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John Lewis Burckhardt (1784–1817) was a Swiss explorer who is best remembered for his re-discovery of the ancient city of Petra in modern Jordan. In 1809 he was commissioned by the African Association to discover the source of the River Niger. In preparation for this journey, for which he needed to pass as a Muslim, Burckhardt spent two years exploring and studying Arabic and Islamic law in Aleppo, before travelling widely in Arabia and Egypt. These volumes, first published by the African Association in 1829, contain his account of the time he spent in Mecca and Medina. Burckhardt was the first westerner to give an account of the Hajj pilgrimage: had his imposture as a Muslim been discovered, he would almost certainly have been put to death. The work provides important and fascinating descriptions of the social, economic and political situation in Mecca and Medina during this period. Volume 1 describes the city of Mecca.

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John Lewis Burckhardt
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Travels in Arabia

*Comprehending an Account of Those
Territories in Hadjaz which the
Mohammedans Regard as Sacred*

VOLUME 1

JOHN LEWIS BURCKHARDT
EDITED BY WILLIAM OUSELEY



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TRAVELS
IN
ARABIA,
COMPREHENDING AN ACCOUNT
OF THOSE TERRITORIES IN HEDJAZ WHICH
THE MOHAMMEDANS REGARD AS SACRED.
BY THE LATE
JOHN LEWIS BURCKHARDT.
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF
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THE INTERIOR OF AFRICA.
IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.
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1829.

PREFACE OF THE EDITOR.

SOME years have now elapsed since two distinct portions of Burckhardt's works (his Travels in Nubia and Syria) were offered to the public, and most favourably received; their success being insured not only by intrinsic merit, but by the celebrity of their editor as a scholar and antiquary, a traveller and a geographer. It must not however be inferred, from any delay in publishing the present volume, that its contents are less worthy of notice than those parts which have already proved so interesting and instructive to a multitude of readers. It was always intended that this Journal, and other writings of the

same lamented author, should issue successively from the press : “ There still remain,” says Colonel Leake, in his Preface to the Syrian Journal (p. ii.) “ manuscripts sufficient to fill two volumes : one of these will consist of his Travels in Arabia, which were confined to the Hedjaz or Holy Land of the Muselmans, the part least accessible to Christians ; the fourth volume will contain very copious remarks on the Arabs of the Desert, and particularly the Wahabys.”

Respecting the portion now before the reader, Colonel Leake, in another place, expresses a highly flattering opinion. “ Burckhardt,” says he, “ transmitted to the Association the most accurate and complete account of the Hedjaz, including the cities of Mekka and Medina, which has ever been received in Europe. His knowledge of the Arabic language, and of Mohammedan manners, had enabled him to assume the Muselman character with such success, that he resided at Mekka during the whole time of the pilgrimage, and passed through the va-

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rious ceremonies of the occasion, without the smallest suspicion having arisen as to his real character.” (See the Life of Burckhardt prefixed to his Travels in Nubia, p. lvii. 4to. edition, 1819).

Recommended so strongly, the work of a less eminent traveller would be entitled to our notice : this presents itself with another claim ; for the manuscript Journal was partly corrected and prepared for publication by the learned editor of Burckhardt’s former writings. But some important literary occupations prevented Colonel Leake from superintending the progress of this volume through the press. His plan, however, has been almost invariably adopted by the actual editor ; particularly in expressing with scrupulous fidelity the author’s sentiments on all occasions, and in retaining, without any regard to mere elegance of style or selection of terms, his original language, wherever an alteration was not absolutely necessary to reconcile with our system of phraseology

and grammatical construction certain foreign idioms which had crept into his English writings.*

The map prefixed to this volume might almost appear superfluous, since the positions of Djidda, Mekka, Medina, Tayf, and Yembo, the chief places of Hedjaz visited by Burckhardt, are indicated with accuracy in the excellent maps that illustrate his Nubian and Syrian Travels. But as the reader of this volume cannot reasonably be supposed to have constantly at hand, for immediate reference, the two former portions of our author's works, a map is here given, in the construction and delineation of which Mr. Sydney Hall has attended to every suggestion offered by the

* It was thought expedient, from circumstances of typographical convenience tending to facilitate and expedite the publication of this volume, that the Arabic characters which in the original manuscript follow immediately certain words, or appear between the lines or in the margin, should here be placed together at the end, as an Index, with references to the pages wherein they occur.

