives are worse; and we did not see this work as directed only to professional scholars and researchers but also to any readers of Hebrew texts who have progressed beyond the most elementary stages. Indeed, the Dictionary should for the most part be quite intelligible to persons who have only the most rudimentary acquaintance with the language: once one has been able to locate the page on which the word in question is located (and we hope to provide an English-Hebrew index with the final Part of the work) the semantic structure of the word, our differentiation of senses and the provision of citations should all be easily accessible.

## 3. A Sample with Annotations

The structure of a typical article in the Dictionary can be illustrated by the excerpt printed here. The elements of an article are as follows:

**אָבַד** 184.11.24 vb. **die, be destroyed, disappear, be lost**–Qal Pf. 3ms אָבַד (אָבַד), 3fs אָבְדָה (אָבְדָה), 2ms אָבַדְתָּ, 2fs אָבַדְתְּ, 1s אָבַדְתִּי (אָבַדְתִּי), 3pl אָבְדוּ (אָבְדוּ), 1pl אָבַדְנוּ (אָבַדְנוּ); impf. 3ms יֵאבַד (יֵאבַד), 3fs יֵאבֹד (יֵאבֹד, Q חֹבֵד), 3pl יֵאבְדוּ (יֵאבְדוּ, Q חֹבְדוּ), 3fpl יֵאבְדֶנָּה (יֵאבְדֶנָּה, Q חֹבְדֶנָּה), 2fpl יֵאבְדֶיךָ (יֵאבְדֶיךָ, Q חֹבְדֶיךָ), 1pl יֵאבְדֶנּוּ (יֵאבְדֶנּוּ, Q חֹבְדֶנּוּ); + waw 3ms וַיֵּאבַד (וַיֵּאבַד, Q חֹבַד), 3fs וַיֵּאבֹד (וַיֵּאבֹד, Q חֹבֹד), 3pl וַיֵּאבְדוּ (וַיֵּאבְדוּ, Q חֹבְדוּ), 3fpl וַיֵּאבְדֶנָּה (וַיֵּאבְדֶנָּה, Q חֹבְדֶנָּה), 2fpl וַיֵּאבְדֶיךָ (וַיֵּאבְדֶיךָ, Q חֹבְדֶיךָ), 1pl וַיֵּאבְדֶנּוּ (וַיֵּאבְדֶנּוּ, Q חֹבְדֶנּוּ); ptc. ms אֹבֵד (אֹבֵד, Q חֹבֵד), 3fs אֹבֵדָה (אֹבֵדָה, Q חֹבְדָה), 3pl אֹבְדִים (אֹבְדִים, Q חֹבְדִים), cstr. אֹבְדֵי (אֹבְדֵי, Q חֹבְדֵי), fs אֹבְדָה (אֹבְדָה, Q חֹבְדָה), mpl אֹבְדִים (אֹבְדִים, Q חֹבְדִים), fpl אֹבְדוֹת (אֹבְדוֹת, Q חֹבְדוֹת), pass ms S אֹבֵד (אֹבֵד, Q חֹבֵד), inf. אֲבֹד (אֲבֹד, Q חֹבֹד), אֲבֹדְךָ (אֲבֹדְךָ, Q חֹבְדְךָ), אֲבֹדְכֶם (אֲבֹדְכֶם, Q חֹבְדְכֶם).

