

# WAS CRETE A ROMAN PROVINCE DURING THE REPUBLIC?

POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN CRETE AFTER THE ROMAN CONQUEST

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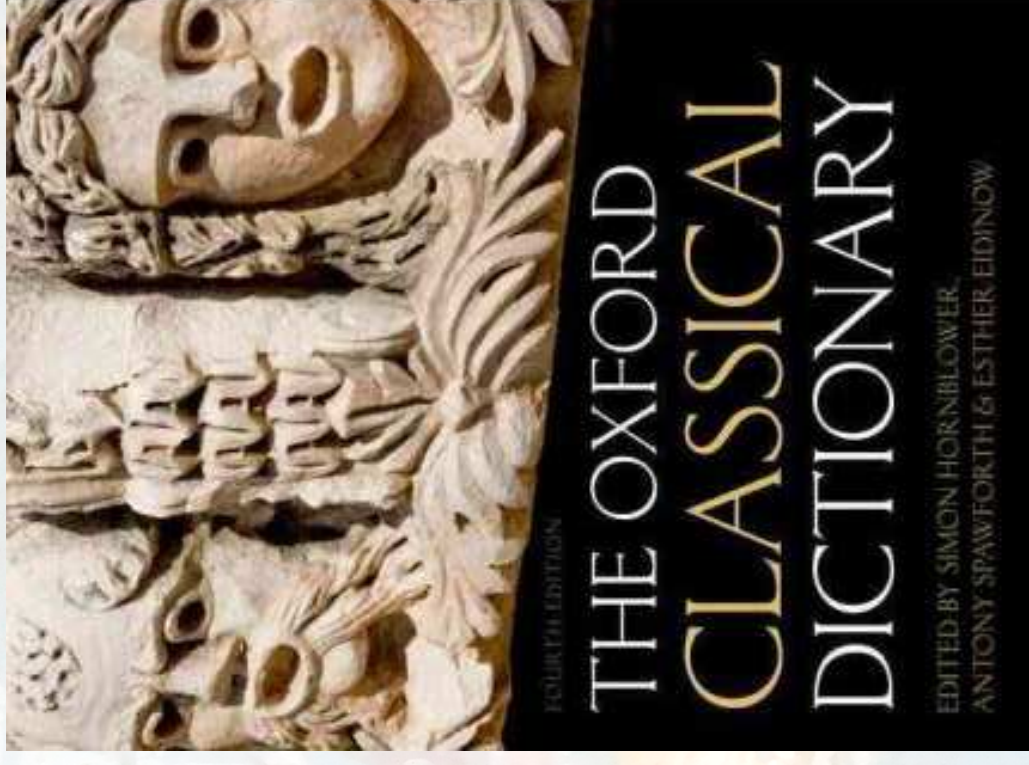
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“By this time Crete was reputed as a home of pirates second only to Cilicia. Their activities were encouraged by Philip, who realized his hope of thereby injuring Rhodes. The pirates supported Mithridates VI of Pontus against Rome, and when M. Antonius intervened to punish them, he was beaten off Cydonia, but Q. Caecilius Metellus crushed the islanders. Crete became a Roman province, united with Cyrene, under a senator of praetorian rank, and the old league became the provincial council”.

*The Oxford Classical Dictionary, s. v. “Crete, Greek and Roman”*





Orosius, 6.4.2: *eodem tempore Cretam insulam per biennium Metellus euertit diuturnoque bello domitam in potestatem redegit legesque Minois Romanis legibus permutauit.*

Eutropius, 6.11.1-2: *bellum Creticum ortum est. Ad id missus Q. Caecilius Metellus ingentibus proeliis intra triennium omnem prouinciam cepit appellatusque est Creticus atque ex insula triumphauit.*

Livy, *Periochae*, 100.3: *Q. Metellus perdomitis Cretensibus liberae in id tempus insulae leges dedit.*

Velleius Paterculus, 2.34.1: *per id tempus a Q. Metello Creta insula, in populi Romani potestatem redacta est.*

