

Stable and variable elements of a melodic type collected from Hunedoara, in the Béla Bartók *Rumanian Folk Music* collection

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Abstract: *The Rumanian Folk Music collection consists of musical folklore recorded by Béla Bartók in Transylvanian villages over a hundred years ago. This material includes a certain melodic type individualized by its stanza structure and by the presence of refrains within the larger category of old style, free rhythm songs. All the melodic variants gathered under no. 325, letters a to f, were collected from villages in Hunedoara County during the winter 1913-1914. At a first glance, these variants appear to differ in terms of melody and cadence system, let alone the initial melodic formulas. Aim of the present study was to analyze all musical parameters, to identify the stable and the variable elements of the melodies, respectively, and to attempt a reconstruction of Bartók's logic of classifying these melodies under the same melodic type.*

Keywords: *melodic type; refrain; Hunedoara County; Béla Bartók;*

Introduction – Birth of the *Rumanian Folk Music* Collection

The *Rumanian Folk Music* collection is Béla Bartók's last and vastest scientific work, including the Romanian musical folklore recorded between 1909 and 1917, with the exception of the material sourced from Maramureș, which was published in 1923, and the carol collection, published in 1935. As told by Francisc (Ferenc) László, Bartók found the time to deal with this huge material starting in 1933. This endeavor became a priority for him, even faced with the economic and social turbulence caused by the impending war. This was also the reason why he delayed his imminent emigration to the United States for as long as he could, because the several thousands of Romanian phonograms and cards were in the ownership of the Ethnographic Museum in Budapest. His work on the Romanian material included three essential steps: „1) revising of all the transcriptions according to his own new standards post-discovering the Bulgarian rhythm, 2) a unified classification of the entire folklore material, 3) handwriting of the entire material”². Unfortunately, these three lines of action had to be approached simultaneously instead of one after the other in a logical succession, as he would have wanted it, thus the inevitable inconsistencies were pointed out by the author himself in the foreword of the first and second volume. Béla Bartók took the Romanian material with him to America and kept working on it intensely for years to come before bringing it to its final shape, which also meant adding notes and analytical studies to some melodies. The work was finalized few months before Bartók's death in September 26, 1945. The manuscript of the vast, three volume *Rumanian Folk Music* collection had a different trajectory than other scientific works. Without going into all the details, we will mention that many attempts were made to find a suitable editor. In 1952, Constantin Brăiloiu was contacted in Paris (where he had previously found residence as a

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² Francisc László. 2003. *Béla Bartók and the Traditional Music of Romanians in Banat and Transylvania* [*Béla Bartók și muzica populară a românilor din Banat și Transilvania*]. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Eikon, p. 86.

political refugee) and offered to curate Bartók's collection. Unfortunately, Brăiloiu died in 1958. The person accepting this huge responsibility was Benjamin Suchoff, a distinguished American ethnomusicologist, who did an exceptional job in editing Béla Bartók's work. The *Rumanian Folk Music* collection saw the light in 1967.

The melodies that we targeted appear in the second volume of the *Rumanian Folk Music* collection, namely "Vocal Melodies", under no. 325, letters *a* to *f*. Within this second volume, melodies are classified according to their genre, first non-ceremonial songs, then ceremonial ones, all grouped under ten classes. For a better understanding of where the selected melodies find their place within this classification, we offer a brief description of the ten classes as imagined by Bartók:

Class A: *parlando* melodies (subclass I: isometric mel., subclass II: heterometric mel.);

Class B: *tempo giusto* melodies (subclass I: isometric mel., subclass II: heterometric mel.);

Class C: dance melodies (subclass I: melodies with definite structure, subclass II: melodies with indefinite motif-structure, subclass III: recited „dance-words”);

Class D: *tempo giusto* melodies in „dotted” rhythm (subclass I: isometric melodies, subclass II: heterometric melodies);

Class E: melodies with indeterminate structure;

Class F: *cântec lung*;

Class G: mourning-song melodies: α so-called *bocete* with improvised texts, β *Zorilor*, γ *A bradului*, δ *Hora mortului* or *La priveghi*;

Class H: wedding-song melodies;

Class I: harvest-song melodies;

Class J: rain-begging song melodies (subclass I: melodies with definite structure, subclass II: melodies with indefinite structure)³.

