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# New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and its Region

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War and Peace: Fortifications,  
Conflicts and their Aftermath

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Front and Back Cover: David Roberts, The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans Under the Command of Titus, AD 70, Oil on canvas, 1850 (Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roberts\\_Siege\\_and\\_Destruction\\_of\\_Jerusalem.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roberts_Siege_and_Destruction_of_Jerusalem.jpg))

First Divider: Reconstruction of the fortifications of Seleucid Acra in Jerusalem, a view from the Northwest (Drawing: Yakov Shmidov, courtesy of Doron Ben-Ami and Yana Tcheganovets)

Second Divider: The Southern Face of a Hellenistic Tower at Artaba (Photo: Yoram Hoffman)

Third Divider: Cracked Billon Coinage Issued during the Reign of Baldwin III (1143-1163), The Museum of the Order of St. John at the University of Birmingham (Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cracked\\_coin\\_of\\_Baldwin\\_III\\_\(1143-1163\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cracked_coin_of_Baldwin_III_(1143-1163).jpg))

Fourth Divider: Review of Prisoners on an Assyrian Relief, about 700-692 BC. From the South-West Palace of Nineveh, Lachish Reliefs, The British Museum (Photo: Mike Peel; Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lachish\\_Reliefs\\_The\\_British\\_Museum.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lachish_Reliefs_The_British_Museum.jpg))

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## Kiriath-jearim and the List of Bacchides Forts in 1 Maccabees 9:50–52

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The 2017 excavations at the site of Kiriath-jearim (Deir el-Azar), 13 km west-northwest of the Old City of Jerusalem, on the outskirts of Abu Gosh, revealed evidence for the existence of a ca. 150×110 m elevated platform at the summit of the mound (Figs. 1-2)<sup>1</sup>. This platform was supported

by massive, three-meter-wide stone walls oriented north-south and east-west. Two main construction methods were observed in these support walls: the lower courses, established on bedrock, were built of large boulders, while the upper courses were constructed of medium-sized, square-cut stones



1 Aerial view of Kiriath-jearim (Deir el-Azar), looking south (Courtesy of the Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim)



2 Digital Elevation Model of the mound of Kiriath-jearim, schematically indicating the supposed lines of support walls which created the elevated platform on the summit (Courtesy of the Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim)



3 Two construction methods in the support wall in the southeast of the site: the lower courses, established on bedrock, were built of large boulders, while the upper courses were constructed of medium-sized, square-cut stones (Courtesy of the Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim)



**Table 1** General observation on quantity of pottery in previous works undertaken at Kiriath-jearim and in the 2017 excavation season

Period	Barkay's salvage excavation <sup>*</sup>	Feldstein's survey, 1980s <sup>**</sup>	Zissu and McKinny's survey, 2013 <sup>***</sup>	The 2017 excavation season <sup>****</sup>
Early Bronze	A few sherds	Single sherd	A few sherds	Several sherds
Middle Bronze	Single sherd	-	A few sherds	A few sherds
Late Bronze	Single sherd	Two sherds	-	Small number of sherds
Iron I	Two sherds	A few sherds	A few sherds	Several sherds
Iron IIA	Single sherd	-	-	Several sherds
Iron IIB	Very large number of sherds, main period of activity	Very large number of sherds, main period of activity	Very large number of sherds, main period of activity	Very large number of sherds, main period of activity
Iron IIC	Medium number of sherds	Large number of sherds	Large number of sherds	Large number of sherds, main period of activity continues
Persian	?	One sherd	A few sherds	A few sherds
Hellenistic	Large number of sherds	Large number of sherds	-	Medium number of sherds
Roman	Medium number of sherds	Significant number of sherds	Medium number of sherds	Large number of sherds
Byzantine	Medium number of sherds	Small number of sherds	A few sherds	Medium number of sherds
Early Islamic	?	A few sherds	Single sherd?	Small number of sherds
Medieval	?	Single sherd	-	A few sherds

\* Pottery shown to us by Oron Yarden at Tel Aviv University, 2017.