Justin, 39.5.2-3: *Itaque et ea pars Libyae provincia facta est; postea Creta Ciliciaque piratico bello perdomitae in formam prouinciae rediguntur.*

Festus, *Breuiarium*, 7.1: *Creta per Metellum proconsulem, qui Creticus dictus est, prouincia facta est.*



“Nel 96 Tolomeo Apione lascia la Cirenaica in eredità a Roma, che tuttavia provvede all’annessione soltanto nel 74. in quest’ultimo anno Nicomede IV di Bitinia lascia in eredità il proprio regno a Roma [...] E nello stesso periodo vennero annesse Creta (67, anche qui rimanendo oscure, quando meno ai loro inizi, le modalità della costituzione della provincia unica di Creta e Cirene) e Cypro...”

G. I. Luzzatto, *Roma e le province*, Bologna, 1985, 98

“In the East, after almost ten years of campaigning first by Lucullus and later by Pompey, the province of Cilicia was expanded, two new provinces, Bithynia and Syria, were created and Rome, through a series of friendly kings and dynasts, came to exercise power effectively as far as the Jordan, the Euphrates, the Caucasus and the Crimea. Cyrene was made a province in 75, Crete in 66, Cyprus in 58...”

A. W. Lintott, *Imperium Romanum*, London-New York, 1993, 11

“By 62, the Senate also had added four new territorial provinciae that required someone with imperium. There is Bithynia/Pontus (organization begun in 74, with the first regular commander taking it up for 61 or 60), Crete (annexed and organized 68-65), Cyrene (a Roman province by 63) and finally Syria...”

T. C. Brennan, *The Praetorship in the Roman Republic*, Oxford, 2000, 633

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## Cyrene and Crete as a single province under Augustus (27 B.C.)

ἀλλ' ἐν ἀρχαῖς γε διέθηκε ποιήσας ὑπατικὰς μὲν δύο, Λιβύην τε ὅση ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις ἔξω τῆς ὑπὸ Ἰούβα μὲν πρότερον νῦν δὲ Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ ἐκείνου παιδί, καὶ Ἀσίαν τὴν ἐντὸς Ἄλλουοσ καὶ τοῦ Ταύρου πλὴν Γαλατῶν καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ Ἀμύντα γενομένων ἔθνων, ἔτι δὲ Βιθυνίας καὶ τῆς Προποντίδος· δέκα δὲ στρατηγικάς, κατὰ μὲν τὴν Εὐρώπην καὶ τὰς πρὸς αὐτῇ νήσους τὴν τε ἐκτὸς Ἰβηρίαν λεγομένην, ὅση περὶ τὸν Βαῖτιν ποταμόν, καὶ τῆς Κελτικῆς τὴν Ναρβωνῆτιν, τρίτην δὲ Σαρδῶ μετὰ Κύρνου, καὶ Συκελίαν τετάρτην, πέμπτην δὲ καὶ ἕκτην τῆς Ἰλλυρίδος τὴν πρὸς τῇ Ἠπειρῷ καὶ Μακεδονίαν, ἑβδόμην δ' Ἀχαΐαν μέχρι Θεσσαλίας καὶ Αἰτωλῶν καὶ Ἀκαρνανῶν καὶ τινῶν Ἠπειρωτικῶν ἔθνων ὅσα τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ προσώριστο, ὄγδόην δὲ Κρήτην μετὰ τῆς Κυρηναιίας, ἐνάτην δὲ Κύπρον, δεκάτην δὲ Βιθυνίαν μετὰ τῆς Προποντίδος καὶ τοῦ Πόντου τινῶν μερῶν· τὰς δὲ ἄλλας ἐπαρχίας ἔχει Καῖσαρ.

Strabo, 17.3.25

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## Cyrene and Crete as a single province under Augustus (27 B.C.)