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editor: at whose recommendation the names of places are spelt after Burckhardt's manner, however different from that more usual among us.*

By the editor's advice, also, several places situate beyond the Eastern limits of Hedjaz are included in this map; since Burckhardt, although he did not visit them himself, has given some original itineraries, in which they are mentioned.

That those places do not belong to the region properly denominated Hedjaz, is evident; but how far this region extends eastward, cannot easily be determined; and the same difficulty respecting it occurs in various

* Thus in the map as in the letter-press of this volume, *Mekka* might have been spelt *Mecca*; and *Hejaz*, *Jidda*, *Nejed*, would as well express the proper sounds of those words, as *Hedjaz*, *Djidda*, *Nedjed*; and at the same time approximate more closely to the original Arabic orthography, by which our English *j* (as in *Jar*, *James*, &c.) is represented without the assistance of a *d*; although the prefixing of this letter to the *j* might prevent a Frenchman from pronouncing it as in *jour*, *jamais*, &c.

directions. The editor, that he might ascertain by what boundaries we are justified in supposing Hedjaz to be separated from other provinces of Arabia, consulted a multiplicity of authors, both European and Oriental. The result, however, of his inquiry has not proved satisfactory; for to each of the neighbouring countries certain writers have assigned towns, stations, and districts, which by others of equal authority are placed in Hedjaz.

Such confusion may partly have arisen from the different statements of the number, extent, and names of divisions comprised within the same space; this being occupied, according to European writers, by three great regions, the *Stony*, the *Desert*, and the *Happy Arabia*; while Oriental geographers partition it into two, five, six, seven, or more provinces, under denominations by no means corresponding in signification to the epithets above mentioned, which we have borrowed from the Greeks and Romans.

That it would be a most difficult, or scarcely

possible task, to fix precisely the limits of each Arabian province, is acknowledged by that excellent geographer, D'Anville; but he seems disposed to confound the region comprising Mekka, Djidda, and Yembo, (places which, as we know, are unequivocally in Hedjaz,) with Arabia Felix.* D'Herbelôt, in one place, declares Hedjaz to be Arabia Petræa,† and in another he identifies it with Arabia Deserta.‡

Among the Eastern writers, some divide

* D'Anville, *Géographie Ancienne*.

† See the *Bibliothèque Orientale* in “Hegiaz ou Higiaz”—“Nom d’une province de l’Arabie, que nous appelons Pierreuse,” &c.—Richardson also, in his *Arabic and Persian Dictionary*, explains Hijaz by “Mecca and the adjacent country, Arabia Petræa,” and Demetrias Alexandrides, who translated some portions of Abulfeda’s *Geography* into Greek, (printed at Vienna, 1807, 8vo.) always renders Hedjaz by *Ἀραβία Περσαία*.

‡ “Les Provinces de Tahama et d’Iemamah sont comme au cœur du pays; celle de Hegiaz est devenue la plus célèbre à cause des villes de la Mecque et de Medine, et fait avec les deux dernières que nous avons nommées ce que nous appelons l’Arabie Déserte.”—*Biblioth. Orient. in “Arab.”*

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Arabia into two parts, Yemen and Hedjaz ; others into five great provinces, Yemen, Hedjaz, Nedjed, Tehama, and Yemama. Bahrein has also been included ; and Aroudh is named as an Arabian province, but appears to be the same as Yemama. Hadramaut, Mahrah, Shejr, Oman, and other subdivisions have likewise been reckoned independent provinces by some, while many confound them with the greater regions, Yemen and Hedjaz. To the latter, indeed, are often assigned even the extensive countries of Nedjed, Tehama, and Yemama.

