Ethnoarchaeology in Turkey: a historical approach

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Ethnography has become an increasingly important source of information in Anatolian archaeology. Many traditional village communities or social groups living in remote areas of Anatolia have succeeded in preserving their social and economic behavior. The use of analogies derived from modern-day observations of these communities to aid in interpreting past cultures has a long history in Anatolian archaeology. Rural Anatolia has a great potential for those ethnoarchaeologists adopting direct historical or general comparative analogy. The rapid disappearance now of traditional subsistence activities and technology in rural Anatolia gives us a sense of urgency in documenting as much ethnographic evidence as possible.

The development of the subdiscipline of ethnoarchaeology in Anatolia can be detailed through three different issues. The first issue to be considered is the role of the Turkish folklorist, ethnographer, and archaeologist Hamit Zübeyr Koşay in the formation of ethnoarchaeological thought in Turkey. An examination of what he accomplished, from the time of his first archaeological excavations in the early years of the Turkish Republic, to the late 1960s, when processual or "new" archaeology began to influence Anatolian archaeology, is important for

this essay. The second issue is the impact of processual archaeology on the intellectual development of ethnoarchaeology in Turkey, including an examination of the influences generated by the initiation in the 1960s of the Joint Southeastern Anatolian and the Keban Dam Projects. It will be demonstrated that collaboration with American and British contributed much to the development of ethnoarchaeology in Turkey. Some of the ethnoarchaeological studies carried out after the introduction of processualism in Anatolian archaeology are evaluated in this study, as well as several other important ethnographic studies conducted with archaeological questions in mind. The last issue assessed is the impact of the Çatalhöyük project on the development of Anatolian archaeology, as that project has been conceived of as an exercise in post-processualism.

Archaeology by an ethnographer

The use of ethnographic data as a means of interpreting the archaeological past in Anatolia dates back to the days of Hamit Zübeyr Koşay in 1930s, although there is evidence to show that simple analogy was used in Anatolia as early as in the first half of the nineteenth century. The European archaeologists and travelers of the nineteenth century occasionally examined the material remains of the living people to better understand the archaeological remains. For instance, British archaeologist Sir Charles Fellows examined and recorded the wooden houses and storehouses in the plain of Xanthus in Lycia during his journey to southwestern Anatolia (Fellows 1852: 241). His aim was to understand the impact of the simple wooden construction techniques on the Lycian rock-cut monuments by basing his argument on the thought that the people of the land of Lycia have been conservative in preserving their architectural traditions throughout the millennia.

It was only after the decade of the 1930s that ethnography became an important source of information for archaeologists

working in Turkey. This is in part due to the fact that the decade of the 1930s was an important stage in the development of archaeological though in Turkey, since this period also saw the institutionalization of Turkish archaeology. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, developed a cultural program based on the recovery of the pre-Ottoman Turkish heritage. After the turmoil of the First World War and the War of National Liberation, Atatürk wanted to establish a national unity and consciousness. The founding in 1931 of the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) to achieve this goal served as a great means of showing that Turks had been present in Anatolia since remote antiquity. It was through the foundation of the Turkish Historical Society that archaeology gained a national following and came to be regarded as a professional discipline. The so-called 'History Thesis' developed by the Turkish Historical Society at its first congress gave importance to the idea of cultural continuity between the present and past populations of Anatolia.

The issue of cultural continuity constituted a large part of the History Thesis, and archaeology appears to have served to legitimize the relationship between the Anatolian Turks and the populations of pre-Ottoman Anatolia. Koşay, who was one of the founders of the Turkish Historical Society and director of the Museum of Ethnography in Ankara, was asked by Atatürk to carry out archaeological excavations and to reveal information on the pre-Ottoman Turks. It was a period when there were still few experienced Turkish archaeologists and those who had gone to European countries for archaeological training had not yet returned. In this vacuum, scholars such as Koşay assumed important roles in the process of carrying out investigations throughout Anatolia. Working under the aegis of the Turkish Historical Society, Koşay conducted excavations in 1930s and 1940s at sites such as Ahlatlıbel, Alaca Höyük, Kumtepe, Pazarlı, Karaz, Büyük Güllücek, and Mahmatlar. During these excavations, Koşay recognized similarities between the archaeological record and the ethnographic data he observed in the

