Johanna Cartwright and Elizabeth Finn: Women Who Helped Shape the Modern Zionist Movement

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Introduction

Nahum Sokolow wrote in his two-volume *History of Zionism* in 1919 that "Modern Zionism is the logical consequence of Jewish History" and that "Zionists hope that English Christians will be worthy heirs and successors to the Earl of Shaftesbury, George Eliot and many others" The first statement would be a good discussion topic; the second was undoubtedly true for Sokolow. Unfortunately, most English Christians have not held to the biblical view of Israel that Lord Shaftesbury and George Eliot exhibited. In fact, that fervor for Zionism among Christians has waxed and waned over the last five centuries. During all of this time, individuals have believed, prayed and worked for the spiritual and physical restoration of the Jews to their Messiah and to their Land.

Jim Melnick published an article in Issue 130 (November-December 2017) of the LCJE Bulletin on "The Cartwright Petition." He discovered that the original Petition document was held at the Sutro Library at San Francisco State University. My article on "The Balfour Declaration" appeared in this same issue of the Bulletin. Jim and I saw a connection and were eager to connect the dots. In January, my husband Bruce and I were in San Francisco to meet our newest great grand-daughter – so we couldn't resist taking our first Uber ride to the Sutro Library! We not only saw and photographed the original Petition of 1649 but were told that we would be able to get a copy of a 1941 paper written about the Petition and its importance and which contained a complete copy of the fourpage Petition.

There was one other prequel to this story which began at last year's LCJE Conference in Denver when I moderated a panel discussion on the book edited by Gerald McDermott, *The New Christian Zionism.*² It was in a footnote in that book that Jim found the 2013 book by Robert O. Smith titled *More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism.*³ This book documents the Puritan roots of Christian Zionism while being critical of American support for the State of Israel.

¹ Sokolow, Nahum. Vol I, xxvii.

² Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press. 2016. 48, fn 7.

³ Oxford: Oxford University Press.

As Jim and I sleuthed our way through these and other books, I realized that I had been looking at the 19th and early 20th centuries for the beginning of ideas leading to the modern Zionist Movement and ultimately the establishment of the state of Israel – when I needed to move back into the 17th and 18th centuries to find the biblical roots of Christian Zionism or more specifically the biblical roots of the notion of the restoration of the Jewish people to their land and to their Messiah. This paper will hopefully fill in a few of the gaps from those earlier days and then into the 19th century by highlighting two women who played different but significant roles in this area.

The Year of the Women

Women's issues are not new certainly, but it does seem a timely occasion to bring these two women – Johanna Cartwright and Elizabeth Finn – to our attention as they pertain to the work we have been called to in our various ministries represented in LCJE.

Besides examining these two women, I will attempt to look at the context in which they emerged in their respective historical time frames. I have found this to be a fascinating study which has led me down several very enjoyable rabbit trails. As with all of historical research, one has to excise as much as one puts into a paper such as this. So let us begin! (I have attached a bibliography of works cited at the end of this paper which will be posted to the LCJE website).

Johanna Cartwright and the Puritan Aspirations for Israel

Up until the 1600's, Palestine had been to the English a land of purely Christian concern and associations – the Holy Land of Jesus - even after it was lost to Christians through the intrusion of Islam in the 7th century and after the unsuccessful attempts by European Crusaders to wrest it out of Moslem hands in the 12th.

What caused the change in perspective can largely be attributed to the translation of the Bible into the vernacular languages of western Europe following the Reformation and the invention of the printing press. Reading the Scriptures in German, French and English by Protestant reformers brought Israel back into the picture in a dramatic way. Israel was now remembered as the homeland of the Jews, the place of their history and the promise of their return. There was an explosion of new ideas about the Jews who had been persecuted as "Christ-killers" by Catholic Europe and who now came to be seen as "God's Chosen" and to whom God had given unconditional and forever promises. Unearthed was the startling idea that one day "all Israel would be saved" and that her Redeemer would come out of Zion!

