

TO HISTORY OF STRUGGLE FOR OTTOMAN (MOSUL) OIL IN BEGINNING OF THE XXTH CENTURY

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In connection with the Iraq events of last years, neighbours of Iraquois-Turks in the mass-media again have recollected Mosul and Kirkuk. And certainly, not casually. During centuries this region was a part of Ottoman Empire, there lived Turkish (Turkmens), and their descendants live till now. Being based on data of last reliable population census of Iraq in 1957 and rate of its annual growth of 2.5 %, Turkish authors estimate the Turkmen population of Iraq today in quantity not less than two millions person from the general population of Iraq in 25 million.

A problem of the status of Kirkuk still has in Mosul region one of disputed. In Turkish mass-media it is marked, that the Iraq Turkmens consider Kirkuk as the ethnocultural center, and in days of empire they formed the majority the population in Kirkuk. In city the Ottoman culture prospered, Turkmens prevailed in trading layers and provided to city economic stability.¹ Leaders of the Turkmen population in Kirkuk approve, that on hands they have birth certificates and documents on the right of possession of the land, received during Ottoman time. Turkmens especially at Saddam Hussein's regime appeared before threat of assimilation, nowadays as if the same waits for them as a result of activity in Kirkuk Kurds. "However despite of every possible pressure, we kept to our children Turkish language and our originality".²

The involvement of Turkey into the Iraq crisis has induced some Turkish journalists to approve, that the loss of the Mosul which has occurred almost a century ago – not healing wound of Turkey. They refer to corresponding statements of Mustafa Kemal.³

On boundary XIXth and XXth centuries special interest to Mosul region has arisen at great powers then oil fields there have been discovered here. It is considered, that to their discovery had direct attitude Kalust Gulbenkian (b.1869), the Istanbul geologist. It has been involved to initiated from Abdulhamid II searches of oil deposits and has prepared the report in which it was informed, that in area of Mosul there are rich stocks of oil.

¹Who Owns Kirkuk? The Turkoman Case, by Yücel Güçlü. Middle East Quarterly, Winter 2007.

²Millî Gazete, 27.04.2003.

³Sabah, 24.07.2003.

It was time when the world economy already with might and main used kerosene, when the marine sea fleet – both military and civil passed from coal to oil. The large expert on a petroleum industry Karl Hoffmann wrote to 20th years, that motor transport, aircraft, navigation already are based on oil. In the summer 1914 the merchant marine fleet had 364 steamships on oil fuel that made 2,62 % of all world trading tonnage. In the summer 1922 it was totaled already 2.793 steamships heated by oil, representing 22,34 % of all merchant marine fleet. In the memorandum of lord Curzon from July, 6th, 1921 it was specified, that the English fleet on 90 % was heated by oil. Young naval forces of the USA are entirely heated by oil.⁴

The leader in race for oil were the USA, the first 50 years of history of a petroleum industry (with 1859 on 1909) are noted by domination *Standard Oil Co.* In 1911 the Supreme court of the USA has decided to disband this company on independent societies because of dishonest practice of elimination of competitors. However the new “legally independent” companies have remained under influence of interests of group of Rockefeller, most powerful of them were *Standard Oil of New Jersey, Socony Mobil Oil and Standard Oil of California.*⁵ Having established the control over the oil market in the western hemisphere, they, at active state support, have joined under the slogan of “the open doors” in struggle in the European oil market, first of all against “proprietor over the seas” and many colonies of England.

Struggle has begun and for Near-Eastern oil. In 1901 W. Knox D’Arcy has received Ferman from Shah of Iran on oil concession in all territory of the country. In 1908 the first oil field there has been opened and D’Arcy has founded the company *Anglo-Persian Oil Co.*, known later under the name *British Petroleum.* The British government has got the basic share in actions of the company. The first oil refinery has been constructed in Abadan in 1913.

Other largest international company became in 1907 – as a result of merge – *Royal Dutch Shell.* Under direction of H. Deterding, whom Hoffmann calls “the powerful managing director”, it has managed to get on the American market. Itself deterding from the Dutch colonial businessman “has turned to the English politician-industrialist and landlord”⁶ With Deterding gets acquainted in London mentioned above Gulbenikan. In 1907 it has persuaded heads of *Royal Dutch Shell* to open in Istanbul a bureau under its management, became also the financial adviser at Ottoman government, carried out simultaneously functions of the financial adviser at embassies of Empire in London and Paris.

