

Life In The Indus Valley

Life in the Indus Valley: A Journey Through Time **** The Indus Valley Civilization, one of the world's oldest urban cultures, flourished between 3300 and 1300 BCE. Spanning across modern-day Pakistan and northwest India, this remarkable civilization left behind a fascinating legacy of sophisticated urban planning, advanced engineering, and a unique way of life. In this post, we'll delve into the intricacies of daily life in the Indus Valley, exploring their impressive feats and shedding light on their remarkable achievements. Understanding the Urban Landscape**

Imagine sprawling cities meticulously planned, with grid layouts and sophisticated drainage systems. The Indus Valley cities, such as Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, stand as testaments to their engineering prowess. These weren't haphazard settlements; rather, they were meticulously planned urban centers. *(Visual: Include a map highlighting the key Indus Valley sites like Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, with corresponding images of excavated ruins.)*

Housing and Architecture: Designing for Daily Life Indus Valley homes varied in size and complexity, often constructed from baked bricks. Houses were frequently built around courtyards, with rooms arranged efficiently. This layout is reminiscent of many traditional South Asian homes today. A typical house often featured:

- **Private Bathrooms:** Indus Valley homes often had their own bathrooms and toilets, with advanced drainage systems that led to public sewage lines. This attention to sanitation is a hallmark of their civilization. *(Example image: A diagram showing a cross-section of an Indus Valley house with bathroom and drainage.)*
- **Water Management:** Wells and reservoirs were integral parts of the community. This indicates a sophisticated understanding of water management, essential for sustaining a large population. *(How-to: Describe the process of building a well from local resources, similar to what the Indus Valley people might have done.)*

Economy: Trade and Craftsmanship Trade played a vital role in the Indus Valley economy. Evidence suggests extensive trade networks stretching across Central Asia, Mesopotamia, and beyond. This trade involved agricultural products, crafts like pottery and textiles, and precious stones. *(Visual: Include images of Indus Valley pottery, seals, and other artifacts.)*

Craftsmanship and Art: Reflecting Society The Indus Valley people were skilled artisans. Their pottery, often decorated with intricate designs, showcases their artistic abilities. Seals with unique symbols and motifs provide insights into their beliefs and social structures. *(Practical Example: Demonstrate how to create a basic Indus Valley-inspired pottery design using clay and simple tools.)*

Agriculture: The Foundation of Life Agriculture formed the bedrock of the Indus Valley economy. Evidence suggests they cultivated various crops, including wheat, barley, and cotton. Their farming methods, though less technologically advanced than our modern era, were highly efficient for the time. *(How-to: Explain different irrigation methods likely used in the Indus Valley, like canal systems, for modern application in similar climates.)*

Religion and Beliefs: Insights from Artifacts While a comprehensive understanding of Indus Valley religion is still emerging, artifacts suggest a rich system of beliefs. The presence of figurines, seals, and specific architectural features hints at a complex pantheon of deities and ritual practices. *(Visual: Include images of Indus Valley figurines and seals.)*

Decline and Legacy: The Mysteries of Disappearance The Indus Valley Civilization eventually declined, and the reasons behind its demise remain a subject of ongoing debate. Possible factors include environmental changes, shifts in trade routes, or potential conflicts. Regardless of the specific causes, the legacy of the Indus Valley Civilization continues to inspire awe and admiration. Their innovative urban planning, advanced engineering, and artistic talents remain a significant contribution to the history of human civilization.

Key Points

- **Urban Planning:** The Indus Valley cities were meticulously planned with grid layouts and advanced drainage systems.
- **Advanced Engineering:** Their understanding of water management and sanitation was remarkable for their time.
- **Trade and Craftsmanship:** Extensive trade networks and skilled artisans were hallmarks of their society.
- **Agricultural Foundation:** Agriculture was vital to their economy, with cultivation of various crops.
- **Intriguing Religion:** Artifacts suggest a complex religious system, though details remain elusive.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): 1. Q: What materials did they use to build their houses? A: Predominantly

baked bricks were used for construction. 2. Q: What were the Indus Valley writing systems like? A: **The Indus Valley script remains largely undeciphered, posing challenges for historians.** 3. Q: How did they manage their water supply? A: **They constructed elaborate wells and reservoirs, highlighting their sophisticated understanding of water management.** 4. Q: What do the Indus Valley seals tell us? A: **Seals bear unique symbols and motifs, providing insights into their beliefs, trade practices, and possibly even their social structures.** 5. Q: What happened to the Indus Valley Civilization? A: **The exact reasons for its decline are still debated, but possibilities include environmental changes, shifts in trade routes, or potential conflicts.**