In every class that includes melodies having a stanza structure, each of the various subclasses will again be divided into four groups, according to the number of melodic lines:

Group 1 – melodies consisting of two melodic lines, main caesura after the first line;

Group 2 – melodies consisting of three melodic lines, main caesura after the first line;

Group 3 - melodies consisting of three melodic lines, main caesura after the second line;

Group 4 - melodies consisting of four melodic lines, main caesura after the second line.

Within each group, melodies find their place according to the number of caesuras in ascending order, with further subdivisions ensuing.

The melodic type discussed in here is classified under Class A. II. 4. 8, 8, 14, 14, 4) 4 5(. The elements of the code have the following meaning:

- Class A are *parlando* melodies, or melodies sung in a free rhythm, which implies no recurrence of equal values; thus, the bar lines delimit the melodic line entities;

- Subclass II are melodies with a heterometric rhythmic structure (melodies whose melodic lines have metrically different structures). Within type 325, verses are tetrapodic, whilst refrains are tripodic;

- Group 4 includes melodies consisting of four melodic lines, the main caesura being after the 2nd line. The code 4) 4 means that the first two lines cadence on the IVth degree, the second being the main caesura, and the 5(means that the inner cadence of the third line falls on the Vth degree. The last line cadences on the Ist degree.

³ Béla Bartók. 1967. *Rumanian Folk Music*, vol. II Vocal Melodies. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 7-9.

1. The Itinerary of Bartók's Collections in Hunedoara

The dates under each melody clearly tell us that Béla Bartók carried out his collection work in villages of the Hunedoara County in December 1913 and January 1914. More precise information may be found in his historian's notes, which state as follows: ...we may conclude that Bartók's trip in this part of Southern Transylvania took place between the 21st of December and the 1st of January, perhaps starting on December the 20th and ending on the 2nd of January. In any case, it lasted between 12 and 14 days"⁴. Looking into Bartók's itinerary, he spent the first three days in Cerbăl (December 20-23), then moved to the villages below the Retezat Mountains – Grădiște, Păucinești, Râu de Mori, Nucșoara, Ohaba, Sibiel, to then return in the Forest Dwellers Land villages Lelese and Ghelari. The numbering of the cylinders containing the six pieces in questions proves the same order:

Cylinder no.	RFM no.	Locality	Date of recording	Informants	Name of piece
MF 3340a	325d	Cerbăl	XII, 1913	Mărie Nedela (17, illit.)	<i>Trandafirie cu tri firie</i>
MF 3390a	325a	Grădiște	XII, 1913	Fira Dălinesc (40, illit.), Eva Rădoni (50, illit.)	<i>Dragă mi-i crijma-n pădurie</i>
MF 3434a	325b	Râu de Mori	XII, 1913	Parașchiva Mituca (18) and other girls	<i>Muld mă mir de bădița</i>
-	325c	Ghelari	I, 1914	Mărie Lăscuțoni Zric (22), Mărie Gostean Bărătea (17), Mărie Malea (20)	<i>Fetelor, nevestelor</i>
MGr 7a	325e	Cerbăl	18 III 1914	Marie Costa (15), Susana Costa (16)	<i>Mă uitai din deal în sus</i>
MGr 9a	325f	Cerbăl	18 III 1914	Marie Costa (15), Susana Costa (16)	<i>Cucule, pasărie sură</i>

Table 1. *Dates of field collections in Hunedoara*

The dates in the above table show that, upon his returning in the Forest Dwellers villages in the first days of 1914, Bartók either recorded melody no. 325 c in his field notebook only or ran out of cylinders. The next two melodies were recorded on March 18, 1914, on the occasion of the famous lecture at the Ethnographic Society in Budapest, where he had four young people from Cerbăl as his special invitees.

2. Stable Elements Defining for the Melodic Type

The six melodies making up the melodic type found under no. 325 of the *Romanian Folk Music* collection have all been collected from the Hunedoara County, from the following villages: Grădiște, Râu de Mori, Ghelari, and Cerbăl. This aspect is worth mentioning, as it is not the norm. In most cases, melodies gathered under one number stem from totally different regions, such as, for example, Hunedoara and Bihor.