Respecting the boundaries of all these provinces, much embarrassment has arisen from contradictory statements made by several of the most eminent Oriental geographers ; Edrisi, Abulfeda, Al Madaieni, Ibn Haukal, Ibn el Vardi, Bakoui, and others. Mr. Rommel, a very ingenious commentator on Abulfeda's " Arabia," is frequently obliged to acknowledge the difficulty of ascertaining where one division begins and another terminates. With regard, more particularly, to the boun-

daries of Hedjaz, Abulfeda is silent ; but it appears that his opinion, so far as Mr. Rommel could collect from incidental accounts of places assigned to this province and adjoining territories, did not in all respects coincide with the statements of other celebrated geographers.*

* See “ Christophori Rommel Abulfedea Arabiæ Descriptio, commentario perpetuo illustrata,” Gottingæ, 1802, 4to. “ Ambitum et fines hujus provinciæ Abulfeda designare supersedet.—Al Madaieni hæc profert: ‘ Hhegiaz est provincia complectens illum tractum montium qui inde ab Yaman expansus usque ad Sham (Syriam) protenditur. In eo tractu sitæ sunt Madinah et Amman’—Cum hoc dissidere Abulfedam non dubium est.—Ibn al Arabi: ‘ Quod est inter Tehamah et Nagd, illud est Hhegiaz.’—Fusius Ibn Haukal: ‘ Quod protenditur a limite Serrain urbis sitæ ad mare Kolzum adusque viciniam Madian, et inde reflectendo per limitem tendentem in ortum urbis Hhegr, ad montem Tai transeundo juxta tergum Yamamah ad mare Persicum, hoc totum ad Hhegiaz pertinet.’ Et alio loco: ‘ Hhegiaz ea est provincia, quæ Maccah et Madinah et Yamamah cum earundem territoriiis comprehendit.’—Ibn al Vardi Hhegiaz appellat provinciam secus Sinum Arabicum et a regione Habyssiniæ

It may perhaps be asked, why our inquisitive traveller did not learn from some intelligent native the precise extent and limits of Hedjaz? To this question the following passage (written by Burckhardt, near the end of his journal, and probably intended for the Appendix,) may serve as a reply, and show that even the present inhabitants do not agree in their application of the name Hedjaz. “This,” says he, “is not used by the Arabian Bedouins in the usual acceptation of the word. They call Hedjaz exclusively the mountainous country, comprehending many fertile valleys south of Tayf, and as far as the dwelling-places of the Asyr Arabs, where the coffee-tree begins to be cultivated abundantly. This is the general application of the term among all the Bedouins of those countries; and the town’s-people of Mekka

sitam—Bakui eam inter Yaman et Syriam posuisse satis habet, simul longitudinem ejus mensis itinere emetiens.”—
 (pp. 57—58.)

and Djidda also use it in that sense among themselves. But when they converse with foreigners, whose notions they politely adopt, the name Hedjaz is bestowed on the country between Tayf, Mekka, Medina, Yembo, and Djidda. The Bedouins give the name of El Ghor, or the low-land, to the whole province westward of the mountains from Mekka up to Beder and Yembo ; while those mountains themselves northward of Tayf are called by them Hedjaz-es'-Shám, or the Northern Hedjaz.”*

* This would confirm the derivation of Hedjaz (mentioned by Golius) from *ahhtedjezet*, “ quod (provincia Hhegiaz) colligata et constricta montibus sit :” but others derive it from the Arabic word *yehedjez*, because Hedjaz *divides* Nedjed from Tehama, or because it *connects* Yemen with Syria, between which it is situate. As even the shortest note written by Burckhardt must be considered valuable, a few lines, that immediately follow the passage above quoted from his Journal, are here given : “ I compute the population of the province usually called Hedjaz, comprising the whole territory of the Sherif of Mekka, together with that of Medina and the towns situated therein, and all the Bedouin tribes, at about two hundred

On reference to Vol. II. pp. 287, 288, a remark will be found concerning the different application of this name (Hedjaz) among those who inhabit the sea-coast and those Bedouins who occupy the interior country; and it will even appear that doubts have been entertained whether the sacred city Medina does not belong rather to Nedjed than to Hedjaz.