**1a. die, be destroyed, disappear, of persons,** often as divine judgment, <שָׁטַט> Israel Lv 2638, Dt 426.26 אָבַד הָאֲבֹדִים *you will utterly be destroyed* 819.19, :: יָמֶיךָ אֲבֹד *you will live long*, 3018.18) 820 1117 2820 (|| שָׁמַד ni. *be exterminated*) 2822 Jos 2313.16 Jer 2710.15 Ob12 CD 39.10 Mur 457, remnant of Judah Jr 4015; other nations Dt 720 Is 6012 (|| הָרְבוּ שָׁמַד *shall be utterly laid waste* Ps 1016), remnant of Philistines Am 18, of Moab Nm 2130 (|| נִיְנוּ *their posterity*, em. of נִיְרָם *their lamp*), Moab 2129, Egypt Ex 107, Tyre Ezk 2617, Ninevites Jon 39; humans in general Jb 420; family of Korah Nm 1633, of Ahab 2 K 98, of Esther Est 414; the foolish Ps 4911, those far from God 7327 (|| צַמַח hi. *put an end to*, מוֹת *die*), those incensed against Israel Is 4111 (|| הָיָה כְּאֵין *become as nothing*), cities and families 4QpNah 3-4 ii9, Y.'s enemies Jg 531 Ps 8017 8318 (|| בָּדַל ni. *be dismayed*) 9210 (|| פָּרַד htp. *be scattered*), psalmist's enemies Ps 94, wicked Jb 49 Ps 3720 (|| כָּעָשָׁן קָלוּ *em. of בָּעָשָׁן, like smoke they vanish*; || 4QpPsa 21 33.4.8) 683 (|| מִן הַמִּנְיָן *as wax melts before fire*) Pr 1110 2828 (:: קוּם *arise*), cursed 1QDM 110, sailors Jon 16.14; individuals Mc 49 Zc 95 Ps 212 11992 Est 416.16. צַדִּיק *righteous* Is 571 (|| אִסְרָה ni. *be taken away*) Ec 715, חַסִּיד *pious* Mc 72, נָקִי *innocent* Jb 47 (|| כָּחַד ni. *be destroyed*), slave Si 3040, opponent of a rich man 82 יִשְׁקַל מִחִירְךָ *he may pay out your price and you will perish*, false witness Pr 199 2128; non-human subj. לֵישׁ *lion* Jb 411 (+ מְבַלֵּי טֶרֶף *for lack of prey*).

אָנִיָּה 20.0.2 n.f. **boat, ship**, propelled by oars Ezk 27<sub>29</sub>, for use on sea or river—sg. Q אֹנִיָּה; pl. אֹנִיָּוֹת. Kt אֹנִיָּוֹת, Qr אֹנִיָּוֹת, אֹנִיָּוֹתֵיכֶם, אֹנִיָּוֹתֵיכֶם; see also אֹנִי *fleet* (coll.)—<SUBJ> הֲלֹךְ go 2 C 9<sub>21</sub>, pi. go to and fro Ps 104<sub>26</sub>, עָרַב hi. transport Ezk 27<sub>25</sub>, נָשָׂא carry 2 C 9<sub>21</sub>, שָׁב pi. be minded to, be about to Jon 14, שָׁבַר ni. be broken 2 C 20<sub>37</sub>, עָצַר 20<sub>37</sub>, יָלַל hi. wail Is 23<sub>1.14</sub>. <NOM CL> אֹנִיָּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישִׁים בְּרֹאשׁוֹנָה *ships of Tarshish are at the front* Is 60<sub>9</sub>. <SUBJ> עָשָׂה build 1 K 22<sub>49</sub> (Kt עָשָׂר ten) || 2 C 20<sub>36</sub>, מָצָא find Jon 1<sub>3</sub>, שָׁלַח send 2 C 8<sub>18</sub> (Kt אֹנִיָּוֹת), שָׁבַר pi. shatter Ps 48<sub>8</sub>, גָּר linger in Jg 5<sub>17</sub>. <CSTR> הַיָּם הַיָּם of the sea Ezk 27<sub>9</sub>, אֹנִיָּה of papyrus, hence swift Jb 9<sub>26</sub>, סוֹחֵר of the merchant Pr 31<sub>14</sub>, אֹנִיָּוֹת of Tarshish 1 K 22<sub>50</sub> Is 2<sub>16</sub> 23<sub>1.14</sub> 60<sub>9</sub> Ezk 27<sub>25</sub> Ps 48<sub>8</sub> 2 C 9<sub>21</sub> (sim. Jon 1<sub>3</sub>) רָגְזָתָם of their exulting Is 43<sub>14</sub>; חוֹף beach for, haven of Gn 49<sub>13</sub>, דֶּרֶךְ way of Pr 30<sub>19</sub>, אֹנִיָּוֹת sailors 1 K 9<sub>27</sub>, כָּל־ all of Is 2<sub>16</sub> Ezk 27<sub>9</sub>.