⁴ Ferenc László. 1985. „Muzica Cerbălului în opera lui Béla Bartók”. In *Béla Bartók. Studies, Notes, Essays* [Béla Bartók. Studii, comunicări, eseuri]. București: Editura Kriterion, p. 99.

2.1. Architecture

The most constant structural element of this melodic type is its build. All melodic variants are structured identically in six melodic lines, combining verses and refrains in a recurring stanza structure. The verse-refrain combination is stable both within the piece, each stanza bringing along the same structure, and across the six variants. The previous statement, that every stanza has six melodic lines, six distinct and well-delimited melodic entities, stands however a slight amendment. What we are really dealing with is an extended stanza, amplified by the addition of refrain structures after melodic line B of the melody. Béla Bartók himself signals this when indicating the build of the stanza: 8, 8, 14, 14 (syllables). Thus, even if these refrains cover five or six syllables, just as in case of true refrains, we may still see them as support refrains, organically attached to line B.

Closely related to the correct identification of build is the placing of the inner and final cadences, so as to identify the general melodic profile. This is what allows the researcher to categorize a variant within a melodic type and also within the entire musical classification of a piece of folklore.

Below is a synoptic table showing the build of each of the six melodies, the degrees where each musical entity cadences, as well as the general melodic profile:

<i>RFM</i> melody no.	Build	Cadence profile	General melodic profile
325a	A A B ^{support rf} B _k ^{support rf}	1 1 2 V	descending
325b	A A B ^{support rf} B _k ^{support rf}	1 1 2 V	descending
325c	A A B ^{support rf} B _k ^{support rf}	1 1 1 V	descending
325d	A A B ^{support rf} B ^{support rf}	1 1 2 2	linear
325e	A A B ^{support rf} B ^{support rf}	1 1 2 2	linear
325f	A A B ^{support rf} B ^{support rf}	1 1 2 2	linear

Table 2. *Stanza structure of the melodic type*

In the first three melodic variants, repetition of the B line (verse plus support refrain) brings along a cadential differentiation (indicated by the small *k*), consisting in the final cadence being moved to the low register. This moving of the cadence from the Ist or IInd degree to the Vth one, down into low register, signifies a *cadential leap*. This cadential leap creates a falsely descending general melodic profile. In the three other variants, cadences of the B line fall on the IInd degree, which is specific for the Banat sound, resulting in a linear profile. As we can see, the music in Banat already exerted its influence upon this area, a fact which comes as no surprise, given the circulation of instrumentalist musicians.

Regarding the mentioned examples, the differences between how inner cadences are notated stem from Béla Bartók's transcription system, in which all tunes are notated such as to end on G). Even if the final sound represents, as mentioned, a cadential leap, it was notated as being the Ist degree. In Bartók's system, cadences are indicated as being 4 4 5 1.

325a. $\text{♩} = 250$ $\text{♩} = 220$ 8, 8, 14, 14

1. Dra - gă mi-i crij - ma'n pă - du - rie, și Dra - gă mi-i crij - ma'n pă - du - rie, Dra - gă mi-i crij - ma'n pă - du - rie, și o mor, măn - dro, mo - ră (sic!), Dra - gă mi-i crij - ma'n pă - du - rie, și o mor, măn - dro, mo - ră, mă

2. Bieș - la vin și mănă la mu - rie, și Bieș - la vin și mănă la mu - rie, Bieș - la vin și - mănă la mu - rie, și o mor, măn - dro, mo - ră, Bieș - la vin și - mănă la mu - rie, și o mor, măn - dro, mo - ră, mă;

Var.:

M. F. 3390 a), Grădiște (Hunedoara), Fira Dălinesc (40, analf.), Eva Rădoți (50, analf.), III. 1913.

Fig. 1. *Dragă mi-i crijma-n pădurie*, RFM no. 325a

In his foreword to the second volume, Bartók suggests that, in the music of the Hunedoara dialect, the large number of four melodic line stanzas may prove an influence from the neighboring Banat region. We wholeheartedly concur; we even bring additional arguments supporting this assertion. Further elements of the studied melodic type are also specific to the Banat area:

- the expansion of the stanza to six melodic lines;
- the existence of regular tripod refrains placed after lines no. 3 and 5, acting as support refrains;
- the final cadences falling on the IInd degree.

