QUIRIGUA—A SMALL MAYA CITY WITH BIG REMINDERS OF PAST GLORY

Jack C. Warner

It was one of the hottest days of my life, as I entered the massive plaza surrounded by jungle in the ruined Maya town of Quirigua (Ki ri wa). The thermometer at the visitor’s center in this World Heritage site, in far SE Guatemala, read 105 F. It was so humid that on this clear sunny day the visibility was less than a quarter of a mile. My wife, Mary, and I entered the largest plaza in the whole Maya region-1,066 feet from North to South. We scanned the many stone monuments. It is the large standing carved stone monuments, called stela, that make Quirigua world famous.

Before we get into a description of what one finds today at Quirigua, it is useful to review a few facts about Maya archaeology:

- The Maya were the only indigenous American culture to develop a complete writing system; and thus, true history. In our lifetime, Maya script has been mostly (about 85%) decoded by archaeologists.
- The Maya wrote a great deal in fan-fold books, pottery, and stone inscriptions on stela, buildings, and other monuments. Only parts of four books remain; so, most of our knowledge of the Maya comes from reading the inscriptions on stone.
- In their time, the Maya were very advanced at mathematics, astronomy, and calendar systems.
- There were many Maya city-states. A noble ruled each city-state. The bigger cities had kings. Many kings were considered to be gods. The kings often formed alliances with other kings for military and trade reasons.
- The peak of the Maya civilization is called the Classic Period. It occurred from 250 AD to 900AD, and was centered in the Maya lowland jungle area of what is now NE Guatemala, Belize, SE Mexico, and NW Honduras.

Quirigua is in Guatemala’s far SE, along the lower Montagua River and its important trade routes. It appears to have been founded in the second century AD by the big city-state of Copan. Copan is in the jungle about 30 miles S, in what is now Honduras. The most precious item to these ancient Maya was not gold or diamonds. It was jade. The Maya elite coveted jade. The greatest source of jade in the whole Maya world was the upper valley of the Montagua Rivier. Copan founded Quirigua to control this vital trade route and gain the wealth it brought.

Quirigua seems to have lived a routine life as a vassal state of Copan for hundreds of years, until a king named Caustic Sky ascended to the throne in 724 AD (many Maya kings were named, in English, by the archaeologists based on what their emblem glyph looked like. Since the writing has been decoded, many now also have "real" Maya names. Caustic Sky’s "real" Maya name is K’ak’ Tiliw Chan Yopaat. Due to the complexity of these Maya names, I will continue to use the older English names here). In 738 AD things changed in Quirigua. Caustic Sky committed a daring act. He captured his former leader, the king of much larger Copan, and beheaded him in the
great plaza of Quirigua. This began a period of over 140 years of great prosperity at Quirigua. How was Caustic Sky and his little kingdom able to defeat mighty Copan and make it stick? At this time in the Maya world there were two “superpower” city-states: Tikal and Calakmul. Copan was strongly allied with Tikal for many years. It appears that Caustic Sky switched allegiance to Calakmul and both these allies enjoyed the riches of the jade trade.

The wealth and prestige of Quirigua and Caustic Sky grew a great deal after 738 AD. As was the Maya royal custom, great things were commemorated in carved stone. The monuments at Quirigua are among the most artistic and best preserved in the whole Maya world.

Caustic Sky had this carved stela erected in 761 AD to commemorate the previous 5 years of his rein. It is carved in local sandstone and stands 24 feet high. In 761 AD, it was the tallest monument ever erected in the Maya world. This area is subject to fairly frequent earthquakes. The monument has a noticeable lean now.

In 766 AD Caustic Sky had this beautiful high relief stela erected. It is 20 feet high, it is known in Maya archaeological circles as having well preserved, sophisticated Maya glyphs. Note when compared to the previous stele, one can see changes in Caustic Sky’s face.

In 771 AD Caustic Sky had his most famous stela erected. It is 35 feet high and it is the largest stone ever quarried by the Maya. It weighs 130,000 lb and is said to be the largest free-standing worked monolith in the New World.
This is a closer look at Caustic Sky’s face on the tallest 771 AD stela. Again, you can see changes in his face with age and power. At this point, he had been king/god for 48 years.