⁴Гофман, Карл, **Нефтяная политика и англо-саксонский империализм**, Пер. с немецкого. Ленинград, 1930. с. 13, 14.

⁵Шевалье, Жан-Мари, **Нефтяной Кризис**, Пер. с франц. М., Прогресс, 1975. с. 20.

⁶Гофман, с. 32.

In 1912 for search and oil recoveries in Mesopotamia at participation of English and German investors Gulbenikan has carried on negotiations with the Turkish government for creation *Turkish Petroleum Co (TP)* which capital has been divided between *Anglo-Persian Oil Co*-50 %, *Royal-Dutch Shell*-25 % and *Deutsche Bank*-25 %. As compensation for services Gulbenikan should receive 5 % from the profit falling an English share. These have made of 5 % its one of the richest people of the world. On June, 28th, 1914 the Ottoman government has officially undertaken to transfer the new company oil concession in Mesopotamia.⁷

However business was not limited to the European participants of struggle for Mosul oil. The American admiral Colbi M. Chester which has visited in 1901 by the military ship in Turkish waters, again has arrived to Turkey and as the intermediary of several American firms in 1908 has achieved the consent of authorities to concession on construction of railways in Anatolia. In August, 1909 the Osmanli Chamber of Deputies has approved substantive provisions of this project. It provided construction of the railway from Sivas to Van through Diyarbakir, Ergani, Bitlis with two branches – to Aleksandretta gulf (Yumurtalik) and to Suleymaniya, on territory of then Mesopotamia, through Mosul and Kirkuk. The company acquired the right of operation of all minerals, including and oil fields, in a 40 kilometer strip along railroad lines. On February, 25th, 1910 this project has been transferred to the Grand Visier, and on March, 15th, 1910 The state secretary of USA Knox has addressed to the Turkish Charge d'Affaires in Washington with the application in which has specified, that its government gives great value of concession of Chester and in case of its ratification the government of the USA will agree basically on prospective increase by Turkish authorities of the customs duties.⁸

The American initiative has met sharp repulse from Germany and the states of Entante. Concessioners it was necessary to refuse some conditions infringing interests of other applicants. The starting point of the railway had been took not Sivas but Harput, the exclusive right of research of bowels was reduced with 20 till two years.⁹ B 1911 Chester has reorganized in the USA the company *Ottoman-American Development Co*, there were hearings, that the project of Chester was supported by bank firm *Coon, Lab and Co*, connected with *Standard Oil*.¹⁰

The changed project has been transferred in Ottoman parliament which, however, did not begin to hasten with the statement of concession. It became soon clear, that this American project is doomed to a failure, its consideration

⁷Sabah, 14.01.2003.

⁸Международная Летопись, М., 1924, N 1, с. 117-118; Gordon, L., *American Relations with Turkey*, 1830-1930, с. 260.

⁹Gordon, p. 259-262, *Международная Летопись*, 1924, No 1, с. 117.

¹⁰*Current History*. 1926, January, с. 262, 496.

in the Osmanli Chamber of Deputies has been postponed for uncertain time.¹¹ Russian ambassador in Turkey N. V. Charykov with satisfaction wrote to the heads that it is not necessary “to regret especially about a new delay and probable final failure честеровского the project” and that this failure is, undoubtedly, result of the German influence on the Grand Visier”.¹²

However it has not discouraged the American diplomacy. The Russian charge d’affaires in Istanbul K.N.Gulkevich informed in January, 1914 to Petersburg, that the new ambassador of the USA in Turkey Morgenthau, “behind whom there is *Standard Oil*”, is ready in America to arrange to Porta a loan up to billion francs”. To it, in Gulkevich’s opinion, it is necessary to date the arrival to Istanbul the American bankers Coonand Lab. Gulkevich marked, that “granting of the loan would be delivery to Americans of concessions on development of the mines entered into concession of Chester, and operation of state forests of empire, and also oil fields in Mesopotamia”.¹³