nearby villages. As a result of his educational background in ethnography and folklore, Koşay became the first scholar in Turkey to combine ethnographic data with archaeological studies. In one of his earliest works, *Etnografya ve Folklor Kılavuzu* (1939:12), Koşay maintained that primitive societies provide us with the most important information about past human existence (1939:13). He particularly saw ethnographic analogy as an important tool for interpreting prehistoric technology and the agricultural way of life. According to him, Anatolia was a reservoir of ancient cultures, and the archaeologist must use ethnographic data in reconstructing the ways how stone, bone, and metal implements were made. For instance, in a study carried out with A. Ülkü in 1932, Koşay examined primitive pot making techniques in Anatolia (1964) so that this study could be a good source for archaeologists studying past pot making methods, techniques, and forms of exchange. They described sequences of contemporary pot making such as the preparation of clay, forming, glazing, firing, and exchange; patterns that are at present about to vanish in the Anatolian ethnographic record. Koşay also documented rural Anatolian agricultural life, farming methods, and implements (1956). During the Alaca Höyük excavations, Koşay examined the Alaca village from an ethnographic point of view for a better understanding of the community that lived there millennia earlier. He documented the village building techniques, household implements, and methods of farming, including the plowing, harvesting, storage, and the tools used in wheat processing (Koşay 1951).

Such ethnographic studies by Koşay clearly highlight the importance of using present observations to interpret past material culture. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that Koşay's studies represent the earliest attempts at ethnoarchaeology in Turkey that would lead later to its development as a specialized subdiscipline. On the other hand, the efforts of the Turkish Historical Society's early efforts remind us the movement documented in

the archaeologies of the countries who wished to trace their ancestry back in their homelands and to use archaeology, ethnography, and folklore as tools to do so. In this context, it is striking that Koşay did not pursue a pan-Turanian mission by modeling his work on the examples found in countries such as Germany, Italy, Soviet Union, and China. For instance, the manipulation of the past by means of archaeology was observed in Germany during the National Socialist regime. Hitler's rise in power in 1933 resulted in the establishment of prehistoric archaeology as a recognized academic institution after the defeat of first World War. According to the developed doctrine, the Germanic culture was responsible for all major intellectual and technological achievements of western civilization (Arnold 1992). The ideological background for such an ethnocentric German prehistory was derived from the *kulturkreis* theory established by a linguist-turned prehistorian Gustaf Kossina.

In Turkey, the close connection of archaeology to state policy in the early years of the newly established Turkish Republic was not simply to promote the glories of Turks and their supposed ethnic or cultural superiority. On the contrary, the archaeological research conducted in Turkey sought to foster a spirit of patriotism and enhance national unity during a time of worldwide imperialism. In order to raise the spirit of patriotism, it was fundamental to demonstrate that Anatolia belonged to the Turks even before the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks arrived. The nationalist movements of other countries had territorial ambitions, whereas the nationalism of Atatürk, with its history thesis, sought to protect itself from such movements and did not seek to expand the national boundaries of Turkey. The history thesis never had imperialistic ambitions but rather it aimed to refute western imperialism by claiming the land that it held. This is the main difference that separates the political use of archaeology in Turkey from that of the other countries of the world. Thus, what is important about Koşay for our case is that he never viewed archaeology and ethnography as political tools,

since he did not allow any national considerations to influence his undertakings. The fact that the political vision of the period did not obscure his archaeological objectivity was also related to his personality that has always been taken as a model by many Turkish archaeologists.

In addition to these early studies undertaken by Koşay, Rudolf Naumann's work entitled *Architektur Klienasiens* (1955) must also be mentioned, as this study represents an early attempt at showing the importance of ethnographic analogy. By using ethnographic parallels from Boğazköy village in reconstructing Hittite houses at Hattusa (Naumann 1955:389, figs. 463, 484, 514-516), numerous similarities were documented between the contemporary and ancient houses in terms of their layouts, materials used, and construction techniques. So it would appear from the types of research carried out roughly between 1930 and 1960 that the first use of ethnography in Anatolian archaeology was based on the use of simple analogies observed in the past material culture and contemporary populations. Koşay limited his theoretical model to analogies as this certainly anticipated the New Archaeology approach and paved the way for it in Turkey.

