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## BAGI ZOLTÁN PÉTER

# FEMALE ROLES IN THE HISTORY OF THE LONG TURKISH WAR

#### Draft version

It was the work of László Nagy entitled "Megintfölszántmagyarvilág van" published in 1985 that first addressedthe fact that woman appeared in thecamps of the early-modern armies. He claims that the Hurenweibels wereofficials assigned to surveillance of the harlots who travelled with the camps. At first sight one may consider it surprising that theofficials commissioned with such function even exist in the 16th-17th century German infantry regiments battalions or among the members of their prima plana but pot only in this role.

The increasing number of the soldiers in16th century armies in connection with the demanded requirements of ammo and utensils of the firearms (handguns and artillery) evidently brought about the need of extending the supplying and carrying capacities. The impedimenta teams moving with the mercenary armies had an indispensable role in the camp life of such armies: in the acquisition of food, caring of the sick and the wounded, carrying and maintaining of the equipments, digging trenches, setting up the guns and keeping the camp clean. The order among them was maintained by the assigned officials, the Hurenweibels and their assistants. The need for their effectiveness was indisputable since there were several precedentsthat persons of dubious existence or obscure originswere among them. Therefore it could cause considerable disquiet in the camps. No wonder that the contemporary military experts described those who had a "service" around the impedimenta not so flatteringly(Trosser).

The majority of these colourful and motley companies consisted of children and women. since the ancient times that the mercenaries went on campaigns with their wives or even with their whole family.

Their presence in the camps was customary until the appearance of the general conscriptions in the  $19^{th}$  century.<sup>6</sup>

It seems unequivocal that one could have a relative estimation of the numbers of non-fighting members of the camp on the basis of the various contemporary reports. As Janko states, Karl von Mansfeld ordered the building of a fortified camp in 1595 near Moson, in the construction of which 600 women were participated, including numerous noble women.9Later, Rudolf II informed the superiors of Grundramsdorf, Neudorf and BiedermasdorfApril28, 1601 in a patent that the disbanding of the unit with 200 members, who served at PápaunderDietmayr Schiffer Hauptmann, would take place in these settlement Based on the testimony of this document, 19 women and children (Trossweib und Bubeln) were marched with the soldiers. From the Christian camp besiegingKanizsa Peter Casal reported on August 30, 1601 that he saw more women than men in the Madruzzo regiment.10 In February, 1632 after a brief siege the defenders of Buxtehude ceded the fort to the Swedish troops who in turn guaranteed the free leaving of the imperial guards and their relatives. Shortly thereafter 501 soldiers, 335 women 367 children left the city.11In case of a regimentwhich probably belonged to the army of Albrecht Wallenstein and was stationed in Frochheim near Bamberg, a muster was held during which besides 2258 soldiers, 916 women and 521 children were also counted by the assigned officials.12 Eighty years later a passage in the chronicle of Levočain 1681 noted that, general Aeneas Caprara left 150 soldiers and many wives of soldiers in the city on 29 June in the same year. During the following weeks many more joined to these, and therefore the citizens needed to support 2500 children and womenaltogether. 13 Obviouslyall these ramifications burdened the dwellers of Levoča to a great extent. All the more so, Johann Jakob von Wallhausen stated in his work entitled Kriegskunstzu Fußpublished in 1615 that the recruitment of 3000 soldiers went together with the appearance of 4000 women and children (!) in the military camp.14Therefore, it may imply that the proportion of the combatants and non-combatants was nearly equalin the early-modern armies.

On the basis of their perception and tasks of women, living in military camps and border fortresses, can be jotted down into three (hardly separable) categories: wives of soldiers, cooks and harlots.

## Wives of Soldiers

Time to time the service payers attempted to prohibit or at least significantly limit the number of therecruitment of married soldiers. 15 Firstly, the fact that families were also encamped with the soldiers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Nagy 1985, 145. According to that theme one may claim that the most comprehensive monography of the literature is the work John A Lynn. See: Lynn 2008.passim.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Baumann 1994.94., 150-162.; Waidmayr 2003. 38.; Bagi 2005. 114.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Waidmayr 2003, 102. In the summer of 1415 the English king Henry V went to conquer the French Kingdom. In his army there were different kind of soldiers, there were a 2000 membered cavalry and a 8000 membered infantry but also involved supplementary sections such as carpenters and craftsmen, bakers, blacksmiths, coachmen, cattlemen, masons, swineherds, victuallers, priests and violinists. Rázsó1987, 156.

