THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF SENECA'S NATURAL QUESTIONS: SOME MANUSCRIPTS RELATED TO Z

MS Z (Geneva lat. 77, 12th cent.) of Seneca's Natural Questions has aroused interest and discussion ever since A. Gercke first published some of its readings. Until now there has been no agreement among scholars about how far Z's readings are genuine, or how far they are the product of medieval conjecture (1). However, before tackling this problem (2), one should examine carefully the other MSS which are related to Z. No other MS with a complete text like Z's has yet come to light, but I have shown elsewhere that MS R (Escorial O III 2, 13th cent.), which has a composite text, is a twin of Z between 1. 13. 2 and 2. 53. 2 (3). The purpose of the present article is to re-examine two twelfth century sources of readings similar to Z's with a view to determining whether they are independent of Z itself.

Gercke recognised that MS L (Leiden Voss. lat. F69, 12th cent.) contains a number of corrections by a second hand (L^2) which are similar to Z's text. For example, L^2 agrees with Z or ζ (the consensus of RZ) at the following places (where the reading of the other MSS is given first, irrespective of whether it is correct or not):

(1) See A. Gercke, Studia Annaeana, Greifswald 1900, 21-7 (where Z is called 'R'); id., preface to Teubner edition of the Natural Questions, Leipzig 1907 (repr. Stuttgart 1970), xxvii-xxviii. The most important discussion of Z is still P. Oltramare, Le codex Genevensis des Questions Naturelles de Sénèque, "R. Phil." 45, 1921, 1-44; and Z is used in Oltramare's Budé edition (Paris 1929, repr. 1961). For other comments and opinions on Z cf. particularly: H. W. Garrod, "C. Q." 8, 1914, 275; H. Geist, De L. Annaei Senecae Naturalium quaestionum codicibus, Diss. Erlangen, publ. Bamberg 1914, 18-21; B. Axelson, Senecastudien. Kritische Bemerkungen zu Senecas Naturales Quaestiones, "Lunds Universitets Årsskrift", N. F., Avd. I, Bd. 29, Nr. 3, Lund 1933, 3-4 and pass.; id., Neue Senecastudien. Textkritische Beiträge zu Senecas Epistulae morales, ib., N. F. Avd. I, Bd. 36, Nr. 1, Lund 1939, 235, n. 24 (announcing that he had abandoned his earlier intention of reexamining Z); M. Winterbottom, "C. R." n. s. 26, 1976, 48.

(2) I have already dealt with the problem in my unpublished Oxford D. Phil. Thesis, An Edition with Commentary of Seneca Natural Questions Book Two (1976), chapters 1-3, and intend to publish the results in a future article.

(3) In: Escorial MS. O III 2 and related MSS of Seneca's Natural Questions, "C. Q." n. s. 28, 1978, 296-311.

- 2. 1. 4 mirum] tibi mirum ξL^2 ; 9. 4 remittit] proximo tradit ξ : uel proximo tradit add. L^2 ; 30. 2 niuis] densae niuis ξL^2 ;
- 5. 10. 1 ferretur] fieret Z: uel fieret add. L².

The source of L2's readings is plainly a MS like Z, and in fact Gercke thought it might be Z itself: "L² autem e Z eiusue gemello pendere nunc probauimus" (preface to Teubner edition, xxix). But Gercke does not recognise that there are places where the correction in L differs from Z: for instance, at 4a, pr. 5 both L¹ and Z have arsit, which in L is corrected to ars sit; at 5, 1, 2 the corrector of L has deleted est after infusus, but Z has est. Admittedly, such corrections do not provide unambiguous proof of L2's independence of Z. First, it is impossible, at any rate on the microfilm of L which I possess, to tell whether such a correction is by the same hand as is responsible for the Z-like corrections, and not by the original hand of L or some third hand. Secondly, even if the same hand is at work, the scribe may have taken his corrections from more than one MS, and he may have made the occasional conjecture. In such a situation one should keep an open mind about L2's independence of Z. However, one passage does give more compelling evidence of L2's independence:

1. 3. 7 Aristoteles idem iudicat: 'Ab omni' inquit 'leuitate acies radios suos replicat. Nihil autem est leuius aqua et aere: ergo etiam ab aere spisso uisus noster in nos redit. Ubi uero acies hebes et infirma est, qualislibet aeris ictu deficiet. Quidam itaque hoc genere ualetudinis laborant ut ipsi sibi uideantur occurrere, ut ubique imaginem suam cernant. Quare? Quia infirma uis oculorum non potest perrumpere ne proximum quidem (4) aera, sed resistit (5). 8. Itaque quod in aliis efficit densus aer, in his facit omnis: satis enim ualet qualiscumque ad imbecillam aciem repellendam'.

qualislibet $AB^{1}VDE^{1}FHUW$: qualibet P: quolibet $RB^{2}E^{2}GL^{1}$: quaslibet L^{2} : cuiuslibet Z (6).

- (4) Z's ne proximum quidem is better than the ne sibi quidem proximum of the other MSS, because, in the latter reading, sibi, which is not needed anyway, receives an unnatural emphasis. The corruption could have begun with the transposition of proximum quidem, after which sibi was inserted between ne quidem. (If this view of the text is correct, this is a conjunctive error of the MSS other than Z).
- (5) Gercke and subsequent editors have accepted Kroll's conjecture resilit, but it is wrong. Resistit here means 'stops, comes to a halt' (cf. I. pr. 13, 7. 10. 2 etc.), which is perfectly appropriate: cf. deficiet above for the eye's ray fading away, rather than rebounding. Note also that Kroll's conjecture gives an ugly dactylic clausula (aera sed resilit), whereas the paradosis gives a good double trochee (sed resistit); cf. F. Muller, "Mnem." 45, 1917, 322.
- (6) My sigla are those of Gercke's and Oltramare's editions with the addition of: R (explained above); D-Dublin, Trinity College 514 (13th cent.); W-Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Lat. Z. 268 (1548; 14th cent.).

Editors before Gercke read quolibet, which is wrong: for quolibet... ictu implies that the manner of the impact of the sight upon the air determines whether or not the sight penetrates the air; whereas the context indicates that the determining factor is not the manner of the impact but the density of the air (cf. s. 7 aere spisso; s. 8 the contrast between densus aer and qualiscumque (aer)). The required sense could perhaps be conveyed by Z's cuiuslibet, but qualislibet, which focuses precisely on the quality of the air, is more appropriate, and is confirmed by qualiscumque in s. 8. Accordingly, Gercke and subsequent editors read qualislibet. Now L2's meaningless quaslibet does not come from Z. nor, in view of its total lack of sense, can it be conjecture based on Z's reading or on anything else. Furthermore, one might plausibly guess that an ancestor of Z had quaslibet, and cuiuslibet was conjectured to restore some sense. Be that as it may, L2 is independent of Z, and, in all probability, of the other MSS, although quaslibet could be the corrector's own blunder for qualislibet. But the corrector should be given the benefit of the doubt, and it should be recognised that here and elsewhere L² may be an independent witness.

We may now move on. H. Geist drew attention to Vatican Reg. lat. 1707 (13th cent.), which contains brief excerpts from the Natural Questions with a text like Z's (7). These excerpts form part of a large florilegium of Christian and classical authors, which is found in four more MSS (8). The five MSS, with my sigla, are as follows:

- a Douai, Bibl. mun. 285 (12th cent.)
- b Troyes, Bibl. mun. 215 (12/13th cent.)
- c Douai, Bibl. mun. 533 (12/13th cent.)
- d British Museum Add. 16608 (14th cent.)
- e Vatican, Reg. lat. 1707 (13th cent.).

I have collated the excerpts from the Natural Questions in all five MSS (9), and a text with apparatus is given below in the Appendix. For convenience the apparatus is divided into two parts. The first gives the variants of abcde from each other, with the exception of some insignificant orthographical variants, and some simple errors which have been corrected by the original scribes. The second part records the divergences between the reading of the excerpts (the consensus of abcde is denoted by γ) and the other MSS. Here the consensus of all the MSS besides γ Z is denoted by Ψ , and the consensus of Z Ψ by Ω . In the text, I have be-

⁽⁷⁾ Geist, op. cit. (note 1), 20-1.

⁽⁸⁾ I am most grateful to Madame J. Fohlen for giving me this information.