But with the beginning of the First World War diplomatic struggle for oil passed already in conditions of military actions. In February, 1915 the confidential British-Franco-Russian arrangement on Black Sea Straits has started to be made out, but not only about Straits there was a conversations. The promise of another’s Straits to Russia was not disinterested for allies. The mentioned British-Franco-Russian arrangement in March-April, 1915 has been expanded by a mutual exchange of memoranda of Minister for Foreign Affairs S. D. Sazonov and English and French of ambassadors in Petrograd- Buchanan andPaleolog. In particular, in Sazonov’s memorandum from March, 4th, 1915 proved to be true: “the Allied governments can be assured, that will meet from the imperial government the same sympathy to realization of plans which can be at them in relation to other areas of Empire Ottoman”.¹⁴

About what plans there is a speech, it became clear after in February, 1916, when Russian army in East Turkey has appeared directly on approaches to Iraq and Syria. The English and French diplomacy presented by Michael Sykes and George-Picot has hastened to coordinate the territorial requirements concerning the Asian Turkey and to arrive with them to the Russian capital. The project Sykes-Picotdivided the Arabian countries and a southeast of Turkey into some zones, provided various degrees of administrative and economic intervention here the named powers. The dark blue zone directly departed to France, included the

¹¹**Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of The United States, 1922**, vol. 2, 1921. Washington, 1938, p. 921.

¹²**Международные Отношения в Эпоху Империализма. Документы из Архивов Царского и Временного Правительств (Далее – МОЭИ)**. Сер. II. Т. 18. М., 1938, с. 102, 103.

¹³**МОЭИ**, Сер. III. Т. I. М.– Л., 1931, с. 183.

¹⁴**Тексты документов см, Шацилло, В. К., Первая Мировая Война. Факты И Документы**. М., 2003 с. 259-266.

Western Syria and Lebanon, Turkish Cilicia, Aintab, Urfa, Mardin, Diyarbakir and Hakkari. As to spheres of influence of France, they established East Syria and Mosul. The red zone subordinated England Southern Iraq with Bagdad and Basra, the Palestinian ports Haifa and Акка; spheres of its influence had been named Transjordan and the Central Iraq. There were also other “zones” of submission and influence, including joint. Having arrived to Petrograd, Sykes and Picot have handed over on March, 9th 1916 to Sazonov the memorandum with a statement of their project. Sazonov has put forward a number of counterconditions, having demanded in particular transfers of Russia some regions of East Turkey and a part of southern coast of Black sea.

As we see, in an initial variant of a sharing of Mesopotamia Mosul intended France. England tested at that time really difficulties on Near-Eastern fronts and required support of allies.

1918 became year of end of military actions of the First World War. Defeat of Turkey meant realization of the above-stated plans of tearing away of Near-Eastern territories of Empire, including region of Mosul, in favour of England and France, Russia as it is obvious, after revolutionary events 1917 has appeared outside of this sharing.

On October, 30th, 1918 in port Mudros representatives Ottoman government have signed the agreement on an armistice which provided opening passages for military fleet Allies and granting to them of the right to occupy forts of Bosphorus and Dardanelles; delivery of the Turkish garrisons remained still in the Arabian countries; evacuation of Turkish armies from Iran, from the part of Transcaucasia borrowed by them, and from Cilicia; the right of allies to occupy Batum and Baku, etc.¹⁵

Almost immediately after cease-fire, already on November, 3rd, 1918 Englishmen occupied Mosul vilayet. In the middle of November, 1918 French and the English military ships were included into Novorossyisk, Englishmen have borrowed Batum, have entered Baku.

Winners have started to realize the post-war world device through the League of the Nations created on their initiative. Its status has been certain in the text of the Versailles peace treaty signed on June, 28th 1919 at Parisian peace conference. In structure of League of the Nations the system of mandates – for management powers-winners – was established by former German colonies and the territories which have departed from Empire Ottoman. According to clause of 22nd pact of League of the nations, people of these territories “are not capable to supervise independently over themselves in especially difficult conditions of the modern world”. Therefore, in the name of “sacred mission of a civilization”, the pact of

¹⁵Там же, с. 332, 333.

League of the nations ordered “to entrust trusteeship above these people to the advanced nations” on behalf of League.