<sup>4</sup> Czigány 2004, 46.

In the work of the former Landsknecht, Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof the impedimenta teams were called impious, whores and imps. One of the most experienced mercenary leader of the age Johann Jakob von Wallhausen in his book published in 1615 were also had an unkind opinion about them. Raimondo Montecuccoli likewise declared that all the diseases and famines originated from those teams and what is more he claimed that all the members of those teams are spies. Kirchhof 1602. 106. Wallhausen 1971. 6. Burschel 1994, 227.

<sup>6</sup> Burschel 1994, 241.

One may admit that, from the Ananbasis of Xenophon may seem clear that to the Persian campaign the Greek mercenaries brought women with them. Kertész 1989. 40. Henry V during his French campaign in 1415. held unusual discipline among his soldiers unlikely to his own age. "The English considered sinful, if there are infamous women in the camps" Rázsó 1987. 162.

<sup>8</sup> Hämmerle 1998.125. About the women lived in military camps see also:Brownmiller 1978. 38-47.; Scheffknecht 1991.77-110.; Opitz 1993.11-28.; Kroener 1996.15.;Hagemann 1997. 35-88.; Andersson 1998.171-198.; Hagemann 1998.13-50.; Kroener 1998.279-297.; Rogg 1998. 51-73.

<sup>9</sup> Janko 1869, 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> Stauffer: Die Belagerung von Kanizsa, 1886. 275.

<sup>11</sup> Burschel 1994, 241.

<sup>12</sup> Czigány 2004, 46-47.

<sup>13</sup> Lőcseikrónika 1988.440-441.

<sup>14</sup> Wallhausen 1971.6.: Burschel 1994. 227.

<sup>15</sup> Parker 1972.175.; Czigány 2004. 46.

increased the costs of the food provisions beside other factors. As one may encounter it in the muster register of the Mörsburg regiment in June 1598 and in the instruction of Thomas Sichel who was sent to muster the infantry of Ehrgott. <sup>16</sup>These practices were the reasons why the governmental offices in the courts of Prague and Vienna attempted to find solutions for these problems during the long-Turkish war with the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the 16th and 17th century. The members of the Court War Council (Hofkriegsrat) who were left in Vienna suggested in their expert report on 26March 1598 that those futile "guzzlers" should be employed in the construction of ramparts and other works. <sup>17</sup>

On the other hand the experts presumed that the presence of the family can undermine the combat moral of the troops since they may incline to revolt easier and may be more anxious to get involved in the battle than their independent comrades. 18 However, the companionship of wives and children might mar not only the fighting mood but it also could influence the speed of the troops' movement. 19

The husbands try to be with his beloved ones during the march. The infantry's Artikelbrief, issued as a supplement of the imperial diet in Speyer in 1570 seems to refer to this practice. It was the reference point for the Court War Council when recruiting their regiments and troops. The document's 67th paragraphin principle prohibited all soldiers tomarch with the supply part of the columnexcept for soldiers who were suffering from diseases or had a special permission from a higher of ficer. 20 It was inevitable that armies which expanded so bore substantial loss to their speed. 21

In spite of these tendencies the military conductors of mercenaries as well the contemporary military theorists were well aware of the fact that not a single army could dispense theservices of the women around the impedimenta.<sup>22</sup>Lazarus von Schwendi who compiled the *Artikelbrief in* 1570had to acknowledge this and he was obliged to affirm their presence in the camps of the imperial army.<sup>23</sup>The role of women went far beyond attenuating the sexual desires of their partners. They carried their "shared possessions", cooked to them, raised their children, heal their wounds, changed their bandages, rushed with them to the battlefield to plunder the corpses, cleaned the latrines of the camps, and women were also digging trenches with the others who were helping around the impedimenta.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to that, they participated in the financial support of the family since they washed the clothes of the office holders for fee or they were occasionally bagging.<sup>25</sup>lt happened not on one occasion that they even risked their lives byseeking outside the camps to further support their families. According to the above mentioned description of Casalthere was such an enormous scarcity of food in the Christian

camp besiegingKanizsa in September 1601 thateverybody who was able to do soleft the camp and with huge sticks, stroke down the pomes from the apple and plum trees. Then after walking half, one or even more miles gorged from the acquired fruit they became sick because they were so tormented by starvation thatthey devoured everything.<sup>26</sup>

