



Karaman und Ereğli Ovasi: Versuch der Rekonstruktion hethitischer Verhältnisse
Die verbliebene Bahnlinie entspricht der bequemsten Möglichkeit einer Trasse am Süd- und Ostrand

Abb. 8

The Secession of Tarḫuntašša

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It is with much pleasure that I write this piece for my good friend and colleague Silvin Košak. I have particularly appreciated, and greatly benefited from, his advice and comments on my Hittite books.

Around 1267, the Hittite prince Ḫattušili seized the throne of Ḫatti from his nephew Urḫi-Tešub, and banished the displaced king to the Nuḫašši lands in northern Syria. This blatantly illegal coup had the effect of shifting the royal succession sideways, from the descendants of Ḫattušili's brother Muḫattalli to the usurper and his own descendants¹. To help secure the dynastic succession in his own family, Ḫattušili made every effort to maintain the goodwill and support of Muḫattalli's second son Kurunta, Urḫi-Tešub's half(?)-brother. Kurunta had been closely linked with Ḫattušili's family ever since his childhood, when his father had placed him in his uncle's care. Ḫattušili had reared the young prince alongside his own son Tuḫaliya. A close friendship had developed between the cousins².

At the time of the coup, Ḫattušili made clear that Kurunta was in no way involved in the alleged offences which had led to Urḫi-Tešub's overthrow. Probably at the same time as he dispatched Urḫi-Tešub to Syria, he demonstrated his faith in Kurunta by appointing him ruler over the southern appanage kingdom of Tarḫuntašša³. It was a highly prestigious appointment. Tarḫuntašša had for a brief period assumed the role of capital of the Hittite empire, when Muḫattalli transferred there from Ḫattuša his administration and his gods⁴. He clearly intended the move to be a permanent one. But when Urḫi-Tešub became king, Ḫattuša was reinstated as the Hittite royal capital. Nevertheless, Tarḫuntašša remained an extremely important part of the kingdom – as reflected in Ḫattušili's appointment of Kurunta, son of Muḫattalli, as its ruler. Kurunta was placed on a virtually equal footing with

1 Details of the conflict leading up to Ḫattušili's seizure of the throne, and the subsequent banishment of Urḫi-Tešub to the Nuḫašši lands are recorded in the so-called Apology of Ḫattušili III, CTH 81, ed. Otten (1981).

2 Information provided by the 'bronze tablet' treaty between Tuḫaliya and Kurunta Bo 86/299, ed. Otten (1988) §§2, 13.

3 The bronze tablet §3 (I 14-15) seems to imply that they were virtually simultaneous appointments.

4 Apology §6, I 75-II 1-2, §8, II 52-53.

the Hittite viceroys in Karkemiš and Aleppo. His kingdom became in effect a third viceregal state. Treaties which both Hattušili and subsequently Tuthaliya drew up with Kurunta conferred upon him and his kingdom privileges well beyond those normally enjoyed by Hatti's vassal rulers and subjects. No doubt these and the high status accorded to Kurunta were intended partly to maintain the prince's loyalty to Hattušili and his family. It helped compensate him for the loss of the main prize – *his own* family's right to the royal succession in Hattuša. But just as importantly, Hattušili and Tuthaliya were probably acknowledging, through Kurunta's appointment and the terms of their treaties with him, the increasingly vital role Tarhuntašša was playing in the welfare and security of the kingdom as a whole.

In the meantime, the banished Urhi-Tesub left no doubt that he would never relinquish his claim upon the Hittite throne. Overtures he made to the Babylonians and Assyrians while in Syria were almost certainly aimed at gaining support for his bid to get it back. Becoming increasingly concerned at reports about his nephew's activities in Syria, Hattušili attempted to relocate him in a new place of exile. But the attempt was thwarted when Urhi-Tesub fled to Egypt and was granted asylum by Ramesses II. The date of his flight and the length of his sojourn in Egypt are still debated. But when Ramesses declared his support for the new regime in Hattuša, Urhi-Tesub, no doubt fearing that the pharaoh might hand him over to Hattušili, once more took to his heels. In response to Hattušili's persistent demands for his nephew's extradition, Ramesses declared that he could not give up Urhi-Tesub, because the bird had flown the coop; he was in fact now back in Hittite territory!

