

Moses life rewritten in New Testament and in Sucevita monastery picture

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Abstract:

The prophet Moses represents for Christians a religious leader, his life been re-written in New Testament from Luke's writing and St. Paul epistles. From Stephen's archdeacon apology it's a life's Moses known periodization, detailed later and better by Hebrews Epistle. 2 Corinthians epistle reveal antithetically the face of the seer from Sinai with the glory of Christians which are called to see the reality of heaven kingdom. His face became an inspirational source from Christian arts.

The mortuary chamber of Sucevita monastery, in the 40 pictures scenes reveal the life cycle of Moses, give a moralizing and Christian sense, using Holy Bible's information and apocryphal writings. Inside the church, which is surrounded by a fortified site, we find many biblical and extra-biblical scenes painted in the miniature style of the books, employing the 16th and 17th century decoration style of biblical manuscripts. The religious leader of Israel helped by God, become the prototype of Christian theocrat from XVIth century. In this manner, the picture becomes didactical source through viewing, biblical and liturgical catechesis, but also testimony of deceased founder's good name.

Keywords: *Moses, Prophet, people, Luke's writing, Sucevita monastery*

1. Preliminaries

Moses was a man of universal vocation, if we consider what course the overwhelming influence on the world has yet divine law with permanent destination given by him. Moses knew, in a sublime way, to bring to the service of his own people all the good spiritual accumulations of the school of time.

By Moses, Israel as a nation, was formed and organized in the most happy of time, receiving holy law, which will then inspire countless Christian peoples.

Moses is the dominant personality in the first part of the history of biblical people, specifically from its exit from Egyptian bondage and the entry into the Promised Land, the instruction given through Moses put his imprint on almost all books of the Old Testament.

The merit of Moses is not only to have formed Israel as a people of the 12 descendant tribes of the twelve sons of Jacob, but first of all is to share this faith with one God. He did it as a prophet of God, because in this capacity he also discovered the true name of God. The Old Testament portrays him as an entirely different person “a heroic leader of the people and a man of God who brought Israel into a special relationship with God” (Semen 1996: 26).

2. Moses Life in Luke’s writing

a. In Gospel of Luke

The historical event of the Savior's Transfiguration is reported in the synoptic gospels (Mt. 17: 1-9, Mk. 9: 1-9 and Lk. 9: 28-37), on the right side of Jesus being the prophet Moses (Lk. 9: 30.33). The mode of re-knowledge of the prophet-legislator is not indicated to us. Christian art presents him holding the tables of the law, with his illuminated face. The Orthodox Iconography insists on the participatory aspect, the light that surrounds the Savior by covering altogether other modes of light.

A special place in the Gospel of Luke is the Lk. 16: 29.31 parable, where Abraham urges the ruthless brothers to “obey” Moses and the prophets. In Lk. 20: 28 we have the nomination of the Prophet Moses, who “wrote” for us (Διδάσκαλε, Μωϋσῆς ἔγραψεν ἡμῖν) about the levy marriage. Luke 20: 28 is a summary of the text Deut. 25: 5.

Here, the Sadducees question, highlights the legal prescription, of a national nature, whereby the land must not be alienated to another tribe, and the obligation of second-degree relatives to “raise” the survivors of the deceased.

The second text of chapter 20, brought as argument by the Savior that Moses is wrongly interpreted by the scribes of his time, is found at Lk. 20: 37, where it is stated: ‘But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’// Μωϋσῆς

ἐμήνυσεν ἐπὶ τῆς βάτου, ὡς λέγει, Κύριον τὸν θεὸν Ἀβραάμ καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἰσαὰκ καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἰακώβ, quoting Exodus 3.6. The idea is also supposed in the hermeneutical appeal to Exodus 3: 2.6 in Mk. 12: 26; Mt. 22: 32; and Acts 3: 13. The conclusion is that, as we must suppose the resurrection of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from the dead, so this event is also possible for their children. The same formula reiterated in Acts 3: 13 emphasizes that the God of Israel glorified Jesus, who becomes the master of life, so that if the Jews deny Christ, he denies their own God (Lachs 1980-1981: 232).

b. In Acts

In the Apostle Peter's speech from Solomon's Porch, presented in Acts 3: 22-23 by the deuteronomic quotation (Dupont 1953: 317), following the apologetic method of the presentation of Christ the Risen One as Moses prophet (Deut 18:15), they prolong the prophecy also with v. 19 pointing out that 'Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.' The LXX text speaks of "the man who will not obey", (Waard 1965: 45) while the Apostles extend the area of obedience to "anyone" adding the phrase ἐξολεθρευθήσεται ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ / be completely cut off from their people".

