Published: September 15, 2009
Last Updated: April 19, 2012

JULIAN

JULIAN (Flavius Claudius Iulianus), Roman emperor (b. probably 331 CE, in Constantinople; autocrat from 3 November 361; d. 26 June 363). The present article deals only with Julian's military campaign against the Sasanians up to his death. Among the participants in these events who left written testimony were Ammianus Marcellinus, Eutropius, Oreibasios (the emperor's personal physician), Magnus of Karrhai, and Eutychianos. (For a full account of Julian's life, see D. Kienast, pp. 323-25 with sources and literature. Literary and printed documentation are found in *PLRE* I, pp. 447-78, s.v. Iulianus, No. 29, and in Barbagallo, 1942, pp. 206-8. A comprehensive treatment is in Arce, pp. 93-176; numismatic evidence is treated in Arce, pp. 181-214.)

Sources. The most detailed description is by Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res Gestae* 23.2-25.4), and its favorable representation of Julian has been emphasized recently by J. Matthews, T. D. Barnes, and R. Seager. Eutropius provides only brief notes in his *Breviarium* (10.16). Oreibasios's writings, now lost, were probably used by Ammianus, and certainly by Eunapios (substantiation in Frag. 15 = *Excerpta de Sententiis* 5 in Blockley, p. 21; fragments relating to the *Persian Wars* 27-29 = *Exc. de Sen.* 38-45), who in turn represents the main source for the description of the military campaign by Zosimos in his *New History* (3, chaps. 12-29). It is possible that, in composing the first version of his *Res Gestae,* Ammianius was able to use Eunapios's *Histories*, or parts of it, written ten years earlier and only partially preserved (this according to, among others, Chalmers; Conduché, p. 369; Bowersock, 1977, pp. 207-8, and 1978, pp. 7-8; Barnes, 1978, p. 118; and Matthews, p. 504;

this is rejected, however, by F. Paschoud, 1980, pp. 109-10, and resolutely so by Ch. W. Fornara, who holds the view that their works represent two independent eyewitnesses). Magnus's work is also lost; however, Johannes Malalas used it in his *Chronographia* in the 6th century (the relevant section is easily accessible with French translation in Paschoud, 1979, pp. 242-45). There is disagreement concerning the use of Magnus's writings by authors of the 4th century (cf. Norman, and Scheda, p. 382). Eutychianos's work is quoted only once in Johannes Malalas (see Paschoud, 1979, p. 245).

Among the works contemporary with Julian, by far the most important are the laments for the dead emperor by the orator Libanios: in Oratio XVII (the so-called *Monodia*) and especially in the second and more extensive part of Oratio XVIII (the so-called *Epitaphios*), which contains many details not otherwise handed down (text and tr. Norman; see also works by Benedetti Martig, Scholl, and Wiemer). Paschoud (1979, pp. xii-xix) assumes outright that Ammianus, Eunapios (and therefore Zosimos), and Libanios all are based on a single source, the *Hypomnema* of Oreibasios. The similarities, especially between Ammianus and Zosimos, even in some insignificant episodes, are in any event indisputable (pointed out rightly by Paschoud; differently Fornara). The emperor's Christian contemporary, Gregory of Nazianzus, presents a spiteful picture of Julian in the fourth and fifth of his *Orationes*; these are the source of Julian's characterization as an apostate which remains in force to this day (4.1; 5.17). In the latter (5.8-14; see also 5.15-18) he describes the Persian campaign with prejudice. The four poems composed by Ephraem the Syrian against Julian upon his death similarly are marked by polemics; still, they present a valuable historical document (see Bowersock, 1977, pp. 205-6; Griffith, p. 238). Ephraem's hymns 17-21 also give some insight into the period of Julian's reign. Numerous additional sources, among them the church historians of the 5th century, which are in part reactions to the glorifying representations by Ammianus, Eunapios, and most of all Libanios, are listed in M. H. Dodgeon and S. N. C. Lieu (pp. 231-74, in English excerpts; regarding Socrates, see the detailed treatment in Arce, pp. 33-47). The *Syrian Novel*, in which many legendary traditions have come together, is historically worthless, but is still important for the folklore about Julian (see Nöldeke, 1874, but cf. Van Esbroeck). This Syriac work was used, in turn, by Arabic-speaking authors. This fact was pointed out by Nöldeke in his translation of Ṭabari, according to whom Julian (Lulianus) was able to take the capital city, Ctesiphon (Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, pp. 59-62; Ṭabari, pp. 840.7-842.11). (For other Arabic authors, see Nöldeke, 1874, pp. 291-92, and Azarnoush, p.

