

BEYOND THE CIRCLE

The Mechanics of Magic Circles in Medieval and Renaissance Traditions

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Medieval Grimoires

- *Curriculum* for licensed instruction
- Delivered verbatim from Master to Apprentice
- Diagrams provide examples and rubrics
- Mainly working with Aerial Spirits
- Protection is mostly against Necromantic Spirits
- Information degenerated over time

W

U

S

T

V



SOL

Celestial



LUNA

Sublunar

Igneous

Aerial

Terrestrial

Necromantic

Aqueous

Subterranean

Lucifugi

Purposes of a Magic Circle

1. Contain



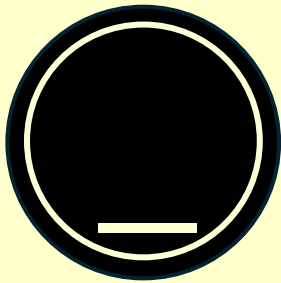
- A vessel to raise and contain power



- Isolate a magical environment

Purposes of a Magic Circle

2. Enclose



- Make a magical symbol dormant



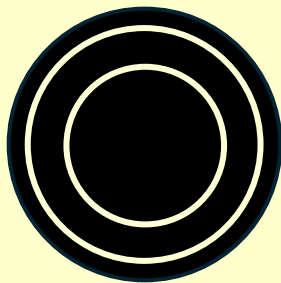
- Encircle a dangerous Spirit or cursed object

Purposes of a Magic Circle

3. Protection



- Prophylactic protection
(*Gr. prophylaktikos*)
e.g. Defensive armor to repel influence



- Apotropaic protection
(*Gr. Apotropaios*)
e.g. Outer circle of invisibility

General Formula

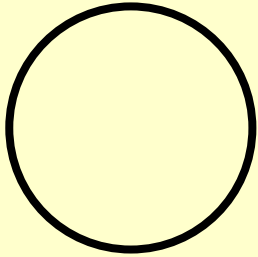
1. Delineate a space to be a boundary between worlds
2. Cleanse and sanctify self, space and tools
3. Visualize a magical sphere
4. Empower with words and signs
5. Infuse the circle with intent
6. Invite spirit agencies (incense and invocation)
7. The Work
8. Dismiss spirit agencies (incense)

Imaginary Circle

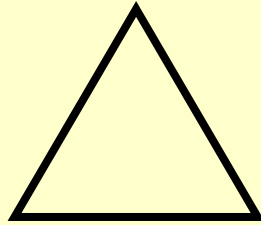
“First, when convenience serves not, as to time or place that a real Circle should be delineated, they frame an imaginary Circle, by means of Incantations and Consecrations, without either Knife, Pensil, or Compasses, circumscribing nine foot of ground round about them, which they pretend to sanctifie with words and Ceremonies, spattering their Holy Water all about so far as the said Limit extendeth...”