In the modern sense is hard to imagine that what could motivate those women to march to campaigns with their husbands, sincethey needed to bring a wide range of items: the household utensils and even the logs for fire and whatever the family needed in the everyday life. All of these may have reached a total weight of 20-25 kilograms. The carrying of small children also fall on them if there were not a bigger child who could help them. Moreover, they should care and herd the animals which they brought with themselves: dogs, goats and others.

It is not surprising that in temple records of settlements along the route of the marching army, one could find numerous reports on unknown wives of soldiers who have died of exhaustion somewhere along the road.<sup>27</sup> Peter Burschelpointed out from the investigation of the matriculation registers and tax lists that the major part of the soldier's wives didn't consider the camps or the garrisons as a foreign environment. It can be derived from that fact that their fathers and husbands served as simplemercenaries or held low ranks as well.<sup>28</sup>

Besides all these, the encampment could be appealing. In the period of the long Turkish war the overdue wages behoved the widowed and orphaned ones. One can trace such cases in the contracted *Accordo* of Hans Geizkofler in June 1595 and of Johann BaptistaPezzen in December 1597.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, the encamping could have mean a certain existence for a woman.

The constant "itinerant way of life" could have been extremely harsh for pregnant women. Contradictory to today's habits little attention was paid to them: during the campaign they should march and works as others. But one may not consider it as the consequences of the inhuman conditions of the camps. The women could have been accustomed to that and they have known that during the pregnancy they still expecting to do hard work and after the givingbirth they ought to take over the everyday tasks of the household again. 30 Casalreported form the camp under Kanizsa in September 1601 that 30 such women can be counted who werecarrying their new-borns in a basket on their back. 31

Accordingly, a question might be raised that how many times could soldier marry. One of the diary writer of the Thirty Years' War accounted that under the period of service he wedded two times. The first wife of him gave birth to four children within roughly four years. Two of them have died shortly after their birth but the others also passed away after a few month. Finally, in a little while the woman also deceased. One may have the hypothesis that the exhaustion caused her death since the army were split

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The report of Johann Eustach von Westernach and Zacharias Geizkofler about the muster of the Mörsburg regiment 8 June 1598. ÖSTA KA HKRA Prag 1598. No. 18., The instruction of Thomas Sichel28 July 1603. ÖSTA KA HKRA Wien Reg. 1603 Juli No. 140.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>The opinion of the Court Military Council to Maximilian archduke in 26March 1598.0StA KA AFA 598/4/ad 2.

<sup>18</sup> Parker 1976.175.; Waldmayr 2003. 108.

<sup>19</sup> Parker 1976.175.; Waidmayr 2003. 108.

<sup>20</sup> Lünig 1723.74.; Janko 1871. 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Waidmayr 2003. 103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Burschel 1994.244.; Baumann 1994. 154-155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Lünig 1723.74.; Janko 1871. 208.

<sup>24</sup> Coberus 1685.45.: lähns 1880, 937.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Kirchhof 1602.107,;Burschel 1994. 244.;Waidmayr 2003. 108.

<sup>26</sup> Stauffer 1886, 285.

<sup>27</sup> Burschel 1994. 242-243.1

<sup>28</sup> Burschel 1994, 245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Hans Geizkofler*Accordoja*. ÖStA HKA NGB 1595-1596 Bd. 157. 127r-129v.; Johann Baptist Pezzen*Accordoja*, 1597.december 2. ÖStA KA HKRA Prag 1597.No. 10.

