ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Textile Terminologies in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean basin during the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE

Copenhagen (Denmark), 4-8 March 2009

Convened by:
Marie-Louise Nosch ① and Cécile Michel ②

SCIENTIFIC REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Textile Terminologies in the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean area in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC.

In the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, textile industries flourished along the trade routes, in the urbanised centres and in palaces and temples. The written sources contain rich terminologies describing the textiles. This exploratory workshop will explore this terminology diachronically and investigate the parameters which influence semantic changes and the adoption of new terms. Through textile terminology, we perceive contacts, innovations, trade routes and economical structures of pre-monetary societies.

Textile terminology arises and develops in unison with technical innovations, discoveries, fashions and trade patterns. This statement is valid today and was valid already in the 3rd millennium BC. The Greek word for a long shirt, *khiton*, derives from the Semitic term for linen and survives in the Arab and English word for cotton today; the modern word *denim* for American-style clothing designated originally woad-dyed blue cloth from southern France, “de Nîmes”. In the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, textile industries developed along the trade routes, in the urbanised centres and in palaces and temples. The exploratory workshop on textile terminology will explore this development and the parameters which influence the adoption of new terms and semantic changes. The terminological stock is also a valid source of information on the knowledge and degree of interest of the prehistoric authorities in textile production and thus provides insights into administration and modes of production in palace and state organised textile industries. Through the study of textile terminology, we perceive the contacts, innovations, trade routes and economical structures of the pre-monetary societies.

The geographical and chronological framework for the program is the Central and Eastern Mediterranean in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. This was the period when, for the first time in history, textile production rapidly developed from household production to standardised, industrialised, centralised production, on the basis of a division of labour. It was during this period that sheep developed a white coat/wool through selective breeding, which then provided the dynamics for the development of dye industries, colour extraction and intensive use of colour symbolism in dress. Within this area we also have the development of palace economies and administrations, new means of production, inscriptions with extensive records on production management, tools, glyptic, frescoes and relief iconography in which various types of dress are visible, and the special organisation of production from excavations.

Scientific Committee
Cécile Michel, Marie-Louise Nosch, Mogens Trolle Larsen, Giovanna Biga

Organisers
Cécile Michel, Marie-Louise Nosch

The exploratory workshop
The exploratory workshop took place in Copenhagen, 5-7 March 2009. The host was The Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research, The SAXO Institute, University of Copenhagen.

All participants were staying in the hotel Opera near the University. The participants arrived on March 4th and thus the meeting could start in the morning of March 5th.
The conference started with four papers on methodological aspects of the investigation of textile terminology: methodologies in technical translations (Lervad and Dury); classifications of textiles (Desrosiers); technological investigation of textile production (Andersson Strand) and weaving in Mesopotamia in the Bronze Age (Breniquet).

The following six papers investigated the textile terminology in the 3rd millennium BC with special emphasis on the Sargonic Period (Foster), Ebla (Biga), Egypt (Jones, Herslund), and Neo-Sumerian texts (Verderame, Waetzoldt). At the end of the 3rd millennium-session, all papers were summarised by Rachel Fenton, and a general discussion took place.

The textile terminology in the 2nd millennium BCE was investigated in six papers by ten scholars, from the perspectives of the Old-Assyrian trade (Michel and Veenhof), the Hittite and Louvian textile terminology mainly from religious texts (Lebrun and Degrève), Ugaritic and Akkadian textile terminology from Ugarit (Vita), and Akkadian textile tools (Wisti Lassen); the Aegean evidence – Linear A and Linear B, was investigated by Del Freo, Nosch and Rougemont, and a specific paper dealt with the textile vocabulary of main Knossos textile scribe 103 (Lujan). At the end of the 2nd millennium-session, all papers were summarised by Anna Michailidou, and a general discussion took place.

The further development of textile terminologies of the treated areas and languages in the 1st millennium BCE was presented in three papers: two papers on the Neo-Babylonian evidence (Joannès and Zawadzki) and one paper on the Vedic, Avestan and Indo-Iranian textile terminology.

Finally, new evidence from the archaeological perspective was briefly presented.