Reginald Scot, 'The Discoverie of Witchcraft' 1584

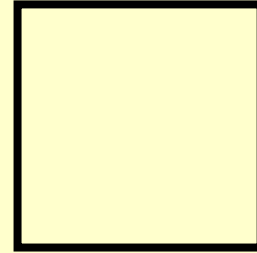
Key to Symbols



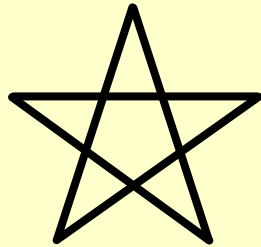
Contain



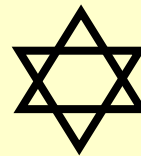
Manifest



Form

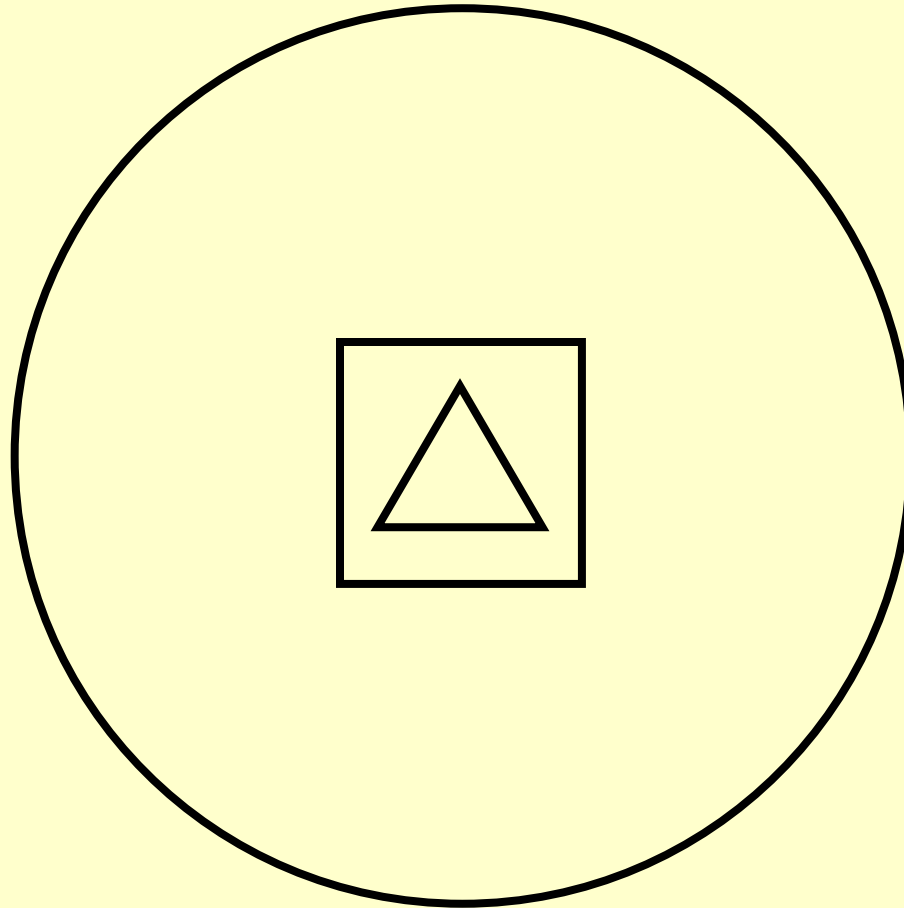


Actuate

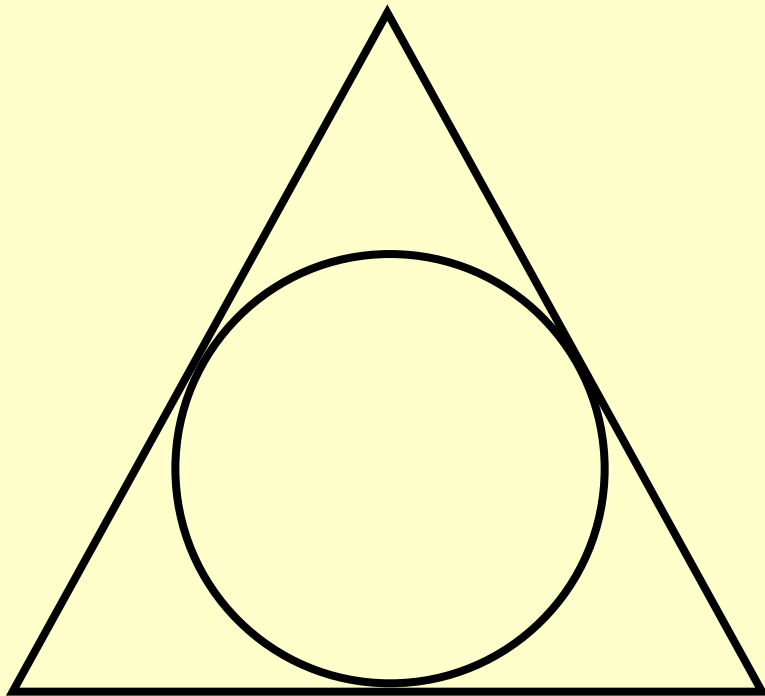


Sanctify

Ritual for Thaumaturgy

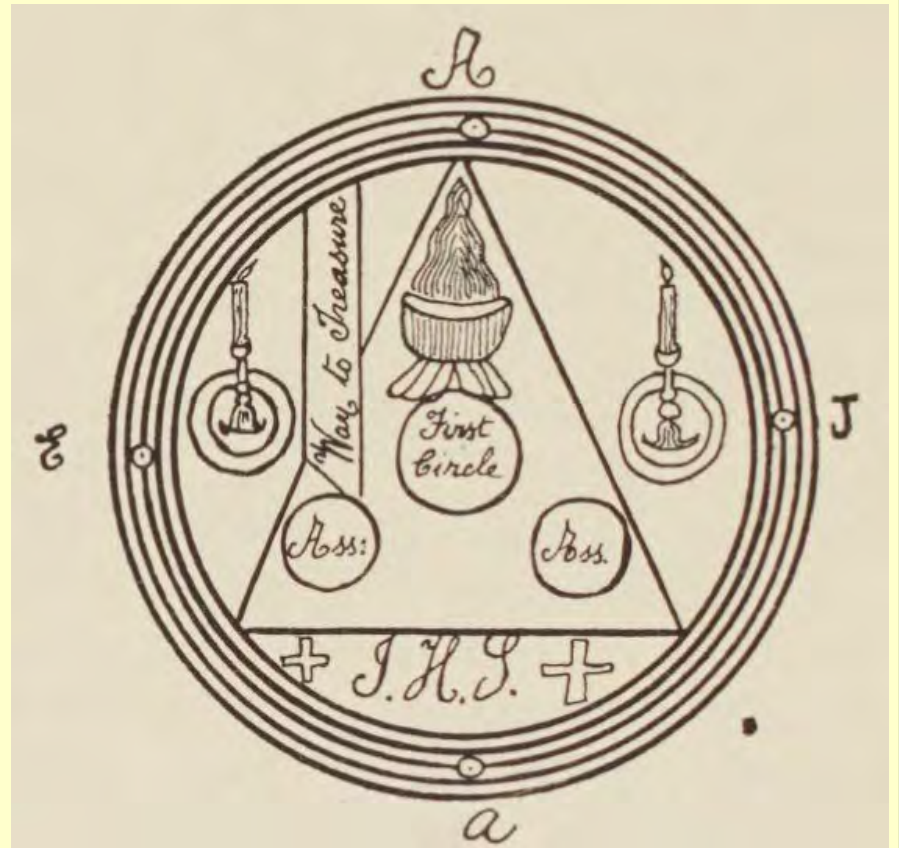
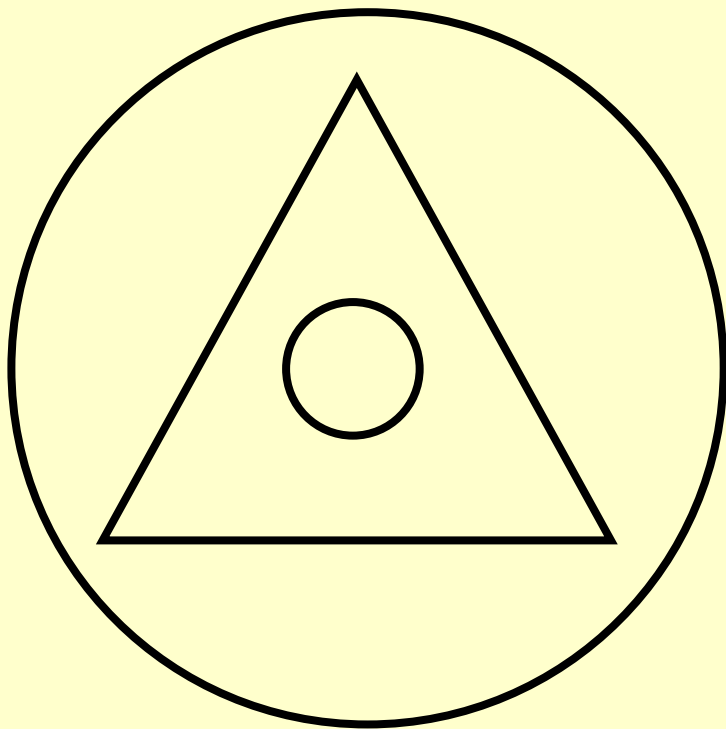