The repetition of the word "prophet" emphasizes the quality of Jesus the Risen that is like Moses. From these verses, the Apostles believe that those who believe in Moses must obey Jesus. The identification of Jesus with the Prophet Moses predicted will be restored to Acts 7: 37.

The longest speech in Acts is that of St. Stephen, making a foray into the history of Israel, by scoring five basic elements: the relationship between God and Abraham, Abraham and the patriarchs, the story of Joseph, the promises fulfilled at time by Moses and the presence tabernacle as evidence of the relationship with God (Soards 1993:59).

Starting with Acts 7: 18, Moses' life is exposed by quotes from the Exodus, interleaved in midrash summaries. We have in Acts 7:18 a full text, without introductory formula, with a small difference, from LXX from Exodus 1: 8: 'Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.'

The intention of St. Luke, when through St. Stephen's mouth, presents this section of the history of the people of Israel is to render the

authority of the holy books that make up the Torah, going from Genesis to Exodus (Keesmaat 1999: 46). And here comes the special interest of St. Luke to relate the history of mankind as a continuous exodus. Here we have a rhetorical way of going beyond a meaningless time for the thread of the narrative that St. Luke deliberately uses to resume the event and person's as paradigm in another speech (Standaert 1985: 323-324). This is the case of Paul's discourse in Antioch of Pisidia, when he does not read the account of Moses (made by the deacon Stephen in chapter 7), but points directly King David's time.

In St. Stephen's speech, the remembrance of Israel's history continues with the account of the killing of an Egyptian by Moses and his wandering in Midian (Boismard 1981:185).

The chapter reflects some accounts present in the Jewish Middle Ages of Hellenistic origin. Generally, the parallel made by Philo in Alexandria in *De Vita Moses* are very similar to those in the Acts of the Apostles (Kilgallen 1976:11-18). Like Philo, in Luke-Acts the killing of the Egyptian is considered a necessary description (Philo 2003 :73) to illustrate the liberation that will become the important mission of Moses, especially from 3rd chapter of Exodus book (Chirilă 2002: 72).

Midrash interpretation (France 1983: 159-161) of Acts of this murder is subjective reason - thought his action was not understood (Acts 7: 25) (Childs 1974: 33-36).

The understanding of this grand old-timer theme is that Moses, out of a national pride, has made this solution. The text quoted in Acts 7:27 accurately tracks the text of Exodus 2: 14 of the Septuagint: "But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us?'" The text in Acts demonstrates a great example of disobedience that followed the course of the history of the chosen people. The example of disobedience culminates in the removal of Jesus, the Right (v. 52), which had been foretold in Deut. 18. In Acts Moses' attitude is describes as a conciliatory one, awaiting conciliation from its co-nationals (συνήλλασσεν).

Saint Archdeacon Stephen alludes to the text of Ex. 3: 2, telling the way Moses receives the revelation of becoming the ruler of the Jewish people through the flame of the unburned bush. The mission to which he is called is the removal of Jews from Egyptian captivity.

The editorial work of St. Luke is highlighted in Acts 7: 23.30.36 and 42 where Moses lives in cycles of forty years.

The first mention of the number of forty must be related to Moses' thought of looking after his brethren (v.23). The second mention is in Acts 7:30 where the angel shows him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai in the flame of the fired bush. The next mention of the forty is related to the exodus of Egypt, the passage through the Red Sea, and wandering through the wilderness. The last mention of the forty years refers to bringing sacrifices to God while traveling through the wilderness (Unite 1985: 744).

The editorial work of St. Luke is highlighted in the text of Acts 7: 32-35 where four verses from the Exodus are interwoven. Thus, the order is Exodus 3: 6 followed by Exodus 3: 5 and Exodus 3: 7 (Melnicuic-Puică 2005: 166-172) and returning to Exodus 2: 4:

'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.' "Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.' 35 "This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush.'

Here, as in Acts 7: 38, there is the presence of the angel who mediates God's revelation to man. From these verses it appears that God declines his identity by naming the land of Sinai the holy ground and expressing the purpose of His revelation: 'I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free.' Moses is also sent to Egypt, his brothers not recognize him as a leader.

To make himself understood in his apology, St. Stephen concludes that God had sent Moses and redeemer and lord (Boismard 1981:189).

From Exodus 3: 6 Luke cites only the first part of the verse; Exodus 3: 5 is quoted by approximation, transforming the preposition ἐν into the preposition ἐφ.