The actual sharing of Turkish possession has been lead by Supreme body Entente at conference to San Remo (Italy) in April, 1920. During discussion of the project of the peace treaty with Turkey the main attention has been given to distribution between Allied powers of mandates of League on the Arabian grounds, departed from Empire Ottoman. Simultaneously in San Remo conditions of section of other parts Turkey put subsequently in basis Sevre peace treaty have been developed, signed near Paris on August, 10th 1920. Its clause 94th provided, that Syria and Mesopotamia, in the consent with the statute of League of the Nations, have been temporarily recognized by the independent states, under a condition, that advice and the help of the mandatory state will direct their management pending that moment; when they will appear capable to supervise over themselves.¹⁶

The Major object of English claims had appeared Mosul vilayet, though, as we remember, it under the agreement Sykes-Picot departed in the French zone of influence. But having occupied in November 1918 this area and, now, using the military and political prevalence in the Near East and on Caucasus, Englishmen did not begin to give its Frenchmen, approving, that Mosul – a part of Iraq. However, France purchase of Syria first of all interested, and in Mosul it aspired to provide to herself access to oil deposits. But against English plans in the Near East for a long time acted as the USA, wished to receive the share in a sharing of oil concessions.

So England has received the mandate to Mosul as on a part of Iraq, in August 1921 Feysal by means of Englishmen has been proclaimed as King of Iraq and local authorities at all of them conflicts and disputes to Englishmen were not going to return Mosul Turkey. The formal statement of mandates on a class “A” Council of League has followed on July, 24th 1922, by virtue of they have entered only on September, 29th 1923. The Great Britain has received mandates “A” to Palestine and to Mesopotamia, and this mandate has been issued in the form of the Anglo-Iraq agreement from October, 10th 1922.

The Modes provided by system of mandates, not too differed from existed then colonial modes. The mandatory state was actually full owner mandate territories. In that dependence countries repeatedly there were armed performances against colonizers...¹⁷

In Turkey after declaration in 1920 in Ankara new authority, capture of Mosul by England, the Anglo-French agreements in occasion of the future Mosul have not been recognized.

¹⁶Там же, с. 418.

¹⁷Дипломатический Словарь, Т. II М, 1950, с. 96-98.

All 20th years of the USA as it was possible to notice, after a sharing in San Remo conducted active diplomatic struggle against intention of Englishmen to establish in region, including Mosul, monopoly of *Turkish Petroleum Co.* on development here oil deposits. The principle of “the open doors” constantly repeated in notes of the USA to the government of England and Council of League of the nations. The head of *Standard Oil* Teagle declared, for example, 21.02.1921: “By the position in world trade, on the economic and financial power the United States, without any doubt, in a condition to demand redistribution of foreign petroliferous areas to receive a part of that other countries wish to keep undividedly for themselves”...¹⁸ Turkish authorities have tried to use again restored idea of the project of Chester in communication with dispute on Mosul, and its updated variant has been urgently ratified TBMM on April, 9th, 1923, i.e. during work of Lausanne conference. In newspaper **Hakimiyet-i Milliye** 9.04.1923 the entire account about the debate accompanied ratification has been published. The general tone – the country requires good roads, in mining, “the national government should think of prosperity of the nation”. There were also opponents of the concession. The author **Open Lettre to TBMM’s Members (TBMM Azayı Muhteremesine Açık Mertup)** approved, that the policy of the USA concerning new Turkey is not better at all than policy of the Allies countries.¹⁹

The message about ratification as a thunder, has amazed Allies politicians, has generated strong protests. And as it is obvious, many circumstances have prevented it to realize. The American diplomacy has found for the blessing to use the objections in occasion of concession *TP* only as means of pressure at negotiations with Englishmen in occasion of “opening of doors” to Mosul-grantings of participation of Americans in *TP*.²⁰

On May, 2nd, 1923 the representative of mentioned financial association *Coon, Lab and Co* has visited the State Department and has informed, that its company are not measured to finance the Chester enterprise, having referred on “unreliability of conditions” in Turkey. On May, 29th, 1923 state secretary Hughes cables to Lausanne to the American observer J. Grew, that State Department is not measured to protect concession of Chester in the name of “fair game and the account of the rights of other parties”. And in July Hughes demands from Grew to not admit any recognition in Lausanne peace treaty *Turkish Petroleum Co.* as monopoly.²¹

¹⁸Международная Жизнь 1922, № 8, стр. 11.

