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HOUSE IN THE CITY AT THE BEGINNING  
OF THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD.  
THE CASE OF THE NEW TOWN  
IN SZCZECIN IN THE HALF OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> C.

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DOM W MIEŚCIE U PROGU WSPÓŁCZESNOŚCI.  
PRZYPADEK NOWEGO MIASTA  
W SZCZECINIE W POŁ. XIX W.

Abstract

Between 1845 and 1873, Szczecin was extended by a fortified district of the New Town *Neustadt* with a new type of residential development – bourgeois tenement house *mietshaus*, *mietskaserne*. The preserved buildings of the New Town is an illustration for a certain stage in the process of finding a new definition for a dwelling house in the city, taken in Europe in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> c., when the old structure of the city began to transform to the contemporary city.

*Keywords: tenement house mietshaus, mietskaserne, functional layout nineteenth-century building, the New Town Neustadt, Szczecin Stettin*

Streszczenie

Szczecin w latach 1845–1860 został rozbudowany o ufortyfikowaną dzielnicę Nowe Miasto (*Neustadt*) z nowym typem zabudowy mieszkalnej – kamienicą mieszczańską (*mietshaus*, *mietskaserne*). Zachowana zabudowa Nowego Miasta stanowi ilustrację dla pewnego etapu w procesie poszukiwania nowej definicji dla domu mieszkalnego w mieście, podjętego w Europie w poł. XIX w., kiedy stare struktury miejskie rozpoczęło przekształcać we współczesne *city*.

*Słowa kluczowe: kamienica mieszczańska mietshaus, mietskaserne, układ funkcjonalny XIX-wiecznej kamienicy, Nowe Miasto Neustadt, Szczecin Stettin*

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## 1. PREFACE

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Europe, as a result of intensive industrialisation, a new social structure emerged, paired with a need to redefine the urban and architectural as well as functional space. In this time, multiple European cities, often released from the surrounding fortifications, experienced an intensive spatial development being extended by new districts with development having new forms and functions. Similar transformations were made in Szczecin in 1845–1866. At this time, the city was extended by the New Town (*Neustadt*) – a fortified district with a wide promenade, streets and urban squares, which were not only used for trade and service, but met the needs and aspirations of its residents. During this period, also a new type of residential development emerges – burgher house (*mietshaus, mietskaserne*). On an example of the Szczecin's district can be identified the development and transformations in its functional and spatial system, which was shaped during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century along with the development of the urban infrastructure. The Szczecin's *mietskaserne* of the New Town are an illustration of a certain stage in the process of seeking a new definition for a residential house in the city that was started in Europe in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the old urban structures were transformed into the modern *city*.

## 2. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOWN IN MID 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The New Town District was formed as a result of the extension of Szczecin started by Prussia in January 1845 due to the intensive efforts and pressures of social-economic circles. The formation of a new district started from erecting polygonal fortifications around it in 1845–1851. Only after joining the new system with the existing works of Szczecin's fortress and its tightly closed line of defence, the levelling work at Swedish and Prussian fortifications in the section between Bastions VII-IX was started in order to spatially join the two urban structures, the Old Town and the New Town.

The finished work of erecting fortifications gave rise to the public and private development of the new district. The residential “hunger” that underlined the creation of the New Town turned the investment movement towards a new type of urban development – the tenement house. The new form of a residential building that replaced the previous burgher house was formed in the 40s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Berlin. Szczecin, as one of the major cities of the state of Prussia, remained under a strong influence of the Capital of Prussia (just as Wroclaw or Poznan) adapting its models in respect of urban and architectural solutions<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the method of shaping new urban areas and residential development was highly impacted by the Prussia's construction regulations (*Bauordnung* for Berlin from 1851 and 1887<sup>2</sup>) and the development of the urban infrastructure (gas, water and sewerage) that took place in the European cities in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. As compared to the area of the Old Town, the New Town had a comfortable

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<sup>1</sup> In the 60s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Szczecin with civil population of 50,487 was 9<sup>th</sup> among the cities of Prussia. Adding the “military” population – a total of 5,944 – the city improved in the list of largest cities of Prussia to the 7<sup>th</sup> place.