⁽⁹⁾ I am grateful to the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes for providing me with microfilm or photocopies of abce; I have seen d and e myself.

gun each new extract on a new line, added references, and modernised spelling and punctuation.

These excerpts are of course too small a sample of the whole florilegium to justify any firm conclusions about the relationship between abcde, but some very provisional observations are in order. There are the following shared errors:

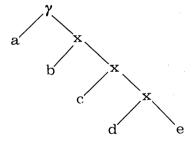
Errors of bcde: 1. pr. 6 effugisti] uitia add. supra lineam b, in textu cde; 3. pr. 11 a diuinorum] ad iuniorum.

Errors of cde: 3. pr. 11 conversatione] -nem; claro] cl(a)uso;

pr. 12 Quid] Quod; queri] quaerere; pr. 13 nec (post infestus)] non; pr. 15 spiritus] specie.

Errors of de: 3. pr. 14 uenerint] ueniunt.

These are all significant conjunctive errors (10), and, if one assumes that none of the MSS is derived from any other, they yield the following stemma:



But the mutual independence of the MSS is not in all cases certain. Certainly a is not the ancestor of bcde, because at 4a. pr. 1 a adds o lucili after tecum in the text, whereas bc add the words not in the text but above the line, and de do not have them at all. Presumably γ had the words above the line or in the margin. But in these excerpts there is no evidence that cde are independent of b, and there is one indication that they may be descendants of b: for at 3. pr. 11 b appears to have the ungrammatical ad iuniorum conversatione, on which cde's ad iuniorum conversationem could well be based. But of course more of the florilegium must be collated to establish properly the relationship of b to cde, and also that of c to de. For c's lucere (7. 27. 5) could quite easily have been emended by conjecture, so it does not prove de's independence of c. Neither d nor e is derived from the other, for they both have significant separative errors (e. g. 1, pr. 5 homo om, d; 4a, pr. 11 est om, e).

⁽¹⁰⁾ ce's contenta for contempta at 1. pr. 5 is purely orthographic, so not significant.

The MS relationships are of little consequence for the restoration of the text, for where the MSS differ the text is never in serious doubt: only at 3. pr. 14 is it unclear whether the original of the florilegium had ammittere or amittere. However, a reliable stemma might cast fresh light on the provenance of this florilegium. It was circulating in northern France by the end of the twelfth century, as the provenance of the three earliest MSS indicates (see below). It has been attributed to Ytier of Vassy (11), a monk at Clairvaux in the first decade of the thirteenth century, on the evidence of a subscription at the end of b. But this is wrong, for the subscription refers solely to a set of poems on monastic life which immediately precedes (12). In b the poems and the subscription are appended to the florilegium by a second hand (13), and they do not occur in any of the other MSS of the florilegium. Thus, although b itself certainly comes from Clairvaux, that does not necessarily indicate the provenance of the florilegium. MS a, which is the earliest, and has the purest text, belonged to the monastery at Anchin, and c belonged to Marchiennes, not so far away, so the florilegium may have emanated from that part of the world (14).

But now let us consider the excerpts in relation to the Natural Questions. There are no extracts from Books 2, 4b, or 5, yet the excerpts clearly follow the *Grandinem* book order (i. e. 4b-7, 1-4a), even though some of the excerpts are slightly out of sequence (15). The excerptor has selected passages which contain no scientific matter, but deal with ethical and theological themes, and all come from near the beginning or end of a book, where Seneca treats these themes extensively. It is characteristic of excerptors to alter words and phrases in order to render the passages intelligible out of context, and to omit words deemed non-essential: our excerpts are no exception, as the second half of the apparatus readily shows.

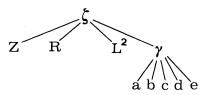
It also shows the affinity between γ and Z, which share the following readings (in each case the reading of the other MSS is put first, without necessarily implying that it is correct):

- (11) Cf. M. A. Vernet, "Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France" 1948-9, 227.
- (12) J. Leelercq, "Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis" 12, 1956, 296-304, states what is known about Ytier, and prints the text of the poems and subscription.
- (13) So Leclercq, op. cit., 296. My own inspection of photocopies of the end of the MS confirms this.
- (14) d was in Liège in A. D. 1437, and I know nothing about the provenance of e.
- (15) The first two excerpts, from 6. 32. 12, are in the wrong order; 1. pr. 5 precedes 7. 30. 1; 1. pr. 3 and 6 follow 1. pr. 14.