From Exodus 3: 7 Luke replaces τῆς κραυγῆς with τοῦ στεναγμοῦ, the verbal forma of ἀκούω ranging from imperfect to past perfect tense. The verb ἐξέλθαι = exit is inserted into the Lucan account. Again, the

adverb δεῦρο appears as a divine imperative for the application of God's commandments.

In Acts 7:35 Moses is called lord and redeemer, preparing abrupt transition over the history of Israel to Jesus Christ.

Like Peter, the Apostle, St. Stephen resumes the text of Deut. 18:15 which emphasizes Moses' consciousness that God will raise another prophet like him. The ἀναστήσει verb can be translated either "raise" or by "resurrect".

Through the ἀναστήσει verb, the typological side of Moses as precursor of Christ is emphasized (Bovon 1978: 23), as well as the eschatological character of prophecy. The text of Luke in Acts 7:37 reproduces the LXX text identically, specifying the speaker (Melniciuc-Puică 2005: 158-173).

3. Moses in Corinthians correspondence

1 Cor. 11

Typological character of the Old Testament is that events, objects, creatures and people of the Old Testament, in addition to their own meaning, foreshadows another reality superior. Typology is not an exegesis of biblical texts, but it is a theological interpretation of the facts described in the Old Testament. This interpretation is not independent of the literal sense, but these two meanings are interdependent. Type is a sign, a mask, an image (Acts 7:43), a model (Acts 7:44), is an example.

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." 8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. 11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. (1 Cor. 10:1-11 NIV)

The Israelites, according to 1 Cor. 10: 1-11, coming out of Egypt, all of them were full of God's loving help in their wandering way through the wilderness from Sinai to Kadesh; all were shaded by the pillar of the cloud during the day, and were illuminated by the pillar of fire during the night (Exodus 13: 21); they all went ashore through the Red Sea (Exodus 14: 22); they all ate manna from heaven (Exodus 16) and they all drank water (Exodus 17: 16, Numbers 20: 2-11) miraculously springing out of the stone.

The epithet "spiritual" can be interpreted in two ways: either in the typical sense, if one considers offering material as foreshadowing a gift next higher or supernatural meaning, that these gifts were products immediate creative force of the Holy Spirit. Both interpretations can be admitted. Passing from type to antitype Apostle shows that Christ was the guiding angel of Israel and stone spiritual from which all gotten wonderful drink. However, only two men, Joshua and Caleb were worthy to see the land of promise, only they received the promised promise (Mihoc 1976: 278). Others of their generation fell in the wilderness for their evil deeds. The practical consequence highlighted by the Apostle Paul is as follows: The Savior Jesus Christ was present in the midst of the Israelites in the wilderness, and yet they perished for their sins. Christians not to be deceived, that if they do the works of this people will not escape the fate of sad.

1 Corinthians 11:7 reminds golden calf in the wilderness (Exodus 32: 1-4), whom they worshiped with sacrifice dancing and dining sacrifice (Exodus 32: 5-6). At Setim Israelites worship the god Baal Peor with sacrifices and acts of fornication (Num. 25: 1-9). Rebellion against God is punished by venomous snakes (Num. 21: 6).

2 Cor. 3: 7-16

The Pauline writings and the other New Testament epistles express the image of the Prophet Moses from an antithetic perspective, emphasizing the superiority of the following Christ as compared to the servants of the written word "on the stone" (II Corinthians 3: 3.7). The Pauline Interpretation of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the references of 2 Timothy 3: 8 and Hebrews (3: 1-6; 11:23-30; 12:18-21)

and the one in the Jude Epistle (v.9) fructify the rabbinic and Jewish traditions about Moses' personality (Propp 1987: 375-386).

The Scriptural fragment in Exodus 24: 1-11 clearly states the superiority of the vision of hearing, the proximity relative to the divine, and the ritual of reading the words of the Book of the Covenant of the people. Looking Synoptically, Exodus 20: 18-21 where we have the people's refusal to hear Yahve, with the account of Exodus 24: 1-11, we notice the obvious superiority of the vision of hearing. Yahve can be seen directly even if only by a few elected. The divine word will be transmitted primarily through Moses' voice.

In Numbers 12: 8, Moses is the one who has the opportunity to see Yahve face to face, which shows his unique status (Childs 1974: 609). Here we see both the visual and the auditory brought together: "He speaks with his mouth to his mouth, to show and to do, and not in guesses, and he sees the face of the Lord" - but the visual is that which makes Moses relate to Yahweh in a unique way.