Almost certainly, Ramesses was telling the truth. He suggested several places where his royal brother should look for the fugitive – Qadeš, Aleppo, and Kizzu-*u*atna. Hattušili angrily rejected all these suggestions. If he *had* turned up in any of these lands, his own loyal subjects would surely have handed him over. Ramesses dismissed this rejoinder with contempt: 'Your subjects are not to be trusted!'⁵. One thing seems certain. Urhi-Tesub had indeed left Egypt, with or without the pharaoh's knowledge or consent, and had returned to Hittite territory. Ramesses may well have received reports of sightings of Urhi-Tesub at all three places he mentions. They probably indicate stops on the route taken by Urhi-Tesub in his progress through Palestine and Syria, into Kizzu-*u*atna in southeastern Anatolia. *En route*, the fugitive appears to have fallen briefly into Hittite hands, probably in the kingdom of Amurru whose boundaries lay close to Qadeš. But he escaped by bribing his captors⁶. Then, after making a detour to Aleppo, he finally reached Kizzu-*u*atna – which bordered upon the land of Tarhuntašša. In Tarhuntašša, his father had relocated the seat of the Hittite empire. Here too his brother now ruled as king, with the status of viceroy in all but name, and subject only to the usurper

Hattušili. This was surely the place where the *legitimate* ruling dynasty of the Hittite world should be re-established.

As we have noted, the shift back to Hattuša took place during Urhi-Tesub's relatively brief reign. But Urhi-Tesub may well have acted under pressure from his uncle⁷, in the period before his relationship with him broke down. The time may now have seemed ripe, at least to the supporters of Muqattalli's line, to reassert the claims of this line to the royal Hittite succession, by declaring Tarhuntašša once more the seat of the imperial administration. Such a declaration, it could be claimed, had the blessing of Muqattalli's personal deity, the Storm God of Lightning, who was also the patron god of Tarhuntašša⁸. The kingdom of Tarhuntašša probably owed its very existence to Muqattalli, and the region's population presumably derived substantial benefit from his relocation of the imperial capital there. Power in Tarhuntašša had now been assigned to Kurunta. The prospect of his appointment, as a son of Muqattalli, being warmly welcomed by the people of Tarhuntašša very likely influenced Hattušili's decision to install him there. But this decision involved a gamble – that Kurunta would remain loyal to Hattušili's family. Should he be tempted to declare his independence of the Hattuša regime, and establish himself as Great King in the land chosen by his father as the hub of empire, he may well have had strong local backing. We should remember that throughout the empire, Hattušili's coup led to serious divisions both in the homeland as well as in the vassal states. Urhi-Tesub still commanded considerable support at the time of his overthrow, and may well have used his progress through Hittite territory after his return from Egypt to rekindle this support, perhaps for himself, but perhaps more importantly, looking to the future, for his family as Hatti's legitimate ruling dynasty.

But we have no further information about Urhi-Tesub after his departure from Egypt, apart from scraps of information provided by Ramesses, including suggestions regarding the fugitive's whereabouts. He certainly never achieved his ambition of regaining his throne. Perhaps he died in the attempt. Perhaps his death finally prompted his brother Kurunta to make his own claim on the Great Kingship of Hatti. From recently discovered inscriptions (discussed below), we know that at some point in his career, Kurunta did in fact proclaim himself Great King. This meant breaking his allegiance to the regime in Hattuša. The break must have occurred during the reign of Hattušili's son and successor Tuthaliya. Tuthaliya's treaty with Kurunta, probably drawn up soon after Tuthaliya's succession c. 1237, gives no hint of anything but close and cordial relations between Kurunta and Hattušili's

⁷ See Bryce (2005: 253).

⁸ Singer (1998) attributes Muqattalli's shift of the royal seat to Tarhuntašša primarily to religious and (to a lesser extent) personal motives. He remarks (1998: 538-9) that Muqattalli's adoption of his 'new' deity, the Storm God of Lightning, is intimately connected with the transfer of the capital.

⁵ ÄHK no. 29 espec. obv. 17-21, pp. 78-9.

⁶ See Bryce (2003: 218), with refs. to ÄHK nos. 26 and 27.

family up to that point. Now, Kurunta was openly challenging Tuthaliya's regime, and a showdown between the cousins seemed inevitable.