A further argument in this regard is Bartók's analysis on the eighth melody in his study, *The Folk Music Dialect of The Hunedoara Rumanians*, published in the wake of the already mentioned lecture that he gave at the Ethnographic Society in Budapest in March 1914. This eighth melody is the first of the melodic type discussed herein, 325a. Regarding this melody, Bartók mentions: *Example 8. – Completely different from any other dialect type. Possibly of more recent origin. The major difference is in the cadence tones of the melody sections. The main caesura – the end tone of the second section – is c instead of the f characteristic of the Southern dialects. It is a fact, however, that a main caesura with c as cadence tone is not a rarity*

in the Banat dialect. The quaternary structure and the refrain are also Banat peculiarities. (This refrain is *Jo mor mândră, mor, mă*; the third section equals one text line of eight syllables plus the six-syllable refrain, the fourth section is similarly constructed.) The scheme of its structure is *a a b b₁*. It is interesting that in *Erdőhátság* (*Land of the Forest Dwellers in Hunedoara* [AN]) *b* is sung instead of *b₁*; the main cadence is transformed into *f¹* as the result of lowering, by a fifth, the last two tones of the melody section⁵.

2.2. Verse and Refrain Structure

2.2.1. Peculiarities of Verse Construction

In all variants of this melodic type, verses are tetrapodic and acatalectic, either because the eight-syllable structure of the verse: *Dragă mi-i krijma-n pădurie* (no. 325a); *Tradafirie cu tri firie* (no. 325d); *Cucule, pasăre sură* (no. 325f), or through a syllabic completion: *Muld mă mir de bădițarie* (no. 325b); *Fetelor, nevestelor, mă* (no. 325c); *Mă uitai din deal în susu* (no. 325e).

325b. ♩ = 280

1. Muld mă mir de bă - di - ța - rie, Muld mă mir de bă - di - ța - rie, Muld mă mir de bă - di - ța - rie, eu mot, mândră, mo - ră, Muld mă mir de bă - di - ța - rie, eu mot, mândră, mot,

2. Mândru ști - e să - ru - ța - rie, Mândru ști - e să - ru - ța - rie, Mândru ști - e să - ru - ța - rie, eu mot, mândră, mo - ră, Mândru ști - e să - ru - ța - rie, eu mot, mândră, mot,

M. F. 3434 a), Râu - de - Mori (Hunedoara), Parașchiva Mituca (18) și alte fete, III. 1913.

Fig. 2. *Muld mă mir de bădița*, RFM no. 325b

Besides, syllabic completions, singing may also be punctuated by melodic interjections. These were identified in three melodies (no. 325c, 325d, 325e), one or more sounds being sung on one syllable: *că* or *hăi!*

325c.

Că Fe - te - lor, ne - ves - te - lor, mă, Că Fe - te - lor, ne - ves - te - lor, mă, Fe - te - lor, ne - ves - te - lor, mă,

eu mot, mândru - li - ță, mo - ră, Fe - te - lor, ne - ves - te - lor, mă, ves - de - i - co - dru,

⁵ Benjamin St
by Benjamin St

Ghelari (Hunedoara), Mărie Lăscuțoși Iric (22), Mărie Gostean Băratea (17), Mărie Malea (20),
I. 1914.

Fig. 3. *Fetelor, nevestelor, RFM no. 325c*

After listening to the musical phonograms, we managed to identify the missing words in the verses of some melodies (no. 325f: *Să ai, bade, ori să n-aiu*); in no. 325d, in the second stanza, instead of the double refrain: 'Nalt îi badea și subțirie, hai, dorule, hai!' (repeated, marked as 2.r.), the informants sing: *Rabdă dracu-n cin' mi-l ține, Vai, dorule, vai!* Therefore, the only entities that should be treated as a support refrain are those on lines 4 and 6, with the text: *Vai, dorule, vai!*

M. F. 3240 a), Carbăil (Hunedoara), Mărie Nedela (†, analf.), VII, 1913.

Fig. 4. *Tradafirie cu tri firie, RFM no. 325d*

Regarding the relationship between literary content and music, we noticed that the tunes of a melodic type do not circulate with a single literary text, but are most often interpreted with very different lyrics. As outlined in Volume III, the literary texts associated to these melodies fall into the following categories:

- no. 325 a – Category J: Drinking songs;
- no. 325 b – Category A: Love songs (Kissing);
- no. 325 c – Category R: Miscellaneous;
- no. 325 d, e – Category A: Love songs (Miscellaneous);
- no. 325 f - Category A: Love songs (Longing).