From statements so vague as those above quoted, an attempt to trace exactly the limits of any country must be vain and fallacious: that region, therefore, which borders on the Red Sea, and which the natives, we know, entitle unequivocally *Hedjaz*, is marked in our map, as in almost every other published hitherto, merely with that name, its first letter being placed where the editor supposes Arabia Petraea to terminate, and its last letter

and fifty thousand souls; a number which, I am certain, is rather over than under rated; the greater part being the Bedouin inhabitants of the mountains, and principally the strong tribes of Beni Harb."

where he would separate Hedjaz from Tehama.*

To those who seek the most accurate information respecting places but little known, this work is sufficiently recommended by the name of its author, and of the country which it describes. “The manners of the Hejazi Arabs have continued,” says Sir William Jones, “from the time of Solomon to the present age.”† “Our notions of Mecca must be drawn,” says Gibbon, “from the Arabians. As no unbeliever is permitted to enter the city, our travellers are silent; and the short hints of Thevenot are taken from the suspicious mouth of an African renegado.”‡

But the reader of this preface must not be withholden from perusing Burckhardt’s authentic and interesting account of the

* Burckhardt (Syrian Travels p. 511.) quotes Makrizi, the Egyptian historian, who says, in his chapter on Aila, (Akaba): “It is from hence that the Hedjaz begins: in former times it was the frontier place of the Greeks, &c.”

† Discourse on the Arabs, *Asiat. Researches*, vol. ii.

‡ Roman Empire, chap. 50. note 18.

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places which he visited, of the extraordinary ceremonies which he witnessed, and of the people among whom he lived in the character of a Muselman.

Some short notices, written on a detached leaf, but evidently intended by the author as an introduction to his Journal, are given accordingly in the next page: for, that the Arabian Travels should appear under such a form as Burckhardt himself probably wished them to assume, has been throughout a favourite object of the editor,

WILLIAM OUSELEY.

London, January, 1829.

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

IN the pages of this Journal I have frequently quoted some Arabian historians, whose works are in my possession. It is now to me a subject of regret that those manuscripts were not with me in the Hedjaz. The two first I purchased at Cairo, after my return from Arabia.

These works are—1. The History of Mekka, entitled *Akhbar Mekka*, a thick quarto volume, by *Aby el Wolyd el Azraky*, who flourished in the year of the Hedjra 223, and has traced the annals of his native city down to that period. This work is particularly interesting on account of its topographical notices, and the author's intimate

acquaintance with the state of Arabia before Islám or Mohammedanism. The manuscript appears, from the hand-writing, to be six, or perhaps seven hundred years old.

2. The History of Mekka, entitled *Akd e' themyn*, in three folio volumes, by *Taky ed' dyn el Fasy*, who was himself Kadhy of Mekka. This history comes down to the year of the Hedjra 829, and is comprised in the first volume; the other two volumes containing biographical anecdotes of distinguished natives of Mekka.

3. The History of the Mosque of Mekka, with which the history of the town is interwoven, called *El Aalam hy aalam beled Allah el haram*, in one volume quarto. The author was *Kottob ed' dyn el Mekky*, who held high offices at Mekka, and brings the history down to the year 990 of the Hedjra.

4. The History of the Hedjaz, and more particularly of Mekka, by *Asamy*. Of this chronicle I possess only the second volume, a large folio manuscript, comprising historical records from the time of the *Beni Omeya*, to

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the year (of the Hedjra) 1097. I have not been able to ascertain the title of this work, which abounds with curious and valuable information. The author, *Asamy*, was a native of Mekka.

5. The History of the Temple and Town of Medina. This work is entitled *Khelaset el Wafa*, its author was *Nour ed' dyn Aly Ibn Ahmed e' Samhoudy*,* and it is comprised in one folio volume, bringing the history down to the year 911 of the Hedjra.