But Kurunta may never have had any intention of re-establishing himself in Hattuša. Strategic considerations of a kind that had influenced his father's decision to shift the imperial administration to Tarhuntašša may well have persuaded him to continue to use Tarhuntašša as his royal seat after declaring himself Great King. In attempting to determine what these considerations may have been (the texts themselves provide us with no helpful information), let us begin by looking at where Tarhuntašša's boundaries were located, and what countries lay adjacent to or beyond them.

It is of course possible that these boundaries changed several times throughout the kingdom's history, which probably began with the reign of Muwatalli early in the 13th century (though Tarhuntašša as a geographical entity may have existed much earlier). In the fragmentary remains of what appears to be a treaty or at least a pact of some kind, the countries Ahhiyawa, Mira, and Tarhuntašša are mentioned together in a broken passage which talks about boundaries⁹. The text *may* date to Muwatalli's reign, and this portion of it may deal with boundary definitions. If so, then it would appear that Tarhuntašša at this time extended well into southwestern Anatolia – to the borders of both Mira, the largest and most powerful of the Arzawan states, and the territory controlled by the kingdom of Ahhiyawa. The latter encompassed the region of Millayanda (Classical Miletos) and perhaps extended inland as far as the headwaters of the Maeander, and south along the coast to Iasos and Mösgebi. It is generally assumed that Muwatalli shifted the royal capital to Tarhuntašša to give him a base closer to Syria in preparation for his military showdown with Ramesses. But equally important, the royal administration's new southern location placed Muwatalli within closer communication, and military striking range, of the politically volatile regions of southwestern Anatolia – most notably Lukka, and the territories subject to the kingdoms of Ahhiyawa and Mira. Even after Tarhuntašša lost its status as the royal capital, it continued to provide an important link between the Hittite homeland and the west. This is reflected in Kurunta's diplomatic mission to the Ahhiyawan king, with whom he conducted negotiations on Hattušili's behalf, if we can so interpret the fragmentary passage in the Taḫagalawa letter which appears to refer to such a mission¹⁰. The Syrian viceregal kingdoms of Karkemiš and Aleppo were similarly well placed for the viceroys to conduct military operations or engage in diplomatic communication with the various Syrian states on behalf of the Great King of Hatti.

The clearest statement of Tarhuntašša's boundaries appears in Tuthaliya's treaty with Kurunta. The descriptions of the redefined boundaries indicate that the western frontier of the kingdom at this time was located along the Kaštaraja river

9 Ed. Sommer (1932: 328).

10 Sommer (1932: 6-7: I 71-4). See also Singer (1983: 212).

(Classical Cestros) at the western limit of Classical Pamphylia. Possibly there had been some reduction in the western territories which had previously belonged to Tarhuntašša. The kingdom's northern limits may be indicated by the hieroglyphic inscriptions found at Hatip near Konya¹¹, and the sites of Kızıldağ, Karadağ, and Burunkaya lying further to the east¹². These inscriptions almost certainly date to the last decades of the 13th century, thus providing an important guide to Tarhuntašša's northern frontier as the kingdom of Hatti entered its final years.

The subject of the rock inscription discovered at Hatip is Kurunta, designated as a 'Great King', son of the 'Great King' Muwatalli. His name also features in a number of seal impressions discovered in Hattuša, which bear the inscription *Kurunta, Great King, Labarna, My Sun*¹³. There is no doubt that the Kurunta of the Hatip inscription and the seal impressions is the man Hattušili appointed as the ruler of Tarhuntašša. The inscriptions at Kızıldağ, Karadağ, and Burunkaya proclaim a 'Great King' called Hartapu who is the son of a 'Great King' called Muršili. Hartapu is otherwise unknown to us. From the time of their discovery in the early 1970s, it was generally believed that the monuments on which Hartapu's name appears belonged to an 8th century context, until Itamar Singer demonstrated that on chronological and stylistic grounds, the inscriptions should be dated to the period *before* the fall of Hattuša¹⁴. That is consistent with the proposal made by James Mellaart in 1974 that the Muršili of these inscriptions, Hartapu's father, was in fact Urhi-Tešub, who adopted the throne-name Muršili on his accession¹⁵.