Burschel 1994.243., 245.; Waidmayr 2003.
Stauffer: Die Belagerung von Kanizsa, 1886. 278-279.

into parts and she followed the wrong column by mistakeand only at München could she reach her companion. From the three sons of her second wife one died just after birth.32

The faith of the children who remained alive were not deeply differed from their parents. They should contribute to the welfare of the family early. The girls ought to help for their mother in different parts of the life: in the cooking, washing, cleaning, collecting firewood and they also participated in the carrying of the wounded. The boys generally served as a servant of a higher rank holder. They kept their weapons, tents, clothes clean and they also managed the everyday role around the horses.33

#### Cooks

Another category of the female habitants of the camps wastook part in the providing of the soldiers. The royal-imperial commandment attempted to solve the problem of the food supply from various sources at the same time in the period of the long Turkish war. One of the possible solutions for this obstacle was the presence of the wandering traders, the victuallers(markotányosok).34With this "collective" phrase one may label those who had an eminent role in the provision of the soldiers, the cooks (Sudler) and cooking women (Sudlerin) who have operated chop houses. The customers of these "houses" were from the part of the independent soldiers who were not accompanied by family.35

## Harlots in the Camps

The third category consistof those part of the encamped women who had prostituted their body. The leaders of the armies time by time issued such mandates that those women who have not lived in marriage or acted as harlots need to be banned from the camps. In 1570 Artikelbriefwhich were issued to regulate the recruitment of the soldiers had declared this opinion in its 68, paragraph36 The officers who assigned to musterthe regiments warned Russwormthat he must keep away women of 'libertine morals' from his impedimenta. Moreover, Thomas Sichel had similar instructions mustering the infantry of Ehrgott five years later.37The reason of their prohibition could have been not only the abomination of the impure morals but also the anxiety about the epidemics and various contagions since the contemporary military leaders feared the plagues more than their opponents. 38

But in other respects, constantly recurring regulations had scarce achievements. Correspondingly one can inevitably claim that an early-modern army could not exist without the presence of harlots around the

32 Waidmayr 2003, 110. 33 Burschel 1994.252.: Waidmayr 2003, 110.

34 Redlich 1954.230.;Krüger 1996. 48.;Bagi 2005. 154-158.

35About the cooks and cooking women in details see: Blau 1985.142-145.; Burschel 1994.239-240.; Waidmayr 2003. 104. The paragraphs of the camp regulations according to the victuallers: Fronsperger 1573. XIXr.-XXIIIv.; Redlich 1954.236-238.; Baumann 1994.151-154.; Kenyeres 2002. 183.

36 Lünig 1723.74.: Janko 1871. 208.

37 The instruction of Zacharias Geizkofler and Wenzel Marachto Hermann Christoph von Russwormhoz, 27. June 1598. ÖStA KA HKRA Prag. No. 16.; The instructions of Thomas Sichel for the mustes 28. July, 1603. ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Reg. 1603 Juli No. 140.

38 Czigány 2004. 46.

camps.39Their numbers could have been variable by squad to squad. As Geoffrey Parker states that in the Spanish forces fighting in Flanders at the end of the 16th century one can count 4-8 harlots after every battalion which consisted of 200 Spaniards. 40And after the battle of Höchstädt(13. August 1704) the victorious allied forces gained several valued part of the equipment of Tallard marshal's French forces: the military treasury, the camps office and the pharmacy of the leader and moreover 34 "chariots of joy" with the girls on it.41

But it rather hard to distinguish those women who were just marched with the column from those who were harlots.On the one hand all the women marching with the army were named as 'Hure' which simply means a concubine woman.42From the other point of view, the contrast between the cohabitation, the certain time endured relationship and the prostitution can be barely deciphered. One may take into consideration that there is akind of practical relationship due to which the women beside the sexual 'servitude' undertook the obligations of amarriage. In exchange for the financial support they manged the family expenditures. They handled the pay of the service, shared property and the spoils of war, which they attempted to sell if a convenient opportunity offered itself. Therefore, the man who took the role of the procureror the pounce provided protection to them.

