



## Finding a role for archeology societies

By Dean R. Snow

*Extracted from the Maine Archaeological Society Bulletin, Fall 2006*

This seems like a good point at which to reflect on the ways in which state archeological societies have evolved over the last half century. Fifty years ago serious archeology was done mainly by a very small number of university, college or museum professionals. State societies provided almost the only access to archeology available to most avocational archeologists. Moreover, in those lowtech days it was possible for avocationalists to do quality research or rescue threatened sites with little funding or specialized equipment.

All of that has changed. To do acceptable archeological science today one needs institutional support and technical expertise that an earlier generation could not imagine. At the same time, cultural resource management, including government archeology, has grown into a huge new branch of professional archeology.

By some estimates 70 percent of all new employment in archeology is in CRM. By my count there are 154 professional archeologists in Pennsylvania, and I am probably missing more than a few. There probably are not that many in Maine, but there are certainly many more than there were in 1966, when I was the Lone Ranger.

On the public side, books, magazines, museums and polished programs on cable television, all produced by another set of professionals, now meet the needs of most lay people wanting to know more about archeology.

If doing archeology and presenting archeology have become the domains of professionals, where does that leave organizations like the Maine Archaeological Society?

The emerging new role for state societies surely must include stewardship. Protection of our dwindling archeological resources is not something that professional archeologists and law-enforcement people can do alone. Today archeological resources, like endangered species and other natural resources, are protected mainly by avocationalists who truly care about them. People used to shoot rare birds as easily as they looted archeological sites, but there has been an important sea change over the last half century. Most of us no longer need to possess something in order to love it. Avocational archeologists, like birdwatchers (and I am one of those too), have inherited the duties of watchdogs, local protectors of local resources.

Large-scale looting is becoming a thing of the past, but collectors will continue to pick up arrowheads on plowed fields and on eroding banks, I suppose. In this country such finds legally belong to the landowners, whether they are public or private, but with or without landowner permission many people still take a finders-keepers approach to surface finds.

That being the case, avocational societies have an enduring duty to help educate people to record basic information about the artifacts they pick up. Someday that small collection in a shoebox will be left to someone who did not experience the bonding that goes with discovery, someone for whom it is just a shoebox full of rocks. Too many such collections will end up in auction houses or in landfills if archeological societies do not help in the effort to preserve them.

## Upcoming events

**December 2:** ASM board meeting, Crownsville. 10 a.m. All members are welcome to attend.

**January 10-14, 2007:** Society for Historical Archeology meeting, Williamsburg, Va. For information, 301-990-2454 or [hq@sha.org](mailto:hq@sha.org)

**January 27:** Montgomery County Preservation Conference. Strathmore Arts Center, North Bethesda. 9 - 3:15. Charlie Hall is among the speakers. For information, contact Karen Yaffe Lottes, 301-340-2825, [kylottes@montgomeryhistory.org](mailto:kylottes@montgomeryhistory.org)

**March 15-18:** MAAC meeting, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

### Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT program participants and other ASM members:

**Montgomery County lab,** field work Wednesdays, 9:30 to 2:30. Call 301-840-5848 or contact [james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org) or [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org). CAT opportunity.

**ASM field session collection:** Volunteers are needed to work on up-grading collections associated with previous field sessions. Currently, the collection from the Rosenstock Site, a key Late Woodland Montgomery Complex area, is being upgraded. The lab in Crownsville is open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. For additional information contact Louise Akerson [rakerson@comcast.net](mailto:rakerson@comcast.net) or Charlie Hall [hall@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:hall@mdp.state.md.us).

**The Lost Towns Project** of Anne Arundel County. 410-222-7441.

**Mount Calvert.** Lab work and field work. 301-627-1286.

**Jefferson Patterson Park** invites volunteers to take part in its various activities, including archeology, historical research and artifact conservation. This year's public archeology program runs until July 8, with digging on Fridays and Saturdays and lab work Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Contact Ed Chaney at 410-586-8554 or [echaney@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:echaney@mdp.state.md.us)

The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide. Call up [www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/](http://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/) to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

### CAT corner

For updates and information on other CAT activities check the ASM website.