ἐνομίσθη διὰ ταῦτα ἢ μὲν Ἀφρικὴ καὶ ἡ Νουμιδία ἢ τε Ἄσια καὶ ἡ Ἑλλάς μετὰ τῆς Ἡπείρου, καὶ τὸ Δελματικὸν τὸ τε Μακεδονικὸν καὶ Σικελία, Κρήτη τε μετὰ Λιβύης τε περὶ Κυρήνην καὶ Βιθυνία μετὰ τοῦ προσκειμένου οἱ Πόντου, Σαρδῶ τε καὶ Βαιτικὴ τοῦ τε δήμου καὶ τῆς γερουσίας εἶναι, τοῦ δὲ δὴ Καίσαρος ἢ τε λοιπὴ Ἰβηρία, ἢ τε περὶ Ταρράκωνα καὶ ἡ Λυσιτανία, καὶ Γαλάται πάντες, οἳ τε Ναρβωνήσιοι καὶ οἱ Λουγδουνήσιοι Ἀκυιτανοὶ τε καὶ Βελγικοὶ, αὐτοὶ τε καὶ οἱ ἔπικοι σφῶν.

Cassius Dio 53.12.4-5

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## Q. Caecilius Metellus' Command in Crete (69): *prouincia Creta*

*Scholia Bobiensi*, p. 96 St.: *Q. Metellus detrectante collega suo Q. Hortensio administrationem prouinciae Cretae ipse suscepit et ibidem confecto bello cognomentum ex uirtute, ut supra diximus, Cretici meruit.*

Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 26.2: ὁ γὰρ Μέτελλος, οἰκεῖος ὦν ἐκείνου τοῦ συνάρχαντος ἐν Ἰβηρίᾳ τῷ Πομπηΐῳ, στρατηγὸς εἰς Κρήτην ἐπέμφθη πρότερον ἢ τὸν Πομπηΐον αἰρεθῆναι: δευτέρα γὰρ τις ἦν αὕτη τῶν πειρατηρίων πηγὴ μετὰ τὴν ἐν Κιλικίᾳ.

Dio Cassius, 36.1a (Xiphil. p. 1, 5-12 Dind.): κληρουμένων δὴ τῶν ὑπάτων Ὀρτήσιος τὸν πρὸς Κρήτας ἔλαχε πόλεμον. ἀλλ' ἐκείνος μὲν ὑπὸ τε τῆς ἐν τῷ ἄστει φιλοχωρίας καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν δικαστηρίων, ἐν οἷς πλείστον τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπων μετὰ γε τὸν Κικέρωνα ἠδυνήθη, τῷ τε συνάρχοντι τῆς στρατείας ἐθελοντῆς ἐξέστη καὶ αὐτὸς κατὰ χώραν ἔμεινεν· ὁ δὲ δὴ Μέτελλος ἐστεύλατό τε ἐς Κρήτην.

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## Metellus' settlements in Crete (67-66): A provincial law?

Livy, *Periochae*, 100.3: *Q. Metellus perdomitis Cretensibus liberae in id tempus insulae leges dedit.*

Orosius, 6.4.2: *Eodem tempore Cretam insulam per biennium Metellus euerit diuturnoque bello domitam in potestatem redegit legesque Minois Romanis legibus permutavit.*

“Conosciamo, al riguardo, la *lex Rupilia* per la Sicilia; la *lex Aemilia* per la Macedonia; la *lex Pompeia* per la Bitinia-Ponto; la *lex Caecilia* per Creta (con qualche dubbio se si riferisca all'organizzazione della provincia o al conferimento di poteri straordinari a Pompeo); la *lex Gabinia* per la Siria e Palestina”.

G. I. Luzzatto, *Roma e le province*, Bologna, 1985, 40

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## Metellus' settlements in Crete (67-66): A provincial law?