* To this writer Burckhardt refers in p. 323, by the letters (V. S.) "Vide Samhoudy."

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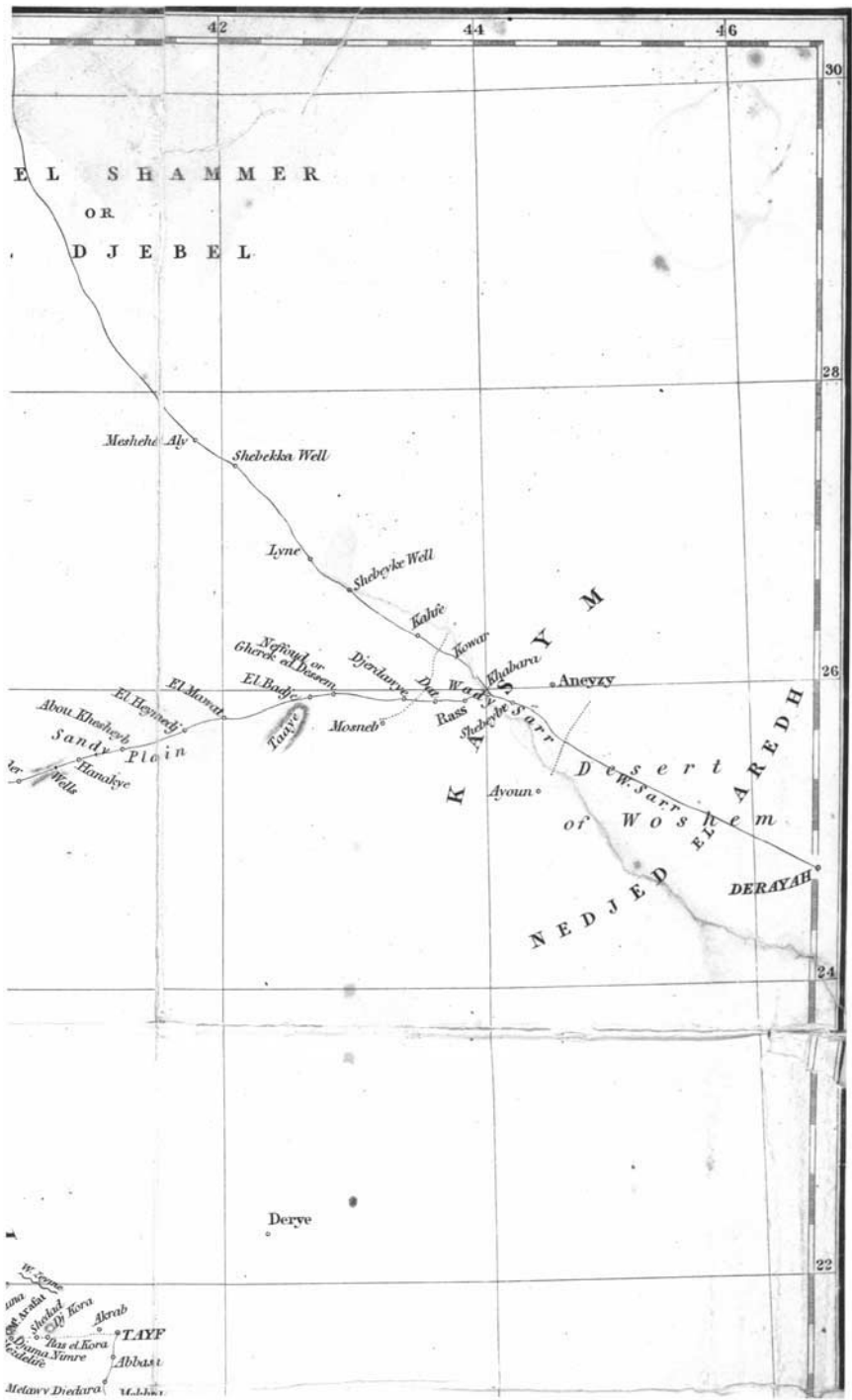
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