2.2.2. Peculiarities of Refrain Construction

Refrain lyrics match a tripodic structure. Both the catalectic and the acatalectic form may occur:

- *io mor, mândro, moră* (syllabic completion) – tripodic regular refrain;
- *io mor, mândro, mor, (mă)* (melodies no. 325a and 325b, from Grădiște and Râu de Mori);
- *hai, dorule, hai (ă)* (syllabic completion) - tripodic regular refrain (melodies no. 325d, 325e, 325f, villages in the Hunedoara Forest Dwellers Land).

A particular case is that of melody no. 325c: here, the first refrain: *io mor, mândruliță, moră* is sung on a regular tetrapodic structure and has two extra syllables as compared to the other variants; the second refrain, *verde-i codru*, is bipodic regular and is two syllables shorter, thus creating a metrical compensation.

2.3. Rhythmic structures

In terms of rhythm, these melodies fall under the free rhythm system, as indicated by their belonging to Class A; metrically, they fall under the category of *Heterometric parlando structures* (A.II.). In the introductory study to the second volume, Bartók already identifies a possible problem regarding the metrical categorization (*parlando* or *tempo giusto*) of these melodies, given their syllabic character. In his own words: *The melodies of this Subclass [II], consisting mostly of four-section structures, do not differ in character, on the whole, from those of Subclass I, except for their syllabic structure. Some of them, however, seem to be of more recent or even of urban origin, either because of their (common major) scale or some other features. But the majority is nothing else than transformations of isometric types, especially of the Banat area... An affirmative answer would apply primarily to the 8,5,8,5 and 8,6,8,6, structures which, incidentally, are internationally known, and probably are of Western origin*⁶.

325e. $\text{♩} = 300$

1. Hăi, Mă uî-tai din deal - în su-su, Mă - uî-tai din deal - în su-su, Mă uî-tai din deal în su-su, hai do - ru-le, hai, Mă uî-tai din deal în su-su, hai do - ru-le, hai.

2. Și - vă-zui on nor - a-le-su, Și - vă-zui on nor - a-le-su, Și vă-zui on nor a-le-su, hai do - ru-le, hai, Și vă-zui on nor a-le-su, hai do - ru-le, hai.

Var. **

M. Gr. 7a, Cerebăl (Hunedoara), Marie Costa (15), Susana Costa (16) / B. III. 1914.

Fig. 5. Mă uitai din deal în sus, RFM no. 325e

In light of the above considerations, we hereby offer a synoptic table highlighting the rhythmic structures of the discussed melodies, structures on the first line of the stanza (Ionian major with dotted values or trochee with an extended fourth note value), repeated twice and in which structures only the long values (fourth note or half note), in whatever position, may suffer excessive lengthening:

⁶ Béla Bartók. 1967. *Rumanian Folk Music*, vol. II Vocal Melodies. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 22.





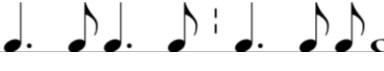
<i>RFM</i> melody no.	Rhythmic structure	Variation process
325a		shortening or elongation of dotted values
325b		inversion between the first and the second metric cell
325c 325d		excessive elongation of last value
325e		elongation of dotted values, up to a half note value
325f		tripling of the dotted values cell

Table 3. *Rhythmic structures of the initial lines (lines 1 and 2)*

The middle structure on line B invariably matches the elementary rhythmic structure of the eight eighth-note series:



The rhythmic structures of refrains tend to be stable, with variations that only involve the last value. This may be elongated, from a dotted fourth note to a half note, a dotted half note, a full note or even an excessively elongated value:

– melodic line 4



– melodic line 6



3. Variable Elements of the Melodic Type

Less than stable elements of the discussed melodic type are the involved scales and the initial and final melodic formulas. It is obvious that the latter are going to undergo a greater degree of variability than other structural elements, but the fact that different melodies of this type are sung in various scales generates a fascinating and unexpected sound diversity.