Conclusion:** The Indus Valley Civilization stands as a testament to human ingenuity and adaptability. Their innovative approach to urban planning, engineering, and trade laid the groundwork for future civilizations. Exploring their remnants offers valuable lessons about the evolution of human societies and the enduring power of human creativity. Further research and discoveries continue to shed light on this remarkable civilization, unveiling new chapters in the story of humanity.

Life in the Indus Valley: A Glimpse into Ancient Urbanity

Imagine a world hundreds of years before the pyramids of Egypt rose, a civilization that was not just thriving, but sophisticated. This was the reality of the Indus Valley Civilization, a sprawling network of cities and settlements that flourished between 2600 and 1900 BCE. Often referred to as the Harappan Civilization (after the first site to be extensively excavated), this ancient culture left behind an enduring legacy of urban planning, innovative technologies, and a way of life that continues to fascinate archaeologists and historians alike. So, what was it truly like to live in the Indus Valley? Let's journey back in time and explore.

A Land of Rivers and Fertile Plains

The very existence of the Indus Valley Civilization was intrinsically linked to its environment. The mighty Indus River, along with its tributaries like the Ravi, Chenab, and Sutlej, provided the lifeblood for this vast civilization. These rivers deposited rich alluvial soil, creating incredibly fertile plains perfect for agriculture. This agricultural abundance was the bedrock upon which their impressive urban centers were built. Without the bounty of the land, the development of such complex societies would have been impossible. The climate was generally favorable, supporting staple crops like wheat, barley, peas, and dates. Evidence suggests they also cultivated cotton, a significant development that would go on to play a crucial role in trade for centuries. This agricultural prowess allowed for surplus production, which in turn supported a growing population and enabled specialization of labor.

Cities Built on a Grand Scale: The Marvel of Urban Planning

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Indus Valley Civilization is its remarkable urban planning. Cities like Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, now UNESCO World Heritage Sites, showcase a level of sophistication rarely seen in the ancient world. These weren't haphazard settlements; they were meticulously designed, grid-like metropolises.

The Grid System: Order in the Chaos

One of the most astounding aspects is the deliberate use of a grid system for street layout. Streets were straight, wide, and intersected at right angles, demonstrating a clear understanding of urban design principles. This organized layout facilitated easy movement of people and goods within the cities and likely aided in efficient drainage and sanitation.

Advanced Sanitation and Water Management

The Indus people were pioneers in sanitation and water management. Almost every house had its own private well and bathing area, connected to a sophisticated network of covered drains that ran along the streets. This advanced sewage system was far ahead of its time, indicating a strong emphasis on public health and hygiene. The Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro, a large, watertight public bathing pool, is another testament to their focus on water-related infrastructure and possibly ritualistic practices.

Standardized Bricks and Construction

Another fascinating detail is the use of standardized, baked bricks in construction. These bricks were remarkably uniform in size and shape, suggesting a centralized control over production and a commitment to quality. This standardization would have made construction efficient and durable. The buildings themselves were often multi-story, constructed from these durable bricks, and featured courtyards and inner rooms, providing privacy and a sense of community.

A Society of Artisans, Traders, and Farmers

While the urban centers were impressive, the Indus Valley was a complex society with diverse roles. Life wasn't solely confined to the bustling cities.

The Backbone of the Economy: Agriculture and Trade

As mentioned, agriculture was fundamental. Farmers toiled in the fertile plains, producing enough food to sustain themselves and contribute to the urban populations. Beyond sustenance, they cultivated crops like cotton, which became a valuable commodity for trade. The Indus Valley Civilization was also a highly mercantile society. Extensive trade networks stretched across vast distances, connecting them with Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf, and possibly even Egypt. Archaeologists have found Indus seals in Mesopotamian sites and Mesopotamian artifacts in Indus cities, clear evidence of this ancient commerce.