The Geneva Bible, completed in 1560, was a product composed by exiled English Protestants – exiled by the Catholic Queen Mary I who reigned over England and Ireland from 1553-58. The translation team was led by William Whittingham and included John Knox and Miles Coverdale. Working with the original languages and using William

Tyndale's New Testament translation into English from Greek, the finished product became the most read version of the Bible for years.⁴

This Bible provided the inspiration for the Puritan movement which was called by Matthew Arnold "a revival of the Hebraic spirit in reaction to the Hellenic spirit that had animated the immediately preceding period of the renaissance." ⁵ The Geneva Bible was the translation carried over on the Mayflower to the New World. Puritanism shaped English life in one form or another for over two hundred years. It brought in a distinctively Hebraic brand of understanding to the Scriptures and to Christian principles of living to its readers.

A group of Puritans left England for Holland beginning in 1604. They sought refuge there from the established church in England which discriminated against those known as dissenters from the official church. Holland welcomed persecuted religious minorities from all parts of Europe, including a large number of Jewish refugees who had fled the Inquisition of Spain and Portugal. By the time the Puritan settlers arrived in Amsterdam, there was a flourishing and established community of Jewish merchants there who were instrumental in the thriving Dutch trade of the day.

Thus, the self-exiled English Puritans who were striving to live their life according to the ancient Hebrew Bible texts became acquainted with living, modern Jews in the tolerate state of Holland.

England and the Jews

Here we should remember that England was the first of the European countries to expel the Jews from their land. This happened in 1290 under King Edward I (1272-1307). From that date until the mid 17th century, Jews were forbidden to enter England.

Also, in order to understand the setting for Johanna Cartwright and her son Ebenezer's Petition, we need to consider the state of England and its Civil War at the time. King Charles I ruled England from 1625 to 1649. The English Civil War was fought toward the end of his reign between those who were loyal to the throne and Parliament members who objected to the king's exercise of power. Oliver Cromwell was a member of that Parliament and rose to a position of military leadership during the first and second Civil War against Charles. When the army was formed to fight against the king and his Loyalists, Lord Thomas Fairfax was named Captain-General. Lord Fairfax sat at the head of the War Council which met on January 5, 1649.

It was at that very moment that Johanna Cartwright's Petition was set before the Council. The War Council received several other petitions at that time from English

⁴ Tyndale drew on Erasmus' edited New Testament in Greek in 1516.

⁵ Tuchman, Barbara W. *Bible and the Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls) 1956, 129.

subjects. Among these petitions was the appeal from Johanna Cartwright (or Cartenright), a widow, and her son Ebenezer residing in Amsterdam.⁶

As Jim Melnick wrote in his LCJE Bulletin article, the Cartwrights believed that one of the reasons that the War Council convened was for "God's Glory" and for "Izraell's Freedom, Peace and Safety." They wrote that while they were in Amsterdam among the Jews there, they heard the "heavy out-cryes and clamours against the intolerable cruelty of this our English Nation, exercised against them by that (and others) inhumane exceeding great Massacre of them, in the Reign of Richard the second, King of this Land, and their banishment ever since."

The Cartwright Petition called for the following actions re the Jewish people:

- 1. Readmission of the Jews into England after their long period of exile;
- 2. The "transport of Izraells Sons & Daughters in [English and Dutch] Ships to the Land promised to their fore-Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for an everlasting Inheritance";
- 3. That in coming back into England, "they, together with us, shall come to know the Emanuell, the Lord of life, light, and glory."

The motivation that the Cartwrights gave the War Council in their petition that England come to aid the Jewish people was two-fold: England would receive God's blessing if they lifted Jewish exile. God's wrath will be appeased which was due based on the shedding of innocent Jewish blood in those days of their expulsion by an English king; and that in returning to a truly Christian land they may be "dayly enlightened in the saving knowledge of him, for whom they look dayly and expect as their King of eternal glory, and both their and our Lord God of salvation [Christ Jesus]."

So, while we know almost nothing of the personal details of Johanna Cartwright, we learn a great deal about her heart for the Jewish people, her concern for their eternal welfare as well as their need to find a safe haven in a place that would give them welcome – and as a happy consequence may lead them to their Messiah Jesus.

