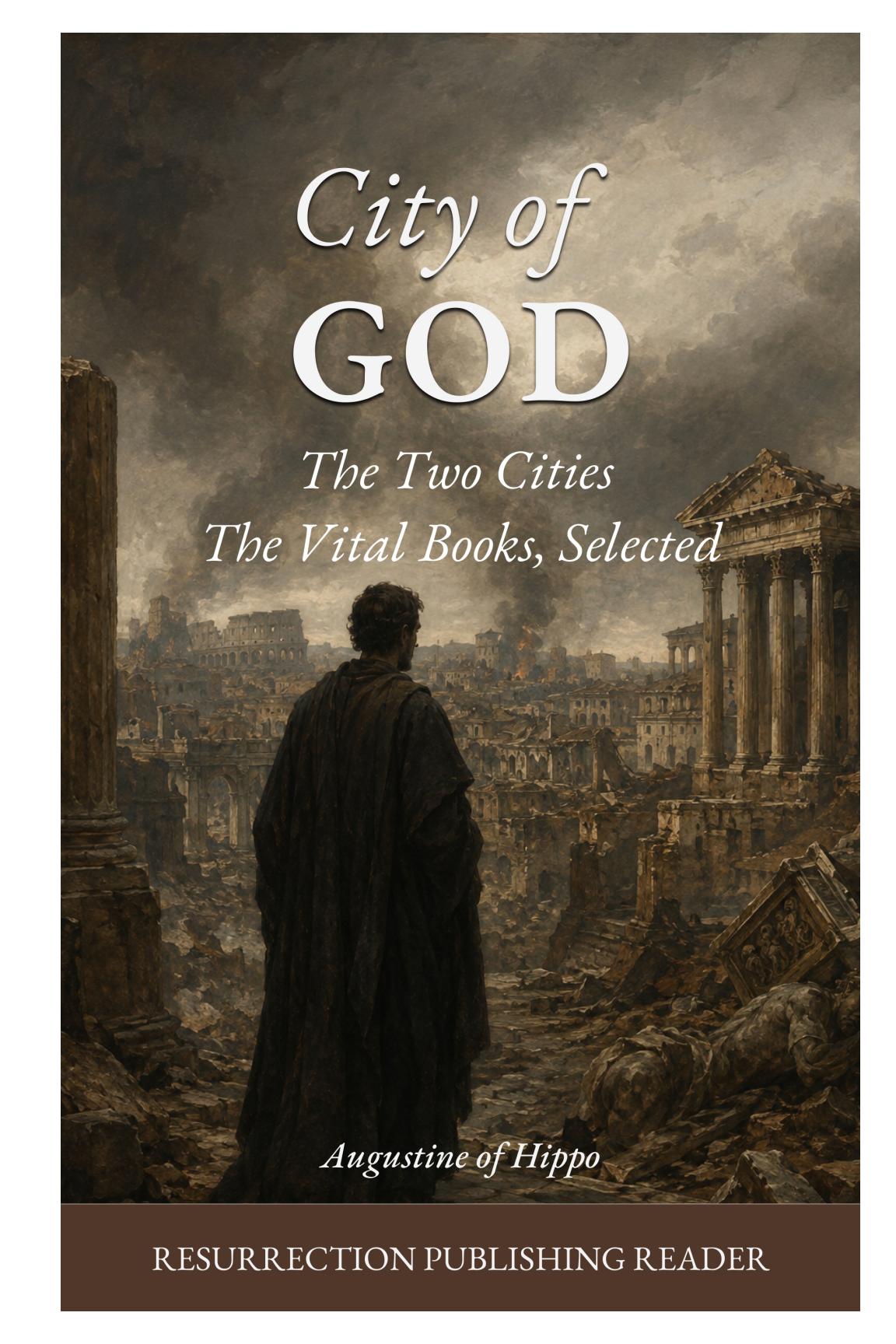


THE CITY OF GOD — FREE SAMPLE |
RESURRECTION PUBLISHING



City of **GOD**

The Two Cities
The Vital Books, Selected

Augustine of Hippo

RESURRECTION PUBLISHING READER

THE CITY OF GOD: THE TWO CITIES
— THE VITAL BOOKS, SELECTED

Augustine of Hippo

Free sample · Resurrection Publishing

This free sample prints the Publisher's Preface, the two reading paths, and the opening of Book I — it is not the full reader.

ABOUT THIS READER

This reader prints eleven whole books of Augustine's *City of God* in the 1887 public-domain English translation, never fragments. Each book arrives in three pieces: a one-page opener, the complete book, and an argument trace that follows the reasoning into the modern debates. Bridge summaries carry the reader across the books not printed, so the arc never goes dark.