Craftsmanship and Specialized Skills

The artisans of the Indus Valley were incredibly skilled. We see evidence of exquisite craftsmanship in pottery, metalwork (bronze tools and weapons), bead-making, and sculpture. The famous "Priest-King" statue and the "Dancing Girl" bronze figure from Mohenjo-daro are prime examples of their artistic prowess. These skilled craftsmen likely operated in workshops within the cities, producing goods for both domestic use and export.

The Mystery of Their Language and Governance

One of the most enduring mysteries of the Indus Valley Civilization is their script. Numerous seals, pottery, and other artifacts bear inscriptions in a script that remains undeciphered to this day. This linguistic barrier makes it challenging to fully understand their social structure, beliefs, and administrative systems. Similarly, the exact nature of their governance is debated. The uniformity in city planning and the standardized weights and measures suggest a degree of centralized authority, but the absence of grand palaces or monumental temples, unlike in other ancient civilizations, leaves room for interpretation. Some scholars suggest a more decentralized form of governance, perhaps ruled by councils of elders or merchant guilds.

Daily Life: What We Can Infer

While we lack written records to paint a vivid picture of daily routines, archaeological findings offer tantalizing clues about life in the Indus Valley.

Homes and Hearth

Indus homes were built around courtyards, providing private spaces for families. They likely cooked on hearths, and evidence suggests they enjoyed a varied diet. Pottery found in abundance includes bowls, plates, and storage jars, indicating how they prepared and consumed food.

Leisure and Recreation

The discovery of dice, board games, and small clay figures suggests that people in the Indus Valley had leisure time for recreation and entertainment. Children likely played with toys, mirroring the simple joys of childhood across millennia.

Beliefs and Spirituality

While definitive temples are absent, evidence points towards a rich spiritual life. Numerous figurines of women, often interpreted as mother goddesses, suggest a focus on fertility and the divine feminine. Animal figures, particularly the bull, were also prevalent, hinting at their importance in religious or symbolic contexts. Seals depicting a figure in a yogic posture have led some to believe in the early origins of yoga.

The Decline and Legacy

Around 1900 BCE, the Indus Valley Civilization began to decline. The reasons are not fully understood, but a combination of factors likely contributed, including climate change (shifts in monsoon patterns), environmental degradation, and possibly the drying up of rivers. While the great cities were eventually abandoned, the people and their knowledge did not disappear entirely. The legacy of the Indus Valley Civilization is profound. Their advancements in urban planning, sanitation, and trade laid the groundwork for future civilizations in the Indian subcontinent. Their agricultural innovations and the cultivation of cotton had long-lasting economic impact. Even the undeciphered script continues to be a tantalizing puzzle, a reminder of the vast human history we are still uncovering. Living in the Indus Valley was, in many ways, a testament to human ingenuity and the desire for organized, civilized life. It was a society that prioritized public health, appreciated skilled craftsmanship, and engaged in extensive trade, all within a framework of sophisticated urban design. Though the reasons for their decline remain debated, the echoes of their achievements resonate through history, offering us a compelling glimpse into one of humanity's earliest and most remarkable urban experiments. The sheer scale and sophistication of their cities, their advanced understanding of engineering and public health, and their far-reaching trade networks make the Indus Valley Civilization a truly awe-inspiring chapter in the story of human civilization.

Life in the Indus Valley: A Glimpse into One of Humanity's Earliest Urban Civilizations The Indus Valley Civilization, flourishing between approximately 2600 and 1900 BCE, stands as one of the most remarkable early urban cultures in human history. Spanning a vast region across what is today Pakistan, northwest India, and parts of Afghanistan, this sophisticated society laid foundational stones for urban living, governance, and cultural expression long before many contemporaneous civilizations. Its cities, advanced infrastructure, and intricate trade networks offer profound insights into how ancient communities organized themselves, thrived, and adapted to their environment.