<PREP> בְּ in Jon 1<sub>5</sub>, + שׁוּב hi. cause to return Dt 28<sub>68</sub>, הֲלֹךְ travel 1 K 22<sub>50</sub>, יָרַד descend Ps 107<sub>23</sub> Is 43<sub>14</sub> (hi.), שָׁעַר htp. rush upon Dn 11<sub>40</sub>; עָלַי against Is 2<sub>16</sub>; יָרַד מִן descend from Ezk 27<sub>29</sub>; עָם pass by with Jb 9<sub>26</sub>; כִּי like + הִיָּה be Pr 31<sub>14</sub>, עָשִׂים make 1QH 3<sub>6</sub>, רָעָה hi. shake 3<sub>13</sub>, עָלָה lift 7<sub>4</sub>. <ADJ> רַב pl. many Dn 11<sub>40</sub>. <COLL> אֹנִיָּה בְּאֹהַב תַּרְשִׁישִׁים a ship bound for Tarshish Jon 1<sub>3</sub>, אֹנִיָּוֹת לְמֶלֶךְ ships belonging to the king 2 C 9<sub>21</sub>, כַּמְלַח בְּאִיָּה like a sailor in a ship 1QH 6<sub>22</sub>. <DER> אֹנִי *navy, fleet*.

1. **Lemma.** In the case of a verb, the lemma or headword is given in the ‘root’ or unvocalized form; in the case of a noun, it is given in the form of the singular absolute, vocalized. If the noun does not actually occur in the singular absolute, the lemma is placed within square brackets to indicate that the form has been reconstructed.

Some objections may be raised to the use of ‘root’ or other reconstructed forms, since such do not actually exist, and it is the aim of this Dictionary to cite only actually occurring forms. Here, however, is a case where we feel that methodological purity must take second place to user-friendliness; for we think it unhelpful to register a verb that occurs only in the hithpael, for example, under the *hith*-prefix, and not under the ‘root’ where most users would expect to find it.

2. **Number of occurrences.** The number of occurrences of the word (or, more strictly, lemma) is divided among the four groups of texts that constitute our corpus: 1. the Hebrew Bible; 2. Ben Sira; 3. the Dead Sea Scrolls and related texts; 4. inscriptions and other such texts. In the case of <sup>ʔ</sup>*abad*, for example, the notation indicates that the verb occurs 184 times in the Hebrew Bible, 11 times in Ben Sira, 24 times in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and not at all in other Hebrew texts.

For the purposes of counting, all occurrences are registered, even those which we regard as needing emendation. Places where the word may be restored to a text through emendation are not counted, though some such occurrences are mentioned

in the Dictionary. Occurrences in Biblical manuscripts from Qumran do not count, except where the word occurs in them and not in the Masoretic text. But occurrences in Biblical citations in other manuscripts, in the pesharim, the Temple Scroll, and parts of 11QPsalms which are not copies of the canonical Psalms, do count.

3. **Part of Speech.** The designation of a word as verb, noun, adjective, and so on, is traditional and generally uncontroversial.

4. **Gloss.** 'Gloss' is our term for a brief translation of the Hebrew lemma. It is intended to show briefly the range of meanings of the word, corresponding, though not in detail, to the major sense divisions in the article on the word. Major sense divisions in the gloss are separated by a semicolon, others by a comma.

5. **Morphology.** The intention of this element in the article is to list all forms of the lemma that exist in the texts. Round brackets indicate variants of a given form, whether orthographic, pausal, or suffixal variations. When a form occurs only as an unvocalized word, the corpus to which it belongs is indicated by Q for Qumran texts, S for Ben Sira and Inscr for inscriptions.