In 780 AD Caustic Sky had this large sandstone boulder carved with his head appearing out of the mouth of a mythical crocodile/mountain beast. This type of monument is called a “zoomorph” by archaeologists. Also carved are many fine glyphs.

Caustic Sky died in 785 AD after a 62-year reign. He was about 88 years old. He was succeeded on the throne by his son, Sky Xul. Sky Xul erected this zoomorph and stone altar in 795 AD in the ballcourt plaza just off the main plaza. Again the king/god emerges from the mouth of a mythical crocodile/mountain monster. The glyphs tell of the founding of Quirigua under the leadership of the king/god of Copan. The altar is said to represent a dismembered god leaping from a split in the earth.
Sky Xul died about 795 AD and was succeeded by Jade Sky. Quirigua appears to have been in decline, as were most of the lowland Maya city-states at the end of the 8th century AD. This much smaller stela was erected by Jade Sky in 800 AD. It was the last stela installed. By 810 AD Quirigua was abandoned by the Maya.

There is much at Quirigua that is not yet excavated. What wonders lie beneath this mound at the grand plaza/jungle boundary?
On the south side of the great plaza is an area of elite residences and administrative structures called the acropolis. It was built over many years 550-810 AD. Like in many Maya cities, newer structures were built over the older ones.

Archaeology can teach us many lessons. Archaeologists decoded the Maya glyphs so we could read a history in the first place. Clearly the story of Quirigua’s history in the eighth century AD is a story that shows:

- Leaders matter
- The big do not always dominate the small
- It pays to have friends and allies
- Writing on pottery and stone lasts longer
- No civilization lasts forever

REFERENCES

All photographs are Mary & Jack Warner originals
Royal Cities of the Ancient Maya, Michael D. Coe & Barry Brukoff, The Vendome Press, 2012
Wikipedia, Quirigua
A Forest of Kings, Linda Shele and David Freidel, William Morrow and Company, 1990

May General Meeting: Monday, May 9th, at DMNS in Ricketson Auditorium at 7 PM.
Speaker: Dr. Donna M. Glowacki
Title: Oh The Times they are a-Changin’: Living & Leaving in 13th Century Mesa Verde

Abstract: By the turn of the fourteenth century, ancestral Pueblo people had left the Four Corners, yet the circumstances that led to this regional depopulation varied from village-to-village and person-to-person. While climatic challenges shaped options, it was the social and political factors that really made the difference, and reasons for leaving depended on how people were situated in the politically charged, multicultural, and multilingual, social landscape. Drawing on multiple lines of evidence including settlement patterns, pottery exchange networks, and changes in ceremonial and civic architecture, Glowacki will discuss the diverse, intraregional contexts from which people emigrated to explore how different histories and their contingencies, which included deeply rooted Eastern and Western identities, the broad-reaching Aztec-Chaco ideological complex, and the McElmo Intensification, converged and prompted the Mesa Verde migrations.

Speaker Bio: Donna Glowacki is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Notre Dame, a senior researcher on the Village Ecodynamics Project, and a long-time research associate with Crow Canyon Archaeological Center and Mesa Verde National Park. She has conducted fieldwork at seventy-six of the largest sites in the Central Mesa Verde region. Her research focuses on understanding social change, and particularly the role of religious transformation and sociopolitical reorganization in regional depopulation and migration, as well as intraregional exchange, and ceramic and compositional analysis. Her publications include two edited volumes and various book chapters and articles. Her book, Living & Leavi
Minutes of the DC-CAS Board Meeting, April 5, 2016

The DC-CAS Board Meeting was held at the Tivoli Center at Metro State University April 5, 2016. Attending were Linda Sand, Catherine Griffin, Michelle Giometti, Jon Kent, Teresa Weedin, Reed Farmer, Cashel McGloin, Ken Andresen, and Kendra Elrod. Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Linda Sand.