Following the suggestion from the ESF Standing Committee of the Humanities, we also invited member of the Thera Exploration team prof. Michailidou to attend. She gave valuable comments and a résumé of the main points in the 2nd millennium BCE research.

**Outcome and further collaboration**

The organisers and participants agreed to publish the proceedings as a book. It was agreed to set the submission deadline for manuscripts to June 15, 2009. Michel and Nosch will edit the papers for a publication in the *Ancient Textiles Series*, published at Oxbow Books, Oxford.

The hand-outs and power point presentations of the workshop will be posted on the CTR website. Michel and her team in Nanterre suggested arranging a 2nd meeting on a narrower topic in Paris in 2001. The topic will be discussed in the HAROC group in the next months.

During and at the end of the conference, the participants and the organisers mutually informed each other about on-going and new research projects related to textiles and terminology. The participants were invited to join the projects and to communicate with other scholars in their home countries about these on-going or future research projects related to textiles.

Textile research is a research field predominantly composed of women scholars. Thus, the workshop with a near to equal participation of male and female scholars contributed to a more equal gender balance in the field.

Most participants came from Denmark and France (each 5 scholars), Italy and Spain (each 4 scholars), Belgium (2), and one scholar from Germany, Sweden, Holland, Poland, UK.

From outside Europe came one scholar from Australia, two from the U.S.A and 1 from Canada.
SCIENTIFIC CONTENT

Outline of the major point of discussion and agreements of the participants. Generally, each paper was followed by much discussion, questions and comments.

*The conference started with four papers on methodological aspects of the investigation of textile terminology: methodologies in technical translations (Lervad and Dury); classifications of textiles (Desrosiers, Herslund); technological investigation of textile production (Andersson Strand) and weaving in Mesopotamia in the Bronze Age (Breniquet)*

This session was highly useful in terms of setting the framework and being precise about textile terminology, in particular in the contributions by Lervad and Dury and Desrosiers. The prescriptive school of thought in terminology holds that terms should be fixed items and should not be prone to synonymic variation. Terminologists and translators have been trained to embrace terminological standardization, to disparage synonymy in favour of monosemy, and to employ consistency rather than lexical variation. However, despite this widespread assumption that synonymy is something to avoid in specialized languages, since it may hamper effective communication between specialists, a number of studies have revealed that even within the confines of specialized communication, synonymic variation does indeed exist.

In addition, the complex technicalities of textile production and their terminologies were explained in particular by Andersson, Desrosiers and Breniquet. Producing a textile includes many steps: fibre preparation, spinning, loom set up, weaving and finishing. Furthermore, many decisions have to be made: what type of fibres to use and how they should be prepared, what type of yarn and of what quality, what type of weaving technique etc. The choices are unlimited and depend on the result the craftsperson wishes to obtain and its use. In the case of 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, textile evidence is so rare and textile terms so scanty that other methods must be investigated. One of them consists in finding the criteria used to tell apart categories of textiles, thus to examine the various possible textile classifications that could find an echo in the corresponding terminology.

Differences in textile technology and loom types between Europe, the Aegean and Anatolia on the one side, and Mesopotamia and the Levant and Egypt on the other side have vital impact on the textile terminology. Likewise, the differences in fibre use (wool in Europe, Aegean, Anatolia; flax in Egypt) are necessary bases for the construction of textile terminologies.

Terminology reveals information about technology and the evolution of crafts in ancient society. The presence of a linguistic term for a given procedure or profession implies its existence in the society where the language was spoken. It follows that a study of a particular technical vocabulary in a diachronic perspective can inform us about the nature and evolution of craft and production.

An obstacle, however, for a better understanding of the textile terminology is the accuracy of the translation of the specific technical terms. Often our dictionaries place great emphasis on a correct understanding of etymology and stem, whereas the translations related to a particular craft or process tend to be based on a preliminary technical understanding. Translations of textile terms are often left broad and open on purpose.