326.)

Julian's policy and objectives. Modern authors, impressed by the image of Persia as Rome's most dangerous enemy, like to speak of the inevitability of war (e.g., Andreotti, p. 221). Rome's desire to avoid a two-front war is often cited as a secondary motivation for conflict (thus Andreotti, p. 242); the defense and securing of the eastern Roman provinces are also frequently brought up (e.g., Selem, 1973, p. 1124), as well as the quest for glory in war (von Geffcken, p. 113, in his day interpreting in a positive sense) and revenge for earlier Persian plunder and conquests. The latter factor was emphasized already by the contemporary, Libanios (*Or*. XII.70; *Letter* 1343.1; see, in addition, Seager, 1998, p. 290). In any event, Julian consciously practiced an aggressive policy in order to expose what in his view had been his predecessor's weak rule. He was resuming the campaigns of the 2nd-century emperors (Trajan, Lucius Verus, Septimus Severus), and he rejected the successive peace proposals of Šāpuhr II, which are mentioned by Libanios (*Or*. XII.76; XVIII.164; XVII.19). In his overestimation of Roman military capability he may have rejected offers by friendly nations to fight alongside Rome (Amm., 23.2.1; Wirth, p. 463, disagrees). An indicative light is cast on the emperor's position by the panegyrist who praises him for holding council with gods and not with generals or officers (Lib., *Or*. XII.83; see also Wiemer, p. 234). In retrospect it is understandable that the pagan authors did not want to make Julian responsible for the disastrous war. According to Ammianus it was Constantine the Great who had ignited Persian bellicosity (25.4.23; see also Warmington); Libanios's judgement was similar (see Seager, 1998, p. 298). Julian's statement that he started wars "after having weighed all circumstances" were tendentious words put in his mouth by Ammianus (25.3.17: *examinatis rationibus*). On the other hand, the losses sustained by the Sasanians in 298, which they had been trying to rectify ever since, remain unmentioned in the context of the war started by Julian. A. Marcone (pp. 334-35) attempted to locate the war within the larger space of the centuries-long conflict between the Persian empire and Rome.

It is hard to establish what military and political aims the emperor asssociated with the expedition, since there are no clear statements by him (Julian, *Letter* 98; the last preserved document dates from March 363); it remains uncertain to what extent Amm., 23.5.19 and 24.3.4 correctly reflect Julian's intentions. If we trust Ammianus (22.12.1-2), Julian's goals for the campaign were revenge for the decades of Sasanian destruction of Rome's East as well as the

enhancement of his fame as a general. However, the ancient writers could have suppressed information (see Wirth, p. 461, and Szidat, pp. 1030-32). Among modern authors, G. Wirth in particular has emphasized that the goal could not have been the conquest of the entire Sasanian empire and its occupation for an extended period (p. 459; in Wirth's vein already Seeck, 1922, pp. 341-42; now also Klein, p. 290, and Seager, 1997, p. 266). The more problematic question is whether, at the time, both sides already felt that they were dependent on each other (thus, in any event, Wirth, pp. 459-60). On the other hand, Wirth is the most adamant voice disputing that Julian initiated his campaign with a clear goal and a realistic plan in order to resolve emerging problems (see, e.g., Matthews, pp. 159-60; supported by Paschoud, 1979, p. xxii, and 1980, pp. 111-12). The idea that Alexander the Great was the model for Julian's campaign (see, e.g. Bowersock, p. 106; Szidat, pp. 1029-30, referring to Libanios, *Or*. XVIII; and Lomas Salmonte with reference to Julian's *Caesares*) may have already suggested itself to contemporaries. But that would have indicated, rather, the gap between illusion—namely, conquest of the entire Sasanian empire, which Seager (1997, p. 263) assumed to have been the goal: in *Or*. XVIII.18.261 Libanios speaks indeed of an expedition to the Indus river—and reality, thus showing a considerable lack of realism in the 32-year-old emperor. According to Socrates' assertion (*Historia ecclesiastica* 3.21), Julian considered himself a reincarnation of the Macedonian (see Marcone, pp. 343-44; Socrates' statement is also emphasized by Straub, p. 165). However, such an aspiration is contradicted by some reports—mentioned already by O. Seeck (1922, pp. 341-42) and Marcone (pp. 344-45)—for example, that Tarsus was planned as quarters for the winter 363/364 (23.2.5; see also 24.1.1), unless the public was to be intentionally misled about the emperor's intentions (this also according to Wirth, p. 483, and Seager, 1997, p. 263). Many researchers interpret the expedition as a punitive campaign, similar to those in Germania (see, e.g., Andreotti, pp. 247-48; Gigli; and Marcone, p. 345), which was probably intended to culminate in the taking of Ctesiphon; that city, in fact, had been the goal of many Roman offensives in the 2nd century CE (Barnes, 1998, pp. 164-65, disagrees).