\*\* Pottery seen in the storehouse of the IAA in the early 1990s and then brought to Tel Aviv University and rechecked in 2017.

\*\*\* Pottery seen at Bar Ilan University, 2017.

\*\*\*\* General impression of pottery from the excavated squares.

(Fig. 3); this was especially clear in our excavation of Area B, on the southeast side of the platform. The site had been inhabited from the Early Bronze Age to the Byzantine or Early Islamic period, but results of the new excavations, as well as results of past surveys and a salvage dig carried out at the site in the 1990s (McKinny et al. 2018), indicated two main periods of prosperity: One in the Iron IIB-C and another in the late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods (Table 1; for the 2017 excavations, see Finkelstein et al. 2018).

The lack of clean contexts made dating the construction of the support walls according to traditional archaeological methods or radiocarbon samples impossible; the site is eroded below the level of the floors that connected to the stone support walls. We therefore turned to OSL dating. We took ten samples from various spots along the inner and outer faces of the support walls unearthed in the north and southeast of the site, and from parallel walls inside the massive walls in the same excavation areas (Figures 4-5). The



4 OSL results, Area A in the north (see Table 2; Courtesy of the Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim)



5 OSL results, Area B in the southeast (see Table 2; Courtesy of the Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim)

results of the OSL dating (Table 2), combined with the settlement history of the site, seem to indicate that the elevated platform was originally built in the Iron IIB, in the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and that it was renovated in the Iron IIC, and then two more times in the late Hellenistic and the early Roman periods (detailed discussion in Finkelstein et al. 2018). Looking at the locations from which the OSL samples were taken, it is reasonable to propose that the first two renovations still used field stones, and that the last one is when the square-cut stones were introduced.

**Table 2** OSL ages in years before 2020 (changed from 2017 for easier calculation). Dates which fall in the Hellenistic period are shaded

Sample	Area	Wall	Elevation (masl)	Age with sediment*	Range calendar years	Age with sediment and stones*	Range calendar years
KYR-1	A	17/A/5 outer face, bottom	751.48	2100±100	180 BCE-20 CE	2300±120	400-160 BCE
KYR-2	A	17/A/5 outer face, bottom	751.50	2070±110	160 BCE-60 CE	2300±130	410-150 BCE
KYR-3	A	17/A/5 outer face, bottom	751.65	2360±110	450-230 BCE	2560±130	670-410 BCE
KYR-7	B	17/B/10 outer face, bottom	746.59	2110±110	200 BCE-20 CE	2260±130	370-110 BCE
KYR-11	B	17/B/28 inner face, bottom	746.89	2660±140	780-500 BCE	2960±170	1110-770 BCE
KYR-12	B	17/B/28 inner face, bottom	746.87	2900±140	1020-740 BCE	3160±180	1320-960 BCE
KYR-13	B	17/B/28 inner face, bottom	746.96	2590±140	710-430 BCE	2980±180	1140-780 BCE
KYR-19	A	17/A/5 inner face, bottom	752.12	1770±70	180-320 CE	1950±100	30 BCE-170 CE
KYR-21	A	17/A/10 outer face, bottom	752.15	2150±100	230-30 BCE	2390±130	500-240 BCE
KYR-24	B	17/B/29 outer face, lowest part reached	747.51	2450±100	530-330 BCE	2670±130	780-520 BCE

\* As the sediment is confined by building stones, gamma dose rates were calculated either with sediment only ("age with sediment") or with 2/3 contribution from sediment and 1/3 contribution from building stones ("age with sediment and stones").