**Special fieldwork opportunity:** Richard Ervin of SHA is working on the Broad Creek Cemetery, a 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> Century cemetery on Kent Island. On occasion and on very short notice, it is necessary for him to conduct emergency excavations in preparation for new interments. Contact him at 410-545-2878 (days), 410-643-7128 (evenings) or by email at [rervin@sha.state.md.us](mailto:rervin@sha.state.md.us)

## Book note: Coe's classic 1964 piedmont study reissued

A classic volume of Mid-Atlantic prehistoric archeology has just been reissued. Joffre Lanning Coe's "The Formative Cultures of the Carolina Piedmont" reports on three North Carolina sites and changed perspectives about the age and depth of sites in the Eastern Woodlands. The book, originally published in 1964, has a lot of the original descriptions for point types like Savannah River, Morrow Mountain, Kirk and Guilford that are found in Maryland and also includes some ceramics. The types are based on good samples from well-excavated contexts.

The 130-page paperback reprint costs \$31.40, including tax and shipping. Order from Historical Publications Section, Office of Archives and History, 4622 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4622. For credit card orders call (919) 733-7442 or <http://store.yahoo.com/nc-historical-publications/>

## It's time to renew your ASM membership for 2007

Beat the Christmas rush by renewing your ASM membership now while you are thinking about it. Dues are the same as last year, starting at \$25 for an active individual membership. Some are paid through your local chapter. See the insert in this newsletter for details and to renew.

## What O'Malley said about archeology

Earlier this year, ASM Ink asked the candidates for governor what their thoughts were on several issues of interest to archeologists in the state. The responses were printed before the election. To help ASM members keep track of Governor O'Malley's performance now that he has won the governorship, here is a reprint of his comments:

**Q. How much of a role do you think the state government should take in protecting Maryland's archeological heritage?**

**O'MALLEY:** Historical and archeological preservation is key to protecting the history of all Marylanders and strengthens our insight into how far we've come as a people, and how far there still is to go. The state government should take the lead in partnering with academics, civic groups and private experts to safeguard our heritage.

In the past four years, Maryland has seen increasing, and reckless, development under Bob Ehrlich. Rather than appoint competent civil servants, he has selected inexperienced, well-connected friends to lead the Department of Planning, which directly impacts the state's commitment to archeological and historical preservation. His lack of commitment to the environment, and his willingness to let developers construct new homes in critical areas, is reflective of the current governor's failure to defend protected lands from development.

I believe that Maryland needs a strong governor with the determination to stand up for Maryland's history, and our state's families, in the face of special interests. We are all paying for the state's government - we should elect one that will work for Maryland families and protect our past.

**Q. What actions would you take or endorse as governor to this end?**

**O'MALLEY:** If elected, I will work with the archeological community to stand up to developers and protect historically critical lands. I will bring Baltimore's award-winning CitiStat system of performance-based government statewide, making sure that every dollar we dedicate to historical preservation is used as efficiently as possible. As a state, Maryland has so much history that we must protect, from the bombardment of Ft. McHenry to Antietam and the other battlefields of the Civil War, and we need a strong state partner who will protect and preserve our history. By working with Maryland families, historical preservation community and environmentalists, we can guard our state's treasures for future generations to enjoy.

In Baltimore, we are proud to have the most encompassing preservation program of any jurisdiction in Maryland. With over 7,000 buildings designated as local landmarks or parts of historical jurisdictions, we have taken the lead in protecting our history. In addition, Baltimore's Property Tax Credit for Historic Restorations and Rehabilitations is a 10-year, comprehensive tax credit program that allows the owners of 54,000 different properties to complete restoration projects without being penalized for their dedication to protecting Maryland's history.