Manifest a Spirit into a Mirror



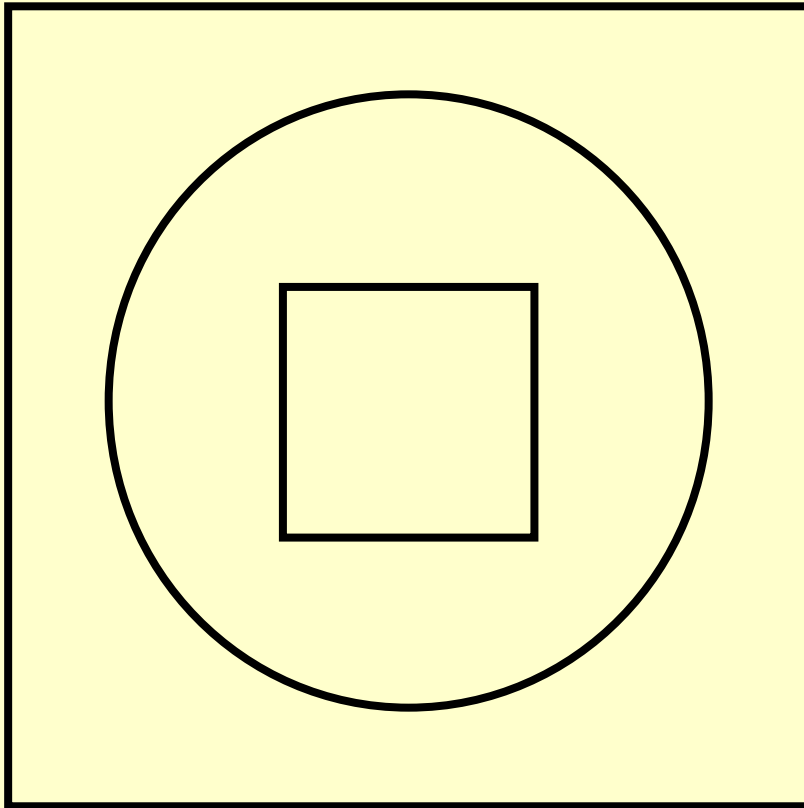
Lemegeton Clavicula Salomonis, Sloane MS. 3825, AE Waite

Manifest Inside a Circle



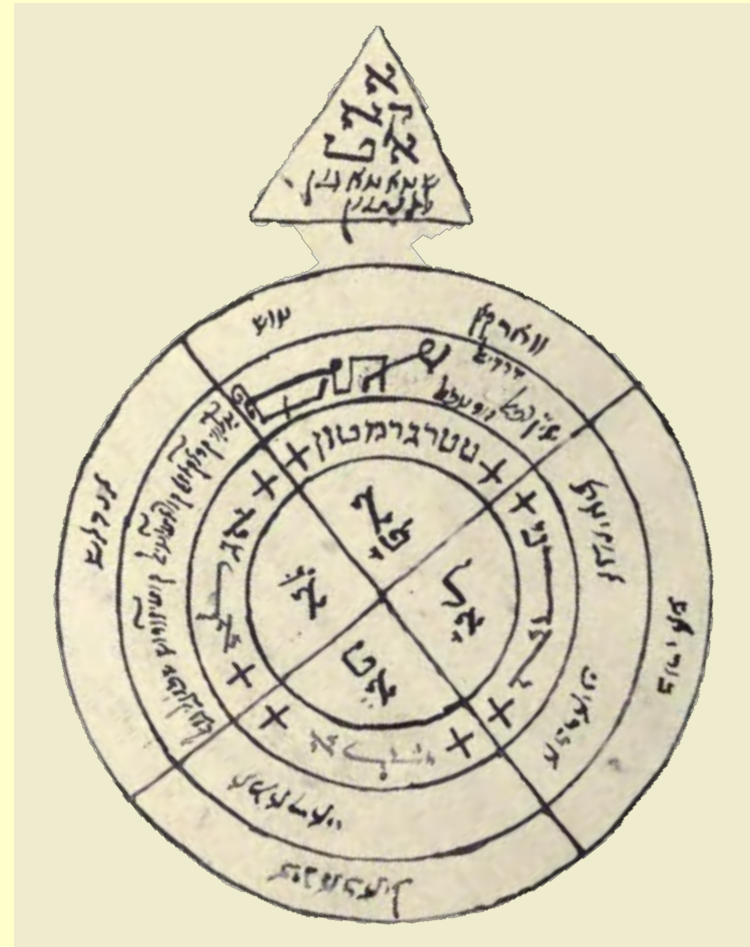
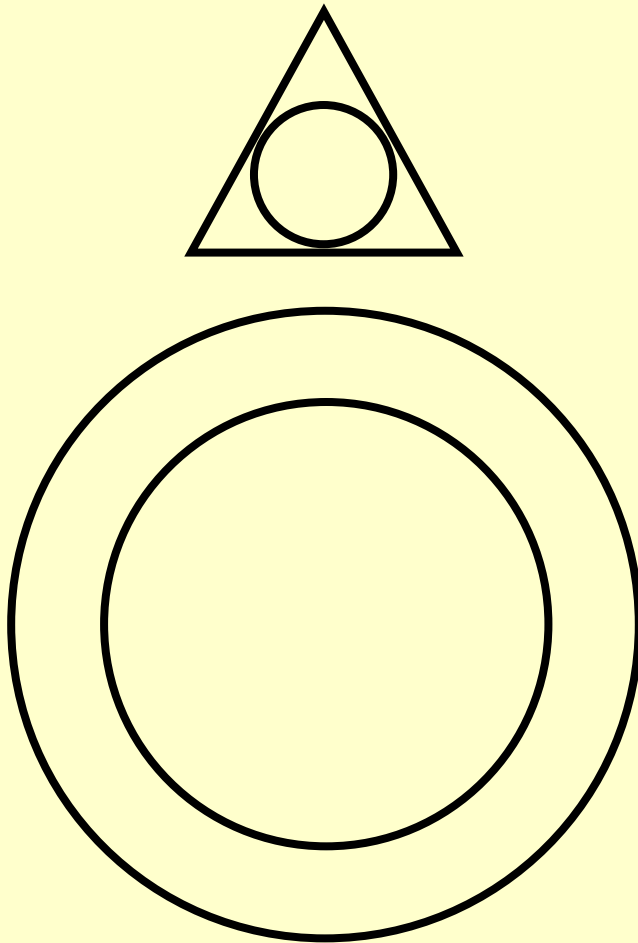
Grimorium Verum, 1517, AE Waite