Vice President/Speakers (Catherine G) announced she is still working on confirming a May speaker but will have one confirmed by the April General Meeting next week.

Scientific (email from Neil H) is working on the Blackfoot Cave writing assignments. Neil reported the papers given at CCPA were well received. Reid Farmer reported Ken Caryl Ranch Survey has been confirmed as complete, the board extended their thanks to Reid for his work on the project.

Membership (Cashel M) reported about one half of DC-CAS members have renewed their memberships for the year and will make an announcement at the April General Meeting to remind those who haven’t renewed their dues are due.

CO-CAS (Teresa W) reminded everyone the DC-CAS Chapter will be hosting the quarterly CO-CAS meeting April 23 at History Colorado. Volunteers are needed to help setup prior to the event by 8:30am and to help clean up after the event. Volunteers for this request are instructed to contact Teresa Weedin for more details.

PAAC (email from Preston Niesen) reported the upcoming PAAC class being taught at History Colorado will begin April 14. There are still seats open to attend the class. The Fall PAAC schedule is being planned, suggestions for the Denver location class topic are being solicited, contact Preston Niesen for input.

Treasurer (Michelle G) reported the treasury report will be available in the coming days and reported membership dues are rolling in steadily.

APB/e-APB Newsletter (Ken Andresen and Cashel McGloin) reported the April APB has been published and will be made available online in the next few days.

Old Business
March Board Meeting minutes were approved.

New Business
Request for funding has been made to the DC-CAS Board for $200.00 to cover fees for pottery petrographic analysis from the Blackfoot Cave samples. The intent is to determine clay content and its relation to provenance. The DC-CAS Board suggested requested budget should be increased to $300.00 to cover petrographic analysis costs and was so moved. Motion to grant up to $300.00 for Blackfoot Cave petrographic analysis costs was approved.

December Members Night location was discussed; after review of suggestions it was decided the Members Night event held each December in lieu of the General Meeting will be held at Jon Kent’s lab at Metro State. More details will be made in the coming months.

It was decided to move the May DC-CAS Board Meeting to 7:15pm and will be located in the Cherry Creek Building Room 241.

December Holiday Dinner locations are under review and decision will be made in the coming months. Linda S announced the November Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 9, the day after Election Day due to scheduling conflicts. Meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM.

The next DC-CAS General Meeting is scheduled for May 9, 7pm in the Ricketson Auditorium at Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

The next DC-CAS Board Meeting scheduled for May 3, 2016 7:15pm at Metro State Cherry Creek Building (South Classroom) Room 241.

Minutes of the DC-CAS General Meeting, April 11, 2016

The DC-CAS General Meeting was held at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science Ricketson Auditorium April 11, 2016. Approximately 30 people attending.

Linda Sand called the meeting to order at 7:06pm and welcomed guests and members. Linda thanked Cashel and Ken for their work in getting the April APB published and posted online.

Scientific (Neil Hauser)
PAAC (Preston Niesen) reminded attendees the Historical Archaeology PAAC course will begin April 14 at History Colorado. There are still seats open, if you are interested in attending the Historical Archaeology course contact Preston to sign up. The PAAC schedule for the Fall is being planned and topics for the Denver location are requested. Contact Preston for your input.

Membership (Cashel McGloin and Linda Sand) reminded members March 1 was the due date for their current membership dues and to renew as soon as possible.

Treasury (Linda Sand for Michelle Giometti) reported membership dues are coming in. Linda announced the DC-CAS Board has approved up to $300.00 to be used for Blackfoot Cave petrographic analysis. Linda Sand for Craig Banister reported the website is up to date.
Linda reminded those attending the Egyptian Study Society and DC-CAS joint meeting in August will be held August 15, 2016.

**Speaker** (Catherine Griffin) confirmed Dr. Donna Glowacki will be the May General Meeting speaker. Topic will be on Mesa Verde. Thomas Carr has been confirmed to be the June speaker and has a number of topics he can cover and asked for input on what he should give in June. Catherine took a survey and results led to ‘Conflict on the Plains Photography Project’ as the chosen topic for June.