**Q. Would you restore funding to the Maryland Historical Trust?**

**O'MALLEY:** If elected, I look forward to working with your members to make sure that the Maryland Historical Trust not only has enough funding, but that the Trust's funding goes where it will do the most to preserve our state's rich heritage.

# Looters hit estimated 80% of U.S. sites

By Dennis Wagner

*Condensed from The Arizona Republic, November 12, 2006*

**SAN CARLOS** - In the dead of night, looters are destroying the history of America, desecrating sacred Indian ruins.

An estimated 80 percent of the nation's ancient archeological sites have been plundered or robbed by shovel-toting looters. Though some of the pillaging is done by amateurs who don't know any better, more serious damage is wrought by professionals who dig deep, sometimes even using backhoes.

The motive is money. Indian artifacts are coveted worldwide by collectors willing to pay for trophy pieces of the past. Fine antiquities are displayed in glass cases at mansions and museums. Lesser objects wind up on fireplace mantels or stored in garages.

Looters are just the first link in a chain that includes collectors, galleries, trade shows and Internet sites such as eBay. But stopping the black-market business is virtually impossible because of a lack of manpower for enforcement and loopholes in the law that make it hard to convict the few who get caught.

"They're changing history," Vernelda Grant, a tribal archeologist for the San Carlos Apaches, says as she stands amid 800-year-old ruins that have been transformed into a crater field. "They're killing us. They're killing the existence of who we are."

Garry Cantley, an archeologist with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, listens quietly. Like Grant, he is sickened by the damage.

The San Carlos Reservation covers 1.8 million acres of high desert, pine forest, canyon and archeological sites -- a wilderness patrolled by 10 rangers who spend most of their time protecting game and fish.

The enforcement story is equally grim elsewhere in the West: too much country, too many diggers, not enough officers.

In May, a report by the National Trust for Historic Preservation concluded that artifact hunters, off-roaders, urban sprawl and vandals are "robbing the nation" of cultural resources.

Warren Youngman, assistant BIA special agent in charge for Arizona, shrugs when asked how many looters are working tribal lands: "There's a lot of wide-open spaces, and we don't have the manpower to cover it. We'll never know."

Enforcement is complicated by a plethora of overlapping agencies. Depending on where a ruin is, it could be the jurisdiction of U.S. Forest Service rangers, National Parks officers, Bureau of Land Management investigators, tribal police, BIA agents or state investigators.

Until this year, the BIA, with policing oversight for 561 recognized tribes nationwide, had just one investigator assigned exclusively to looting. The agent, John Fryar, retired this year and was not replaced.

"I just barely scratched the surface, frankly," says Fryar, now living in New Mexico.

The lack of enforcement is true across the nation. Just two investigators work Arizona trust lands covering 9 million acres. BLM officers cover more than a million acres each.

Manpower shortages are compounded by a lack of information. Many government agencies have only begun to inventory archeological ruins. Arizona's statewide catalog lists more than 100,000 known sites, most of which have not been inventoried. The BLM is responsible for 261 million acres nationwide (86 million in Arizona), but most of the land is not surveyed.

Meanwhile, it is sheer guesswork as to what percentage of ruins have been looted.

A 2002 report on federal lands in the remote Four Corners area put the figure at 32 percent. Archeologists and enforcement officers generally estimate that eight of ten Southwest sites have been robbed or damaged. Fryar is more pessimistic. "At least 95 percent-plus have been looted at one time or another," he says.

Typically, the digger arrives in early evening, hiding his truck in bushes a distance from ruins.

Cantley says hard-core looters school themselves in archeology and zealously defend their right to dig. "These guys know archeological sites as well as the experts," he says. "For many of them, it's a generational thing. They did it with their fathers and grandfathers, and they think it's a god-given right."