Form Inside a Circle



Reginald Scot, 'The Discoverie of Witchcraft' 1584 (1886 Imprint)

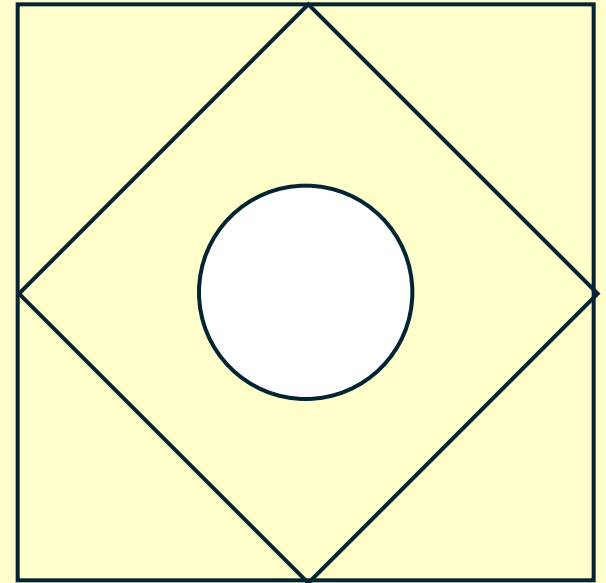
Spirit Evocation



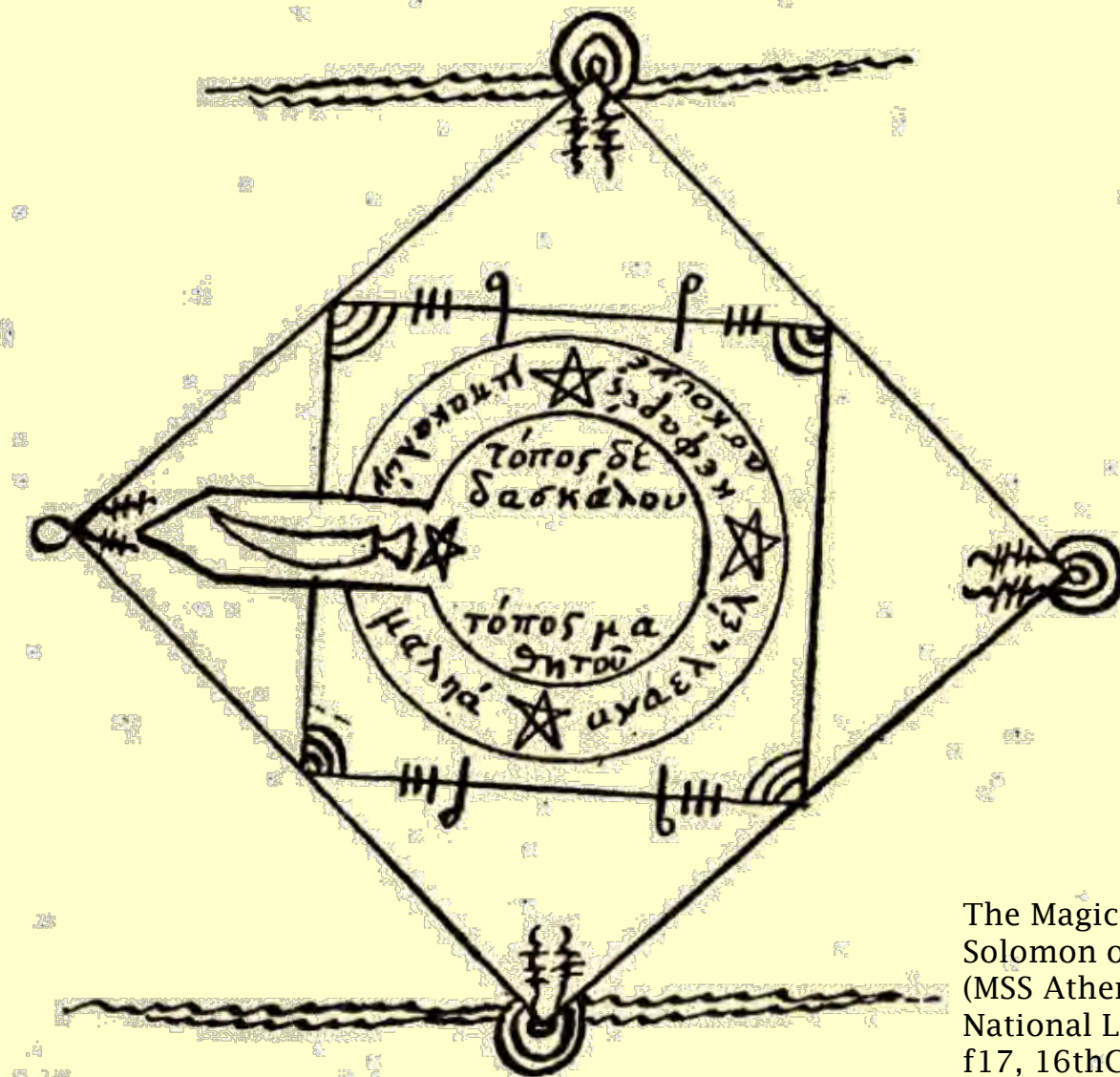
Sepher Mafteah Shelomoh, fol 80 (Gollancz, Hermann, 1914, Oxford University Press)