Finally, a different methodology was presented by Herslund, by applying contemporary ethno-biological and cognitive linguistic theories of categorisation to the study ancient Egyptian writing systems, it is possible to cognitively map the lexemes appearing in the [textiles] category and demonstrate 1) How the lexemes in question existed on
different levels of abstraction and inclusiveness in the mind of the ancient Egyptians; 2) How some category members were conceived as good prototypical members whereas others were "not-so-good" border edge members, and 3) How the experience of textiles and the practice of wearing clothes constituted a prototypical cognitive core, from which the [textiles] category radiated out to include a whole range of meanings, motivated by bodily experiences as well as mythology and belief systems.

The following six papers investigated the textile terminology in the 3 millennium BC with special emphasis on the Sargonic Period (Foster), Ebla (Biga), Egypt (Jones, Herslund), and Neo-Sumerian texts (Verderame, Waetzoldt). At the end of the 3rd millennium-session, all papers were summarised by Rachel Fenton, and a general discussion took place.

Some scholars investigated finished garments in texts and in iconography and statues. Although the skirt or kilt was standard apparel for women and men throughout the late third millennium, there were several stylistic innovations in wrap-around garments under the Akkadian kings. The traditional shaggy outer garment gave way in the second generation to a smooth, fringed body wrap, evidently worn for ceremonial occasions. Then in the time of Naram-Sin, a new style, the toga, suddenly makes its appearance. This new fashion spread among the wealthy elite, both men and women, in Sumer and Akkad. In post-Akkadian times, the toga became the standard apparel for rulers, such as Gudea and the kings of Ur (Foster).

The ‘linen lists’ of the Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom funerary stelae (Jones) provide an important corpus of textile and textile-related terminology, that, although from a religious and cultic context, shows evidence of specialisation in textile production. These stelae (also known as relief slabs) derive mainly from the necropoleis of Memphis, the first capital city of Egypt, and date from c. 2900 BC to c. 2436 BC (First to Fourth Dynasties).

The investigation of the colours and dyes in connection of textiles is vital in understanding textile terminology, and was investigated by Waetzoldt for Mesopotamia and Biga for Ebla. Many of the textiles quoted in Ebla texts are coloured, especially those in the monthly administrative textile delivery records. The textiles are often specified to be reddish-brown, yellow or multicoloured. Other textiles are white or black. The wool is black, white or black and white. The study of the colours of different textiles and which types of textiles are coloured and which type are not can be very useful in identifying the type of textile. It seems clear that the chromatic differences sometimes have a symbolic, ritual value; it has already been noted for example that the goddess Nintu has a white dress when she is well-disposed and a black dress when angry (Biga);. Textiles given as funerary gifts are well known but are not in one particular colour but are of different colours or even multicoloured.

In Mesopotamia at the time around 2000 BC textiles usually were not specified by colours. In the texts there are mentioned only black (gī₃₉) wool and clothes produced from it. Very rarely we find yellowish (?) textiles (in Sumerian: sig₇). For ribbons they obviously mixed black and yellowish wools. ‘Multicoloured’ garments (tūg-gûn-a) are mentioned in texts coming from the palace of Garshanna. Garments woven from a shiny yellow wool (hus-a) might be worn only by the king. The garments of gods could be white, black or multicoloured.

Interesting suggestions to identify weaving techniques such as tabby and twills were presented by Waetzoldt. In Sumerian there is no clear terminological differentiation between fabric and garment. Both were called by Sumerian tūg. However, it was suggested that ṭā˘₂˘₃₉ni-lám e.g. might describe a woven fabric. This is confirmed by the relation of warp-threads to
weft-threads of about 1:1 to 1:2. Strictly speaking this relation concerns the weight of the weft- and warp-threads.

Many papers presented data from unpublished inscription. This was for example the case for the paper by Pomponio presenting data from a small lot of unpublished tablets belonging to the collections of the British Museum concerning the production and the typology of textiles in the most important provincial capitals (Girsu and Umma) of the Neo-Sumerian empire (21st century BC, Southern Mesopotamia): these texts are a balanced account of income and redistribution, a long list of clothes and piece-goods belonging to a dozen of different types and about seventy sub-types, a register of textiles with their weigh and a register of wool intended for textiles.