The editorial layer — the Publisher's Preface, the openers, the traces, the bridge summaries, the glossary, and the indexes — was generated with large language models under the Resurrection Publishing editorial method; every quotation was verified word for word against the source editions, and no page reached print until a human editor accepted it.

This free sample prints the Publisher's Preface, the guide to the reader's two paths, and the opening of Book I: its opener, its first four chapters, and where its argument lands. It is not the full reader.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

In the summer of 410, an army of Goths under Alaric entered the city of Rome and spent three days looting what no enemy had taken in eight hundred years. The last army to do it had been the Gauls, while Rome was young. The explanations began before the smoke cleared. The old gods, people said, had protected Rome while Rome worshiped them; the city had abandoned them for Christ, and this was the payment. The charge reached North Africa, where a bishop named Augustine heard it and sat down to answer it. His answer took thirteen years, filled twenty-two books, and outlived the empire it was written in.

The book he built is *The City of God*, and its question is still a live one: what holds a society together, and what is a society finally for? Augustine's answer gave the West two of its most durable ideas. The first is that the line between good and evil does not run between states, as though one nation were God's and another were not. It runs through every society and every person, and what sorts them is love. The two cities of his title are not two countries on a map; they are two patterns of love, one turned inward on itself and the other turned toward God, and both are mixed together in every society on earth. The second idea follows from the first: no state can deliver what only the city of God receives. A kingdom without justice, he argues, is a robbery that has grown large; a Christian ruler is happy by hope, not yet in possession; and the peace any city keeps is a borrowed peace, real and good, but not the one we were made for.

Between those two ideas the book takes up nearly everything a reader argues about now. What does a catastrophe prove about God? What makes a state different from a gang of thieves? Are the emotions diseases to be cured, or the will itself in motion? Is the future settled, and can we be free if it is? Where did evil come from?

Do the thousand years of Revelation lie behind us or ahead of us? Can hell be eternal, and still be just? And what will God do, finally, with these bodies of ours? Modern writers are still arguing with his answers, and the chapters they argue about are in this book.

This reader carries eleven of the twenty-two books, each printed whole, in a public-domain English translation. Each book arrives in three pieces: a one-page opener, the complete book with its chapter notes, and an argument trace that follows the reasoning and ends by following it into the modern debates. The four stretches between the printed books are summarized inside those traces, so the argument runs unbroken from the ruins of Rome to the eternal Sabbath. A glossary, an appendix on the limits of the influence story, and two indexes close the volume; the translation itself and the short notes at the chapter ends are described in the Note on the Text.

The reading order, the map of the bridges, and the way the pieces fit together are explained in the next section, How to Use This Reader.

HOW TO USE THIS READER

Each of the eleven books printed here arrives in three pieces. First, a one-page opener that states the book's claim and the question it answers. Second, the book itself: every chapter printed whole, many chapters ending in a short note that explains a reference, identifies a person or work, or marks a place where the Latin admits more than one rendering. Third, the argument trace: the book's reasoning followed step by step, its opponents' strongest cases stated before they are answered, and its final section called "Where it lands in modern thought." Read them in that order the first time through. The trace is written to be read after the book, when its quotations land on chapters the reader has just finished; read first, it will look like a summary, and it will lose the force the chapters give it.

The internal chain: book to book. This reader carries eleven of the twenty-two books of *The City of God*, whole. Four stretches fall between them: Books II–III, VI–IX, XIII, and XV–XVIII. The arc never goes dark. Each stretch is summarized inside the argument traces at the seams, where the argument passes it. Book IV's trace carries Books II–III, the catalogue of pre-Christian catastrophes and the debate over founding justice; it also carries Varro's learned defense of the civic gods, the move Book VI takes up whole, while Book X's trace picks up Book VIII's introduction of the Platonists. Book XIV's trace carries Book XIII's account of death, which serves it directly. The long historical run of Books XV–XVIII, the two cities' story from Cain to the empire, is summarized where Book XIV hands the story on and Book XIX picks it up. Read the books in order the first time; the argument is cumulative, and every trace tells the reader what the bridged books did.

The external chain: into the modern debates. Each trace closes by following the book into the present: which modern debates stand on

its chapters, who argues on each side, and where a line to a modern thinker is contested rather than clean. Book XIX is the sharpest case. The modern argument over Augustine's politics has been conducted largely through two recent books rather than through the text, and it turns on a single sentence whose English sounds stronger than its Latin; the trace and the endnote at that sentence sort this out. The appendix, *Honest Limits of the Influence Story*, gathers these cautions in one place, and it hands the reader a test to carry while reading: a claim about Augustine should be able to name its chapter. When you meet the claim that he founded something — progress, just war, the millennium, liberalism — ask which sentence carries it.

