



 <https://doi.org/10.29327/2206789.20.35-1>

## INFLUENCE OF ROMANCE AND GERMANIC LANGUAGES ON THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK IN PAPIAMENTU

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**Abstract:** In this paper, we investigated how the names of the days of the week were formed in a philological and lexical approach in the Romance and Germanic languages and how they influenced the formation of Papiamentu, based on philological research already carried out and consultation to various dictionaries and translation tools. We observed that, in semantic issues, Papiamentu had the formation of the names of its days of the week from Portuguese and Spanish influences; on the other hand, in morphosyntactic constructions, the Germanic structure prevails, especially Dutch. This is interesting when we keep in mind that, the more we understand about human cognition, the more we realize the importance of linguistic processes, both for the way man sees, thinks and represents the world, and for the definition of his own humanity.

*Keywords:* papiamentu, lexicon, philology, culture

**Resumo:** Neste trabalho, investigamos como se formaram os nomes dos dias da semana numa abordagem filológica e lexical nas línguas românica e germânica e como eles influenciaram a formação do papiamentu, com base em pesquisas filológicas já realizadas e consulta a diversos dicionários e ferramentas de tradução. Observamos que, em questões semânticas, o Papiamentu teve a formação dos nomes dos seus dias da semana a partir de influências portuguesas e espanholas; por outro lado, nas construções morfossintáticas prevalece a estrutura germânica, especialmente holandesa. Isto é interessante quando temos em mente que, quanto mais entendemos sobre a cognição humana, mais percebemos a importância dos processos linguísticos, tanto para a forma como o homem vê, pensa e representa o mundo, como para a definição da sua própria humanidade.

*Palavras-chave:* papiamentu, léxico, filologia, cultura

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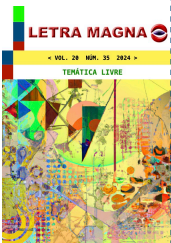
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Recebido em 05/01/2024

Aceito em 21/01/2024

Publicado em 29/02/2024



## Introduction

We began our research based on the words of Abbade (2008) that studying the lexicon of a language means following the history, customs, habits and structure of a people. The author states that the lexical study of languages is important to reveal secrets of social and linguistic history at specific moments in the history of each community. In other words, it is, «consequently, a dive into the history and culture of these people» (ABBADÉ, 2008, p. 716).

With this in mind, we can have a fine line between Philology, responsible for the advent of linguistic studies, from the 19th century onwards, and Lexicology. These studies influenced grammarians who sought to define the constitutive factors of language and languages. From this advent, according to Abbade (2008), Lexicology emerged, which studied language by analysing «the lexical content into conceptual elements («basic» meaning of the word), functional («specific» meaning) and morphosyntactic («accidental» meaning), and defending the formal and historical aspect of the word, subordinated to the semantic and sociocultural aspects” (2008, p. 716).

In this paper, we focus on conceptual elements in order to investigate a basic meaning that the days of the week have had over generations, based on philological research already carried out and consultation of various dictionaries and translation tools. We will discuss the origin of the word 'week' and how the names of its days were constituted in Papiamentu, having their origins made up of a mixture of languages that encompass both Romance and Germanic languages.

Next, considering that Papiamentu is the result of a mixture of languages from the Romance linguistic family, we researched how days are called in other languages belonging to this family. When observing the strong religious influence (whether monotheistic or polytheistic) in the formation of these names and, above all, in the cultural vision of the people of the time, we extended our research to Germanic languages, which also have strong ties with the formation of the language spoken in Curaçao.

As a result, we observe the uniqueness of Papiamentu in relation to other languages, although, as we will demonstrate, they all had religious influences that shaped the vision of how the world was seen at the time, whether through Christianity or doctrines known as pagan. Curaçao, mainly influenced by Christian-based religions (especially Catholicism, Protestantism and the Reformed Church) from European countries, has its

enslaved people adapting their Creole and African beliefs in a process of religious syncretism (Gerbner, 2018).

## **Background**

In this section we will address initial questions about the relationship between lexicon, culture and cognition, the history of papiamentu, in addition to weaving the connections between the historical materiality of the language and philology in the formation of the names of the days of the week.