The impact of processual archaeology

The use of ethnography appears to have gained a new impetus during the late 1960s with the beginning of the well-known theoretical and methodological debates in the United States. The development of the "new" or processual archaeology resulted in an archaeology with an anthropological orientation, and with an emphasis on explanatory models rather than a mere collection of artifact descriptions and lists of traits that were believed to represent a "culture". The archaeologists went beyond from making simple analogies and started to examine traditional village communities to provide as many as varied interpretative hypotheses as possible to help us understand

archaeological remains. Other major changes also began to occur in Anatolian archaeology in 1960s. The collaboration in 1963 with the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago on the Joint Southeast Anatolian Prehistoric Project led directly to the introduction of the principles of processual archaeology in (M. Özdoğan 2001:16). Robert J. Braidwood, who had earlier introduced the interdisciplinary approach to Near Eastern archaeology with his excavations at Jarmo in northern Iraq, was influential in bringing processual archaeology to Turkey. The cooperation between Braidwood and Halet Çambel (Braidwood and Braidwood 1998) evidently played a major role for the introduction of new ideas into the Anatolian archaeology.

In response to the theoretical and methodological upheaval occurring, the relationship between archaeology and ethnography was systemized in Anatolian archaeology, and the initiation in 1968 of the Keban Dam Project secured this process. The objective of the Keban Dam project was to obtain as much information as possible on archaeological sites and other cultural heritage that were about to be submerged as a result of the construction of the Keban Dam. Fortuitously, Hamit Zübeyr Koşay assumed a major role in the Keban Dam Project. He believed that the simple agricultural village life had changed very little since prehistoric times both in this region and in most other rural parts of Anatolia. Koşay (1977:III) stated that: "Keban Projesi altında Keban Barajı yapımı dolayısıyla su altında kalacak höyüklerde kazılar yapılarak eski kültür eserleri ortaya çıkarılırken halen bu topraklar üzerinde yaşayan halkın maddi ve manevi kültürü de ihmal edilemez ve bunun eski çağlar ile ilişkisi inkar olunamazdı."

Ethnographic research and analogies played an important role in interpreting the architectural remains, pottery, and other objects recovered during the excavations carried out in the Keban Dam area. Koşay himself also used ethnography in interpreting the archaeological remains he excavated between 1968

and 1970 at Pulur (Sakyol) Höyük. For example, he attempted to interpret the function of some anthropomorphic household hearth structures at the site by drawing parallels to hearths and fire in the Anatolian ethnographic record (Koşay 1976:147). In addition, he interviewed the inhabitants of Pulur village, which was adjacent to the prehistoric mound, and observed their use of materials as well as drawing analogies from the archaeological literature to understand past uses of similar materials (Koşay 1977).

Investigations of the rural architecture of the Keban Dam area by scholars such as Doğan Kuban (1970), Ayla Alpöge (1971 and 1972), and Eckhart Peters (1972) are also very important studies. The studies carried out by Alparslan Koyunlu on the village settlement of Munzuroğlu, the 'Agha Konak' in the Munzuroğlu village, consisted of an experimental ethnohistorical study of a house in the village of Munzuroğlu, and a mill in the Ağmezra village in Elazığ Province (Koyunlu 1976, 1979, 1982a and 1982b). These studies were not strictly ethnoarchaeological in character, but they were of great interest to the archaeologists participating in the project.

The 'Aşvan Project' carried out in the early 1970s within the Keban Dam area represents a major step forward in the development of ethnoarchaeology in Turkey. There was a deliberate and conscious effort by the Aşvan team to recover ethnographic information (French 1972:56). They collected reference material for a study of contemporary agriculture with a view to creating a background from which an understanding of ancient practices could perhaps be extracted. The study of rural architecture, agricultural implements, and household structures and activities were also included. The examination of contemporary architecture of the region, which appeared to be a continuation of a very ancient tradition that remained relatively unchanged, provided useful insights into some of the causes of ancient settlement growth and deterioration. This information also

formed one possible baseline for the interpretation of mound formation (Hall et al. 1973). In addition, Williams (1972 and 1973) examined and recorded the modern agricultural implements in the Aşvan region and the activities for which these implements were designed. This study made it possible to make archaeological inferences on past agricultural practices. By maintaining that archaeologists can reconstruct the ancient situation by analogy to present practice, Weinstein (1973) also inventoried the utilitarian, everyday household objects and their uses in order to interpret the corresponding archaeological artifacts within the region. These investigations by the Aşvan team demonstrated that the study of contemporary evidence can provide a range of possibilities to the archaeologist.

