

“...old wine into new bottles...” The continuity of the Tradition in the Contemporary Composition Practice of Byzantine Music

It is known that Byzantine Music develops, spreads and evolves in a clearly traditional and therefore conservative field; in the field of the Orthodox Church. Even in this specific traditional atmosphere, creation of new musical compositions is inevitable at times, not mainly for the cover of new functional necessities, but mostly for the renewal of the current musical tradition. It is essentially legitimate and expected for every new composer (even if they act in such a conservative field) to aim to a musical differentiation, trying to bring something new in the Art and therefore perpetuate their reputation in History¹. It is easily recognizable that almost the oeuvre of the majority of the (older or contemporary) Byzantine Music’s composers is characterized by this exact dual (and primary perhaps contradictory) attempt: to adduce a personal composing stigma remaining inside the limits of the formed tradition². Therefore, a more specific musicological examination of occasionally new compositions always creates reasonable questions; the most important of them (keeping in mind that “parthenogenesis” does not actually exist in the Art) is related to the originality of every new melody.

A more systematic study and detailed analysis of such new-contemporary in the present case – church melodies validates the above remarks and reveals further technical details as far as process and methodology of construction are concerned. In the present paper I’ll try to examine this specific phenomenon. As an indicative field of the relevant research I’m going to use two very well-known musical compositions; two contemporary musical books, especially widespread and popular at both the Greek and the international “psaltic reality”: the *Holy Week* composed by Konstantinos Pringos (+ 1964)³ and the *Triodion* composed by Thrasyvoulos Stanitsas (+ 1987)⁴, masterpieces of two leading chanters and composers of the 20th century who coexisted at the lecterns of the Constantinople Ecumenical Patriarchate for twenty years (1939–1959). In the first the adhesion to the previous tradition is more than obvious, while in the second one it appears to be absolutely disguised, although implicitly recognized.

I consider it preferable if you sought the truth of my words through music itself, beginning with the first of the mentioned musical compositions: from the very first musical narration, even more from the specified musicological analysis, it is crystal clear that the previous relevant musical tradition is called back and restated in it; it has to do with the tradition that was already shaped from the 2nd half of the 18th century, through the compositional work of Peter the Peloponnesian, specifically via his contracted “*Doxastarion*”, a musical composition that became popular through wide manuscript tradition and was finally printed in the year of 1820, being one of the first printed books of byzantine music⁵. From the above musical material I randomly choose a composition here, the doxastikon of Good Monday’s Matins servise *Kyrie, erchomenos pros to pathos* [*Κύριε, ἐρχόμενος πρὸς τὸ πάθος*], composed in first plagal mode. I shall try to show, firstly how the specific composition is formed during its primary musical editing from Peter the Peloponnesian (originally written in the so-called old and synoptic Byzantine notation [plate 1 & ex. 1], which was later transcribed and disseminated until today through a version of a relevant analytical notation [plate 2 & ex. 2])⁶, and secondly how the same composition is called back and restated by Konstantinos Pringos [plate 3 & ex. 3]⁷.

¹ Cf. Chaldaeakes 2009.

² Cf. Chaldaeakes 2008.

³ See Pringos 1969; Pringos 2006; about the man cf. Papamanolakes 1996; Hadjigiakoumes 2003: 37-8 (of the submitted leaflet).

⁴ See Stanitsas 1969; about the man cf. Farasoglou 1996; Tsiounes 2000; Tsiounes 2003; Hadjigiakoumes 2003: 39-40 (of the submitted leaflet); Aggelinaras 2009: 173-201, 203-28.

⁵ For the specific work and its manuscripted delivery see Vasileiou 2008: 59-65, 73-8, 82, 83-4, 89, 90, 92, 98, 101, 109, 110-1, 114-5, 118, 124-7, 218-20, 222-33; cf. Apostolopoulos 2006; the printed version that I used here is the edition Peter 1820.

⁶ I receive here the noted through the older synoptic notation version of the specific composition from the codex No. 7 of the Mingana collection of the academic library of Birmingham (ff. 93^v-94^r), a manuscript written by Anastasios Proikonnisios (in 1770), copied another one written “*by the own hands of Peter domestic of the Great Church*”, while the noted through the new method of analytical notation version, correspondingly, from the edition Peter 1820: 301-2.