Castle Structure

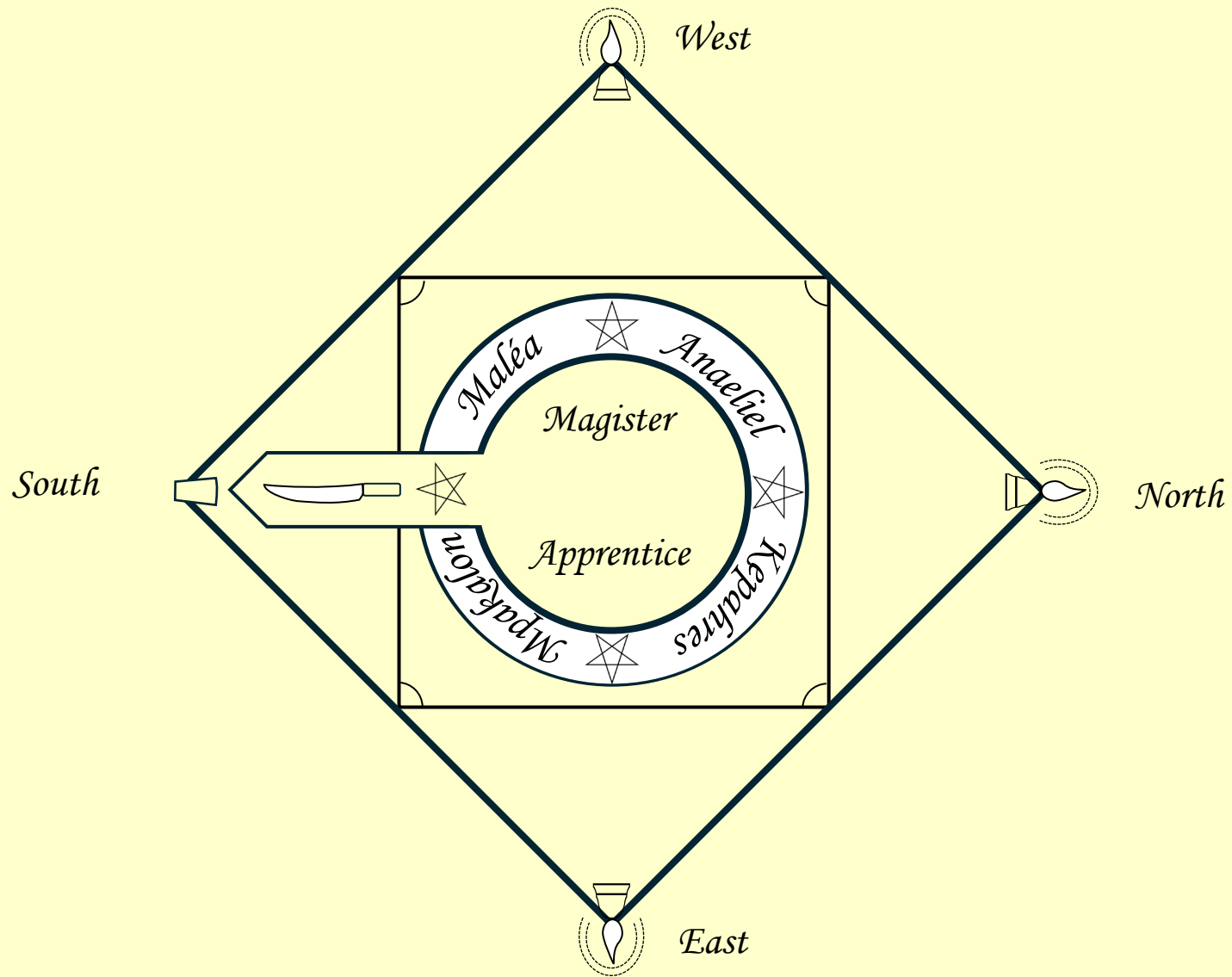


Evocation of Aerial Spirits ~ Hygromanteia 13-16th C

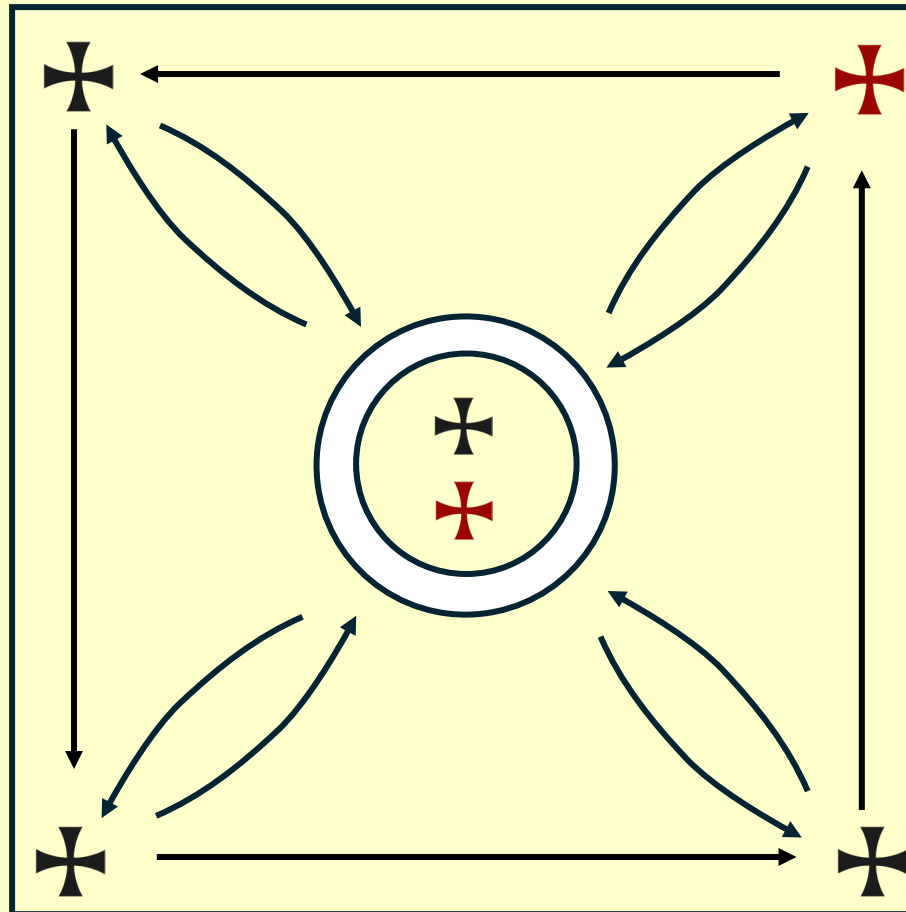


The Magical Treatise of
Solomon or Hygromanteia,