The reference pieces. The glossary defines his working vocabulary, from *civitas* to the two loves; each entry carries one of his sentences, quoted from the chapters printed here, with the book and chapter named. Two indexes close the volume, a Scripture index and a subject index, covering both Augustine's text and the editorial chapters, and a Sources page names the translation this reader prints. The short notes at the chapter ends come with the translation itself; where they came from, and how the broken ones were mended, is told once, in the Note on the Text.

A second path. The eleven traces, read one after another, form a connected account of their own: the argument Augustine began in 413, and the modern debates still attached to it, book by book. A reader who has finished the books can read the traces in a row as a second pass. A group can enter almost anywhere; each book is self-contained with its trace. But the work is one long argument, and the first pass rewards the order it was written in.

BOOK I — WHAT A CATASTROPHE PROVES

Rome fell in three days of terror that the ancient world had thought impossible. The city that had swallowed every empire it met was entered, looted, and burned in the summer of 410 — and the first question in the ruined streets was not “what happened?” but “whose fault is it?” The old answer came fast: the gods are angry; we stopped feeding them. A Christian convert, once a professor of rhetoric and now a bishop on the African coast, began his answer to that accusation by walking through the wreckage.

What he found there he put at the front of his book. The Goths had ravaged every corner of Rome except the churches of the martyrs and apostles — and Pagans who fled to those churches were spared with the Christians. Augustine builds no doctrine on this fact yet; he sets it down as evidence. Then he answers the charge from the pagans’ own memory: Rome’s founders were refugees from Troy, a city that had burned with its gods in their temples — Minerva’s image stolen once her guards were dead. If catastrophe refutes the gods a people worships, these gods were refuted once already, long before Christ. And then he turns to the hardest of the pagan charges, the one made not in the senate but at dinner tables: your God let our women be violated, and your morality drove the violated to kill themselves.

Book I is the work’s autopsy — the examination of a body after death, and its heart is not argument but testimony — the women who survived, the law that forbade despair, the Roman heroine Lucretia whose praised suicide Augustine dares to read as a wrongful death. Everything the later books build — the two cities, and the two loves that found them — starts here, in the wreckage, with the question of what a catastrophe proves. The answer, fifteen years and twenty-two books later, is that it proves nothing against God: what

Rome suffered, Troy had suffered first. But that is getting ahead of the story, and Augustine never gets ahead of the story. He starts with the churches, and then with the women.

Chapter 1.—Of the Adversaries of the Name of Christ, whom the Barbarians for Christ's Sake Spared when They Stormed the City.

For to this earthly city belong the enemies against whom I have to defend the city of God. Many of them, indeed, being reclaimed from their ungodly error, have become sufficiently creditable citizens of this city; but many are so inflamed with hatred against it, and are so ungrateful to its Redeemer for His signal benefits, as to forget that they would now be unable to utter a single word to its prejudice, had they not found in its sacred places, as they fled from the enemy's steel, that life in which they now boast themselves.¹ Are not those very Romans, who were spared by the barbarians through their respect for Christ, become enemies to the name of Christ? The reliquaries of the martyrs and the churches of the apostles bear witness to this; for in the sack of the city they were open sanctuary for all who fled to them, whether Christian or Pagan. To their very threshold the blood-thirsty enemy raged; there his murderous fury owned a limit. Thither did such of the enemy as had any pity convey those to whom they had given quarter, lest any less mercifully disposed might fall upon them. And, indeed, when even those murderers who everywhere else showed themselves pitiless came to those spots where that was forbidden which the license of war permitted in every other place, their furious rage for slaughter was bridled, and their eagerness to take prisoners was quenched. Thus escaped multitudes who now reproach the Christian religion, and impute to Christ the ills that have befallen their city; but the preservation of their own life—a boon which they owe to the respect entertained for Christ by the barbarians—they attribute not to our Christ, but to their own good luck. They ought rather, had they any right perceptions, to attribute the severities and hardships inflicted by their enemies, to that divine providence which