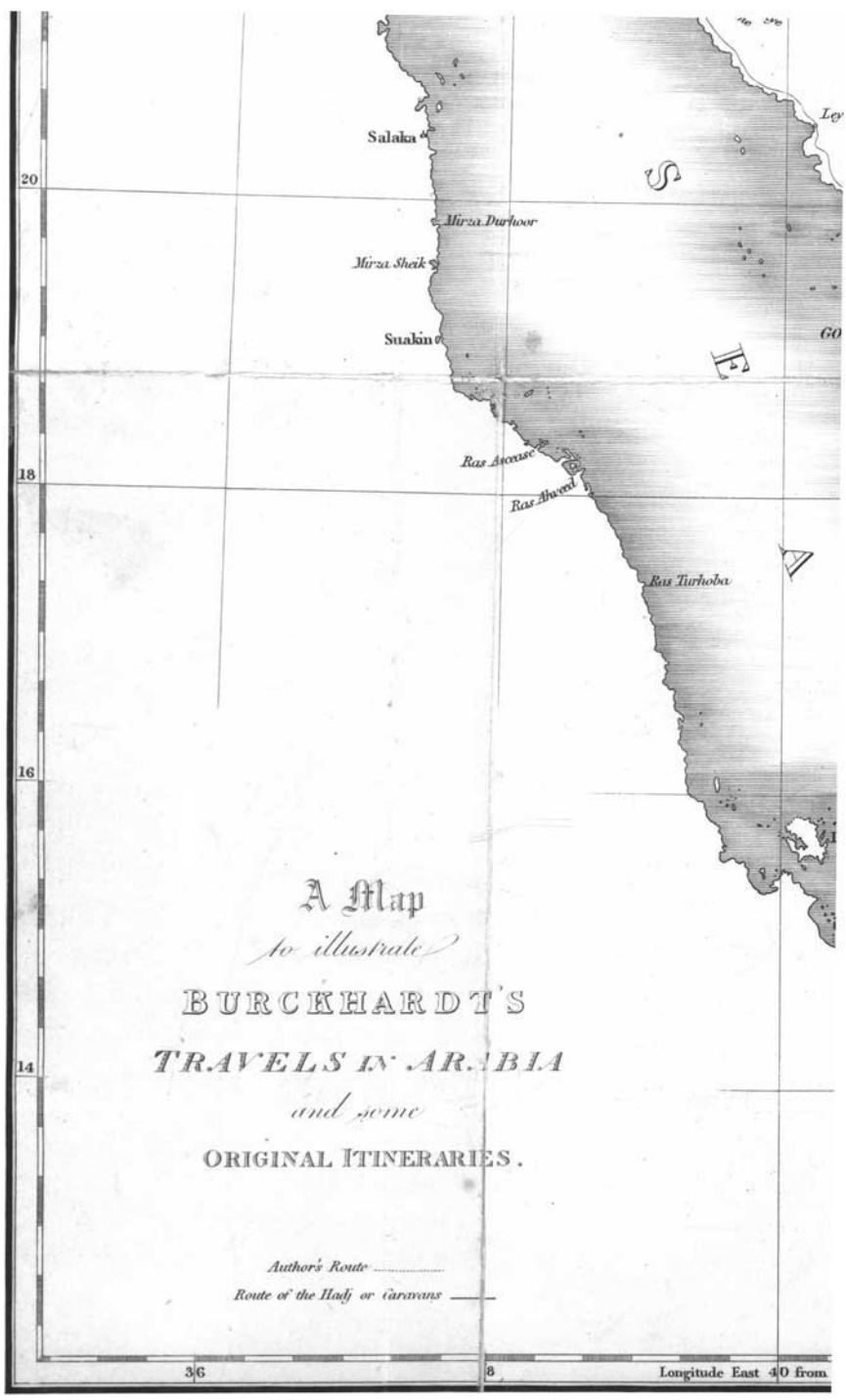
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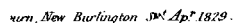




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