### **Notes on Lexicon, Culture and Cognition**

Biderman (1978) points out that the lexicon of a language is the sum of all the accumulated experience of a society and the collection of its culture through the ages. When we talk about a natural language, Ferrarezi Júnior (2010) explains that we are facing “a socialised and culturally determined system of representation of worlds and their events” (2010, p. 12).

We then agree with Ferrarezi Júnior (2010) in arguing that language is constituted, constructed, functions and interferes in our own vision of the world to the extent that we need to represent with it the things that surround us, that is, our worlds (both the one we live in – as we see it – as those we can imagine). And, therefore, a language needs to be understood as an open system, which feeds and feeds back on man's own relationship with these same worlds.

As Silva (2008) argues, linguistic structures express conceptualisations, and conceptualisations carried out in and through language are intrinsically related to the way in which human beings experience reality, both physiologically and culturally.

Therefore, language is shaped by culture to the extent that culture demands from language appropriate forms of expression in all imaginable situations (Ferrarezi Júnior, 2010). But it should be noted that language is also a human construction and, therefore, is part of culture. However, at the same time as being part of a culture, language helps to build it. It is an inseparable relationship on three levels (at least), an inter-influence: our thinking, our already established culture and the language we speak, in which all elements influence and feed the others while feeding each other back.

## **Papiamentu: Cultural and Historical Issues**

Papiamentu is a creole language spoken in Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire, Caribbean islands with a lexical mix involving Germanic and Romance languages. This influence on the evolution of Papiamentu dates back to colonial times, when European powers explored and established their colonies in the region. We know that in the 17th century, the islands of Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire were under the rule of European colonial powers. Portuguese, as the language of colonisers, was introduced to the region, interacting with African languages brought by the enslaved. The slave trade brought a diversity of African languages to the islands, creating a linguistic base that combined African elements with Portuguese. During this period, the Spanish also exerted their influence, as the islands were under intermittent Spanish control.

Then the Netherlands took control of the islands in the 17th century, and Dutch became the official language. However, local communities continued to use Papiamentu, which was developing as a unique creole language, incorporating elements of Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and African languages. English, as a global lingua franca, has gradually been incorporated into the Papiamentu lexicon in the form of new imports.

As a result, we have creolisation evident in the simplified grammar and the fusion of elements from Romance and Germanic languages and often presents a phonetic simplification of words, making them more accessible to the local population. This is a common case in creole languages. The presence of elements of Romance and Germanic languages in Papiamentu reflects the cultural diversity of the Caribbean islands. This linguistic mix is a testament to colonial history and cultural interactions over the centuries.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Papiamentu continued to evolve, consolidating its grammar and vocabulary. Portuguese, although it was no longer the official language, left an indelible mark on the linguistic structure of Papiamentu, so that, in the 20th century, the islands began to recognise Papiamentu as an official language alongside Dutch. This formal recognition consolidated the importance of the language in the cultural identity of local communities.

Over the centuries, Papiamentu has emerged as a living symbol of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the ABC islands. Its ability to absorb influences from several languages, including Brazilian Portuguese, highlights the resilience and adaptability of

creole languages.

Today, Papiamentu is recognised as an official language in Aruba and Curaçao, as well as being spoken in parts of Bonaire. The preservation of this language is crucial to keeping the islands' rich cultural heritage alive and celebrating the diversity that constitutes it.

### **The Days of the Week and Their Historical and Philological Connections**

According to Svobodová (2012), the word 'septimana' is of Latin origin and was introduced by ecclesiastical Latin at the end of the 4th century. The meaning of the word was related to what was 'marked by the number 7'. At that time, civilisations already had the need to count time in intervals greater than one day, in order to mark the periodicity of events and religious events.

Svobodová (2012) explains that the seven-day system was developed by the Chaldeans, a people who originally lived south of Babylon, and was also known by the Hebrews, who started the week with the sabbath (the sabbath or shabbat was the Lord's day of rest), preceded by the six days of Creation).