Other ethnoarchaeological studies preceded the Keban Dam Project. Jacques Bordaz, who was an important figure in lithic studies, carried out fieldwork in the 1960s to obtain information on threshing sledges and flint flaking in northwest Anatolia. He located several threshing sledge (döven) producers (1965) and documented the techniques of blade making (1967) near the flint quarries of Çakmak, south of Bursa Province. Bordaz observed that flint production remained an important activity for many Turkish farmers, who still used it to thresh their wheat efficiently. He demonstrated that the blade-making industry in this part of Anatolia was a discontinuous production system. In light of ethnographic evidence from the village of Çakmak, Bordaz attempted to answer which knapping method was more prevalent during the Upper Paleolithic. This study of community-based flint making from Çakmak and the production of threshing sledges enhanced our understanding of the prehistoric tool-making methods (See also Weiner 1981; Torrence 1985:79; Karimali 1994:402). A similar research design, involving the examination of traditional blade making in the Hilvan region of southeastern Anatolia, was also adopted in 1978-79 by Gebel (1987) within the context of the Lower Euphrates Project.

The 1970s saw a series of ethnoarchaeological studies on various aspects of pot making. Steele (1971) examined primitive village-based pot making at Sorkun in northwest Anatolia. In 1975 and 1977 Crane investigated traditional pot making as practiced in the local pottery villages of Gökeyüp, Datbey and Türkönü in the Sardis region as part of the field research program of the Harvard-Cornell Archaeological Exploration of Sardis. Crane (1988) documented two traditions of pot making that were unaffected by modern industrialization. One employed the kick wheel and vertical kiln, while the other used the turntable and open-air firing. These practices may be supposed reasonably to approximate the models for earlier pot making. Another important study in this field was carried out by Tomris Bakır who, in 1978, examined a rare example of domestic pot making at Yiğittaşı village in northeast Anatolia. These studies, while important, should not be viewed as the earliest to deal with pottery production. There were earlier studies conducted in the Aegean that also included examples from Turkey (Casson 1938 and 1951). Casson's studies appear to represent the earliest attempts in Aegean archaeology to confront issues such analogy and the general use of ethnographic data by archaeologists (Jacobsen 1985:94). The study by an Italian team in late 1980s of contemporary pottery manufacture at Uslu village in Elazığ Province in eastern Anatolia (Angle and Dottarelli 1990), on the other hand, represents an important step in pot-making studies in Anatolian ethnoarchaeology in terms of research design employed and issues examined rather than merely documenting the sequences of manufacture. The utilization of ethnographic data in these studies not only provides information on the technological aspects of pot making, but also broadens our vision on the natural and socio-economic environment in which the manufacture of pots takes place.

Several single, village-based ethnographic studies carried out during the 1960s and 1970s are also important. These studies were based on the examination of a single village contributing to

the interpretation of past villages. The earliest of this type of single village-based study was carried out in the early 1960s at Yassıhöyük in central Anatolia by a team from the Middle East Technical University at Ankara. Balaman's (1982) general ethnographic investigations between 1971 and 1973 at Te-Ve village in central Anatolia must also be mentioned. This study, which views the concept of 'village community' as a settlement, production unit, or an agricultural culture, offers a good theoretical framework on how a single village must be studied from an ethnographic point of view. The study in the early 1950s of Hasanoğlan village from a socio-economic perspective (Yasa 1957) can also be placed in this category.