Moreover, the situations of the mercenaries' wives could have changed rapidly, since their husbandcould left them or died in battles. In that case there were no other opportunity than selling their body to secure their existence. After a while these women were also considered as prostitutes similarly to those who joined to the army as harlots from the start. But it should be noted in the light of the recent researches that the major part of the harlots in the camps have not choose this way of self-support by their own motions. Clearly the circumstances could have forced them into this style of living. One may take into consideration that the mercenary armies devastating the land and the plagues, starvation, hardships following them may coerced the women to join the armies and attempt to secure their existence in this wav.43

The contemporaries also acknowledged the presence of encamped women during the Long Turkish War.FerencDersffyin 13 August 1597,who wrote a letter to bethlenfalviThurzóGyörgy the lordlieutenant ( $f\"{o}isp\acute{a}n$ ) of  $\'{A}rva$ County, did not dare to note in his letter that  $_n$ ... $azn\'{e}metekkel$ , azminthogynem is lehetneknáluknélkül, sokasszonyállatokvannak..."[There are plenty of those females with them though the Germans cannot be without them]. But the other part of the sentence might indicate the severe convulsion he felt. He wrote: " ...azolaszoknálpedigsokszépifjúlegényekaz ő módjokszerint." [In case of the Italians in turn there are many handsome youth according to their customs. J44

#### Women Duringthe War

The women who have marched with the soldiers not only participated in the insurance of the family's existencebut also took part in combat operations. The military entrepreneurs who were assigned to recruit

<sup>39</sup> Burschel 1994, 249.

<sup>40</sup> Parker 1972, 175,

<sup>41</sup> Zachar 1990. 54.

<sup>42</sup> Baumann 1994, 155.

<sup>43</sup> Baumann 1994.155-162.; Burschel 1994.248-252.; Waidmayr 2003. 110-112.

<sup>44</sup> Pálffy 1997.149.

the soldiers frequently utilized the presence of women and other relatives of the mercenaries for their own benefit. 45 It occurred repeatedly that during the process of the musters they dressed women and children into uniform. 46 Therefore, the entrepreneur could defaicate the military pay of the non-existing soldiers and the "act of the figurants" wereonly honoured by a few mite. 47

But there were women who were actually enlisted in the military. Tobias Coberustook a gruesome account. In his work in October 1596he depicts a girl who demanded her military salary. At first sight the doctor thought that the short-haired person who wore the cloak of the shooters was a military servant. However, it has been revealed that the unexpected visitor was a girl who was first deluded by a soldier who then treated her shamefully and left her. Coberus commiserated with the girl and decided to send her back to Vienna. But the girl did not make to experience this gesture since in the very night she was lacerated by dogs on a place appointed to her just next to the tent ofthe doctor. Only her sacrum wasfound after the incident.<sup>48</sup>

Though the strangest case was reported in the *Fuggerzeitung* in 1601. Based on information received from Italy the article stated that a soldier gave birth to girl. What is more the name of the soldier was Daniel Burghammer who was the member of the Madruzzo regiment participating in the siege of Kanizsa. The soldier had lived in marriage in that time for 7 years and he confessed that he was born as a hermaphrodite but his parents baptised him as a boy. Later he was given as an apprentice to a smith then he was enlisted as a soldier and fought in the Habsburg-Nederland and in the Hungarian Kingdom. By his own admission in the last year he lay with a Spanish soldier after that he conceived a child.<sup>49</sup>