In the following, we focus on the possibility of renovation work on the elevated platform at Kiriath-jearim in the late Hellenistic period.<sup>2</sup> Four OSL samples from the support stone walls (Nos. 1, 2, 7 and 21, shaded in Table 2) provided dates in the Persian and Hellenistic periods.<sup>3</sup> One comes from the bottom of the outer face of the massive wall in the southeast (our Area B), two from the outer face of the massive wall in the north (Area A) and one from the bottom of the parallel wall in the north (Figs. 4, 5). Note that three of the four samples come from the outer sides of the massive walls facing the slopes – places prone to damage and collapse after centuries of neglect. As activity at Kiriath-jearim in the Persian and Early Hellenistic periods was rather weak (Table 1), these dates should be interpreted as representing the Late Hellenistic period in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE – the beginning of the second period of prosperity at the site. OSL dates 1 and 2 do not allow a date later than ca. 160/150 BCE and No. 7 falls no later than 110 BCE (see age with sediments and stones column in Table 2). Indeed, pottery collected during our excavation, and in past surveys and the salvage excavation carried out at the site, indicate that Kiriath-jearim came back to life in the Late Hellenistic period. Repairs in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE should probably be associated with the Seleucids, as this date is too early for a major Hasmonean building effort. The only known historical scenario for reconstruction/renovation of the massive support-walls in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century is the fortification operation undertaken in Judea by the Seleucid general Bacchides (1 Macc 9:50-52):

50 καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ ὠκοδόμησαν πόλεις ὄχυράς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ, τὸ ὄχυρωμα τὸ ἐν Ἱεριχῶ καὶ τὴν Ἀμμαοὺς καὶ τὴν Βαιθωρῶν καὶ τὴν Βαιθῆλ καὶ τὴν Θαμναθὰ Φαραθωνὶ καὶ τὴν Τεφῶν ἐν τείχεσιν ὑψηλοῖς καὶ πύλαις καὶ μοχλοῖς· 51 καὶ ἔθετο φρουρὰν ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἐχθραίνειν τῷ Ἰσραήλ. 52 καὶ ὠχύρωσε τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἐν Βαιθσοῦρα καὶ τὴν Γάζαρα καὶ τὴν ἄκραν καὶ ἔθετο ἐν αὐταῖς δυνάμεις καὶ παραθέσεις βρωμάτων.<sup>4</sup>

Bacchides returned to Jerusalem and built strong cities in Judea: the fortress in Jericho, and Emmaus, and Beth-horon, and Bethel, and Timnath, and Pharathon,<sup>5</sup> and Tephon, with high walls and gates and bars. And he placed garrisons in them to harass Israel. He also fortified the city of Beth-zur, and Gazara, and the citadel (Akra), and in them he put troops and stores of food (RSV translation).

The question is, can our finds at Kiriath-jearim be associated with this episode, related in the first book of Maccabees and in Jewish Antiquities by Flavius Josephus?

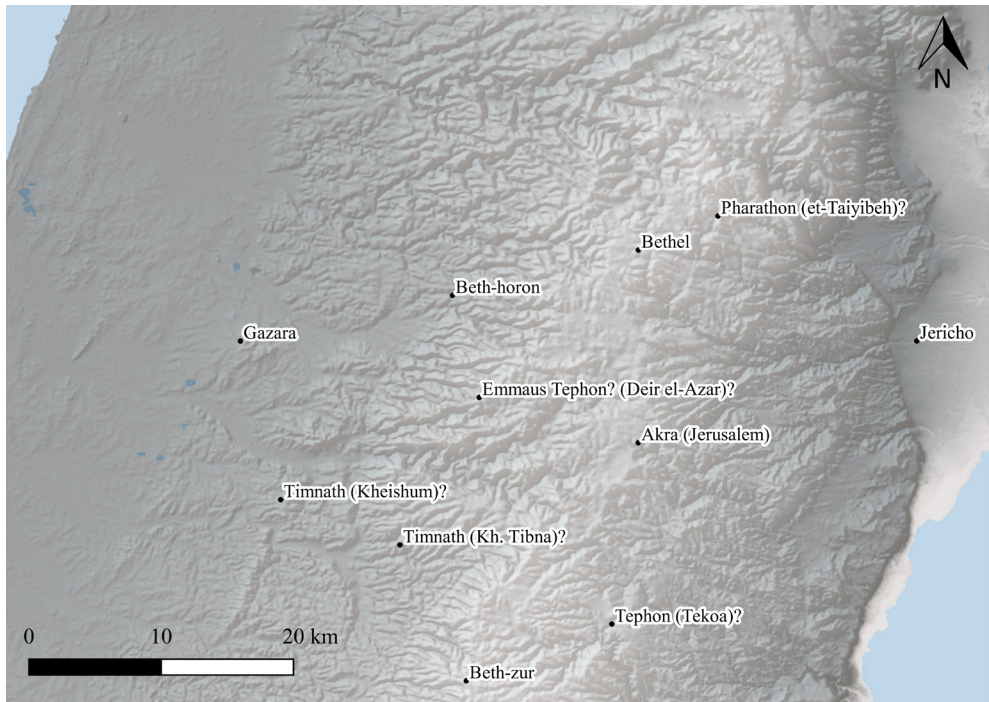
The separation that the text of 1 Maccabees makes between two groups of places is not vital for reviewing the geography of this fort system. The identification of Jericho, Beth-horon (whether upper or lower), Bethel, Beth-zur and Gezer is clear.<sup>6</sup> Emmaus, ostensibly clear too, will be dealt with below. This leaves us with Timnath, Pharathon and Tephon (for past discussion of the Bacchides forts, see Galil 1993; Roll 1996 with references to older works; for a detailed recent discussion, see Hagbi 2017).