The Pauline argument is built around the revealing experience of Moses (Melniciuc-Puică 2014: 88) on Mount Sinai (LXX Exodus 34: 29-35):

‘When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. 30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. 32 Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. 34 But whenever he entered the Lord’s presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35 they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord.’

St. Paul defend oneself by his opponents using the argument that their authority has roots in the revelation of God revealed to Moses but that it is deprived of the Spirit (Fitzmyer 1981: 636). So Paul claims that his revealing experience is completely different from that received by Moses when he received the Law, because his experience is in the Spirit. There is now the second argument outlined in 2 Corinthians 3: 14-18, which is built on the same traditional revealing experience, but with a

difference in emphasis. Here the Apostle Paul is concerned about the result of the veil coverage of Moses' face, and the consequences of the Israeli response to this veil in the eyes of the "Lord's glory" τὴν δόξαν κυρίου.

The experience of returning to God, as evidenced by the Sacred Scripture, gives Moses the example: whenever Moses turned his face to God, he lifted up his veil (Jeremias 1993: 859-861). The brightness of Moses' face blinded the Israelites, so he put a veil on his face when he came to speak to them. Paul develops the experience of the "veil" for contemporaries of the Jew, for the veil in fact prevents them from understanding the true meaning of the times when the Torah is read in the synagogue. Paul argues that the veil remains when the "old covenant" is read (ἀναγνώσει της παλαιας διαθήκης - v.14 cf Acts 13: 15, 1 Timothy 4:13) and can only be removed by Christ. St. Paul firmly maintains that the veil remains over the minds and knowledge of the Jews when Moses is read (ἀναγινώσκηαι) (Hafemann 1992: 31ff; Baker 2000: 1-15). The consensus of the commentators indicates that the Apostle Paul refers to the written form (cf. Romans 10: 5.19) of the Sinai covenant. In this context, this interpretation indicates that in Sinai Moses looked at the image of God, and that it prefigures reality in eschatological life, when all people will participate in this experience (Thrall 1994: 241).

4. Moses life in Hebrews Epistle

In two stances Moses is present in Hebrew Epistle: in Heb. 3: 5-11.17-19 and Heb. 11: 23-29.

In Heb. 3: 9-11 quoting Psalm 94: 8-12, St. Paul portrays God with respect to the attitudes of the Jewish people, who, while living God's guidance for forty years, did not become faithful to the Lord (Johnson 2006: 299). Man forgets the good offered and looks at revenge for the attempts he has received. The Jews tempted God, constantly demanding confirmation of their fidelity to them, but they did not learn that faithfulness raises faithfulness, as love demands love. When the trials, as parental pedagogy, turned against them, the Jews forgot the good received for a long time and rebelled. We learn from the apostolic fragment to evaluate the present through the perspective of history, to react today

without forgetting what we received yesterday and to be loyal to the One who was faithful to us until death.

In Heb.3: 5 Moses is named slave (θεράπων) in contrast with Christ who is son of the house (υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ) of God.

The second stance from Hebrew Epistle is chapter 11, when the apostolic writer underline the faithfulness of Moses, beginning with his birth unto the miraculous cross of Red Sea. The depiction in words affirm all his life under faith action:

‘By faith (Πίστει - as feminine noun in dative singular) Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.’ (v. 24) , He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt [...] By faith he kept the Passover [...] By faith the people passed through the Red Sea...’ (vv. 25-29).

The son of Jochebed and Amram, named Moses, was hid against Pharaoh rule three months. In Hebrews Epistle author view this as a faith act, under God protection. Also, the rejection of a privileged position by Moses, and chose to be part of the people of God, suffering with his people is the effect of faith. Even Exodus 2 remember the fury of Egyptians against his murder, Hebrews Epistle interpretation change this flee into a faith act, culminating with the passage through the Red Sea.

5. Moses Pictural cycle in Sucevita Monastery

Since 1585 the Sucevita monastery became in Romania, from Moldavia region, a masterpiece of Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Gheorghe Movilă and his brother Jeremia Movila, build this fortress as family necropolis (Dumitrescu 2001: 231). The monastery Sucevița was adorned with two porches, with interior and exterior painting in fresco, executed by Ioan Zugravul and his brother Sofronie, after 1595. Joining elements of Byzantine and Gothic architecture, Sucevița monastery keeps the trilobate plane in Moldavian architectural line founded by Stephen the Great. The painting inside the church is compartmented in scenes similar to the miniatures from that epoch books (Cincheza-Buculei 2002: 89), and the exterior presents on the green background ample scenes from the Byzantine iconographic tradition. Between the central nave of Resurrection church and internal porch is located the mortual chamber, painted with 40 sequences from Moses life (Costea 1995: 73).