**The *lex Rupilia* for Sicily, 131 (but Sicily was a permanent province from 227 B.C.):**

Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.32: *Siculi hoc iure sunt ut, quod cuius cum ciue agat, domi certet suis legibus, quod Siculus cum Siculo non eiusdem ciuitatis, ut de eo practor iudices ex P. Rupili decreto, quod is de decem legatorum sententia statuit, quam illi legem Rupiliam uocant, sortiatur. quod priuatus a populo petit aut populus a priuato, senatus ex aliqua ciuitate qui iudicet datur, cum alternae ciuitates reiectae sunt; quod cuius Romanus a Siculo petit, Siculus iudex, quod Siculus a ciui Romano, cuius Romanus datur.*

**Lucullus grants a πολιτεία (laws?) to the Cyreneans, 86  
(...but Cyrene was not a permanent province until 74 B.C.):**

Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 2.4-5: οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ Κρήτην κατάρας ὠκειώσατο, Κυρηναίους καταλαβῶν ἐκ τυραννίδων συνεχῶν καὶ πολέμων ταραπομένους ἀνέλαβε, καὶ κατεστήσατο τὴν πολιτείαν Πλατωνικῆς τιнос φωνῆς ἀναμνήσας τὴν πόλιν, ἣν ἐκεῖνος ἀπεθέσπισε πρὸς αὐτούς· δεομένων γὰρ ὡς ἔοικεν ὅπως τε νόμους γράψῃ καὶ τὸν δῆμον αὐτῶν εἰς τύπον τινὰ καταστήσῃ πολιτείας σῶφρονος, ἔφη χαλεπὸν εἶναι Κυρηναίους οὕτως εὐτυχοῦσι νομοθετεῖν...

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## Metellus' settlements in Crete (67-66): A provincial taxation?

Cicero, *Philippicae*, 2.97:

nuper fixa tabula est, qua civitates locupletissimae Cretensium uectigalibus liberantur statuturque, ne post M. Brutum pro consule sit Creta prouincia. Tu mentis es conpos, tu non constringendus? An Caesaris decreto Creta post M. Bruti decessum potuit liberari, cum Creta nihil ad Brutum Caesare uiuo pertineret?

## Aemilius Paulus' settlements in Macedonia (167): A non provincial taxation

Livy, 45.29.3-5:

silentio per praeconem facto Paulus Latine, quae senatui, quae sibi ex consilii sententia uisa essent, pronuntiauit. ea Cn. Octavius praetor -nam et ipse aderat- interpretata sermone Graeco referebat: omnium primum liberos esse iubere Macedonas, habentis urbes easdem agrosque, utentes legibus suis, annuos creantis magistratus; tributum dimidium eius, quod pependissent regibus, pendere populo Romano. deinde in quattuor regiones diuidi Macedoniam...



## ***A prouincia* in Crete?**

### **The meaning of *Prouincia* in Republican Latin**

A. W. Lintott, “What was *Imperium Romanum*?”, *G&R* 28, 1981, 54: “It is well known that the primary meaning of *provincia* was ‘post’ or ‘appointment’” .

J. S. Richardson, in *CAH IX*, 1994, 598: “The *provincia* on the other hand seems originally to have been a task assigned to a specified Roman magistrate or promagistrate, in the fulfilment of which he would exercise the *imperium*” .

- *The Language of Empire*, Cambridge, 2008, 9: “*provincia*, which begins as the task or responsibility of a holder of *imperium* comes to mean an area within the empire with a defined set of administrative norms” .

F. Vervaet, “The praetorian proconsuls of the Roman Republic. A constitutional survey”, *Chiron* 42, 2012, 61, n. 69: “A *provincia* was a *provincia*, regardless of its permanent or temporary nature and the question whether it was traditionally tied to a certain, more or less defined territorial entity. Such fictitious categories are bound to cause confusion” .



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## Allotments of *provincia Creta* to Roman magistrates (69-44)

69-66? Q. Caecilius Metellus (consul in 69)

62? M. Iuuentius Laterensis (quaestor in Cyrene in 63?)

Cicero, Pro Plancio, 85: admonuisti etiam, quod in Creta fuisses, dictum aliquod in petitionem tuam dici potuisse.