The textile terminologies in the 2nd millennium BCE was investigated in six papers by ten scholars, from the perspectives of the Old-Assyrian trade (Michel and Veenhof), the Hittite and Louvian textile terminology mainly from religious texts (Lebrun and Degrève), Ugaritic and Akkadian textile terminology from Ugarit (Vita), and Akkadian textile tools (Wisti Lassen); the Aegean evidence – Linear A and Linear B, was investigated by Del Freo, Nosch and Rougemont, and a specific paper dealt with the textile vocabulary of main Knossos textile scribe 103 (Lujan). At the end of the 3rd millennium-session, all papers were summarised by Anna Michailidou, and a general discussion took place.

The cuneiform private archives from Kaniš, dated to the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C., belonged to Assyrian merchants who traded many textiles between their home city Aššur and central Anatolia (Michel and Veenhof). The numerous terms linked to textiles cited by these tablets have been extensively studied by K. Veenhof in 1972. Since then, thousands of texts have been published and deciphered, which have supplied so many new data that a new analysis is desirable. Of those exported to Anatolia, many were imported in Aššur, others were produced in Aššur or somewhere in northern Mesopotamia. In addition the Assyrian traded textiles which were produced in Anatolia. This implies that the textiles had different origins and that their names come from different languages. Most of them occur only in the Old Assyrian dialect and the overlap with the Old Babylonian vocabulary is limited.

Mycenaean textile terminology as attested in the Linear B tablets is particularly rich. The palace scribes kept strict record of many of the textile manufacture processes, in particular the sheep breeding, the production targets, the textile personnel and the finishing and storage of textiles (del Freo, Nosch, Rougemont). The extant Mycenaean tablets show that scribe 103 played an important role in the organization of the textile industry at Knossos. His vocabulary was investigated by Lujan.

The further development of textile terminologies of the treated areas and languages in the 1st millennium BCE was presented in three papers: two papers on the Neo-Babylonian evidence (Joannès and Zawadzki) and one paper on the Vedic, Avestan and Indo-Iranian textile terminology.

Francis Joannès, (Université de Paris 1 Panthéon – Sorbonne, Maison de l’archéologie et de l’ethnologie, Nanterre, FR), Textile terminology in the Neo-Babylonian documentation

The vocabulary concerning the crafts in connection with textile is plentiful, but often elusive in the written documentation of the Neo-Babylonian period. Joannes reviewed how far the differences in terminology between the documentation of the great religious institutions and these of the private area imply different modes of production and use. Finally, the
enumeration of garments and fabrics was discussed with the aim to detect rules in the organization of clothing.

The problems in studying garment terminology in a non-cultic context in the Neo-Babylonian period were addresses by Zawadzki. The author discussed an unpublished tablet with new terms or a new description of known terms. He also presented a lists of a few new terms from other (un)published tablets, some with a short discussion.

Andrés-Toledo showed how the Indo-Iranian and Indo-European linguistic reconstruction can contribute to precise which textile terminology existed among the Indo-Iranians before they became separated in the Indian and the Iranian groups. The author considered those words which can be reconstructed not only as Indo-Iranian ones, but also traced back to an Indo-European textile terminology. Secondly, he dealt with the Old Indian and Old Iranian textile terminology which could have been inherited from Indo-Iranian, but lacks in other Indo-European languages. It was concluded that some of these words belong to Indo-Iranian and even Indo-European formulas.

Finally, new evidence from the archaeological perspective was briefly presented. Garcia-Ventura presented evidence for textile remains as such and on one particular source of information – textile impressions. The contexts of the objects for which the textiles served as wrapping and also the technological features of the fabrics themselves was explored based from a group of Ur III foundation figurines found at Nippur.

**ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS; CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE FIELD**

*Publication*
The organisers and the participants agreed to publish the proceedings as a book, as soon as possible. It was agreed to set the submission deadline for manuscripts to June 15, 2009. Michel and Nosch agreed to meet in Paris in July 2009 and to edit the papers and Nosch agreed to arrange for publication in the Ancient Textiles Series, published at Oxbow Books, Oxford.

The participants were furthermore encouraged to write their contributions as book chapters, and to provide ample documentation in the form of transcriptions and photographs.

*Communications*
The organisers Nosch and Michel asked the participants for their permission to post all hand-outs and all power point presentations on the CTR website, and this was agreed.