This still left the problem of Hartapu's use of the designation 'Great King', which no ruler in the Hittite realm was entitled or would dare to use other than the one who actually sat upon the throne in Hattuša. But we must remember that Urhi-Tešub never accepted as legitimate the regime of the man who had seized the throne from him. To him and his supporters, he and not the usurper Hattušili was the Great King of Hatti. We know that Urhi-Tešub had sons¹⁶, and one of these may have been a man called Hartapu. In calling himself the son of the Great King Muršili, Hartapu was reasserting his father's status as the true king of Hatti. He reinforces this by referring to his father by his throne-name Muršili, one of the most illustrious names in the Hittite royal dynasty. It was a name which the usurper and his successors pointedly refused to recognise in any references they made to Urhi-Tešub. Hartapu also called himself a Great King, in effect an assertion of his right to the Hittite throne as his father's son. The discovery of the Hatip inscription, and

11 Dinçol (1998).

12 Alp (1974), Hawkins (2000: 433-42).

13 See Neve (1987: 401-8, Abb 20a.b).

14 Singer (1996: 68-71). See now Jasink (2001: 235).

15 Mellaart (1974: 514-16).

16 In an oracle enquiry text dating to this period Tuthaliya considered the question of territorial compensation for Urhi-Tešub's sons (KUB 16.32 (CTH 582), ed. Ünal (1974: II, 104-11, obv. II 29')).

the seal impressions which designate Kurunta as a Great King provide strong support, along with the Hartapu inscriptions, for the proposal that Muḫattalli's direct descendants used the title 'Great King' to reassert their right to the throne of Ḫatti, in defiance of the current regime in Ḫattuša. I have suggested that this alternative royal dynasty sought to restore Tarḫuntašša to the status it had enjoyed under Muḫattalli as the seat of the Hittite imperial administration.

There are two important questions posed by Hartapu's and Kurunta's inscriptions which we should address: How do we reconcile the claims to Great Kingship which both these men made? How do we explain the appearance of Kurunta's seals in Ḫattuša? Unfortunately, we have no historical context for any of the inscriptions. We know nothing else about Hartapu, and nothing more about Kurunta, apart from the Ḫattuša sealings and the Hatip rock inscription, after Tutḫaliya drew up his treaty with him. In the absence of a clear historical context for the inscriptions, we could postulate several possible scenarios as a basis for answering the above questions. The following is one such scenario.

While there is no doubt that Urḫi-Tešub died without ever realising his ambition of regaining his throne in Ḫattuša, the circumstances and time of his death are unknown. But if he predeceased his brother, his death may have served as a catalyst for action by Kurunta, prompting him to claim his family's rightful status as the ruling dynasty of the Hittite world. We know that at some point between Tutḫaliya's treaty with him and the so-called Südburg inscription, recently discovered in Ḫattuša and dating to the reign of the last known Hittite king, Tutḫaliya's son Šuppiluliuma (II), Tarḫuntašša did in fact establish itself as an independent kingdom¹⁷. Almost certainly, it did so under the leadership of Kurunta, who marked his country's new status by assuming the title Great King. This title was inscribed on boundary markers, of which the Hatip monument is the only known surviving example, distributed along the frontiers. Kurunta's use of the title was more than merely a declaration of his independence from Ḫattuša. It was an explicit rejection of the legitimacy of the regime based there. This was a much more serious threat than any attempts made by Urḫi-Tešub to regain his throne. Despite his credentials, Urḫi-Tešub was no more than a stateless fugitive. But now the Ḫattuša regime was being challenged by another of Muḫattalli's sons, who far from being a stateless fugitive was already, and had long been, the formally appointed ruler of one of the Hittite world's most important kingdoms.