We should note that the Petition was written during a season of religious fervor in England and the continent. These religionists pointed to natural phenomena such as the comet of 1652, the Civil War in England, Poland and other areas as portents of the end of time and the return of Jesus. Pamphlets were published such as one by "an enthusiast" Paulus Felgenhauer titled "Good Tidings for Israel" predicting "the speedy advent of the Messiah." Melnick noted that Englishman Robert Maton, Oxford graduate and millenarian, published a book in 1642 titled *Israel's Redemption or the Propheticall*

⁶ Smith, Robert O. *More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2013, 95.

⁷ King Richard II was a great grandson of Edward I and reigned from 1377 until he was deposed in 1399. The quote is from the Cartwright Petition and appearing in The Bulletin, Issue 130, 8.

⁸ Lowy, A. *Miscellany of Hebrew Literature,* Vol II, (London: Trubner and Co) 1877, 22.

History of our Saviours Kingdome on Earth. Living by Levitical law and dreaming of Israel's restoration as depicted by the biblical prophets was a decided mark of Puritanism which created vision for God's ultimate plan for the Jews.

Robert Smith stated that The Cartwright Petition presents "a precise distillation of the Judeo-centric strands of Puritan thought developed over the previous century since John Bale."

The problem was that the Cartwright Petition went before Lord Fairfax's War Council at precisely the moment that the House of Commons named 135 commissioners, including Fairfax, as a High Court of Justice to try King Charles I. Charles would be executed within the month. So while the petition was not immediately acted upon, its premise was based squarely in the center of Puritan Judeo-centric discourse that would provide future action for the Jewish people, namely, the re-admittance of Jews to live as Jews in England under the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. These nascent ideas affecting English theopolitical thoughts would ebb and flow all the way up to the Balfour Declaration two hundred and fifty years later. No small historical fact which proves the axiom that ideas are what move human history forward.

The Puritan thinkers and writers, reading their Geneva Bibles, rediscovered not only the Jewish roots to their Christian faith, but the role of the salvation of the Jews in the plan of God's redemption of the world. They rediscovered Romans 9-11 as one Puritan theologian wrote in his 1617 commentary on Revelation, published in London: "The Church triumphant [could be understood as foreshadowing] a most happie condition . . .after the happie conversion of the Iewes, whose embracing the Gospell, shall be as life and riches to the Christian world, Rom 11; and in comparison of which time wee are yet, but as in a kind of livelesse state and poore condition." ¹⁰

One Last Word Before we leave the 17th Century Puritans . . .

There is one Jewish name that must be mentioned before we leave the Puritan period. That is the name of Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel. Born in Lisbon, Portugal during the time of the Inquisition, Manasseh's father Joseph took his family to Amsterdam where Jews were received and given religious freedom. Manasseh rose to be a renowned rabbi of that city and in 1650 sent his own two petitions to the Parliament in England applying for the readmission of the Jews to England. In his booklet titled "The Hope of Israel" Manasseh asked for the following:

- 1. Return of the Jews to England
- 2. That they be given the right to free exercise of religion, to erect a synagogue and to acquire burial ground
- 3. That they may pursue commerce and be protected under the law and that any English laws against the Jews be repealed.

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⁹ Smith, Op cit, 96; cf Fairfield, Leslie P. *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers) 1976.

¹⁰ Smith. Op cit. 98.

Manasseh gave several arguments for why the readmission of Jews to England would benefit that country:

- 1. England would gain wealth with Jewish merchants and traders (it was the time of great trade wars among European nations)
- 2. Jews are faithful citizens of the countries in which they live
- 3. They will join the Commonwealth under Cromwell and together look for the "hope of Israel" to be revealed, i.e., they share a common biblical outlook with Puritan England.

Then Manasseh added a twist which he firmly believed based on the Book of Daniel: the dispersion of the Jews to <u>all</u> countries would not be complete without their return to England. This "completed dispersion" was necessary before they could return to their own land and the Messiah be revealed.

Manasseh was among the first Jews to arrive in London in October 1665 but he did not live to see the ban officially lifted and Jews welcomed back to England. Oliver Cromwell died in September 1658. Three years later, Charles II was restored to the English throne, Cromwell's body was exhumed and hung. But the Jews were back in England to stay after Parliament decreed under King Charles II in 1665. It was perhaps the Puritan reign of the Commonwealth's most lasting victory.