A Civilization Rooted in Urban Innovation

At the heart of the Indus Valley Civilization was its

remarkable urban planning. Cities such as Harappa, Mohenjodaro, and Dholavira reveal a level of architectural precision unmatched in the ancient world. These settlements featured grid-patterned streets, standardized brick sizes, and complex drainage systems—evidence of a highly organized society with centralized authority. The presence of public baths, granaries, and fortified citadels suggests not only technical mastery but also a concern for civic welfare and communal cohesion. Unlike contemporary civilizations that often displayed monumental palaces or temples, the Indus cities emphasized functionality and equity, reflecting a unique approach to urban life centered on practicality and sustainability.

Life in these settlements was deeply intertwined with agriculture, river systems, and seasonal cycles. The Indus River and its tributaries provided fertile soil and reliable water sources, enabling the cultivation of wheat, barley, and cotton—the latter marking one of the earliest known uses of this versatile crop. Evidence from archaeological sites indicates advanced irrigation techniques, crop rotation, and storage facilities, pointing to a sophisticated agricultural economy capable of supporting dense populations. The reliance on agriculture fostered surplus production, which in turn stimulated trade both within the civilization and with distant regions such as Mesopotamia, enhancing cultural exchange and economic complexity.

Daily Life and Social Organization

The daily existence of Indus Valley inhabitants reveals a society marked by craftsmanship, commerce, and cultural continuity. Artisans produced finely crafted pottery, beads, seals, and tools, often decorated with intricate motifs and inscriptions in a script still not fully deciphered. The widespread use of standardized weights and measures underscores a regulated economy and a shared system of exchange. Households included hearths, storage jars, and evidence of textile production, suggesting a vibrant domestic life centered on food preparation, craft, and family. Social structure remains a subject of scholarly debate, but the uniformity of housing across cities implies a relatively egalitarian distribution of resources, with minimal architectural distinction indicating elite classes.

Trade played a pivotal role in sustaining the Indus economy and connecting it to broader networks. Seals bearing animal motifs and script have been found as far west as Mesopotamia, confirming long-distance maritime and overland exchanges. Goods such as carnelian beads, cotton cloth, and agricultural products flowed outward, while imported materials like lapis lazuli and tin enriched local craftsmanship. This interconnectedness not only boosted economic vitality but also facilitated the transmission of ideas, technologies, and artistic styles across vast regions.

Enduring Legacy and Future Research

Though the Indus Valley Civilization eventually declined, its

legacy endures in the foundations it laid for urban development, agricultural innovation, and cultural exchange. The meticulous planning of its cities and the emphasis on public infrastructure foreshadowed principles still vital in modern urban design. Moreover, the civilization's mystery—especially the undeciphered script and the reasons for its gradual transformation—continues to inspire archaeological inquiry and technological exploration. Advances in remote sensing, DNA analysis, and computational linguistics offer promising avenues to unlock deeper understanding of this ancient world.

Looking ahead, the study of the Indus Valley Civilization remains crucial for appreciating the diversity and ingenuity of early human societies. As researchers uncover new sites and refine analytical methods, we move closer to reconstructing the rhythms of life along the Indus River—a civilization that, though ancient, speaks powerfully to the enduring human drive for innovation, community, and resilience. This deep historical perspective not only enriches our knowledge of the past but also informs how we approach sustainable development and cultural preservation in the present and future.

The Indus Valley Civilization, also known as the Harappan Civilization, stands as one of the most enigmatic and influential ancient societies in human history. Flourishing between approximately 2600 BCE and 1900 BCE, this Bronze Age civilization spanned a vast geographical area,

encompassing parts of modern-day Pakistan and northwestern India. Far from being a collection of scattered settlements, it represented a highly organized and sophisticated urban culture, leaving behind a legacy of impressive achievements that continue to fascinate archaeologists and historians. Understanding life in the Indus Valley requires delving into its remarkable city planning, advanced technology, intricate social structures, and the enduring mysteries that still shroud its decline.

The Genesis and Spread of a Flourishing Civilization

Emerging from earlier Neolithic farming communities, the Indus Valley Civilization rapidly transformed into a complex urban society. Its geographical expanse was truly remarkable, stretching from the foothills of the Himalayas in the north to the Arabian Sea in the south, and from eastern Afghanistan to the western Indian state of Gujarat. Key to its success was the fertile plain of the Indus River and its tributaries, which provided abundant resources for agriculture, the bedrock of its economy. The civilization's rise was not an overnight phenomenon; it evolved over centuries, with evidence of increasing settlement size, technological innovation, and social stratification leading up to its mature urban phase.