The commercial value is based on uniqueness, artistry and preservation. A plain Navajo bowl may bring \$100. A good polychrome pot from the Salado people fetches \$5,000. Ancient Hopi yellow-ware pottery may be

worth \$80,000.

Looters get to know buyers by visiting shows, sharing contacts and researching artifacts. They offer their finest merchandise to wealthy collectors who pay top dollar for one-of-a-kind items in pristine condition. More modest objects are sold to galleries. Mediocre antiquities go to bulk dealers or are offered on eBay.

If prosecuting looters is difficult, bringing charges against black-market buyers is nearly impossible, because authorities must prove that the collector knew artifacts had been looted.

Some artifacts are sold with provenance papers, listing where and when they were recovered. But there is no way for consumers or government agents to know whether objects were legally excavated from private property, looted from public lands or handed down by family members. Once a stolen relic is on the market, enforcement is next to impossible.

Ed Vaught of Atlanta, who sells artifacts online, says legitimate traders do their best to avoid illicit products. "You try to get as much history on the artifact as you can," he says. "It's also nice to know the person you're dealing with so there's some provenance."

Vaught, who has been a collector for six decades, says artifacts didn't even have any value until the 1960s, when Americans began to romanticize Indians and their history. Suddenly, old pots became expensive kitsch.

"It's enormous now. Huge," says Vaught, echoing comments from other dealers. "Not just in the United States. The Japanese, the Chinese, Europeans are all infatuated with Native American things."

As the interest grew, so did the incentive for plundering ruins. Looting emerged as an occupation, along with the contemporary manufacture of phony antiquities known as "ghosts."

Today at one Web site for Native American artifact collectors, you can find a list of 143 auctions, shows and other events. Search for "Indian artifacts" on Google and you'll get nearly 380,000 hits - many of them buyers and sellers.

Over the past decade, authorities have charged only a handful of people with violating the key federal laws designed to preserve historical sites and items: the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

Near urban areas, ruins are often damaged by amateurs. But the systematic destruction is caused by pros who rarely get caught in the act.

The lack of enforcement is a key factor. But wiggle room in the law may be even more significant. Simply put, it is legal to unearth archeological relics on private property, except burial sites. It is also legal to purchase items from others who have obtained them lawfully or by inheritance. And it is legal to buy contemporary art - bowls, baskets, kachinas - that resemble antiquities.

"So we have to prove this pot came from federal or Indian land," says Cantley. "And what happens when we approach these guys? They're going to say two things: 'These articles came from private property, and I want my lawyer.' "

Even when thieves are caught at a dig, court rulings may insulate them. In 2003, two men used a winch to haul rare petroglyph boulders from Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada. They were found guilty of theft but acquitted on a looting charge. Then the convictions were overturned in June because, judges ruled, federal agents could not prove the defendants knew they were stealing something of archeological worth.

Sherry Hutt, a former Maricopa County judge who now oversees a National Park Service program to protect Indian burial relics, said the ruling means that only archeologists who violate the law face prosecution, because they are the only ones who know the scientific value of artifacts.

As the monetary value of antiquities grows, the spiritual and scientific values remain incalculable.

Grant, with a master's degree in cultural anthropology, understands DNA and carbon dating. But she also is an Apache woman who believes in native ceremonies, dream-reading and sacred rites.

Grant served an internship at the Smithsonian Institution, working amid a collection of 1,500 Apache artifacts. She returned to Arizona and went to work protecting Native American relics for tribal governments, first the Salt River Pima, then the Apache.

She says the pillaging of sacred objects is a gut-wrenching assault on the forefathers, on sacred land.

"But how can you prove that in a court or in our archeological surveys or lab forms?" Grant asks. "It's very difficult."

## Book Review: Finding out about earliest America

*Jamestown, the Buried Truth*, by William M. Kelso, University of Virginia Press, 238 pages, \$30

For some strange reason, most likely repetition, when most Americans think of the earliest British settlers on this continent, they think of the Pilgrims and Plymouth Rock, 1620 and all that. But they really should think of 1607 and all that, when the southernmost of two efforts to settle North America proved both disastrous and successful and established the beachhead from which our country grew.