Timnath and Pharathon were identified by Abel (1949: 172) as two different locations (see, however, Tilly 2015: 203-204): Timnath as biblical Timnath-heres (Khirbet Tibna in southwestern Samaria – also Kallai 1960: 96; Shatzman 1991: 42) and Pharathon as biblical Pirathon, (Jud 12:13-15; possibly also 2 Sam 23:30); this division of the toponym into two different places has been accepted by most scholars. Yet, Khirbet Tibne cannot be regarded as located “in Judea” (Avi-Yonah 1977: 53). Hence Galil (1993) equated Timnath with Timnah of Joshua 15:57 and placed it in Khirbet Ras et-Tawil, northeast of Hebron; but from the town’s group-context, Timnah of Joshua 15:57 is south of Hebron. Avi-Yonah (1977: 53) and Roll (1966) placed it at Khirbet Tibna southwest of Jerusalem, on a ridge sloping down into the Elah Valley. This solution seems the most appealing, because it puts Timnath on the southern of the three roads which led from the coast to Jerusalem. The problem with this identification is that an initial survey of the site revealed late Iron II (but not Hellenistic?) sherds (Mazar 1981: 246). The large, dominating site of Khirbet el-Kheishum north of Azekah, which revealed finds from the Hellenistic period, has recently been suggested as the location of Timnath, with the name preserved at the nearby site of Khirbet Tibna of the Shephelah (Klein and Zissu 2014). Pharathon/Pirathon was placed in the village of Far’ata west of Shechem (Knauf 1990; Smith 1992; but this is probably the location of Ophrah, the hometown of Gideon – Finkelstein and Lipschits 2017), or in the village of Farkha south of Shechem (Naaman 1989; Safrai 1980: 61-62). But these sites are outside the boundaries of Judea. Galil (1993) identified it with Khirbet el-Fire west