<sup>2</sup> Berlin's *Bauordnung* from 1853 as a model study of building regulations was recommended for adoption within the whole state by the Prussia's Ministry of Trade and Public Work *Ministerium für Handel, Gewerbe und öffentliche Arbeiten*.

public space with large squares and wide avenues with cobbled streets, gas street lighting and urban well pumps<sup>3</sup>. It should be stressed that, at the same time, the residential houses were deprived of running water and sewerage system. In Szczecin, the investments in this respect were made when a majority of plots of the New Town was developed intended for residential development, thus the functional and spatial solutions of tenement houses were implemented using the solutions typical for the development lacking any technical infrastructure<sup>4</sup>.

The formation and extension of the urban infrastructure affected largely the qualitative change in the functional system of tenement houses and apartments of residential houses as late as in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the creation of another Szczecin's 19<sup>th</sup> century district – the Downtown, which was erected after a decision on levelling of the fortifications, made in 1873.

## 2.1. GEOMETRY OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TOWN

In the available academic works describing the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of Szczecin, the residential development of the New Town is discussed in few details and assigned typologically to the latter development of Downtown. As a result of the analysis, it can be noted that there are some important differences between the architectural and urban morphology of the Downtown and of the New Town.

The New Town was founded on the area of ca. 23 ha, where 22 quarters and 14 streets were planned. The development with various functions was erected on this spatial network. Among 173 addresses assigned to the New Town in the files of the Szczecin's constructional policy, as many as 140 are related to the residential development<sup>5</sup>.

As shown by the preserved archives, the first address files of residential houses were set up already during the erection of fortification (ul. Murarska 2 – 1850, ul. 3 Maja 12 – 1851). During the first 5 years, the development of the New Town was rather slow<sup>6</sup>. The activity of the constructional entrepreneurs was higher in 1858 when as many as 13 design plans of tenement houses were submitted to the Town Hall. The high investment activity was continued for about 10 years and ended in 1867 when only 2 designs of tenement houses were submitted<sup>7</sup>. At this time, 88% of all plots of the New Town intended for the residential function were already developed. The last design of a tenement house comes from 1878<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Szczecin was fitted with a gas network in 1848, entrusting implementation thereof to the German engineer G.M.S. Blochmann. In Berlin, the gas network was installed by the English company ICGA already in 1826. r. Kozińska B., *Rozwój przestrzenny Szczecina od początku XIX wieku do II wojny światowej*, Szczecin 2002, p. 50–51.