⁷ See Pringos 1969: 18-20.

- - a po kta - n - thi - - i ne nin un ke
 ros e fe sti ken on i - - - pon i min i
 du gar pa ra di do me a mar to lon cher - - sin
 - - - e mbe - lthi - - - ne i ke
 sta vro me pro spti - xa ntes ta fi pa ra do
 ntes ev de li gme - - - non lo gi u
 nte os - ne - kron o mos thar si - -
 - te tri i me ros gar e - gi - - -
 ro - - - me is a ga li - a sin pi
 ston ke zo in tin - e - o - - ni on

ru sa - - lim, - - a po - klan - thi - - - - -

ne nin un ke ros e fe sti ken on i - - -

pon - i - - min i du gar pa ra di do - -

me a mar to lon her - - - sin - - e - mbe -

hithi - - - - ne i ke sta vro me pro spti - xa -

ntes ta fi - pa ra - do - - ntes e vde

li gme - - - non lo gi u - - nte os - - -

ne - - - kron o mos thar - - - si - - - - -

te tri i me ros gar e - - gi - - - - ro - -

- - - me is a ga li - a - sin pi - - ston

ke zo in tun - - e o - - ni on

EXAMPLE 3

Ki ri e er ho me nos pros to - pa - - thos
 tus i di us sti ri zon ma thi tas e le -
 ges ka ti di - - an pa ra - la -
 von - - - a - - - ftus pos ton ri
 ma ton mu a mni mo ni te on pa - le
 i - - - - pon - i - min o ti pro fi
 tin pan ta u ge - gra - pte i mi en i e ru
 sa - - lim - - a po - ktan - thi - - - ne
 nin un ke ros e fe sti ken on i - - - -
 pon - i - min i du gar pa ra di do -
 me a mar to lon her sin - - - -
 e - mbe - hthi - - - ne i ke sta vro me

pro spti - xa - ntes ta fi pa - ra - do -
 - ntes e vde li gme - - - non
 lo gi u - - nte - os - ne - kron
 o mos thar - si - - - te tri i me ros
 gar e - gi - - - ro - - - me
 is a ga li - a - sin - pi - - ston
 ke zo in tin - e o - - ni on - -
 - - - - - - - -

To sum up, I would observe that what Konstantinos Pringos attempts, his personal intervention on the original composition, appears in two aspects on which it is interpreted and understood [cf. ex. 4]; the first (and superficial) one is of course known through notation, the way of writing down the composition: Pringos uses a rather simplified (or intentionally analytical) musical notation, on which the composition is imprinted relatively by the practice of psaltic expression and easily read based on personal interpretative experience, that is formed through multi-relevant artistic practice; this way both the total rhythm of the composition is smoothed and the individual melodic phrases and cadences are homogenized); the second aspect (deeper and substantial) regards to the structural dimension of the composition: Pringos adds (extremely sparingly and after their testing and prevalence in relevant oral tradition) new (short) musical phrases, new melodic patterns with obvious emotional origin and severe lyric destination, which in most cases have to be considered as an attempt of a more eloquent and emphatic illustration of the meaning of every melodic text⁸.

⁸ See for example the following musical phrases or words: *oti profitin panta u gegrapte* [ὅτι προφήτην πάντα οὐ γέγραπται] / *amartolon chersin embehthine* [ἀμαρτωλῶν χερσὶν ἐμπαιχθῆναι] / *tafi paradontes* [ταφή παραδόντες] / *evdeligmenon* [ἐβδελυμένον]; the application of compositional technique “imitation of meaning”, is visible here, which Chrysanthos from Madytos describes it in his *Great Theory of Music* (see Romanou 2010: 189, § 421) as follow: “Imitation of meaning is to give a high pitch melody to meanings enclosing height – like heaven, mountain – with low pitch melody those meanings something low – like earth, abyss, hell – with joyful sound meanings that enclose joy – like paradise, victory – and with morose sound meanings of sadness – like death, condemnation etc.”.