Elizabeth Anne McCaul Finn

We now fast-forward two hundred years to the 19th century for our second woman who worked for the good of the Jewish people and in this instance gave practical help to those living in Jerusalem.

Geopolitical realities in the 1830s gave England its first opportunity to establish Europe's first Consulate in the Middle East. 11 English evangelicals were motivated by sympathy for and desire to protect the Jews living there and many longed to see a restoration of the Jews to Palestine. While there were political motives as well, there was a hope of establishing a foothold in this important region of the world.

You may recognize the name of the early missionary to the Jews of Warsaw, Alexander McCaul. Elizabeth was his brilliant daughter who married the second British Consul to Jerusalem, James Finn.

Alexander McCaul (1799-1863) was a distinguished graduate of Dublin University and trained with CMJ's Lewis Way. He was sent as CMJ's first missionary to Warsaw in 1821 and laid the foundation there of the work that lasted over a hundred years among the millions of Jews in that city. He was instrumental in connecting the German Pietists with the British evangelicals.

¹¹ Crombie's For the Love of Zion gives details.

After 20 years he was recalled to London to become Principal of the Hebrew College at CMJ's training compound called Palestine Place in Bethnal Green. Among other work, McCaul revised CMJ's 1817 Hebrew New Testament and began the first Hebrew language worship service there. ¹² In 1841 he declined the offer to become the first Anglican bishop of Jerusalem believing that it was only right that that honor go to a former rabbi, Jewish believer in Jesus, Michael Solomon Alexander. ¹³ In 1835 McCaul published his book entitled New Testament Evidence That the Jews Are to Be Restored to the Land of Israel.

Alexander's daughter, Elizabeth Anne, was born March 14, 1825 in Warsaw, Poland. While she was given no formal education, she was tutored in Hebrew by a Jewish believer and former rabbi. She was given her first English Bible on her fourth birthday as she was reading by that age. On her next birthday she received a German Bible. She read the Bible and Shakespeare in German and was fluent in Yiddish from a young age. By 12, she was rising at 3:30 AM to translate Lavater's *Maxims* (a book of proverbs) from the original German for which she was paid two guineas. 14

Most biographical outlines of Elizabeth Anne McCaul Finn list her as "a British writer" with the occupation "wife," which she was. But she was also a linguist, a strong believer in the return of the Jewish people to their land, an evangelist, a pioneer photographer, an amateur archeologist, a philanthropist, a diplomat and hostess, a mother, and a care-giver to the poor and destitute. She lived long enough to witness the Burning of Parliament in 1834, the coronation procession of Queen Victoria in 1837 and the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Elizabeth died on January 18, 1921. This indefatigable woman attended her last charity board meeting several months before she died just before her 96th birthday.

Her love and concern for the Jewish people and her understanding of their need to know their Messiah and to return to the land promised to Abraham and his descendants was never far from her mind. She married James Finn who was named second British Consul to Jerusalem from 1846-63. Both were fluent Hebrew speakers and Elizabeth learned Arabic once she was in the land. Their three children were born there. It should be noted that Christ Church inside the Jaffa Gate of the Old City was completed just after the Finns' arrival and that they lived first in the Consulate attached to the church – which was built to be the chapel of the British Consulate. 15

While the Finns were not missionaries with CMJ, James served as committee member of the London Jews Society as it was then known. He was often faulted for being too concerned for the salvation of the Jews. He left much direct evangelism of the Jews to

¹² Barker, Walter. A Fountain Opened (London: Olive Press) n.d.

¹³ Lewis, 123.

¹⁴ Johann Kasper Lavater (1741-1801) was a Swiss poet, writer, philosopher and theologian.

¹⁵ See Kelvin Crombie's For the Love of Zion for details of the geopolitical realities of the 1830s that opened this door to Protestant presence in Ottoman Jerusalem.

his wife to avoid accusations of mixing politics and religion. But both their hearts longed for the Jews' salvation.