In addition to these village-based ethnographic studies, there were other studies carried out in the long-settled village communities. These studies were intended to demonstrate how ethnoarchaeological research of a contemporary village can help us in understanding village life of the remote past. The study at the Neolithic site of Cafer Höyük in Malatya Province was carried out between 1979 and 1986 by a team led by Aurenche. During the excavations, they described the elements of a disappearing traditional culture in order to interpret the archaeological remains (Aurenche and Calley 1984; Aurenche et al. 1997). These investigations, which make an explicit reference to the Aşvan Project, demonstrated that one can draw analogies between contemporary and past societies in places where broadly-similar economic strategies have been carried over millennia within similar environmental constraints. The ethnographic survey of Yiğittaşı village, located adjacent to the prehistoric site of Sos Höyük in Erzurum Province, was also designed with an archaeological context in mind. This research project, which was carried out as part of the University of Melbourne project at Sos Höyük, focused on observations of a functioning community occupying the same physical space as the ancient settlements and noted the reflection, distortion and inversion of socio-ideological factors in the contemporary

material culture (Hopkins 1999 and 2003). Dittemore's work at Zemzemiye village in Bilecik Province (1983) is another important study that opened new avenues of research in village studies. The reason archaeologists examine traditional village communities is not only to provide as many varied interpretive hypotheses as possible to help us understand the archaeological remains, but also to understand how the archaeological record has been formed and transformed over time. For instance, research carried out at Işıklar village in northwestern Anatolia (Blum 2003) is a good example of this type of study that help excavators to interpret their material remains they unearthed at ancient sites.

The ethnoarchaeological study initiated in 1994 at Yassıhöyük as part of the Gordion Archaeological Project, on the other hand, investigates the dynamics of socio-economic change in nearby ancient Gordion. In order to place the village of Yassıhöyük in a broader regional context, this single village-based study was later expanded to include 17 other villages within a 40km radius of the village (Gürsan-Salzmann 1997). A more specific study carried out within the context of the Gordion ethnoarchaeology project examines the changing roles of women in the household economy of Yassıhöyük village (Gürsan-Salzmann 2001).

Archaeologists have also used ethnography to reconstruct the form and architectural characteristics of prehistoric houses. Many of the construction techniques (e.g., wattle-and-daub for house walls) used at the Early Bronze Age village site of Karataş in the Elmalı Plain of southwestern Anatolia were also observed in the contemporary village architecture of the region (Warner 1994:154-155). Because common, domestic architecture has remained relatively unchanged in this part on Anatolia, archaeologists working at Karataş were able to benefit from contemporary building techniques in interpreting architectural fragments from the prehistoric mound excavations. The issue of architectural

continuity and the structural links between the houses and the tombs in Lycia has recently been examined in detail in light of the investigation ongoing in the region (Işık and İşkan-Yılmaz 1996). A similar research strategy involving the use of information derived from the analysis of contemporary popular architecture for archaeological use was also adopted by scholars working at İkiztepe in north-central Anatolia (Yakar and Garzon 1974; Alkım 1983; Bilgi 1999) and at Aşağıpınar in Turkish Thrace (Karul et al. 1999; see also A. Özdoğan 1984).

The study of pastoralism or pastoral nomads is one of the most neglected fields in the Anatolian ethnoarchaeology. Archaeological investigations in the Near East demonstrated that pastoralism played a very important role in the prehistoric life in the region. Watson (1980:58) stressed the need that more ethnoarchaeological investigations must be carried out on pastoralism before this way of life is completely gone out of the ethnographic record of the Near East. Yakar's work on semi-sedentary farmers represents an exception in the ethnoarchaeological literature. Yakar (1998:811) examined the possibility that the Early Bronze Age village of Karataş in the Elmalı plain in southwestern Anatolia might have been inhabited by the semi-sedentary segment of a farming community. It is hoped that further studies will be carried out in this field in rural Anatolia.

Another area of research that received very little attention in the Anatolian ethnoarchaeological literature is the subsistence activities carried out within the context of the studies oriented towards the search of the origins of agriculture. The pioneering study in this issue was carried out by Jack Harlan in southeastern Anatolia in conjunction with replication experiments on the harvesting and threshing of wild wheat (1967). In a similar way, Füsun Ertuğ carried out a series of ethnoarchaeological investigations in the field to test the models explaining the nature of agriculture-based subsistence economy and plant gathering patterns that might have prevailed at the Neolithic site of Aşıklı

Höyük in central Anatolia (Ertuğ 1996, 1997, 1998). Her ethnoarchaeological investigations into the issues such as the role and the use of plant gathering in the subsistence economy, the agricultural calendar, food processing implements, and the division labor according to gender provided useful information to test the models developed for the prehistoric site.