Catherine Griffin introduced the April speaker, Reid Farmer whose lecture “Desert Training Center: World War II Military Archaeology in the California Desert” was given.

Reid Farmer began by explaining his work in CRM is you work with whatever project you get. A project he was given in the southern California desert led to his team’s survey of the Desert Training Center.

The Desert Training Center was first sought by General Patton in February 1942. The object was to find a location to train troops for Operation Torch, the North African invasion. Patton found remote southern California as a suitable location for this training ground. In August 1942 the first troops arrived for training. By 1944 about 2 million troops had been trained in the Desert Training Center/California-Arizona Maneuver Area. The landscape is a very Spartan remote desert of southern California. Water was supplied by the Metropolitan Water District Aquifer. Troops and supplies were shipped in by railroad. When the area closed in 1944 due to troop shortage hundreds of vehicles were ‘marooned.’

In 2009 Reid Farmer and his crew were contracted by Tetra Tech with Genesis Solar Energy to survey a part of this Training Center in the Chuckwalla Valley. The crew found this project to be a difficult one as the Training Center is not just a site but a whole landscape. Work previously conducted on the area, per historical records, pointed to the Chuckwalla Valley being used by smaller units with tented camps but field work hadn’t yet been conducted to support this. Reid and his team surveyed the area, recorded every can and can scatter as well as other material remains such as a shoe repair kit, brass cartridges and other ordinance. They found features such as fox holes, pipes perpendicular to the ground used for signal flares in arrow shaped formations, strung tin cans, and ‘desert art’ where several troop insignia had been created on the desert floor. Reid discussed what their findings meant and the different perspectives they explored to their eventual conclusions of what did take place at Chuckwalla Valley.

Linda thanked Reid Farmer for sharing his experience with the group as Catherine presented him with a token of appreciation for his time.

**Old Business**

March General Meeting minutes were approved.

**New Business**

The announcement was made that tours for the Lamb Spring Archaeological Site are open for booking for the 2016 season. Due to high interest from the 2015 season tours the number of tours for 2016 have doubled.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

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**Earth Knack Gathering 26th Annual Rendezvous**

June 16th - 21st

In collaboration with Sarqit Outdoor Living School near Denver, CO.

The Earth Knack Gathering is an opportunity for the whole family to spend five fun-filled days learning to reconnect to the Earth in a practical and moving way. Our top-notch instructors will offer courses in skills that all our ancestors had a knack for. This once-common knowledge, aeons old, is quickly becoming lost as we trade "up" in technology. As we become more specialized, we lose sight of the simple pleasures of picking a fresh salad near a mountain stream, making a stone into a sharp tool, weaving a basket to carry our things, or creating beautiful clothing. And as we lose this knowledge, we become dependent, we lose our options, and a part of us dies. We feel this knowledge contains the marrow of life: the spark, the knack for living in harmony with ourselves and the Earth.

At the Earth Knack Gathering, you will learn the science—the step-by-step process—that enables you to gather and make everything you need from your surroundings. You'll meet kindred spirits as you gain fun and useful skills that you can incorporate into your modern lifestyle. Together we will learn the skills of bow-and-arrow, atlatl, blacksmithing, basketry, pottery, fire-making, outdoor cooking, plant-fiber cordage, wild edibles, medicinal plants, beekeeping, natural gardening, soap-making, natural building, livestock, flintknapping, hide tanning, and much more!

Stop simply watching and hearing about it...get out here and really try it!

For more information, please visit: [http://www.earthknackgathering.com/](http://www.earthknackgathering.com/)

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**PAAC Course**

Hurry, hurry time is running short to register for the spring 2016 PAAC, class here in Denver. This spring's class is titled “Historical Archaeology” and will be taught by Kevin Black, Assistant State archaeologist. Classes will be held at the History Colorado Center on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 9:30 PM beginning April 14 and last through May 26. The registration fee for the class is $12.00 and can be mailed to Preston Niesen, Denver Chapter PAAC Coordinator. If you have questions concerning the class please feel free to contact Preston at
Selection of a PAAC Class for this coming fall will be made in the next few months. If you have a specific PAAC Class which you are interested in please let Preston know your desires.