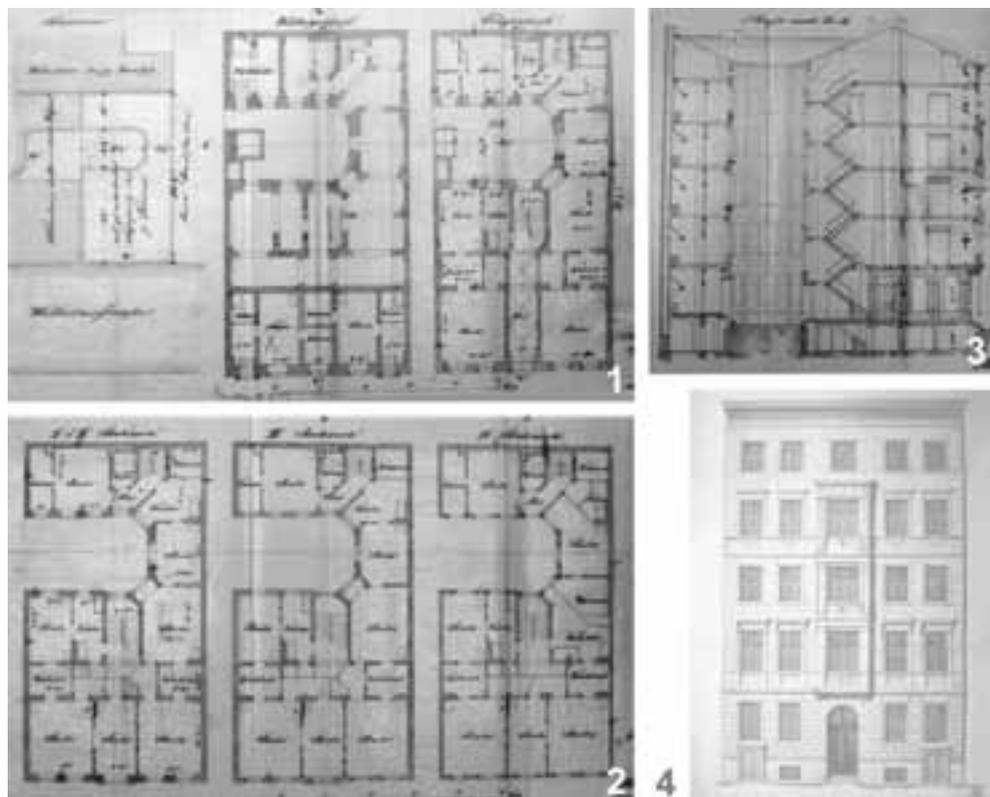
<sup>4</sup> In Szczecin, the waterpipe infrastructure was implemented in 1865 by the Englishmen J. Moore and W. Lindley. At the same time, Moore installed the waterpipe for Poznań (1865–1866) and extended the waterpipe from 1842 in Wrocław (1864–1871). Berlin has had a waterpipe network since 1856.

<sup>5</sup> The preserved files of so-called Building Police are a part of State Archive in Szczecin.

<sup>6</sup> Acc. to files from State Archive: 1852 – 4 tenements; 1853 – 5 tenements; 1854 – 7 tenements; 1855 – 4 tenements; 1856 – 6 tenements; 1857 – 2 tenements.

<sup>7</sup> Acc. to files from State Archive: 1859 – 7 tenements; 1860 – 11 tenements; 1861 – 9 tenements; 1862 – 8 tenements; 1863 – 11 tenements; 1864 – 8 tenements; 1865 – 4 tenements; 1866 – 11 tenements.

<sup>8</sup> Acc. to files from State Archive: 1868 – 3 tenements; 1869 – 6 tenements; 1870 – 1 tenements; 1871 – 1 tenements; 1874 – 1 tenements; 1875 – 1 tenements; 1876 – 1 tenements; 1878 – 1 tenements.



- III.1. The example of archival documentation building of the New Town in Szczecin. Tenement house, street Drzymały 9 – situation, basement and ground floor, E. Günther – mauermeister, 1861, Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie, ANB nr 9029. Source: I. Kozłowska.
- III.2. The example of archival documentation building of the New Town in Szczecin. Tenement house, street Drzymały 9 – 1–4 floors, E. Günther – mauermeister, 1861, Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie, ANB nr 9029. Source: I. Kozłowska.
- III.3. The example of archival documentation building of the New Town in Szczecin. Tenement house, street Drzymały 9 – section, E. Günther – mauermeister, 1861, Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie, ANB nr 9029. Source: I. Kozłowska.
- III.4. The example of archival documentation building of the New Town in Szczecin. Tenement house, street Drzymały 9 – elevation, E. Günther – mauermeister, 1861, Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie, ANB nr 9029. Source: I. Kozłowska.

The building plots of the New Town were developed with various types of developments, in contrast to the latter buildings of the Downtown, where a unified form was prevailing<sup>9</sup>. In addition, these were smaller in relation to the Downtown plots having on average a size of about 2/5 of area of the Downtown plots. The lower scale of the new urban building plots did not translate into the differences in parameters of residential houses of both 19<sup>th</sup> century districts. The tenement houses had residential bays from the side of the street and from the yard with a separate width (bay of the front house was 11–14.5m wide, and the side basements had a bay of 4.5 and 5.5m wide, and in some cases of 3.5 and 6m). The apartments in the front houses had similar sizes and the differences were seen only in the lower number of apartments intended for lease in the New Town.