6. 32. 12 mortalium malorumque] mortalium est mors malorum; unum] mi; 3. pr. 4 ostendit] aspexit; pr. 11 nihil] nil; dignum habet] habes; pr. 12 aduersa] dura; pr. 14 animo] animum; pr. 18 Primo] -um; 4a. pr. 2 ipsi] ac; si modo] modo.

There is one certain error of $Z \gamma$ here, 3. pr. 11 habes; and 6. 32. 12 mi may well be an error (see below). On the other hand, Gercke and Oltramare have rightly accepted the omission of dignum at 3. pr. 11 (deleted by Skutsch before Z's reading was known), and Oltramare is surely right to follow Z at 4a. pr. 2. In the other places $Z\gamma$ are certainly or possibly right (see below on 6. 32. 12). Strictly speaking, only shared errors can prove a relationship between MSS, and $Z\gamma$ share only one certain error, habes. Even if mi is an error, confusion between mi and $u\bar{n}$ (unum abbreviated) is so easy that chance coincidence is theoretically possible. However, the excerpts are brief, so the one error does suggest a relationship between $Z\gamma$, and the suggestion is strengthened by the facts that Z and the other MSS do not agree in significant error against γ , nor γ and the others against Z, and that $Z\gamma$ share several unique, albeit true or plausible, readings.

 γ is independent of Z, because Z has two unique errors: 3. pr. 10 habuerint (for habuerunt) could perhaps have been emended by a medieval scribe or reader, so it is not a decisive separative error, but 3. pr. 12 credito (for decreto) is. So we may conclude that $Z\gamma$ derive from a common ancestor, which I call ζ , like the common ancestor of RZ. The MS relationships may be represented in the following diagram:



Since R (where derived from ζ) never overlaps with γ , and L2's readings are so sporadic, the interrelationships of $ZRL^2\gamma$ cannot be determined more precisely.

Finally, in one passage $Z\gamma$ differ from each other and from the other MSS. Discussion will illustrate the value of $Z\gamma$ (16):

6.32.12 Hoc affigamus animo, hoc nobis subinde dicamus: 'Moriendum est'. Quando? Quid tua? Quemadmodum? Quid tua? Mors naturae lex

(16) There are no relevant readings of L^2 in this passage, and R is here a twin of P, i. e. not derived from ζ .

est; mors tributum officiumque mortalium est; mors malorum omnium remedium est. Optauit illam quisquis timet. Omnibus omissis hoc unum, Lucili, meditare, ne mortis nomen reformides; effice illam tibi cogitatione multa familiarem, ut si ita tulerit possis illi et obuiam exire.

Quemadmodum? Quid tua? Z: Quomodo? Quid tua? γ : om. rell. est; mors malorum $Z\gamma$: malorumque rell. hoc] o γ unum] mi $Z\gamma$.

Quemadmodum? (or Quomodo?) Quid tua? must be genuine, for its style is thoroughly Senecan, there is no apparent motive for its interpolation, and the repetition of Quid tua? readily accounts for its omission by the other MSS. Here we have convincing proof that ζ contains genuine readings not found in other MSS (17). There is no way of ascertaining whether Seneca wrote Quemadmodum or Quomodo, but, since excerpts as a rule are especially prone to careless error or wilful alteration, Z's reading should be preferred.

In the next sentence one should probably follow $Z\gamma$, ...mortalium est; mors malorum... Again the style is Senecan, with the emphatic anaphora of mors, and again interpolation purely for the sake of rhetorical embellishment is implausible. The reading of the other MSS may result from a scribe's eye jumping from mortalium to mors, producing the omission of est mors, after which it was natural to insert -que after malorum. If $Z\gamma$ do have the correct text, then we have here not only evidence of genuine readings in ζ , but also a valid conjunctive error of the other MSS, indicating that they share a common ancestor (cf. note 4 above).