Julian's political goals remain unclear, since it is incomprehensible that the Sasanian prince Hormisdas, who had spent decades in Roman exile, could have replaced Šāpuhr II at the height of his military successes (see Amm., 24.2.11 and Zos., 3.18.1). Such an idea would be another indication of the illusions under which Julian lived at the time (see Wirth, p. 472, and Matthews, p. 139), even if Libanios does present this as Julian's goal in *Letter* 1402.3 (cf.

Scholl, p. 136). Modern authors occasionally emphasize that, after the defeat of the Sasanians (which he believed to be a certainty and which would have been proof of the support of Roman gods of his deeds), he wanted to reinvigorate the slowed pagan *renovatio* of the state and gain support for actions planned against the Christians (thus Marcone, pp. 341-42; see also Benedetti Martig, p. 37).

Libanios and Ammianus (23.2) provide some information on tactics envisaged for the campaign. The emperor wanted to advance in a pincer movement and surprise the Sasanian ruler. He ordered Procopius and Sebastianus to the Tigris so that, as Ammianus put it, "no unexpected attack could develop on the unprotected flank" (23.2.5; cf. Wiemer, p. 264, referring to Lib., *Or*. XVIII.214, and Selem, 1979, p. 38). According to Julian's plan they were to tie down Šāpuhr in northern Mesopotamia in order to allow Julian himself to advance quickly and unopposed southward along the Euphrates (this also according to Matthews, p. 138). Julian did not draw anyone into his planning except the Armenian King Arsaces, who was to assemble a contingent (Amm., 23.2.2). His own forces, together with Procopius and Sebastianus, were to form a second army group, which was to join up with Julian in Assyria (Selem, 1979, differs) after passing through Corduena, Moxoena, and Chiliocomum (in Media: Amm., 23.2.5; the location remains unknown). Many modern authors praise these strategic thoughts and plans (e.g., Bidez, p. 289, who speaks of an extremely careful preparation; Andreotti, p. 238; and Dillemann, p. 120). R. T. Ridley (pp. 318 and 326) and W. E. Kaegi evaluate very positively the secrecy, deception of the opponent in the choice of route, and speed of movement that made up Julian's strategy (according to Kaegi, with reference to literary works). However, the strategic preparations could not help but be inadequate (according to Wirth and recently Hunt, p. 75), for example, in regard to communications and the supply problems (cf. Paschoud, 1980, p. 112). It seems that no information was available or acquired on the difficulty of crossing the area between the Euphrates and Tigris near the famous Royal Canal, Naharmalcha (Aram. Nahar Malkā; see Paschoud, 1978, p. 112), which linked the two rivers, nor on the climatic conditions to be encountered in southern Mesopotamia during the summer (see Kaegi, 1991, pp. 587-91).

The tactics of the opposing side likewise should be noted: even if Šāpuhr II had been deceived about the Romans' plans for a time by Arsaces' actions (see Amm., 25.7.12), he must have been soon informed by scouts about the advance of the main army along the Euphrates. Šāpuhr's tactics have been rightly

emphasized by Paschoud (1979, pp. xix-xxi; appreciated already in Reinhardt, 1892, pp. 31, 45). In his desire to avoid a full-scale field battle, he let the Roman troops advance deep into Persian territory, even accepting the destruction of cities and fortresses. Even more effective, after the Romans declined to take Ctesiphon, was the ruse of luring the Roman army into the interior of the country, and finally the scorched-earth policy, which must have completely surprised Julian (see Paschoud, 1979, p. xxii, n. 1). Not until they were moving north along the Tigris did Julian and his starving troops become involved in continuous battles. One has to agree with Paschoud (1979, p. xxiv) that the Roman defeat was the logical outcome of a campaign that was in every way poorly executed.