is wont to reform the depraved manners of men by chastisement, and which exercises with similar afflictions the righteous and praiseworthy,—either translating them, when they have passed through the trial, to a better world, or detaining them still on earth for ulterior purposes. And they ought to attribute it to the spirit of these Christian times, that, contrary to the custom of war, these bloodthirsty barbarians spared them, and spared them for Christ's sake, whether this mercy was actually shown in promiscuous places, or in those places specially dedicated to Christ's name, and of which the very largest were selected as sanctuaries, that full scope might thus be given to the expansive compassion which desired that a large multitude might find shelter there. Therefore ought they to give God thanks, and with sincere confession flee for refuge to His name, that so they may escape the punishment of eternal fire—they who with lying lips took upon them this name, that they might escape the punishment of present destruction. For of those whom you see insolently and shamelessly insulting the servants of Christ, there are numbers who would not have escaped that destruction and slaughter had they not pretended that they themselves were Christ's servants. Yet now, in ungrateful pride and most impious madness, and at the risk of being punished in everlasting darkness, they perversely oppose that name under which they fraudulently protected themselves for the sake of enjoying the light of this brief life.

¹ Aug. refers to the sacking of the city of Rome by the West-Gothic King Alaric, 410. He was the most humane of the barbaric invaders and conquerors of Rome, and had embraced Arian Christianity (probably from the teaching of Ulphilas, the Arian bishop and translator of the Bible). He spared the Catholic Christians.—For particulars see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, and Millman's *Latin Christianity*.—P.S.]

Chapter 2.—That It is Quite Contrary to the Usage of War, that the Victors Should Spare the Vanquished for the Sake of Their Gods.

There are histories of numberless wars, both before the building of Rome and since its rise and the extension of its dominion; let these be

read, and let one instance be cited in which, when a city had been taken by foreigners, the victors spared those who were found to have fled for sanctuary to the temples of their gods;¹ or one instance in which a barbarian general gave orders that none should be put to the sword who had been found in this or that temple. Did not Æneas see “Dying Priam at the shrine, Staining the hearth he made divine?”² Did not Diomede and Ulysses “Drag with red hands, the sentry slain, Her fateful image from your fane, Her chaste locks touch, and stain with gore The virgin coronal she wore?” Neither is that true which follows, that “Thenceforth the tide of fortune changed, And Greece grew weak.” For after this they conquered and destroyed Troy with fire and sword; after this they beheaded Priam as he fled to the altars. Neither did Troy perish because it lost Minerva. For what had Minerva herself first lost, that she should perish? Her guards perhaps? No doubt; just her guards. For as soon as they were slain, she could be stolen. It was not, in fact, the men who were preserved by the image, but the image by the men. How, then, was she invoked to defend the city and the citizens, she who could not defend her own defenders?

¹ The Benedictines remind us that Alexander and Xenophon, at least on some occasions, did so.

² Virgil, *Æneid*, ii. 501-2. The renderings of Virgil are from Conington.

Chapter 3.—That the Romans Did Not Show Their Usual Sagacity when They Trusted that They would Be Benefited by the Gods who Had Been Unable to Defend Troy.

And these be the gods to whose protecting care the Romans were delighted to entrust their city! O too, too piteous mistake! And they are enraged at us when we speak thus about their gods, though, so far from being enraged at their own writers, they part with money to learn what they say; and, indeed, the very teachers of these authors are reckoned worthy of a salary from the public purse, and of other honors. There is Virgil, who is read by boys, in order that this great

poet, this most famous and approved of all poets, may impregnate their virgin minds, and may not readily be forgotten by them, according to that saying of Horace, “The fresh cask long keeps its first tang.”

Well, in this Virgil, I say, Juno is introduced as hostile to the Trojans, and stirring up Æolus, the king of the winds, against them in the words, “A race I hate now ploughs the sea, Transporting Troy to Italy, And home-gods conquered” ...

And ought prudent men to have entrusted the defence of Rome to these conquered gods? But it will be said, this was only the saying of Juno, who, like an angry woman, did not know what she was saying. What, then, says Æneas himself,—Æneas who is so often designated “pious?” Does he not say, “Lo! Panthus, ’scaped from death by flight, Priest of Apollo on the height, His conquered gods with trembling hands He bears, and shelter swift demands?”

Is it not clear that the gods (whom he does not scruple to call “conquered”) were rather entrusted to Æneas than he to them, when it is said to him, “The gods of her domestic shrines Your country to your care consigns?”