¹⁹Hüseyin Yusuf, **TBMM Azayı Muhteremesine Açık Mertup**, İstanbul, 1339: с. 6.

²⁰**Papers Relating to The Foreign Relations of The United States, 1922**, vol. 2, Washington, 1938, p. 969.

²¹**Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1923**, с. 1033, 1034, 1211, 1214. L. Denni marks in the book, that Standard Oil, expecting to receive a share in Mosul riches via the Turkish oil company, has arranged depriving with Chester of the credit from Wall-Street. J. Денни, **Америка Завоевывает Британию**, М. 1934, с. 278.

From the statement of the head of oil department of the British government of Clark on December, 2nd 1922 it became clear, that decided to admit Americans to *TP*, however “is not solved, they will receive what share.”²² **New York Times** wrote then, that “secretary Hughes does not begin to support actively Chester concession” for it contradicts concession *Turkish Petroleum* in which it is interested *Standard Oil*, having in Washington greater influence, rather than Chester and its friends. It is considered, that representatives *Standard Oil* have agreed with the British oil circles that *Standard* will receive 25 % Mosul oil.²³

English-Turkish dispute across Mosul in Lausanne has not been solved, according to 2 item art. 3 Lausanne Treaty in May 1924 in Istanbul have proceeded negotiations between Turks and Englishmen about an accessory of Mosul, the Turkish party again proved, that 2\3 population Mosul Vilayet is Turks and Kurds, that geographically the area is a component of Turkey, etc. The Parties again have remained on the positions and the question has passed in conducting League of the Nations.

Discussion on Mosul problems in Geneva has begun on September, 20th, 1924, the League of the Nations was engaged in her in details, directing in region of the representatives with the purpose of definition of ethnic structure of the population – Turkish it or not. During these negotiations in a disputable zone where Englishmen protected the line of demarcation established by them, repeatedly there were armed conflicts of Turkish and English armies. Turks insisted on plebiscite, Englishmen rejected it.

On October, 29th 1924 Council of League of the Nations has passed the first, adverse decision for Turkey about an establishment in above-mentioned area, in the name of the prevention of conflicting situations, a time line of demarcation (*The Bruxelles line*) on actual accommodation of the contradictory armies on 24 July, 1923. That kept the status quo, Mosul remained beyond Iraq, i.e. for Englishmen.²⁴

Simultaneously Council of League of the Nations has formed the commission in structure of representatives of Sweden, Belgium and Hungary for studying a question on a place. The report of this commission in October, 1925 has appeared unexpected-, it recognized, that the population of Mosul prefers to remain not joined to one of the parties. However the commission at the same time offered,

²²**Morning Post**, Lnd. 02.12.1922.

²³**New York Times**, 14.04.1923.. From the letter of state secretary Hughes to President Standard Oil Teagle, November, 8th, 1923: “Turkish Petroleum Co. It is reorganized in such a manner that equal participation in it of the British, Danish, French and American interests ...” is actually stipulated.

²⁴Let’s remind, that by this time, on September, 22nd 1924 Council of League of the Nations Council had been approved the British – Iraq Agreement – with the clause, that its conditions correspond to a mandatory mode. **Дипломатический Словарь**, М., Том 1, 1948, с. 98.

proceeding from “needs of normal development” Iraq, to consider Mosul as a part of the Iraq territory, to prolong the English mandate above Iraq for 25 years.

In view of refusal of Turkey to recognize obligatory arbitration of League of the Nations, this organization has requested the Hague Tribunal – whether establishes Lausanne Treaty binding force for both parties behind the decision of Council of League of the Nations on Mosul to a question. The decision of the Hague Tribunal has recognized this decision obligatory. Eventually on December, 16th 1925 Council of League of the Nations has passed the final decision establishing border between Turkey and Iraq-basically this border has passed on the Bruxelles line. England was offered to agree with prolongation of the mandate to Iraq for 25 years and to enter into with Turkey the agreement on the statute of Mosul, together with on economic questions.