*Further meetings*
Michel and her team in Nanterre suggested arranging a 2nd meeting on a narrower topic dealing with the economy of wool in Paris in 2001. The topic will be specified in the HAROC group in the next months.

*Network opportunities and new projects.*
During and at the end of the conference, the participants and the organisers mutually informed each other about on-going and new research projects related to textiles and terminology. The participants were invited to join the projects and to communicate with other scholars in their home countries about these on-going or future research projects related to textiles.
• Nosch presented the new research plan 2010-2015 for the Danish National Research Foundation’s Centre for Textile Research. It includes several research programmes which are of interest to the textile terminology group: Invisible Crafts deals with the processes in textile craft which do not leave traces in the archaeological record but are inherent to the craft and may possess its own vocabulary; The First Textiles includes archaeologists and anthropologist investigating the changes in society when textiles are adopted; textile imprints is a research project developing a methodology for the study and understanding of textile imprints, in particular in areas where no real textiles are preserved.

• Verderame informed about a group of scholars investigating the relationship between the history of religion and textiles. It is based in the department of History of Religion, University La Sapienza, Roma. Director is prof. Alessandro Saggioro. The group meets at regular intervals and edit a journal. The director welcomes new participants to join the research group.

• Breniquet made a call for contributions and documentation on a research project on the sissiktum, the fringes of cloth with which imprints are made on cuneiform as a mean to ‘sign’ and authorise an action.

• Desrosiers suggested conducting an overall classification of all the pictorial illustrations demonstrated by the participant during the conference. It was agreed that all illustrations for the conference being sent to her.

• Judy Craig, who came to the workshop as a listener, suggested creating as Proposed Lexicon of Ancient Near Eastern Textiles (PLANET!). this wil be conducted over the nex 2-3 years, in collaboration with sevela of the workshop participants. She will draw up an initial draft of the database, and subsequently circulate it to the workshop participants for further critiques. The lexicon will be digital, created as a four-dimensional (maybe more) tool, easily searchable and including correspondences between:
  1) the textile concepts and
  2) the textile terms in various languages (which probably should include modern as well as ANE, since someone should be able to search the database on his/her own terms).
  3) how the terms change through time, along with
  4) the underlying data (attestations, scholarly articles, links to photographs, links to dictionaries, etc.).

Gender, age and provenance perspectives
Textile research is a research field predominately composed of women scholars. Thus, the conference with a near to equal participation of male and female scholars contributed positively to a more equal gender balance in the research field.
We also find it valuable that the workshop also included young scholars still writing their PhD (Fenton, Garcia Ventura, Wisti Lassen). The average age of the participants 45 years, the average age for men was 48 years and the average age for women was 43.
Most participants came from Denmark and France (each 5 scholars), Italy and Spain (each 4 scholars), Belgium (2), and one scholar from Germany, Sweden, Holland, Poland, UK. From outside Europe cane one scholar from Australia, two from the U.S.A and 1 from Canada.
FINAL PROGRAMME

Wednesday 4 March 2009

Late afternoon Arrival at Hotel Opera, Copenhagen

Thursday 5 March 2009

09.00-09.30 Registration at CTR
09.45-10.00 Introduction and presentation of the ESF
Cécile Michel and Marie-Louise Nosch

10.00-10.40 Synonymic variation in the field of textile terminology: a study in diachrony and synchrony
Susanne Lervad (Termplus Aps, Danterm, DK) and Pascaline Dury (Centre de Recherche en Terminologie et Traduction, Université Lyon 2, FR)

10.40-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-11.30 Textile terminology in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC: what kind of classification could help connecting terms to textiles?
Sophie Desrosiers (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, FR)

11.30-12.00 Results of the technological investigations of textile production via systematic tests of textile tools in experimental archaeology: limits and potentials for the study of Aegean Bronze Age textile technology
Eva Andersson (CTR, Copenhagen, DK)

12.00-12.30 Discussion

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-14.00 Weaving in Mesopotamia during the Bronze Age: archaeology, techniques, iconography
Catherine Breniquet (Université Blaise-Pascal, Clermont-Ferrand II, FR)