of Hebron and Avi-Yonah (1977: 53-54) sought Pharathon in Wadi Fara northeast of Jerusalem (but there is no suitable site there). The question is, could there have been two places with the same uncommon name Pirathon/Pharathon? If the answer is positive, biblical Pirathon may be identified to the north of Judea. A negative answer causes a contradiction between Pirathon “in the land of Ephraim” (Jud 12:15) and Pharathon “in Judea” (or one needs to assume that “the author of Maccabees understood Judea as Jewish-occupied territories including land north of Jerusalem in the ancient tribal allotment of Ephraim” – Smith 1992:373). Another solution would be to equate Pirathon/Pharathon with Ophrah=et-Taiyibeh, which means a פִּרְעָה < פִּרְעָה metathesis.<sup>7</sup> Note that in 2 Chronicles 13:19 (seemingly close in date to 1 Macc. – Finkelstein 2015) Ophrah appears as Ephron – a name closer to Pharathon. This resolves the problem, as Ophrah/Ephron/Pirathon/Pharathon is in the Deuteronomistic “land of Ephraim” and at the same time perfectly fits the northern line of places fortified by Bacchides “in Judea” (Finkelstein 2017: 440-441).<sup>8</sup> Tephon or Tephoh (Abel 1925: 206-207) was identified with Tapuah south of Shechem (Abel 1949: 173; Kampen 1992), the southern Tapuah, west of Hebron (Kahana 1960: 142, n. 50), Beit Nattif (Moeller and Schmitt 1976: 36-37; Galil 1993), Tekoa (Avi Yonah 1977: 54 – the name appears as such in Josephus Ant. XIII,15) and Khirbet Bad-Faluh north of Tekoa (Roll 1996: 513; according to him, Tephon may preserve/corrupt the name of biblical Netophah, which may be identified at Khirbet Bad-Faluh – Aharoni 1979: 440). The first identification should be dismissed, as it puts the fortress far

from Judea; of the Judean places the latter two seem preferable (but see below). Assuming that the list is historically genuine and complete (for doubts, Tilly 2015: 203-204), one can place the sites on a map in order to understand their geographical logic (Fig. 6). In doing so it becomes obvious that the idea was to surround and control Jerusalem on all sides (e.g., Roll 1996; recently Hagbi 2017). Jericho is located in the east; Bethel and seemingly Pharathon are in the north and Beth-zur is in the south. Evidently, the most important means for controlling Jerusalem are the roads leading to

the city from the coast. Assuming that in the Hellenistic period they were similar to what we know about Roman times (for the latter see, e.g., Tsafir, Di Segni and Green 1994, map), we refer to Gezer and Beth-horon on the road from the Aijalon Valley and possibly Thamnatha on the southern road, from the area of Ashkelon/Gaza and the Valley of Elah. Surprisingly, the entire western flank of Jerusalem, and specifically the road ascending to the city directly from Lod and passing below the dominating hill of Kiriath-jearim (Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996: Fig. 16), is not represented. If the list of Bacchides' forts is historical, and has



6 Location of the forts constructed by Bacchides "in Judea" (Courtesy of the Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim)

a strategic meaning for controlling Judea, this is impossible.

The ultimate dominating site to be fortified along the central road to Jerusalem is the hill of Kiriath-jearim, with its far-reaching views to the coastal plain in the west and of the entire Jerusalem hill country to the east and southeast. This is the reason for its importance in the Iron IIB, and in Roman times for the Xth Roman Legion (Finkelstein et al. 2018; for the Roman finds at the site and at nearby Abu Gosh, see Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996: 113-120; Cotton et al. 2012: 11-12, 25-26, 38-39). Indeed, our OSL results show that the massive stone support walls were renovated in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE – an endeavor which can hardly be associated with the early Hasmoneans (cf. above). The question, then, is whether one of the places in the Bacchides list can be identified with the central road in general and with Kiriath-jearim/Deir el-Azar in particular. We can think of two possibilities. One is admittedly a somewhat far-reaching speculation. Elsewhere, we suggested that while the Iron Age town at Deir el-Azar was called Kiriath-jearim, the elevated platform on the summit of the hill is known in the Bible as Gibeah (Finkelstein and Römer 2019). Accordingly, one can wonder if the original Hebrew list of Bacchides' forts read *הגבעה*, referring to Kiriath-jearim; the translator to Greek wrote τὸν βουβόν (compare, e.g., the LXX for Ex 17:9), and a later copyist, no longer understanding the meaning of *הגבעה* here, corrupted τὸν βουβόν to Τεφὸν (Tephon).<sup>9</sup> Another less speculative possibility is to identify Emmaus of the Bacchides list with Kiriath-jearim (or its immediate vicinity), rather than

with the better-known Emmaus of the Valley of Aijalon. This would be based on two sources:

1. The reference in Luke 24:13, that Emmaus is located 60 stadia from Jerusalem – exactly the distance to our site.
2. Josephus's report (War VII, 6,6), that following the destruction of Jerusalem Vespasian settled 800 veterans in a place called Emmaus, 30 stadia from Jerusalem, which fits the location of the Arab village of Qaluniya (a name which probably stems from 'Colonia'). Regardless of possible confusion between the two sources about the distance from Jerusalem, Josephus does not seem to refer to Emmaus/Nicopolis.<sup>10</sup>

Identifying Emmaus of the Bacchides list at Kiriath-jearim is more logical than placing it in the Aijalon Valley: this fills the missing part in the list (a fort along the central road to Jerusalem) and avoids reconstructing two sites – Gezer and Emmaus – close to each other. The problem remains that there is no linguistic connection between the two names and that Eusebius (Onomasticon 48: 24) seems to know Deir el-Azar under its old name Kiriath-jearim. The solution could be that Emmaus was the name of the settlement near the spring. Indeed, it seems that the Crusaders made this identification (see the presentation of the references to Abu Gosh as Emmaus in Pringle 1993: 7-8 and the discussion in Riesner 2010: 35-36). In conclusion, the results of the excavation in Kiriath-jearim seem to shed new light on the system of forts established by Bacchides in Judea, and may also re-open the discussion on the identification of a place named Emmaus with Abu Gosh.

## Endnotes

- 1 The Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim is a joint project of Tel Aviv University and the Collège de France, funded by Sana and Vlad Shmunis (USA). I. Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University and T. Römer and Christophe Nicolle of the Collège de France direct the project. The first season of excavation at the site took place during four weeks in August 2017. Staff of the excavation consisted of S. Einhorn and M. Cohen (coordinators of the Expedition), S. Einhorn and J. Cohen-Finkelstein (registration), R. Abu Seif (administrator), A. Kleiman, Z. C. Dunseth and J. Mas (supervisors of Areas A, B and C respectively), and Y. Levinger, L. Bouzaglou, E. Levy, E. Hall, N. Walzer and O. Zeevi (field archaeologists). About 50 students from Israel, France, Switzerland and other countries participated in the dig.
- 2 We tend to associate the last renovation effort, in the Roman period, with the activity of the Xth Roman Legion (Finkelstein et al. 2018).
- 3 For the full picture of the OSL dating at Kiriath-jearim, see Finkelstein et al. 2018.
- 4 Josephus (Ant XIII, 1, 3) repeats this text with small changes, most significantly referring to Tekoa instead of Tephon and omitting Beth-zur (more below): "He also fortified many cities of Judea, whose walls had been demolished: Jericho, and Emmaus, and Bethoron, and Bethel, and Timna, and Pharatho, and Tecoa, and Gazara, and built towers in every one of these cities, and encompassed them with strong walls, that were very large also, and put garrisons into them that they might issue out of them, and to mischief the Jews. He also fortified the citadel at Jerusalem more than all the rest."
- 5 According to most of the Greek manuscripts there is no "and," so that it would be one place "Tamnata Pharaton," but the Bible indicates two different places (Jud 12:5, Josh 15:57 and 19:43) and Josephus (cf. above) also thinks of two places (more below).
- 6 The identification of Gazara on the coast, instead of Tel Gezer (Fischer, Roll and Tal 2008), must be dismissed as it has no geographical logic in relation to the rest of the list.
- 7 We wish to thank B. Sass and R. Zadok for helping us with this issue.
- 8 This means that I relinquish my proposal to identify Pharathon at Tell el-Ful (Finkelstein 2011).
- 9 We are grateful to J. Price for his help with the Greek.
- 10 For the problem of one, two or three places named Emmaus to the west of Jerusalem, see Fischer, Isaac and Roll, 1996: 151-153, 223-224; against the identification of Emmaus at Abu Gosh, see Ehrlich 1996, Riesner 2010; in favor, see Pringle 1993: 7-8)

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