Today, Saturday is the last day of the weekly calendar. Still according to Svobodová (2012), the Hebrews who lived in Rome called 'dies Solis' (day of the Sun) 'una/prima sabbati' (first day of rest) and the other days were called 'secunda sabbati' (second day of rest) to 'sixth sabbati' (sixth day of rest).

With Christianity, in 189 AD, the day of rest was changed to Sunday, under the influence of Pope Victor I, in honor of the resurrection of Christ. This decision interfered with the change of name from 'Dies Solis' (Day of the Sun) to 'Dominica/Dies Domini or Dies Dominicus) (Day of the Lord). The Jewish calendar was then taken advantage of by the Catholic Church with the introduction of the word 'Dominica', which was opposed to 'feria'.

Svobodová (2012) explains that Martinho de Braga (or Martin ho Bracarense), bishop of Braga and Dume, treated as a saint by the Catholic Church, considered it unworthy that Christians continued to call the days of the week by the pagan Latin names of Dies Lunae ( day of the Moon, or Diana, in Roman mythology, or Artemis, in Greek mythology), Dies Martis (day of Mars, or Ares, in Greek mythology), Dies Mercurii (day of Mercury, or Hermes, in Greek mythology), Dies Jovis (day of Jupiter, or Zeus, in Greek mythology), Dies Veneris (day of Venus, or Aphrodite, in Greek mythology), Dies Saturni

(day of Saturn, or Cronos, in Greek mythology) and Dies Solis (day of the Sun, or Helios/Apollo, in Greek mythology), making use of ecclesiastical terminology (Feria secunda, Feria tertia, Feria quarta, Feria quinta, Feria sexta, Sabbatum, Dominica or Dies Dominicus).

Taking into account that each day was named after a Roman god, and this name was also given to the planets, Sagan (1996), in questions focused on Astronomy, warns that at the time the days could have been named according to the hierarchy of the brightness of the astronomical bodies. corresponding ones – the Sun, the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Mars, Saturn and Mercury (and thus we would have, Solis, Lunae, Veneris, Jovis, Martis, Saturni and Mercurii), which was not done. Furthermore, he explains that if the days of the week had been ordered by distance from the Sun, the sequence would be Solis, Mercurii, Veneris, Lunae, Martis, Jovis and Saturni.

The problem is that the order of the planets was not known at the time the planets, gods and days of the week were named. Sagan (1996) concludes: «this collection of seven gods, seven days and seven worlds – the Sun, the Moon and five wandering planets – entered the minds of people throughout the world. The number seven began to acquire supernatural connotations” (Sagan, 1996, p. 78). Sagan further explains that this delimitation of seven days has no intrinsic astronomical importance, unlike days, months and years.

On the other hand, Porto and Porto (2008) explain that the ancient planetary system is Aristotelian and places the earth at the center. Aristotle's cosmology remained the only systematic thought from the 4th century BC until the 16th century AD. The order of the stars was established by assuming that the longer the star took to go around the Earth, the further away it should be. from the center. With the knowledge of the time, this order was: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto had not yet been discovered because they were not visible to the naked eye (SIAE98-USP, 2000).

In addition to the astronomical questioning made by Sagan, Boléo (1941) reported that the problem of conserving the enumerative system of the days of the week has been an object of interest to several Romanists, bringing historical, linguistic and religious contributions. However, a decisive result has not yet been found.

The researcher lists several hypotheses for the addition of “feria” to the days of the week: because the Portuguese are more Catholic or have received greater influence from Church authorities, or are more conservative, or the language was formed in a center,

located further away, south, than the others and where the Moorish influence would have been accentuated.

In Portugal, the reference of the “holiday” week to the week following Easter Sunday still persists, as does any temporal situation in which people do not work. Likewise, the word ‘feria’ refers, in the working class, to the total salary for the working week.

In the work, Boléo (1941) refutes the statement by Giese (1939), from the University of Hamburg, that the names were created under the influence of the Moors who lived outside the city of Lisbon, due to the commercial relations they maintained with the capital. The Moors designated days using the enumerative system next to the word: «second day», «third day», for example, which would correspond to Portuguese, ‘segunda-feira’ (Monday) etc.