Tarḫuntašša's secession from Ḫattuša was possibly but the first step in a campaign whose ultimate intention was to reunite the Hittite world under kings from Muḫattalli's family line. They would rule the empire from Tarḫuntašša, in accordance with the wishes of Muḫattalli. But that could not happen while a 'Great King' still occupied the throne in Ḫattuša. Kurunta's seal impressions found in Ḫattuša

17 Hawkins (1995). The inscription indicates that Tarḫuntašša was one of the lands which Šuppiluliuma conquered, implying that at this time it was enemy territory.

with the title 'Great King' have led some scholars to suggest that he did in fact stage a coup in the city, and may indeed have succeeded in seizing the throne there, for a brief period, from his cousin Tutḫaliya. Peter Neve adduced evidence to indicate destruction of parts of Ḫattuša, particularly the walls and temple quarter, during Tutḫaliya's reign, which could have been caused by armed conflict in the city between the forces of Kurunta and those loyal to Tutḫaliya¹⁸. This is a line I myself have followed elsewhere¹⁹. But it has to be said that the archaeological evidence for such an event is far from secure, and there is certainly nothing in the written record to support the theory of an armed coup by Kurunta against Tutḫaliya. Could the seal impressions belong within a diplomatic context, reflecting perhaps secret negotiations which envoys from Kurunta conducted with his supporters in Ḫattuša? The seals which they carried might have served as validation of their authority to act on Kurunta's behalf.

Kurunta may have brought other means to bear in his attempts to dislodge the regime in Ḫattuša. In the last decades of its existence, the Hittite homeland seems to have become increasingly dependent on grain shipments from abroad, both from Egypt and from its subject states along the Syro-Palestinian coast. These shipments reached the Anatolian coast at the port of Ura, whence they were conveyed overland to Ḫattuša. Tarḫuntašša had a long eastern Mediterranean shoreline, opposite the island of Cyprus (Hittite Alašija), and almost certainly the port of Ura lay within its eastern frontier²⁰. A hostile Tarḫuntašša could seriously disrupt supply routes to the heartland of the Hittite world, cutting off vital grain imports. This could have had an enormously destabilizing effect on the Hittite kingdom, leading to popular uprisings against the regime installed in Ḫattuša, and the sort of faction strife which had brought the kingdom to the brink of extinction during the Old Kingdom.

A suitable time for exerting such pressure may have presented itself when Tutḫaliya's army suffered a disastrous defeat by the forces of the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I in the battle of Niḫrija, c. 1230²¹. This must have been a serious blow to Hittite morale, and to the credibility of Tutḫaliya himself. Perhaps now Kurunta stepped up his campaign to remove the Ḫattuša-based regime. To judge from the hieroglyphic inscriptions referred to above, Tarḫuntašša's northern frontiers, abutted and very likely encroached upon the Hittite Lower Land, which throughout Hittite history had played an important strategic role as buffer territory between the homeland territories and the countries of western Anatolia. Tarḫuntašša

18 Neve (1987: 403-5, with table, 404).

19 E.g. Bryce (2005: 320).

20 On Ura's political and geographical relationship with Tarḫuntašša, see de Martino (1999) and Yakar et al. (2001). Further on Ura's role in the importation of grain to Ḫatti, see Singer (1996: 65-6).

21 See Singer (1985), Bryce (2005: 316-18).

was well placed to control passage south of the Salt Lake to and from the homeland and the south west. It could cut off one of the Hittites' major routes to their southwestern vassal states, prevent reinforcements from these states being dispatched to Hattuša, and provide bases for launching invasions on the Hittite homeland from the south west, as happened early the previous century in the reign of Tuḫaliya III. All in all, an attack mounted upon Hattuša at this time from the land of Tarḫuntašša could have had strong prospects of success. It is just possible that if the extensive redevelopment and refortification of Hattuša took place largely in the reign of Tuḫaliya, this may in part have been a reaction against a rival regime in Tarḫuntašša, a reassertion of Hattuša's status as the true capital of the Hittite world, as well as an acknowledgment that the city's defences needed substantial strengthening against the ever-increasing threat of outside attacks.