Each picture have on top an inscription, who resume and identified the hieratical fragment (Costea 2007: 33). In first inscription from tomb chamber it is written: “When King Pharaoh wanted to destroy the Israelites, he commanded all his people”.

Although the inscription above the women indicates the name of Zipporah, the one on the throne has the characteristics of the Pharaoh from the images below; so we indicate the scene as a ban on helping midwives to support Jewish women. The Pharaoh's command makes a textual reference to Exodus 1:22, although it illustrates the verse in Exodus 1:15-16.

In second picture on top it read: “Here (is) the birth of Moses”, alluding to Exodus 2: 1-2 or Acts 7: 20 and Hebrews 11: 23.

Third picture from tomb chamber have the inscription: “Moses babe, sitting in the basket, on the edge of the river”, in resume of Exodus 2: 3-4.

On forth picture it written the inscription: “Here Moses babe found by the daughter of the pharaoh”.

In fifth scene is written the inscription: “Here the child is / is entrusted to his / her nurse / mother”, as resume of Exodus 2: 7-9.

In six picture scene are the inscription: “Here Pharaoh held Moses to his bosom and [he] took him by his beard, and [Pharaoh] was angry and gave his candle into his hand and put it in his mouth and it was a rumor” is an interpolation at Exodus 2: 10 (Ciobanu 2014: 5). This midrashic interpretation is attested also in Acts 7:22-23.

The last picture from first cycle of forty years of Moses life write the inscription: “When Moses became great, he went out to his brethren, and knew all his people”, in resume of Exodus 2:11 and Hebrews 11:24.

Next four pictural sequences express the second period of Moses life, according Acts 7: 24-30. The inscriptions in Sucevita chamber mortuary are the following: “Moses fled ...” (Exodus 2: 15// Acts 7:29); “This is where Moses came to the land of Midian when Zipporah also took her from the priest ... found out the daughters shepherd the sheep”; “Moses was laying down the sheep of his father-in-law in the wilderness, in the mountain of God Horeb” (Exodus 3:1) and “Here the angel of God appeared to him in the bush, and said unto him, Take off the shoes of thy feet, for the place where you stand is holy” (Exodus 3:2-5//Acts 7:33).

On next 29 pictures in fresco, 7 images describe the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt, crossing the Red Sea. In Sucevita tomb chamber the painters have mixed the events from the journey through the wilderness, recorded in Exodus and Numbers. The inscription-title written in Slavonic language (Cozmei 2013: 58) resume biblical text about Elim springs, manna and quails from heaven, the Law of God receiving in Sinai, the bronze serpent, the tent covenant made and Joshua with Kaleb explored the Promised Land (Mouriki 1995: 532). The last four pictures of Sucevita chamber tomb resume Numbers 13-32, the end of Moses life, using also Jude Epistle information about Michael Archangel (Melniciuc-Puica 2016: 207) fight with the devil about the body of Moses (v.9).

6. Conclusions

Although he was raised and educated in the house of oppressors, the young Moses proved to have a special sense of justice. In fact, the desire to achieve justice for his brothers was also imposed on public attention.

The first revolt against injustice is felt in his soul when, for the first time in public, “[...] the sons of Israel saw their hard work”, the inequity of Egyptian beating an Israelite. Once upon a time, he saw two Israelites arguing, tried a reconciliation between them, but without success (Exodus 2: 11-13).

Another act of righteousness committed by Moses was fulfilled in Midian when he defended the seven daughters of the priest Jethro.

Staying in exile for 40 years seems a bit too much and gives the reader some sense of mistrust over the one who has played such an important role in liberating a nomadic people with a very sharp sense of freedom. The motivation to extend exile was not family, first of all Moses proves the qualities of a good psychologist and social analyst, and especially political. He realized that the unity of the sons of Israel was not well established.

“Under eastern Orthodox or Catholic influence, the princes and boyars of Moldavia and their families would benefit from the right to be buried in the church as a consequence of patronage” (Crăciun 2005: 161). Any slander brought against the faithful dead, such as the challenge posed by Satan against Israel’ great leader, is seen by Jude as a challenge to God’s honour. The Supreme Judge is present as the one who protects the

good name of the faithful, in life and in death (Melnicuic-Puică 2016: 210). The righteous at least continue to exist post-mortem by means of their good name.

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