Jak Yakar's significant study, *Ethnoarchaeology of Anatolia: Rural Socio-economy in the Bronze and Iron Ages* (2000), is the first complete study to utilize ethnographic models in reconstructing the socio-economic organization of Bronze and Iron Age rural Anatolian society. This study accepts that the ways of life today of traditional communities in rural Anatolia are, in reality, reflections of the remote past.

Post-processualist contribution

Post-processualism is a movement in archaeology that was started in the 1980s by Ian Hodder as a reaction to processual archaeology. Post-processualist archaeology contains no unified ideological system, but is largely defined as a movement by how it differs from processual archaeology. Having been accepted as the next step after processual archaeology, post-processual archaeology consists of a wide range of ideologies such as cognitive archaeology, contextual archaeology, feminist archaeology, and Neo-Marxist archaeology. Although both processualist and post-processualist archaeologists desire the best understanding of the past, and want to eliminate bias in archaeological interpretation, they differ from each other on how to achieve this goal. Post-processualist archaeologists are interested in issues such as religion, social complexity, gender, and belief systems. For this purpose they pay particular attention to art, architecture, burial goods and non-utilitarian artifacts. Thus, post-processual archaeologists reject explicitly scientific methods and ask questions on the social classes, individuals, and the meaning of artifacts in the larger scheme of their culture/society.

Post-processual archaeology has gained popularity in Western Europe, and is becoming more influential in America as well. As the primary champion of this movement, Hodder's assumption of leadership of the Çatalhöyük project has resulted in the introduction of new perspectives to Anatolian ethnoarchaeology. Hodder's approach uses a historical-particularist framework to identify relationships between symbolism and material remains in specific culture-historical traditions. Hodder (1985:11) argues that it is inadequate to examine the relationship between the archaeological remains and human behavior without understanding the generation of that relationship by individuals in an active social context. If the ethnoarchaeologist does not attempt to understand the culture in which he/she works, it is difficult to claim that all of the relevant variables have been examined. In this context, the ethnoarchaeology project conducted at Çatalhöyük is providing a wide range of examples to illustrate how the traditions of local villages are helping us to understand this complex Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük (Mathews et al. 2000).

Ethnoarchaeogical investigations at Çatalhöyük have covered not only the excavation itself but also the social context of excavation. David Shankland examined the impact of the archaeological project on local communities at the nearby village of Küçükköy (1997 and 2000), and argued that excavators in general do not examine the role and the place of past material remains in the culture of the living inhabitants. Shankland (1998) stated that "today few archaeologists attempt to understand the living as distinct from the dead inhabitants of the land. They often live apart from local communities, they almost never speak the language accurately, and almost without exception, prefer to learn about Turkish culture in an *ad hoc* manner. On the other hand anthropologists who specialize in Anatolian communities and attempt to learn about them in a systematic manner, are not interested in the past of the villages. Hence anthropological literature fails to discuss the richness and cultural diversity of Anatolia."

Summary and conclusions

This brief essay represents an attempt to survey the history of ethnography in Anatolian archaeology. I tried to demonstrate the major role played by Hamit Zübery Koşay in the process of making ethnography an important tool for Anatolian archaeologists. Koşay has been viewed as the first to view ethnographic analogy as a valuable interpretive tool. Therefore, the period between the 1930s and the late 1960s can be classified as a formative period for ethnoarchaeology. The idea of cultural continuity, which played a central role in the cultural program of the newly-established Turkish Republic, does not appear to be significant in the ethnographic studies of this period. Moreover, the studies of this period were based strictly on empirical observations and the use of analogies of ethnographic data that could be useful for archaeological interpretation. It was only towards the late 1960s that the use of ethnography by archaeologists was carried on theoretical grounds as a result of collaborations with American and British archaeologists within the context of joint projects, such as those conducted in the Euphrates area in Turkey. The initiation of the Çatalhöyük project by Ian Hodder, one of the most important figures in the post-processualist movement in archaeology, opened a new avenue for those scholars working on the ethnoarchaeology of Anatolia.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Curtis Runnels for commenting on the earlier draft of this paper and providing me with constructive thoughts on the issue. I am, however, responsible for all the errors and shortcomings that may be found in this brief essay.

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