In calculating when these various events took place, we need to take account of the ages of the participants in them. Kurunta had been entrusted to Hattušili's care by his father Muḫattalli. Later, he was appointed ruler of Tarḫuntašša, almost certainly at the same time as Urḫi-Tešub was banished to Syria. This would have been shortly after Hattušili's accession, c. 1267. We can reasonably assume that Kurunta was still a child when Muḫattalli had entrusted him to Hattušili, probably not long before the battle of Qadeš in 1274. He must have reached adulthood at the time of his appointment to Tarḫuntašša, but was probably still only in his early twenties then. He would thus have been in his early fifties at the time of Hattušili's death c. 1237. Tuḫaliya would have been about ten years younger, if he was in fact the offspring of Hattušili and his queen Puduḫepa, whom Hattušili met on his way home from Qadeš. There can be no doubt that Kurunta's claim to Great Kingship reflected a severing of relations with the Hattuša regime, which must have occurred during Tuḫaliya's reign some time after the conclusion of the treaty between the cousins. I have suggested that the death of Urḫi-Tešub provided the catalyst for this break. Given that Urḫi-Tešub had become king of Hatti c. 1272, and was probably a young man at the time, perhaps in his mid-twenties, he would have been about 60 at the time of Hattušili's death, five years or more older than his brother Kurunta. Three events may well have occurred around 1230: the death of Urḫi-Tešub, now well into his sixties, Tuḫaliya's disastrous defeat in the battle of Niḫrija, and Kurunta's declaration of independence. The third event may have been a consequence of the first two. By 1230, Kurunta must have been at least sixty. It is most unlikely that a man of his years would have waited much longer to embark on the radical course of action we have suggested above, which had the overthrow of the regime in Hattuša as its ultimate objective.

But Kurunta's fate, like Urḫi-Tešub's, remains unknown. And we have no indication that he had any sons to succeed him. Urḫi-Tešub, however, did have sons. And one of these, Hartapu, may now have become the Great King of Tarḫuntašša. What seems very likely, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, is that Tar-

ḫuntašša retained its independence from the regime in Hattuša through the rest of Tuḫaliya's reign and the very brief reign of his son Arnuḫanda (III) (c. 1209-1207). It was probably only in the reign of Arnuḫanda's brother and successor Šuppiluliuma II that Tarḫuntašša was reconquered and attached once more to the kingdom of Hatti, as reported in the Südburg inscription. Muḫattalli's descendants never succeeded in overthrowing the regime of Hattušili's family before the collapse of the Hittite kingdom. It may be that this collapse was hastened by Tarḫuntašša's secession, engineered by Kurunta, from the kingdom of Hatti.

Conceivably, Hartapu occupied the throne in Tarḫuntašša from the death of his uncle Kurunta until the kingdom's last days, if Urḫi-Tešub was already a man of advanced years when he had sired him. Hartapu *may* still have held power in Tarḫuntašša when Šuppiluliuma launched his campaigns against the kingdom and the countries of southwestern Anatolia, as reported in the Südburg inscription. If so, his career probably ended with Šuppiluliuma's conquest of Tarḫuntašša²². But we are now stretching our age calculations to the limits of acceptability, and there is no reason why Hartapu could not have been followed as Great King in Tarḫuntašša by one or more successors whose inscriptions we have still to find.

The Südburg inscription reports Šuppiluliuma's conquest and annexation of the lands of Ujianaḫanda, Tamina, Maša, Lukka, and Ikuna²³, which all lay within southwestern Anatolia. The inscription then records the conquest and annexation of Tarḫuntašša. It is not unlikely that Šuppiluliuma's chief opponent in these campaigns was the ruler of Tarḫuntašša – Hartapu or one of his successors – and that all the lands named in the inscription had become subject to or allied with this ruler. Jasink suggests that Šuppiluliuma had to deal not with a number of different rebellions but with a single, well identified enemy who was attempting to weaken, if not totally eliminate, Hittite power in the south²⁴. We can perhaps go further and suggest that with the possible expansion of Tarḫuntašša's control throughout southern Anatolia, the regime there was building its power to the point where an invasion of the core territory of the Hittite kingdom under a Tarḫuntašša-led alliance was becoming imminent.

Did such an alliance in fact launch an attack on the homeland, and thus help bring about the fall of the capital and the collapse of the empire over which it held sway?

Muḫattalli's descendants never succeeded in their bid to reclaim the Hittite throne. But if Urḫi-Tešub was attempting to build himself a new power base in northwestern Syria and southeastern Anatolia, it is possible that direct descendants of his resurfaced in the Iron Age neo-Hittite kingdoms of the region. Fanciful though this may be, it is an appealing notion that the neo-Hittite kings called

22 Cf. Jasink (2001: 238).

23 Further on the campaigns, see Singer (1996: 66).

24 Thus Jasink (2001: 236-7).

Mutallu were in fact Iron Age members of the family of Muwattalli, which had been deprived of its royal birthright when Hattušili III seized his nephew's throne.

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