**Lamb Spring Archaeological Preserve Talks and Tours**
The Lamb Spring Archaeological Preserve is offering talks and tours of this important Paleo-Indian archaeological preserve just south of Chatfield State Park (Littleton address) monthly from May, 2016 thru October, 2016. Remains of extinct species of Columbian mammoths, camel, horse, and buffalo have been excavated from this prehistoric hunting site. Mammoth remains have been C14 dated to about 16,000 years ago. Cody Paleo-Indian culture artifacts have been dated to about 10,000 years ago.

For more information and to make a tour reservation see: lambspring.org/freetours

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**Four Corners Research-Archaeology in the Mesa Verde Region**
They have just announced their 2016 field school. For more information, visit http://www.fourcornersresearch.com/index.html

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**2016 Archaeological Field Opportunities in the Rockies**

Excavate and celebrate the 50th Anniversary since the end of the 1st excavation at Hell Gap. We are hosting the Paleoindian Archaeology at the Edge of the Rockies advanced field school this summer while at Hell Gap. The curriculum includes advanced field techniques, electronic and digital data recording, analysis techniques, and workshops on lithics, zooarchaeology, and stone tool production.

**Sessions:**

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<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hell Gap I</td>
<td>July 2 through July 11</td>
<td>leave Laramie on July 1</td>
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<td>Hell Gap II</td>
<td>July 16 through July 25</td>
<td>meet at Hell Gap at</td>
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<td>Hell Gap III</td>
<td>July 30 through August 8</td>
<td>meet at Hell Gap at</td>
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Please contact Marcel Kornfeld, PiRL, Department 3431, 1000 East University Avenue, Laramie, Wyoming 82071-3431 or go to http://www.uwyo.edu/pirl PaleoIndian Research Lab: Email – anpro1@uwyo.edu or messages at (307) 766-5136.

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**Excavation Opportunity-Introduction to Archaeological Field Excavations in Southwestern CO**

Where: Mitchell Springs Ruin Group

Greetings CAS members! The following information will explain this year’s excavation opportunity being held at the Mitchell Springs Ruin Group in Cortez Colorado. All sessions are 4 days in length. Again, this year we will be working with our friends from the Verde Valley

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**Archaeological Center** (VerdeValleyArchaeologyCenter.org), and members from various Chapters of the Arizona Archaeological Society. **You Will Learn About:**

- Excavation and documentation techniques
- Architectural identification and dating
- Mesa Verde region pottery identification
- Chipped stone and ground stone identification
- How to read stratigraphy
- Prehistory of the Puebloan occupation in the region
- The Chaco outlier great house community in the Montezuma Valley
- Introduction to Puebloan Social History

The Mitchell Spring Ruin Group was originally noted by Lewis Henry Morgan in 1870 during his early study of aboriginal Americans in the American Southwest. Shortly thereafter, J.W. Fewkes visited the site and confirmed Morgan’s observations. During a reconnaissance of the San Juan Watershed in the 1890’s, T. Mitchell Pruden, a physician working with the Peabody Museum at Yale made the next mention of the ruins and provided a description and assessment of the condition of the site in two published reports. Several years later, Pruden returned and with the assistance of Clayton Wetherill (brother of Richard Wetherill, who is widely credited with discovering the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde) and Henry Hun, conducted archaeological excavations related to his study of prehistoric architectural family units that are still often referred to as Unit Pueblos or Pruden Units. The site is located just south of Cortez, CO and is the center of a large community spreading out in all directions from the site center for more than a half mile. It contained hundreds of rooms, 4 small great houses, a great kiva, D-shaped tri-wall structure, a 10 meter court kiva, reservoir and a tower kiva. It was occupied for over 500 years and is listed on the National Historic Register.