The historic church leaders who held sway in Jerusalem were unhappy to see a Protestant presence established there, especially one that was favorable to the Jews of the city. When the first British Consul was established in Jerusalem in 1839 – the first European country to do so – the Consul was instructed to give diplomatic protection to the Jewish people living there under Ottoman rule. So, the Finns were not outside their bounds as they creatively set up aid to the Jews living in the area at the time as well as to give diplomatic covering to them.

Elizabeth was insatiably curious about everything she saw in the land. Hers were the first detailed descriptions of Jerusalem and its environs to reach England from a woman author. Her books A Home in the Holy Land and A Third Year in Jerusalem were published in London in 1866 and 1869, respectively. 16

She and her husband helped establish the Jerusalem Literary Society in 1849 using a thousand of their own books and setting up a small historical museum. The Society was founded for "the study of local 'antiquities," and it had rapidly become the center for all the Biblical historiographers who came ... "17 The Society was one of the pillars for the founding of the Palestine Exploration Fund founded in 1865. The Finns often spent Sabbaths exploring the surrounding area for artifacts and biblical sites. James Finn was one of the first Westerners given permission to visit the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock.¹⁸

Gidney, CMJ historian of the first hundred years of the mission work, confirmed: "The foundation in the winter of 1849-50 of a Society for the Literary and Scientific Investigation of all subjects connected with the Holy Land (history, language, coins, agriculture, natural history, customs, etc) . . . James Finn, British Consul, was the president." He noted that "The number of converts at Jerusalem steadily increased during this Period" and listed twelve on the mission staff headed by John Nicolayson, a director of the House of Industry for training new Jewish believers. Dr. Macgowan and his hospital for the Jews staff and the institute for training of women under Miss Cooper and Elizabeth Finn. 19 A school for Jewish boys and one for girls was added as well.

¹⁶ Both of these books were reprinted from the original by Boston's Adamant media in 2002. Each has been digitalized by Google.

¹⁷ Tuchman, 246.

¹⁸ James Finn wrote Stirring Times: Records from Jerusalem Consular Chronicles from 1853 to 1856, 2 vols. (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co) 1878.

¹⁹ Gidney, W.T. The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews: From 1809 to 1908 (London: London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews) 1908, 296-297.

The Agricultural Vision

Crombie noted, "The Finns believed they had a role in preparing the way for the restoration of Israel by showing the Jewish people that agricultural development was possible in Eretz Israel." It was perhaps their most forward-looking of their ideas. It forecast the later possession and resettlement of the Land by Jews. The Finns first purchased a tract of land outside the Old City walls for the purpose of training Jews in the art of farming. In concept, they set up the first kibbutz. The plot was outside the Damascus Gate. Later they added some property near Bethlehem. The latter did not ultimately succeed, but the Jerusalem area farm called Kerem Avraham was used to train and employ Jewish men and women.

The Finns built their house on the property which was "an uninhabited and untilled piece of land that the Arabs called Karm al-Khalil which translated means 'Abraham's Vineyard." In his memoir, Israeli novelist Amos Oz wrote that the land that the Finns purchased in 1853 at the cost of 250 English pounds extended over ten acres and that over two hundred Jews were employed on what was called the Industrial Plantation. After James Finn died, Elizabeth set up a soap factory there, employing Jewish workers. Oz assessed the Finns as people who "believed fervently that the return of the Jewish people to their homeland would hasten the salvation of the world." And that they were "pious Christians who were moved by the poverty, suffering, and backwardness of Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land." 22

Another author, Simon Montefiore described in his book *Jerusalem* just what sort of poverty and filth existed in the city at the time that the Finns lived there. Writers of the day – Melville, Twain, Flaubert and Thackeray – all came in this period with the romanticized view of the city which became known as "Jerusalem Fever." Each described the disease and ruin that they found there. Montefiore wrote that the ruling official of the city, the Pasha, lived in squalor over the place of the former Roman Antonia Fortress on the north side of the Temple Mount. Finn was "astonished at the beggarly meanness of that mansion . . . and ragamuffin officials." The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was a religious battlefield where "Greek monks attacked the newly appointed Catholic patriarch and herded camels into his residence."²³

The poverty of the Jews was exacerbated by the Crimean War in which the French and British fought Russia from 1853 to 1856. The destitute Ottoman Jews depended almost

²¹ Oz Amos *A*

²⁰ Crombie, 93.