If, then, Virgil says that the gods were such as these, and were conquered, and that when conquered they could not escape except under the protection of a man, what a madness is it to suppose that Rome had been wisely entrusted to these guardians, and could not have been taken unless it had lost them! Indeed, to worship conquered gods as protectors and champions, what is this but to worship, not good divinities, but evil omens? Would it not be wiser to believe, not that Rome would never have fallen into so great a calamity had not they first perished, but rather that they would have perished long since had not Rome preserved them as long as she could? For who does not see, when he thinks of it, what a foolish assumption it is that they could not be vanquished under vanquished defenders, and that they only perished because they had lost their guardian gods, when, indeed, the only cause of their perishing was

that they chose for their protectors gods condemned to perish? The poets, therefore, when they composed and sang these things about the conquered gods, had no intention to invent falsehoods, but uttered, as honest men, what the truth extorted from them. This, however, will be carefully and copiously discussed in another and more fitting place. Meanwhile I will briefly, and to the best of my ability, explain what I meant to say about these ungrateful men who blasphemously impute to Christ the calamities which they deservedly suffer in consequence of their own wicked ways, while that which is for Christ's sake spared them in spite of their wickedness they do not even take the trouble to notice; and in their mad and blasphemous insolence, they use against His name those very lips wherewith they falsely claimed that same name that their lives might be spared. In the places consecrated to Christ, where for His sake no enemy would injure them, they restrained their tongues that they might be safe and protected; but no sooner do they emerge from these sanctuaries, than they unbridle these tongues to hurl against Him curses full of hate.

Chapter 4.—Of the Asylum of Juno in Troy, which Saved No One from the Greeks; And of the Churches of the Apostles, which Protected from the Barbarians All who Fled to Them.

Troy itself, the mother of the Roman people, was not able, as I have said, to protect its own citizens in the sacred places of their gods from the fire and sword of the Greeks, though the Greeks worshipped the same gods. Not only so, but "Phoenix and Ulysses fell In the void courts by Juno's cell Were set the spoils to keep;

Snatched from the burning shrines away, There Ilium's mighty treasure lay, Rich altars, bowls of massy gold, And captive raiment, rudely rolled In one promiscuous heap;

While boys and matrons, wild with fear, In long array were standing near."¹

In other words, the place consecrated to so great a goddess was chosen, not that from it none might be led out a captive, but that in it

all the captives might be immured. Compare now this “asylum”—the asylum not of an ordinary god, not of one of the rank and file of gods, but of Jove’s own sister and wife, the queen of all the gods—with the churches built in memory of the apostles. Into it were collected the spoils rescued from the blazing temples and snatched from the gods, not that they might be restored to the vanquished, but divided among the victors; while into these was carried back, with the most religious observance and respect, everything which belonged to them, even though found elsewhere. There liberty was lost; here preserved. There bondage was strict; here strictly excluded. Into that temple men were driven to become the chattels of their enemies, now lording it over them; into these churches men were led by their relenting foes, that they might be at liberty. In fine, the gentle Greeks appropriated that temple of Juno to the purposes of their own avarice and pride; while these churches of Christ were chosen even by the savage barbarians as the fit scenes for humility and mercy. But perhaps, after all, the Greeks did in that victory of theirs spare the temples of those gods whom they worshipped in common with the Trojans, and did not dare to put to the sword or make captive the wretched and vanquished Trojans who fled thither; and perhaps Virgil, in the manner of poets, has depicted what never really happened? But there is no question that he depicted the usual custom of an enemy when sacking a city.

¹ Though *levis* was the word usually employed to signify the inconstancy of the Greeks, it is evidently here used, in opposition to *immanis* of the following clause, to indicate that the Greeks were more civilized than the barbarians, and not relentless, but, as we say, easily moved.

FROM THE ARGUMENT TRACE — WHERE BOOK I LANDS

Every book in this reader closes with an argument trace that follows the reasoning step by step and ends in the modern debates. Book I's trace ends here:

Where it lands in modern thought. Three lines run from Book I. First, the line of apologetic method: the comparative-catastrophe argument of I.2–7 is the template Orosius would formalize at Augustine's prompting, and the template every later “why does God allow catastrophe” argument against paganism — and after modernity, against secular providences — has followed. Second, the line of law and morality: the Lucretia discussion is a standing text in the ethics of suicide and in the law's refusal to treat the violated as culpable; its modern continuation runs through the law of rape and the concept of victim-blaming. Third, the line of war and moral injury: the sanctuary scenes of I.1 are among the earliest extended first-hand accounts of noncombatant survival in a sacked city, and modern readers in the literature of war trauma reach for them as such. On the gender chapters the honest position is the one the text itself prints: the violated are guiltless, the code that punished them with self-destruction is the thing under indictment — and Augustine argues this while still speaking the language of purity his age gave him. Both are stated plainly, in his own words.

The casuistry of I.21–27 carries its own line into the present. The privacy of conscience, the refusal to let fear of sin justify sin, and the soldier-as-sword-bearer distinction are standing instruments in suicide ethics and just-war reasoning.

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