He explains the conservation of the system with “feria” by the Hebrew influence, through the Shabbat (a word that meant, in addition to rest, also week). The Jewish calendar was taken advantage of by the Church, introducing the word 'Dominica', which was opposed to 'feira'.

To contest the Moorish origin defended by Giese (1939), Boléo (1941) explains that the Muslim influence was stronger and more prolonged and even so, in Lisbon the enumerative system with «feira» was not maintained, although it was used for some time, as documents from the first half of the 12th century prove, but later giving way to the pagan system used to this day.

Boléo presents a study of how to date the days of the month throughout the Iberian Peninsula, consulting documents from Portugal, Galicia and Spain, and concluding by stating that the situation was the same throughout the peninsula: either by calends (periods separated by occurrence of the new Moon), or for consecutive days, or for holy days. To reinforce this further, the Moors have lost influence since the reconquest of Lisbon, which further highlighted the uniqueness of Portuguese in designating the days of the week and its independence from Moorish processes.

We noticed Boléo's concern in giving an explanation with historical, cultural, religious and linguistic foundations, in addition to being carefully documented. It is evident that the reason for preserving the Portuguese enumerative system with “feira”, which differs from all other Romance languages, is the most conservative and religious characteristic of the Portuguese people, alongside the strongest authority of the Church. We emphasise that this is a hypothesis, as we have not found ways to scientifically prove the greater

conservatism or greater religiosity of the Portuguese.

## Materials and Methods

We consulted the following dictionaries to gather information about the words and their meanings:

1. Bluteau, R (1739). Dicionário da língua portuguesa. Ampl. Antônio de Morais. Lisboa: Oficina de Thadeo Ferreira.
2. GLOSBE (2023). Dicionário multilingüe online. Disponível em: <https://pt.glosbe.com/pt/pap/semana>. Acesso em 06 dez 2023.
3. Kroonen, G. (2013). Etymological dictionary of Proto-Germanic. Leiden/Boston: Brill. Ørberg, H. H. (1998). Latin-English Vocabulary II. Focus Publishing: Newburyport-MA. Orel, V. A (2003). Handbook of Germanic etymology. Leiden/ Boston: Brill.
4. Quicherat, L. et al. (s.d.). Novissimo diccionario latino-portuguez: etymologico, prosodico, historico, geographico, mythologico, biographico, etc. no qual aproveitados os trabalhos de philologia e lexicographia mais recentes (v. 1), 7<sup>a</sup> ed. Rio de Janeiro, Garnier.
5. Roberts, J. et al. (2017). A Thesaurus of Old English. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Disponível em <http://oldenglishthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/>. Acesso em 01 abr. 2020.

We created the following table with the days of the week in several Romance languages to check the proximity of the lexias in each language according to the corresponding deity:

**Table 1**

*Names of the days of the week in different Romance languages*

Papiamentu	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Latim	Roman god
diadomingu, dia domingu, djadomingo	domingo	domingo	dimanche	Dies Solis	Sol
djaluna, dia luna, dialuna	segunda- feira	lunes	lundi	Dies Lunae	Lua
dia mars, diamars, djamars	terça- feira	marts	mardi	Dies Martis	Marte
djarason, dia rason, diarason	quarta- feira	miércoles	mercredi	Dies Mercurii	Mercúrio
diaweps, diaheubs, diahuebs	quinta- feira	jueves	jeudi	Dies Iovis	Júpiter
diabièrne, djabièrna, diabierna	sexta- feira	viernes	vendredi	Dies Veneris	Vênus
diasabra, djasabra, saba	sábado	sábado	samedi	Dies Saturni	Saturno

Source: From the author, with the exception of Latin [Ørberg, 1998; Quicherat, n.d.]



As we can see, the names of the days of the week in several Romance languages maintained similar forms, both with the respective deities honoured, as well as 'Sunday' and 'Saturday', which, as we have already explained, correspond to the 'Lord's day' and to the 'day of rest', due to Jewish and Christian influence.

Still, an exception is 'djarason', "ration day", which apparently derives from the Portuguese word for ration (ração), since Wednesday was the normal day on which slaves received their weekly rations. Others attribute the word to the Dutch word 'rantsoen', which has the same meaning, as Fouse (2007) explains.