²¹ Oz, Amos. *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (Orlando, FI: Harcourt Books) 2003, 118. Trans from Hebrew *Sipour Al Ahava Vehoshekh* by Nicholas de Lange, 2004.

²² Op. cit, 119. Oz reported that after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Finns' house ultimately became a religious Jewish girls' school by the name of Beit Bracha.

²³ Montefiore, Simon Sebag. *Jerusalem: The Biography* (New York: Vintage Books) 2011, 360.

entirely on gifts from their Eastern European brethren. That stream of funding was interrupted during the war. Those living on the edge sunk to starvation levels.

Mrs. Finn became a one-woman Social Service agency. She raised funds from abroad to dig cisterns (clean drinking water was lacking), buy land, and alleviate malnutrition among the poor Jews of Jerusalem. She established the "Sarah Society" which did home visits to poor women in the city bringing gifts of rice, sugar and coffee. (This work continues today under the auspices of Christ Church Jerusalem as The Mercy Fund). One British judge in Constantinople saw Elizabeth as "a lady of very considerable energy and ability and of a very masterful temper."

She was moved always to give practical help that would bring skills and independence to the Jews. She taught the women needlework and knitting which they could sell to support themselves and their families. With the help of a Miss Cooper, she set up the Institute for Jewesses. The rabbis excommunicated the Jewish women who worked with Miss Cooper as the rabbis saw working for gentiles to be the first step to conversion. Nonetheless, over 150 Jewish women learned fine needlework which Mrs. Finn sold at a bazaar she started in 1849 besides sending their work to London for sale. (The Bazaar has been re-instituted at Christ Church in recent years and is held each May. The proceeds of the sale go to the poor of the Old City).

In 1850 Elizabeth escorted HRH Princess Mariana around the city to see the various Protestant works that had begun under LJS to benefit the Jewish people – the Hospital, the School, Miss Cooper's Institute and to the "converts" House of Industry. That same year James Finn offered a plot of land to a Jewish believer saying that "My great object and desire being to see the land of Israel cultivated by Christian Israelites preparatory to the time when the land will be all restored to their nation."²⁴ A Jewish believer, Simeon Rosenthal, led the agricultural work. Jewish employees were allowed to break from work for Jewish congregational prayer as well for Sabbath and holidays. The farm books were kept in Hebrew.

As Consul James Finn fought for the Jews to have equal rights in the area. In 1854 he submitted a written petition on behalf of Jerusalem's Ashkenazi Jews requesting permission for them to build a synagogue.

Conclusion

Johanna Cartwright and Elizabeth Finn are among the unsung heroes of Christian Zionist history. Without an overlay of theology or a particular hermeneutic, these women and the societies they represented relied solely on the written Word of God to conclude that:

1. God was not finished with His Jewish people in His plan of salvation

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²⁴ Jack, Sybil M. "James and Elizabeth Finn: Missionary Activity in Jerusalem 1848-1863," 17.

- 2. That the Jews would one day be restored to their Messiah and their land
- 3. That the Jew's restoration would bring "life from the dead" to the rest of the world.

They also saw and took responsibility as gentile believers who spurred Church leaders to the following points:

- 1. The church should repent of its anti-Jewish attitudes and actions
- 2. The church show mercy to the Jews first by taking the news of salvation to them but also by finding ways to ameliorate their suffering
- 3. The church must create an atmosphere of philosemitism based on biblical mandates
- 4. Believers should find all possible ways to have genuine and godly relationships with the Jews to bridge the gap that history has opened.

These two women acted for the Jewish people, acknowledging that to do so may bring criticism and misunderstanding to them. They believed the Bible and stood with the Jewish people regardless of the winds of cultural and political pressure that came against them in the periods of history in which they lived. They did not use the excuse that they were women to remain inactive and silent. May we all learn from their examples.

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