(MSS Atheniensis 1265 of the
National Library of Greece
f17, 16thC)

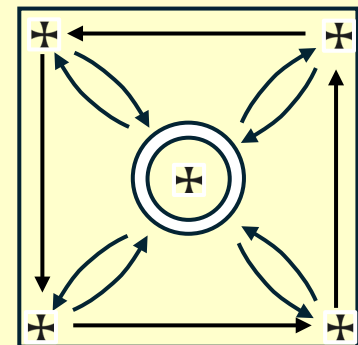
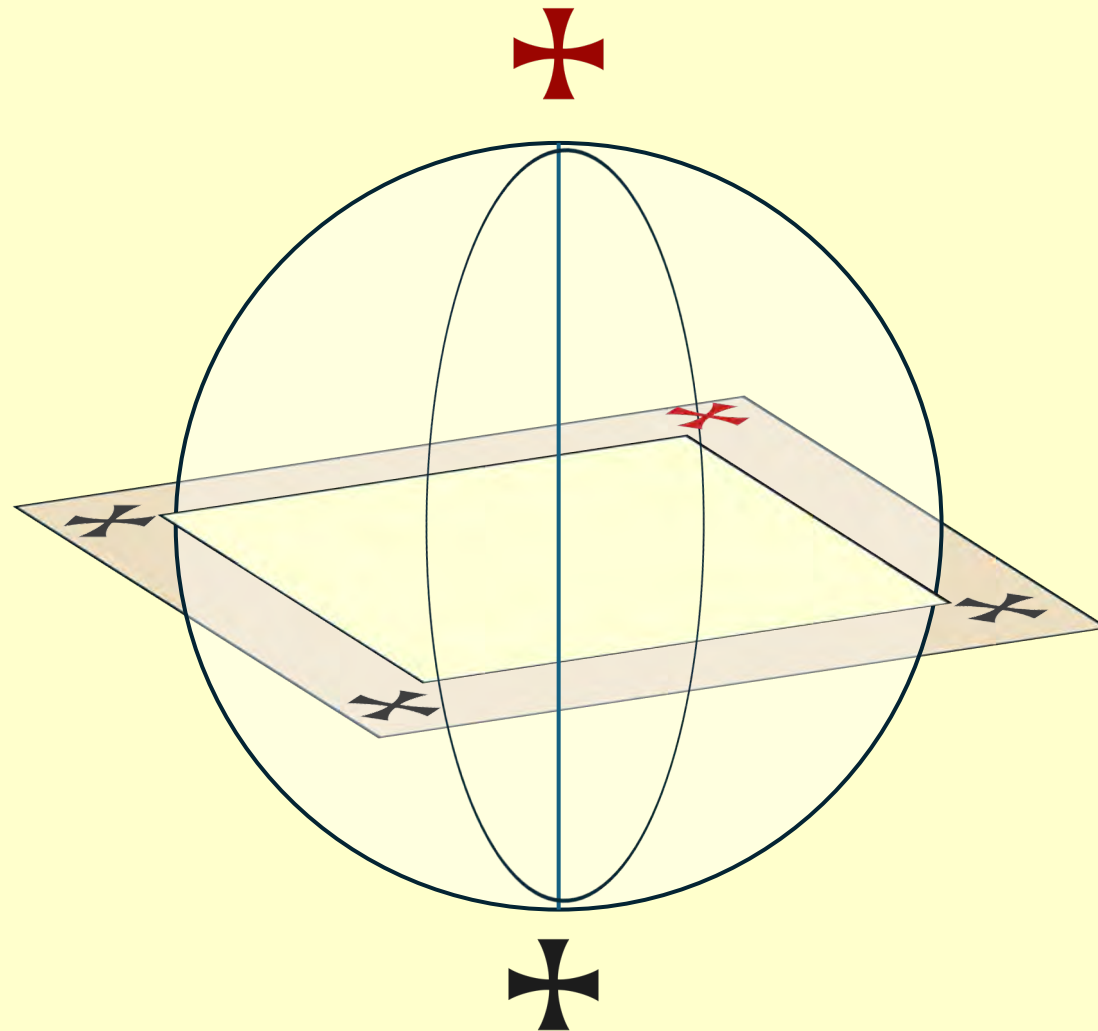
Evocation of Aerial Spirits ~ Hygromanteia 16thC