EXAMPLE 4

Peter →
 Pringos →
 Κυ ρι ε εφ χο με νος προς το ο πα
 α α θος τους ι δι ους στηρι ζων μα θη τας ε
 λε ε γες κατ ι δι ι ι αν πα ρα λα α βω
 ω ω ων α α αυ τους πως των ρη μα των
 μου α μνη μο νει τε ων πα λαι ει ει ει πον
 υ μιν ο τι προ φη την παν τα ου γε ε γρα α
 πται ει μη εν ι ε ρου σα α λη ημ α πο ο

κταν θη η η ναι νυν ουν και ρος ε ρε στη κεν ον
 ει ει ει πον η μιν ι δου γαρ πα ρα δι
 δο ο μαι α μαρ τω λων χερ σι ι ι ι ν
 ε ειμ παι χθη η ναι οι και στω ρω με προς
 πη ξα αν τες πα φη πα α ρα δο ο ον τες
 ε βδε λω ημε ε ε ε νον λο γι ου ου ουν παι ω ως
 νε κρον ο μως θα ρσ ει ει τε

ται η με ρος γαρ ε ε γει ει ει ρο ο ο μαι
 εις α γαλ λι ι α α σι ν πι ι ι στων και ζω
 ην τη ην αι ω νι ο ο ο ο ο ο ο ο ο ον

The second musical work which comes up indicatively is the *Triodion* of Thrasyvoulos Stanitsas, an obviously innovative and sophisticated compositional work, although the musical tradition of Peter the Peloponnesian smolders on its base. To be understandable I would like to follow a reverse searching route from the one I have already used during the above analysis of Pringos' composition. I randomly choose again a composition from this musical work, the Apokreo ("Leave-taking from Meat") Sunday's doxastikon *Prokatharomen eaftous adelphi* [Προκαθάρωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀδελφοί], composed in first mode⁹, an actual novel melody of Stanitsas, from which I'll start here: as far as the notation is concerned, the composition is drafted in detail, as it clearly reflects the personal interpretative style of the composer–chanter [plate 4 & ex. 5]; if I deconstruct its notation, removing every ornamental, inlaying and analytical details, which were transported from the voice of the interpreter to the notated record of the composition, it is possible to reformulate it in a simpler and shorter musical recording, encasing every analytical notation in dynamic of either (micro structurally) specific musical signs or (macro structurally) wider musical phrases [cf. ex. 6]; the result of such a musical deconstruction and notation restatement proves to be impressive and revealing [ex. 7 & ex. 7a]; if I contrast it directly to the previous relevant musical tradition (with the same composition as it replies to the musical work of Peter the Peloponnesian [plate 5 & ex. 8]¹⁰) the deviations between the two are minimized, almost deleted, and the two compositions are quasi-associated (in the sense that – even in the differentiated points of the composition– Stanitsas reuses musical material from the total of the above work of Peter the Peloponnesian [cf. ex. 9]¹¹);

⁹ See Stanitsas 1969: 60-2.

¹⁰ See Peter 1820: 253-4.