The course of the campaign. Julian's campaign has been treated in detail in the commentaries on Ammianus by J. Fontaine (1977) and J. den Boeft et al. (1998 and 2002), by Paschoud (1979), and already by G. Reinhardt (1892), even if his view of the sources is no longer valid (see, most recently, Matthews, pp. 130-79); a good review of sources is presented by Ridley (pp. 327-29). The route of the campaign has been retraced by B. von Borries (pp. 58-63) and Seeck (1919, pp. 212-13). The first part of the campaign up to Hierapolis has been described in detail by F. Cumont, and the entire advance along the Euphrates by A. Musil; however, many of his identifications have met with skepticism among researchers. In addition, the dissertations by M. F. A. Brok and B. Bliembach are useful. See also maps 2 and 3 in Paschoud (1979), as well as the author's atlas map in the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (B VI 4, Wiesbaden, 1984) with the special map "Der Feldzug Iulians gegen die Sāsāniden (363)." The campaign cannot be described here in full detail.

Julian started out from Antiocheia on 5 March 363 (Amm., 23.2.6) with 80,000-90,000 men (Bowersock, 1978, p. 108) in his campaign against the Sasanians, finding little approval even among his supporters (see Scholl, pp. 134-44, esp. p. 140, and Wiemer, pp. 68, 164, 178-81 regarding Libanios's position), who pointed to the unfavorable omens (thus Julian, insofar as he disregarded them, could be correctly labeled "impious" by M. Meulder). The advance to Hierapolis, where the troops were to be assembled, was described by Julian himself in his letter 98 (ed. Bidez and Cumont) to Libanios. The march via Batnai (Amm., 23.2.7) to Karrhai (Amm., 23.3.1) has been interpreted (see above) as a feint (see Amm., 23.3.6), since Julian undoubtedly wanted to move south along the Euphrates. In Karrhai he dispatched a part of the army (ancient sources variably estimate its size between 16,000 and

30,000) under Procopius and Sebastianus to the upper Tigris (see above). The emperor himself with 65,000 men (if Zos., 3.13.2 is correct; cf. Marcone, p. 347, n. 46, and Ridley, p. 319) advanced south along the Baliḵ. In Kallinikum (today Raqqa) the fleet joined the army—1,100 vessels, according to Ammianus (23.3.9, where the individual types of ships are listed; Magnus in John Malalas differs, p. 329.15 = Paschoud, 1979, p. 242, n. 4; and also Zos., 3.13.2, who has, moreover, an incorrect indication of the meeting location). The army then advanced along the left bank of the Euphrates and on 1 April reached Kirkesion (Amm., 23.5.1), the border fortress at the confluence of the Euphrates and Ḵābur rivers; the latter was crossed by means of ships formed into a bridge, which was then dismantled (see Bowersock, 1978, p. 110). The fortress Anatha on a Euphrates river island is the first settled place encountered on enemy territory. The inhabitants surrender (Amm., 24.1.6-10; Zos., 3.14.2-4). The army moves past Thilutha (Amm., 24.2.1-2) and Achaiachala (Amm., 24.2.2) to Baraxmalcha, where a part of the troops crosses over, and Diacira, abandoned by its citizens, which is destroyed (Amm., 24.2.3). The army then advances to the city of Ozogardana (Amm., 24.2.3; Zos., 3.15.3: Zaragardia), which is also found to be deserted. This city too is destroyed. Here the Romans meet an enemy detachment for the first time (Amm., 24.2.4) and defeat it. South of Macepracta (Amm., 24.2.6) the army faces the Royal Canal (Nahar Malkā), which linked the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Two days later, Pirisabora (MPers. Pērōz-Šāpūr), located south of the canal, is taken and destroyed (Amm., 24.2.9-22; Zos., 3.17.3-18.6). Information offered by Ammianus and Zosimos now diverges more (which recently, in turn, prompted Fornara to back away from the *communis opinio*); as a result, no generally accepted reconstruction of the army's route has been developed (cf. Paschoud, 1978, with map, p. 349, and, on the other hand, Matthews, pp. 148-55, with map, p. 150). Julian used the Royal Canal to move the fleet, so that it could reach the Tigris in the most direct way. The army moved southeast with great hardship and losses (Amm., 24.3.1; Zos., 3.19.1). After the passage through Phissenia (only in Zos., 3.19.3), the situation became even more difficult, as the enemy removed the dams and diverted water from the Royal Canal to flood the land (Amm., 24.3.10-11; Zos., 3.19.3-4). The next city, Bithra (probably a misspelling of Aram. Birtha "fortress"), like Phissenia, cannot be located but must have been (with Bowersock, 1978, p. 112 and Paschoud, 1979, p. 142) near the Royal Canal. Maiozamalcha was taken after a battle of several days by digging a passage under the wall, which made it possible to invade the city; the city was destroyed and almost all inhabitants killed (Amm., 24.4.2-31; Zos., 3.20.2-22.7; cf. Lib., *Or*. XVIII.235-42 and comm. Paschoud, 1979, pp.