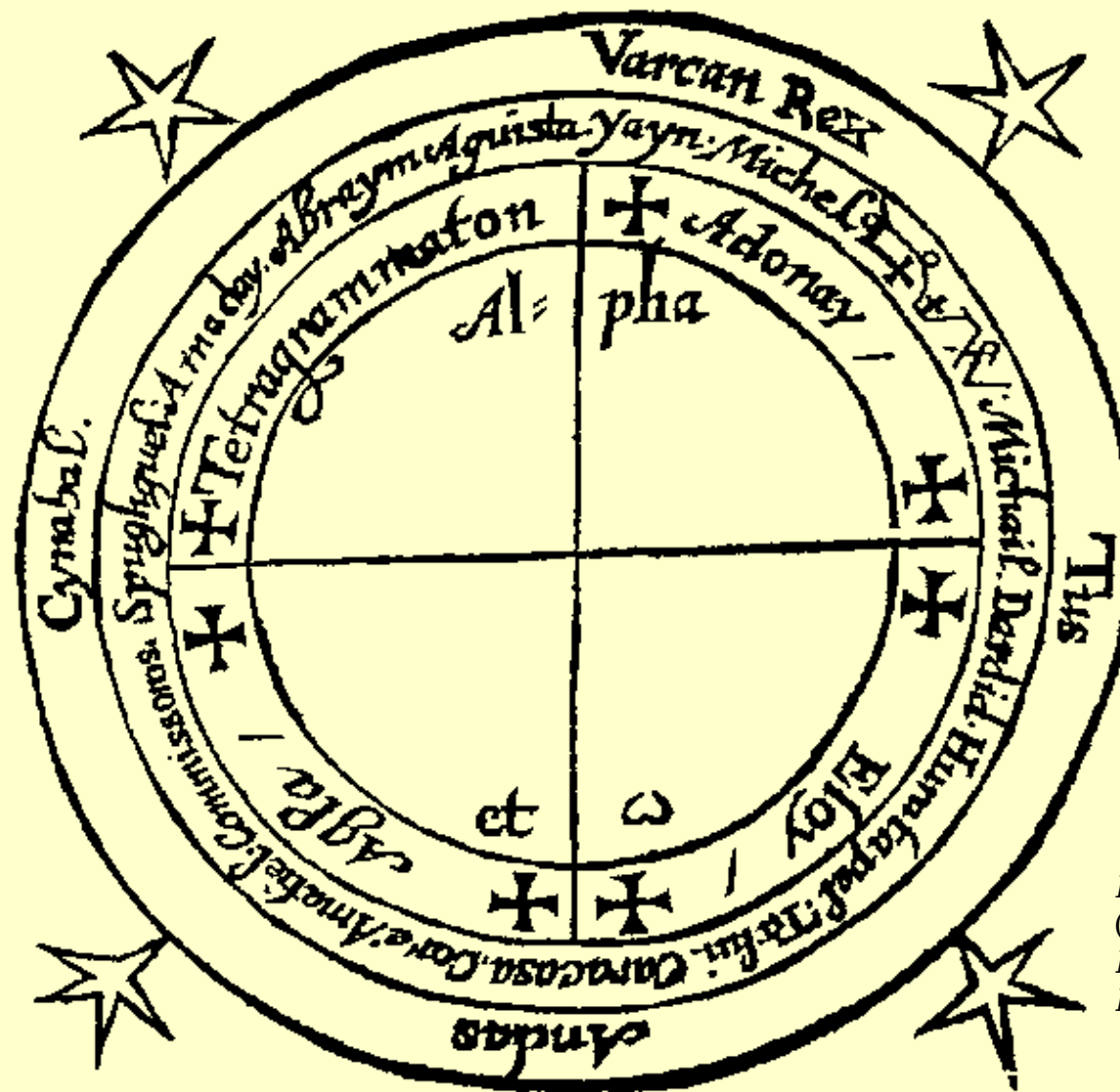
Apotropaic Method to Conceal a Room



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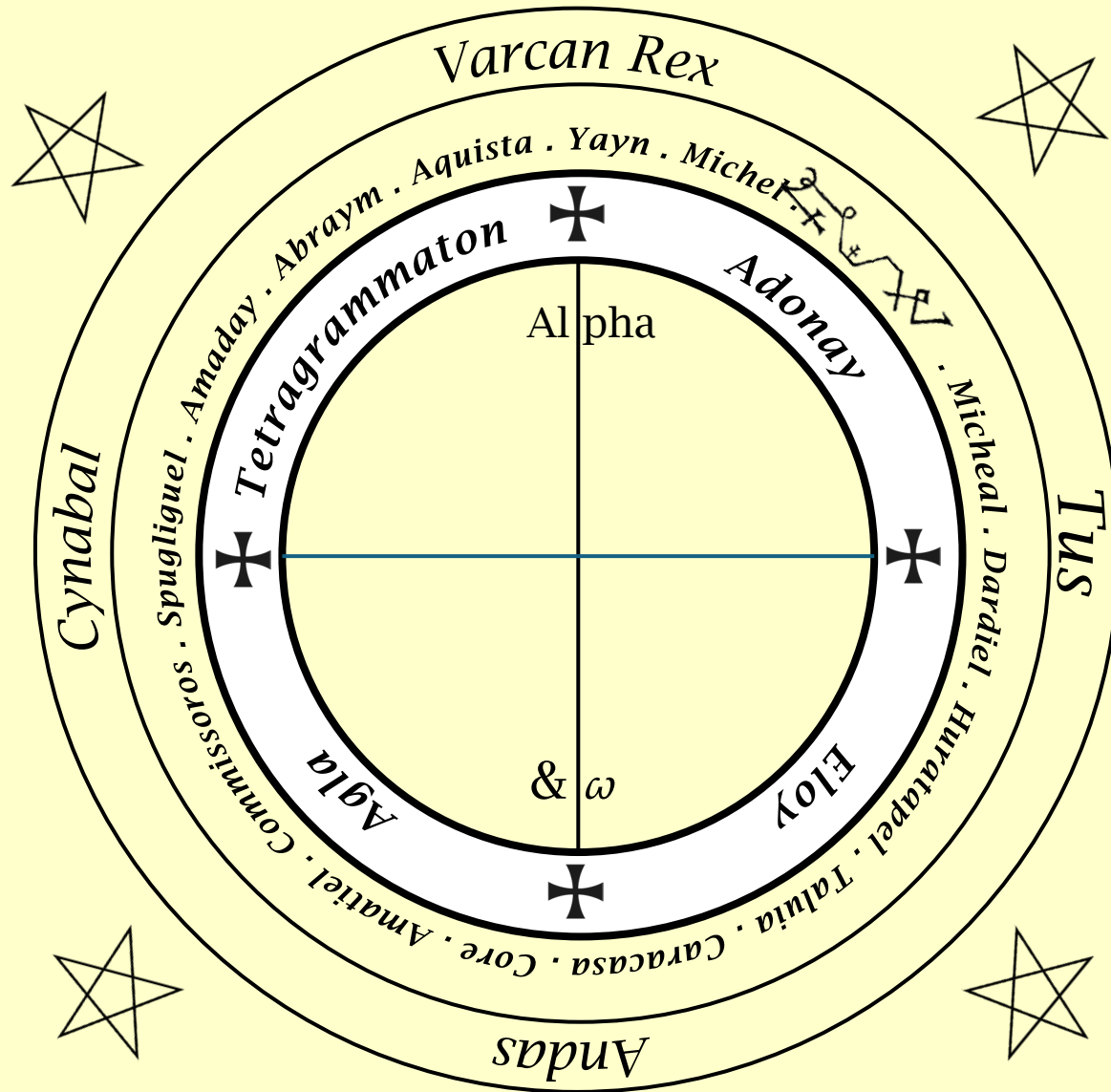