¹¹ Compared with the composition of Peter the Peloponnesian, the composition of Stanitsas differs in melody in the following words or phrases: *ti vasilidi* [τῆ βασιλίδι] / *ton areton* [τῶν ἀρετῶν] / *pluton imin* [πλοῦτον ὑμῖν] / *ton pathon* [τῶν παθῶν] / *katevnazi* [κατευνάζει] / *ta idimata* [τὰ οἰδήματα] / *ke to despoti* [καὶ τῷ δεσπότη] / *katalati* [καταλλάττει] / *tus ptesantas* [τοὺς πταίσαντας] / *dio met efrosinis* [διὸ μετ' εὐφροσύνης] / *taftin ipodexometha* [ταύτην ὑποδεξώμεθα] / *voontes christo to theo o anastas* [βοῶντες, Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ, ὁ ἀναστάς]; from these, however, the following are composed identically towards the next indicatively mentioned musical phrases from other compositions of the same Peter the Peloponnesian (including in Peter 1820): *katevnazi* [κατευνάζει] = phrases *pros to pathos* [πρὸς τὸ πάθος] and *tafi paradontes* [«ταφῆ παραδόντες»] from *Kyrie, erchomenos pros to pathos* [Κύριε, ἐρχόμενος πρὸς τὸ πάθος] (pp. 301-2) // *ta idimata* [τὰ οἰδήματα] = phrase *dia ta dinaria* [«διὰ τὰ δηνάρια»] from *Tin filadelfian ktisometha* [τὴν φιλαδελφίαν κτησώμεθα] (p. 344) or phrase *o ilios eskotizeto* [«ὁ ἥλιος ἐσκοτίζετο»] from *Pasa i ktisis iliuto fovo* [Πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις ἠλλοιοῦτο φόβῳ] (pp. 380-1) // *dio met efrosinis* [διὸ μετ' εὐφροσύνης] = phrase *amartion mou ta plithi* [«ἁμαρτιῶν μου τὰ πλήθη»] from *Kyrie i en poles amarties* [Κύριε ἡ ἐν πολεῖς ἁμαρτίας] (pp. 319-22) // *taftin ipodexometha* [ταύτην ὑποδεξώμεθα] = phrase *thelete me* [«θέλετέ με»] from *Elkomenos epi stavru* [Ἐλκόμενος ἐπὶ σταυροῦ] (pp. 390-1) or words *anomis* [«ἀνόμοις»] and *evoa* [«ἐβόα»] from *Defte, christofori lai* [Δεῦτε, χριστοφόροι λαοί] (pp. 392-4); similarly, the phrase *ke to despoti* [καὶ τῷ δεσπότη] is visibly identical with the melody of the word *syndieonizim* [«συνδιαωνίζειν»] from the first Eothinon doxastikon *Is to oros* [Ἐἰς τὸ ὄρος] [by the adaptation of John Protopsaltes Neochorites; see Peter 1981: 50-1 (where the word *epigomenis* [«ἐπειγομένοις»] is also identically composed with the word *dio met efrosinis* [διὸ μετ' εὐφροσύνης] of Stanitsas' composition)]. So, the remaining novel melodic sentences of Stanitsas are *ti vasilidi* [τῆ βασιλίδι] / *ton areton* [τῶν ἀρετῶν] / *pluton imin* [πλοῦτον ὑμῖν] / *ton pathon* [τῶν παθῶν] / *katevnazi* [κατευνάζει] / *katalati* [καταλλάττει] / *tus ptesantas* [τοὺς πταίσαντας] / *voontes christo to theo o anastas* [βοῶντες, Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ, ὁ ἀναστάς]; even from those, it is also remarkable that the melodic phrases *ton areton* [τῶν ἀρετῶν] and *pluton imin* [πλοῦτον ὑμῖν] apparently resemble with the melodic phrase *chersin embethine* [«χερσὶν ἐμπαρθῆναι»] from the above composition of Pringos, while the phrase *voontes christo to theo o anastas* [βοῶντες, Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ, ὁ ἀναστάς] with the phrase *tis pisteos tin agkiran, ypermachon exomen ton* [«τῆς πίστεως τὴν ἄγκυραν, ὑπέρμαχον ἔχομεν τὸν»] from the first mode's Vespers doxastikon *Tin pagkosmion doxan* [τὴν παγκόσμιον δόξαν] composed by Peter Philanthidis (see Philanthidis: 2-3). This way, the really novel melodic sentences of Stanitsas are just the following: *ti vasilidi* [τῆ βασιλίδι] / *ton pathon* [τῶν παθῶν] / *katalati* [καταλλάττει] / *tus ptesantas* [τοὺς πταίσαντας].

so, the novel, groundbreaking and sophisticated transforms immediately into the traditional, conservative, simple what is more the simplest; if I continue such a research approach on the musical text, splaying out this process of its “musical drainage” and “notation denuding”, I could conclude in a way of notation corresponding to the form that it would have (hypothetically speaking) if it was written directly due to the older concise version of notation; this means that I would be able to notate it (beyond every idea of its composer or even beyond every imaginative research) in an abbreviated and concise way [cf. ex. 10 & ex. 10a]¹².

In conclusion, I would comment that in this case we can also see the same compositional method of reconstruction and restatement of a previous musical tradition, hidden underneath the analytical way of notation, underneath a deterministic registration of ornaments and analysis of the voice of the composer (who happens to be, simultaneously, the original interpreter of the composition; and perhaps the specific phenomenon has to be attributed to this double status of the composer). When the total aesthetics of the examined composition is simplified and analyzed on all components (based on the safe awareness of its form and structure), when the supervision of our research (beyond the superficial striking melodic and composing development) is extended in depth, in the substance and in the core of the original idea of the composer, the composition is revealed before us “naked” (and the corresponding “composing plan” is of course easily revealed at the same time); then, it is assessed in their real dimensions, which at the major proportion it is proved that they are aligned and trooped towards several other (already previous formed) musical tradition.