Harappa and Mohenjo-daro: The Apex of Urbanism

The twin metropolises of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro are the most prominent examples of Indus Valley urban centers. These cities were not haphazardly built but were meticulously planned with a remarkable degree of foresight. Their grid-like

street layouts, featuring wide, straight avenues intersecting at right angles, speak volumes about their sophisticated urban planning capabilities. The buildings, primarily constructed from standardized baked bricks, were remarkably uniform in size and shape, suggesting a strong central authority or a shared sense of civic responsibility. The scale and organization of these cities were unparalleled in the ancient world, predating similar developments in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

A Glimpse into Daily Life: Society and Economy

Life in the Indus Valley was characterized by order, efficiency, and a surprisingly egalitarian social structure, at least in comparison to other contemporary civilizations. While there is evidence of some social stratification, it appears to have been less pronounced than in the stratified societies of Egypt or Mesopotamia, where grand royal tombs and opulent palaces dominated the landscape. The focus seemed to be on communal well-being and the efficient functioning of urban life.

The Foundation of Prosperity: Agriculture and Trade

Agriculture was the lifeblood of the Indus Valley Civilization. The fertile alluvial soil of the Indus plains, enriched by annual floods, supported the cultivation of a variety of crops, including wheat, barley, peas, lentils, sesame, and dates. Evidence suggests the use of the plough, allowing for larger-scale farming and surplus production. This agricultural surplus was crucial for supporting a large urban population

and for engaging in extensive trade. The civilization's economy was not solely agrarian; trade played a vital role in its prosperity.

Archaeological finds have revealed extensive trade networks that stretched far beyond the Indus region. Indus seals and pottery have been discovered in Mesopotamia, indicating a thriving maritime trade across the Persian Gulf. In return, they likely imported precious metals, gemstones, and other raw materials not readily available in their own territory. This interregional exchange facilitated the diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices, contributing to the dynamism of the civilization.

Craftsmanship and Technological Prowess

The Indus people were skilled artisans and craftspeople, producing a wide array of sophisticated goods. Metallurgy was well-developed, with evidence of the working of copper, bronze, and gold. They created tools, weapons, ornaments, and household items with impressive skill. Their pottery, often decorated with intricate geometric patterns and animal motifs, is another testament to their artistic sensibilities. Beyond their artistic endeavors, their technological achievements were remarkable.

The invention of a standardized system of weights and measures, along with the development of a sophisticated script (still undeciphered), speaks to a high level of intellectual and organizational capacity. The precision of their brick sizes, uniform across vast distances, indicates a centralized control or adherence to common standards. The

intricate drainage and sanitation systems found in their cities are perhaps their most enduring technological marvel. The meticulous planning of public baths, covered sewers, and individual house drainage systems suggests a profound understanding of public health and hygiene, a concept that would not be fully appreciated for millennia in other parts of the world.

Social Organization and Governance

The governance of the Indus Valley Civilization remains a subject of much debate. The uniformity of urban planning, architectural styles, and artifacts across such a vast area suggests a significant degree of centralized authority or a shared cultural ideology. However, unlike contemporary Mesopotamian and Egyptian societies, there is a notable absence of grand palaces, elaborate royal tombs, or monumental statues of rulers. This has led to speculation that the civilization may have been governed by a council of priests, merchants, or a more collective form of leadership, rather than by individual monarchs.

The emphasis on public works like drainage systems and granaries, rather than ostentatious displays of royal power, further supports the idea of a society prioritizing communal well-being. The presence of a sophisticated writing system, albeit undeciphered, would have been essential for administration, record-keeping, and the management of trade. Understanding the Indus script is thus a critical key to unlocking the mysteries of their governance and social structure.

The Enigmatic Decline of a Great Civilization

The decline of the Indus Valley Civilization, which began around 1900 BCE, is as enigmatic as its rise. While the precise causes are still debated, a combination of factors likely contributed to its gradual disintegration. The absence of widespread warfare or evidence of sudden catastrophic events suggests a more protracted process of societal transformation and decline.