In the next sentence the choice between unum and mi is not entirely straighforward. Probably unum is correct, because it contrasts with omnibus; cf. Ep. 5. 1 Quod... et omnibus omissis hoc unum agis, ut..., 108. 27... et omissis ad quae deuertimur in rem unam laboremus, ne... On the other hand hoc could provide sufficient contrast with omnibus, cf. Ep. 23. 3 Hoc ante omnia fac, mi Lucili: disce gaudere. But there is no doubt that γ 's o for hoc is wrong, because Seneca never uses the emotional o in an address to the dedicatee of a book (18). One may guess that o is a deliberate alteration.

In conclusion, L² and γ are independent descendants of ζ , which is of great importance for the text of the Natural Questions.

- (17) Strangely, Z's reading is overlooked by Oltramare in his article (cited in note 1 above) and his edition; though Geist, op. cit., 20, had earlier recorded e's reading.
- (18) In Seneca's prose, o with a vocative of a person or deity is extremely rare. Apart from cases within a poetic quotation, there are only two examples: Ep. 55. 3 ...exclamabant homines, 'o Vatia, solus scis vivere'; 97. 4 o di boni, rem perditam! Obviously neither passage supports o in NQ 6. 32. 12.

Appendix: The text of the Excerpts from the Natural Questions.

Seneca de naturalibus causis

- 6. 32. 12 Omnibus omissis o mi Lucili meditare ne mortis nomen reformides. Effice illam tibi cogitatione multa familiarem, ut si ita tulerit possis illi et obuiam exire.
- ibid. Moriendum est. Quando? Quid tua? Quomodo? Quid tua? Mors naturae lex est, mors tributum officiumque mortalium est, mors malorum omnium remedium est. Optat illam quisquis non timet.
- 7.1.4 Naturale est magis noua quam magna mirari.
- 27. 4 Tota mundi concordia ex discordibus constat.
- 27. 5 Ignorat naturae potentiam qui illi non putat aliquando licere nisi quod saepius fecit.
- 1. pr. 5 O quam contempta res est homo nisi supra humana surrexerit.
- 7. 30. 1 Egregie Aristotiles ait numquam nos uerecundiores esse debere quam cum de diis agitur.
- 1. pr. 13 Quid est deus? Mens universi.
- pr. 14 Totus est ratio.
- ibid. Quo neque formosius est quicquam nec dispositius nec in proposito constantius.
- pr. 3 Ipse est necessitas sua.
- pr. 6 Nihil adhuc consecutus es. Multa effugisti, te nondum.
- 3. pr. 3 Fidelissimus est ad honesta ex paenitentia transitus.
- pr. 4 Crescit animus quotiens coepti magnitudinem aspexit, et cogitat quantum proposito, non quantum sibi supersit.
- pr. 7 Secundis nemo confidat, aduersis nemo deficiat.
- pr. 8 In melius aduersa, in deterius optata flectuntur.

Titulus naturabus c 6. 32. 12 non om. c¹, supra lineam add. manus prima 7. 27. 5 lucere c l. pr. 5 contenta ce homo om. d pr. 14 quicquid d pr. 3 sui e pr. 6 effugisti] uitia add. cde, supra lineam b

- 6. 32. 12 o mi γ : hoc mi Z: hoc unum Ψ Quomodo? Quid tua γ : Quemadmodum? Quid tua? Z: om. Ψ mortalium est mors malorum γZ : mortalium malorumque Ψ . Optat γ : Optabit δ : Optauit rell. non om. Ω (19)
- 7. 27. 4 Total haec add. Ω 30. 1 Aristotiles γΨ: -teles Z
- 1. pr. 3 est enim add. Ω
- 3. pr. 4 aspexit γZ : ostendit Ψ
 - (19) Geist, op. cit., 49, thinks that optat and non are correct.

pr. 10 Magna ista quia parui sumus credimus. Multis rebus non ex natura sua sed ex humilitate nostra magnitudo est. Quid praecipuum in rebus humanis?