In case of these examples one can assume that the mentioned persons engaged in the battles and fired muskets or fought with pikes. According to the sieged of Várad in 1598 (29September- 3November) István Szamosközy the famous history writer noted that: "azasszonyok is derekasanmegfeleltek a  $v\'edelembennekikjut\'ofeladatnak: s\~ur\~uj\'eges\~om\'odj\'araz\'ud\'itott\'akazellens\'egreaz\~osszehordottk\"oveket. Amit$ csak a harchevében a kezükbekaptak, "mindenthajítófegyvernekhasználtak, éscsépeltékveleazellenséget, barbártömegvisszaveréséheznagyonhozzájárultak. úgyhogy KülönemlítéstérdemelStepánIstvánErzsébetnevűszolgálajó, ez a rettenthetetlen amazon, aki a férfiakközül is a legbátrabbakdolgáravállalkozván, dicsőpéldátadott a többiasszonynak. Karddalazoldalán, lándzsával a maidletaszítottaőket, bástvafokán, egydőfésselkéttőrökötszúrtát kezében, másokatpedigsúlyossebekkelűzött el. Végül is, harcitűztőlégve, nővoltárólés a veszedelemrőlmegfeledkezve, éstúlzottbátorságáérttisztesmódonfizetett: óvatlanabbulmerészkedettazellenségközé, egyólomgolyóbisfúrtaát a mellét." [Women were also appropriated in their task in the defence: they flood the enemy soldiers with collected stones as the hail falling from the sky. Anything which could they take hold of was used as a throwing weapon and they threshed the enemy insomuch that they greatly contributed to the repulsion of the barbaricmass. Special mention should be given to a servant of StepánIstván who was called Erzsébet. This fearless amazon who tackle with the commitment of the bravest men gave glorious example to other women. Sword was in her side and pike was in her hand and with one strike stabbed two Turks on the edge of the bastion then tossed them down and she dispelled others with serious wounds. After all, the fire of the battle was so burning in her thatshe ignored the perils and forgot that being a woman, she carelessly ventured among the enemy and she honourably paid for her excessive bravery a lead bullet pierced her chest.]<sup>50</sup>

Besides the combats, they were also involved in the construction of the ramparts and circumvallation. In the letter of Casal who was personally presented during the siege of Kanizsa in 1601 he repeatedly mentioned that not only the soldiers but women also participated in the construction of the siege ramparts. This was necessary, because a significant portion of the trench diggers hired for this purpose were escaped, or had already died. The women working in trenches could not avoid their fate, many of them were also shot. <sup>51</sup> Along with the fight they were cleaning the latrines of the camps and cared the wounded and the sick. <sup>52</sup>

It may have been occurred that they were captured during the food-gathering or digging trenches.On 31 October 1605 women collected fruits on a hill near Presov and they were attacked by Hajduks and the soldiers abducted three wives with them. At last their fate turned favourably since the next day they were released.<sup>53</sup>But others were not so fortunate. According to Ortelius, in battles aroundSzékesfehérvárin 22 October 1601 the Tartars could capture several food carts and a few wives of Landsknechts and dragged them with themselves.<sup>54</sup>Moreover, theHajduksposted a letter to Presov in 28 June 1605 in which they requested to replacea soldier with a recently captured wife in exchange. However, the agreement was rejected. The Wachtmeister claimed that it would be shameful to exchange a warrior to an old harlot.<sup>55</sup>

## Instead of Summary

The Hungarian military history payed less attention to what role the women played in the wars of Hungary. This is certainly true in the case of the Long Turkish War. Butas this brief overview may show us a motley but exciting and colourful image can be created about this theme. During the war the women appeared as wives who accompanied their soldering husbands, cooks who were selling their products, harlots who were prostituted their body, amazons who were fighting like the women of Eger and as captives. It may need further investigation to gain a picture of the wide variety of women's role during the 16th and 17th century.

<sup>45</sup> Waidmayr 2003. 55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> It appeared that soldiers were dressed as women. In 10 September 1605*Obristleutnant* of the Eherreich regiment who was stationed in Eperejes sent 50 musketeers to the field to guard the maid-servants who were working there. The soldiers were dressed in women clothes since the anticipated attacks of the haiduks but on this day there was no attack. Tagebuch 1805. 351.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> The Bestallungof Charles V. in 1543 has already banned the muster of children. Witzenberger 1588, 55.

<sup>48</sup> Coberus 1685. 44.

<sup>49</sup> Klarwill 1923, 234-235.

<sup>50</sup> Szamosközy István: Erdélytörténete 1598-1599, 1603. Translated byBorzsákIstván.edited bySinkovicsIstván. Budapest, 1977. 146.

<sup>51</sup> Stauffer, "Die Belagerung von Kanizsa,"285., 291., 294.

<sup>52</sup> Coberus, ObservationummedicarumcastrensiumHungaricarum, 45.

<sup>53</sup> Tagebuch 1805. 366.

<sup>54</sup> Ortelius 2002.205r-v.

<sup>55</sup> Tagebuch 1805, 334-335.

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