The above observations are valid (*mutatis mutandis*) almost totally for the two musical masterpieces which are under examination here; however, they similarly cover generally the philosophy of almost all the new compositions of the contemporary musical literature. In any case, I would observe that the well-known hagiographical saying¹³ adapts here conversely: *old wine* (the melodies of the tradition) fills *new bottles* (new compositions, which – covered by the cloak of a more analytical way of using the notation or even hidden by any newly composing technique – recycle and refresh the older and traditional ones.

¹² For the shaping of this “synoptic version” of Stanitsas composition I used as a base the corresponding composition of Peter the Peloponnesian (as it is recorded through the synoptic notation in the musical code No. F48m of Stavroupolis monastery, Bucharest of Romania, a manuscript written by Athanasios Foteinos in the year 1775, f. 124^{r-v} [plate 6]). similarly, for the phrases *katevnazi* [κατευνάζει] / *ta idimata* [τὰ οἰδήματα] / *dio met efrosinis* [διὸ μετ' ἐφροσύνης] / *taftin ipodexometha* [ταύτην ὑποδεξώμεθα], I used relevant records from the indicated compositions of Peter (as they appear in the aforementioned codex, ff. 154^{r-v}, 179^{r-v}, 200^{r-v}, 165^v-166^r, 205^{r-v}, 207^{r-v}); the rest sections are my attempt of a synoptic record of this composition.

¹³ Mat. 9, 17; Mar. 2, 22; Lu. 5, 37-9.

EXAMPLE 5

Pro ka - tha - ro - men e a - ftus - - -
 a de - lfi - - ti va si li - - -
 - - - di ton - - - a - -
 ton - a - - re - ton i du gar pa ra
 ge - - go - - nen plu - - - ton -
 i - min - - a ga thon - ko - mi - - -
 zu - - - sa ton pa - thon ka te - vna - -
 - - - zi ta - - - i di - - -
 ma - - - ta ke to de spo - - -
 - - - ti - - - ka ta - la - - -
 - - - ti tus - pte - tus - pte - - sa -
 ntas di - o - - met e - - -

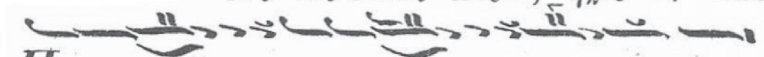
fro - - - si - - - - - - -
 ni - - - nis ta - - - ftin i po - - -
 de xo - - - - - - -
 me - - - tha - - - - - - vo o - - -
 - - ntes - - - chri - sto - - - to - - -
 the o - - - o a na - stas -
 ek - ton - - ne - - - kron - a ka - ta
 kti tus i mas - - di - - a fi - - -
 la - - - xon do xo lo gu - - - ntas - -
 se - - ton mo - non - a - - na ma -
 - - - rti - - - ton

EXAMPLE 7a

Pro ka tha - ro - men e e ftu - - a de e lfi
 ti va si li - - di ton - - a - - ton -
 a re ton i du gar pa ra gc go - nen plu - -
 - ton - i - min a ga thon ko mi - - zu - -
 - sa ton pa - thon ka te vna - -
 zi ta i di - - ma - - ta ke to de
 spo - - ti - - ka ta la - - ti


tus pie - - tus pie san tas di o met e - -
 - fro - - si - - ni
 mis taf tin i po de xo - -
 me - tha - - vo o - - ntes - - chri
 sto - - to the - - o o a na stas - - ek - ton
 ne - kron a ka ta kri tus i mas di - - a fi - -
 - la - - xon do xo lo gu nias - se
 ton mo non a - na mia - - rti - - ton

Εἰς τὰς Αἴνας Δόξα, ἦχος $\frac{7}{9}$ πα.