To avoid controversy, forms prefixed with *waw* are not termed, for example, 'consecutive', or 'preterite', but are simply prefaced with the rubric '+ *waw*'.

6. **Semantic analysis (body of the article).** The essence of any dictionary article must of course be the semantic analysis of the various senses of the lemma. No rigid schematization has been applied in our analysis, and the structure of each article is developed from the nature of the attestations of the word. Nevertheless, the following two principles are commonly employed.

(a) The senses of a word are generally arranged in order of frequency of attestation; that is, the most common senses usually come first.

(b) Concrete senses generally precede metaphorical senses. These two principles sometimes come into conflict, of course, and our recourse in such circumstances is to what we think is the most logical order or the order most helpful to the user.

7. **Syntagmatic analysis.** As outlined above, within each semantic or 'sense' category, the material is organized by the syntagmatic analysis.

In the case of verbs, this means that the subjects and objects attested for the verb in question are registered; these subjects and objects are arranged roughly by sense, often with concrete and collective subjects or objects preceding metaphorical and collective subjects or objects. Participles and infinitives are analysed for subjects and objects as if they were finite verbs; for example, in the clause *ba<sup>a</sup>habat yhw<sup>h</sup> ʔet-yiśrāʔel* "because Yahweh loved Israel", "Yahweh" is analysed as the subject of the verb *ʔāhab*, and "Israel" as its object. A further type of syntagmatic relationship in which verbs occur is realized by the use of prepositions; such prepositional relationships are therefore registered in a separate section.

In the case of nouns, the verbs of which the noun in question is the subject or object are registered in turn; and also the nouns which are related to it; the adjectives used to modify the noun; and the prepositions and verb-prepositional phrases used with the noun. All these are listed in separate sections of the article. Occurrences in which the noun is neither the subject nor the object of a verb, and is not 'governed' by a preposition, and is not used in a construct relationship nor in apposition to some other noun will normally be examples of nominal clauses. There is no attempt

to distinguish subjects and predicates in nominal clauses. Clauses containing the verb "to be" are not regarded as nominal clauses (despite the view of some authorities).

With adjectives, the interesting syntagmatic information is the nouns with which the adjective in question is used.

Other syntagmatic data, for example conventional phraseology in which the word in question appears, are entered under the heading 'collocations', which means in our usage any collocations other than those which have already been registered under other headings.

8. **Paradigmatic analysis.** As already mentioned, the registering of synonyms and antonyms actually attested in the text functions as a simple form of paradigmatic analysis. It is our rule to list as synonyms and antonyms only words belonging to the same part of speech as the lemma; thus it is not always the case that words and phrases given in the body of the article as 'parallels' or 'opposites' qualify as synonyms and antonyms. On the whole, though, the list of synonyms and antonyms constitutes an index to the parallels and opposites that have been mentioned in the course of the article.

9. **Derivatives.** In the case of verbs, the section headed 'derivatives' lists all the words, including proper names, that may be 'derived', morphologically speaking, from the verbal 'root'. In the case of nouns, the verbal 'root' from which the noun is 'derived' is noted, if it is attested; in some cases, another noun appears as the indexial word under the heading 'Derivation'. No historical implications are intended by the existence or by the name of this section; it functions simply as a kind of index to associated words.

#### 4. *Further Information*

Those scholars interested in the progress of the project are invited to correspond with the Editor. An occasional Newsletter is issued free of charge, and sets of sample pages of the Dictionary are available. Offers of assistance with reading the proofs, or with any other aspect of the work, will be much appreciated.

Those who have recently published lexicographical or linguistic studies which may be of use to researchers on the Dictionary project are invited to send a copy of their work to the Secretary of the project.

The publication of the first Part of the Dictionary has been announced by Sheffield Academic Press for 1990; their catalogue may be obtained from their offices at 343 Fulwood Road, Sheffield, S10 3BP, England.

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