Scholia Bobiensia p. 167 St.: constabat enim Laterensem fuisse in Creta prouincia...

(51)-50 A praetorius pro praetore?

Caelius [Cic.], Ad familiares, 8.8.8: itemque senatui placere in Ciliciam prouinciam, in viii reliquas prouincias, quas praetorii pro praetore obtinlerunt, eos, qui praetores fuerunt neque in prouincias cum imperio fuerunt, quos eorum ex s. c. cum imperio in prouincias pro praetore mitti oporteret, eos sortito in prouincias mitti placere...

44 M. Iunius Brutus (praetor 44) (He never held his province)

Cicero, Philippicae, 11.27: neque enim est in prouinciam suam Cretam profectus, in Macedoniam alienam aduolauit...

44?-43 P. Aemilius Lepidus (proquaestor propr.?)

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## Crete and Cyrene as a single province in 27 B.C.

δέκα δέ στρατηγικάς, κατὰ μὲν τὴν Εὐρώπην καὶ τὰς πρὸς αὐτῇ νήσους τὴν τε ἐκτὸς Ἰβηρίαν λεγομένην, ὅση περὶ τὸν Βαῖτιν ποταμόν, καὶ τῆς Κελτικῆς τὴν Ναρβωνῆτιν, τρίτην δὲ Σαρδῶ μετὰ Κύρνου, καὶ Σικελίαν τετάρτην, πέμπτην δὲ καὶ ἕκτην τῆς Ἰλλυρίδος τὴν πρὸς τῇ Ἠπείρῳ καὶ Μακεδονίαν, ἐβδόμην δ' Ἀχαΐαν μέχρι Θετταλίας καὶ Αἰτωλῶν καὶ Ἀκαρνάνων καὶ τινων Ἠπειρωτικῶν ἔθνων ὅσα τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ προσώριστο, ὀγδόην δὲ Κρήτην μετὰ τῆς Κυρναίας...

Strabo, 17.3.25

ἐνομίσθη διὰ ταῦτα ἡ μὲν Ἀφρικὴ καὶ ἡ Νουμιδία ἢ τε Ἀσία καὶ ἡ Ἑλλάς μετὰ τῆς Ἠπείρου, καὶ τὸ Δελματικὸν τὸ τε Μακεδονικὸν καὶ Σικελία, Κρήτη τε μετὰ Λιβύνης τῆς περὶ Κυρήνην καὶ Βιθυνία μετὰ τοῦ προσκειμένου οἱ Πόντου, Σαρδῶ τε καὶ Βαιτικῆ τοῦ τε δήμου καὶ τῆς γεροσίας εἶναι...

Cassius Dio 53.12.4-5

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## **A possible allotment of *prouincia Creta* by 51-50: A *praetorius pro praetore* in Crete?**

Caelius [Cic.], *Ad familiares*, 8.8.8: *itemque senatui placere in Ciliciam prouinciam, in VIII reliquas prouincias, quas praetorii pro praetore obtin[er]ent, eos, qui praetores fuerunt neque in prouincias cum imperio fuerunt, quos eorum ex s. c. cum imperio in prouincias pro praetore mitti oporteret, eos sortito in prouincias mitti placere...*

### **Roman permanent *prouinciae* in 51:**

*(in VIII reliquas prouincias, quas praetorii pro praetore obtin[er]ent)*

Sicily, Sardinia, Africa, Macedonia, Asia, Bithynia, (Cilicia), (Cyrene?), (Crete?)

### **Roman permanent *prouinciae* under consular command in 51:**

Hispania Citerior, Hispania Ulterior, Gallia, Syria

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# Crete and Cyrene as a single province (Lollius, quaestor? c. 37)

## Cretan coinage

Cnosos, Crete, L. Lollius. ca 37-34 BC.

Draped bust of Artemis right, quiver over shoulder / L·LOLLIVS across fields, Stag standing right.



## Cyrenean coinage

Cyrene, L. Lollius, ca. 37-34 BC.