144-55, and Bliembach, pp. 165-74). The advance to Seleukeia led through Meinas Sabatha (this according to Zos., 3.23.3; cf. Ridley, pp. 320-21, and Paschoud, 1979, pp. 156-63 on the numerous source-related and geographical problems). Julian ordered the clearing of the so-called Trajan's Canal (in Amm., 24.6.1 mistakenly identified as the Royal Canal) in order to create a path for the fleet to the Tigris above the capital. There the army succeeded in crossing the Tigris (see Ridley, p. 321, and Paschoud, 1979, p. 169), even though Persian troops on the opposite bank attempted to prevent them (Amm., 24.6.4-6; Zos., 3.25). In the next battle, before the gates of Ctesiphon, the Roman troops were again victorious (Amm., 24.6.8-16; on the number of casualties, see Paschoud, 1979, pp. 179-80).

A turning point of the campaign was the significant decision not to besiege the capital, which was certainly better fortified than in the 2nd century, when Trajan captured it, but to pass by (Amm., 24.7.1). Ammianus indicates that the reason was fear of a two-front war, since the king's armies were believed to be near (see Bowersock, 1978, pp. 114-15). Libanios mentions an emissary from the Sasanian ruler (*Or*. XVIII.257-59) who was, however, refused by Julian for reasons unknown (see Paschoud, 1979, p. 181, and Bliembach, pp.190-94). Since the Roman troops had to move upstream after declining to besiege Ctesiphon, it was entirely logical to destroy the fleet by burning it, so that it would not fall into the hands of the enemy (Amm., 24.7.4 in problematic context; with good explanation by Paschoud, 1979, pp. 185-86; Austin differs; cf. Brok, p. 162). But it seems that Julian was deceived by deserters, if statements by Gregory of Nazianus and Ephraem are correct (thus with Bowersock, 1978, pp. 114-15; cf. Paschoud, 1979, pp. 182-84; Ridley, p. 322 differs). Julian's decision appears to have met with resistance in the army (see Marcone, pp. 350-51). The goals now being pursued are again unclear (in part due to the gap in Amm., 24.7.2). Julian was possibly still hoping for the arrival of the detachment which he had ordered to the Tigris in mid-March (see Hunt, p. 75), so that together with them he could defeat Šāpuhr II in an open battle (thus, e.g., Brok, p. 160). After several days near Ctesiphon the Roman army marched into the country's interior (Magnus in Malalas, p. 331.7 = Paschoud, 1979, p. 244, no. 10; also Paschoud, 1979, p. 187). The river Douros (Diyālā) was crossed at Noorda (only in Zos., 3.26.3). This was not the first place (as Zosimos stated) where the enemy had burned the grass and wheat in the fields (cf. Amm., 24.7.7); however, the scorched-earth policy and the summer heat must have moved the Romans not to advance further but to seek a route to the Tigris in order to follow it upstream into the Corduena region (cf. Amm.,

24.8.4-5). Zosimos does not say that the Roman army at this point, at the latest, was in retreat (cf. Paschoud, 1979, p. 190, who correctly sees such a change of direction marked in Ammianus's account by the transition from book 24 to book 25).