Related Info:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ-E4zzPqNw
http://www.fourcornersresearch.com/index.html
Our various projects

**2016 Field Sessions -- Each Lasting Four Days**

May 27-30 Mitchell Springs, Cortez CO. **FULL**
July 15-18 Mitchell Springs Ruin Group, Cortez
August 4-7 Pecos Conference in Springerville AZ
August 12-15 Mitchell Springs Ruin Group, Cortez
August 26-29 Mitchell Springs Ruin Group, Cortez

Attendees are encouraged, but not required, to participate for the entire four days.

There is a $95 per person per session fee required to offset expenses related to camping, latrines, specimen collection, processing and analysis, and curation. CAS Student fee is $35.

Free camping, potable water and toilets are available on-site. Previous experience is not required. PAAC Excavation course credit is a bonus. Researchers are meticulous about details. Your help in this task will be much appreciated.
Open to CAS members in good-standing only. Ask your local Chapter Membership Chair about membership if you are not currently a CAS member. Signed “Liability Waiver and Site Visitation Ethics” forms are required at registration to participate. Registration details and more information for enrollees will follow.

Notes:
CRITICAL! – These classes are held during the warmest months of the year when temperatures can be in the 90s. Some aspects of the work can be physically demanding. We provide shaded areas around the excavations and we encourage all participants to take abundant shade and water breaks. If you have any health issues that may in any way be made worse by these conditions, we ask that you do not apply. You are welcome to come out and visit us if you are interested in checking out the work. By applying for one of these field school classes, you acknowledge that you are in good health and are capable of performing in the conditions as stated.

We have limited CAS openings in each session. Please indicate the session for which you are interested and any alternate session dates, should your first choice not be available. The sooner you apply the better chance you will have of getting your preferred dates.

In consideration of travel distances, if you are interested in attending/travelling with a partner, please apply together so that we will not split you up. Adding someone to your travel group may not be possible after your initial registration. Please only do so if you are sure you can make it. We cannot give refunds on cancellations unless we have a waiting list and can fill the opening you vacate.

To sign up, contact: Tom Hoff tomhoff4@gmail.com - phone 970-882-2191

These excavations are a private project on private property. While the Dove Family is offering it exclusively to CAS Members, it is not sponsored or administered by the Colorado Archaeological Society.

Questions? Contact Dave Dove (davidmdove@msn.com)

COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
DENVER CHAPTER

Balance Sheet
March 31, 2016

ASSETS
Current Assets
Checking/Savings
Key Bank Checking 4,018.01
1st Bank CD 182 day 7/5/16 0.05% 5,693.80
1st Bank CD 182 day 4/19/16 0.05% 4,808.17
1st Bank CD 1 Yr 2/17/17 0.15% 4,998.08
Total Checking/Savings 19,518.96

TOTAL ASSETS 19,518.96

LIABILITIES & EQUITY
Current Liabilities
State CAS Dues Payable 730.00
Total Checking/Savings 730.00

Temp. Restricted Net Assets
Scientific Applications Fund 3,521.91
Swallow Report Project Fund 2,700.81
D Bucknam Memorial Speaker Fund 1,747.10
Blackfoot Cave Fund 70.00
Library Fund 202.45
Education Fund 182.00
Field Trips / Social Fund 483.01
Student Membership Fund 57.50
Speakers Meal Fund 811.62
Total Temp. Restricted Net Assets 9,776.40

General Fund 7,268.40
General Fund Net Income 1,744.16
Total Equity 18,788.96

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 19,518.96

Income Statement
March 1 – 31, 2016

General Fund
Income
Membership Dues 748.00 1,602.00
Interest-Savings, Short-Term CD 0.70 5.16
Donations Received 64.00 876.00
Total Income 812.70 2,483.16

Expenses
Bank Service Charges 3.00 9.00
Dues Paid to State 730.00 730.00
Total Expenses 733.00 739.00

Net General Fund Income 79.70 1,744.16

Scientific Applications Fund
Income
Donations Received 85.00 110.00
Total Income 85.00 110.00
Net SAF Income 85.00 110.00

Swallow Report Project
Income
Donations Received 15.00 19.00
Total Income 15.00 19.00
Net Swallow Report Income 15.00 19.00
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