The composition of the development of plots of the New Town was characterised by some speculative constructional investments made at that time. It led to the formation of rear out-buildings of tenement houses around extremely tight and small yards. As a result of the fire protection regulations applicable at that time, these were required to not exceed the minimum dimensions of 5.33x5.33 m (17'x17')<sup>10</sup>. A non-determination of a maximum area of plot development, which was provided for the latter Downtown areas where only 2/3 of a plot could be developed (34% of plot area was to be undeveloped), affected the deterioration of social and health conditions of residential premises situated around the yard. A non-developed area of a plot for residential tenement houses of the New Town accounted on average for 16% of its whole area, and in rare cases for 5% (ul. 3-Maja 8).

## 2.2. SOCIAL GEOMETRY IN STRUCTURE OF RENT TENEMENT HOUSE OF NEW TOWN

The geometry of the facade and the functional system of tenement houses of the New Town showed transparently the social structure of their residents. A dependence between the architectural geometry and the sociological system is characterised best by the following description made by J. Hobrecht<sup>11</sup>, the author of extension of Berlin and Szczecin at the turn of 60s and 70s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

*Fassen wir nun einmal die Wohnungs-Verhältnisse, wie sie sich in beiden Fällen gestalten, ins Auge: In einer sogenannten Miethskaserne befindet sich im I. Stockwerk eine Wohnung zu 500 Thalern Miete, im Erdgeschoss und II. Stockwerk je zwei Wohnungen zu 200 Thalern, im III. Stockwerk je zwei Wohnungen zu 150 Thalern, im IV. drei Wohnungen*

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<sup>9</sup> The downtown tenements were formed on two ways: by “O” arrangements – with a front and narrow rear house that were joined with side outbuildings or by “=” arrangement – with a front and wider rear house.

<sup>10</sup> For yards of downtown tenements a min. width of 10m was adopted for two side outbuilding flanks, 6m at one side flank subject to contact with the yard of the neighbouring tenement.

<sup>11</sup> The quote comes from publication by J. Hobrecht *Ueber öffentliche Gesundheitspflege und die Bildung eines Central-Amtes für öffentliche Gesundheitspflege im Staate* z 1868, where the author criticizes the lack of building regulations and speculative building investments that led to catastrophic living conditions of residents of German cities, seeing in improvement thereof a tool to counter cholera.

ä 100 Thaler, im Keller, auf dem Bodenraum, im Hinterhause oder dergl. noch mehrere Wohnungen ä 50 Thaler.

In einer englischen Stadt finden wir im Westend, oder irgend wo anders, aber zusammenliegend, die Villen und einzelnen Häuser der wohlhabenden Klasse, in den anderen Stadttheilen die Häuser der ärmeren Bevölkerung, immer in Gruppen nach dem Vermögen der Besitzer zusammenliegend, ganze Stadttheile dabei lediglich von der Arbeiter-Bevölkerung bewohnt. Wer möchte nun bezweifeln, dass die reservirte Lage der je wohlhabenderen Klassen und Häuser Annehmlichkeiten genug bietet, aber – wer kann auch sein Auge der Thatsache verschliessen, dass die je ärmere Klasse vieler Woldthaten verlustig geht, die ein Durcheinanderwohnen gewährt. Nicht “Abschliessung”, sondern “Durchdringung” scheint mir aus sittlichen, und darum aus staatlichen Rücksichten das Gebotene zu sein<sup>12</sup>.

The new way of living is, as well known, exactly contrary to the English one. In the so-called Mietskaserne (leased barracks) on the first floor is a flat whose rent is 500 thalers, on the ground floor and second floor is a flat whose rent is 200 thalers, on the third floor are two flats each per 150 thalers, on the fourth floor are three flats each per 100 thalers, and in the loft, in the basement, in the outbuilding and other similar locations are several flats per 50 thalers. In an English city, there are villas and individual houses of rich social groups located in separate districts and in other districts are houses for poorer population concentrated by wealth, where all districts of the city are inhabited only by the population of workers. Who could doubt the fact that a separate location of more affluent classes and houses provides them with multiple facilities but who cannot see that the poorer class loses many benefits that are provided when living in one building with people of different status of wealth. Not “separation” but “penetration” seems to be as recommended for moral reasons and for the wellness of the state.