Evocation of Aerial Spirits, Heptameron 13-16thC



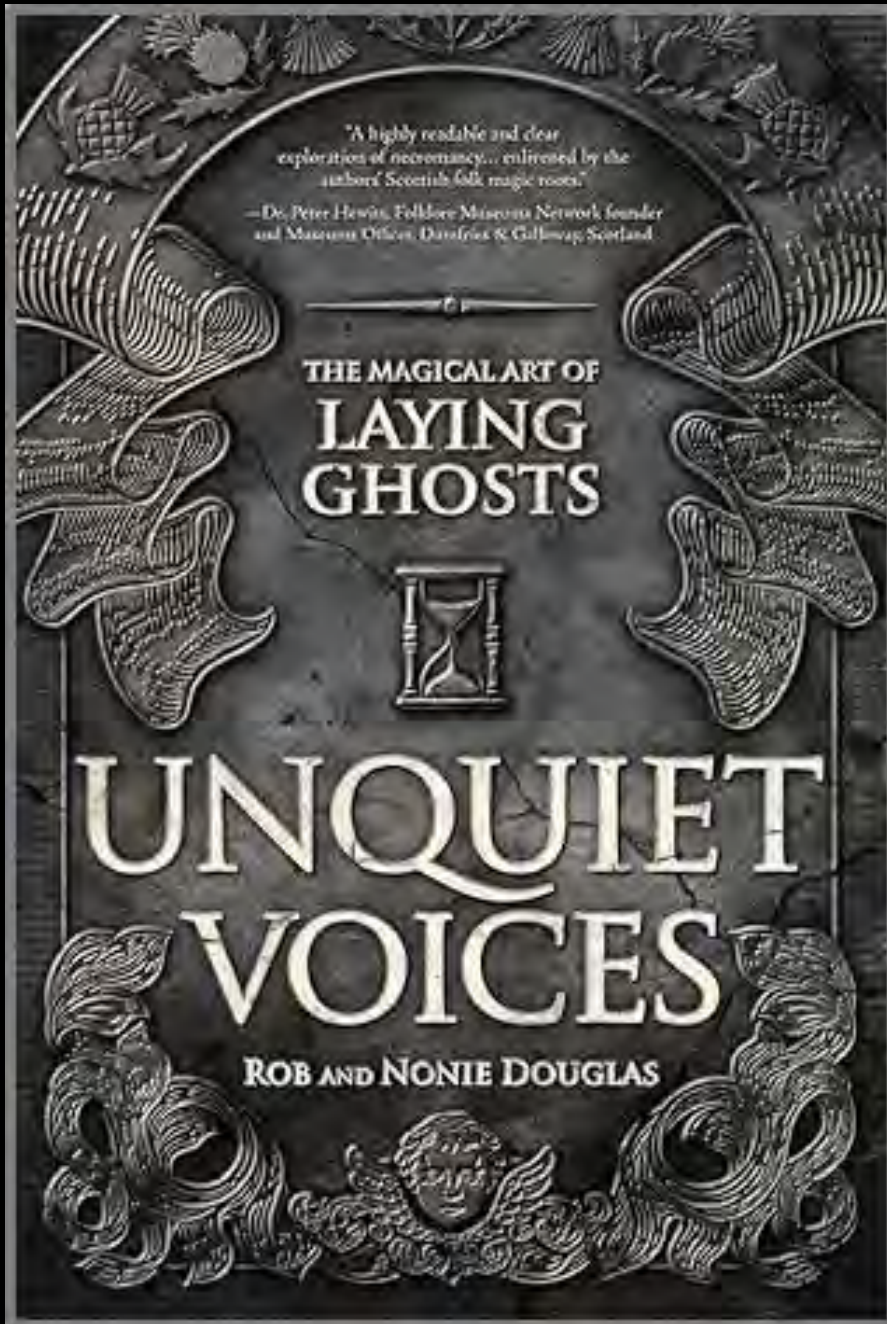
Peter de Abano
(1250-1316)
Heptameron,
Printedbaris. 1567

Evocation of Aerial Spirits ~ Heptamoran 16thC



Summary

- Grimoire magic has been lost and altered over centuries.
- Ceremonial magic is originally Sublunar; mostly focused on the evocation of Aerial Spirits.
- The construction of a circle relates to its purpose. Not all operations require a circle.
- Most diagrams are instructive examples. They do not need to be replicated exactly.
- Apotropaic circles are used to dissuade the attention of spirits. Prophylactic circles provide an impassible barrier.



Unquiet Voices: *The Magical Art of Laying Ghosts*

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