The authority in Ankara for many reasons was not then in a condition to get involved because of Mosul in the military conflict to England. Turkey has accepted the offer of England already about final, formally triple negotiations which have ended on June, 5th with 1926 signing of the English-Iraqi-Turkish agreement about Mosul. The document recognized the Bruxelles line (with small corrections), leaving, thus, Mosul within the borders of Iraq. The right was given to Turkey or to receive within 20 years of 10 % from incomes of the Iraq government from Mosul oil, or to capitalize this share of incomes in the sum 500 thousand pounds sterling.²⁵

It is necessary to note, that not always is possible to consider work of the commission across Mosul in League of the Nations as clear, transparent, some sources and documents of League and until now demand additional studying. Not casually, for example, the newspaper **The Leningrad Pravda** (**Ленинградская Правда**) has named the report of this commission “inconsistent”. Recognizing the legal rights of Turkey to Mosul, the report suggests all to transfer Mosul to Iraq.²⁶ ... In speech in TBMM in connection with ratification of the English-Turkish agreement Minister for Foreign Affairs Tevfik Rüştü has declared, that the arguments which have been put forward by Turkish delegation at conference in Lausanne, in Constantinople and Geneva, have not lost the legal value.²⁷ In one of notes in 4th volume of *Speech* of Mustafa Kemal in 1927 (p. 357). It is told, that England and France “put strong pressure upon Swedish delegate Uden” which objected to the decision in favour of England.

As it is represented, the question of an accessory of Mosul ethnic-cultural and historical arguments has not been cleared up to the end though as it is obvious,

²⁵ *Дипломатический словарь*, Том II. М, 1950, с. 87-190; *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası*, Cilt: I (1919 -1937). Ankara, 1987, с. 70-75.

²⁶ *Ленинградская Правда*, 22.08.1925.

²⁷ *Temps*, 10.06.1926.

the oil problem has received the decision. As if to the American participation in *TP*, conditions of this participation still were long discussed.²⁸ Only later two years after the decision the Mosul conflict, in 1928 to Iraq have been admitted the American companies *Standard Oil of New Jersey* and *Socony Mobil Oil*. *Turkish Petroleum Co.* has been disbanded and instead of it has been organized in 1931 new – *Iraq Petroleum Co.*²⁹

As we see, struggle for conditions of an oil sharing here already century a dense shadow hangs above Mosul region. Hoffmann wrote then, that cooperation of America and England in a question about *TP* “has put an end to diplomatic resistance of Turkey... Turkey was protected to the utmost ... and could not make anything, not having found the strong ally who would be ready to enter for the sake of it war with the Great Britain. In official interpretation the territorially-political problem has been finally resolved. Whether so it actually, nobody knows ...”³⁰

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²⁸So, in November, 1925 before consideration of a problem in Geneva actions *TP Co* have been distributed as follows: The Anglo-Persian oil company - 47,5 %, Royal Dutch Shell - 22,5 %, Compagnie Française de Pétrole - 25,0 % , Гульбенкян - 5,0 %. Источник: **Great Britain. Parliamentary Debates**, Lnd. Vol. 188. p. 1154.

²⁹Capital Iraqi Petrol has been distributed between six foreign companies as follows: English-Iranian (later as British Petroleum) - 23,75 %, Royal Dutch Shell - 23,75, Compagnie Française de Pétrole - 23,75, Standard Oil of New Jersey - 11,875, Mobile ойл - 11,875 %. 5 % has received Гульбенкян... Шевалье, с. 23.

³⁰Гофман, с. 391-393.

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28. So, in November, 1925 before consideration of a problem in Geneva actions TP Co have been distributed as follows: The Anglo-Persian oil company - 47,5 %, Royal Dutch Shell - 22,5 %, Compagnie Français de Petrole - 25,0 %, Гюльбенкян - 5,0 %. Источник: **Great Britain. Parliamentary Debates**, Lnd. Vol. 188. p. 1154.

29. Capital Iraqi Petrol has been distributed between six foreign companies as follows: English-Iranian (later as British Petroleum) - 23,75 %, Royal Dutch Shell - 23,75, Compagnie Français de Petrole - 23,75, Standard Oil of New Jersey - 11,875, Mobile ойл - 11,875 %. 5 % has received Гюльбенкян... Шевалье, с. 23.

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