According to this description, the burgher houses of the New Town with their spatial-functional structure socially hierarchised their residents. In the basement protruding more than 1.5m over the land level, from the side of street, *Wohnkeller* flats having lowest standard were planned. In the next 3–4 land floors, the flats with the same functional arrangement, but a different height of floors and windows were placed<sup>13</sup>. The last floor had smaller flats with the lowest standard.

A prestigious first floor of a tenement house, standing out with its rich tectonics of the elevation referred theoretically to *piano mobile* of the Italian palace being an archetypical form for the 19<sup>th</sup> century burgher house.

The higher floors with flats having a lower rent, but the same functional-spatial arrangement obtained a modest decoration in the elevation, showing a lower status of their residents.

The tenements of the New Town had high roofs under which, in some cases, flats with a comparable comfort to the flats in the basement were planned. A gate, which was often impassable, led to the main staircase situated in the rear section of the tenement’s bay, fitted in the flats of high and medium standard.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Hobrecht, *Ueber öffentliche Gesundheitspflege und die Bildung eines Central-Amtes für öffentliche Gesundheitspflege im Staate*, Verlag von Th. von der Nahmer, Stettin 1868, p. 13–14.

<sup>13</sup> Heights of individual levels: basement – 2.7–3.15m (8’6”; 9’; 10’); ground floor – 3.15; 3.45m (10’; 11’); 1<sup>st</sup> floor 3; 3.15; 3.3; 3.45m (9’9”; 10’; 10’6”; 11’); 2<sup>nd</sup> floor – 2.9; 3; 3.15; 3.3m (9’3”; 9’6”; 10’; 10’6”); 3<sup>rd</sup> floor – 3; 3.15; 3.3m (9’; 9’6”; 10’); 4<sup>th</sup> floor – 3; 3.15 m (9’; 9’6”).

For “the poorest”, a separate service of vertical and horizontal communication was introduced. The basement flats were accessed directly from the street while the flats with lowest rent, from the official stairs in the side flank of the tenement.

The structure of *mietskasernen* discloses the frankness of intention of Hobrecht’s description as the poor residents could leave “next to”, but not integrate with the more affluent group of society.

### 2.3. FUNCTIONAL ARRANGEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSES OF NEW TOWN

The function of the tenement houses of the New Town has a rich typology conditioned size and shape spots and forms of their development.

The flats were accessed from the stairway through an entrance in a form of a wooden wall with wide doors fitted with skylights. The flats in the front buildings had main *Stube* rooms that were placed from the street. Its depth was from 5.5 to 5.7m. Placed from the yard were kitchens and rooms with a depth of 4 to 4.85m. Along the flat, in parallel to the front elevation, a hall with a width of 1.25 to 1.65m was planned, which had a room without windows – *Cabinet* – at its end or in some cases, a servant’s room. The flats in the New Town had no, typical for the latter Downtown development, ending of the hall with walls placed at an angle of 135° against the longitudinal walls with doors leading to the front rooms and from the yard. But often, the so-called Berlin’s room was used – *Berliner Zimmer* – which was a necessary element of the downtown development. It was a room situated in the corner between the front flank and the side flank that was used as a living room – reception or an entrance hall leading to the rooms in the outbuilding with its own official entrance *Entréekasten*. The room had one large window placed in a cut corner of two residential bays. Such a solution was used for the first time by Schinkel in his urban designs of residential houses in the 20s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the outbuilding section of the flat, residential rooms were planned accessed from the hall or as a suite of rooms. At the end was a kitchen *Küche* to which a pantry was adjacent *Speise Kamer* and a servant’s room *Madchen Kamer*.