ibid. Animo omne uidisse et, qua maior nulla uictoria est, uitia domuisse; innumerabiles sunt qui populos, qui urbes habuerunt in potestate, paucissimi qui se. (11) Quid est praecipuum? Erigere animum supra minas et promissa fortunae, nil dignum putare quod speres. Quid enim habes quod concupiscas? qui a diuinorum conuersatione quotiens ad humana recideris, non aliter caligabis quam quorum oculi in densam umbram ex claro sole redierint. (12) Quid est praecipuum? Posse laeto animo dura tolerare, quicquid acciderit sic ferre quasi uolueris tibi accidere. Debuisses enim uelle si scisses omnia ex decreto dei fieri. Flere queri gemere descissere est. (13) Quid est praecipuum? Animus contra calamitates fortis et contumax, luxuriae non auersus tantum sed infestus, nec auidus periculi nec fugax, qui sciat aduersus utramque fortunam intrepidus inconfususque prodire, nec illius tumultu nec huius fulgore percussus. (14) Quid est praecipuum? Non admittere in animum mala consilia, puras ad caelum manus tollere, nullum bonum petere quod ut ad te transeat aliquis dare debet aliquis amittere; optare quod sine aduersario optatur, bonam mentem. Cetera magno aestimata mortalibus etiam si quis domum casus attulerit sic intueri quasi exitura qua uenerint. (15) Quid est praecipuum? Altos supra fortuita spiritus extollere, hominis meminisse, ut siue felix fueris scias hoc non futurum diu, siue infelix scias hoc te non esse si non putes.

pr. 16 Liber est qui seruitutem effugit.

pr. 17 Sibi seruire grauissima est seruitus.

3. pr. 11 concupiscas] et add. b¹ a diuinorum conversatione] ad iuniorum conversatione b, ut vid.: ad iuniorum conversationem cde ex claro] ex clauso ce: excluso d pr. 12 Quid] Quod cde queri] quaerere cde pr. 13 auersus] adversus d nec (post infestus)] non cde pr. 14 admittere e: amm-abc: am-d puras] putas d amittere] amm-ac: adm-e venerint] veniunt de pr. 15 spiritus] specie cde scias hoc (post infelix) om. d

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habuerint Z
pr. 10 in \gamma ZL^2ET\delta: om. rell.
                                   humanis | est add. \Omega
                                                           redierunt \Omega
                          habes \gamma Z: dignum habet \Psi
pr. 11 nil γZ: nihil Ψ
                                                            queri] et add. \Omega
                                                                                   descisse-
                                  decreto] credito Z
pr. 12 dura γZ: aduersa Ψ
re yFRU: desciscere rell.
                                                      sciat] fortunam non expectare sed
pr. 13 auersus aduersus AVPUW: inuersus R
                    fortunam om. \Omega
facere et add. \Omega
pr. 14 animum γZ: animo Ψ
                              fueris eris \Omega
pr. 15 extollere tollere \Omega
pr. 16 est | autem add. \Omega seruitutem | suam add. \Omega
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pr. 18 Primum discedamus a sordidis, deinde animum seducamus a corpore.

4a. pr. 1 Turbam rerum hominumque desiderent qui se pati nesciunt; tibi tecum optime conuenit. (2) Nec est mirum paucis istud contingere: imperiosi nobis ac molesti sumus, modo amore nostri modo taedio laboramus; infelicem animum nunc superbia inflamus, nunc cupiditate distendimus, alias uoluptate laxamus, alias sollicitudine exurimus; quod est miserrimum, numquam sumus singuli. Necesse est itaque assidua sit in tam magno uitiorum contubernio rixa. (3) Fac ergo mi Lucili quod facere consuesti: a turba te quantum potes separa, ne adulatoribus latus praebeas; artifices sunt ad captandos superiores.

- pr. 4 Hoc in se habent naturale blanditiae: etiam cum reiciuntur placent.
- pr. 11 Nemo mortalium tam uni dulcis est quam hic omnibus.
- pr. 15 Nullum uerbum mihi quod non salua bona conscientia procederet excussum est.
- pr. 18 Adice victus parsimoniam, sermonis modestiam, adversus minores humanitatem, adversus maiores reverentiam.
- 4a. pr. 1 optime] o lucili optime a: o lucili supra lineam add. bc pr. 11 est om. e
- pr. 18 Primum γZ : -mo Ψ discedemus Ω animum] ipsum quo summo magnoque opus est add. Ω seducemus Ω
- 4a. pr. 2 ac γZ : ipsi Ψ modo γZ : si modo Ψ lassamus Ω
- pr. 4 Habent hoc in se Ω
- pr. 11 Nemo] enim add. Ω uni tam Ω

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