Potential Factors Contributing to Decline

One of the most widely accepted theories points to environmental changes. Shifts in river courses, particularly the drying up of the Ghaggar-Hakra river system, which was a vital artery for many settlements, would have had devastating consequences for agriculture and trade. Climate change, leading to increased aridity and reduced monsoon rainfall, could have crippled the agricultural base upon which the civilization depended.

Another contributing factor may have been ecological degradation. Deforestation for fuel and building materials, coupled with intensive agriculture, could have led to soil erosion and reduced fertility. Overpopulation in urban centers, combined with these environmental pressures, could have strained resources and led to social unrest.

Theories of invasion by Aryan tribes, once popular, are now largely discounted due to a lack of compelling archaeological evidence of widespread conflict during the period of decline. While migration and cultural exchange likely occurred, the

narrative of a violent conquest has been largely superseded by evidence of a more gradual societal transformation.

As the major urban centers declined, the population dispersed, and the sophisticated urban infrastructure fell into disrepair. The Indus script gradually disappeared, and many of the cultural practices that defined the civilization faded into regional traditions. The legacy of the Indus Valley Civilization, however, was not entirely lost. Elements of its agricultural practices, trade networks, and perhaps even certain cultural and religious beliefs, are thought to have persisted and influenced later developments in the Indian subcontinent, forming a crucial, albeit often overlooked, chapter in the history of human civilization.

The Enduring Legacy and Unanswered Questions

The Indus Valley Civilization continues to captivate with its advanced urban planning, technological ingenuity, and the tantalizing mystery of its undeciphered script. The sheer scale of its achievements, predating many later advancements, underscores the sophistication of ancient human societies. Its emphasis on public health and sanitation is particularly remarkable and serves as a reminder of the long historical trajectory of human efforts towards creating healthier living environments. The ongoing efforts to decipher the Indus script hold the promise of unlocking deeper insights into their beliefs, governance, and daily lives.

The study of life in the Indus Valley offers invaluable lessons about the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability,

societal organization, and technological progress. It stands as a testament to the capacity for complex societal development in the ancient world and continues to inspire awe and fuel scholarly inquiry, reminding us that history is a continuous narrative of innovation, adaptation, and the enduring human quest for civilization.

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In the end, accessing *Life In The Indus Valley* in this way supports steady growth. It blends learning into everyday life, allowing understanding to develop gradually and naturally, guided by curiosity rather than pressure.

Questions & Answers About life in the indus valley

No	Question	Answer
1	What made the Indus Valley Civilization so advanced for its time?	The Indus Valley Civilization (c. 2600-1900 BCE) was remarkably advanced due to its sophisticated urban planning, including well-organized grid layouts, advanced sanitation systems with indoor plumbing, and standardized brick sizes, all indicative of strong central governance and engineering skills.
2	What do we know about the daily lives of Indus Valley people?	Daily life likely revolved around agriculture, with people cultivating wheat, barley, and cotton. They were skilled artisans, producing pottery, jewelry, and seals, and lived in multi-roomed brick houses. Trade was also a significant part of their economy.
3	Why is the Indus script still a mystery to us?	The Indus script, found on seals and pottery, remains undeciphered because we haven't found a 'Rosetta Stone' – a bilingual text that would allow us to cross-reference symbols. The inscriptions are also very short, making linguistic analysis challenging.
4	What kind of food did Indus Valley people eat?	Their diet was primarily agrarian, consisting of cereals like wheat and barley, pulses, and vegetables. They also raised cattle, sheep, and goats for milk and meat, and evidence suggests they consumed fish and fruits.
5	Did the Indus Valley Civilization have a religion? What do we know about it?	While no grand temples have been found, evidence like seals depicting figures in yogic postures and female figurines suggests a possible reverence for nature, fertility, and perhaps proto-Shiva figures. Animal worship was also likely prevalent.

6	What led to the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization?	The exact cause of decline is debated, but leading theories include environmental changes like shifts in river courses and climate change, leading to agricultural disruption. Invasions or internal social unrest are also considered possibilities.
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In the coming years, Life In The Indus Valley eBooks will remain a foundational learning tool. Innovations such as adaptive content may further enhance their effectiveness.

Future developments may allow eBooks to respond to user behavior.

Summary

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