Æ Sestertertius (32mm, 17.28 g, 6h). L. Lollius, magistrate. Head of Zeus-Ammon right; B (retrograde) to left; [scepter to right] / *Sella curulis*, ΛΟΛΛΙΟΥ; Δ between legs of *sella*.



## R. Kallet-Marx's view of the *imperium Romanum*: (*Hegemony to Empire*, Cambridge, 1995, 337)

“Down to 148 B.C. —the age of the great wars that extended Roman supremacy over the East— the guiding principle of Roman hegemonial behavior had been the extension and maintenance of the *imperium populi Romani*, seen essentially as the power of the Roman people to command obedience from foreign kings and nations. The essence of the *imperium* lay not in legal forms such as treaty obligations, or in financial exploitation such as continual payment of tribute, or in military occupation —all these things might or might not accompany it— but simply in the capacity of the "metropole" to enforce its will upon the "periphery," to use modem terms. This concept of empire did not presume or demand active peacetime exploitation of those subject to this power but aimed simply at the preservation and reinforcement of power itself, upon which Roman security was ultimately based” .

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**Macedonia as non-provincialized Roman dominion.  
Aemilius Paulus' settlements in 167 (battle of Pydna):  
(Macedonia was not a permanent provincia until 145)**

Livy, 45.29.3-5:

*silentio per praeconem facto Paulus Latine, quae senatui, quae sibi ex consilii  
sententia uisa essent, pronuntiauit. ea Cn. Octavius praetor -nam et ipse aderat-  
interpretata sermone Graeco referebat: omnium primum liberos esse iubere  
Macedonas, habentis urbes easdem agrosque, utentes legibus suis, annuos  
creantis magistratus; tributum dimidium eius, quod pependissent regibus,  
pendere populo Romano. deinde in quattuor regiones diuidi Macedoniam...*

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## Crete as a Roman dominion during the Republic

**Cicero, Pro Flacco, 30:**

*Illā enim est gloria diuina Pompei, primum praedones eos qui tum cum illi bellum maritimum gerendum datum est toto mari dispersi uagabantur redactos esse omnis in <populi Romani> potestatem, deinde Syriam esse nostram, Ciliciam teneri, Cyprum per Ptolomaeum regem nihil audere, praeterea Cretam Metelli uirtute esse nostram, nihil esse unde profiscantur, nihil quo reuertantur, omnis sinus, promunturia, litora, insulas, urbis maritimas claustris imperi nostri contineri...*

**Cassius Dio 36.19.3:**

Κρήτες μὲν οὖν οὕτως, ἐλεύθεροί τε πάντα τὸν ἔμπροσθεν χρόνον γενόμενοι καὶ δεσπότην ὀθνείον μηδένα κτησάμενοι, κατεδουλώθησαν. Μέτελλος δὲ τὴν μὲν ἐπίκλησιν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἔλαβε, τὸν δὲ δὴ Πανάρη τὸν τε Λασθένη (καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνον εἶλεν) οὐκ ἠδυνήθη πέμψαι ἐν τοῖς ἐπικηκίους...

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## Some conclusions...

### ...was Crete a Roman province during the Republic?

Crete was the *provincia* of a Roman magistrate at least twice:

69, Q. Caecilius Metellus (Creticus), consul

*Scholia Bobiensis*, p. 96 St.: *Q. Metellus detrectante collega suo Q. Hortensio administrationem provinciae Cretae ipse suscepit...*

44, M. Iunius Brutus, praetor

Cicero, *Philippicae*, 11.27: *neque enim est in provinciam suam Cretam profectus, in Macedoniam alienam aduolauit...*

### An hypothetical allotment of *provincia Creta*:


50? A *praetorius pro praetore*...?

Caelius [Cic.], *Ad familiares*, 8.8.8: *itemque senatui placere in Ciliciam provinciam, in VIII reliquas provincias, quas praetorii pro praetore obtin(er)ent...*









# ¡Muchas gracias! Ευχαριστώ πολύ

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