The death of Julian. Only at this stage do Šāpuhr's troops appear and engage the Roman army in constant skirmishes (Amm., 25.1.1). The subsequent stopping points along the route of approximately 120-130 km (according to Paschoud, 1979, p. 193) up to the spot where Julian fell in battle are mentioned by Ammianus (25.1.3-11) and Zosimos (3.27.1-28.3); the latter gives many more toponyms (see Paschoud, 1979, pp. 194-99; in general, Ridley, pp. 324-25). A place named Toummara is mentioned in Zos. (3.28.3); on 26 June 363, fighting erupted north of there, and the emperor was hit by a spear and wounded; a few hours later he died from the injury (Zos., 3.29.1). Gregory of Nazianzus asserted just a few years later that the emperor wanted to jump into the Tigris to create the impression that he had become a god (*Or*. 5.14; cf. Paschoud, 1979, p. 202; Wirth, p. 490, also suspects a sought-after death in battle).

The number and variety of ancient voices with regard to the circumstances of the emperor's death, and the perpetrator's identity, is great. Ammianus (25.3.6) leaves it unclear as to where the spear came from that hit the emperor, but he too knows of the rumor (25.6.6) that the emperor was killed from the Roman side (see Paschoud, 1979, pp. 203-4). Gregory of Nazianzus names (*Or*. 5.13) as many as four variants (cf. Conduché, p. 357, and Büttner-Wobst, pp. 28-29). Libanios still states in *Monodia* that the emperor was killed by a Persian (*Or*. XVII.32), but in *Epitaphios* he already knows of murder from the emperor's own ranks; finally, Libanios in *Oratio* XXIV.6.18, accuses a Christian member of the army of having killed the emperor. Among the 5th-century church historians only Philostorgios (p. 101) assigned responsibility to the opponent's side and has a Saracen in Sasanian employ commit the deed; that is also the conclusion of modern research (see Bowersock, 1978, p. 117). The prejudiced statements of later Christian authors have been carefully collected by Büttner-Wobst. He rightly emphasizes that the news about the circumstances of the death were more and more embellished with details as time passed (the exception: Zonaras, who based himself on older sources). The Byzantine authors (up into the 14th century) have been reproduced with even more detail by Reinhardt (1891; see also Nostitz-Rieneck). The Christians saw the death as God's punishment. Ephraem saw the emperor's death as the final triumph of Christianity; so did Socrates, Sozomenos, and Theodoret of

Kyrrhos, the authors of church histories in the 5th century CE. The pagans (such as Eunapios) interpreted the emperor's death as the beginning of a crisis for the empire, which was now left without the protection of the gods. Hahn justifiably speaks of an "ideological conflict" which was set off by Julian's death (see also Baynes, and Selem, 1973, pp. 1121-22).

When one considers the prejudice of the sources, it is not surprising that the pagan authors described Julian as victorious to the end. Eutropius speaks (*Breviarium* 10.16.2) of the return of the victorious Julian. The other authors intentionally avoid the word "retreat" in describing the route covered by the Roman army from June 16 to the time of the emperor's death. According to Zosimos (3.29.1, probably based on Eunapios) Julian had, at the time of his death, "brought the Persian empire to nearly complete destruction," as if Julian had been murdered at the moment of triumph, with the Sasanians about to surrender; Libanios says the same (cf. Seager, 1998, p. 291; there are good observations on Libanios's subsequent judgement of the Persian war in Wiemer, pp. 249-50 and 258). Disinformation by these authors results in a retreat of the Roman army being mentioned only after the emperor's death (see JOVIAN).

The Sasanian rock relief of Ṭāq-e Bostān recorded, as Trümpelmann verified, the triumph of Šāpuhr II over the Roman emperor (cf. also the interpretation by M. Azarnoush, pp. 328-29). Nicholson sees in the depiction of the god Mithras a subtle irony for Western observers who knew of the dead emperor's veneration of that god. G. Azarpay thinks that Mithras was intentionally included in this relief as the Iranian "god of the treaty" (Azarpay, p. 186) concluded between the two parties. The triumph over Julian is also possibly recorded on an intaglio now at the British Museum (see MacDonald).

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