In the New Town were tenements with individual toilets (devoid of sewage) located in the residential apartments. During the erection of its development no urban municipal infrastructure existed, thus, such rooms as bathroom was not present inside the individual flats.

Flats with lower standard had a small kitchen *Küche*, a room *Stube* or a bedroom *Schlafzimmer* and a chamber *Kammer* often without windows. Only the kitchen was heated, where the family life was concentrated.

The tenement house had additional rooms in the common space. The ground floor of the yard often had a coachhouse *Wagen Remiz*, a stableman’s room *Knecht Kamer* and a stall *Pferde Stall*. Often, this complex had a sanitary node adjacent to with toilets with a septic tank. The common rooms for the whole block were also located in the basement. It was a laundry room *WaschKüche* with a bricked furnace and water tank, which due to the moisture was located in the basement so to avoid any damage to the wooden floors of the higher levels. A heated room could be also used as a bathroom. It was a place where often complexes of toilets were located.

The way the tenement residents functioned is best reflected by the description by P. Peschken:

*Vorn beim Eingang liegt zum Hofe hin ein Wohnzimmer zum Aufenthalt der Frau, wo es unordentlich sein darf. Die beiden Zimmer zur Straße sind Empfangszimmer, wo allenfalls der Hausherr seinen Schreibtisch hat. Das Berliner Zimmer ist das Speisezimmer, dann folgt der Flur mit Schlafzimmern, Küche und Dienstbotentreppe, dann einige Zimmer für zwangloses Wohnen der Familie, die man auch als eigene Wohnung für eine Verwandte oder Fremde abteilen kann.*

Man muss sich einmal klarmachen, dass die Empfangszimmer von den Erwachsenen wenig, von den Kindern praktisch gar nicht benutzt wurden. Die Frau durfte in den Empfangszimmern höchstens eine Spielerei wie einen Stickrahmen haben; jede Art Hausarbeit war dort verpönt. Die Kinder kamen dorthin zu Weihnachten und sonst, wenn sie einem Besuch vorgeführt wurden: gewaschen, gekämmt und im Sonntagsanzug. Die Familie wohnte für gewöhnlich zum Hofe hin genau wie ihre Dienstboten. In der Bauform des Hofes lag nichts Negatives weiter, als dass dort eben gewirtschaftet wurde, dass Fuhrwerke auf – und abgeladen, dass Teppiche geklopft wurden<sup>14</sup>.

*In the front at the entrance to the yard is a dirty zone – for the woman. Two rooms with a view on the street are reception rooms Empfangszimmer, where most hosts sets their desks. In a room of Berliner Zimmer type is a dining room Speisezimmer, and then a hall with a bedroom, kitchen and stairs for the service Dienstbotentreppe, where a daily family life is going on.*

*The reception rooms were virtually not used by the adults and children. A stay of a woman in this space was allowed only during manual work and other household duties were not welcomed in this zone. The children were introduced there for the Christmas Day or on other holidays after being washed, combed and put in formal clothes just as their service. Some disadvantages to shaping of a private space of the family at the tenement's yard were unfavourable social conditions related to handling and discharge of carts or carpet beating.*

### 3. SUMMARY

The study of a residential development of the New Town, erected in the 50s and 60s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a case study, shows a wider spectrum of the object. In this period, the residential “barracks” were a typical solution adopted in the cities of Prussia in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The test resource of residential buildings of the New Town is characterised by specific features and should be divided typologically from the Prussia's architecture and urban planning after 1870.

On an example of the Szczecin's district, a certain process of residential development transforming towards modern solutions was shown. It was the time when a traditional model of tenement development was abandoned and replaced with a new type of a residential house with multiple flats offering various comfort depending on the social status.

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<sup>14</sup> Peschken G., *Das Berliner Mietshaus und die Sanierung*, [w:] Burkhard Bergius u.a. (Hrsg.): *Architektur, Stadt und Politik*, Anabas V. Gießen 1979, p. 212.

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