The *Diccionario da Lingua Portuguesa* (Bluteau, 1739), which introduced Rafael Bluteau's legacy into the history of the Portuguese language and lexicography, defines the 'feira' as 'the place where on certain weekly, monthly or annual days merchants and farmers compete to sell the products of the land, arts and mechanics'. It also says that the word is added to the days of the week, except Saturdays and Sundays, but does not explain why this happened.

It is also interesting to highlight the formation of the names of the days of the week in Papiamentu with the addition of 'dja' or 'dia' to the respective days of the week, something very similar to what we see in Germanic languages, with the addition of 'dag'. Next, we present a table with the days of the week in several Germanic languages with the respective deity honoured:

**Table 2**

*Names of the days of the week in different Germanic languages*

English	German	Dutch	Proto-Germanic	Old English (Anglo-Saxon)	Norse god
Sunday	Sonntag	Zondag	Sunnōniz daʒaz	Sunnandæg	
Monday	Montag	Maandag	Mēnan daʒaz	Mōnandæg	
Tuesday	Dienstag	Dinsdag	Tīwas daʒaz	Tīwesdæg	Tyr
Wednesday	Mittwoch	Woensdag	Wōðanas daʒaz	Wōðnesdæg	Odin
Thursday	Donnerstag	Donderdag	Þunras daʒaz	Þunresdæg	Thor
Friday	Freitag	Vrijdag	Frijjōz daʒaz	Frīgedæg	Frigg
Saturday	Samstag	Zaterdag	Sætern daʒaz	Sætendæg	

*Source:* By the author, with the exception of Proto-Germanic [Kroonen, 2013; Orel, 2003] and Old English [Roberts; Kay; Grundy, 2017]

In English, the days were named after the gods of the Saxon (Germanic) and Celtic

communities of Britain. Oliveira (2019) clarifies that these people adapted the system introduced by the Romans, replacing Germanic deities with Roman ones, but still having some relationship between them. For example: 'Tuesday' (Tuesday) comes from 'Tiw's Day', referring to Týr, Norse god of war. In Greek mythology, the god of war is Ares, whom the Romans referred to as Mars. 'Dies Martis', as we have already explained, is the day of Mars and, like the day of Týr, both are war deities and represent the same day of the week. Still according to Oliveira (2019), this process must have occurred before the introduction of Christianity (7th and 8th centuries).

Successively, in English: 'Sunday' is equivalent to «Sun's Day»; 'Monday' is equivalent to "Moon's Day". And 'Tuesday' we already explained in the previous paragraph. 'Wednesday' (Wednesday) is equivalent to the day of the Germanic god Woden (known as Odin), loosely related to the corresponding Latin dies Mercurii, «Mercury Day».

Thursday is the form of "Thor's Day", god of thunder, related to the Latin Iovis (Jupiter), god of the sky and thunder for the Roman people ('Zeus' in Greek mythology).

Friday is equivalent to "Frīg's Day", meaning the day of the Anglo-Saxon goddess Frīg. The Norse term for the planet Venus was Friggjarstjarna (or 'Frīg's star'). In Latin, it corresponds to dies Veneris, 'day of Venus'. Frīg (also associated with 'Freya') is the divinity of love, fertility and beauty, both characteristics of Venus (in Roman mythology) and Aphrodite (in Greek mythology).

Saturday was the only term in which there was no replacement of Romanesque deities by Germanic ones. Literally, it means "day of Saturn". It did not originate from the Vikings, but from the Latin "dies Saturni".

As Oliveira (2019) explains, the Anglo-Saxon was brought to the British Isles by the Germanic tribes. As a result, during the first centuries of the Christian Era, a distinct dialect of Proto-Germanic began to form, as happened with the formation of Low German.

It is interesting to highlight that, in Icelandic, German and Finnish, respectively, the words 'Miðvikur', 'Mittwoch' and 'keskiviikko' mean 'middle of the week'. A similar situation occurs in ancient Italian, which also had the word "mezzadima", that is, 'middle of the week', to designate Wednesday. Therefore, little by little a term was created that was disconnected from religious motivation.