M. Gr. 9 a), Cerbăl (Hunedoara) Marie Costa (15), Susana Costa (16); 18. III. 1914.

Fig. 6. Cucule, pasăre sură, RFM no. 325f

3.1. Scales

The musical material of the discussed melodies is overall not uniform, instead consisting of plagal and authentic scales with various final cadential pitches. This was an unexpected finding, since we would have thought that melodies of the same melodic type would have the same sound structure. In the following is a table showing the scales of the studied melodies, starting, in accordance with Bartók's own classification, from plagal minor/major structures, cadential leap structures *, to minor/major, authentic or plagal, structures cadencing on the IInd degree:

RFM melody no.	Scale	Name of scale/mode	Observations after listening to the piece
325a		Hypodorian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the E flat is sung as such, not higher – F sharp is the leading-tone for G, it does not generate




			chromatism with E flat
325b 325c		Hypoionian	-
325d 325e		Hypoaeolian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in no. 325e, the sixth occurs only as an ornament; - A flat is invariably followed by B flat (bars 3 and 7)
325f		Lydian/ Dorian hexachord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - except in initial formulas, A's and B's are being sung lower (as A flat and B flat, respectively)




Table 4. *Melodic structures*

3.2. Initial and Final Formulas

Initial and final formulas are relevant for their melodic shape, more precisely for the melodic profile that they can generate, in accordance with the melodic variations. They may also be interesting insofar they are showing various ways to start or end what is essentially the same melody, given that we are talking about the same melodic type.

3.2.1. Initial Formulas

Initial formulas extracted of the six melodies show a continuous variation:

<i>RFM</i> melody no.	Initial formula	Melodic profile
325a		half descending
325b		ascending
325c		descending




325d		descending
325e		descending
325f		ascendent

Table 5. *Initial formulas*

From the first to the last melodic variant, there is an obvious range variation: the first one starts in the high register and goes downwards, while the last variant starts low and goes upwards.

3.2.2. *Final, cadential formulas*

Even if all end on a G, no matter the function of the final sound, cadential formulas tend to vary quite a lot. Below are the various formulas serving as final cadences within the targeted melodic type:






<i>RFM</i> melody no.	Cadential formula	Melodic profile
325a 325c		descending
325b		descending
325d		concave
325e		concave
325f		mixed vaulted

Table 6. *Cadential formulas*

4. Conclusions

A thorough analysis of all musical parameters of this melodic type allowed us to highlight its defining traits, those particular features which individualize the melodies from the rest of the collection. By doing this, we also attempted to understand Bartók's logic in classifying these particular melodies within the same melodic type. The following conclusions could be drawn:

- the most unique trait of these melodies, which also represents the immovable, recurring elements, is the **build**, $A A B^{\text{support rf}} B^{\text{support rf}}$, where lines 3 and 4 are amplified by the addition of structures serving as *support refrains*, organically attached to melodic line B;
- **the general melodic profile** is the element according to which variants are classified under a certain melodic type; in this particular case, the placement of the inner and final

cadences generates a descending melodic profile in melodies no. 325 a, b, and c and a linear one in variants no. 325 d, e, and f;

- in the first three variants, the cadence moving to the Vth degree, in the low register, illustrates a **cadential leap**. For the three other variants, final cadences fall on the **IInd degree**, generating a sound specific to the Banat folklore.
- all variants of this melodic type have **tetrapodic acatalectic verses**, accomplished by completion syllables and simple interjections. The verse component of the melodies tends to be coupled with very different literary texts, while the refrains are much more consistent, with only two lyrics: *io mor, mândro, mor, (mă)*, and *hai, dorule, hai (ă)*, respectively;
- **rhythmic structures** have a pronounced syllabic character; only elongations, sometimes even excessive ones, of the long values justify their classification under the free rhythm system category;
- **sound structures** are exceedingly diverse, featuring both authentic and plagal forms of the mode. Identified structures were: Hypodorian, Hypoionian, Hypoeolian and Lydian/Dorian hexachord;
- **initial and cadential formulas** are also very diverse, lending each melody its own melodic profile.

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