"The American dream was born on the banks of the James River, at a place first called James Fort, in 1607," writes William Kelso in "Jamestown, the Buried Truth."

Four hundred years later, 2007 is the year of Jamestown revisited and nobody knows more about Jamestown than Kelso, the archeologist who realized that the fort's remains had not eroded into the James River and who has led the productive search for its traces ever since.

Kelso does a detailed job of describing the archeology that discovered that the footprint of the 1607 fort's palisades still existed and the later archeology that found traces of buildings as well as scads of artifacts.

But he is interested in the people too, the ones who lived there and died there. He goes into as much detail when telling of efforts to identify some of the skeletons found buried in or near the fort. His goal is to make 1607 Jamestown come alive, to give readers a sense of what it was like there and then and he is as successful in an archeological-historical way as Ivor Noel Hume was in a fictional way in his "Civilized Men" last year.

Specific objectives had been given to the colonists. But, Kelso observes, "The Virginia Company's goals - to find a route to the Orient, convert the New World natives to Christianity, find gold, and export raw and manufactured goods - were at best only slightly fulfilled."

There was friction among the settlers and it might have spilled over into open warfare. Kelso reports on the mysterious shooting injury that led to the death of one man, and the Indians didn't have guns at that time.

Kelso just doesn't give results, he takes the reader through the thought processes as the archeologists try to digest the information turning up and try to figure out what it means and what to do next. He takes this approach when dealing with where to dig next and with looking for material to flesh out the finds and bring the site to life.

In seeking traces of the palisades and buildings, there were some written records, but Kelso discusses the problems of having to deal with records of unknown reliability. "For all their numbers and other seemingly objective facts," he writes, "these documents raise as many questions as they answer.... Any attempt to make a composite from these various sources would leave us with the proverbial camel designed by a committee."

Eventually traces of buildings did emerge. Kelso writes: "What may be most intriguing are the hints that these remains ... offer of the colonists' complex interactions with the Virginia Indians." More than 200 projectile points were found in or immediately next to the fort, indicating the palisades were not a do-not-pass barrier.

The 1607 fort deteriorated and by 1624 it was gone, as was the Virginia Company, which had been in charge of the settlement. King James I took control of the colony and Kelso traces what happened on the ground for the following decades too.

The book is lavishly illustrated with photos and drawings, most in color. The only thing missing is a good diagram of the 1607 fort with the buildings labeled.

2007 is a good time to catch up and what has been found and learned at Jamestown, and Kelso's book is the one that tells the story with clarity, authority and first-hand knowledge.

-- Reviewed by Myron Beckenstein

## Chapter notes

### Anne Arundel

The Chapter meets five times a year in February, April, June, September, and November at the All Hallows Parish Brick Church at the Parish Hall near London Town, at 7 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito at [AACHapASM@hotmail.com](mailto:AACHapASM@hotmail.com) or visit the chapter website [www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php](http://www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php)

## Central

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned. But if someone has a site he wants investigated, contact the Maryland Historical Trust or Central Chapter President Stephen Israel at 410-945-5514 or [ssisrael@abs.net](mailto:ssisrael@abs.net)

## Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Needwood Mansion. Dinner at a local restaurant is at 6. Monthly lab nights are the first Thursday of the month, from 7 to 9 at Needwood Mansion. Contact [james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org) or [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org), or call 301-840-5848. Chapter website: [www.mid-potomacarchaeology.org](http://www.mid-potomacarchaeology.org)

## Monocacy

The chapter meets in the Community Room of the C. Burr Artz Library, 110 East Patrick Street, Frederick on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or [jlazelle@msn.com](mailto:jlazelle@msn.com). Chapter website: [www.digfrederick.bravehost.com](http://www.digfrederick.bravehost.com).