14.00-14.15 Discussion

3rd MILLENNIUM

14.15-14.45 Ancient Egyptian classification of textiles in the writing system
Ole Herslund (University of Copenhagen, DK)

14.45-15.15 The Egyptian Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom ‘linen lists’: text and textile reconciled
Jana Jones (Macquarie University, Australia)

15.15-15.35 Discussion

15.35-16.00 Coffee break
16.00-16.30 On garments in the Sargonic Period
Benjamin Foster (Yale University, USA)

16.30-17.00 Coloured textiles in the Ebla documentation
Maria Giovanna Biga (Università di Roma "La Sapienza", IT)
17.00-17.15 Discussion

Reception at the Danish National Research Foundation’s Centre for Textile Research

Friday 6 March 2009

9.30-10.00 The Textiles in the Neo-Sumerian documentation
Franco Pomponio (Università de Messina, IT – text read by Lorenzo Verderame)

10.00-10.30 Textile industry terminology in the Neo-Sumerian texts
Hartmut Waetzoldt (Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg, DE)
10.30-10.45 Discussion

10.45-11.00 Coffee break

2nd MILLENNIUM

11.00-11.40 Textiles or garments: what did the Assyrians trade in Anatolia?
Cécile Michel (CNRS, Maison de l’archéologie et de l’ethnologie, Nanterre, FR)
and Klaas R. Veenhof (Leiden University, NL)

11.40-12.20 Les fibres textiles dans le monde syro-anatolien: la laine (SÍG) et le lin (GU/GADA). Terminologies hittite, louvite, lycienne
Agnès Degrève and René Lebrun (Université Catholique de Louvain, BE)
12.20-12.30 Discussion

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-14.00 Ugaritic and Akkadian textile terminology in the archives of Ugarit (Late Bronze Age)
Juan-Pablo Vita (CSIC - Instituto des Estudios Islámicos y del Oriente Próximo, Zaragoza, ES)

14.00-14.30 Tools, procedures and professions – a review of the Akkadian textile terminology
Agnete Wisti Lassen (University of Copenhagen, DK)
14.30-14.50 Discussion

14.50-15.10 Coffee break

15.10-15.50 The terminology of textiles in the Linear B tablets, with some considerations going back to Linear A ideograms
Maurizio del Freo (Università di Roma "La Sapienza", IT), Françoise Rougemont (CNRS, Maison de l’archéologie et de l’ethnologie, Nanterre, FR), and Marie-Louise Nosch (CTR Copenhagen, DK)
Mycenaean textile terminology and the organization of textile production: the case of the scribe 103.
Eugenio Luján (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, ES)

16.20-17.30 General Discussion (3rd-2nd Millennium)

Saturday 7 March 2009

1st MILLENNIUM AND AFTER

10.00-10.30 Textile terminology in the Neo-Babylonian documentation
Francis Joannès (Université de Paris I Panthéon – Sorbonne, Maison de l’archéologie et de l’ethnologie, Nanterre, FR)

10.30-11.00 Garments in non-cultic context (Neo-Babylonian period)
Stefan Zawadzki (Adam Mickiewicz University Poznan, PL)
11.00-11.15 Discussion

11.15-11.30 Coffee break

11.30-12.00 Some considerations about Vedic, Avestan and Indo-Iranian textile terminology
Miguel Angel Andres (University Salamanca, ES)
12.00-12.15 Discussion

12.15-14.30 Lunch at CTR

14.30-15.00 Neo-Sumerian textile wrappings. Revisiting some foundation figurines from Nippur
Agnès Garcia Ventura (Barcelona, ES)

15.00-16.30 Final discussion, plans for follow-up research activities and other joint collaborative actions of the group of researcher

16.30-17.30: Museum visits

18.00 Closing Conference dinner at CTR

Sunday 8 March 2009

Morning: Museum visits and departure
Statistical information of Participants

16 women and 14 men

Europe
Denmark 5
France 6
Italy 3
Spain 4
Belgium 2
Germany 1
Sweden 1
The Netherlands 1
United Kingdom 1
Poland 1
Greece 1

Non-European countries
Australia 1
USA 2
Israel 1

![Bar chart showing age distribution by gender]
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