Curaçao is mostly Catholic (72.8%)<sup>1</sup> but has Brua followers. Brua is an Afro-

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<sup>1</sup> According to research carried out by the Contemporary Portal of Latin America and the Caribbean, from the University of São Paulo (USP), <https://sites.usp.br/portalatinoamericano/espanol-curacao>

Caribbean religion and healing tradition practiced predominantly in the ABC islands and at its center is belief in the Christian God (called 'papa Dios' in Papiamentu - and we know that 'Dios' has its influence from the Romance languages), but prayers can also be directed to Catholic saints, who many adhere to Brua equated them to African gods and spirits. Individuals can even approach the almasola, the 'servant of the devil' or 'the devil himself' who supposedly resides in the ocean surrounding the islands, from where he can attack anyone. The Brua religion was banned by the Roman Catholic Church from the beginning and was often publicly frowned upon as "inferior" and "evil", remaining clandestine to this day, with practices taking place in places well hidden from the public eye but still frequented. by individuals from all social, ethnic and economic strata (Punski-Hoogervorst, Rhuggenaath & Blom, 2022), just as we return to Gerbner (2018). This is not a particular case of the ABC islands, but rather the entire enslaved community that was destined for the American continent. In Brazil, prejudice still exists towards Candomblé and Umbanda (Pereira, 2023).

## Results

We observe a strong religious influence (whether monotheistic or polytheistic) in the formation of these names and, above all, in the cultural vision of the people of the time.

In the case of Papiamentu, we see that, as happened with 'Mittwoch' and 'keskiviikko', Wednesday receives a new name in Papiamentu due to the historical roots of the period of slavery, which shows the uniqueness of the languages in their processes of word formation and naming of the days of the week.

Papiamentu is a fascinating example of how languages can evolve and transform over time, reflecting complex cultural and historical interactions. The contribution of the Romance and Germanic languages to the formation of Papiamentu stands out as a significant chapter in this history, highlighting the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity in the construction of a community's identity. The preservation of Papiamentu not only honors the past, but also represents a commitment to the continuity of a unique and rich linguistic heritage.

This is interesting when we keep in mind that, the more we understand about human cognition, the more we realize the importance of linguistic processes, both for the way man sees, thinks and represents the world, and for the definition of his own humanity. This capacity is, according to Ferrarezi Júnior (2010), also a unique differentiating element of natural

languages in relation to artificial languages, such as those of computers, which gives a dimension of the importance of these phenomena in any linguistic system.

### **Discussion**

In this work, we tried to focus on some conceptual elements in order to investigate a basic meaning that the days of the week have had over generations, based on philological research already carried out and consultation of various dictionaries and translation tools.

Future research could focus on a more in-depth analysis of the linguistic structure of Papiamentu, exploring how specific elements of the Romance and Germanic languages manifest themselves in grammar, phonology and syntax, as well as their adaptation to different social and historical contexts, which could provide insights valuable. Furthermore, an analysis of regional variation within Papiamentu could also be an interesting topic of research. As the language is spoken on different islands, there can be significant variations in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. Considering the contemporary scenario, research can address how Papiamentu is responding to contact with other languages due to globalisation and tourism, in the case of English imports, which may include recent linguistic borrowings and changes in linguistic dynamics.

### **Conclusions**

Religious views can significantly impact the lexicon of a language, as religious beliefs often play a central role in shaping cultural values, practices, and thought patterns. The influence of religion on language can manifest in various ways, including the adoption of religious terminology, the creation of religiously inspired expressions, and the integration of religious concepts into everyday language.

Papiamentu has been influenced by various languages, including Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and African languages, due to the historical context of colonisation and the slave trade. The names of the days of the week in Papiamentu show the influence of the region's historical and religious context, with clear links to the traditions of Roman Catholicism and the celestial associations often found in many cultures, in addition to the impact of Germanic languages on morphosyntax, with the addition of 'dja' very similar to the 'dag' seen in these languages.

For future research, we intend to more closely compare the similarities found in

languages with origins from different families, on the other hand, to present the singularities that make each of them, whether Romance, Germanic or Creole, unique within each grammar and linguistic system, linked to the formation of thought and interfaces with the culture of each community.

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