**December 13:** Mike Johnson, Fairfax County Archeologist, will speak about the archeology program in Fairfax County, Virginia, and about the search for Clovis and pre-Clovis in the Nottoway River Valley.

## Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Contact Dan Coates at [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net)

**December 13:** Annual dinner meeting, Harford Glen, 6 p.m. Former state archeologist Tyler Bastian will speak.

## Southern

Contact Kate Dinnel for information at [katesilas@chesapeake.net](mailto:katesilas@chesapeake.net) or 410-586-8538.

## Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Ida, near the court house in Ellicott City. Some months, potluck suppers are held at 6:30. Otherwise, dinner is available at the Tiber River Tavern in Ellicott City. Either car pool from Mt. Ida at 5:55 or meet at the tavern. For information on the chapter, contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or [roseannlee@earthlink.com](mailto:roseannlee@earthlink.com)

**December** (No Meeting)

**January 8, 2007:** "Archeology Lab: Mt. Pleasant" (there are many artifacts from Mt. Pleasant that need to be cleaned and articulated. There will be plenty of bottles, plates etc. to piece together.

**February 12:** Matt Croson on "Archeology and CSI: Time is the Only Difference."

**March 12:** Michael Olmert, University of Maryland, "Outbuildings: Architecture and Culture in the 18th Century Anglo-Tidewater Backyard." (Pot Luck Supper)

**April 9:** Bob O'Brien, "A Travelogue of Hawaii".

**May 14:** Program to be announced. (Pot Luck Supper)

## Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. in the LaVale Library, unless noted. Contact Ed Hanna, 301-777-1380. Chapter email: [wmdasm@yahoo.com](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com) Website: [www.geocities.com/wmdasm](http://www.geocities.com/wmdasm)



**The Archeological Society of Maryland Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization devoted to the study and conservation of Maryland archeology.**

ASM. Inc members receive the monthly newsletter ASM Ink, the biannual journal MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10% discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Belinda Urquiza for membership rates. For publication sales, contact Dan Coates at ASM Publications, 716 Country Club Rd., Havre de Grace, MD 21078-2104 or 410-273-9619 or [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net).

**Submissions welcome.** Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782, 301-864-5289 or [myronbeck@verizon.net](mailto:myronbeck@verizon.net)

**President**

John Fiveash  
443-618-0494  
[jsfiveash@comcast.net](mailto:jsfiveash@comcast.net)

**Vice President**

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410-263-1102  
[JamesGGibb@comcast.net](mailto:JamesGGibb@comcast.net)

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Kathy Steuer  
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[herbalkat5@hotmail.com](mailto:herbalkat5@hotmail.com)

**Treasurer**

Sean Sweeney  
410-569-8715  
[seansweeney1224@comcast.net](mailto:seansweeney1224@comcast.net)

**Membership Secretary**

Belinda Urquiza  
PO Box 1331  
Huntingtown, MD 20639  
410-535-2586  
[burquiza@comcast.net](mailto:burquiza@comcast.net)

**At-Large Trustees**

Claude Bowen  
301-953-1947  
[claud.bowen@thomson.com](mailto:claud.bowen@thomson.com)

John Newton  
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[jnewton@mtamaryland.com](mailto:jnewton@mtamaryland.com)

Elizabeth Ragan  
410-548-4502  
[earagan@salisbury.edu](mailto:earagan@salisbury.edu)

Kathy Rigby  
410-750-7102  
[rigbys2@verizon.net](mailto:rigbys2@verizon.net)

Annetta Schott  
410-877-7000  
[annettaschott@comcast.net](mailto:annettaschott@comcast.net)

Jim Sorensen  
301-434-8316  
[james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org)

**Archeological Society of Maryland  
ASM Ink  
P.O. Box 1331  
Huntingtown, MD 20639-1331**

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