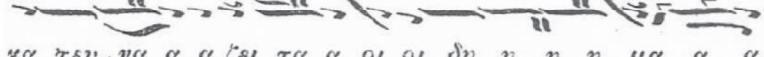
Προκαθάρωμεν εαυτοὺς ἑσθλα δὲ ἐλφοίτη

 βασιλιδίων ααααρεεετων




 ἰδὲ γὰρ παρὰ γέεγο νεν(ῶ) πλετονημιν α

 γαθων κομιιιιζςςςσα(ῶ)των παθων

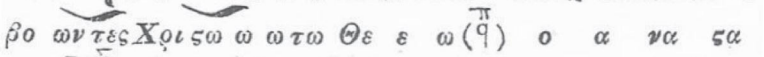


 κατευναααζειτααοιοιδηηηημααα


 τα(ῶ) καιτω Δεσποτηκαταλλαττει τεςπται αιαι




 σααααντας(ῶ) διομετεευφροοσυυνης



 ταυτηνυποοδεξωωωωμεεεεθα(ῶ)




 βοωντες Χρισωωωτωθεεω(ῶ) οαναζα




 αςεκτωννεεκρων(ῶ) ακατακριτεςημας

 διιαφουυυυλααααξον(ῶ) δοξο



 λογεντααςσεῶτονμονοναα ναμααααρ



 τηηηηητον

PLATE 5

EXAMPLE 8

Pro ka tha - ro - men e a fuis - - a de - - ifi
 ti va si li di - - ton a - - re - - -
 ton i du gar pa ra ge - - go - - nen plu ton
 i min a gathon ko mi - - zu - - sa
 ton pa thon ka te vna - - zei ta - - i - di - -
 ma - - - ta ke to de spo ti ka ta la ti -
 tus pie - - sa - - - ntas di o met

e - - - fro - si - nis taf tin i po - - - de
 xo - - - me - - - tha vo o ntes chiri sto - - -
 to the - - - o o a na stas - - - ek ton - - - ne - -
 kron - - a ka a kri tus i mas di - - - a
 fi - - - la - - - xon do xo lo gu nias -
 se ton mo - non a - - - na ma - - - rti - - -
 ton

EXAMPLE 9

Pater →
 Siamitsas →
 (deconstructed)

Προ χα θα ρω ω μεν ε αυ του ου ους α
 δελ φαι τη βα σι λι ι ι δι τω ω ω ω ν
 α α τω ω ν α ρε τω ν ι δου γαρ πα ρα γε
 γο νεν πλου ου ου ου τον η μιν α γα θων
 χο μι ι ι ι ζου ου ου ου σα των πα θων χα
 τευ να α α α α ζει τα οι δη η η μα
 α α τα και τω δε στο ο ο ο τη

η κα τάλ λα α α τ ρει τους πται αι τους πται σαν
 τας δι ο μετ ε ε ε ευ φρο ο ο
 συ υ υ υ υ υ υ υ υ υ η η η η γης
 τω την υ πο δε ζω ω ω ω ω ω ω με ε θα
 α α α βο ω ω ω ν τε ες χρι στω ω ω τω
 θε ε ω ο α να στα ας εκ των νε
 α κα τα χρι τους η μας δι ι α
 χριων

φυ υ υ υ λα α α α ξον δο ξο λο γουν τας
 τον μο νον α α να μα α α αρ τη η
 σε η τον

EXAMPLE 10

Προ κα θα ρω μεν ε αυ τους α δε λφοι τη
 βα σι λι ι ι δι τω ω ν α α των α ρε των
 ι δου γαρ πα ρα γε γο νεν πλου ου ου τον
 η μιν α γα θων κο μι ι ι ζου ου σα των
 πα θων και τευ να ξει τα οι δη η η μα α α τα και
 τω δε στο ο ο τη και τα λλα ττει τους πται αι
 τους πται σα ντας δι ο μετ ευ φρο συ νης τω
 τηγ υ πο δε ξω με θα βο ω ω ντες χει στω
 τω θε ω ο α να στας εκ των νε κρων α κα
 τα χει τους η μας δι α φυ υ υ λα α ξον δο
 ξο λο γου ντας σε τον μο νον α να μα α α
 ρτη η τον

EXAMPLE 10a

Προ κα θα ρω men e a fous a de lfi
 ti va si li di ton a . . .
 ton a re ton i du gar pa ra ge go - nen
 plu . . . to on i - min a ga thon ko
 mi - - zu - - - se ton pa thon ka
 te vna zi ta i di - - - ma - - - ta

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